MONASH University

Hope in uncertainty:
Ethical (and other) encounters in participatory theatre

Applying ethics and aesthetics of care
perspectives to diverse and difficult
community theatre practices in Australia
and the UK, 2014–2019

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Abstract

This thesis is centred in four key questions:

1. How has care been theorised?

2. How do community arts and cultural development (CACD) practices accommodate care?

3. How might CACD practices enable and extend the field of care ethics, and

4. What concepts and presumptions might inhibit such practices?

Part 1 begins with a literature review of care ethics and feminist care ethics (FCE) since the 1980s, discussing the field's broad social, political and interpersonal reach. It investigates the relevance of 'vulnerable methods' as the primary methodology of this investigation. I discuss benchmark terms in contemporary socially engaged practices (CACD) and ask whether such terms do or do not serve 'deep care' values.

In Part 2 I detail five case studies, situated between 2014–19, each of which puts our benchmark terms under scrutiny. Each project includes participants who have suffered trauma, displacement and loss. Each shows the significance of iterative processes that resist the pressures to define outcomes before projects begin in order to satisfy funding or organisational requirements. I also examine the significance of *vulnerable authority*—a term I contribute to the field; and also show how oversimplifying the concept of agency can compromise projects and participants.

Each case study interrogates the challenge thrown by UK CACD practitioner James Thompson, in his realisation that care creates an aesthetic of its own making. The studies track how often we find ourselves working to rubrics and protocols that contradict care, or that override care ethics in order to conform to received aesthetic outcomes.

My own conclusions are that 'deep care' requires a trust in precarity, some notion of collective benevolence or good will, and benefits most from non-agonistic processes. Our most valuable work may take place in what Mary Louise Pratt calls 'crossroads sites' where we are confounded in our presumptions, where we 'do not know where we are going' and where a project's value lies in what it 'pays forward', as much as in its immediate outcomes. Such practices, however, demand not only Thompson's 'new unnamed forms of practice' but structures and trainings that support and trust the *along the way.* I suggest that it is in creating such pathways that *hope* can be realised as a right in our arts practices.

Declaration

This thesis is an original work of my research and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

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PART 1 THE FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

Chapter 1
Introduction

In this thesis, I argue that theatre, performance and community arts have yet to engage consistently and deeply with issues of care—specifically, of care ethics, and of feminist care ethics (FCE), a nascent field of enquiry. There are instances that demonstrate care in such practices; however, for the most part, the discussion is more often couched in terms of ethics in the region of morality or justice ethics (about doing *right* or doing *good*), which profoundly differs from a notion of an iterative, ethically informed care that adapts and produces outcomes appropriate to differing communities and circumstances.

The scope of existing theoretical work ranges across performance process and praxis, as well as in the ethics of spectatorship. Often, it is couched in terms of vulnerability, for example in accounts of working with people such as refugees, asylum seekers, and displaced indigenous communities or disadvantaged youth, who perhaps require exceptional care. Yet presumptions around what such 'exceptions' (and vulnerability) require give rise to issues exemplified in the so-called 'Bishop-Kester debate' (2006–2012) where socially engaged arts are pitted in opposition to aesthetic values, and 'high' art considered exempt from social critique by dint of its utopian or transformative insights (Bishop, 2005; Grant H. Kester, 1997, 2005). Often, collaborative, community-centred engagements are presumed to demand either caution and restraint, or aid and abet free-for-all 'radical pluralities' (Kester, 2012, p.2).

The debate pits 'high art' against socially engaged projects which are presumed (at best) subject to chaos and fragility and (at worst) mired in the mud of a collective experiential ambiguity. Curiously, neither Claire Bishop nor Grant Kester seems to trust artists to create 'true' and affective art in either case. But as community facilitator Lily Hibberd cautions:

> Both (Bishop and Kester) may have missed a fundamental ethical point: socially based art practice does not hinge on a competition between the status of an artist *versus* their collaborating community, and despite the challenges involved in making a collaborative project fair, open and just, aesthetics is not a platform that can bridge an ethical .
>
> *(Hibberd, 2017, p.9)*

Whilst the debate's oppositional thinking is fractious—and indeed, rooted in factual errors—nonetheless there is an interesting if provocative suggestion that, in CACD projects, ethical practice needs to be centred in considerations aside from the 'mainstream', and in ways that diversify and expand how we measure what we think are our core values.

In this thesis, I bridge that divide, initially via applying a feminist care ethics (FCE) lens to five case studies in community-engaged process. A feminist lens registers that diverse experiences, abilities, needs and creativities require differently forged forms and interactions specific to each situation. In our ever-more complex world, it is imperative we interrogate old touchstones and move forward to imagining and practising new models of ethics, aesthetics and care. In a decade where Royal Commissions have borne witness to decades-long institutional abuse of children, and where there are currently more than 60 million displaced persons in the world, we need to ask, *whose* aesthetic judgments do we adhere to and uphold? In complex communities, such as present-day Australia, with as many as thirty-eight per cent of residents now of non-English speaking and often traumatised background, the challenges thrown to us as artists demand a tolerance not just of our differences, but to embrace what long-serving UK community artist Francois Matarasso identifies (somewhat nervously) as 'hope in uncertainty' (Matarasso, 2019). It is this nervousness, and his brilliance in identifying it, that I honor in borrowing Matarasso's term in my thesis title. Our task is not to land on one or the other side of the ethics *versus* aesthetics debate, but to come to understand what kinds of care uncertainty requires, and what aesthetics are appropriate to each differing circumstance.

My own background is as a theatre performer and director and arts facilitator, working across Western conventional, avant-garde collaborative, intercultural and community-engaged practices. I try to bring care into the equation in each project and circumstance in which I am involved. I conjecture that a sensitivity to oppressive practices has been formed from my childhood. As the daughter of post-World War II refugees to Australia, I grew up in a household of silences, where war traumas remained unspeakable, suspicions unexpressed, emotions unexplained. My parents were barked at to 'speak English' even when conversing between themselves. Grateful for the respite afforded by Australia from the after-effects of a brutal war, they never wanted to acknowledge their sufferings in a country that at best showed disinterest. I bring a highly somatic awareness to my arts practice, informed by my work as a dancer and a clinical bodywork therapist. This is not a simple awareness to bring into the equation. The expression of experiential truths has been (and remains) subject to severe criticism and silencing by received majority opinions in both arts and academe.

Of course, the body, its histories and its truths are often ungainly, inchoate, difficult to summarise and hence difficult to ascribe to one aesthetic against another. How do we get funded to work in unratified aesthetic spaces? The case studies of Part 2 describe the occasional experience and inputs of co-participants (refugees, underprivileged youth, members of the Forgotten and Stolen Generations) that are not spectacular, not particularly beautiful, cannot necessarily be spoken, but are yet worthy of our attention. We are not simply concerned with what is aesthetically pleasing, but with what is given, what received, what heard, what questions asked, what ignored, what cannot be spoken, and thence what cannot be resolved, within the scope of any single project. I argue that the irresolution can be part of the terrible beauty of a project but does not nullify it. What in our profession we define and agree as 'successful' is driven, in part, by aesthetic judgments that are conditioned by pressures such as guidelines, timeframes, and degrees of

structural and social support, each gnawing at the edges of our instincts and our decisions that help define *what matters*, both now, and into the future.

In our work on the ground, we might move beyond the received categories our funding bodies applaud and replace them with a more systemically considered notion of the presences we bring into, and accept in, process. The question, 'What demands, or calls to, our care?' is a complex matrix that can call to our sense of being, of who we are, across, history, time and cultures, and redefine our notion of 'presence'. Exactly who, and what, 'shows up' in our practices? I mark that the notion of 'presence' is an oft-cited, but peculiarly under-theorised term in most performance practices. It is term in common use in actor training and practice, but even in this sphere, it remains highly under-theorised. My hope is that I can assist this language to evolve into something where 'presence' is understood as a process of inclusion, in the touchstones I outline in the summary of my case studies.

Care ethics, established in the 1980s in Europe, the UK, North America and Scandinavia, is a nascent field and draws on several others, including feminist philosophy, sociology, education studies, and disability studies, with or without reference to the arts. Where there is a crossover between aesthetics and the ethics of care, it has tended to focus on feminist arts, or arts created by and with women. This parallels the problematic (identified by early FCE scholars) where care tends to be relegated to the feminine, to women's place, or to women's actions. Care, however, is a complex issue, that needs to extend beyond all such gendered disparities—something that pertains to all humans, and our interactions (including, many argue, with the more-than-human) in varying degrees and at various times over the course of our lives. This was argued cogently by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fischer (1990) along with their assertion that it is care *per se* which maintains the 'life-sustaining web' of which we are all a part.

Other issues in early care theory—quickly identified as problematic—include a presumed opposition between public and private, personal and political, and the social versus emotional complexities of obligation. For example, is giving care always onerous or one-side—that is, a gesture from carer to cared-for? As feminist care ethics progresses over the next thirty years, the discipline reaches a point of cognising the (sometimes joyous, not always onerous) *inter*dependence of participants (Tronto, 1993; Tronto, 2017).

I here lay claim to applying the specific term an 'ecology of care' to the field of participatory arts and by so doing insist that, as in any environment or ecosystem, our being-in-the-world makes its demands on us to activate an ethics calling to the sinew of our relationships between structures, and cultural forms and norms. Scholars and philosophers, from Maurice Merleau-Ponty to Tronto, Marion Barnes and Margrit Shildrick, call to such awarenesses as marks of our inherent interrelationality (Marian Barnes, Brannelly, Ward, & Ward, 2015; Merleau-Ponty, 1969; Shildrick, 2008). For others, including Isabelle Stengers, Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, Thom Van Dooren and Deborah Bird Rose, this also includes the more than human realm (de la Bellacasa, 2017; Rose, Van Dooren, & Chrulew, 2017; Stengers, 2003; 2011).

The vast field of 'other languages' that an ecological framework invites, lies beyond received, verbal languages, and is only beginning to be discussed in fledgling research disciplines such as embodied cognition, trauma studies, disability studies, and in ecology/biology studies. This can only be touched on briefly, but warrants deeper investigation in the future. From this perspective, however, I draw attention to the following: as in any ecology, our awareness requires us to consider the invisible.

The term 'invisible' suggests and includes a multiplicity of considerations, including the microscopic, the emergent, the latent or the yet-to-be-revealed. As noted, it points to experiences that are perhaps unspeakable, accommodating experiences that hold a history of trauma. This perspective is particularly prescient in our work here in Australia with respect to our displaced indigenous peoples. In Part 2 I also demonstrate how important this perspective is to some of our newest refugee arrivals to Australia. For both groups, we can note that the historical relationship between subjects, their land (contexts and politics) and spirit (energy, history, laws and reference points) is dialogic, with land, laws and histories denoted as living, not abstracted entities. Certain international politics—for example, Bolivia's Law of Mother Earth[1], which gives earth, air and water equal legal status to humans—acknowledge and embed the critical intertwining of beliefs in law; however, there is little incorporation of such embodied possibilities made legitimate within our everyday practices in Australia.

Whilst 'good' community and cultural development (CACD) workers are likely (if perhaps unconsciously) to be practising with such awarenesses—for example, working with and accommodating the beliefs of people for whom pigs speak, trees communicate history, for whom drums are sacred, and trance practices are quintessential[2]—the specificities of what this implicates, as a pragmatics of care, is often missing in the literature around CACD. Some of the dreams I detail in Part 2 are quintessential to what propels the work I create and co-create, but I have rarely encountered moments where the truths that dreams speak are validated in Western intellectual practices. They are, however, accorded deep value in other cultures, such as illustrated in the writing of anthropologist Edward L. Schieffelin in his work with the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea (Schieffelin, 1985), and in the story-exchanges I have had with members of the South Sudanese community.

As Schieffelin describes, our cultural engagements can accommodate so much more than meets our eyes: but it is an exacting task to honor the histories, complexities, hopes, sufferings and dreams of the communities with whom we work. Of course, no-one can ever hope to draw a comprehensive map of all that we need to consider in our work. However, with awareness, we might begin to map how to become, and remain, aware of the multifarious inputs in our engagements, and how we may need to respond, adapt and change in response to such considerations. If we care, we need to care for our subjects-in-history and -in-process[3], embracing our co-participants' varying relationships to land, to

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[1] For a summary of the legal standing of this law, go to https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_of_the_Rights_of_Mother_Earth

[2] In this thesis, I denote the understandings of the South Sudanese diaspora in Canberra, with whom I have worked extensively.

[3] I extrapolate the term *sujets-en-histoire* from Julia Kristeva's *sujets-en-proces*, first articulated in her *Desire in Language* (Kristeva, 1980).

place, and to all that communicates with them (and us) where and how we live our daily lives. Accordingly, my intention is to provide examples of incidences where care has occurred, and/or where it has been under challenge, both in my case studies and in my Conclusion, which points to techniques and touchstones which might help us configure care in our practices.

In order to ground and frame this discussion, Part 1 of this thesis begins with a literature review, firstly of care ethics, and in particular, of feminist care ethics (FCE) as a branch of applied philosophy which distinguishes itself from moral philosophy in its focus on reciprocal relations, pragmatics, and embodied action. Its focus on the key principles of responsiveness, equity and agency is a critical feature—heralding its distinction from systematised and immutable moral precepts and justice ethics—and distinguishes itself as an iterative practice, variable and responsive according to circumstance. Chapter 1 looks to theories pre-2000; Chapter 2 to its developments post-2000, interrogating the notion of a systemic ecological ethics (as outlined by Isabelle Stengers, Puig de la Bellacasa and others) and makes note that complex notions of 'being' and 'presence' are only vaguely configured in most theories of contemporary performance, and the funding guidelines that purportedly support our work. What I also note is how the complexities of presence are part of performance 'parlance' and perhaps our best practitioners have utilised an awareness of its complexities in ways not conscious to our funders. My intention is to emphasise the gap between what happens (what circumstances demand) and what is given credit, and funded, in our industries.

However, the primary, generative emphasis of this thesis remains whether and how our practices ground exhibit and are supported *in due care*. Accordingly, the second literature review which begins Part 2 looks at CACD per se—defining its key terms and assessing which of these terms seem most valued in our current economic and funding climate (2018–19).

I ask the following questions:

- Do currently supported CACD practices exhibit due care?

- If they do, then how?

- If they do not, then why not, and according to what or whose definitions or experiences? and

- How do such CACD rubrics align with the latest thinking in feminist care ethics?

In Australia, there is a push towards ensuring that inclusive practices are featured and embraced by funders and organisations, whether localised or on a national scale. However, the presence of people of difference (of cultural background, or of ability) in a project does not guarantee that they are being cared for or catered to. Indeed, Matarasso draws a distinction between the 'instrumentalisation' of participants, and a deeper form of

inclusion which he identifies can be 'messy'. So, at the outset, I raise the question of what care looks like and feels like, and how it operates in caring CACD practices.

Whilst Matarasso's recognition of the value of 'mess' is significant, James Thompson observes that the experience and witnessing of care (for example, of his injured work colleague, attended-to by a skilled physiotherapist) can occasion a special beauty of its own (Thompson, 2015). This gives rise to his notion of an 'aesthetics of care', which remains novel in the field. Indeed, Thompson—a CACD practitioner of some thirty years— has been surprised and challenged by this realisation. In an earlier essay, he describes how he was confounded by his own methodology (as a 'specialist' practitioner) working in a war zone, and seeing his cohesive theatre exercise fail in a context that challenged his presumptions of where his work was pointing to (Thompson, 2009).

Thompson states that, in socially engaged actions, praxis and aesthetics are most often considered antithetical (Thompson, 2015, p.432). And yet, we can note that an 'aesthetics of care' is not per se a radical conception: beauty can and may be present and witnessed in a multitude of ways, from the way a parent responds to a child, a carer to his ward, a director to her collaborator. The 'problem' may lie in our concepts of art, our 'status' as trained 'professionals' in specialist fields, and/or of the value of community process and of care itself, of what we are supported and called to care for. The question is partly about how we measure our actions.

The languages and textures of care are often non-verbal. A parent who croons to his baby (and indeed, the physiotherapist with hands on her patient) may be issuing a whole world of care-knowledge in the rhythm, rise and fall of their touch, their demeanour, their breath and speech or 'song'. This speaks to a knowledge-base of care, and caring actions, that emerge from multi-sensate functions and abilities that are only just beginning to be theorised in such fields as embodied cognition. Accordingly, although care is considered a function of our embodiment—for example, in the work of biologist Charles Birth (2012), embryologist Erich Blechschmidt (2004/1955), and care ethicist Maurice Hamington (2004)—this thinking, within applied and community/participatory arts practices, is most commonly subjected to a rationalist discourse that (as Thompson laments) requires socially engaged practices to 'do good' and effect measurable benefits answerable to short-term agendas and requirements. This belongs to a masculist, individuated 'morality ethics' which, as this thesis progresses, I demonstrate does not match the more delicate requirements of the work of CACD practitioners in the field.

Whilst a full interrogation of the wider fields of inquiry into non-verbal aspects of care is beyond the scope of this thesis, care practices can, and do, occur in and amongst our daily, embodied interactions. Feminist theory would argue that this, *per se*, is political, and it is perhaps where women perform daily care routines and actions that care is seen as of restricted value. As earlier intimated, care practices may also occur in respect of our silences—in giving space to, respect for, and working with, what project co-participants cannot say, which again is where care practices bleed into circumstances that constantly

challenge aesthetics. What is a play that is composed of silence[4]? A dance comprised of movements that cannot be shown? I state these not as rhetorical questions, but as realities that workers in community (whether artists, social workers, school teachers, and everyday parents) must and do face every day. They remain under-theorised, and often leave practitioners floundering in a sea of experiences which mark them as other—rather than support their work as vital and quintessential in care practices, engaged in complex social realities, and as markers of care (as I discuss in several chapters following). Thompson, in his work in a Sri Lankan war-zone, admits to having been more comfortable with his daytime political theatre exercises than the spontaneous cultural performances that erupted at night, and over which he had no control (Thompson, 2009, pp.2–3). In the end, he admits that any cultural practice is valid and valued CACD if it contributes to community health and vitality. I note the plurality of dimensions of engagement that contribute to care, but which may fall by the wayside in evaluation requirements that also feed into ongoing funding and support mechanisms.

Such issues are particularly, but not singularly, pertinent in working with people of complex needs (who are often profoundly non-verbal), and people who have suffered traumatic displacement and loss. I note with caution how often people of special circumstances are bundled together in CACD rubrics, without distinction for the specificities of their abilities. It is a tendency against which we need to be on guard, as it can tend towards what Francois Matarasso observes as the unwitting instrumentalisation of co-participants to suit goals that have little to do with them (Matarasso, 2019, 3/1/2019), even if the stated intention has been to 'show care'.

Following Thompson's lead (and supported by feminist theorists such as Margrit Shildrick and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa), I suggest that in the face-to-face encounters of such experiences, practice teaches us its ethics. We often have no 'moral precepts' to hide behind. It is only the face, body, and enormity of the 'others' with whom we work that calls to our ethics, and our care-full and caring considerations. This of course refers to a Levinasian ethics (Lévinas, 1998) and applies to contexts beyond what Emmanuelle Levinas himself discussed. Although properly analysing a Levinasian ethics is beyond the scope of this thesis, I pay homage to a writer who reminds us so clearly of the enormities of others that we can never grasp or match. The critical realisation here is to bear in mind the infinite latent capabilities of those with whom we work.

To summarise, an 'aesthetics of care' embraces care as precarious, variable, and responsive to circumstance. As my case studies also demonstrate, an aesthetics of care shows that the beauties of care include both practical and aesthetic engagements, some of which speak directly and overtly to each other, and some of which remain veiled and in *un-spectacular* process over many years. Feminist ethicist Tiffany Page discusses the demands of specularity: she asks, if an exchange is non-spectacular, does it exist (Tiffany Page, 2017)? We might extrapolate from this to ask wider questions, such as, is the

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[4] Simon Bowes (with a nod to Samuel Beckett) describes his experience of representing silence in the theatre (Bowes, 2014); but the critical point here is that respect for silence needs to become a quintessential consideration in working with communities. Presumptions around the primacy of activity, agency and outcomes in socially engaged practices can silence silences.

growth of a seedling, or indeed of the secretive foetus, accorded a fully valued space and agency? These questions are as relevant in forestry, as in gynaecology; in arts and science, and certainly, in arts practices with their demands for articulated outcomes, even before a project has begun. I thus speak to a concept of scoping and accepting the progress, advance, and retreat *of time* in our projects—and indeed, the value of actions that *pay value forward*—and the deleterious effects of our prevalent project-to-project funding environments which inhibit continuity of both relationships and outcomes. Indeed, we might pause to consider whether there is an inherent eugenics in our general practices: does my child, my art-baby, fit within the paradigm that our art-nurseries will accept and take into our care? If it does not fit, should it be left to flounder and die?

We need to consider that, at any moment in life (including as we approach death), we emit and express potential. As long as we breathe, we potentiate. I once saw a tree in Bendigo (country Victoria) so old it had outlived the relic of the hospital on whose grounds it remained. The tree punched the air with its vigour, even whilst half of it was already dead. Where I am still alive, I still live.[5]

We, as readers, philosophers, and workers on the ground, need to think through what is alive, and the concepts of aliveness, fruiting, and presence. Where do we stop our care? Where do we draw the line? As I do the final work on this thesis during ongoing COVID19 crises and restrictions—with my father in law in isolation in a Melbourne nursing home— we realise that we as communities face such decisions and definitions every day. Who, and what, matters? When it comes to the crunch, how do we decide on one before another? If we have to decide, in an either/or fashion, how can we do so with grace, and to whose benefit, and why? The pandemic cuts us to the quick, challenging our fears, our desires, and our decision making. In Italy, the most heart-wrenching of interviews with doctors too short of supplies force them to make a choice, regarding *who matters more*? This is a question that is so often challenged by the fact that life itself might confound our choices. The aged might survive, in spite of what we presume of their fragilities. It is perhaps a condition of our times that even the most exacting definitions of care and values are under pressure that it will take generations to understand.

Care and care-taking has an enormous complexity that may be well-served by participatory arts practices, on the proviso that there is an understanding of what the distinctive values and aesthetics that *care*, as the driving relational force, requires and demands. As Thompson discovers, in witnessing the beauty of care of a physiotherapist for his injured colleague, care occurs in spite of the conceptual boundaries we place against where care, beauty and 'good' CACD or applied arts happens. I suggest that when we work in/with communities, it is almost *only* 'new unnamed forms of practice' that we are heading towards. In my five case studies, I bear witness to this realisation.

In these studies, I discuss where the beauty and delicacy of our engagements have confounded me in my own process. My position in each project has been as performer/facilitator, facilitator/director, and/or director/companion. I acknowledge that I

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[5] Our local tree surgeon is of a similar bent: refusing to cut down anything that is still alive. His clear and generous statement to me, whilst worrying at an old plum tree, was that 'every branch is sacred'.

may have already become out of date, under the pressures of the COVID crisis: am I still a director/performer/facilitator when those actions currently cannot take place? However, I continue and complete and submit this thesis in the hope that we can, in some way, reflect on our practices in a way that can help us move forward *in hope*, into our uncertain futures.

As with the COVID crisis, some of the relevance of this discussion extends beyond what this thesis can contain. However, I draw my discussion in to ask four key questions, namely, and to date:

- How has care been theorised?

- How does CACD—and in particular, theatre and performance within CACD—theorise or accommodate care?

- How might performance making (within CACD practices) inform and extend the field of care ethics—or indeed, model, enact and enable care? and

- What (might) inhibit(s) care in our practices?

Part 2 interrogates my case study projects, each set up in collaboration with vulnerable groups of knowledge holders[6]. I discuss a project undertaken with a group of women incarcerated in a Parramatta institution throughout their teenage years; I analyse work done in consideration of refugee issues, and with refugee groups (three projects); and I examine a creative arts project with children at an underprivileged school in collaboration with other interest groups. In each of the five cases, a slightly different mode or model of care is required, none of which has been fully theorised in the literature.

The work with the 'Parragirls' asks us to rethink the concepts of initiation, iteration and duration of a project. Within which timeframe do we assess the success of a project? The key challenges are to do with expectations around results, benefits and the nature of the outcomes—how they are valued, and for how long. The fragilities of the group far precede the project, as they bring their histories into the project with them. Their resilience, however, far outlasts the project—as they themselves report in surveys, emails and other personal communications, some of which are included as documentation. Their own strengths have been amplified via their involvement, in some ways that are measurable, in other ways that are less so. Part of the evaluation lies in participants' self-initiated reports of 'feeling better', in the pride in their work, in becoming-visible as artists and contributors to conferences, publications and exhibitions—factors that contribute to their sensed experience of a positive presence. The project's process and outcomes are challenging to conventional rubrics in the blurring of boundaries between professional and amateur, in the key question around aesthetics, beauty and care, and in how to assess positive affects such as these.

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[6] This is the term used, with variations, by writers such as Frances Rifkin (2010), Caroline Lenette & Julie Ingamells (2015) and Chrissie Tiller (2014).

The second, third and fourth case studies, with a special focus on refugee experience (and specifically incorporating my long-term work with members of the South Sudanese Diaspora in Canberra) ask us to rethink the value of the negative. By this I indicate the value of not-knowing (gaps between cultures), the not-speaking (critical silence), as well as the value of not-making (doing everything but theatre)—the latter concept validated by Guglielmo Schininà in his work with displaced Serbian communities' (Schininà, 2012). In this discussion, I allude to a discourse more familiar to psychology and the visual arts—that is, validating the notion of working with 'negative space' as a positive space of alterative perception which reflects on the reality (or being-ness) of any specific moment. I suggest that such awarenesses (as working with the negative, with not-knowing and not-speaking, and with non-conclusive practices) have long been operant in our daily interactions in our communities, but not necessarily evaluated as worthy of attention. Taking Thompson's provocations seriously, a critical realisation might be to question why these (supposedly alternative) values have so long been un- or under-recognised.

Figure 1: Rubin's vase. This concept is also utilised in Gestalt psychology.
(Retrieved from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negative_space)

The fifth project—*Moon Stories*—is an intergenerational work incorporating participants from an elders' dance troupe, tertiary media students, and children from an underprivileged school. It pushes us to further contemplate the authority of divergent knowledges, across cultures, ages and timespans, and it is here I clarify the notion of *vulnerable authority* in direct contradistinction to notions of authority and knowledge in our current value systems which consistently presume 'certitudes' such as *readiness*, *will* and *agency* in the communities with whom we engage.

The concepts of agency and authority are of course complex and complicate both preparation and evaluation of processes. As Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett (a literary and performance theorist) asks, who decides where a text ends and its context begins, or, if we were to write it as *con/text*, then who gets to insert the slash or make the cut (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). Who hears, notices, or validates the difference? The context of our work in community may differ from the conditions of text publications, but not by much. We still 'write' and perceive according to 'texts' in our minds, that legitimate or de-legitimate our processes and outcomes. It is a question of where and how received judgment values are challenged in each of these case studies by virtue of the participants involved (the 'outrider', the refugee, semi-literate school children, the women incarcerated

for the 'crime' of being orphans). In this thesis, I place such women's, children's, outliers' and artists' knowledges (verbal and non-verbal, expressed and unexpressed) front and centre, and argue for the beauty of their placement, regardless of received values. It is a positionality that argues for the vitality, forward-looking and constructive nature of vulnerable knowing.

It is the reason why my Methodology chapter firstly argues the distinction between ontological *versus* 'veridical' truths[7], then embraces the vulnerable methods outlined by feminist care ethics scholars including Gretchen Rossman, Sharon Rallis, Tiffany Page, Clare Hemmings and Saba Mahmood (C Hemmings, 2017; Mahmood, 2012a; Tiffany Page, 2017; Rossman & Rallis, 2010). I also acknowledge Judith Butler's recognition that our embodiment, whilst inescapably vulnerable, is a strength and a resource because it brings forth dissidence and potentially celebrates and strengthens difference (Butler *et al*, 2016; Butler, 2015) This is primarily a feminist perspective which I call upon to 'fray the edges of our forms' in order to allow latent capabilities to be revealed and valued. As I argue, at times our comings-into-Being benefit from 'soft' processes, that aim to provide the kinds of contexts and environments that encourage and allow for the emergence of a self's tender becomings.

The concept of 'the becoming' of a co-participant is both helpful and problematised in my enquiry. Curiously, theories of the subject as a 'becoming' (for example, in the work of Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Julia Kristeva *circa* the 1980s) is concurrent with the emergence of both CACD and care ethics, as a result of the radical social and political movements of this era (Deleuze, 1987; Kristeva, 1969). However, little attention[8] has been paid to discussing these movements parallel to each other, perhaps suggesting a divergence in research on notions of Being versus notions of 'performing' identities. Although to fully address such parallels is beyond the scope of this thesis, I suggest that CACD, because it deals with (many) fluid bodies and future (or unfolding) selves, has more recently had to legitimate itself in discourses that give weight and substance to the field, perhaps because it seems unnerving to arts organisations that require definable outcomes.

This point raises a problem specific to CACD. On the one hand, we often work with communities trying to reach into a future which, at the best of times, is full of ambiguity and uncertainty. For facilitators, we often ride what Francois Matarasso, in his public-access blog, calls an 'edge':

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[7] With gratitude to Julian Meyrick (Meyrick, 2011) for his article outlining the distinctions between these terms.

[8] Margrit Shildrick notes that phenomenology and 'other equally significant links between a theoretical take on intercorporeality and the mainstream feminist notion of relationality remain virtually unexplored' (Shildrick, 2008, p.33).

> So much depends on who else comes along, what they contribute and where they want to go. The uncertainty is more exciting than frightening, *but there is always an edge;* I would worry if I did not feel it.
>
> *(Matarasso, 2019: 3/03/2019; emphasis mine)*

As he describes in one of his projects:

> People had two, three, four even five languages: Gujarati, Swahili, Hindi, Arabic, Punjabi and others. For over an hour, we did nothing and yet we did so much. We told stories round the circle, even without a fire to watch. We told ourselves and listened to one another. We recognised and were recognised.
>
> *(Matarasso, 2019: 3/03/2019)*

'Telling ourselves' may require sensitivities that are difficult to quantify, but which need to be part of our practices. We can certainly train in performance-making, but can we train in care? I note here that the problem is not the multiplicity of languages, but rather that we may be working against systemic codes that validate certain languages—gestures or practices—above others.

Of all arts practices, it is (possibly) in CACD that creative expression, the coming-forth and -together of the complexities of who we might be, need not be antagonistic (or agonistic) processes. There is room for all the play's characters (and most of their languages) on our stage[9], in processes of mutual but non-homogenising recognition. However, it does require an understanding of what inter-relational ethics means, looks like and feels like. Such a process requires developing a tolerance of discomfort and along-the-way—a touchstone I mark as critical in my concluding chapter.

Taken together, the instances of CACD represented in my case studies, model and enact different versions of caring-through performance-making, which also land in different end-points that at times create entirely new aesthetic outcomes. The process stands in contrast to other models of caring- for or -about (as marked by FCE theorists) where the care-giver acts from a place of certainty—of what they already know how to give, or to control, preceding process. On the most fundamental of levels, it also stands in contrast to current demands (from funders and producers) to articulate outcomes even before a project begins, which forms a key part of my interrogation of the language and frameworks of key funding bodies in Chapter 5.

As it happens, each of my case studies deals with *displaced* peoples—people who have been cut off from place and connections that, in an ideal world, (usually) help constitute and sustain our identities. Whilst human resilience is remarkable, the severance of self from location–not only from place, but from all the relations and correlations that help make place and home, familiar and familial—constitutes a violation that is difficult to

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[9] We are thus also replacing an oppositionality so often associated with theatre performance. The word *protagonist* comes from the Greek root which means 'one who place the first part or chief actor'. It is derived from *protos* meaning 'first' and *agonists* meaning 'actor or competitor'. An *antagonist* is the character in a story who is against the protagonist.

overcome. Like the mandrake root that shrieks when pulled from the earth, the language of the bodies of these co-participants-in-process, and the complexities of this (those) language(s), is something we do not always (know how to) hear or tend to.

My intention is to provide a framework and methodology to attune to the particular, if often discomfited, music of such voices, whilst encouraging the sense of emergent identities-in-new-place(s) to be explored. However, this thesis is not about ideals of care. It is about what care looks like, feels like, and how it makes a difference, in our actions on the ground—including sometimes raw and inconclusive experiences.

This framework asserts a place for the notion of a situated, embodied pragmatics of care. Theatre is a praxis that demands responsiveness, skills in reciprocity and values our bodies as expressive tools that reach towards others. It seems logical, then, that from theatre and its allied practices we can learn much regarding the actions and applications of care. In my own experience as a performing artist, I have learnt that my own latent capabilities are provoked in theatre process: who am I, what can I do, beyond the limits of what I conceive myself to be? Actor training touches areas of psyche and psychology, but in my experience, it can also translate to surprisingly simple actions, such as when I discovered I could tumble and trapeze on stage, whilst in 'real life' being a klutz—as if theatre gave me permission to be and act well beyond the limits of my self-conception. We note that such reaching-forth finds a compatible language in the writings of eco-feminists such as Isabelle Stengers and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa. What theatre praxis creates is a circumstance which, at its best, enables us to be (and witness) beyond what we think we are, or have been restricted to be. Theatre can be an arena where dormant or latent capabilities can be exercised, or called-forth, surprise ourselves, and create new futures.

'Had we but world enough, and time'[10], we could draw parallels here between both Martin Heidegger's notion of *coming-forth*, and of Baruch Spinoza's concept of *hilaritas*—a kind of 'joy' experienced as one expands to include more and more experience and interrelationality in and with the world. To fully engage with Heidegger and Spinoza is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis, although it is important to mention both as their concepts of coming-forth, of the joys of *hilaritas*, have certainly been in the foreground of my thoughts for many years. The pragmatic realisations of such joys, however, take conscious awareness, political intent, and practical support, and I here follow feminist care ethics pathways to examine these issues. As I discovered in giving birth to my first child, I might have missed experiencing a particular moment of great beauty[11] if I had not heard, and then experienced, that it was possible. This, within the larger, and epic, story framework of 'giving birth', which has many acculturated interpretations and hence expectations of pain, or suffering, and of transitioning into joy.

Unless we are open[12], or trained to anticipate the surprise, the new, we just might miss the gifts of the community we work with. This takes reconfiguring our presumptions about

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[10] The phrase comes from Andrew Marvell's' poem, 'To His Coy Mistress', published posthumously in 1681.

[11] The moment is actually about feeling relaxed during the phase of birth called 'transition', in which *most* women begin to call out for pain-killers.

[12] Judith Butler argues that vulnerability should be defined as a condition of 'radical openness'' rather than a weakness (in Butler, Gambetti, & Sabsay, 2016, p.81)

hope, about presence, and of what we attune to. As I discuss in Chapter 4, both human and more than human agencies need to be configured beyond simplistic notions of fulfilling the goal 'to be' (Barandiaran et al, 2009), or of being driven by rational intent, as per normative individualist morality ethics, in order to accommodate 'mystery' (Bannon, 2016).

In this way, the research questions turn back to what James Thompson identified in his experience in CACD as a central challenge: as new experience leads to new thinking leads to new methodologies and diversities of outcomes, how can we accommodate these complexities?

The case studies reflect my experiences working with people of profound and complex needs; school children from an underprivileged background; members of the Forgotten and Stolen Generations; and recent refugee arrivals to Australia. Each project has commanded me to address the ethics of my practice—particularly as they help track my move away from contemporary Western 'well-made' theatre into the realm of participatory arts. In working with the 'others' of these projects, the nature of my relationship face to face with their knowledges and strengths, and also their uncertainties, have become the most pressing of ethical investigations.

Even though, in conventional Western theatre, a modicum of care (for example, of a director to her audience) is always a consideration, in community and participatory arts the ethic elements can be far more demanding and complex. Questions to do with whose voices are represented, whose stories told—in what ways, and to whose benefit—place art, its aesthetics, and the issues of participation and spectatorship on a sharp edge. In all the complexities of these dialogic relations (between giving and receiving, watching, listening and making), some key critical questions are sustained: what happens in, and who gains from, each event or exercise, and how, and why?[13] Toby Lowe makes a virtue of this almost Stanislavskian methodology in his Helix Quality Framework for Participatory Arts (Lowe, 2012). The 'who, what, how and why?' are considerations relevant to both FCE and CACD, and important to attend to.

The work of feminist care ethicists Joan Tronto, Marion Barnes, Maurice Hamington, Selma Sevenhuijsen (Sevenhuijsen, 1998, 2000) and Margrit Shildrick has helped frame my enquiry into the ethical positioning of the case studies under investigation. The prompts for these scholars' analyses lie in the fields of social theory, policy, nursing and medicine and aged care, signalling the relevance of the interdisciplinary approach undertaken in this thesis. In her 2016 literature review, Jose de Sao Jose locates the emergence of early care theorists in a socio-political context the scholars themselves do not always trace (de Sao Jose, 2016) as she explains, the 1980s saw social changes such as the dismantling of asylums and isolated care homes place the care needs of a large number of vulnerable people into a more public and visible domain. Early care research was thus provoked by contemporary socio-economic and political factors, and the need to examine gaps in private and public services, capabilities and protocols. Here I differentiate 'sociological and

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[13] Toby Lowe makes a virtue of this almost Stanislavskian methodology in his Helix Quality Framework for Participatory Arts (Lowe, 2012), which I discuss in Chapter 4 below.

economical' from epistemological and ontological research, not because they *should* be divided, but because they *have* been.

In the following literature review I seek to make connections between this developmental history and its relevance to up-to-date CACD and participatory arts. The special focus is not just on care, but also on care ethics—a deeper investigation of motive, process and outcomes, that reflects on both intention(s) and methodology. Feminist care ethicists go deeper into these questions by testing care ethics, not simply as an interrogation of moral precepts, but of power relations and the effect and affect of our actions in both public and private spheres, and indeed, in questioning habituated social and political divisions between the two. They also tend to question knowledge hierarchies and insist on a focus on whose voices are heard, and whose unattended to, which is also of central concern in CACD. As a central proposition of feminist research methods, I establish this approach as my beginning enquiry**.**

Chapter 2
The significance of feminist care ethics and feminist methods to CACD

2.1 Early care theory: a literature review

In this section I examine Jose de Sao Jose's 2016 retrospective overview of the development of early care theory 1980s-2000. I make use of her overview as a starting-point from which to interrogate key concepts, as well as gaps in theory. This sets the ground for further examination of the development of care ethics, feminist care ethics (FCE) and thence systemic ecologies of care which I discuss in Chapter 3.

De Sao Jose identifies her 2016 overview as a 'clarification of (the) field of elder care[14]. Whilst she thus limits her field—perhaps provoked by a sensed urgency to address the phenomena of rapidly ageing populations in the countries of her study—she asserts that the research can be extrapolated for use in 'other contexts of care'—an extrapolation worthy but also problematic, as I discuss below.

At the outset, she states that one of the larger problems for all theorists of care has always been to define the term. Some definitions emphasise the emotional nature of care. Others emphasise the practical nature of care, that such practices occur in both domestic and public spheres, in circumstances that are either waged or non-waged. She associates different operationalisations[15] to each kind of care activity, contributing to a 'significant divergence in terms of results/findings' and thus 'compromising' the potential for a theory development (de Sao Jose, 2016, p.2). She asserts the need to create a 'unified theory', without recognising the problematics of such a notion in this field.

Early care research tends towards a bifurcation of care as affect ('women's work'[16], borne of obligation, love and duty) *versus* more 'instrumental' care that takes place in the public sphere. A more sophisticated contextual framing is instigated by Joan Tronto, who unshackles actions from gendered-delimited roles, instead specifying micro (that is, largely familial) from macro (that is, larger structural questions about policy, and institutional practices) (Tronto, 1993, *passim*). Her schema frames any bifurcations in broader historical, social and cultural factors that determine role, obligation and degrees of choice.

Aside from these particular distinctions, care theory up to the 1990s is largely understood as a concept focused in scenarios of deficiency and dependency—for example, of a care receiver's inability to maintain physical self-care. The research and praxes are thus focused in a 'problem' to resolve. Here, we can pause to ask whether there is a place to

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[14] That is, up to the year 2000. Her reasons for not reaching beyond this year (to publication, in 2016) are unexplained.

[15] This is a term that de Sao Jose does not define, but which means 'institutional capacities to care'

[16] De Sao Jose cites the work of Ungerson (1990); Graham (1991, 1997); Arber and Ginn (1992) (de Sao Jose, 2016, *passim*).

theorise care as an attitude, rather than founded on a 'problem' restricted to illness, disability or limitation, or dependency.

De Sao Jose's emphasis on 'care deficits' (de Sao Jose, 2016, p.2)[17] highlights limitations we can also see in contemporary CACD. In particular, the notion of 'vulnerability' sits in a place of power disparity[18]. However, there are different definitions that could be called into play, if the research were broadened for example to embrace, celebrate and comfortably facilitate different cultures and sensibilities[19]. This is a critical observation, as it also informs and, in several ways, delimits the activities of CACD, both historically and in its current forms, and can tend to delimit its scope to problem-solving. Part of the intention of this thesis is to align the concept of vulnerability with notions of openness, receptivity and reciprocation, as opposed to definitions based on need, debility and/or pre-conceived outcomes alone.

Whilst early care discourse largely delimits the scope of feeling- and sensing-states to a focus on carer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, research over the decade progresses as follows. A primary realisation is that care giving may not only have negative, but also positive impacts for the care giver. For this perspective, de Sao Jose cites Graham's (1997) model, heralding the critical concept of reciprocation which appears in the later work of Tronto and Barnes (Barnes et al., 2015; Tronto, 2017) that I discuss below.

Research then begins to account for other care givers such as men, non-kin, care givers from different ages and social classes, and care givers from ethnic minorities, including the influx of migrant workers and the discrepancy between such workers caring for others (as aid work) whilst leaving their own families[20]. Such social complexities become important when we come to consider the position of contemporary CACD work in complex multicultural and migrant communities.

Thence, a conceptual broadening of the field begins to embrace the complexity of emotions in care work, including simultaneously contradictory emotions, for example, of love and resentment, of role designation within families and communities (whose obligation it is to care?), and the relation between care work to other work—for example, working outside the home. This becomes an important consideration when working in CACD, where the capacity of participants to attend (to) a project might be limited by obligations that are culturally expected but hard to explain. How caring is it (of organisers) to come in with 'clear and equitable' project objectives that need to be filled, which might be impossible for members of the community to sustain?

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[17] I return to an interrogation of the notion of 'deficits' in Chapter 2, in discussing the notion of agency. In classical philosophy, agency is considered a human capacity '*par excellence*'; by the end of our discussion, I will have noted several theorists who challenge the notion of human-centred superiority in terms of agency, consciousness, craft, and aesthetics.

[18] De Sao Jose cites Ungerson (1990); Graham (1991, 1997); Arber and Ginn (1992) (de Sao Jose, 2016, *passim*)

[19] For example, see my later citations of the work of anthropologist Edward Schieffelin in his study of PNG rituals.

[20] Here, de Sao Jose cites the work of Anneli Anttonnen & Jorma Sipila (1996); Trudie Knijn and Monique Kremer 1997); Jane Lewis (1998) (in de Sao Jose, 2016, *passim*).

There are, however, several aspects that prove problematic in de Sao Jose's overarching methodology, and these can be enumerated as follows.

Firstly, de Sao Jose expresses an anxiety to identify 'conceptual fragmentations…not completely solved' from one research project, or one year or decade, to the next. I suggest that there is an inherent limitation to chronological methodologies, as not all realisations are made in chronological order, and indeed, some can be made decades preceding published theory. Here we might ask, whether lines and lineages of thought and research are always the best ways to examine discourses on care? Perhaps other models, which arise from other geometries, could prove more useful?

Secondly, de Sao Jose's praise for Thomas' attempt at an inherently unified theory (Thomas, 1993, p.665) is troubling. I contend that a unified concept of care which is 'comprehensive, consensual and stabilised' needs to be challenged. Is care something that should be fixed, in concept or in practice? This becomes a key question in assessing the practice of CACD. As I identify later in this discussion, there are examples in the literature that make the case for principles of care that need to remain responsive and adaptive to circumstance—as demonstrated in Vicki D. Lachman's case study of her work as a hospital ER triage nurse (Lachman, 2012, p.113). In a particular instance she cites, it is clear that her process of observation, knowledge of the patient and attentiveness to patient history is tribute to a long practice of sensitive perceptual skills that demonstrate fluidity, responsiveness and attentiveness. Her patient's body is not just what sits before her but includes (even if he does not speak) the preceding loss of his wife to cancer, his history of alcoholism and loneliness.

If indeed care could be 'fixed', how could it truly[21] accommodate identity and needs differences, fluctuating circumstances, and unidentified or invisible[22] needs? The concept of shifting, and multiple, notions of personal and social identity are a post-modernist viewpoint—a position I note is not identified in any of the works cited by de Sao Jose—yet I argue I am not committing an historical fallacy in seeking to push the concept further. Deleuze and Guattari (1980) were already positioning a complex identity framework as early as 1980 in *Milles Plateaux* (Deleuze, 1987). In the field of anthropology, challenges to Western identity hegemonies—such as in the work of Edward Schieffelin (Schieffelin, 1985) and Frederique Apffel-Marglin (Apffel-Marglin, 2002)—describe communities where care is actioned in cooperative, dialogic and adaptive relations. Such intercultural sensitivity is, overall, missing from de Sao Jose's overview—even within the limits of investigating practices in aged care.

However, as I and others such as Dwight Conquergood (2012), Michael Balfour (2012) and Alison Jeffers (2013) argue, such factors are critical considerations in CACD, where we may work with people (as Jeffers quips) 'likely to change your mind' by dint of their different life experiences and belief systems, and the ways their communities have lived for centuries. Other factors—such as recent traumatic histories, and experiences of war—

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[21] The interrogation of the concept of truth becomes critical in later stages of this thesis. I will take up Julian Meyrick's distinction between veridical and ontological truths in my Methodology section (Meyrick, 2011).
[22] The concept of visible and invisible needs is interrogated more fully below.

only add to these complexities. This highlights the significance of cross-disciplinary considerations, which does indeed become better-embraced in later research, such as in Schininà's articles (2004, 2012) describing his work amongst people in exile. Indeed, these factors could well be part of the unspoken values by which any culture operates— another concept that becomes critical in my discussion of CACD as a field in Chapter 5.

Intriguingly, de Sao Jose hints to this kind of fluidity, of shifting, and multiple, notions of care, in observing a gap between observations of the impacts of the role of migrant workers in the 1990s, and 'yet a further decade' before 'deeper studies' surface[23]. She half-points to a lag between perceptual cognition and methodical research actions. Certain cognitions may not be part of the lens of a given research paradigm, and therefore not documented; however, I contend that the cognitions may have been addressed in practice, for any number of years, outside of the published research. This begs the question, where and how do such recognitions occur or arise? And how do we respond to a realisation that is 'new' (that is, does not fit within a given, pre-existent research paradigm)? I cite where Lachman's responsiveness to her patient has clearly not come from no-where, but from a sensitivity within a hands-on practice that has been in place for a number of (unstipulated) years. This points forward to the vulnerable research methods I discuss in Chapter 3 below.

Indeed, care may be an area where practice precedes theory, in many if not most instances, and perhaps by a very long time. One might call to mind the care of the land practised by indigenous Australians, including associated concepts such as interdependence, pathways of knowledge, and deep listening, long before environmental ecology was postulated as a 20th-century theorem. In such circumstances, care may be a body of practice (and awareness) applied to bodies *in* a practice. One of the key questions, in calling to such bodies of practice, is how much the body and its undocumented responses *count*, and when and how they can be accorded value and brought into the conceptual analysis of care.

Although Hamington suggests that 'care is bodywork' (Hamington, 2004), for the most part it is only post-2000 that care researchers begin to articulate that 'it is bodies that do the work'—with all the conceptual complications such recognition entails. De Sao Jose cites Julia Twigg and collaborators (Twigg, Wolkowitz, Cohen, & Nettleton, 2011), and my own researches uncover the later work of bioethicist Shildrick (2008, 2012). In a later Chapter, I discuss even more recent discussions (for example, by Bryony Trezise and Caroline Wake (2013) on performative representations of bodies of memory, and bodies (and voices) remembering traumatic histories; and hence, of work by bodies, with bodies, to help bodies realise their positionality in relation to history—both its documentation and our release from its interpretive and predictive grasps. Yet significantly, this discourse owes much to the work of the so-called Disabilities Scholars, which has profound ramifications in the care research area within and beyond the historical time covered by de Sao Jose.

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[23] De Sao Jose here cites Christensen, 2014; Evans and Atim, 2015, Zechner 2008 (de Sao Jose, 2016, *passim*).

2.2 The Disabilities Scholars of the 1990s: arguing for 'independence'

The disability critique, especially, that posed by Lois Keith (1992) and Jenny Morris (1995), argues that early care research reduces disabled (and older) people to the status of mere dependents without voice (Keith, 1992; Morris, 1995). In order to counteract this trend, the Disability Scholars propose to focus on participant independence rather than on their dependencies. Morris and Keith shift the discourse from a focus on measurable degrees of self-sufficiency towards conceptualising the right and capacity of individuals to have choice and control over and around their variable care needs. The debate is actioned in the socio-political domain, with the introduction of cash-for-care schemes—that is, public financial transfers to care receivers who can direct funds as they will, a move which has since been criticised[24].

Independence, however, is problematic as a term. In situations where care is required, needs must be met, and some able bodies are required to assist others[25]. A more useful focus might be a reassessment of the scope and subtleties of agency, potentially applicable to both care-giver and-receiver as co-participants. These concepts are not in circulation in the 1990s; however, the fact that terms are not yet in circulation does not automatically mean that on some level they are not operant, in this or other fields of practice.

Bodies, being inherently irregular, rupture social theories in many ways[26]. As such, it is a central realisation of this thesis that what bodies know, should be attended to[27]. This points forward to the phenomenological approach I outline ahead. This perspective requires a shared *vulnerable authority* amongst and between co-participants. Vulnerable authority is a concept I realised through practice in the 1990s and discussed in publication as early as 2003. In terms of the academic literature, it is only much later that a notion called 'vulnerable writing' appears in feminist academic discourse, as I discuss in Chapter 3.

2.3 The scope and subtleties of agency: seeking flexible definitions

It is useful to open the concept of agency to a series of questions which seek broader, more flexible definitions of this useful term. Namely:

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[24] See Barnes, Brannelly, Ward & Ward (2015) in bibliography. Similar schemes were rolled out across Australia from 2013, under the title of the National Disabilities Insurance Scheme. Discussion of the success or failure of this scheme is beyond the scope of this thesis

[25] As I observe elsewhere, the claims of disabilities activist/performance artist Petra Kuppers that her project work subverts the systems of control to which people with disabilities have historically been subjected do not necessarily shift the affects and operations of the dependency paradigm. In my personal experience of Kuppers' work—for example shifting the subjugation parameters in theatrical experiments she conducted in Australia—the counter to abjection is not reverse authoritarianism.

[26] It is later that Judith Butler configures the power of vulnerability—vulnerability as a site of resilience and resistance (Butler *et al,*, 2016; Butler, 2015) It is a discussion I return to in Chapter 3.

[27] This concept refers to Heidegger's notion of the concealed and the revealed, but also the relation of black holes to our universe.

- How broadly is agency and ability conceptualised? Can it be conceptualised outside of a paradigm that tends to equate ability with *usefulness* (a socio-political question)[28];

- What can a body do, as opposed to what it cannot do, and how does it do it? This puts a focus on ability, rather than disability, which can be broadly categorised as a strengths-based approach[29]; and

- What does a body feel, and how does it feel, about the shared relationship between carer and cared-for (terms belonging to an interpersonal schema)?

These questions take as a starting point the observation that varying bodies carry varying agencies. This differs from so called 'standard theories' of agency–to do with rationale and reasoning—and have been extended by the work of Edward Schlosser, X. Barandiaran, Benjamin Libet and Andrea Westlund in discussing cooperative and collective agencies (Barandiaran *et al*, 2009; Libet, 1992; Schlosser, 2019; Westlund, 2009, 2009). In the work of Maria Puig de la Bellacasa and others, there is also a discussion of the polysemous nature of agencies due to the 'effective interdependent entanglements' (de la Bellacasa, 2017) in which we are always already bound. The Disability Movement of the 1990s, however, does not articulate questions in this way—and especially does not discuss feeling-states—and remains locked in a fight against the binaries it fights so hard against (for example, restricted to distinctions between carer and cared-for). Yet, significantly, Morris and Keith's work opens the pathway to a consideration of the rights of individuals apart from the need-to-care ratio that was assumed as the basis of previous scholarship. It also raises a question highly significant to any aspect of working in community, and particularly relevant to socially engaged theatre process: who has the right to speak, and for whom? Who holds and retains agency, and for how long?

Even within such a dualistic (and duel-like) framework, it is important that agency and rights answer to the abilities of subjects, including but not limited to their deviance from 'typicality'. I point to the work of Temple Grandin, a high-functioning autist who harnesses her empathic abilities to address the suffering of animals in abattoirs. The example highlights the value of paying due respect to 'atypical' awareness in an inter-relational sensory ecology (see Rohan Todd & Maria Hynes, 2017, pp 729–741). Her empathic work in alleviating the distress of cattle on their way to slaughter (which she senses and intuits and advocates for) highlights the importance of establishing different measures of ability in the care discourse. Her work denotes an ethic of inter-relational care made possible via her particular sensibilities. Extrapolating from this to the general example of care actions towards the vulnerable—and to care in CACD in general—we can see the virtue of

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[28] Latour notes a problem with the concept of 'agency' (as a singularity) *per se*, as any moment of agency is already composed of an 'unknowably large multiplicity' of realities (see Savage, 2009, *passim*).

[29]These questions are given deeper consideration in the analysis of my period as participant observer with the participatory theatre group Entelechy, who are discussed as an exemplar in Chapter 3. It is also a question that implicitly resists homogenisation of abilities.

attempting to create a new template for care discourse that embraces a different sense of values from what has been established in the dependency paradigm.

2.4 The first articulation of an 'Ethics of Care': beyond de Sao Jose's overview

The next significant breakthrough in the care research of the 1990s occurs when Joan Tronto and Selma Sevenhuijsen develop a theoretical framework specifically designated as an Ethics of Care. This framework argues that all human beings provide and receive care over their life courses, and calls attention to the political and moral implications of care at both micro and macro levels of lived experience. From Thomas' statement (still rooted in dyadic concepts) that

Care is both the paid and unpaid provision of support involving (both) work activities and feeling states…provided…to both able-bodied and dependent adults and children in either the public or domestic spheres (Thomas, 1993, p.665) the more sophisticated Ethics of Care framework is articulated, one which argues that interdependence, rather than independence, is a better conceptualisation from which to understand care.

Ethics of Care scholars clearly state that in care situations, power dynamics are in constant movement and redefinition. As Barnes and Tronto emphasise, providing and receiving care are central components from the beginning to the end of life (see Barnes et al, 2015, p.14 for an overview). One person can be a caregiver and a care-receiver at the same time and at different times, therefore the (old) binary divisions between able/disabled, care giver/receiver need to be questioned. The disappearing of either cared, or cared-for, needs to be questioned.

This too is a critical consideration when it comes to CACD work, where a successful outcome and sustainable future of a project is more likely to be made in an interplay between offers, observations and provocations amongst and between co-participants; and where the justification of a project may be difficult to trace, as 'benefits' are distributed differently and often unevenly across communities, or between communities and facilitators, and facilitating organisations. Later I argue that this is a critical consideration in CACD work, where artists are often (tacitly or overtly) expected to disappear within the CACD framework. Many suffer burnout as a result.

Within the Care Ethics framework, Tronto provides a thoughtful, fluid and broadly inclusive overview, summarising that care is both a disposition and an activity; that it is inherently relational; and that it is materialised through a complex process. This process includes the following phases: caring about (unmet needs), taking care of (said needs); care giving (undertaking concrete actions in order to meet said needs), and care-receiving (responding to the care received) (Tronto, 1993, p.127).

She completes her framework by identifying the 'key ethic elements' associated with each phase of the caring process. They are, respectively, attentiveness (being attentive to needs), responsibility (taking responsibility for meeting said needs), competence (providing skillful and appropriate care) and responsiveness (the care-receiver's responsiveness to

the caregiver). She identifies these key ethic elements as actions, grounded in both present and emerging bodily capabilities[30]—not just as conceptual moral ideals, and hence subject to mutability and change.

Initially, it does not seem that Tronto discusses how these abilities and awarenesses can be trained. However, Jacqueline Millner[31] identifies that each of the 'phases', when activated, creates the capacity to care, which I investigate more deeply below in a discussion of what contributes to how care can be trained.

The work of Selma Sevenhuijsen adds to that of Tronto with her explicit assertion of the value and primacy of a relational ontology (Sevenhuijsen, 2000). As Barnes summarises,

A relational ontology recognises that individuals can only exist because they are members of networks of care and responsibility and that this has implications for the way in which we think about obligations to others (Barnes, 2006, p.149-50).

A relational ontology is a movement away from a relational economy—embedded in capitalist conceptions of value—towards care as an expression of citizenship. Responsibility towards both oneself and others' agencies, potentialities and presence, becomes a requisite function of a caring and civil society (Barnes, 2006, p.148). In this way, there is an overlap between care ethics (that which links personal, political and social) with the Gulbenkian Foundation's methodical articulation of community arts as a necessary form of civic duty[32] (see Chapter 4). The conceptual shift provides no less than a new way of assessing the value of a society's able- and less-able-bodied members. It removes the focus from care as correcting deficiencies, to reconfigure what care actions are and what they can achieve as creative forces-in-action, and as co-contributors to vibrant social co-creation[33].

It is only much later that Sevenhuijsen adds 'anticipatory care' to Tronto's list of key ethic elements. Anticipatory care requires *imagination* to pre-empt or accommodate (to) the needs of another. It is remarkable how long creativity, as a recognised functionality of care, has been absent from the discourse. The notion of creative and transformative thinking provides an important conceptual bridge between care ethics and CACD in chapters below.

Whilst the understanding of interrelationality and its complexities (linking identity, ecology and agency) becomes heightened a decade later in the work of Isabelle Stengers, Puig de la Bellacasa and others, there is another consideration important to note at this specific juncture, embedded in Sevenhuijsen' and Tronto's breakthrough realisations.

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[30] I make this distinction, because for example de Sao Jose does not.

[31] Professor Millner presented these and other critical concepts at a roundtable workshop titled *Care: forging an alternative ethics through art* on 4 October 2019 at ANU.

[32] The Foundation funds and distributes this research—not only to the companies and artists it supports, but to anyone practising in the field, taking seriously its role as an active *provocateur* in, and in advance of, the field's development.

[33] See Barnes's emphasis on the 'transformative capabilities' of care ethics (Barnes et al., 2015).

Sevenhuijsen adds to Tronto's key ethic elements with her notion that care (ethics) requires 'practical wisdom' (*phronesis* fro-ne'sis). With this term—a borrowing from Aristotle, describing **'the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason'** and involving 'more than one kind of insight'[34]—Sevenhuijsen links a post-modern concept of the iterative self with an ancient Greek understanding that a 'right' action can vary from one occasion to another[35]. Her argument points to a form of relationality which connects certain key skills, including responsive-ability and creativity, with a key notion in the moving-toward-potentiality in which the arts can be so capable.

Here I point to a key consideration. In such instances, we hope that care is 'good' care—that it is beneficial and benevolent, as James Thompson calls to our attention. For all the theorists of embodied care, it is our bodies which can also create and perpetuate great damage. Indeed, Thompson worries at the actions and motivations of the 'givens' of applied theatre practices in his work in war zones (Thompson, 2004)[36]. I note that some other key terms that enable care to be 'good care' are not yet theorised. In my case studies I suggest that such terms could include good will, or kindness, as well as tolerance and endurance—with these terms configured as positive capabilities; and in my concluding chapter I attempt to formulate some care touchstones—a pragmatics of care—that may prove useful in the field.

Thompson calls for a recognition of an aesthetics of care (and, specifically, for the place of *beauty*), even in the face of fragility, injury and death. In referencing Aristotle, Sevenhuijsen (non-explicitly) points forward to some of these aspects. The point of Aristotle's thinking is to enable human 'flourishing'—a term that implies care, hope, growth, and even love and joy, not merely 'remaining alive'. I note and will return to discuss how complex and challenging is the notion of 'joy' in the twenty-first century.

To summarise, the establishment of an Ethics of Care (Marian Barnes et al., 2015; J. Tronto, 1993) constitutes an important turning-away from the previously unidirectional focus of able-towards-less-able bodies—or, put another way, between bodies distinguished from each other because of their differing functionality, towards a focus on reciprocal relations. I also refer to Shildrick's discussion of 'the gift and hospitality…that signal the promise, not of an ultimately self-centred altruism and benefit, but of a corporeal ethics of response and responsibility' (Shildrick, 2008, p.43). It is the responsibility to such sensibilities that is under focus in this thesis. How do different individuals contribute to society? What enables their gifting? What kinds of gifts can they give[37]? And how are their varied gifts accommodated and supported, in the civic relations and actions that good

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[34] For this discussion, see Sevenhuijsen, 2000); and also J. Bradshaw's excellent summary, 'Reclaiming Virtue'. *https://Www.Artofmanliness.Com/Articles/Practical-Wisdom/* (Bradshaw, 2013, retrieved April 4 2019).

[35] I note here that no reference by or about Sevenhuijsen's 'practical wisdom' in fact points to Aristotle. Yet the term is so particular that it triggered my own research into the roots of this term, and my insistence on examining the ramifications of its roots.

[36] I return to this discussion in Part 2 below

[37] Although any reference to 'gifting' must acknowledge Luce Irigaray, I here do not follow Irigaray's discussion of 'gift'; rather I align the notion of gifting with the potentiality of Being to emerge and to interact and engage from itself in its environment. It owes more to Blechschmidt's philosophy of paying attention to the biodynamic of growth, beginning at the cellular level (that is, from conception) (Blechschmidt, 2004) and continues throughout life and into old age.

CACD work can create? Such relations potentially operate on both micro and macro levels, with structural supports enabling or disabling care, gifting and receiving in both daily, and extra-daily engagements. Such characteristics and qualities are essentially ungendered, even when and if women are the primary agents of such roles. That said, being paid, or left unpaid, can be key considerations regarding whether systemic care is or is not being issued—a factor that becomes critical to the case studies of Part 2.

Whilst Tronto's 1993 care framework is still upheld as a touchstone for care theory, care scholarship in the new century has had to embrace increasing complexities around the question, *what is there to care for?*

- Since the advent of biomedicine and Artificial Intelligence, care needs now have to address complex bioethical issues (*What is a body now? What can it yet become*?).

- The pressing concerns of climate change demand more of our concept of, and responsibilities towards, the environments on which we are interdependent; and

- Instances such as the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to the Abuse of Children, and the global increase in the movement of refugees, demand an extended and sensitive new code of ethics and research in relation to people whose histories hold trauma, and whose reference points are to other cultural and civic practices.

My case studies discuss work with people affected by such issues, signalling an almost desperate need to address not just agency but the politics of situations that enable or disable care, and that question our value systems. I conjecture that reciprocity might be the key to beauty; or as Elaine Scarry argues, beauty already decentres us from our egoic notions of self, causing us to refer beyond how we see ourselves (Scarry, 2013). What strength then is there in acknowledging that care creates new and astonishes beauties that might lead us somewhere new?

Chapter 3
Care, phenomenology and ecology from the turn of the Millennium

3.1 Frameworks and methodologies

From the turn of the millennium, scholars such as Barnes and Shildrick turn their attention to comprehensively address the foundations of social policy and consider previously unexamined practices in care situations, such as (for Shildrick) in the operation of hospital systems (M. Barnes, 2006; Shildrick, 2008). Both theorists include new assessments of unstated, yet implicitly supported, hierarchies of values, which both scholars assert require deep re-examination. I argue, however, that there are two distinct issues at stake here. The first is to do with boundaries between bodies, and within communities of shared identities and interests. What do such boundaries mean and speak? What authorities do they (up)hold? The second issue is more centred in the notion of equity *per se* amongst a community's interests, and between participants who differ from each other in various ways. How do we co-constitute, show respect for, and give space to the rights of difference? How are priorities and values organised and sustained amongst and across differences—whether shallow, or profound? In complex circumstances, in what ways can 'equity' become active and sustained?

In her analysis of the experience of heart-transplant patients, Margrit Shildrick asks which surgical procedures carry more status than others, and why? How does patient experience factor into assessments of surgical success, particularly as medical technologies become more and more interventionist and complex? In this research, Shildrick identifies that values remain highly gendered within the hospital system, and the validity of the sensed experience of a patient following procedure is, for the most part, ignored. She collates statistics that demonstrate how ignoring patient experience has ramifications for the success or failure of the transplant itself. This can include extreme experiences, such as a patient with sensations of having an 'alien' in their body:

> The many anecdotal accounts of recovering transplant recipients who express feelings of strangeness…should not be too easily dismissed (…). The point is not to pin down the truth or falsity of such unsettling intuitions, but to understand their significance.
>
> *(Shildrick, 2008, p.39)*

Indeed, there is a statistically much-higher rate of failure of transplants amongst patients whose experiential distress has not been addressed. (I return to a discussion of 'kinds of truths' further below.)

Her example demonstrates a phenomenologically significant realisation: that our being-in-the-world, 'mutually constituted' by both the flesh-of-the-world and by others (Shildrick, 2008, p.33), includes flesh-as thinking; flesh-as-feeling. In Shildrick's case study, the chiastic relationship in the transplant situation includes not just the physical transfer of

bodies/organs, but of thoughts, sensations, relationships and permissions around and through an event as well—let alone perhaps the thoughts and sensations of the 'alien other' now inside one's body.

As Merleau-Ponty insists in 'The Intertwining: The Chiasm':

> The body unites us directly with the things (of others) through its own ontogenesis, by welding to one another the two outlines of which it is made, its two lips: the sensible mass it is and the mass of the sensible wherein it is born by segregation and upon which, as seer (…) it remains open. Hence there is reciprocal insertion and intertwining of one in the other.
>
> *(Merleau-Ponty, 1969, p.141)*

Regarding surgical procedures, Shildrick clarifies that 'changes to the form of the body inevitably transform the self, and that self and other are in chiasmatic relationship' (Shildrick, 2008, p.32). As Merleau-Ponty insists: the world of each opens upon that of the other.

Shildrick's example of surgical procedures shows that it may not only be unrealistic to consider an organ as 'just' an organ, and a transplant as 'just' a transplant, but that it is clearly unhealthy to do so. Aside from anything to do with gender-associated issues (which is, after all, a question of politics), the sensate body, whatever its gender, is censored to its detriment. The body's ontogenesis looks upon itself, as seer and seen: a co-constituted experience that can only benefit from its acknowledged interrelationality and interdependencies. By contrast, the medicalised language of surgical transplants is steeped in terms of bodily autonomy, and of triumph over any body's mortality by heroic deeds and agencies. Following the logic of phenomenology, Shildrick demonstrates this is a paper tiger. A body never has such autonomy in the first place.[38]

What I briefly emphasise here is that these issues (and their concomitant evaluations) do not just belong to how policies are assessed within socio-politico-medico paradigms, but to whether and how feeling- and sensing-states (including typicalities and a-typicalities) are accommodated into society, arts and politics in general, and that these feeling-/sensing-states need to be incorporated as fundamental aspects of care. This recognition becomes important when discussing applied theatre practices in CACD work—especially, but not only, when working with vulnerable people. As I have discussed, early care discourse from the 1980s largely delimits the scope of feeling- and sensing-states to a focus on carer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Instead, feeling-states–even if problematic, irregular or inconclusive—need to be acknowledged and incorporated as interdependent and interwoven with our very ontologies, and hence deeply embedded within relational care theories and practices.

Accepting but extending the work of Mary Daly and Jane Lewis, care ethics occurs at the intersection of dichotomies of public-private, informal-formal, paid-unpaid (Daly & Lewis,

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[38] Shildrick calls the idea of individual bodily autonomy a 'biomedical imaginary' (Shildrick, 2008, p.33).

2000, *passim*), but I would add, of expressed and latent, consciously known and unknown actions, sensations and knowings and also of intercultural differences in these understandings. I further extend Daly and Lewis's terms to include an intersection with and between what has and has not already come in to language; for 'social care' (their term) includes many aspects of the non-verbal and non-categorised of life experiences that creep upon both able and disabled bodies, and which have relevance to my discussion of CACD below.

3.2 Steps towards an ecology of practice

For many of the peoples with whom we work in CACD, human identity and capability is not separate from their relation to more-than-human-others, including fauna, vegetation, and geology or geography[39]. Whilst this notion might not sit in the foreground of our dominant Western-oriented world-view (although it is gaining currency in the recent writings of philosophers such as Stengers, Puig de la Bellacasa, Van Dooren and Bird Rose), nonetheless it is key to the concept of self and identity of the custodians of many indigenous cultures and indeed to several of the communities who arrive as migrants or refugees to this country. As I demonstrate in chapters to follow, both the original and the newest members of our communities are so often the critical focus of our CACD engagements and listed as priorities by some key funders such as the Department of Social Security and the Australia Council for the Arts. Therefore, one should presume their world views need to be attended to.

Shildrick asserts that the self or the 'I'—which may or may not be solely human—is, in its relational capacities, part of a complex systemic ecology, and can never be delimited within the realm of any few or singular research fields (Shildrick, 2008, pp.38–39). If our practices in community (which purport to include co-participants as knowledge-holders) are to be judicious and equitable, we need to address this consideration.

Following from the discourse of FCE (and indeed, implied but not fully articulated in CACD), that interrelationality is central to care ethics, we can move towards the notion of an ecology of care. Following from this, if we are indeed made of an intertwining between ourselves and others, *what is there to care for*?

The 'thinking of interconnectedness'
The seeds for thinking of care as an ecology of practice were planted in the 1990s by Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher:

> On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a
> species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue,
> and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That

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[39] In Part 2, I demonstrate the relevance of this to my fifth case study—an intercultural and intergenerational project in the year of the anniversary of the first moon landing.

world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which
we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.

(Tronto & Fisher, 1990, p.103)

Here the researchers speak to an implicitly ecological formulation of care and care relations. It is another example of how, embedded within an earlier discourse, lie the seeds for a progressive methodology that exceeds what a chronologically ordered review might recognise embedded within it. The parallel with what Timothy Morton later articulates—that 'the ecological thought is the thinking of interconnectedness' (Morton, 2010, introduction)—is significant and an important part of my argument in the next section, where I link phenomenological discourse (the intertwining) with ecological thought (interdependence), and to care ethics (caring for and about these relational phenomena). It is what I identify as an ecology of care.

It is here that I outline one of my contributions to the field, linking care ethics with ecological thinking, and thence to the scope of socially engaged theatre practices. An ecology of care, as a subset study of systemic relationships, cannot avoid the phenomenon of our embodiments and therefore the deeper question of embodied care and care relations as embodied practices[40]. If de Sao Jose's goals in collating her research is concerned with an ageing population, each member of that population yet has an embodied Being to address. Care practices, being part of economic and social orders, on some level must therefore accept the ongoing Being of their subjects, even as they move towards death[41]. Deep care needs to analyse the deep ecology of relationality and attend to the deep concept of the Being of co-participants. The Being of co-participants includes the conscious and unconscious worlds each participant brings to the table—and also the conscious and less-conscious, visible or hidden/suppressed sensations and feelings that co-constitute them as Beings[42].

This substantiates one of the central aspects of my argument, to introduce the phenomenological discourse as a means of understanding—and accommodating—Being in care relations. Whereas phenomenological discourse has been part of a performance practice-based research for some decades, I believe that the roots of a systemic ethics crossing into the three areas of research have not adequately been addressed.

3.3 Towards an ecology of Being

If we accept the concept of inter-relationality, and if all beings are intertwined with others, then a discourse on ethics would logically extend to account for the more-than-human others that are part of our world. Shildrick for example, states that it is anthropo-egotism that keeps bioethics centred on human and not all life. She signals that further research can and should extend to the more-than-human realm (Shildrick, 2008, p.34). However, she also respects the limits of any single research outcome, and so too I contain my

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[40] Theatre performance as a subset of embodied arts practices, becomes part of my discussion in Part 2 below.

[41] An exemplar is in Entelechy's work with elders in the community, which I have written about elsewhere, http://zsuzsacsardasinlondon.blogspot.com/2015/07/post-1-intro-ambience-jam-elders-and.html

[42] Barnes' and Tronto's later works insist on the accommodation of historical causes that inhibit presence.

discussion to situate itself within our study of human-to-human relations. This discussion becomes more central in Part 2 below, especially where I argue that it is not just ecological awareness that can feed into a practice, but that the consciousness evident in practice can inform and instruct ethical theory. In order to achieve this, however, theory needs to accommodate, and will benefit from, expanding its vocabulary to welcome 'vulnerable sensate realms', such as are exploited to good purpose in arts practices.

As Puig de la Bellacasa shows, in rewriting Tronto's breakthrough paragraph:

> We need to disrupt the subjective-collective behind the 'we': care is everything that *is* done (rather than everything that 'we' do) to maintain, continue and repair 'the world' so that *all* (rather that 'we') can live in it as well as possible. That world includes…*all* that we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web (modified from Tronto 1993, 10).
>
> *(de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.161).*

For de la Bellacasa, we need to re-imagine, in a 'speculative' process, what it is 'to be'— that is, speculate on what informs us, drives us, and what we answer to. We note that de la Bellacasa does not yet talk about this in consistent, practical, sensory terms. In one instance, imagining herself as an earth worm, she calls the experience 'pleasant', but summarises that 'she is not a shaman' and therefore doubts the affect and efficacy of such awareness as a significant-enough activity.

It is perhaps here that from the field of acting—a fully sensory embodied practice—that we can talk to such complexity. Whilst beyond the scope of the current thesis, I mark it in my concluding chapter as an outline of possible methods that we can move to interrogate in the near future. It is where speculation and specularity—what is worthy of our attention as researchers—are challenged and extended by sensory, embodied practices that we might find and develop significant advances.

3.4 'Our haptic sensibilities': how sensory acuity might enable new kinds of care

If we are made in an intertwining of relationships to others—including the more-than-human—then *agency* is also interwoven with those intertwinings. Our concern then, as care ethicists, should surely be with what enables care, and care practices, and what disables them.

Margrit Shildrick's work on bioethics and the circumstances of care for post-operative patients talks to the issue of contexts of care (what is attended to; who is listened to; what questions are asked; how is a patient's experience addressed or ignored?[43]). I have already mentioned where, in asking similar questions, research investigations into the fields of perceptual cognition and distributive cognition would be fruitful avenues for future research. The sticking point of what constitutes 'success' in medical research is also an

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[43] We might note here how Lowe, in his attempt to identify a 'quality framework' for CACD practices, dedicates a chapter to an essentially theatrical method, established and adapted from Stanislavski: 'who what when where why?' as a means of checking on both process and intention.

issue in contexts of socially engaged theatre practice. The sticking point might appear under a different language—and this, as researchers, is perhaps what we need to be alerted to.

In the field of socially engaged theatre, we see the appearance of a newly forged debate about distinctions between ethics and aesthetics, where aesthetics incorporates the areas of the successful communication of ideas and stories within understandings of 'artistic' frameworks. The exemplar I include towards the end of this chapter, discussing the UK participatory arts company Entelechy's 'Ambient Jam', working with people of profound and complex disabilities, does not disavow the significance of aesthetics. However, there is a danger in defining an end-point as an aesthetic *as opposed to* a process-oriented outcome.

That said, how, specifically, does art execute care?

> Theatrical and other artistic creations capture the attention of the neural networks of the body and awake real experiences that might not be accessible to our everyday interactions. Through art we are able to offer experience and knowledge that change the attendant at his or her core.
>
> *(Stephen De Benedetto, cited in Nicola Shaughnessy, 2012,*
> *pp.33–34)*

Victoria Foster advocates the benefits of 'employing art and the imagination as a way of researchers and research participants examining their lived experience, to reflect creatively upon these experiences, and to know themselves more deeply' (Foster, quoted in Hibberd, 2017, p.34).

This perspective focuses on art, not just as a product or outcome—important in the chapter discussing CACD and funding rubrics—but as an action that involves what Sedgwick calls our 'haptic sensibilities', developed and deployed in multi-sensory realms (Sedgwick, 2003, p.185). The healing capacity of art—or, if one were to remain in a secular language, the capacity for art to shift perspectives, reclaim justice, restore agency, and rejuvenate society (society's capacity to create, recreate, and re-engage) is further addressed in the chapter which discusses CACD rubrics below. However, here I highlight it in order to frame a general valuation of art and aesthetics as a means of manifesting or reflecting care.

This essentially constitutes a methodology pointing to an iterative quality helpful to both care and CACD processes. This connects with the feminist vulnerable methods of Chapter 4 below, embracing the 'slow examination of varying and multi-layered modalities' involved in research practices, including incompleteness and doubt, and why this is significant.

3.5 An exemplar: care in action

Here I wish to discuss an example of care-in-practice, as an exemplar of the considerations under discussion. The exemplar works at just such an 'intersection' as described by Daly and Lewis (2000). I note here, however, that the term 'intersection' is

itself a concept that may come under challenge as I work through the material. Other models and geometries, such as 'intertwining', 'dialogics' and so on (preferred by later care ethicists), may supersede this description.

My reference to the work of London-based, participatory arts company Entelechy with adults of profound and complex needs, heightens the significance of this discussion. Although a more thorough analysis is part of the body of my thesis, a brief examination of their process is entirely relevant here. As an exemplar, this section brings together the work of care ethics and CACD, thus joining a circle in my discussion. As with any theory (about behaviour, and choices) it is helpful to anchor in immediate examples. The work of Entelechy not only exemplifies care but also demonstrates what attentiveness and anticipatory care can achieve. It also lays the ground for the aspects that need to be highlighted in the CACD literature review that constitutes Chapter 5. The discussion makes a link between the above section and the one which follows, in helping to understand the difference between ontological and iterative truths, which I later argue is a binary that threatens to cripple CACD practice.

But firstly, to the exemplar of Entelechy's work in London with people of profound and complex needs—a relation established and sustained in a South-East London borough since the 1980s—indeed, from the time of the emergence of care theory, as outlined above.

The ontology of 'the Jam' heading level?

In this section, I discuss the practice of Entelechy arts, a participatory theatre company in London, with whom I worked as a participant observer over three months in 2015, and again over several weeks in 2017. I insert this discussion because in practice-led research, sometimes *only* thick description can prompt the realisations that need to be theorised[44]. The considerations that become part of the theory are initiated by process. In this way, and as pointed to in the example of Lachman's triage of an elderly patient, theory comes-into-being through practice. I assert it as a 'practice-led ontology'. Its inclusion helps me to define 'practice ontology' at the end of this Section.

Entelechy's weekly 'Ambient Jam' (or 'AmJam') sessions welcome the participation of a group of disabled adults, each of whom are non-verbal, and who have profoundly different pragmatic care needs according to their respective disabilities. Reflecting on Thompson's notion of 'unnamed forms of practice', Entelechy's work embraces people of unnamed and unnameable categories of disabilities. Each session usually welcomes the attendance of up to twelve members of the community, linked with five to seven facilitators, including one or two improvising musicians. For example, the internationally renowned jazz artist Charles Wood is a consistent contributor to the sessions. He relishes this engagement as a kind of 'truth' and has been a committed co-contributor over several decades. Facilitators are paid, whilst community co-participants are supported to attend at no personal cost via a local authority funding framework within a personal care plan. The work's focus, apart from providing a zone of safe physical and social interaction, is to heighten the

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[44] In this argument I am supported by Julian Meyrick's appeal to embrace 'descriptive sensitivities' (Meyrick, 2011, p.23

interdependent relationality between co-participants. It also happens to co-create 'art'—or, a dance experience amongst and between participants. Other examples or 'episodes' of this same exercise now extend into public performance events, which brings the work into visibility and thereby erode some of the codes of conventional performance (including notions of 'perfection') into an unfolding landscape of improvisations or 'happenings.' Yet key principles apply in both kinds of events. Indeed, Entelechy's work-in-the field, which include excursions, and performances in highly visible public spaces. This kind of work meets the challenges recognised by Frances Rifkin and others regarding the 'potentially disruptive' quality of CACD engagements[45].

In Entelechy's process work, such as the weekly Ambient Jam for people of profound and complex needs, each participant, whether facilitator or member of the community, is free to assess and work with their feeling-states. Feeling-states are substantiated within the corpus and actions of each participant's body, and amongst and between co- participants. Essentially, the class is one of sensory co-creation and engagement[46]. The sessions function as part of a continuum of care relations with participants. Initial entry into the program is preceded by home visits, and thence following, extensive and ongoing consultation with carers/families.

The work of this community of practice profoundly disrupts and challenges notions of what we 'do' in care relations. In this context, facilitator and organisational care contribute to the wellbeing of participants, yet it is not organised within a therapeutic nor a social-work model. It is often ambiguous who brings professional or 'expert' knowledge into the situation, against the knowledge one has to relinquish in being 'present' to the group process. The 'doing' is more in the order of enabling 'Being'. Indeed, the parent of one participant, 'Lara'[47], once stated that it was one of the few places where her daughter could simply 'be herself' to the fullest of her capabilities. And yet I note that Lara's 'Being', and her 'being herself', involves profoundly active and interactive physical process (that is, this is not a meditation class).

One day, during a whole-of-company meeting, which invited members of the community (participants and carers) as co-contributors, Lara's mother reported that Lara's paediatrician had pronounced that 'language is what makes us human'. In a single statement, he had relegated his patient—her daughter—to the sub-human. It should be noted he had no compunction to keep providing and be paid for his professional services (as her chief medical carer) throughout Lara's lifetime.

Whilst I am not privy to a further discussion with Lara's specialist—in order to ask him directly about his concept of what he cares for, as her physician—I do know that the structures and methods employed by Entelechy in their weekly engagements with Lara demonstrate that good CACD (when it listens) can allow an extra-ordinary bringing-fourth of participant capability. It is an example of where that which Sebeok identifies as an

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[45] See https://entelechyarts.org/status/current/ for further examples.

[46] For a description of the *ethos* of these engagements, see http://zsuzsacsardasinlondon.blogspot.com/2015/07/post-1-intro- ambience-jam-elders-and.html

[47] 'Lara' is a pseudonym to protect the privacy of the participant.

unwelt (a sensory ecology) is not an alternative to considerations of care but could (and should) be deeply embedded in its considerations. *Unwelt* is a term describing the 'biological foundations that lie at the very epicentre of the study of both communication and signification in the human (and non-human) animal' (Sebeok, 1976). Sensory ecology is a relatively new field focusing on the information organisms obtain about their environment. It includes questions of what information is obtained, how it is obtained ('the mechanism'), and why the information is useful to the organism ('the function'). Something I also consider in the kind of abilities of someone such as Temple Grandin, whose autism actually gifts her with capabilities beyond habituated human relations to the animal world.

I state here that the joy we as co-participants shared whenever Lara, during a Jam session, manoeuvred others' bodies in the space, prompted and provoked us with her moods, or expressed sheer joy by jumping across the space on her bottom, provides an unshakeable memory of her capability and agency. In that workshop space, run every week for over twenty-five years, and in which Lara has participated for more than fifteen, the practice comprises a weaving of awarenesses, care-taking, assertiveness and expression, creativity, responsiveness, response-enabling and taking response-ability for and amongst others, that repeatedly demonstrates her humanity.

I take time with this example because it substantiates much of what bioethicist Margrit Shildrick argues as an imperative in contemporary considerations of ethics. If Merleau-Ponty is right in his assertion that the flesh of the world is the medium in which self and other are mutually constituted, then the onus on co- participants in such a situation is to enable such co-constitution, in ways that acknowledge and welcome differences (including typicalities and a-typicalities). I note here, too that co-participant contribution in each 'Jam' takes place on foundationally creative, not simply reactive, levels.

As Merleau-Ponty describes, in such a situation:

> I am freed from myself in the present dialogue, even though the other's thoughts are certainly his own, since I do not form them. I, nonetheless, grasp them as soon as they are born, or I even anticipate them. And even the objection raised by my interlocutor draws from me thoughts I did not know I possessed such that if I lend him thoughts, he makes me think in return.
>
> *(Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.370)*

Each participant—Lara included—does not just react and absorb stimuli but gives shape to a co-created experience. Rather than coming-in as identities who try to assert and insert their presence in the room, together we co-create a third realm—unpredicted, non-conformist, never to be repeated again.

Where does such an activity fit in a funding climate where, more and more often, we are asked to define outcomes and prove participant 'ownership' of a process, even before it begins? Who owns this 'third space' which disappears almost as soon as it is created? On another note, how can these non-verbal participants prove their 'ownership' of the process? It is worth further noting that 'ownership' is a term that belongs to a capitalist

economy. Here I suggest that a care economy, such as exemplified in Entelechy's Ambient Jams, operates in a different currency. The notion of the care economy is something I return to below.

3.6 Ethical facilitation: process and training

> Hospitals are clear that they are care service providers concerned with patients' limitations: by contrast, we, as artists, are concerned with their potentials and creativities.
>
> *(David Slater, Artistic Director of participatory theatre company Entelechy.org)*

> In the middle of our workshop, Cheryl (aged 91) exclaimed, 'Well I will walk, by myself, across this room'—and, pushing aside the walker she has used for the past 10 years, walked unaided across the room and back. 'If she can do that, so can I. I can't right now, but I will,' whispered Helen, 76, confined to her wheelchair beside me.
>
> *(Verbatim from an episode working with Entelechy.org, London, 2015)*

As a process which interrogates/imbricates care relations, AmJam and its participants exhibit qualities of *attentiveness* (being attentive to needs), *responsibility* (taking the responsibility for meeting said needs), competence (providing skillful and appropriate care), and *responsiveness* that Joan Tronto identifies as quintessential to ethical care practices. It occurs in a context where the work sets out to create a space for the contribution of participants, each according to her abilities, and perhaps beyond what we normally consider quotidian biophysical needs. Participants straddle the public care system, as clients of hospitals and nursing homes that identify themselves as problem-centred and 'risk averse'[48]. During AmJam sessions, clients become co-participants in an exploratory process whose emphasis is expansive, exploratory and un-presupposed. This also occurs in Entelechy's work with isolated elders, in their weekly café and arts gatherings[49].

AmJam Facilitators undergo rigorous and continuous self-examination of process, via emails, blogging[50], and ongoing practice training. One member from the community also engages in the ongoing dialogue[51]. Occasionally, but rarely, one senses arrogance or 'status-jumping' (amongst facilitators) intruding into the hands-on process. In general,

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[48] This references a particular conversation I had with David Slater, Artistic Director of Entelechy, in 2015, noting the difference between service providers, and Entelechy itself as an arts organisation.

[49] For a discussion of other examples of their work, see http://zsuzsacsardasinlondon.blogspot.com/2015/07/post-1-intro-ambience-jam-elders-and.html. Entelechy also creates workshops with trapeze artist Vicki Amedume, Flying and Falling, which sees participants in trapeze swings. For this and other types of activities, see https://entelechyarts.org/projects/falling-flying/

[50] See https://ambientjam.wordpress.com/nest/

[51] H., a participant with cerebral palsy, is not verbal in the dance-space, but contributes online with the assistance of a writing-machine and in regular facilitator meetings.

however, each discussion is centred on the principle of equal value of (and equal respect given to) the capability and intelligence of each co-participant.

Here I take up Shildrick's discussion around status. She states that profound and continuous engagements, where 'multiple influences shape and reshape every situation, and where provisional decisions to act in this way, now, then that way, the next' are 'not coincident with *morality*" (by which she means 'systematised rules and principles of conduct'). In the moment of doing, each participant 'has no status beyond the immediate context'[52] (Shildrick, 2008, p.38). Even though care, in the Jam context, requires extensive planning, thoughtfulness, and an exacting self-examination by facilitators, the 'doing' is liberating. I contrast this with the earliest of care research, which even by title identified care as (sic) 'burdensome' (Montgomery, R. J. V., Donald E. Stull, 1986; Montgomery, Rhonda J. V., Judith C. Gonyea, 1985). By contrast, the work here is co-creative, within an iterative structure. Each 'Jam' session is a combination of disciplined, energising, and wild[53].

In such a context as that afforded by the Jam, ethics becomes a sensibility, not just a theory or analysis subjected to 'veridical' truth. In such a circumstance, it is perhaps in the inter-relational arc of bodily sensations that ethics forms. The test of the ethical interaction might be grounded within a systemic inter-relational logic that answers to sensational, rather than hierarchical, value-rules. For example, Lara is very good at sensing when a facilitator tries too hard, or pushes their authority. She removes herself from engagement, shuffling elsewhere. I suggest the Jam operates in a practice ecology more significant than a designation of hierarchical roles—in its own way, uncovering the ontological truth of interpersonal relations, as outlined in the next section. This concept indexes new ways to measure the value of a practice.

3.7 Ontological vs. 'veridical' truths, and process methodologies

Theatre practitioner and scholar Julian Meyrick, citing Badiou, elaborates a difference between veridical truth, which can be substantiated or disproved according to objective and factual accounts, and ontological truths, which he states are more 'expressive of the nature of being: truth as a force that liberates beings from their natural obscurity and allows them full disclosure' Veridical truths prove themselves to have existed; ontological truths prove themselves in the midst of their creation, as part of our creative and re-creative powers. He argues that:

> In the Hellenic tradition, *aletheia* is equated with notions of un-forgetfulness, un-hidden-ness or 'abiding clarity': truth as a force that liberates beings from their natural obscurity and allows them full

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[52] And yet there is something not quite accurate in this current description, as quite clearly facilitators do hold, and are obliged to hold, some awarenesses that (presumably) other co-participants do not, such as taking responsibility to occasionally lift and carry participants in the space or help avoid conflict or accidents. I acknowledge that at present this aspect of the discussion is under-realised

[53] As I discuss in my third case study, this shifts the parameters of a project's 'success'. Stuart Grant has observed that many participatory theatre practices seem to be 'wild'. Later in this thesis, I refer to reviews of one participatory theatre project I created where the inclusion of school children led the reviewer to call the project 'outsider art'. Others disagree with that judgment. Our objectives were certainly not to create an 'outsider' project.

disclosure. It also owns another set of associations, sometimes called the Hebraic, which stress notions of fidelity. *Aletheia* is a project of fidelity to a truth so revealed.

<div align="right">

(Meyrick, 2011, p.4)

</div>

What I focus on here is the distinction between what such a concept can make of the idea of 'success' or 'failure'—and hence perhaps also of recognition of differing beauties—in process, which becomes important to specify in my later discussion of the purpose and scope of participatory theatre practices.

It is difficult to countenance an idea that a Jam can 'fail'. Yes, accidents or omissions can and do occur, and these are (by and large) acknowledged as mistakes to address and redress. However, if we sense 'failure' as linked to its etymological root in the word 'to deceive', a Jam could only 'fail' if its goal and result were to hide the potentiality of co-participants. Lara's mother's statement that the Jam was virtually 'the *only* place…where she could be herself' marks a very particular measure of success. This perspective contributes to a complex discussion on the success and purpose of CACD projects as discussed in my cases studies in Part 2.

3.8 Taking care of the invisible in our practices

Thus, the discourse of care—whether we are talking about health care, or in performance projects—could be predicated on the perceptual capacity of its facilitators, to remain responsive, and in reciprocal and co-creative relation with co-participants. Regarding the care ethicist frameworks discussed in Chapter 1, I have signalled such a capacity in Lachman's work in the emergency ward. I signal that it is embedded but not overly developed in Tronto's framework; but to the best of my knowledge, the link between ethics and perceptual capacity is not made explicit anywhere else in the early care discourse. It does, however, become central to the writings of later feminist methodology theorists, including Yasmin Gunaratnam and Carrie Hamilton (2001), Clare Hemmings (2006), and Tiffany Page (2017) whose works I discuss in more detail in my Methodology chapter. I also note that there is no explicit link between contemporary research into perceptual and distributive cognition and the care discourse, but there could and should be[54]. Within the limits of this thesis, I reference these unfolding disciplines because they address the notion of how care awarenesses can be developed, and even trained–a concept I return to in my concluding chapter. A fully dialogic discussion of this, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, I do nominate touchstones we might bring into consideration.

In this moment, however, I ground our discussion to develop a systemic enquiry that understands care as part of a relational ecology, that values each co-participant; attempts to account for, and encourage expression of, their differing capabilities; provides a framework that enables relationality between participants; is process-oriented; and retains awareness of what is included and excluded in each process engagement, valuing the political, social, physical, intellectual, emotional, sensory and extra- sensory components

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[54] John Sutton provides a useful overview of the most current research in the relatively new field of distributive cognition (Sutton, 2017).

of each engagement, including both what is 'known' and emergent or 'unknown' (of the participant, or their circumstances). These rubrics apply equally to feminist care ethics and will be shown to be relevant to the discourse of CACD in Chapter 4. However, firstly, I consider the notion of 'deep care', and why it might be important to CACD practices.

Chapter 4
Research methodology

4.1 Vulnerable methods: new dimensions of practice

In recent feminist ethical research practices, the concepts vulnerable methods, vulnerable writing and vulnerable wounding are validated within the 'auto-ethnographic turn' discussed by Clare Hemmings (2006), Tiffany Page (2017), Yasmin Gunaratnam and Carrie Hamilton (2001), Gretchen Rossman and Sharon Rallis (2010), and the scholars they discuss in their respective overviews[55].

In vulnerable methods, scholars move away from procedural to relational research practices, recognise parallels between hegemony and constructed knowledge in society, and hegemony and constructed knowledge in research, and draw attention and give grace to how sensory, emotional and affective relations are central to ways in which researchers engage with, produce, understand and translate what becomes 'research'. They advise resistance to presenting research subjects as 'summaries'—to take care not to 'truncate' the life of subjects according to research parameters (Hemmings, 2017; Mohanty, 1982). Saba Mahmood also notes how 'hegemonic protocols of intelligibility' can be a violation, 'taming and controlling' research subjects. By contrast, she argues that feminist research methods do and should 'unsettle the certitudes of one's epistemological projections' (Mahmood, 2012b, p.199).

Tiffany Page highlights the importance of self-reflexivity to 'disrupt master-narratives' and help cognise 'that which exceeds knowledge, assumptions and certitudes' (Page, 2017, p.4). She alerts us to 'the importance of the 'blind field': the ability to see that which remains off frame' (*ibid*., p.6) and to that which 'exceeds the limits of a narrative' (*ibid*., p.12)*.* Further, she warns that vulnerable methods and 'being vulnerable within research' places unexpected affective and sensorial demands upon researchers in representing the lives of others, becoming 'receptive to the limits of knowing' (*ibid*., p.18). Indeed, as Mariam Fraser and Nirmal Puwar assert, there is 'much to be learned from how we creatively carry the textures, pains, desires, sounds and the visual store of memories of the research encounter with us, from the point of collection, to analysis and public presentation' (Fraser and Puwar, 2008, p.2)(Fraser, 2008b). The political agenda of this is valued and is always about who holds what kinds of authority. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asks: who decides where a 'text' ends and 'context' begins; or if we were to write it *con/text*, then who gets to make insert the slash or make cut (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998)? This kind of questioning of power relations helps us distinguish between knowledge as a means of knowing *how* and the potential of knowledge as a 'falling short' (Page, 2017, p.7). Gillian Cowlishaw concludes that '[in] the end I tell the story of the research, its failures and its successes, with other purposes in mind, particularly to

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[55] Tiffany Page's article, 'Vulnerable writing as a feminist methodological practice' (Page, 2017), gives an extensive summation of feminist researchers working with vulnerable methods. I am indebted to Page's work and its lucid and poetic realisations; and to Clare Hemmings and the Gender Institute, ANU for introducing me to feminist vulnerable research methods.

infiltrate and disturb the public discourses that assume we know how to know these lives' (Cowlishaw, 2016, p.234).

Collectively, these scholars encourage researchers to incorporate doubt, ambiguity and multiplicity into our methodologies; to rethink agency as a capacity that involves struggle, effort and exertion; and to take note of uncertainty, ambivalence, inconsistency and contradictory desires, and discordances between the way information has been sourced.

Tender(ing to) moments of care

Jacqueline Mosselson transfers 'microethics' from the life sciences across to sociological and arts research, which leads to a recognition of 'ethically charged' moments (cited in (Guillemin, 2004, p.262). We can link this to Joan Tronto's notion of 'attentiveness'. We are also exhorted to pay attention to moments that accommodate and include silence (Bowes, 2014; Capretto, 2014; *passim*), which reminds us to value non-verbal communication. This links back to the work of the Disabilities Scholars of the 1990s, identifying the strengths and abilities of non-verbal participants.

As I demonstrate in the case studies, vulnerable methods see us as researchers and facilitators 'willingly de-stabilised' as part of the methodology (Cowlishaw, 2016, p.227) and experiencing a loss of the familiar everyday world and some loss of self. This approach rejects the fantasy of 'finding order in events by putting events in order' (Comaroff & Comaroff, cited in Cowlishaw, 2016, p.231). Page continues that surrender, receptiveness, or 'giving (one)self up' (Page, 2017, p.14)—what I have previously identified as 'to yield'—helps attune us to the sometimes 'unspectacular temporality of precarity' (*ibid*., p.10) and of things without conclusion. She also alerts us to the way different temporalities of process can help reveal causes extending 'over months, years, and generations' (*ibid*., p.23)

Page also refers to Elizabeth Freeman's work on 'queer time'—an approach to 'vulnerable writing' that:

> …involves not only slowing forms of time but also a concern for how
> different temporalities might attach to particular bodies and the 'hidden
> rhythms' that are normalised through patterns and routine.
>
> *(Page, 2017, p.23)*

She suggests this method of disruption can involve engaging in:

> …a form of temporal syncopation, where, in the rhythmic modes of living,
> the more visible parts of the narratives are temporally displaced by
> stressing the lesser beats, the parts of life that do not get heard, or
> are misheard, ignored or erased in forms of remembering and in modes
> of telling.
>
> *(ibid., p.23)*

Such 'temporal syncopations' are critically significant in CACD projects. The situation of a worker in CACD involves not only an awareness of their own sensitivities and agendas,

but also to pay attention to what kinds of 'double-awarenesses' their project co-participants might be carrying. There may be significant historical, situational and intergenerational differences within and between groups, as Schininà describes in his work amongst Serbian refugees (Schininà, 2012). Notably, he asserts that such differences render co-participants unable to take agency in ways that funders and CACD rubrics might presume. As a personal example, in working with members of the South Sudanese refugee community, their own awarenesses occupy not just one country, but at least two more (the Sudan, and the refugee camps in Kenya, where many relatives may still live). Decisions they make or cannot make in the present, also refer back to a past—for example, to tribal disagreements that may go back generations. FCE- and CACD-valued qualities of adaptiveness, reciprocation and responsiveness may be restricted in the present moment because a community's focus and sensibilities are located elsewhere[56].

I have found a double- or sometimes triple-awareness often ensues, which can serve to:

> highlight the difference of the researcher from the subject; create novel temporal relations with time[57]; caution the research 'creating something of meaning *to me*…of an echo from someone else's life that grabs my attention because it *resonates*'; thus, also potentially a reflection of 'the expansive power of being pricked' which Page and others argue can lead to selfishness.
>
> *(Page, 2017, p.24)*

Awareness of the differences between living, telling and 'writing about', and where these place us in terms of temporality[58], need to be applied. In these ways, vulnerable methods ask us to create or co-create iterative, responsive, dialogic methodologies; rethink agency (of both researchers, and research subjects) as a capacity that involves struggle, effort and exertion; and applies to all co-creators in CACD contexts. Any artistic endeavour—because it engages individuals on many levels, including socio-emotional and creative—multiplies the dimensions under consideration.

In summary, vulnerable methods can bring into our practices such fundamentally important realisations as:

> Instead of *knowing* as a 'means of knowing what to do', the unsettled disturbance of not knowing (…) becomes integral to the research engagement.
>
> *(Weigman, 2014, p.7)*

Tiffany Page continues:

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[56] A key issue which cannot be scoped within the limits of this thesis, is the place of South Sudanese women in contemporary Australia. Community elder Reverend Peter Kuot specifically relates the degree of distress that is caused by this disjuncture between traditional and new roles, ambitions and expectations.

[57] I note that such 'novel relationship' can be stressful when one is attempting to mediate between community whilst working to bureaucratic deadlines.

[58] Page, for example, points out that she may be writing (in present tense) of someone who has died (Page, 2017, p.26).

A vulnerable method does not attempt to resolve discomfort immediately through problem solving, or by forms of sense-making that utilise particular relational elements of cause and effect. Instead, what is at the heart of vulnerable methods and vulnerable writing are *ongoing questions about what unsettles, about relations to the unfamiliar and strange, and about the erasure of the complexities of subjectivity when individuals and bodies and their actions do not fit or adhere to coherent themes of knowledge*. This unsettled uncertainty of the research process, rather than foreclosing on further understandings, provides space for new forms of unknowing and continued attempts at understanding the stories of others.

(Page, 2017, p.16; emphasis mine)

In these ways, receptivity and reciprocity can help constitute co-participants as 'vulnerable knowledge-holders' (Lenette & Ingamells, 2015, *passim*) who share vulnerable authority.

4.2 New models of authority: vulnerable leadership studies

Vulnerable leadership studies propose various models and differing geometries of authority. Most propose some form of ground-up approach (Abdul Ghani, 2017; Montuori & Donnelly, 2018; Tiller, 2017). In part, its effectiveness is sustained by how authority is bestowed. I remember Abdul Ghani stating the importance of the kind of reception given to new refugees at Restad Gard Asylum Centre, Sweden, *circa* 2000. The Centre is in an old mansion that houses up to 3000 people at any one time. Struck by how former leaders and teachers had succumbed to despair in having nothing to do, to give, or to activate in their crowded no-man's-land, he galvanised hope by organising refugees to teach and learn what they could from each other. Even if they were sent back to troubled homelands, they spent their time actively engaged in acquiring and sharing skills and knowledge. Newer arrivals retained agency; older residents regained their hope. Within their disempowered situation, they became empowered. For Abdul Ghani, hope was an aesthetic created by care for their abilities.

The question of vulnerable authority—what it does, what it looks like, what it can achieve— and how this contributes to a new pragmatic ethics of care becomes an important consideration in the case studies I discuss in Part 2.

Chapter 5
Outlining relations between feminist care ethics (FCE) and community arts and cultural development (CACD) practices

5.1 Community/participatory arts: looking for 'new beauties'

In Chapters 1 and 2, I outlined the emergence and development of feminist care ethics (FCE), and the methodology for my practice and research centred in feminist methods. FCE'S key terms of awareness, attentiveness—a form of listening, witnessing and perceiving; and of competence and response-ability—linked with a capacity to respond *with skill and appropriateness* are articulated as a result of an evolving trajectory of investigations that have moved from a focus on care for the carer, to care for the cared-for; from the assertion of the so-called Disabilities Scholars of their 'independence,' to a more comprehensive notion of the 'interdependence' of humans with others; and thence to the push for integrated, systemic and structural approaches that seek a consistent discourse around policies that make care possible.

I ended Chapter 3 with a discussion of the virtue of engaging a practice methodology centred in self-reflexive practices, and what Hemmings calls 'vulnerable methods' inclusive of doubt and inconclusiveness. Taken together, FCE and feminist vulnerable methods have developed as careful bridges between personal, interpersonal and systemic awarenesses across differing value-systems, within a framework I call an iterative ecology of care.

I note that ecologies of care—and systemically aware knowledge systems *per se*—have long pre-existed Western knowledge systems. This awareness is critical to some of the case studies in Part 2, especially in working with peoples of non-Western cultural backgrounds, and in discussion around attention and expectations in shared processes (which of course then reflect on care, and what is cared for). Such awarenesses require a vulnerability or openness to 'deep care'—a term I coin with reference to George Sessions' 'deep ecology' (Sessions, 1995) which (as in all ecosystems) needs to address aspects of systemic functionality, identity, culture and/or history, implicit or explicit, human and more than human, known, or as yet unknown.

In this chapter, my focus is to measure CACD against care rubrics with an especial focus on deep care, and asks:

- In what ways do our CACD practices and institutions articulate, uphold and support ethical, deep care values?

- How does CACD (as a collective of perspectives and institutions) exhibit systemic care in order to assist practitioners in best practice?

- How do reified best practices answer to other ways of knowing and encompass varying abilities, strengths and sensibilities?

Because CACD often throws us up against, and together amongst, people of diverse historical and cultural backgrounds, beliefs and knowledge systems, there needs to be a way of asking which questions and sensibilities are being considered (as significant) and which are overlooked. And it requires vulnerable methods to undertake the investigation.

Part 1 incorporated a discussion of an exemplar of contemporary creative care practice—the Ambient Jam sessions run by Entelechy in London. The current section will specifically ask: In what ways might such CACD practices contribute new terms of reference to the care ethics field, and in what ways might CACD's established terms (including presumed terms of best practice) risk compromising such proven ethical procedures and relations on the ground?

In order to provide a robust framework for this discussion, the current chapter provides an overview of the terms and criteria by which CACD (in Australia, and in the UK) have come to be assessed. I note that the development of contemporary CACD spans roughly the same time period as that of FCE, from the 1980s to the present. One might therefore presume significant overlaps of premise in both CACD and FCE. However, in the literature review I also discussed discrepancies, some of which have only recently been foregrounded in scholarly work. My intention is to create a pathway appropriate to the analyses I present of my own case studies.

A part of my analysis is of key terms such as community, equity, rights, and agency. Sometimes, exhausted by our collective and individual efforts, we settle unthinkingly into these terms. This is contrary to the dialogic process of most care ethics. It may even be contrary to the presumption of any (recognisable) outcomes at all, such as Guglielmo Schininà discovered in his work with Serbian refugees:

> Where there is very little theatre per se…there (may yet be) plenty of cultural performance…where theatre is less a form and more a means of developing relationship, communication and expression that concentrates on the construction of roles.
>
> *(Schininà, 2012, p.182)*

In the current chapter, I assess CACD evaluative criteria against realisations made working on the ground. It asks whether such criteria match, and/or inhibit and preclude, aspects of arts and civic engagement in community, and whether they aid and abet or inhibit 'good' care. Whilst bodies such as the Australia Council are answerable to the Australian people via its governance, other organisations may be free to dispense funds via different processes and outline their rubrics for other reasons. I emphasise it is not the choices each organisation makes (as in, *who* gets funded), but the rubrics and guidelines that are under present investigation[59]. The point is to engage in a discussion of presumptions of what is 'best practice' in the field. My models here are the work of

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[59] In particular, I want to emphasize that, in highlighting some resources published by the Australia Council for the Arts, that Council is not being singled out for criticism. A great virtue of Council is that it endeavors to be and remain responsive to artists and communities, adjusting its criteria according to what it sees evolving in the sector. Its competitive framework within a sector struggling to maintain funding, however, might serve to feed oppositional practices, against the very best of its intentions

Schininà, and also of the Gulbenkian Foundation, a philanthropic trust which uses it position to prompt and provoke the field it supports—for example, by sponsoring research and contributing to theory, such as the positioning of CACD as a key player in the discussion and development of the arts' civic role and civic duty[60]. The Foundation's intention—as here in this thesis—is to grow and support the field of practice.

Clearly, a globally comprehensive overview is beyond the scope of this thesis. The selection I have made has been chosen to render the discussion of my case studies more comprehensible with reference to practices in Australia and the UK in which I have had most direct experience. The selection has also been driven by my own experience of rubrics I have found either workable, or unworkable and inhibitory—for the particular reasons that they inhibit responsiveness, reciprocity, and the sustainability of the work of care-in-practice. I do not necessarily replace 'bad' with 'good' terms; however, I do identify where key principles (such as responsiveness and reciprocity) require a vulnerability and openness to the new kinds of knowledge that cooperative and collaborative process entail, and where (and by which terms) such vulnerability and openness might be restricted or curtailed.

It is particularly problematic if we are trying to link CACD with 'good' care, or 'deep care'. What enables 'deep care' in our CACD practices? And what characteristics, judgments, rubrics and presumptions disable—or threaten to disable—the possibility of good care?

5.2 CACD: an analysis of key terms

CACD (community arts and cultural development) is an umbrella term for a broad section of cultural practices spanning many continents, that aim at inclusivity in process, reach, and outcome; embrace the abilities of both professional and non-professional, able and less able-bodied participants; and take pride in incorporating, even being shaped by, the agency and unique voice of co-participants. Many of the practices have an especial focus on the inclusion of people from underprivileged or under-resourced backgrounds, and 'unreceived' minorities.

Key theorist/practitioners such as Frances Rifkin (2010), Toby Lowe (2012), Chrissie Tiller (2014) and the collective operating from the Round House in the UK trace their histories to the work of arts and social activist/practitioners such as Augusto Boal and Paulo Freire in South America, and to Dorothy Heathcote in the UK. Some emphasise the 'development' side of community-building. Usually such processes utilise the arts (activities, exercises, interventions) as a tool to help provoke social change.

Whilst across the board, some theorists, practitioners and funders consider 'socially engaged' arts, 'community arts' (CA), 'participatory arts' (PA)[61] and 'applied theatre' (AT) as interchangeable terms, Matarasso argues for the following distinction:

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[60] For example, see their publication *Participatory Performing Arts: A Literature Review* (Chrissie Tiller, 2014).

[61] 'Applied theatre' seems to be the term preferred by both James Thompson and Michael Balfour, but it is by no means agreed upon as the universally preferred term.

> Participatory emphasises the act of joining in and implies that there is already something in which to join. […] Community, in contrast, suggests something shared and collective. Art is […] the result of people coming together to create it.
>
> *(Matarasso, 2019, 16/01/2019)*

That said, Matarasso cautions against a 'destructive competitiveness' between and amongst CACD practitioners—often vying for the same small pool of funds (Matarasso, 2019, 03/01/2019)—but identifies that artists committed to work within the broad spectrum of CACD have 'far more in common with each other than they do with the power centres of state and commercial art'. He summarises these shared concerns as intentions to increase access, provoke or promote social change, and/or advance 'cultural democracy'' (Matarasso, 2019, 31/01/2019).

Alison Jeffers and Gerri Moriarty define cultural democracy as 'a relationship between culture, democracy and the right to make art', and where the value of any arts exchange reflects back on and to co-participants (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2017, introduction). I return to a discussion of 'rights' in the preface to my case studies in Part 2, where I question presumptions that socially engaged arts are almost always driven by the need to achieve or advance social change. However, for the moment it is worthwhile to unpack understandings of the following key terms.

5.2.1 'Community'

In the first instance, Toby Lowe cautions that the concept 'community' can imply a cohesive group of 'like minds', or people of 'shared place, beliefs, spirit' (Lowe, 2012, p.6). By contrast, he states that most of his own CACD work has occurred with 'collectives of individuals' of sometimes widely differing goals and beliefs. Lowe's realisation is something with which many practitioners concur. The overall caution is to guard against presumptions about unity and conformity of approach. Many of the co-participants with whom we work have already suffered enough homogenisation (as refugees, orphans, prisoners, or people of varying disabilities) for it to perhaps unwittingly add insult to injury to bring them into work which invites them to conform.

In the case of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project (PFFP-MP), for example, participants (as children) grew up as a homogenised collective—what one woman described as 'belonging to bad'. *The Memory Project* by contrast has brought them together as individuals with both distinct and overlapping histories, in order to individuate and re-author their own life narratives within a shared context of experience. The narratives of the Forgotten Australians are already contested: individuals are often denied veracity not just by authority figures (such as the Department of Community Services, or nurses, guards and the Catholic Church) but by other former occupants. The nature of such denials is complex and discussed in Part 2. However, as FCE scholar Shildrick cautions, 'The point is not to pin down the truth or falsity of such (narratives), but to understand their significance' (Shildrick, 2008, p.39), as I also argue in Part 2.

5.2.2 'Equity'

'Equity' is one of CACD's most favored terms. I argue that it is complex, requiring more careful attention than is usually accorded. For example, in what ways can Entelechy Arts AmJam's participants (many of profound and complex, highly specific individual needs) be considered 'equal' to each other? There are complex dependencies and interdependencies amongst and between all participants. We might also note that equity and equal rights differ from each other. Yet the term equity—as with the term 'agency'—is often used unquestioningly. Funding bodies, for example, ask their assessment panels to score proposals against such terms as equity and agency which become locked into their criteria. However, as Schininà observes protocols and presumptions around participant equity and 'choice' may at times be irrelevant, perhaps even damaging. Schininà's scholarly work thereby issues profound challenges to notions of 'best practice' in the field (Schininà, 2012 *passim*).

Some of his observations are to do with identifying that we often work in highly unequal playing fields—whether that is due to funding, or political or social circumstances. For example, looking out the window at a group of protestors against the organisation employing him to do his work on the ground, he wryly observes the way applied theatre's 'approved' functionalities can yet betray an *ad hoc* and unstable set of politically aligned values (Schininà, 2004, p.29). That is, *which* 'underprivileged' group warrants our attention, for what reasons, at what time?

In such ways, CACD can fall into the predicament of being based on *need,* which, as I argue in my analysis of feminist care ethics, is often not a well-reasoned, 'best premise for taking, giving or sharing care.

5.2.3 'Rights'

Francois Matarasso also insists that what distinguishes community arts is its 'rights-based approach characterised by an aspiration for emancipatory social engagement'. Alison Jeffers and Gerri Moriarty concur that it is an activity that exhibits a relationship between culture, democracy and the right to make art (Jeffers and Moriarty, 2017). However, we note here that Matarasso also warns that 'setting out to change people' is problematic:

> The definition of a crime against humanity is to instrumentalise people …Human beings must never be instrumentalised. Making people less important than some idea of purpose is the mark of dictators and ideological terrorism.
>
> *(Matarasso, 2019, 3/1/2019)*

CACD, seen as an agent of social change—to *do good/be good*—can ride dangerously close to this territory. The distinction is of particular relevance to my case study on working with the South Sudanese community, where funding guidelines seem to require the instrumentalisation of participants—for example, as 'productive' citizens, and 'self-

sufficient' within twelve months, thanks to a single project, funded to the tune of a meagre $10,000[62].

Thompson notes that applied theatre and CACD's purposive intent—its 'social value'—has until recently helped increase and sustain its funding levels (its social role seen as a positive). As a purposive activity, both practitioners and funders can forget its responsive and adaptive qualities and turn a blind eye to other aspects which are 'also theatre', 'also art', also 'regenerative'—and significantly, culturally engaged, engaging and even socially transformative practices.

With wry self-awareness, Thompson notes that:

> During applied theatre workshops that I conducted in Sri Lanka in the year 2000, the participants organised social evenings of singing and dancing…I was uncertain about the evening's hilarity and sense of celebration, preferring the serious but aesthetically sparse work of the image theatre, improvisations and forum theatre [that I practised with the community]. The effect of this day work was planned but, in contrast, there was no intended effect for the social events.
>
> This is an exaggeration, of course, but while both the daytime and the evening activities could be categorised as performance in this particular war zone, the latter did receive second billing.
>
> *(Thompson, 2009, pp.2–3)*

His conclusions are twofold: first, that 'almost any cultural act' becomes applied theatre when a particular context 'determines that it has social impact'; and second, that he needed to do something about the presumptions under which he himself had been operating. *Which mattered most?* His answer was to publish an essay as counter to his own 'mistaken hierarchy', offered as a recalibration of the relationship between the two areas of practice, seeking to 'realign what is perceived as the proper place, time and form of applied theatre, so that the struggle for a 'beautiful ideal' rediscovers the intimate correlation between the political and the aesthetic at its heart' (Thompson, 2009, p.2).

Thompson's writing, and this thesis, carves a space for the highly contentious possibility that art and 'the aesthetic' occur in ways and places we do not initially recognise. This consideration is particularly relevant to my chapter discussing work with the South Sudanese community. In addition, the etymology of the verb *'to recognise'* (a term often used but not defined, for example, by Matarasso) is to *'know again…recall or recover…something formerly known or felt'*—implying something we already know about ourselves. This in itself may contradict funder rubrics which require projects to 'innovate', or 'create something new' (*ref.* Australia Council rubrics that are attached in Appendix 1). This becomes critical to my discussion of work with members of the South Sudanese

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[62] The Australian Government's more generous *Try Test Learn* fund, distributed by the Department of Social Services, nonetheless capped its resources at the funding equivalent of less than $200 per family over a period of 3 years. (See discussion further below)

Diaspora—noting too that another aspect of the etymology of the verb *to recognise*[63] also refers to an idea of *landedness*—an issue of critical importance to people in exile from their homelands.

5.2.4 'Agency'

In Part 1, I discussed how the Disability Scholars argued for their 'independence'; however, FCE theorists later demonstrate that independence can only operate within larger frames of *inter*dependencies. How often is agency unconsciously linked to notions of individuated ability? and where and when, in our work in CACD, might this be inappropriate? In this section, I discuss the concept of agency, initially from the point of view of philosophy.

The so-called 'standard theory' of agency–with agency linked to reasoning, rationality and intelligibility—does not explain genuine self-governance, nor accidental nor cooperative agency, nor the fact that agency is not necessarily a mark of superiority (an action '*par excellence*') As Schlosser states, a 'human agent is simply a human being who acts, no matter how deficient' (Schlosser, 2019, pp.3).

Barandiam *et al* (2009) specifically point to non-human agencies, but caution that the goal 'to be' (of any organism) is too simplistic and does not account for cooperative and creative agencies[64]. Westlund (2009) discusses 'shared collective agencies' from a feminist perspective; Isabelle Stengers insists that agencies are always contextual (Isabelle Stengers, 2013, p.42). In Stenger's notion of an ecology of practices, she observes the constraints (or conditions) in any circumstance, and in any body, held in what she calls a 'reciprocal capture' (Stengers, 2013, p.43). Maria Puig de la Bellacasa comments that these constraints 're-create relational, situated possibilities and impossibilities' as they happen, which sounds more like an invitation to engagement, rather than a command (de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.153). She further clarifies that Stenger's constraints 'do not determine how we care, or to what we pay attention, but…call to our care because they coexist and need to be 'taken into account'' (*ibid.*, pp.42–43). Hence, our responsiveness is a condition that calls to our readiness to respond, to listen, and to remain, but is not pre-determined, The complexity of this vision is startling, and has ramifications for what we think of as our agencies, both with regards to each other as humans, and with regards to our relations with the more than human world(s). Our 'entanglements', where 'everything is connected to something that is connected to something else', includes not just what we touch, or that which touches us, but belongs to a complex systemic web of interrelations. (Rose, Van Dooren et al., 2017)(cited in de la

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[63] *To recognise* (v.)—early C15, 'resume possession of land', back-formation from *recognizance*, or else from Old French *reconjoins*-, stem of *reconnoitre* 'to know again, identify, recognise', from Latin *recognoscere* acknowledge, recall to mind, know again; examine; certify', from *re*—'again (see **re-**) + *cognoscere* 'to get to know, recognise'. Meaning 'know again, recall or recover the knowledge of, perceive an identity with something formerly known or felt' first recorded 1530s. Related: *Recognised*; *recognizing*. Retrieved from https://www.etymonline.com/word/recognise accessed 11/06/2019

[64] My source for Barandiam et al and Westlund is Schlosser's Standford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry on 'Agency' (Schlosser, 2019). Accessed May 1 2020.

Bellacasa, 2017, p.161) Therefore our obligations extend not just to that which is adjacent to us, but part of a wider web[65]. Logically, some of these interrelations may be invisible.

What is the 'web of care' to which we become related in our CACD projects? In our work on the ground in community-engaged arts, we may, consciously or unconsciously, presume individual agency as superior to collective, or vice versa. As Schininà discovers, in his work with Serbian refugees, the capacity and requirement to make decisions is both demanding what project participants cannot give, or may not want to, such as when they have been in situations of severe trauma (Schininà, 2012). I note that he especially talks to the capacity to make decisions as inappropriate under certain conditions, and/or due to certain experiences, and where participants are in terms of their 'rehab and reintegration' processes. He also observes that traumatised individuals within traumatised communities may play 'double narratives', in order to mimic compliance to both stated and unstated project demands (Schininà, in Ventevogel, Schininà, Strang, Gagliato, & Juul Hansen, 2015, chapter 8).

The pressures and requirements of CACD projects, which include a 'requirement' for participants to be shown to be empowered to make their own decisions, might serve to add to what he calls their 'double-narratives'—self-enactments that adapt and perhaps contradict each other, because their impetus is above all to 'remain safe' (*ibid,* p.3)[66]. I myself witnessed this in my work with the South Sudanese community. The complexities of what community members had to answer to in some instances took eighteen months to understand. The success of many projects cannot be measured in terms of evidence of individual agencies where the individual assertiveness is a risk too great in the circumstances. In fact, Schininà prescribes activities such as *knitting* when individual choices are just too difficult[67].

On the other hand, Schininà has observed the problems of 'collective' mentality in the groups with whom he has worked in war zones. Indeed, he asserts that in such contexts as his work in Serbia, collective identity can feed prejudice and go directly against 'project goals', which he was also forced to question. In other contexts and cultures (such as I experience in my work with the South Sudanese community), 'collective identity' is more common than is individuated decision-making. This fact *per se* might make the rolling-out of a project, within an expected timeframe, very difficult to achieve.

Other aspects of collective agency include who has the power or authority to say yes or no to what outside of the community might seem the simplest questions, as I discuss in my project work with the South Sudanese community in Chapter 9. As I discovered in my mediation between this community, non-Government organisations and several Government offices, notions of strength and agency differ greatly between cultures. We

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[65] Puig de la Bellacasa, whose writing re-introduced me to Stengers, calls them 'care webs'.

[66] This document was retrieved from https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/our_work/DMM/Migration-Health/MP_infosheets/MHPSS-refugees-asylum-seekers-migrants-Europe-Multi-Agency-guidance-note.pdf%0Ahttp://www.euro.who.int/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/297576/MHPSS-refugees-asylum-seekers-mig on August 16, 2019, but no longer seems accessible.

[67] Finding ways in which to understand relevance and irrelevance of criteria is critical. I suggest it belongs to a sensory discourse—a paying attention to the *umwelt* as suggested above and developed further below.

note here that 'collective agency' in feminist theory includes the powerful advances made by protest movements, of which we can count the women's movement of the 1960s and 70s, more recent second- and third-wave feminism, and current 'Black Lives Matter'. Indeed, each advance requires some sort of fissure, some sort of failure or non-compliance that highlights a gap in the ethics of practices, whether these practices are public or private, artistic, political or social.

Judith Butler pointedly talks to the agencies made possible by vulnerability: that is, agencies made possible by dint of listening to, accepting and accommodating experience outside of hegemonies. She argues that vulnerability be re-defined as a condition of 'radical openness' rather than as a weakness (Butler *et al*, 2016, p.81). In the situations I describe above—both mine, and Schininà's—this vulnerability and openness is a requirement, a touchstone, to help ensure we do not piggy back on systemic hierarchies, or unwittingly compound and sustain inequities and abuse.

There is a politics to this discussion touching on considerations of social justice and injustice. It also, by association, touches on what we do with/how we understand 'beauty'—whether that be the tropes of feminine beauty (as weakness), of beauty in strength, or beauty in proportions (or 'golden means') and so on. Whereas Elaine Scarry talks of beauty as a phenomenon that surprises and disarms us, and hence a de-egoic process (Scarry, 2013, pp 13–22), in other terms it is a harsh task-master, calling us to an impossible aspiration, or to sure failures in comparisons against it. But I argue that the beauty released in performing and community arts is often of another order: it is a little more where there is a coalition of forces that enables something (an idea, an action) to move forward with a kind of grace—the kind of grace we witness when a spider's leg twitches her web and the re-shaping of the weave coalesces. Grace is what Thompson describes in the physiotherapist's care of his injured friend; it is what we experience when a story comes forth from a body, in the action and speech of someone otherwise awkward but somehow released via an exercise. It is evident in Stengers' concept of 'constraints' with which we engage, and in de la Bellacasa's insistence on the recognition of 'interdependent entanglements' (de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.155). Such 'entanglements' recall Merleau-Ponty's understanding of how entities 'fold upon themselves, one to the other' and hence also become open to invisible coexistences. These entanglements *call to our care* in 'processes of mattering' (de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.135). It is like the 'sweet spot' on a tennis racquet, where the ball hits the strings at such an angle and at the very place where the strings can be most responsively and issue the most power, the most release. I note that the word 'sweet' here applies to a sensation and an action, an intersection of the body with a tool, and as with Thompson's story, there is a yoking of the language of aesthetics (a sweet or even 'beautiful' shot) with an action we usually think of as pragmatic ('we hit the ball'). We may not always hit the sweet spot; however, we might create the conditions for it to happen and look out for its moment of release.

Regarding agency in creative processes, Schlosser identifies 'skilled coping' (adaptation, adjustment, responsiveness), 'responsive flow;' 'recruitment of capabilities' (especially in art processes) and hence of advancing new forms (Schlosser, 2019, p.14) Libet talks of 'readiness potentials'; Wegner of 'kinds of consciousness' which need to be accounted for.

(Libet, 1992; Schlosser, 2019; Wegner, 2002) Others talk to the capabilities of 'deviance', both Schlosser and Libet citing the experience of the jazz musician (Schlosser, 2019, p.14; p 33-34). I mark that 'deviance' needs to be considered and valued as a mark of higher-order agency especially evident in community arts—and goes well beyond current notions of 'inclusion', 'equity' and 'giving voice'.

Finally, several philosophers counter the equation of agency with greatness and individuated heroicism or significance. Gambetti cites Arendt's assertion that to understand greatness is not merely to acknowledge deed and doer (and presumably 'he who conquers') but to recognise the greatness in endurance (Gambetti, in Butler *et al*, 2016, p.28). I return to the concept of yielding and endurance later in this thesis and align it with my concept of the value of 'pay forward' practices, whose benefits lie in the future. Processes 'along the way' require patience and tolerance of incompleteness and ambiguity.

In summary, whilst 'agency' is a term that rolls easily off the tongue and into organisational rubrics and platforms, the enabling of agency is complex, and requires a surprising delicacy and sophistication of understandings. Centred in relationality, the work of CACD exemplars such as Schininà, Balfour, Thompson and Conquergood specifically calls on other faculties I here nominate as observation (of current limits), intuition (around past social and identity construction, and trauma), persistence (of relating with sensitivity and kindness) and also yielding (in terms of letting go of expectations), although they themselves do not use these terms.

As I show in my case studies—and in particular in my work with students from an underprivileged school—our work can be further complicated by issues such as variability of education, language skills, and access. As I demonstrate, agency and access can be in a push-pull relation to each other, subject to vagaries in context such as gender disparities and cultural norms. In these ways, to *give agency* to project co-participants is a complex task. We note too that some feminist writers warn about 'feel good' methods (the 'inherent selfishness' of 'creating something of meaning *to me'* (Bennett, quoted in Trezise and Wake, 2013, p.184**)** and in 'the complicity of discourses…in enabling us, primarily, to *feel good* about ourselves whilst feeling *for* or *about* others', a consideration I examine (and question) in Part 2.

5.2.5 'Timeliness'

In projects setting out to achieve funding, there is the expectation of a recognisable outcome that could be called 'theatrical', or an art event. Yet what happens for communities not ready to make decisions or reach such 'outcomes'? Does this mean that no art occurs in these exchanges? What if *along-the-*way processes have enormous emotional, political and aesthetic significance to a community? What if the art *were* the exchange–if Thompson's aesthetics of care were present, but we did not recognise it?

In my experience, the effects and affects of working in community stretch both backwards and forwards in time. We need to include what information is locked into the silences of a community (what matters to them now, before and ahead) with Tiffany Page, for example,

making a point of 'causes extending…over months, years, and generations' (Page, 2017, p.6). As summarised in Chapter 4, Page asserts that feminist methodologies need to create novel temporal relations with time (*ibid.,* p.14), and to the sometimes 'unspectacular' temporality of precarity (*ibid.,* p.10). 'Specularity' refers to an awareness of what interests us, stimulates us or prompts our research, and the 'unspectacular' includes where we avoid or miss paying attention to.

Evaluation forms—strategies and limitations

In terms of end results, in arts and care practices equally, 'feedback' often occurs in *pro forma* documents (the tick boxes approach) and usually within certain timeframes. This delimits the scope and reach of feedback and dialogic exchange. Subtle, long-term effects and affects of events are rarely documented—whether that be of participants (see Caroline Wake's lament, in her otherwise positive review of the book by Balfour on refugee performance (Wake, 2014, p.114) or of spectators. However, questions of agency, ability and affect also belong to the future tense—a consideration I return to in my case studies and in my concluding chapters.

5.2.6 The place of mess, hope, and other forms of expression

It is no accident that Matarasso calls CACD a 'restless art', as it 'depends on uncomfortable tensions' and calls forth 'unexpected capacities' amongst its diversities[68]. Its work can create outcomes that can be 'messy', 'wild', deemed 'outsider art' or other such nomenclatures[69]. In an area of practice that Matarasso asserts 'throws up questions (we) cannot answer'[70], perhaps this is inevitable. However, none of the characteristics of ambiguity, the unexpected, or discomfort *per se* negate or contradict aesthetic value, but perhaps reflect on falsehoods, or narrow confines in our understanding of what is 'of value' in the first place.

Any such judgments as messy, wild, or 'outsider art' imply a centredness to aesthetic value against which work-in-community is presumed to push from its 'peripheries'. As I suggest, where *is* the 'centre' of (our) art? If art is a place which invites questions outside normal perception or habitual practices, storytelling from new perspectives, and values 'innovation' (a key criterion, for example, across all Boards in the Australia Council for the Arts[71]) then what can be called its 'centre'? And is its significance 'centred' in individual, or in collective, experience—a key question when we consider how our work in communities from different places of origin must somehow recognise and value different knowledge systems—including, within some communities, a higher priority placed on collective, rather than individual values?

The question of what enables trust, hope and hopefulness to emerge has long been a concern at the forefront of my own practice. Indeed, I have been in situations which

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[68] Matarasso, 'A Restless Art' blog, 17/03/2019; 08/11/2017

[69] Such judgments against assessment rubrics are a critical factor in my case study of The Compassion Plays in Chapter 8.

[70] Matarasso, 'A Restless Art' blog, 28/04/2019'; 17/03/2019' 08/11/2018 and 17/03/2019 respectively

[71] I have even seen it appear—in a highly problematic way—as a criterion within a tranche of funds disbursed by the Australian Department of Social Services (2017–20)—described below

require trust, hope, longing and over-extended expectations. At times, my energy and attention have also been disabused. However, I would agree with Matarasso that 'hope in uncertainty'[72] is one of the key strengths that CACD processes afford—if in the right context, and with enough and the right kinds of supports. Later in this thesis I argue that hope *per se* is a human right, and that, in true cultural democracy, a diversity of latent capabilities also has a right to emerge. Yet, how long does it take to work with uncertainty until forms appropriate to these diversities emerge? Indeed, if time were appropriately valued, apportioned and funded in order to properly buttress such projects, perhaps some of the so-called problems (such as messiness) might disappear.

Within the circuit of these questions, we can also further hone our considerations to embrace complications such as the precarity of social relations, and perhaps the multiplicity of 'centres' in contemporary life. In an era where there are more than 60 million displaced persons in the world (with more than a third of these designated as legitimate refugees)[73], and where recent Royal Commissions have confirmed the decades-long institutional abuses of children, what is the value of traditional or received aesthetics, to any of us? With as many as 38% of Australians now of non-English speaking background, what is a relevant cultural and aesthetic centre in our lives? Thus, our art may not only be restless due to the diversity of its participant communities, but restless because what it requires may not even fit within CACD's own received paradigms.

5.2.7 Into the future ('Very little like theatre': potential beings)

It is my contention that some of what we do, in laying the ground for, in and around participatory practices, is often very little like theatre[74]—or indeed, any other summarily identifiable art form. Nonetheless, its inherent value—socially and aesthetically—may be high. Here, the search perhaps is not to what rubrics can such work conform so much as, *if* such investigations are of value, what rubrics can we create to support this intention to help sustain a community's long- and short-term flourishing*?*

Both feminist care ethics, and ecological philosophy, are concerned with the bringing-forth of the potentiality of—and providing sustenance for—co-participant beings. Whilst 'flourishing' has its roots in Aristotelian philosophy, the end-point of this discussion points to a debate that is a practical consideration—a consideration of practice—in our current times. What enables and what blocks us in or work on the ground? What helps achieve and resource equity and co-participation in our practices? Much of our work may be of value into the future, as a contributor to what we might think of as a 'pay forward' economy—less as a singular outcome, than events or actions that reach forth, of benefit to future generations.

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[72] Matarasso's term is actually *hope* in uncertainty. There is a parallel argument in Terry Eagleton's *Hope Without Optimism* (2017). In what way is the 'third world' of creativity—a co-created future—understood as a 'need' rather than an aesthetic luxury? Can 'hope' and creative futurism be valued accordingly?

[73] Figures are correct as of 2018.

[74] This phrase brings to mind the comment by Polonius, 'very like a whale'—an indication of his trying to humour the 'mad logic' of the madly logical Hamlet.

5.3 The Australia Council for the Arts

The Australia Council describes its guidelines[75] as both a summary of 'good' practice in Australia, and a guideline for future work. Over the years, Council has learnt from practices and practitioners what it needs to articulate, often relying on applications from independent artists to understand what perspectives it needs to stretch and grow to accommodate. That said, it also notes that there can still be bickering between and amongst practitioners—a factor highlighted during and after Council awards ceremonies where different opinions can be 'acrimoniously expressed'[76]. On the other hand, this occurs in a context of scarcity rather than abundance, where the freezing and restricting of funds (especially since what is known as the 'Brandis era' of 2015—a period of draconian funding cuts) created fractiousness in the arts community.

Nonetheless, whilst this points to the effects of political and social policies, and the affect and effect of draconian funding restrictions[77], the focus of this chapter is more towards what is and is not articulated as the values and goals of CACD work. Under fiscal pressures and limitations, it is perhaps more important than ever that these values and principles are subject to examination.

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[75] https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/engagedcommunities-5859f19d5c109.pdf; retrieved from https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/programs-and-resources/engaged-communities/

[76] Comment made by a member of Council, regarding the award ceremonies in 2018/19. *Name protected*

[77] I note here that in Australia—a country prone to drought—that the concept of 'drought' extends beyond the circumstance of funding. Scarcity breeds drought-consciousness. It is only a remarkably different viewpoint which can keep us focused on where water *is*, as opposed to where it is not. George Gundry, an early advocate of Holistic Management in Australia, said his daughter pointed out that 'the problem' may not be 'drought', but 'that we don't have what we think we need for our own purposes'. His daughter was fourteen years old at the time. *Source: personal communication with the author.*

The following information sheet comes from the publicly accessible materials shared under the heading 'Engaged Communities':

Figure 2: Engaged Communities *information sheet, Australia Council for the Arts (https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/workspace/uploads/files/engagedcommunities-5859f19d5c109.pdf)*

In summary, for Council, CACD work must be:

1. 'By, with and for the community';

2. Socially inclusive—demonstrating cultural equity, respect for differences, and achieve results via 'deep collaboration';

3. A co-creation, with equitable sharing of control over artistic outcomes, and co-creators equally valued in terms of intellectual property, copyright and ownership.

Artistically and aesthetically, projects should:

1. Demonstrate innovation in content and form; and

2. Be culturally appropriate (gauged in consultation with communities)—that is, decisions about art form, artwork, narrative and objectives should be tailored to be relevant to the local community or to target communities (a bottom-up rather than top-down model).

Structurally, projects should:

1. Include highly skilled practitioners, working alongside community leaders and cultural experts,

2. Consider succession plans, and the long-term up skilling of members of community into management and leadership roles,

3. Enable co-creators to participate in, rather than consume, art, and

4. See development as a primary objective.

Each of the above points can be argued to 'show care'. However, the last two points are complex in their presumptions. Firstly, that 'co-creators participate in rather than consume art] suggests that observing (or 'consuming') is oppositional to 'making' (and perhaps too is somehow oppositional to showing care); and secondly, if]development is seen as a primary objective,' this begs the question that if a community does not (yet) *develop* at the end of a project, does this mean that the community has not (yet) achieved art? This rests on a presumption on some level that art is an end-product. What if the exchange *is* the art; if Thompson's aesthetics of care is present, but we do not recognise it? This point becomes critical in my discussion of the *Culture Hub* in Part 2 below.

Related to this argument, Council observes that community arts-centred work 'may (regularly utilise and) intersect with related fields including health, housing, client management, justice, education, regional development'. This particular statement talks to the complexity of scope and reach of such work; but it also, and specifically, talks to the peculiar and extensive demands placed on us as practitioners. Whilst the statement reflects an awareness of the complexity of communities, it perhaps does not demonstrate due care to what is expected of artists to 'cover' and be across whilst working in this field, in terms of under recognised levels of expertise, and underpaid or unpaid hours. It also stops short of equating such interrelated practices as 'art'—conceptual divisions that have been identified as problematic to FCE scholars, and socially engaged practitioners such as Thompson, Schininà and Matarasso.

Usually, the onus of networking and creating partnerships is up to the artists themselves—an expectation that relies on artists' legwork preceding receipt of funding—a situation fundamentally disrespectful of the effort and abilities these tasks require. My own most recent experience has been to have put in 600 preparatory hours for 800 hours paid work following. There is a madness to this: to remain as an independent artist (living with dependent children) in such a field is completely unsustainable. This situation also reflects on the inherent interdisciplinary nature of the field (an artist who is also an economist and also a fund-raiser and project manager, and an ethicist to boot), and as discussed further below, points to the risk of over-extension and regular burnout amongst practitioners. Of course, Council's document is not intended to be a comprehensive analysis of CACD. Concepts that clarify such issues might come from other areas of more extensive research, such as undertaken by the Gulbenkian Foundation in the UK.

Regarding the key questions of agency and co-creativity, Alison Jeffers and Gerri Moriarty ask practitioners to define whether community engagement is 'peripheral, engaged or core' (Jeffers, A and Moriarty, 2017, *passim*). Furthermore, following Lowe's 'Helix quality framework', we can extend to some specificities, such as asking, How are priorities decided? What is a project's aesthetic values, and, what values *are elided* from the process? Who has funded a project, and how does/might this affect the outcome? and Is the project required to produce an outcome? Does such outcome imply or enforce cohesion which (as Lowe cautions) may not necessarily be true to the community?

Frances Rifkin notes Elizabeth Hare's observation of the 'spirit of radical questioning' at the root of CACD practices. Hare states that, at its origins, it 'resists coercion in the interests of creative security…of the client group' (Rifkin, 2010, p.30) which puts points 8 and 9 under particular interrogation.

Jeffers, extrapolating from the writings of cultural theorist Stuart Hall, adds that if we take on the idea that culture is a 'critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled' (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2017, pp.251–2), then we need to understand that 'such actions entail risk', and that such risks—which Hall states can be 'critical' and therefore unsettling of statuses quo—might therefore also risk displeasing funders. As if we bite the hands that feed us—which *per se* should not be a problem in a liberal society, especially if the goal is to 'innovate'. So, we see in this discussion that clarity seems to catch us up in a circular trap: how do we keep going?

On the intercultural level, The Gulbenkian document (Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, 2017) makes specific the notions of inclusion and cultural equity by speaking to CACD's role to 'bridge diverse communities' that 'do not usually cross paths'; to ask projects to 'validate our stories and create new ones' and create or renew bonds between different 'shores of understanding'[78] (Balfour, 2012); and to ask the value of a 'work of art in the world' to be measured against *its action* in the world—witnessing, evaluating and valuing the difference these interventions make in the public sphere. This then touches on a notion of the transformative capacity of art—which I noted in Chapter 1 was placed in opposition to socially engaged theatre in the Bishop-Kester debate.

Furthering the concepts of inclusion and difference, Balfour notes that such work may 'smoke out different knowledge systems' (Balfour, 2012, p.27) and place 'coexistent stories' beside each other, whilst Jeffers concludes that you 'may be working with 'people you are likely to disagree' (Jeffers, 2013, p.307-8).

Such factors bring with them ethic demands that are often left to chance—or, to the *chance skill combination* of individuals. As I note in Part 2, in my work with the South Sudanese community, I operated as initiator, then facilitator, adviser, artist, manager of volunteers and key mediator between government and community. I was reprimanded by a Government funding representative for inputting my consultancy fees at too low a rate. However, without limiting that rate, within a grant for $10,000, there was no way any part of the project could have happened in the first place—and in my view, and the view of the

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[78] This phrase is used by various writers, including Balfour, Jeffers and Tillers.

community that asked me to create the project, it needed to happen. Intriguingly, the Government representative presumed that the so-called 'consultant' was a provider— somewhat like a tax agent—completely independent of the project. 'Who would work for that little?' he interjected in a sensitive field of exchange with an input I can only describe as a summary ejaculation.

This particular exchange is only one among many. There are hundreds more to consider. I argue that a key is to ask project partners, supporters and funders to be open to thinking differently. If we apply Tronto's 1993 care ethics framework, this means that the requisite phases (of caring about, taking care of, care-giving and care-receiving) may require key ethic elements that she defines as relational activities materialised through complex processes that reflect, or rely on, a caring *disposition.* Preparedness for such circumstances is likely to necessitate other skills quite outside of the normal remit of the arts, becoming an expectation or project requirement, that quickly becomes exploitative.

An issue then becomes how these necessary skills are valued (and, whether or not recompensed) in an extremely underfunded and undervalued arts climate. In Part 2 below, I note that in my case studies these 'other skills' were consistently required at very high levels. This in itself brings forth the issue of whether the work of deep care in what funders (such as, but not limited to, the Australia Council) requires as 'deep collaboration' is ever adequately recognised or recompensed. Or, does CACD become the 'new' (unrecompensed, and under-recognised) *women's work* against which FCE scholars have now been arguing for 30 years?

5.4 Summary of issues for examination

Joan Tronto's 'caring disposition', as applied to CACD practices, might require a degree of openness, flexibility and skill levels that do not fit within existing and/or financially recompensed structures. For example, is the notion that CACD as a 'place where we might learn about each other' accorded time and structures that adequately support such ideas and engagements? Project-by-project funding delimits the scope of such processes, enforcing articulation of outcomes (and indeed determining processes) even before a community has the chance to engage.

In the words of Meg Richens, former EO of UnitingCare Kippax, an organisation in Canberra that caters for multiple demographics and their needs in community, CACD projects might be places where we are enabled to 'learn as much about ourselves and our presumptions as we do about others'[79]. In fact, she asserts this could be a rubric of *how we value* projects, and our work in these projects, in the first place.

The risk of not taking the time, or being adequately supported, to listen and be led by participant communities to this depth of understanding, means that process and outcomes risk becoming another form of silencing of needs, awarenesses, and of the

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[79] In conversation with the author, August 14, 2019.

'messes' we face in our daily lives that yet may have aesthetic, creative, social and transformative value.,

As a second example, how do such complexities, that can make or break CACD as (potential) sites of 'next practice' touch on the transformative capability of care ethics-in-action? CACD and FCE might better overlap each other if/in that their methodologies are geared towards co-creating new futures together. Yet in the context of applying for funds or being accepted into venue performance seasons ('ticking boxes' and adhering to received terms), how can a next practice—as opposed to a received, or understood, practice—be recognised[80]? This a critical factor I analyse within my case studies.

Dwight Conquergood acknowledges that coercion can be a factor in how people make work and get paid to do it. He makes several salient observations of failed attempts preceding his own successes in Thailand working with the refugee Hmong (Conquergood, 2012; pp 38, 47, 51). In 1998, Conquergood had to subvert the international aid system in order to gain entry to the refugee camp, and work in a way contrary to the mindset of health and United Nations workers who had all but given up on this particular group as the most 'dirty', 'hopeless' and 'uncooperative' of communities. His attentiveness to the historical, philosophical and situational differences of the Hmong made for the success— and the meaningfulness—of the project overall[81].

However, what Matarasso quite forcefully asserts as CACD's purposive or functional tendencies—to 'aspire towards emancipatory social engagement'—can also leave it susceptible to being hijacked to political causes. Conquergood's successes are reliant on his capacity to subvert political systems. As a more contemporary example, the Australian Department of Social Services, in a callout for 'innovative' and 'creative' projects in its *Try Test Learn* Fund, 2016–18, the Department indicated its own primary goal was to get project participants off unemployment benefits within a year. This presupposition was not stipulated in the up-front assessment criteria; it was only when a colleague investigated the fifty pages of Q&A (which she as a university academic could access, and which I as an independent could not) that she uncovered the real agenda buried in these so-called public-access documents. Whilst asserting the higher social purpose of community arts, nonetheless Matarasso cautions that as an art it should never render its participants 'instrumental'[82], which the *Try Test Learn* fund arguably set out to do.

Aside from overtly political agendas, received aesthetic forms *per se* might restrict possible outcomes. Schininà observes that the expected form of a process might be an inhibitory factor. Much of the work he conducted in 1999 with Serbian refugees was 'very little like theatre'. To this day, in my work with the South Sudanese in the ACT I am unsure whether I can say I had been able to share 'my own' work, or be understood or perceived as, an

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[80] I note here that our local (state-based) funding body, as late as 2018, asked us to nominate *one* major practice outcome of our proposed CACD engagements. Their response to my query (regarding a non-continuing funding opportunity) was that they would 'look into it' in future years.

[81] I also note he had an academic position and was in that way paid for the work. In the scarcity of our current funding climate, I propose it is almost impossible to operate as an independent, and sustain any sort of continuity, unless one's work remains voluntary.

[82] Matarasso, 2019, 3/1/2019

artist; or as someone more simply relating to the focus community with kindness and generosity as a kind of functionary. Yet, once asked directly by a colleague: 'In what way has this project reflected your embodied theatre practice?', I find myself answering: 'I carry the principles of my training with me, in my own embodiment, into each situation'. Therefore, in this way, *the theatre becomes me*; however, to have insisted, or to have channelled (the very limited) funds into creating 'theatre' would have been abusive to the group and both consciously and unconsciously ignorant of its needs. To have refused to do this does, however, leave the project and caught in a debilitating spiral of underfunding.

Furthermore, communities can be so complex that they both do and do not 'share place, beliefs, spirit'—that is, they may not be 'compliant' communities. Place, beliefs and 'communal spirit' might have wide variation; and, in the case where a community has been transplanted from one place to another, what do 'old' beliefs mean in a new environment? As Lowe and Rifkin, and my case studies, document, there exists a wide variation in understandings on such 'shared beliefs', and—as I explained in Part 1 above, in discussing 'economies of care'—in what kinds of economies are valued. In addition, within communities—particularly displaced ones—a community's willingness to participate can be circumscribed by a number of significant factors, including but not limited to their economic circumstances, limits to access/transport; differing cultural values (e.g. differing roles traditionally ascribed to women and men); differing levels of education; different notions of 'choice'; and variable understandings of what they have rights to contribute to.

Expectations of 'intercultural' processes may be unrealistic, regarding a community's readiness to share or readiness *to transform*, which Schininà observes as presumptions of best practice that are unreasonable in many circumstances. Indeed, there may be power imbalances in a group one cannot observe, until relationship has been established over several years. Prominent members of a group may lord it over others—as an example, men over women in the Dinka community, which is challenging for a female facilitator to countenance.

In my experience with the Dinka, a few visionary leaders welcome 'interculturality', yet most members of their communities may be suspicious, and/or more simply struggling with too much that it is beyond their daily capacities to be open to. What has worked is a strengthening of their own culture first—providing comfort in the known—even though within that, their own ritual practices may create liminal spaces, and be transformative in themselves, thereby issuing a restorative function that Jill Dolan (Dolan, 2005)[83] and another socially engaged artists value . But in my experience this argument has little traction with funders and key (parochial) venue organisations.

In such instances, Rifkin's 'core principles of choice, equality, respect' (Rifkin, 2010, pp.7,18,19 and *passim*) carry enormous complexity. His other key terms are 'safety and

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[83] In her book, titled *Utopia in Performance: Finding Hope at the Theatre,* Dolan writes on the 'protective qualities' afforded by performance.

competence': but, as discussed, the latter may require competencies well beyond what generic creative arts practice frameworks in general accommodate[84].

Celebrating 'our collective, human capacity for survival and transformation'[85]

Victor Turner comments on the place of *ritual* in community: where cultural practices create liminal spaces that allow for a refreshing and renewal of culture (Turner, 1982, pp.53–59). We note that transformation is also of great importance to FCE scholars such as Tronto and Barnes (ref. Barnes *et al,* 2015, p.5; 16–18).

The Gulbenkian Foundation, however, frames the discourse in a different way. Noting the diminishing role of places of gathering such as churches, it chooses to use metaphors of 'colleges, town halls, parks, and homes' (Calouste–Gulbenkian Foundation, 2017, p.4) to describe potential 'holistic and democratic' spaces of meeting, learning, sharing and social transformation. It demands CACD take up a civic role, above and beyond the production and presentation of artistic work; for co-creators to function as 'connectors, capacity builders, provide discourse and feedback to public policy' across dividing lines of 'geography, capacity, ethnicity, age'; furthermore, to value people beyond their 'usefulness'; to provide forums, perspectives, pathways and means on how to grow and change, and perhaps even help communities identify where and how they can transform themselves and each other. In this, the Gulbenkian share ground with Victor Turner and other practitioners who allow for differing beliefs, including the 'spiritual' in their discourse.

Against this flexible specificity, the Australia Council's criteria (which remain largely secular) seem vague, pointing to artistry, aspiration, transformation, innovation, 'great' art and arts workers, vibrancy, creativity and 'memorable arts experiences for everyone', whereas through deep listening—or what Jeffers calls civil listening (Jeffers, 2013, pp.307–8)—we may indeed uncover an understanding of what is of value, in our diverse and unwieldy communities. But I claim that some key questions remain, namely: *Whose values* are such rubrics speaking to? How do we reckon with, and recognise 'the new'? For whom does it have to be 'new'? What makes art 'great' and/or 'memorable' for and within our communities? Is cultural knowledge acquired or discovered during a performance, or is it pre-ordained?

I suggest that in intercultural practices, these questions are complex, but not necessarily opposed to progressive aesthetic outcomes. But what is imperative, is holding time long enough to have these in-depth conversations in the first place, providing flexibility for us to discover what is of value in our practices.

By way of concluding this chapter, I point to the publication, *Refugee Performance: Encounters with Alterity* (Balfour, 2012). In this compendium of writings by nineteen CACD scholars, Michael Balfour canvases some of the huge variation of practices that can be called CACD, and specifically, 'refugee performance'. His own essay (pp.213–228)

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[84] Note that—contrary to the historical development of care ethics research (which began in examinations of care for the carer), that it is only recently that various councils in Australia are trying to set up resources to address the mental health of arts workers in community who may be subjected to intense and traumatizing, or vicariously traumatizing, experiences

[85] Balfour, 2012, p.27

discusses three projects: Multilink's *Exodus project* in Logan Valley, Queensland; Wendy Ewald's participatory photography project *Towards a Promised Land* in Margate, UK; and Antony Gormley's *Waste Man* sculpture, also in Margate. Each of his examples places a key artist in differing relations to their community of collaborators, and each of which has both very different process, intention and outcomes. Each is productive in different ways. Significantly, each allows both contributors/co-participants to see their world differently— whether that is for an hour, an evening, or a lifetime. Each project is profoundly different in scope and reach. In each, kinds and degrees of care shown to participants vary widely[86].

I note that in each case, there is a recognisable outcome that could be called 'theatrical', or an art event. A key component of this definition includes a certain relationship to time— that an outcome occurs within or at the end of a specified length of time. I argue that this as problematic. Each of his three examples talks to a CACD project as a finitude of sorts. It may have repercussions beyond the event[87], but nonetheless, these three projects have warranted evaluation and publication because they have come to some sort of conclusion. On the other hand, Balfour's 2012 publication—an invaluable drawing together of various contemporary refugee-centred performance projects—includes an important article contributed by Guglielmo Schininà (already cited, but here approached from a different angle) regarding his 'psychosocial and theatrical work with Serbian refugees' in Europe in 1999. In this article, Schininà describes where, although there is 'very little theatre per se', there is yet 'plenty of cultural performance', and theatre is less a form and more 'a means of developing relationship, communication and expression that concentrates on the construction of roles' (Schininà, 2012, p.182).

As I have already mentioned, Schininà contests several pieces of conventional wisdom about what constitutes best practice in refugee performance, including the dictum that facilitators should consult with refugees about 'what it should all be about', and 'what they want to do'. Indeed, the group he was working with 'could not cope with choices' (as they had never really had any), and that workshops should begin with group exercise (he argues that his participants were already over-invested in their group identity, which was 'both a cause and a consequence of war' (Schininà, 2012, pp.175; 170).

With this in mind, Schininà and his co-workers often had to split participants into smaller groups to do activities such as sewing, sport and music—such activities hardly considered 'enlightened' outcomes of contemporary CACD arts practices. As social practices, linking art and hope, however, they achieve very much—and well beyond the scope of any singular project engagement or funder requirements.

As Caroline Wake rightly points out in her review of Balfour's book, the longer-term effects and affects of projects might be critical within certain, if not most, CACD projects. Their impacts over time, and beyond the confines of funding (or defined project and publication parameters) are also important but often-overlooked considerations. The emphasis in

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[86] Of course, Balfour has a huge output of analyses of many different kinds of projects over many decades. This discussion only points to one article for the sake of the current argument.

[87] Caroline Wake (Wake, 2014), for example, laments the fact that the publication of *Refugee Performance* has a finitude and lack of updating of or reflecting on projects that go back more than a decade. She casts no blame on this process, but indeed suggests that lack of funding might contribute to such problems.

Schininà's work is on relationality and witnessing, but it also harnesses other abilities such as a perceptual faculty that can observe current limits; intuition (around past social and identity construction, and trauma); and persistence (of relationality, in spite of all). It engages in an imagining of what informs participants' present behaviour (what a participant has 'gone through') which inhibits their ability to freely make choices, as well as how they are socially constructed, and socially understood or misunderstood in their present circumstances. In many ways, the success of an artist's work in such situations is 'to yield'.

In my experience, a 'deep' project evaluation also needs to include what information is locked in the silences of the community involved in any project, as well as in what unfolds forwards and backwards (for and from them) in time. Working with respect of and for silences, and for extended temporality, are key concepts I apply in my case studies[88]. In such considerations, it is important to consider not only how Feminist care ethics and care ethics inform performance and CACD practices, but also how such practices might inform, provoke and even alter notions of care practices—and indeed, philosophies of theatre and witnessing—and the challenges these provocations issue to CACD funding guidelines and organisational presumptions.

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[88] As I have written elsewhere, in a dance improvisation, one might be aware of a giving-shape (looking forward) and choices *ahead* of one's action, that help to structure a work as it unfolds; elsewhere, as in Butoh, one 'brings ones' ancestors with you' as you dance. Both experiences reflect a particular relationship of the body to space and time.

PART 2 CASE STUDIES

Chapter 6
Latent selves and broken weavings: the potential-to-care in CACD practices

> In creating art, we bring something into existence, and in doing that we change the world. When we make sense of life, from feelings, ideas and experiences we may not even know we have, in forms to which others can respond creatively in turn, we conjure up new possibilities in all our imaginations. That is the artist's act and it is a power in the world.
>
> *(Matarasso, A Restless Art, 09/01/2019)*

The three chapters in this section encompass projects I have co-created in CACD processes with a group of women, members of the Forgotten and Stolen Generations formerly incarcerated in a child welfare institution Parramatta; with refugee groups, particularly members of the South Sudanese Diaspora currently living in Canberra; and with children from an underprivileged and largely impoverished demographic attending a south Canberra High School.

The Parramatta women (the 'Parragirls') had for the most part been institutionalised, isolated and abused throughout their teenage years. Most of the refugees had lost members of their families to civil war[89], and the local school children exhibited signs of systemic intergenerational underprivilege. The 11-year-old Canberra schoolchildren could be described as afraid of reaching into space and spaciousness and hence of aspiration—ironic in a project imagining the significance of the first human footsteps on the moon. Many had not been nurtured through some basic early childhood skills, such as in practices of story-sharing, and in the use of scissors. The point of this example is that, what we often take as givens—for example, the power of imagining and storytelling, and the invitation to imagine forward with mental and physical agility—were already not a 'given' in these children's lives.

Each of the groups in my case studies exhibits signs of the affects of displacement from their rights to come-forth into their respective worlds. This is not to presume that arts practices are obliged to be compensatory in some way; however, if our projects are practices that show care, we need to accompany or walk alongside our co-participants and whatever they bring with them into our workshop rooms.

It would be an error to presume the stories participants wish to share always centre in their traumatic experience(s). Indeed, a peer artist[90] once told me of his elation when his charges—young refugee Sudanese—created a sassy, American gangster *noir* instead of

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[89] On another level, it also prescribes a disruption of knowledge threads, and hence of one's relation to elders—which I take up more fully in the case study *Moon Stories* in Chapter 10.

[90] The anecdote was shared with me by Paschal Dantos Berry, in conversation during an Australia Council for the Arts Assessment Panel Meeting in April 2019.

the 'refugee porn' the company Director had presumed. Nonetheless, the not-speaking the trauma of co-participants also requires an awareness of what they cannot, will not, or choose not to speak. Can we let the elephant (endangered species that it is) sit there with us in the room? Can we let it sit quietly with us playing cards, as everyone else is entitled to do[91]? The ethics of our CACD practices—whilst at times, requiring us to actively prompt and provoke participants' creativity, imaginings, and openness to what we bring forward together, at other times requires us to be sensitive to just letting things be, which is a kind of positive endurance. This is not to say we do not make 'art'—or that endurance itself is not a kind of art—especially if it is about 'good' care, which I discuss in the paragraphs which follow.

In my first case study, of work with women incarcerated as teenagers in the Parramatta Girls' Home[92], the women's early lives had been summarised and delimited in official reports and dossiers as 'belonging to bad'[93]. The dossier 'towers' had become the imagined limits of their life trajectories. By contrast, the current and continuing Memory Project offers participants a growing-forth and a coming-into-being they did not know they had the right or capability to have.

As one of the places investigated in the recent Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to the Abuse of Children[94], the Precinct's history is an example of the difference between care actions, and care institutions which may deliver anything but 'good' care.

Indeed, Thompson reminds us that:

> while care appears to need an adjective to endow it with value—so we receive good care, thoughtful care, and so on—it often has a positive value in its verbal form without adverb support. […] Care thus hovers between a descriptive category with no inherent moral quality, to a normative one that implies that it is a proscription of the positive values found within caring *per se.*
>
> *(Thompson 2016, p.433)*

It is this 'normative' presumption of which we need to be aware—to see through the veil of illusion that all care is 'good' care. By analogy, too, we need to be on guard against any such presumptions around our notions of beauty, which seems to need no adjectives (good or bad beauty). But, as Thompson, Schininà and Scarry each demonstrate, care does tend to operate as a kind of verb aligned with transformation. Gambetti reminds us that Hannah Arendt considers endurance on equal footing with what we do or decide regarding human greatness (in Butler, Gambetti & Sabsay, 2016, p.28). By the end of this

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[91] This particular image—of the sitting playing cards together—has particular relevance to my discussion of the Culture Hub in Chapter 9. Elders of the South Sudanese community specifically asked for card games to be provided during their cultural Gatherings.

[92] The women invited in to the Memory Project can be named in this thesis, because they have self-identified as artists in the public domain, exhibiting and contributing in various exhibitions events and conferences

[93] The participant (*name withheld*) also summarized herself as this in her personal journal.

[94] This Royal Commission in Australia was preceded by one in Ireland and another in the UK.

chapter I will show that endurance is a part of art that shows good care. This first case study lays the ground for the others in discussions throughout Part 2.

To write this thesis, I have referred to my own project notes, to exchanges with participants in conversation and via email, and to statements made by participants at the conclusion of process. Some of these statements have been solicited, for example, from the audience for *Anthems and Angels;* others have been volunteered by participants—for example, in email correspondence around the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project, and the *Culture Hub.* Each process has been required to answer to stringent ethical requirements of Monash University, or of the funders involved—for example, the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs, and ACT Heritage. In each, I demonstrate that vulnerability of participants demonstrates a kind of strength—Butler calls vulnerability a 'resource'—and indeed a strength that opens to new beauties. Each demonstrates distinctions in moral theory between 'standard' theories of individualist rationality and the subject 'par excellence', and agency redefined as responsive flow, recruitment of capabilities and shared collective agencies, as discussed above.

In the following section, I describe and evaluate the first project, working with the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project, also known as the Memory Project, or PFFPMP.

6.1 Silenced voices: The Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project

'Parragirls' began as a support group, initiated by three former residents of Parramatta Girls Home (Bonney Djuric, Christina Green and Lynette Aitken) in 2006, for women institutionalised in the precinct in the mid- to late-twentieth century. As teenagers, members of the group had been incarcerated for the 'crimes' of being orphaned, or *exposed to moral danger* ('EMD') by parents themselves disempowered by social displacement or poverty. Whilst institutionalised, a substantial number were subject to psychological and/or physical abuse—for example, to 'punishments' such as scrubbing brick walkways or walls for hours at a time[95]. This last is a bizarre echo of the punishments meted out in the precinct since early colonial times. Nonsensical repetitive actions, such as the scrubbing of brick pavements or walls for hours, seem to have been passed on as 'corrective' strategies across the century, as if the bricks themselves could instruct across and through history, and (rather like Alice-in-Wonderland's biscuit invoking her to 'eat me') were implicated in that narrative of violence.

Residents had no rights to privacy (for example, toilet cubicles and shower cells had no doors) and there was little formal education outside of preparation for 'domestic' roles[96]. It is no surprise that the title of Djuric's first major project publication is titled *Abandon all hope* (2011). Where children could not actually escape, or overtly rebel, they learnt other

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[95] Best initial references for this information are Djuric' *Abandon all hope* (2011), and Ashton, Paul, and Wilson, *Silent System* (2014)—a book whose research extends beyond the PFFP into a broader research into the 'care' system.

[96] Djuric notes that a 'privileged few' had access to further education; however, for the large part, any education was very poor and mainly focused on domestic 'female' education (Djuric, 2011)(Parragirls, 2016)

strategies such as compliance, 'forgetting', keeping silent[97] under duress, and inducing self-harm as a form of resistance.

As a result of 'chance' conversations in 2012 between Djuric and community artist Lily Hibberd, the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Memory Project (PFFPMP) was formed (Hibberd, 2017). Thanks to the strenuous enduring efforts of Djuric and Hibberd, the consistent focus has been to enable members of the Parragirls to re-author their own life narratives through arts practices, releasing them from the constraints learnt through incarceration towards their re-creative capacities. This is an example of the 'vulnerable leadership' (as described in Part I above)—particularly on the part of Djuric, who is herself one of the Parragirls[98]. The participants had already proved themselves resilient enough to survive.

The Memory Project has unfolded in activities ranging from print making to artists' book exhibitions, from Sorry Day[99] and NAIDOC events, to media installations and a performance in which I was involved as a facilitator and eventually performer. As in best-practice CACD, meticulous attention to who initiates and makes what decisions has always been critical to the Project. In part, its methodology—devised and sometimes fiercely debated between Djuric and Hibberd—has often enough been informed by past mistakes, both in the 'care' system, but also within previous arts processes. We might remember that the etymology of the verb 'to care' is rooted in the verb 'to cure' and from that in the verb 'to grieve'[100]. 'Good care' may result from due processing of the failures we grieve.

The Memory Project's methodology was significantly reconfigured following an early incident where the women's stories were voluntarily shared (with a playwright) and became the subject of a professionally produced play[101]. Whilst this particular outcome garnered prizes and critical recognition, there were tentative responses from several of the Parragirls expressing doubt and uncertainty that their stories had become

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[97] One technique is to stay silent—as Tumarkin explains in referencing the survival of dissidents in the Soviet era (Tumarkin, 2013)

[98] The models here are Alfonzo Montuori (on transformative leadership studies), the 'Power-Up' concept presented by Chrissie Tiller, and descriptions of 'The art of self-organizing' delivered by Adnan Abdul Ghani, on his work in establishing the Support Group Network at Restad Gard Asylum Centre, Sweden. Both Tiller's and Abdul Ghani's presentations were delivered at the *Platforma* Festival, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, October 2017. (Abdul Ghani, 2017.; Montuori & Donnelly, 2018; Tiller, 2017)).

[99] The first National Sorry Day was held on May 26, 1998, one year after the tabling of a report about the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. The report, known as *Bringing Them Home*, acknowledged that Indigenous children were forcibly separated from their families and communities since the early days of European occupation in Australia. What is known as 'The Apology' was delivered by Australia's then Prime Minister Kevin Rudd when he tabled a motion in parliament on February 13, 2008, apologizing to Australia's Indigenous people, particularly the Stolen Generations and their families and communities, for the laws and policies that inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss. https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/australia/national-sorry-day; accessed 25 November 2019.

[100] To care', *v*., from Middle English *caren*, *carien*, from Old English *carian* ('to sorrow, grieve, be troubled, be anxious, to care for, heed'), from Proto-Germanic **karōną* ('to care'). Cognate with Middle High German *karn* ('to complain, lament, grieve, mourn'), Alemannic German *karen*, *kären* ('to groan, wheeze, give a death rattle'), Swedish *kära* ('to fall in love'), Icelandic *kæra* ('to care, like'), Gothic ᚲᚨᚱᛟᚾ (*karōn*, 'to be concerned').

[101]The name of the playwright is withheld; as Schininà observes, the point is in not point to blame, rather, to recognise what structures and habits unwittingly continue abuse.

'entertainment'[102]. As an exemplar of 'verbatim' theatre, the public display and playing-out of the women's teenage years threatened to shrink the women's self-identities back into the dossiers out of which they had been struggling to emerge. The women's cautious objections to this experience are a delicate thing to include in his thesis, as their experiences have willingly been sharing in the private realm (via emails, and in conversations). Their freedoms to create public statements to these effects have been restricted in part by their experiences of incarceration and their subjection to judgment from authority figures. This is not to stay the playwright herself imposed authority over the process: rather that the structure of the process presents an authority in itself to which it is very difficult to provide a counter. The finitude of the project itself—the limits of its funding, scope and parameters with the end result in a well-made play—also runs counter to what we might image as 'possible outcomes; which incorporate ongoing relationship [tot eh subject and the subjects] and an ongoing transformation and interrogation of the represented narrative as it plays out in different and renewed contexts. This points to a variation on aesthetics as well as ethics and performance structures within which we usually operate. It certainly questions the parameters under which so-called 'verbatim' theatre usually operates the truths usually accorded to it.

Bryony Trezise and Caroline Wake note a 'general unease' about verbatim theatre (Trezise, B., & Wake, 2013) which can tend to literalism, thereby re-traumatising the subject. As E. Valentine Daniel discusses in his book on the lives of subalterns in Sri Lanka during and since the 1980s civil war, trauma 'freezes' the subject (Daniel, 1996; Porges, 2011; *passim*), and verbatim processes can exacerbate the effect of this. Indeed, in CACD, there are important distinctions to be made between work that is trauma-centred, *versus* work that is 'trauma-informed'. The latter term implies that, rather than becoming the subject of a process or outcome, difficult narratives may be better held implicitly. Like the elephant in the room, the elephant may need discrete and quiet care. Hence, the subtitle of this thesis—'holding the invisible'—yoked directly with an ethics of care. Indeed, trauma-informed work often requires the holding of silences, as much as the stories that participants can or want to fully acknowledge or share.

Although via the Memory Project, many of the 'Parragirls' have moved beyond their institutional experience as definitive of their identities—for example, in becoming full-time and exhibiting artists; sustaining meaningful work and incomes, and perhaps above all, in developing abilities to develop open and trusting relationships—nonetheless it comes along with them in their lives, and therefore requires to be cared-for.

6.2 Site history

Since the 1880s, the Female Factory Precinct has functioned as a prison, a Catholic orphanage, and an 'industrial school' where the notion of 'school' as a place of education

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[102] As Hibberd describes to me, in an email dated 16 November 2019, these feelings were intermingled with a certain happiness that the 'truth was coming out', and that 'the public was listening'.

was noted in the diary of a former resident[103] as a spectacular failure. Very little learning, apart from the learning of how to cope with fear, occurred.

Graduating to its place as a girls' 'home', remand centre, then women's prison over the next 60–90 years, so-called punishments meted out in the course of the Precinct's more contemporary iterations lend credence to notions that places haunted by violence help recreate and sustain violent actions. Perhaps, we might conjecture, as a result of the intertwining of this history with the present moment. If history is present, its energies and misdemeanours can be too, constituting a 'dark *unwelt*'[104].

Gunaratnam and Hamilton (citing Grace Cho) and others argue for the validity of a 'hauntology' in historical discourses, marking a place for an understanding of the intertwining of canny and uncanny recognitions in/of our histories (Cho, 2008; Gunaratnam & Hamilton, 2017). As Trezise and Wake also discuss, in their book on performance in sites of trauma, such sites can and perhaps should be preserved and animated in order to keep such histories under scrutiny. Site-specific memorialisation invites visitors to come face to face and body to body with sites and understand our own potential agencies in such 'dark histories' (Trezise & Wake, 2013). For Djuric, preserving the site, and performing commemorative acts within it, is not only about preserving memories too easily sidelined and forgotten, but to call to account, re-mind and ensure that such atrocities enacted over the Precinct's history never happen again.

Ghosted by its past, within a fragile present amongst decrepit buildings, and with an uncertain future needing almost constant vigilance to prevent inappropriate and/or unsympathetic development or other use, the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct has been listed as the first Australian Site of Conscience in 2013—a tribute to Djuric's persistent activism.

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[103] Reported in Djuric (2011)

[104] See definition of *unwelt* (a sensory ecology) on pp 40, Chapter 3

Figure 3: Bonney Djuric, Les Oubliettes, *installed in the Bethel building for E.M.G., Parramatta Girls Home, May 2014. Pleated paper dresses and fishing wire, dimensions variable. Photo: Lucy Parakhina.*

6.3 Remembering and forgetting: haunted places

The establishing of the Memory Project preceded the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to the Sexual Abuse of Children (2014–17). There were sixteen former residents of the Parramatta Girls' Home who gave public testimony; others were called as expert witnesses as part of the police investigation that followed; and an unknown number—possibly hundreds—of women provided testimony in private sessions or via written submission[105].

Djuric says that some of the women gave questionable evidence. 'False' facts are common in situations where trauma has been experienced; however, as Shildrick reminds us in her discussion of the experience of heart transplant patients, 'the point (can be) not to pin down the truth or falsity' of their statements, but to understand their significance[106] (Shildrick, 2008, p.39). In a situation such as the Female Factory Precinct experience, shades of truth are understandable in terms of post-traumatic stress experiences (with 'facts' altered by stress) and by the need to have trauma acknowledged, bringing perpetrators to *some* accountability once an opportunity is there. As Schininà observes in his work amongst traumatised refugees, one should not underestimate the affects of

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[105] Data for all of the Royal Commission records that 7981 survivors of child sexual abuse spoke at 8013 private sessions. https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/sites/default/files/file-list/case_study_7_-_findings_report_-parramatta_training_school_for_girls.pdf

[106] Shildrick states that this work on patient survival rates was conducted by Dew and DiMartini 2005. (Dew, 2005)

internalised shame (Schininà, 2012; Ventevogel, Schinina, Strang, Gagliato, & Juul Hansen, 2015).

Djuric confirms that for many Parragirls, their first return visit to the site tripped up memories long dormant—of ghost sensations ('*something happened here*'); and of other sensations, often of horror, beyond immediate grasp. Not all women experienced the same traumas: some, in particular those incarcerated for shorter periods of time, suffered comparatively little trauma, and for example never saw the dungeons. However, there is evidence, scratched into the walls, of the incarcerations that took place there[107]. At times, girls coped by scratching history into their own bodies, by compulsive acts of self-scarification.

Within traumatised communities, truth is a complex beast, enacting itself in variable ways, and not always something that a majority has to agree upon to prove 'true'. In working with the women, I have witnessed some of the complexities of their remembering, including the affect of being amongst 'deniers' during precinct Open Days. Djuric identifies that, for some, learning how to fight and survive has left its scars in a compulsive pattern of fighting each other whenever they again cross paths. 'Truth'-telling in verbal narratives is only a part of the story. The contemporary Parragirls—as a smaller group gleaned from a larger whole—share a characteristic to reject any summary and divisional narratives of their lives[108].

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[107] Other evidence is in the ill health and early deaths of many of the women, due to the physical abuse they suffered there.

[108] Due to her frustration that the women would not 'conform' to her methodology, the narrative therapist seconded to the project for 18 months eventually stepped away. (Ironically, having a 'narrative therapist' present was one of the conditions that allowed the project to pass certain ethics clearances.) In the session where the women expressed their relief that she was 'gone', I learnt an enormous amount—both about the women's resilience, and of the various strategies they had learnt in order to survive, which included keeping silent when sensing the threat of their voices being co-opted for unclear purposes.

Figure 4: Living Traces *exhibition invitation. Artist Collaborators: Bonney Djuric, Lesley Dowton, Ivy Getchell, Gypsie Hayes, Aunty Mathilda House-Williams, Jenny McNally, Sandy Jessamine, Beryl Lloyd, Marg Noble, Lorraine Perry, Toni Marshall, Tony Nicholas, Aunty Mathilda House-Williams, Lynne Edmondson Paskovski, Mershell Evans Williams* (Parragirls, 2016); *Artist Facilitators: Sue Anderson and Gwen Harrison. Curated by Lily Hibberd.*

6.4 Participants are more than the limits of their experiences

The on-site arts activities set up by Djuric and Hibberd were not about returning-to-place in order to either prove, or again be trapped by, the narrative 'captures' they suffered as children. Rather, the participatory practices—visual art, and breath and movement workshops—achieve something much more akin to moving through their experiences in order to be released from them.

> Artistic creations capture the attention[109] of the neural networks of the body and awake real experiences that might not be accessible to our everyday interactions. Through art we are able to offer experience and knowledge that *change* the attendant at his or her core.
>
> *(De Benedetto, 2011, cited in Shaughnessy, 2012, pp.33–4)*

In the case studies that follow, I argue for an ethics of movement (*capacity, and opportunity*) that within the South Sudanese community manifests as a *right* to dance[110]. For this community, 'everyday' sensory interactions (for example, with the Department of Social Services regarding housing, schooling and finance) can be so traumatic and restrictive that their *unwelt* or sensory ecology has become brittle. 'Dancing' (and associative, or related, arts activities) is a way of returning to their resilient selves, and in turn can allow them to be witnessed in a positive light. It could be argued that diverse arts and cultural activities can fulfill this function of stitching or re-stitching of neural networks that have been torn—a concept I return to below.

In relation to the present study, the Parramatta Memory Project fostered twelve etching workshops with artists Sue Anderson and Gwen Harrison; the *Living Traces* book and exhibition; one breath and movement workshop which I conducted in 2015, which I discuss more detail further below.

During the art workshops, by virtue of the 'transaction of textures' (Sedgwick, 2003, p.22) and the 'intimacy' that 'seems to subsist between textures and emotions' (*ibid.,* p.17), the women feel safe to 'feel emotion through haptic absorption'. I observed that, in using their hands and bodies in craft work, action leads to language and stories tumble forth. These are stories that detail the cruelties they experienced whilst incarcerated as children, the neglect or otherwise of their parents, and also, at times, other more positive aspects of their lives, such as when they were or have been shown affection and care, both during incarceration and afterwards. The workshops remind me of traditional 'knitting circles' where stories, gossip and nourishments are shared[111] in an intimately patterned overlaying of life narratives. The specificity here is that the social fabric of these women's lives had been badly torn, from the moment they were removed from their families. Essentially, these workshops provided the opportunity for a re-weaving of their resilience, and an opportunity to re-stitch some of the fundamental patterns in the fabric of their lives.

This is not to say it was or is a simple process. During the workshop, I witnessed a struggle of opposing forces—between silence and speaking, memory and forgetting, as if straps on the women's bodies of memory are released through the process (of making things by hand) and a Pandora's box of traumatic history begins to escape the confines of silence and their previous self-containment in the face of violence.

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[109] I highlight this phrase, because to 'capture the attention of…' is very different from subjecting individuals to narrative *captures.*

[110] Note that Part 2, I argue for an ethics of movement (capacity, and opportunity), which with the Dinka is manifested as a right to dance.

[111] In Canberra, visual artist Jenny Kemarre Martinello achieves similar with her indigenous artists' group, who recently had a supported residency in the Belconnen Arts Centre space.

These moments reinforce or confirm instructions of feminist 'vulnerable methods' scholars (in Chapter 3 above) to embrace discomfort, and the unknown. Yet, answering to these ethic demands is not easy. In the single movement workshop that I conducted with the Parragirls, I witnessed many distracted behaviours. Stories were both propelled from moments of embodied attention, but also appeased by them. In one exercise I devised, in which participants are invited to place the palm of their own hand against their belly, the women were guided to experience a recognition of their boundaries, their resilience, and their own free will (for example, to shield themselves). The primary instruction was to keep breathing, and, for as long as it felt safe, to keep sensing the membrane that both allows for our interrelation with others but also marks the border(s) between us.

I consciously instruct participants in this kind of work to recognise the implicit *massage* elicited by the breath within the body, against and along its own membrane that constitutes the deep tissue interrelationality of breath with body, and breath affecting space (both internal and external). The exercise provides an opportunity for participants to witness themselves, engage in an act of self-care, and of choice: my breath moves me, within me: I can continue, pause, or withdraw; I can witness the sensations and changes in my body; I can agree or disagree that this simple act of breathing in and out is a birth-right, and is normal. The hand can be removed from contact at any time.

As the facilitator, this hour and a half workshop felt like the longest ninety minutes in my life[112]. There were none of the cues to a 'successful' transition into a more relaxed mode of being to which I was accustomed—for example, an easing of breath, signs of relaxation, release of muscle-tension and expanded awareness into the room of participants. There was a lot of chatting—a lot of 'turning away from' the workshop's intended 'quiet space'. I do not sweat easily, however, it felt as if the back of my neck had become a waterfall. At the end of the workshop, several women spontaneously expressed 'how much better' they felt. Indeed, there was a kind of energetic titillation in the room. There was a nervous excitement and exchange between participants. What had happened here?

In psychoanalytic and counselling theory, acknowledgement of past events gives space to participants to feel themselves anew: their breath, their actions, their movement, the act of storytelling itself, as a tribute to their vibrancy and their survival. In my experience, such work can serve to liberate participants from a stifling pre-conditioning. Basically, to say 'you can't say' (your own history, or the knowledge of your body) is to say that 'you can't know, and don't feel that'. By applying all my trained theatre skills to fast-track a narrative or create a 'play', I could well have been replicating the process of unauthorised summation that shaped their early lives, and too easily applied a homogenising rather than an adaptive 'practical wisdom' or phronesis. This is already the way the girls grew up in the Home; I witnessed that the exercise helps to reverse this process.

'I feel, therefore I know' can be liberating. Participants move from 'I speak therefore I am,' or 'I remember, therefore I was' to 'I articulate, therefore, I change the future'. Here, speaking is a forwarding condition: contrary to what we may feel of the *memory* process,

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[112] I also note that it took many months, and attending several meetings with the women, to stitch a fabric of deep trust, in order for this workshop to occur.

speaking is a forward act—an emission from a present, moving forward. In our face to face encounters, 'I see you/I see myself' states that 'I see you/see myself' in your/my becoming, and all the risks and uncertainties that entails.

6.5 It's time for transparency

As a direct outcome of this movement workshop, one of the women, Jenny McNally, began to devise the framework for a performance. She talked about it for several weeks with Lily Hibberd in Sydney. She had visualised a key image: that of a murky window being cleaned, to reveal a key phrase—'*It's time for transparency*'—which is both a metaphor in relation to her life narrative, and part of a politics of realisation that the women share as a group. It was now *time for transparency*: no more secrets, no more holding the blame. It also reflects McNally's strong personal view that the New South Wales Department of Community Services (DCS), and Family and Community Services (FCS) should open all their files to record holders—survivors and present-day children in out-of-home care.

Figure 5: It's Time for Transparency*, 2016. Performers: Zsuzsi Soboslay, Ruby Soboslay Moore. Photo credit: Lucy Parakhina. (The performance can be viewed [7-minute version] at https://vimeo.com/267252400; Videographer: Dennis Beaubois.)*

Jenny McNally, *The custodian of secrets, September 2016*

For many years now, I have carried such a load. The load being shame. Shame beyond imagination. Shame of abandonment. Shame of love hunger. Shame of having nothing true to me. Shame of institutional living. Shame of my life.

Keeping secrets from my family, my children really had no ideas about my background. My friends had no idea. I would drop friends if they got too close. My husband died not knowing who I was. The point that I am making is that it is time for me to come out.

In Parramatta Girls' Home terrible things happened. And for many years I never told anyone. I kept the secrets like many other girls. I have lived my life as the custodian of secrets. What I mean is my shame. My hidden shame shaped my life. Being custodian of secrets is damaging.

If you look at the walls, the grounds, the whole make up of Parramatta, you will see the walls have kept secrets. The paint is peeling; the walls are crumbling. You look at the grounds and the cement has cracked. It is kept its secrets. You look at me: I have kept too many secrets. And I have lived in pain, huge pain. My cracks, my damage and my isolation…

It is time to relinquish my custodial position. It is time to shed the burden. It is time to give it back. It is not my responsibility anymore. I need help in giving it back. The burden I carry, thinking about it brings tears to my eyes and tears to my heart.

The performance, written and co-directed by McNally, acted like a worm that shifts the soil, turning that soil's history over. Its carefully curated signifiers (the filing cabinet, the dirty window, the dossiers) were subjected to undoing via the performance process—via the window being cleaned, the dossiers unlocked, the script being read (the 'weir of guilt' broken open) and—as evident in the short film attached—a few movement gestures of defiance expressed but also giving way to gestures of appeasement or 'letting-go'. The other breakthrough is an ethical one, addressing the question of representation (whose body is seen and heard). McNally realises that this is the story, not just of her earlier life, but of every young girl in her situation. Hence, she asks me to be the performer ('If I do it, it's about me; if you do it, it's about all women').

It transpired that my younger daughter (aged 15) had to travel with me from Canberra to Sydney at the time. On an intuition I asked whether she could be involved. McNally relished the idea, and my daughter (albeit half-consciously) agreed it seems appropriate. Within the structure of the performance design, this presented an opportunity to represent an older self, looking back at a younger self (the former institution resident). Within the framework of care, the fact that a mother is performing with her daughter is a significance

applauded by McNally, who had been given to the 'care' home by her own family. As my daughter was suffering from anorexia at this time, there was a poignant significance for the both of us, and for McNally, about holding such a struggle and suffering, together. The cleaning of the window represented the cleaning of secrets, also perhaps that the cleaner is being cleansed, and in the act of cleaning has the chance (at last) to re-order her history.

When my daughter and McNally met, they seemed to recognise each other—as young people struggling to be accepted, McNally of course imagining herself back in time. Later, McNally took her under her wing, promised to take her to her special beach—a promise my daughter accepted with pleasure. 'You will love it,' McNally said. The promise is yet to be fulfilled, mostly due to geographic distances, but the promise was made, as a way of reaching out across generations and decades, and in appreciation of each other's resilience.

As the film documents, at the end of the (semi-improvised) performance, there is a moment where my daughter and I look at each other. Hibberd sees it as a 'magic moment', a place of meeting and coalesces of stories, such as we always hope for in performance, whether on a professional stage, in film, in amateur shows or in rehearsals. When our eyes meet, Ruby breaks through with a little smile.

6.6 Performing care: witnessing latency, holding resilience

The initial performance of *It's Time for Transparency* was the result of a combination of enabling factors. Hibberd and Djuric as project co-directors had spent many hours laying a path to the confidence McNally needed to create a first-time expression of her story. As a collaborator from interstate, I had helped facilitate the process through a combination of proximity and distance.

To what extent does a field of support *matter*, when the field extends beyond face to face encounters? How does this help hold hope for others? As Feminist Care Ethicists consistently argue, it is important to extend from micro to macro realisations. How can we theorise this idea of stitching a fabric wide enough to encompass both local and national, intimate and global concerns? To me in Canberra—300km away from Parramatta—this performance and its ramifications mattered and still matters. Remembering about it matters; writing about it matters. Revisiting the site and staying in contact with the women matters—because, as McNally states, it is also about all women, and all children. To my mind, Djuric's persistence with pursuing the site's nomination as an internationally recognised Site of Conscience also encompasses this realisation.

The realisation of McNally's vision had rough edges (for example, the performance was read aloud from a sheet of paper that was passed from one performer to the other), but its key signifiers had been carefully negotiated (the cabinet, the dirty window, the dossiers) in the understanding that deep metaphors can effectively hold our stories. In asking me to perform the script on her behalf, McNally showed a profound ethical sensibility in that choice, as well as a sensitivity to the complexities of relationality. Shildrick has called our attention to the inadequacies of the idea of the 'singular moral subject': the body, which is

always already vulnerable is also always already plural in the relationships that help to compose it. In my experience of this project, I feel the depth of Shildrick's academic realisations (with all the weight of theory behind her) matched by the weight of McNally's ethical realisation, with all the weight of her life experience, and compassion for others' sufferings, behind her. It is such moments in community practice that I feel both the grief and elation of such realisations. People hold philosophy within them; bodies carry and create theory. How do such truths gain validation in contexts which more and more demand ratification against (official funding) rubrics that seem ever-more removed from lived experience?

The interrelationality of this process is heightened by one of the final comments McNally makes in her script, which shows an understanding of the systemic relations of such processes. McNally understands that 'nature herself is breaking the silence'—that is, she is not doing the healing on her own. And as CACD co-producers, we were stepping in to a process that was timely, and of its time. As with most 'proof', it is not the outcome that proves the validity of an event: the outcome can only, at best, reflect the validity of the relationships in the process.

If such a third space—a hopefully *accompanied* space—can make all the difference, what is the sense of answering to rubrics that demand a description of 'outcomes' before a project even begins[113]? How can such outcomes be pre-defined, unless we agree to operate in some sort of way that is always 'walking to the side' of the terms we ourselves /our bureaucracies and gatekeepers have 'thrown'? In which case, we are working in double narratives that mirror the 'double narratives' in which such traumatised communities already operate (Schininà, in Ventevogel et al., 2015, chapter 8).

Interestingly, the CACD critical concept of 'whose voice is being represented' is also not simple. Jenny describes quite clearly that she had no voice around certain aspects of her earlier life experiences.

> *They called me the screamer. But no one asked why I was*
> *screaming. They only put me into solitary confinement—where I*
> *screamed some more.*

Jenny's 'artist's voice' had been a latent capability. She had no idea she could write a performance script; she had no idea she could direct one. The act of art-making helped her voice to integrate[114]—the kind of change (neural, physical, and psychological) of which de Benedetto speaks.

It is the capacity to create, generate, and (re)grow that is interrupted by trauma. A common understanding of trauma is that it causes separation and fragmentation. Another of the

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[113] I had gained Ethics Approval from Monash University to include my work in the Memory Project in this thesis. However, over a period of a year, I realised that I could not presume an outcome could be achieved in time for the thesis submission. I went through many months of yielding to a sense of loss, that I would not be able to incorporate the project. In the end, it was by chance that the performance evolved within a timeframe which meant it could be included. It did, and had to, operate according to its own evolution.

[114] *Integrity:* late Middle English (in sense 2): from French *intégrité* or Latin *integritas*, from *integer* 'intact' (see integer). Compare with entirety, integral, and integrate: 'intact'

Parragirls, Lynne described her own life as 'fragmented'. (She had spent several years post-incarceration coping with states of extreme dissociation.) By contrast, The Memory Project is not about the women returning to a place in order to be again trapped by it. It is in order to be released from it, transform and be transformed.

Witnessing latency, holding resilience

Even so—and without entering into a full-blown argument regarding the affect of events and surveys—it can be noted that the affect of the performance is varied. From my own observation during the event—a kind of double-consciousness I argue is common to seasoned performers—I observed the following:

One man, standing in the back row in a blue suit, looked annoyed; Jenny's family [children, and new husband) cried, to understand this shadow history for the first time; whilst a member of the Department of Community Services (DoCS) approached me afterwards, saying she believed she 'should take a copy of the script to the Department'[115]. Thus, the performance prompted a varying suite of responses. Perhaps the variety is a good thing, demonstrating that the audience had been response-enabled to a kind of democratic outcome. Truth be told, I worried about the man in the suit: I presumed he was from an arts council and didn't like the 'rough edges' of the performance; but this is mere conjecture and perhaps a sign of how we as arts workers are so often looking over our shoulder, nervous for signs of approval that might give us imprimatur (and funding) to keep going.

The edited film was later shown at two conferences during 2017, firstly, the *Setting the Record Straight for the Rights of the Child* summit in Melbourne (where Djuric presented on a panel), and at the *Art as Archive/Archive as Art* Community Informatics Research Network (CIRN) Conference at the Monash University Prato Centre in Italy, in a curated project adjunct to the conference workshop led by Antoinetta Lewis, Bonney Djuric and Lily Hibberd. Both instances illustrate where the 'original' is lifted into a new signification, with a new audience, with whom it might resonate in new ways.

These formal events carry the imprimatur of a different kind of validation than did the original performance. The newer events possibly guaranteed a kind of sympathetic resonance to the material therein; however, the 'fact' of the film—as an artefact—does no such thing. Unless carefully edited, placed and curated, it can, like most art objects, so easily be subject to misreading and misinterpretation. A full discussion about the care of craft and crafting is beyond the scope of this thesis, but worth noting here[116].

The original performance took place as part of a day celebrating the launch of the Parragirls' artists' book, *Living Traces* (Parragirls, 2016) The artworks were printed on very high-quality paper, and the book for sale at an arts' market value. This reflects on the way

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[115] In this instance, I could immediately redirect her request to the writer.

[116] This could be a good point to signal what Badiou calls a 'fidelity to the truth of the event' (see Stuart Fisher, 2005)

that throughout the project, Bonney and Lily respected the contributors as valued artist co-creators, not just as 'subjects' of a project research.

The published book is also not just an outcome. It is the end result of a long process which involved the walking-beside/walking with—or a parabolic accompaniment of—the women as they recovered stories and reclaimed the relationship to the raw materials of memory and place, before transforming them through arts practice. The design trigger for *Living Traces* is the graffiti etched into the walls of the buildings and sometimes into the skin of the women as girls: the act of making graffiti is transformed by transposition in the same place but in a new time, within a reconfigured structure, where the women could take authorship of how and why they made these marks, in what materials, and over which they had aesthetic control.

At the time of their institutionalisation, the Parragirls' graffiti was sometimes the only way they could give voice to their experiences. The forms of their current artworks (etching, performance) are new containers for their saying 'no' to traumatic histories and 'yes' to renewed life narratives. The mark-making afforded by the artistic process—these particular 'transaction(s) of textures' (Sedgwick, 2003, p.22)—invites the women's multiplication and magnification of choices regarding texturing, colour, words, and of course the freedom of gesture beyond what was allowed in the period of their incarcerations. The women move through their memory spaces in a new way—and potentially into a future unshackled from the traumas of that past.

It is something that goes beyond the potentially 'harmful captures' of verbatim storytelling which re-tell a self-limiting story again and again. The activity is both a reflection on, and a release from, the violations (essentially, forms of containment and restriction) they suffered as children and young women. Previously, they were not only silenced but kept still. The graffiti represents their internal scars made external, liberating those scars and transforming them into voices that can speak their own new narratives of creativity, not just of pain. The stories and experiences are lifted from limited media (scratchings into walls, or their own skins) into others (that of an artefact or performance), refreshing their narratives via a 'transaction of textures' that may in their own ways be therapeutic.

Here I argue that—*pace* Merleau-Ponty's insistence that the membrane between self and other is a place of exchange—membranes harden in those who have suffered trauma: the membranic capacity to act as conduit between media (whether that be of skin to air, or self to other) is interrupted. I note too that trauma psychologist Stephen Porges calls the traumatised individual a 'frozen' subject (Porges, 2011). The two-way conduit is the transformative one, where new rules, new textures, new narratives, hopeful futures might co-evolve.

6.7 In the company of ghosts

Bryony Trezise quotes writers who state that memorial sites are contentious spaces—in that the 'particular cultural performativities between embodied recollection (feeling *as*) and empathic understanding (or feeling *for*) constitute provisional subjectivities' (Trezise & Wake, 2013, p.193). Trezise points us to Scarry's assertion of the impossibility of feeling

another's horror (Smith, 2006); however, I find Bennett's statement that 'the complicity of discourses of feeling…enabling us, primarily, to *feel good* about ourselves whilst feeling *of* or *about* others' (Bennett, in Trezise & Wake, 2013, p.184) to be contentious. I argue for another possibility—that of feeling *with,* as a compassionate stance, walking beside or accompanying each other as co-participants.

6.8 The significance of parables

The compound word parable (root*: paraballo* or in the Greek, *parabole*) comes from 'para' which means 'to come alongside or compare' and 'ballo' which means 'to throw' or 'see' with. A parable, as a noun, indicates a story that is labile and able to shift in its understandings—an intersection of the timeless (many potential interactions) with time (whoever is present in the shared space). A parabolic process can be one that walks alongside, watching the space between, the relationships building, in what is being thrown—the clay on the potter's wheel becoming shaped into form[117].

This concept of 'traveling alongside' is *per se* not so far removed from the concept that performance practitioner–theorists such as Bertolt Brecht have articulated. His application of the term *Verfremdungseffeckten* (or 'distancing-effect') to theatre performance implies an ability to step back (away from role 'identification') and renew one's vision. Like a 'refresh' button, helping both actor and spectator move from the 'Here am I' (a term of witnessing singularity, and an accumulation from past experiences) to 'Here I also am'— which is a perception always already plural, in relation to others and in forward motion. This perspective gives space to the emergent or latent capability of the creative coming-into-being of the shared performance—or, their becoming-present, which some, but not all, have the privilege and ease of calling 'home'[118].

Perhaps, another way of expressing this experience, is via the metaphor of being in (or singing-through) the *bardo* space—as I was, when I had the visceral experience of accompanying my mother through her death transition. In other cultures, such as Tibetan Buddhism, this is a reality to which many attest: for some uncanny reason, it was also my experienced reality. It was arduous, it was demanding, it caught me by surprise. I am also not sure I had any say in it; it just seemed to happen, because of my sensitivities. What troubles me about rubrics we so often have to work to in CACD, is that there is no space for this kind of experience*. 'I will [now] enter Bardo in order to accompany my co-participants.'* Yet it is perhaps one of the kinds of things we often experience but never get to speak about, or share as *real and valued*, in our reports and documents.

Such concepts (as the parabola/the walking-beside, or the Bardo) suggest or imply a kind of dual temporality, a double-consciousness, which echoes a realisation Schininà makes in his work with refugees—except that he speaks of them hiding knowledge from one world

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[117] For the South Sudanese, the parable is a form that makes inherent sense for a community that often communicates in parables anyway. It is a 'way of being' very different from that generally understood in mainstream Australia, and in project work I have found it demands a particular kind of care.

[118] I note that Heidegger discusses the notion of being 'thrown', as well as significant concepts such as 'the concealed within the revealed' and of the 'uncanny' at home which—whilst beyond the scope of this thesis—are significant concepts that warrant further investigation with reference to refugee experience.

whilst living in another. I also point to the problems of working from a largely secular framework, with people for whom spirit, and spirituality are deeply embedded in almost every exchange of their lives. I have experiences in working with both indigenous and refugee communities here in Australia, and also acknowledge my own particular relationship to energies and exchanges which cannot be explained within a materialist framework. When I dance in landscapes—whether national park, ancient lake bed, or urban environments—I am quite sure I am in dialogue with many entities which carry their own volition, needs, sufferings, and agencies. My point is not to argue one reality *versus* others so much as to suggest and indeed argue for the contiguous co-reality of each.

In complex communities—and according to the belief systems and life experiences of those with whom we often work—arguing rationality *versus* irrationality serves no purpose. Magic, the invisible, and the semiotic capabilities of the more-than-human realm are normal to many communities (*cf.* the writings of Conquergood in his work amongst refugee Hmong; of the anthropologists Schieffelin and Apffel-Marglin, in PNG and Peru respectively, about whose work I have written elsewhere; and with the Dinka community as described in my next case study). As Thompson observes, the 'seriousness' in which applied theatre usually thinks of itself can serve to preclude the validity and vibrancy of so many pre-conscious and non-verbal exchanges that, in more responsively enabled circumstances, might be the very work of care.

In a site such as the Female Factory Precinct, with its 'inherited' punishments and its 'commemorative' graffiti, ghosts do not reveal themselves draped in white linen, but rather in other scratchings and sensations that perhaps call to our respect in new ways. The concept of *vulnerable knowing,* as articulated by Hemmings and Page—and which I extend to the term *vulnerable authority*, is further validated by feminist scholars and taken up by Trezise and Wake in their work grappling with museums with traumatic histories (Trezise & Wake 2013). Critical to the work of each of these scholars is the attempt to grapple with realisations that do not fit within received paradigms (of time, conceptions of self, and reality). We have to be careful of what our received narratives foreclose.

Further to this, Trezise and Wake assert that, in visiting museums with dark histories, we experience a dual temporality (*ibid.,* p.190–1), and a slippage between our (visitors') bodies and those of gaol or asylum inmates from the past. As we move amongst the buildings, amongst the installations and works of art, we are bodies *alive*, remembering the gone and the dead and the restrictions and punishments they suffered.

This is an inescapable duality. However, I am suspicious of both Bennett and Ahmed's claims (as quoted in Trezise & Wake, 2013, p.184) that such discrepancies are, for the most part, to 'our' *gain,* as this is refusing the fact of our own *poesis* as spectators. Indeed, I argue that we can imagine a horror, by virtue of our capacity for *poesis*: that is, our capacity *to make* comes from our capacity to imagine what we can or may bring forth. This includes our capacity to do good or ill. As Hamington, Lachman and others demonstrate, our bodies are the machines of giving good or bad care. But perhaps it is only ethical practices that guide us toward the former.

Art and the making of it, in its re-minding and 'extending neural connections', reminds us of our capacities to engage in processes of choice. The Memory Project has been set up (by Djuric and Hibberd, with sympathetic collaborators) as reminders that participants *have* choice. And rather than inviting visitors to return to the Precinct as an exercise in dark tourism, events and activities have a specific purpose: to ask us, as individuals and as a nation, to re-member (that is, for our limbs to remember to the reality of) past actions, and for this history to never happen again. We don't' want this to happen again. We have to remember that it can. The project is about feeling back in order to step forward. As part of the world with which we are intertwined, it is perhaps a duty of care to commemorate in order to prevent and ensure 'Never Again'.

Chapter 7
Three projects on refugee narratives: a bridge to the discussion of three case studies on refugee issues

This thesis now furthers my discussion on the dialogic demands of CACD projects, this time in working with people displaced by the experience of war. My major offering to the discussion lies in the case study of my work in creating *The Culture Hub* with a local South Sudanese diaspora community; but along-the-way to this outcome, I also analyse what enables or disables care practices in working with such groups, and perhaps 'reassess applied theatre's ambition' in these areas.

I myself am the daughter of refugees settling in Australia at the end of World War II. I could (therefore; possibly) lay claim to 'understanding' refugee experience; however, the cumulative effect of decades of research and community engagement only highlights how much I do *not* know. Indeed, many times, what I presume as a social or ethical 'given'— formed by my position in mediating between the culture in which I grew up, and with my ancestral past—is not likely to be aligned with imperatives of the newer refugee communities with which I work. Specifically, I have learnt to note that as soon as my mind says 'surely…*surely*', then it is I who must stop short, regroup and listen again. I may not be privy to the reasons for a group's or individual's bewildering decisions or even more bewildering silences; nonetheless, each refugee community may have cultural or circumstantial logics of their own to which it is best *to yield*—and in these contexts, *to yield* would be a marker of 'success'. One of the difficulties in this work is to acknowledge that the notion of 'community' applies to and across many complex groupings, from government to non-government organisations, and across political and apolitical affiliations. As I discuss in Part 1, Lowe cautions that whilst the concept 'community' can imply a cohesive group of like minds, or people of 'shared place, beliefs, spirit' he states that most of his work has occurred with 'collectives of individuals' of sometimes widely differing goals and beliefs (Lowe, 2012, p.6).

That said, I can lay claim to the following as some of the ontological truths of my childhood, each of which prove useful realisations in my work with newer communities.

Suspicions
As the daughter of refugees, I experience life as a composite of visible and invisible/speakable and unspeakable forces, covert knowledges, and ambiguous responsibilities.

Facts
I grow up skilled in two languages—the first, unpronounceable in this new country. The old country's intensities and tragedies are also taboo at my own dinner table, let alone in the wider adoptive culture I call home. I am wedged between the fears and beliefs of opposing sides—that of my parents, regarding anything to do with the trauma, displacements and unwitting complicities of war; and from the Australian perspective, because we are the 'enemy aliens' (a people who fought on the 'wrong' side) and now 'strangers in a strange

land'. Somehow, I feel responsible for it all—from both sides one and two, and more. Schininà calls this the 'double-consciousness' (which we might need to rename as a multiple-consciousness) of the first and second-generation refugee. He also mentions a more generic sense of guilt common to survivors of trauma, and their offspring (Schinina, 2012).

Dreams, responsibilities

My father dies of cancer when I am very young—hence, long before he and I might have had cogent conversations about his experiences on the Russian Front. However, in my twenties, he appears to me in a dream. Dressed in army uniform, standing in a battlefield strewn with bloodied bodies, he hands me an unexploded grenade. The question he then asks, '*What would you have done*?' cuts to the quick of the deepest of ethical dilemmas: in similar circumstances, what options would I have? What *would* I have done? It is a question with no answers until I am placed in a situation such as he faced every day, in those coercive relations of power we call 'serving' a war.

The dream speaks to a reality beneath the level of normative conscious engagements in a world which tends to divide time (our past, separated from the present and the future), and also peace from violence. As the recent extradition of a Tamil family from Australia to Sri Lanka in October 2019 makes us aware, peacetime does not signify the end of conflict[119]. Even in zones of relative peace, intergenerational trauma casts long shadows. Our presumed divisions of time, bodies, identities, facts and aesthetics, of history and a clearly distinguished present, may serve political ends but may pose danger to individuals and communities. Our presumptions (for example, of the division between human and more-than-human worlds) may also tread on intercultural sensitivities—which causes other kinds of dangers, as I discuss further below. Here, presuming that a historical past has no effect on the future (as I was encouraged to believe, growing up in the 'safe zone' of Australia) was categorically undone by my harrowing dream, and my research and project experiences in the years that followed.

The dream of the hand grenade is a good example of what Page identifies as 'that which exceeds the limits of narrative' (Page, 2017, p.24) but which calls to our respect with its pull. It represents a question—the seed of which possibly haunted me throughout my childhood, coexisting just outside the 'hegemonic protocols of intelligibility' identified by Mahmood (Mahmood, 2012, p.199). In the dream, I stand face to face with an enormity I initially cannot countenance. Over time, however, I come to realise the dream is calling me to *pay heed* to something walking with me, just beyond me, and over a very long time.

There seems an obligation in it, calling me to attend to something unresolved in our family, and perhaps too in Australia's broader cultural history[120]—although that is conjecture, and unprovable. In the end, I embrace the dream and work with it in the medium I have come to consider my vocation. I name this as theatre praxis, but I have always been someone

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[119] https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-09-04/tamils-in-sri-lanka-fear-ongoing-persecution-biloela-family/11471534. Last accessed 11.09.2020.

[120] The question, I believe, was also in trying to tackle an awareness that the Australian cultural experience could not hold this ethical issue, except in the most simplistic way.

who questions the received values of conventional theatrical form(s). I have never quite accepted Western theatre's parameters—that 'text is god', that the verbal language of Western traditional playscripts is an adequate means in which to capture certain kinds of experience. It is also possible that my tendencies to question these same received values have been generated by virtue of how this dream—and the experiences and doubts that my ancestors held of authorities that lead them into war—have pushed me unconsciously, and for so long. Knowing/sensing, but not quite seeing, the bloodied bodies all around me in the dream of the hand-grenade are part of this kind of realisation. Knowing my own actions could conceivably contribute to more of the same carnage is horrifying and carries a terrible weight. For what I am responsible in this vision is a key question. To what am I response-enabled is also key. Notably, the depth of the question—what the dream is asking me to attend to—has taken several projects, over several years, to attend to.

The following chapter traces the development of three projects, from a 'well-made play' (reliant on words) to a piece of artist-lead participatory performance to a community engagement that is (and remains) 'along the way'. Each is centred in an attempt to grapple with refugee experience. This last engagement is now no closer to a piece of fundable outcome of artistic intercultural 'excellence' than it has been since its inception in 2015, although much has been achieved along-the-way. Each project cares for its community's strengths and vulnerabilities—their struggles, efforts and exertions, uncertainties, ambivalences, inconsistencies, and discordances—in ways in which feminist ethicists, with their emphasis on vulnerable methodologies, would be in accord. The problem however is being caught in a spiral of underfunding, and institutional demands, which sees this kind of work—that which incorporates doubt, ambiguity and multiplicity, rendering 'sensory, emotional and affective relations central', as well as:

> creatively carry the textures, pains, desires, sounds and the visual store
> of memories of the research encounter with us, from the point of
> collection, to analysis and public presentation.

(Fraser and Puwar, 2008, p.2)

—left underpaid and overlooked, seated outside of outcome-driven funding paradigms[121]. This is the dangerous territory where care methods (again) become the parallel of 'women's work' and remain underpaid in what Katharine McKinnon calls 'our contemporary audit cultures'[122]. At the end of 1600 *un*paid hours of work with the South Sudanese community in one year (and 2000 hours in 18 months), I could state that such a circumstance was corrosive of my own self-worth and threatened the stability of my own nuclear family.

Regardless of my own personal experience, however, the broader concern is about contemporary cultural values, and how they are or are not reflected in rubrics that our funders and organisations demand, and in their turn are forced to answer to. In spite of

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[121] The worst experience I have had of this is from a local funding authority which reported they could not 'see how your project would *make us* money' (conversation with the project manager of *In the City Canberra*, 2016, now replaced by the City Renewal Authority).
[122] McKinnon, email with the author, August 2019.

this, I consider my work-in-development was necessary to get to the level of understanding each project required. It was part of the journey to understand what matters, what counts, and what we 'fight' for. Indeed, I will assert that our ideas of 'what matters, what counts?' require the challenges of such community engagements to ensure their validity and their accuracy. By contrast, compliant, ordered and cohesive communities may be concealing truths that may be corrosive at their core.

In our valiant attempts to 'get our shows on the road', many of our arts practices may override significant aspects of 'what there is to care for', and I consider this is a serious issue that needs addressing. Whilst there is great advancement in Australia with advocacy for arts workers' mental health[123], the greater problem of what constitutes our deeper care—to assist the nurturing and sustenance of care values and their deeper ramifications—is a long way from being realised[124].

It is significant that the focus of the chapters following is on the after-effects and affects of war. In our cultural 'funding wars', our metaphors are also telling: funding is about 'winning', and outcomes demand 'success'. The arts (whether traditional, applied/socially engaged, or 'along the way') can be overshadowed by limiting expectations of 'success'. Yet the etymology of the verb 'to succeed' is '*to yield*' (as opposed to conquer)—which may mean that, in process, we contradict what we set out to 'achieve'. Partially, what I trace in the section below describes a process of giving in and arguing for that as a key value.

I discuss the implications of working amongst people who have been affected by war. I acknowledge my own place as a daughter of refugees and survivors of war. In terms of daily life and of my growing-into-the world, this has most probably affected my sense of hyper-vigilance and a cautiousness in the face of setting a foot 'wrong' in my adoptive homeland[125], including in terms of creating 'correct' narratives. In terms of why I have been attracted to theatre as a discipline, it may reflect on the capacity of theatre to be a testing-ground for possible worlds and possible identities, shaped by many different stories—the 'what if' of theatre exercises. As a playwright and theatre creator, it perhaps reflects on my concerns to both imagine different worlds, and different identity formations in newly imagined (if suppositional) contexts. It certainly affects my intention when working with people who have suffered the affects of trauma, to seek out processes that might reach beyond the limits of what such traumas delimit and define. We are always more than our warring words and warring worlds.

I consider this an article of faith, and also of scientific witness. The biologist Charles Birch notes that each of our cells reaches towards others (Birch, 1999, 2012). This is what we

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[123] For example, the Victorian Arts Centre's Arts Wellbeing Collective program, which includes mental health workbooks and a 24/7 phone counselling service specifically for performing arts workers, currently administered via the Victorian Arts Centre (https://www.artswellbeingcollective.com.au).

[124] I think of the Murray Darling Basin Plan, which over seven (expensive) years has devised plans and percentages for how to distribute ('share') water but forgotten to adjust for variable river flows and environmental conditions in the first place. https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/breakfast/the-tangled-web-of-the-murray-darling-basin-plan/11768184, first broadcast 5/12/2019

[125] Much later, in my work with the refugee Dinka community, I come to understand this as an experience in parallel.

call growth. Embryologist Blechschmidt asserts that it is the biochemical environment surrounding the foetus that invites it to move into each successive growth phase (Blechschmidt, 2004; 1955). I have always felt that, similarly, theatre is a practice that invites growth and coming-forward—that is, when it provides the means for us to do so[126]. War tries to inhibit this capability. Some of us somehow survive it.

7.1 Theatres of 'home' and at war

James Thompson writes extensively on the role, affect and ethics of theatre practices (applied or otherwise) in his work in zones affected by war. He raises questions I consider imperative even if our work takes place in 'safe zones' such as the suburbs of Canberra. As practitioners, it is easy for us to be limited to narrow parameters of what our work means and does, particularly when under pressure to produce deliverables within timeframes limited by funders answering to or seeking approval from their masters[127]. By contrast, I argue that what our work means and does must be in reference to what Emmanuel Levinas calls the 'irreducible enormity' of the others we encounter (Levinas, 1998)—the spirit and facticity that supersedes the bodies lanced on our battlefields[128]. Our work requires due care of these enormities. But what does such care look like? And how might it be supported in the long-term engagements our work requires?

As I have already alluded to, Thompson notes the difference between the 'critical attention and tendency to joylessness' of his 'serious' daytime activities in Sri Lankan war zones, and the aesthetic and emotional liberations of concurrent 'informal' community gatherings[129]. A breakthrough occurs when he begins to embrace the more spontaneous, community-initiated activities as under an umbrella where 'almost any cultural act becomes applied theatre' (Thompson, 2009, p.3). Such activities present opportunities that move beyond applied theatre's 'perceived limits or horizons'.

Thompson shifts the markers of his practice in order to recognise his own new horizons. From here, the 'end' of performance can be a 'point of opportunity' which 'questions the purpose or intent of existing practice; and…demands an alternative configuration of the field's political and aesthetic ambition' (*ibid*., pp.5–6).

Accordingly, he re-cognises the place of each of mess, ambiguity and the raucous (what I elsewhere call the 'frayed edges of the form') and of the 'protective and inspirational force'[130] of various kinds of performance. He quotes the Russian anarchist Emma Goldman's assertion of the place for 'beautiful, radiant things', including, especially, dance,

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[126] A great deal of attention is paid in even the most traditional of Western theatre practices to assist and enable this process: stage design, lighting, mise-en-scene and training practices encourage and enable the transformation of a performer into multiple possible selves.

[127] Here, 'masters can include stakeholders, funders, shareholders, producers, and general audience.

[128] This thesis does not examine Levinasian ethics in depth; however, I do assert in other ways that we experience the 'enormity of the other' in different, and equally valid, ways—such as in my examples to do with parenting above.

[129] He discusses the daily 'roadblocks' he experiences in 'progressing' the applied theatre techniques of image theatre, improvisations and forum theatre. We cannot be sure of the exact nature of these roadblocks, as this 'lack of progress' (and specific exercises) are not documented in the article.

[130] This is a term Thompson quotes from argued by Jill Dolan (Dolan, 2005) and others.

for which passion she, in 1916, was essentially excommunicated from her political practices (Goldman, 2006, p.42).

Thompson here flips into a 'soft' language, to that of a listener to an 'intimate and sensory key'—a participant contributing to meaning-making via a process of responsive listening[164]. This is not unusual in communal processes. As Thompson comes to accept, the comfort or 'respite' of communal dance is both restorative (a kind of homing), and future-building (or 'redistribution'), including and incorporating the unknown.

As he suggests, if we can keep dancing, we remain in but are also refreshed in our engagements:

> [T]he actual work of social change is bound up in *how* we create, who creates and when we create art. Dancing, and other forms of aesthetic expression might be places of respite, but the argument here suggests something more radical—they are also integral and necessary parts of change itself. In a world of inequality, social injustice and endemic violence, they could be acts of resistance and redistribution.
>
> *(Thompson, 2009, p.11)*

One of the outcomes of the Dinka community *Culture Hub*—an exemplar in Part 2—was a ten-hour social gathering that culminated in a joyous, swarming tribal dance that itself lasted three hours, but which could have gone on for much longer. I could not claim this was an entirely successful 'intercultural' event (for reasons I describe); and we certainly could not 'prove' that it solved the community's unemployment and communications problems as the Department of Social Services and Office of Multicultural Affairs wanted us to do. However, the dance, for its own sake, was a joyous participatory event; and as the community elder wrote to me, successful *because* we each—together and 'without doubt'—shared 'the face of joy'. It had an enormous impact on replenishing the community's resilience, in sharing from its strengths and in being witnessed as strong, whilst also demonstrating its cultural validity to its own disenfranchised youth, who, in the several years since their parents' immigration to Australia, could not see the point of being 'Sudanese'.

As I have discussed above, Thompson asserts the field of CACD should 'draw inspiration from different cultural forms and learn from disciplines both within and beyond the field of performance studies' (Thompson, 2009, p.7). Earlier, other practitioners, such as Schininà in his work with Serbian refugees, and Conquergood in his work amongst refugee Hmong in camps in Thailand, had come to similar conclusions about making alliances beyond our presumptions and expectations. It is perhaps our political and aesthetic presuppositions which cause us to miss where the 'true beauties' and deeper significances of our work lie. Specifically, Thompson identifies the importance of the affective register and how the 'nexus between art and politics should indeed be thrown open to 'new unnamed forms of practice' that do not, cannot, and should not be asked to conform to narrowly pre-defined

rubrics in the field[131]. In this thesis I argue for the realisations 'between' practices that make for all the difference in what we are setting out to achieve.

7.2 Touchstones between art and the everyday world

For all Thompson's modest realisations of how he yielded to the value of what had meaning for the community amongst whom he worked, there is another layer we should consider, and that he points to. This is linked to both what is accorded value in our official, 'professional' practices, *versus* what is valued in our daily lives, and the artificial division between the two.

Whilst paying deep respect to Thompson's *oeuvre*, I argue that we are almost always holding 'unnamed forms of practice' well beyond and in advance of what we know of ourselves and of our processes, and that this has repercussions in any serious discussion in the field of care and care ethics. In our homes, as parents of our offspring—holding the young thing not yet sure of itself (including its shit, piss and vomit) as well as our unexpected, shared moments of hilarity—we are usually only identifying our care-giving *as-we-go* in an iterative and evolving process. Our culture, however, divides our behaviours into professional or political *versus* 'personal' actions—a division that FCE scholars interrogate, and that Thompson suggests we 'blur'. Here I note that Thompson questions the authority (for example, backed by the UNHCR) with which he himself comes in to process. As does Conquergood before him, he is gracious enough to question his own authority, and acknowledge that he does not see all there is to know.

However, current and increasing emphases in our 'contemporary audit culture' on pre-definable outcomes, sits within the frame of a capitalist economy—as if a care outcome is something we can control and 'buy'. By contrast, actions of care might more accurately belong to a 'pay forward' economy, whereby our actions lay the ground for current and future engagement, and lay seeds for our future generations.

In Part 1 above, I have identified these principles articulated by Tronto and Sevenhuijsen, as well as in the first case study of Part 2 in the work of the Parragirls Memory Project. I also acknowledge it as the stated aims of indigenous elders with whom I have had the honor to work. Thompson (and before him, the anthropologists Schieffelin and Apffel-Marglin mentioned above) identifies it in Jill Dolan's recognition of the 'preventative and protective purpose' some practices (such as dance) can afford; and it is present in the intentions of the projects of Part 2 below, which pave the way for a 'new pragmatics of care' that considers the significance of our art, our actions and our intentions on the futures we create together.

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[131] I note here a kind of parallel where in jazz improvisation, 'keys' are fluid, subject to change and metamorphosis, passing through a cycle of intertwined relationships that follow enharmonic orders seeming to beg for both disruption and return, or a kind of 'homing'. Jazz musicians—through their own listening and responding—will describe a way of 'listening' to the room

7.3 'Pay It Forward': a new pragmatics of care

Accordingly, the following section traces a trajectory from research, to performance-making, and finally to a community-engaged practice that (referencing Schininà) 'displays plenty of theatre' but as yet has no identifiable theatrical outcome. The constant between all engagements is the fact of my embodiment: that is, I bring my embodied theatre-training into each practice[132]—even if (as in the third instance) we have not yet made theatre. This is an important consideration I return to in my conclusions below: how is the body of the practitioner critical in our engagements? How can care in practice be taught? Each reflects on the other in terms of the depth of how they are cross-informed by situated experiences, which I argue are what enable a caring practice. Care for the craft of making is counterbalanced by the requirements of situated care—part of the practical wisdom of which Sevenhuijsen speaks—that calls on a critical ability to be responsive (to circumstance), anticipate care needs and, through our perceptual and imaginative capacities, look ahead to what may be needed, to what is evolving and is yet to come.

A central tenet, therefore, is to combine a concern for our shared futures with a deep respect for observing and respecting our complex differences. I argue this is where care is demonstrated as both pragmatic and visionary: its success is to both forge anew but also to yield. As Aunty Isabel[133] said, in her statement demonstrating that her community's intentions went beyond personal gain, we 'do it for our children'.

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[132] I am indebted to Katharine McKinnon for asking me the question that helped me make this realisation.

[133] Aunty Isabel, an elder from the Paakantji/Barkindji nation, said this to me during a project at Menindee Lakes in 2006.

Chapter 8
Tracking an 'iterative practice' in projects on refugee issues

It is in researching the history of the post-war migrant reception and training centre in inland south-east Australia that I began to understand more of the complexities of my parents' post-World War Two refugee experiences. 'Putting my ears to the walls' of the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Training Centre[134] via interviews and archival research, I begin to uncover some of the unspoken in my own parents' and their peers' experiences of arrival in Australia.

Bonegilla was a place that post-war immigrants were sent to in overnight trains, crossing the scrub plains from Port Melbourne to inland Victoria. Trains arrived at the barren Bonegilla siding in the early hours of the morning, with no reception or refuge in sight. The walk to the Training Centre, carrying their luggage by hand, took several hours. Fibro huts, with gaps between walls and floor, exposed inhabitants (in winter) to freezing air and (in summer) to blazing heat, wild fauna and biting insects. The condition of the huts exacerbated the sense of acute cultural displacement for many residents.

In my initial research at the National Film and Sound Archive, I read stories of 'long holidays' on the sunny summer shores of Lake Hume, far away from troubled, war-affected lands; for those who had arrived from refugee or concentration camps, the circumstances were comfortable enough, with food 'plentiful' and beds provided. But I also retrieved uncomfortable stories of domestic violence, behind paper-thin walls, amongst immigrants for whom the isolation and alienation of being 'strangers in a stranger land' contributed to a shattering of identity and self-worth. With next-hut neighbours unsure of whether to intervene, it is one of the largely unshared experiences of the Bonegilla history.

Beyond Bonegilla, in the immigrants' attempts to settle in urban or rural centres, many experienced doors shut in their faces whilst seeking work or accommodation; arguably, the first wave of post-war immigrants—Arthur Caldwell's 'beautiful (and blonde) Balts' in 1947—fared better; at least they *looked* the part of White Australia[135] at the time. In oral history collections, many immigrants tell of being publicly harassed to 'speak English', even amongst themselves.

Other (and later) geometries
The Melbourne Olympics in 1956 saw politics spilling across borders and generations. The so-called 'Blood in the Water' water polo semi-final between Hungary and Russia occurs a short time after the brutal Soviet suppression of the uprising in Hungary. Footage from the match, broadcast from Australia by Channel 7, shows underwater punches beneath an ostensibly 'level playing field' above-water. Evidence of the violence, and Ervin Szador's

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[134] The Centre was operant between 1949–1972.

[135] Sometimes, it seems as if the 'dark histories' of prejudice in Australia are like 'dark matter' in or cultural universe. With a conjectured 20/80 divide between cosmic light and dark matter, I wonder whether 80% of human endeavour has, to a similar proportion, always been this destructive. Whether we can answer this or not, we ignore it at our peril; as demonstrated in the Parragirls project, silences, under-researched and forgotten histories, over time push at walls until they crack.

bloodied face emerging from the water, undermine an elegantly enunciated commentary ('*Of course, water polo is a violent game*'). The demeanor of the commentary highlights the gap in awareness between people for whom an event has emotional and political meaning, and for those for whom it might have no anchor. In viewing this historical archive, I understand the ways long-boiling plasma disrupts surfaces and breaks through fault-lines.

Attending to the 'break at the surface' is a suitable metaphor for the awarenesses in which we work in CACD, and especially pertinent to our work with immigrants and refugees. There are aspects of their experience that migrants often cannot describe. Within their own communities, 'old truths'–often, deeply traumatic truths—are hidden from their offspring; however, children sense the ghosts living with them anyway. For their part, offspring may keep their own struggles and doubts from the ken of their parents, fielding intergenerational and intercultural tensions until a rupture happens. Such experiences may constitute the daily lives and 'double narratives' roiling beneath the surface of their lives— then as now; now, and always. It is to such unspeakability I call attention in this next section.

Exploring silences

> Silence…should not be seen unequivocally as the burial ground of memory—the metaphoric place where memories are extinguished, eroded or dissolved. On the contrary, silence could act as a holding place of memories, or their hiding spot. Just as importantly, silence could function as a medium for their transmission, amongst a conventional medium of narrative.

(Tumarkin, 2013, p.223)

Figure 6: Anthems and Angels *development. Performers: Nick Tsiavos, Clare Moss, Dene Kermond. Street Theatre, Canberra, 2015. Photo credit: Michael K. Chin, 2015. The moment refers to the birth of the poet's daughter, whilst Soviet tanks move in to take over the city. (The performance can be viewed [4-minute film] at https://youtu.be/Y4X5HNnJRB4)*

8.1 *Anthems and Angels*: an immersive theatre work on the theme of exile

In 2012 I established a series of workshops and performances to examine how history is carried through time via the senses, in what words cannot usually say. I engaged seven musicians (including a traditional *cimbalom* player) in this exploration, utilising old Austro-Hungarian and Germanic melodies and folk tales, and a physical exploration of crossing cultural and generational thresholds.

The workshop's central investigation was to interrogate the place of music, dance and movement, folklore and folk tune dissonances, as carriers of history and inheritance— history struggling against the forward movement of time.

From left: Figure 7: Anthems and Angels, Angel and Gargoyle.
Performers: Timothy Constable, Zsuzsi Soboslay. Photo credit: Michael K. Chin, 2015.
Figure 8: A paper cut telling a story of old Europe. Image credit: frontispiece, Johann-Jakob Hauswirth; in Paper Cuts*, by Johann-Jakob Hauswirth and Louis-David Saugy, London: Thames and Hudson, 1980.*
Figure 9: Ruin in Romania. Photo credit: Zsuzsanna Soboslay.

In 2014–15, the investigation was further developed into a performance script. Because of the parochial context in which I was attempting to make the work, I agreed to try telling the story via script writing. The script portrayed a character (modeled on my own grandfather, State Librarian, and a poet) whose florid pronouncements were interrupted by tragedy and violence in the pre-and aftermath of World War Two. I embraced his literacy and quoted his poetry[136], with an intention to examine the weight of cultural histories, the burdens of ancestry, the half-cohesiveness of memory, the fearful weight of shadows[137], and the guilt of survival.

But to what extent can we trust to words to tell the 'whole story'? In part (and perhaps affected by growing up in a household of shadows and secrets), I was working against instincts that my grandfather's experiences could be expressed in words[138]. I engaged a

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[136] The script is, in parts, bilingual.

[137] Levinas considers the 'face to face encounter' as *the* great ethical encounter. It is something that calls to our care and from which there is no escape. His concept is both wonderfully vague and remarkably pure: face to face with the 'irreducible enormity' of the other, our ethical obligations are insurmountable

[138] Linguist and political philosopher Noam Chomsky insists that the reason for the development of human language is not, in fact, expression, as there are many ways we express. He insists on it being an internal, deep-structural phenomenon. We might consider whether post-traumatic silences represent a scrambling of the deep structures of the world.

percussionist and contrabass player to carry at least *some* of this core suspicion that only music could approach anything close to these experiences.

A four-minute clip of the film can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/Y4X5HNnJRB4.

I call particular attention to the few seconds which show a *czardas* dancer framed with attention on his body and feet, deliberately slowed down to half-speed I order to exaggerate a sense of the weight of history, and of foreboding[139]. The particular clip was used as a projection against a live performer, struggling with that dance tradition, and intended as an interrogation of his inheritance. What do such traditions mean in new contexts—particularly when one's beloved civilisation has almost destroyed itself? The project overall interrogates a relation between beauty and squalor, birth and decay, history and obligation, longing and an attempt to both escape and explain this history in a new context.

At the end of the presentation, we had a Q&A session to evaluate the extent to which spectators had been put in a dynamic relationship with the social history of the work, and in empathic relation with the characters. Their comments, transcribed below, demonstrate the effectiveness of the performance, both for people whose life experiences paralleled those of the play's characters, and for those whose lives had not[140]:

> *Lyrical and compelling…about identity, citizenship, belonging…It has haunted me since seeing it.*
>
> Extremely moving and powerful…I was totally transfixed.
>
> *Made me go back to my experiences in crossing the border during the war. It felt absolutely very true. This little ten-year-old sitting beside me felt it too.*
>
> It was just like when my family left Lebanon…You've draw out the similarities…the common humanity of experience.
>
> *I can read contemporary Australia in it…A powerful thing to offer to the theatre going public.*
>
> It could have been just now, Syria or wherever.
>
> *Masterful, gorgeous, rich and lovely.*
>
> The little ten-year-old beside me really got it.
>
> *This kind of theatre…cuts to the symbolic core.*

Rather contentiously, Alison Jeffers suggests that one of the most important lessons for theatre 'lies in the non-reciprocity of the relationship between performer and audience':

> Whether performers and audience are there for each other or not, their relationship is not reciprocal, moment for moment, because of their

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[139] This short sequence is also available as an excerpt here: https://youtu.be/RrLysBnnwa80.

[140] The quotes are gathered from a post-showing survey, with permission of contributors.

> inability to speak up as an audience member in the moment of
> performance.
>
> *(Jeffers, 2013, p.308)*

However, although she argues that theatre is a place where we have to 'shut up and listen', she acknowledges that 'giving audience' is 'not a purely auditory experience' but an activity where we constitute ourselves as an audience in the 'joint venture (of) opening towards meaning, not (simply) recovering it' (Rayner 1993 p.21).

Indeed, in *Anthems and Angels,* the feedback responses (or what we might otherwise call exchange processes of inter-relationality) suggest that listening can trigger a complex agentive process of (re-, and ongoing) imagining. For some this constitutes recollection of personal experiences; for others, it constitutes a realisation of something new. Therefore, people are 'present' in the audience in different ways, marking spectatorship as a complex interrogative experience.

Cormac Power writes that theatre 'complicates' presence (Power, 2008). In his analysis of Robert Lepage's epic *Dark Side of the Moon*, Power uncovers complex layers of symbolism in the most prosaic of objects (for example, a front-loading washing machine) which carry heightened meanings because of how and where they are placed on the stage, and how their visual and kinetic qualities are exploited, in order to heighten a multi-layered interpretive complexity. He argues this is a function of all theatre, with Lepage's work as an exemplar.

In such examples, for the audience, listening—*if understood* as a synaesthetic capability— is an act of agency, where the composition of meaning occurs in the mind of the beholder. *That we are moved* is a sign—not of an appropriation of others' life-narratives, but of the wonder of our inextricable interconnection with others' life-experiences, and the way meanings combine and recombine through variations in circumstance. I consider it theatre's virtue to engage our imaginations in this way. The central question becomes: in theatre, in the rubbing of our sensory experiences against each other, what can things mean? What do we realise is possible[141]? Whether a performance structure (as with Brecht) encourages us to do anything directly *about* or *with* these life experiences, is another matter (a point I return to later in this thesis).

8.2 The development of *The Compassion Plays*: towards more overt participation

I submitted applications for funding to complete *Anthems and Angels* to several local funding bodies. However, with feedback that the work was 'too advanced and too complex' to fund, the project was stymied. On this point, I note that the centre/regional divide in Australia can constitute other kinds of invisibility: if a 'local' production is deemed 'too advanced', it would then have to be represented to a national body, to be performed

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[141] In the example of the Compassion Plays below, I argue that trust in the process is a very significant element of spectatorship; but when we experiment with either form or context, the basis of that trust may come under challenge.

locally, which on some level does not make sense. It also does not make sense if a local funding rubric is to create 'excellence' and then be rejected for offering it.

By 2016—partly as a strategy to cope with such financial restrictions[142]—I chose to move my project goals away from the full professional production of a piece of scripted theatre. But the impetus was not just financial: it was also partly in response to a worry brewing in several forums, where I heard audiences lamenting that their voices of dissent (for example, from Government policy) had little traction. I often heard a plaintive call: *How can our voices be heard? How can we contribute? I cannot agree with what is happening politically. Where can we also speak*[143]*?* Due to this combination of circumstances and impetus, I decided to pursue a more participatory form of theatre, utilising the medieval Passion Plays form to frame the experience. I quote reviewer and social theorist Jane Goodall's description of the project's opening scene:

> As twilight deepens, a figure in a top hat and skeleton suit sneaks in among the small crowd in the courtyard, then shakes a tambourine to command attention. A beady eye scans the assembly, and the reckoning begins. We're kind to our animals, says Death, but what of others? 'The world pushes against our shores, like an angry tide,' and what do we do to help those set all adrift? […]
>
> The opening of Zsuzsi Soboslay's Anthems and Angels in the beautiful courtyard of Gorman Arts Centre in Canberra evokes the mediaeval play Everyman in which Death is sent to fetch someone at random. Anyone will do, because Death is the great leveller […]. The summoning in the original morality play triggers a desperate appeal for companionship. Everyman reaches out to Good Deeds and a succession of personified moral virtues, who declare themselves too weak for the journey. All this is compressed into a brief prelude, as Death fixes upon the chosen victim and ushers him, together with the audience, into the darkened theatre.
>
> *(Jane Goodall, 'All set adrift', RealTime issue #135 Oct–Nov 2016, http://www.realtimearts.net/article/135/12455)*

Once inside, the audience is seated, as if in a boat, passing through storms until arriving with Everyman as a 'stranger in a strange land'.

> This is 1950s Australia. He doesn't speak the language and the figure of the boatman transforms into an established settler, who tries to teach him. But Death won't leave him—or any of us—here for long. Everyman

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[142] *Anthems and Angels* had been designated 'too advanced and too complex' to fund further by our parochial funding body. Working in a regional centre, it was hard to find the weight of witness required by our national funders. The centre/regional divide in Australia can also constitute other kinds of invisibility

[143] For an interesting discussion on this issue, where such voices have been documented, see the facilitated discussion by Paul Barclay, 'How artists and cultural practitioners are responding to the issue of refugees and forced migration' at http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/artistic-reponses-to-migration-and-the-refugee-crisis/7488082.

sleeps, and we re-enter the existential register as the exquisite melody of the 16th century Coventry Carol is sung, a capella.

The tides are rising again. There will be no control over what happens next in the blizzard of the world…

(Jane Goodall, 'All set adrift', RealTime issue #135, Oct–Nov 2016, http://www.realtimearts.net/article/135/12455) [144]

Hayden Fritzlaff, whose review I include a few paragraphs below, mentions that the opening night of *The Compassion Plays* (on November 2, 2016) was 'made all the more poignant given the revelation that just days before…our own government would disallow refugees arriving by boat to *ever* enter our country' (Hayden Fritzlaff, for *Scissorspaperpen* https://scissorspaperpen.org/2016/11/29/review-anthems-angels-the compassion-plays.)

The year being 2016, the urgency of the situation for refugees was growing. The 'Tampa' affair—otherwise known as the 'Certain Maritime Incident' of 2011, where the Australian Government, under the Prime Ministership of John Howard—fabricated a media narrative that refugees on boats were throwing their children overboard—brought with it a sense of desperation. There is significant conjecture that the tactic was a ploy to attract and deflect voter attention, in an election year. On 16 May 2013, the Australian Government officially 'excised' its borders, supposedly making it impossible for boats to arrive to non-existent shorelines; and within a few short years the full prohibition of boat arrivals was passed in Parliament. Policy has since continued in this direction.

I had established contacts with several community groups directly or indirectly supportive of refugees in Canberra, seeking their potential involvement in the project, in exchange for workshops I could offer interested groups. I saw my role as what the Gulbenkian document sees theatre performance as 'connectors and capacity builders'. I also consolidated discussions with members of local refugee communities, made in partnership with Companion House, Canberra's centre for refugee survivors of torture and trauma. The express comment made by one of the case workers in the Centre—that 'the arts don't really matter'—is belied by evidence-based research, in the UK and Australia. Whilst such in-depth research beyond the scope of this thesis, I can recall the musician Joseph Tawadros (and the Cultural Performing Arts Network, centred in Western Sydney) speaking of the imperative for those in exile to regain and retain their cultural practices.

Following James Thompson, I could take one of two directions here: into extensive academic and archival research, or by putting one's ears to the door amongst immigrants and refugees as artists working with people on the ground. Whilst one route may be considered more 'professional', Thompson and FCE scholars, in their discussions of public versus private realisations, themselves question that division. To my mind, where refugees have themselves indicated how critical it is to remain engaged in, or restore or renew, cultural practices they themselves consider vital to their resilience and self-worth (as indeed I heard directly from an elder of a local South Sudanese community) it is remarkable of these organisations to *not hear* statements made so strongly by

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[144] The full article, with images, is inserted into Appendix 3.

communities regarding their needs. It is also redolent of Shildrick's discussion of the mistake of neglecting patient experience in surgical procedures, and only paying attention to scientific measurements.

In spite of Companion House's case worker's resistance (but assisted by Glenn Flanagan, the Trainer Advocate/Team Leader who understood several community's longing for their arts), I met with representatives of three cultural groups over a period of three months[145]. At the time, Reverend Peter Kuot of the north Canberra Dinka community was the most open to an exchange of ideas, and enthusiastic for an opportunity for his community to re-engage in cultural activities[146]. Peter is a gifted storyteller: I listened deeply into his stories to understand his people's history and their values, and their current situation in Australia.

I also engaged with colleagues working at several Canberra high schools, who brought students concerned about refugee issues, and also keen for professional performance experience, into the project. The final group of Year 9 school children[147] were facilitated in workshops exploring stage presence, 'embodied democracy'[148] and their responses to refugee predicaments[149].

Notably—and strangely—one reviewer called the student participation a fine example of 'outsider art'. A perceptive reviewer overall, this particular comment reveals certain presumptions of what demarcates 'values' in theatre. Why does including school-aged children constitute 'outsider art'? If their inclusion renders the production 'outside', what is the implied inside or 'centre' against which it plays?

As we saw in our discussion of the Memory Project in Chapter 6 above, it is critical to question how disparate groups arrive at a definition of their values. Why and how does a well-made play written with/for and performed by adults constitute an 'insider' view of theatre practice? As a political comparison, was then-Prime Minister John Howard's electoral 'mandate'—constituting less than 51% of our national vote—constitutive of a true 'centre' of contemporary Australian values as he claimed? By the time of producing the *Compassion Plays*, with the 'erasure' of our shores, it had become hard to comprehend where the 'centre' or heart of our big country actually lies.

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[145] At the time, I was sounding out who was most interested in intercultural practices—a term I came to re-evaluate over the course of the project. Was I not, after all, an 'intercultural practitioner'? This was a presumption I came to question over time.

[146] Interestingly, the notion of 'intercultural' work, which at the time was the only imprimatur to organisational support, was just not in the picture of any of these broader communities.

[147] These were seven Year 9 boys from Marist College—with teacher and theatre former collaborator Dene Kermond.

[148] This is a process I devised, and which is still in development

[149] The key question they were asked to address—'What would you wish for someone about to leave?'—became the wishes for the journey ('I wish you a roof over your head'; 'I wish that your family stays together'), which became incorporated into their spoken script. Some of these wishes were also placed into the paper fortune cookies made by one of the student's parents with her home group class. The process was an attempt to make links and generate meaning across generations and cultures

8.3 Passion plays as a form

In deciding on the medieval passion plays as a base structure/form, my intention was to produce an immersive, participatory work, which put the audience for *Anthems and Angels* into a more unstable circumstance than most traditional western theatre forms afford, on the understanding (or suspicion) that received aesthetic forms might *per se* restrict possible outcomes.

As within any tradition, we have to be careful of what our narratives foreclose:

> If we are going to touch people, we need a different kind of language and a different emotional register. And that is what you are creating…
>
> *(Jane Goodall, personal email to author, November 2017)*

I include the following sequence of images as an appropriate way to illustrate the aesthetic—and also the participatory ethic—of this performance, highlighting the sense of the body *within* narrative (and the ethical implications of complicity that Jeffers suggests[150]. These images are primarily intended by way of providing a 'storyboard' to the audience journey.

Figure 10: '*Death summons Everyman, Woman and Child*'; The Compassion Plays: Prologue. *Performer: Zsuzsanna Soboslay. Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski, 2016*

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[150] A full carousel of images is also available on the project homepage:
http://bodyecology.com.au/repetoire/anthems-and-angels/?portfolioCats=4.

Figure 11: *‘Sea levels rise, wars explode and scatter lives’;* The Compassion Plays: Prologue. *Performer: Zsuzsanna Soboslay. Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski, 2016*

Figure 12: *‘We can’t solve these things’;* The Compassion Plays: Prologue. *Performer: CS Carroll; Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski, 2016*

Figure 13: 'You! Your cowardice lets it happen'; The Compassion Plays*: Prologue. Death draws the spectators in to the complicity of performance. Performer: Zsuzsanna Soboslay; Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski, 2016*

Figure 14: 'Come: all of you!'; The Compassion Plays: Prologue. *Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski, 2016.*

Figure 15: *'Into the war zone';* The Compassion Plays. *Performer: Robin Davidson. Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski, 2016.*

A number of people told me they had been 'genuinely frightened' in this opening sequence. As audience participants, they 'had no choice' but to follow. This reflects on the wonderful duality, and sometimes duplicity, of performance, in that spectators might know and trust the performer, but fear her *role*. This in turn reflects on the notion of theatre as a kind of 'rehearsal' for life process—something utilised in Boal's development of the Theatre of the Oppressed. The active engagement of role-playing, role-swapping and rehearsal of differing outcomes is an example of theatre's tools being garnered towards creating (more) hopeful futures. Boal's work (and that of his followers) insist that we can rehearse and change how we perform our life-processes.

Visual artist Samuel James' specialisation is in creating visuals and events in real time in collaboration with actors and dancers. As collaborators, we created images that both capture the sense of ancient histories, present hauntings and looming disasters (the threat of future waves of immigration) via a combination of images from his own situated research in Europe, and archives from the 1950s I had sourced in my earlier research residency at the National Film and Sound Archive.

8.4 Participation as a letting-go

I worked with a volunteer visual artist from the community[151] who planned to create a kind of 'hanging garden' that would be instrumental in the journey from courtyard to the

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[151] The artist's name has been withheld.

immersive inside space. I extrapolated from this idea to a series of 'swap-stations' whereby audience participants hand over a personal belonging at each station, finally being given a single seedling that gets planted in the hanging garden, before that too is left behind on entering the wrap-around experience indoors. The intention was to mimic a progressive letting-go of audience 'familiars.' A further intention was that plants from the hanging garden would be gifted to the Dinka community at the project's completion.

A final week of open workshops was planned, in which exploration of the project themes of displacement and relocation and its effects on identity would be extended to other artist residents of the Arts Centre which ran the Residencies[152], as well as interested parties from elsewhere in the Canberra community. This exploratory process could have led to contributions towards the performance, or others outside of the performance. It certainly would have enabled exercises in community building and interdisciplinary dialogue. However, just before my allocated residency time began, the venue producer indicated she could no longer 'justify' the use of the space for those reasons, handing the week's rehearsals to the next event—the production of a scripted play, written in the 1970s. Arguably, this was about giving credence to a predictable rather than an unpredictable outcome—and perhaps displaying intolerance of the 'unknowables' of participatory process.

Who decides? Who makes the 'cut' regarding what is valued?

The above discussion points to a significant turning point in the steps towards production. Whose values were given credence, and why? Without attempting to create a summary evaluation of these opposing values, we can point to the following significant realisations:

The producer announced (two days before opening) that the production had to 'fit (the venue's) *branding*'. Bearing in mind that the Residencies were awarded 18 months previously and subject to ongoing discussions in the intervening period, such an intervention can be seen as a betrayal of community and participatory arts principles. We had already been forced into creating a commercially viable performance 'season' which was not how the original call-out for Residencies had been advertised. Reasons for this about-face might include producer inexperience[153], pressures of under-funding, and a requirement to have 'showcase' outcomes to guarantee the ongoing viability of the Residencies. The local funding body had already categorically refused to support the initiative, stating that there was 'only one performance venue in Canberra for the creation of contemporary theatre' they supported (which, incidentally, tends to nurture script-based work). The Centre was clearly short of manpower and resources to seek other funding within their own (self-imposed) timeframes.

One of the conclusions I made in my own project evaluation is that the venue was not ready to service the Residencies. The Residencies were part of a move to reinstate a theatre space that had lain dormant for decades. From the start, we as Residents had to do an inventory (which remained unattended to for over a year) of what was missing in the studio (including basics such as simple lighting rig, secure windows and functioning power

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[152] The arts centre in question is intentionally left unnamed.

[153] It was an 'inaugural' project to reinstate a theatre space that had lain dormant for over a decade.

outlets. There were also mildew issues in the badly ventilated room. At one stage, the agreement to purchase stools to provide flexible seating for performances was billed to my account (with 'assembly costs' included in the bill). This was like having the piper pay for the tune she had been commissioned to compose.

There are reasons for all these entanglements, but the point here is to understand what enables or disables *care*—in this case, of the performance, of the community it is trying to serve, and of the performers and creators themselves. Theatre is renowned for being a 'smoke and mirrors' discipline, however, it's one thing to create illusions and another to have to spend so much of one's energy putting out spot fires so that the project does not self-combust, and so that the illusions of self-sufficiency can continue. As someone with a first-class honours' degree, working in theatre for less than $20,000 a year, the degree of shame I carry (that I cannot carry myself, my family, or my communities, on this wage) cannot be underestimated. It is here, too, that the context of where performance sits in our culture is not often discussed. In the parochial context of Canberra, where amateur productions have long been accorded (and funded) equal status alongside professional events—does the standard of a work even seem to matter? And what newly forged standards are we seeking to create?

8.5 What is valued?

The day before opening, the venue producer came unannounced into our tech run (a rehearsal focused on sound and lighting cues which usually does not ask actors to be fully engaged), condemned the poor acting of one performer, and commanded that the opening immersive scene ('Into the war zone') enact fear and entrapment[154]. This was not the intention of the scene, and incidentally placed the said actor under pressure to perform in a way that was not his strength. The lens of her evaluation came from a different place to what this production was largely about (an ethic incidentally shared by the video documenter, which I talk to below). Meanwhile, the project had been a training ground for the venue's fledgling marketing and administration officers. The problem here is not their respective lack of experience; rather, on who was expected to hold and support whom through their learning processes. Not many industries rely so brazenly on the 'support-up' method when the supporters are (perhaps systemically) unpaid or underpaid[155].

The volunteer visual artist had a nervous breakdown after leaving his day job, and three days before the show's opening had not created the hanging garden; therefore, this part of the work (and the 'swap-stations') was abandoned. He promised to bring a 2D canvas painting, which he attempted to deliver for opening night. Our stage manager refused to hang it, asserting it had 'nothing to do with the show'; on the other hand, the venue

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[154] This suggestion in itself would have entailed approximately 50 sound and lighting cues changes and was demanded some two hours before opening.

[155] I emphasise that this critique is not about W.'s capacity, but what the circumstances made possible or nearly impossible. The emphasis is also on how circumstances enable or disable potential community co-participants, in all their variations of knowledge and capability, to come in to a project. This situation was not assisted by our parochial funding body insisting that they only would and should continue to give funding to *one* venue in the whole of the city who they considered carried the remit to produce 'contemporary theatre' in Canberra. We had already been forced into creating a commercially viable performance 'season' which was not how the original call out for Residencies had been advertised.

producer insisted that having *no* foyer display was 'unacceptable'. I wondered on what criteria acceptable and unacceptable were based. I felt caught between opposing values and wondered what was the most important thing we were supposedly caring-for.

8.6 The aesthetics of empathy, care and participation

I argue that empathy takes training; care takes training, and participation requires both care and empathy and something else as well: a willingness to let go of presumptions and create a 'new unnamed form of practice' which can be truly difficult to activate, articulate and sustain in our current funding, production and marketing models, and the expectations they bring along with them. Whilst I believe I led *The Compassion Plays* according to my values, I was forced to consider where 'theatre' sits in our communities. The project had already been forced into creating a commercially viable performance 'season' which was not how the original call-out for Residencies had been advertised. This *per se* may have put it at odds with several of the supposedly 'alternative' groups operating in Canberra—and hence perhaps the 'dirty money' stigma I describe immediately below.

One local 'ethical exchange' community—a group with a significant membership overlap with people heavily invested in refugee advocacy—although initially enthused by being invited into the project, started to pull involvement in the collection of seedlings and contribute to the soup kitchen, with responses ranging from 'people in our own community are doing it hard, too', to 'but there is money being exchanged in the purchase of tickets'. It was as if someone had struck a match that caught a bush and a 'values wildfire' had started. The flames were fanned by a misunderstanding of the project's structure and intentions, and a suspicion that the exchange of money anywhere near their contributions was a kind of poison. Members of the group refused to engage in a discussion around differences between poverty, impoverishment, gifting, and volunteering[156]. However, my later interactions with other members of the same exchange community unveiled a complex web of people willing and able to contribute to a gifting project helping those less fortunate in the community. The difference seemed to be in the luck of connecting with people *willing and ready* to contribute, and a dissociation of the task from anything to do with a theatre event.

Whilst the first point might be attributed to luck (of timing, and the right connections), the second is more alarming as a proposition. Is theatre actually despised on some level in our communities? I ask that question without attempting to answer it here. We have noted how several writers, such as Laura Clark and Bryony Trezise on 'dark tourism' (Clark, 2013)(Trezise, 2013) can be critical of researchers' and creatives' intentions, questioning to whose gain they gather their materials: I wonder whether such suspicions extend into our broader communities, and if so, why? Over the duration of this project, I suspected a hatred of the very 'beauties' Thompson recognises in Emma Goldman's love of dance. To what extent these ruminations are true, I cannot answer here; however, I can say that

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[156] If I were unkind, I could reflect on a suspicion that the group which I came to suspect was essentially created to help affluent households offload excess goods they were wealthy enough to no longer need, at little or no cost or effort to themselves. But I note that stress brings out the worst in us all—and affects our generosity towards others.

Tiffany Page's warning, to be prepared to be confounded in your process, certainly held true. In the meantime, however, it would be good if our production houses and funders are also prepared to be confounded and walk the walk alongside us.

I here reflect on Lowe's realisations that 'communities' are not cogent, nor uniform in their values, beliefs and practices. This realisation applies equally to producers, creators and wider communities: suspicions, idealisation, conservatism, differences of opinion and fear of change can occur amongst and between any of this groups. Specifically, with *The Compassion Plays,* the genesis of the work was inherent in many factors, *some* of which were to produce a professional level of theatre, some of which were to create opportunities to engage in the subject theme in different ways—and in particular, in ways that 'frayed the edges of the form'. Certainly, I learnt that many factors inhibit rather than enable co-creative practices, and here I include the pressures—both revealed and concealed—under which the presentation venue must have been operating.

8.7 Evaluation: the meaning(s) of 'success'

The notion of working with communities who are '*ready to participate'* is a provocative one. According to FCE scholars, care should not only occur opportunistically. Tronto and Barnes, for example, relentlessly challenge governments and organisations on this account, and argue that care is an embedded principle and a *requirement* for societies to function well. Whilst CACD and FCE scholars both resist the notion of operating to 'moral precepts', Tronto and Barnes hold to a kind of template of what should be considered care's (and a democratic society's) imperatives. This argument aligns an aesthetics of care with a sense of our civic 'duties', whilst acknowledging the exacting nature of working with co-creative principles, and all they leave unpredictable. In trying so hard (perhaps too hard) to care for and work to such principles, *The Compassion Plays* proved an exhausting experience. That said, the positives of the performance itself were many:

The meaning(s) of 'success'—Sold out!
The event went up, for three nights, to sell out houses. It had a lucidity and vibrancy that was clearly appreciated and enjoyed, as evidenced in reviews and audience comments. Goodall celebrates the performance's gravitas and subtle complexities—its 'metaphysics and mythologies'—pointing to theatre's capacity to *activate*, and its potential to heal 'rifts':

> Theatre offers different languages. It connects with other zones in the human psyche, the atavistic parts of the brain that do not deal in categories, and where the mystery of being alive on this planet may be experienced in larger terms.
>
> *(Jane Goodall, 'All set adrift', RealTime issue #135 Oct–Nov 2016, http://www.realtimearts.net/article/135/12455)*

Fritzlaff points to this kind of theatre's potential educative role. In achieving a place of empathetic resonance for the predicament of the displaced, he found the work:

> …a bold proposition: a performance experience that combined theatre with improvised music, visual art, song and the responses of its audience. By moving theatre beyond its regular boundaries into a transitory, restless place, it was able to teaches us a little of the importance of compassion, show us a glimpse of the refugee condition. After all, each of us share in this experience. So many of us ultimately come from somewhere else.
>
> *(Hayden Fritzlaff, https://scissorspaperpen.org/2016/11/29/review-anthems-angels-the-compassion-plays/)*

Some comments from the audience likewise attest to the impact, sensitivity and subtleties of the work, and, as I believe, evident in the visuals supplied:

> *Such a beautiful and delicate work with so many underlying powers.*
>
> Impressive and thought-provoking.
>
> *A deeply layered experience.*
>
> An amazing embracing experience…works to each of the five senses at once.
>
> *A vastly wide ongoing, collective/archetypal human experience.*
>
> I really appreciated the deep emotional layering.
>
> *I felt respected as a member of the audience, as an intelligent audience.*
>
> The magical landscape you emanate entices my awareness to a state of compassion and kindness.
>
> *I saw a lot of joy and sense of survival in the work as well.*
>
> We need a different kind of language and a different emotional register if we are going to touch people…And that's what you are creating.

Some more extended responses show the work was received on several, and complex, levels:

> *I feel quite strange in the sense that here I am living in the same locality in which I was born and brought up. The very opposite of displacement and dislocation to the point where maybe you could say parochial, rooted to the spot!*
>
> I loved the live music including the singing and harmonising. And Death, confusion, displacement, uncertainty, anxiety, violence all of these presiding over all like a director, facilitator,

magician/shaman/witch. I wondered afterwards do you know Ingmar Bergmann's wonderful movie The Seventh Seal. I guess you were working from similar source anyway.

I most enjoyed the immersive aspects of the production, the moments when I felt surrounded by images and was prompted to extend my own experiences and memories, to feel that I had shared the experience of others, both 'in the play' and in the audience. The 'language class' in particular sparked interactions with others nearby, a camaraderie of recognition—a number of people watching obviously had their own memories of migration, had brought their own angels and demons with them, sharing an ironic awareness of the idiocies that result from 'managing' people with different needs by way of cursory categories.

Regarding this last comment, which reflects on the degree of audience participation, some attendees told me (agreeing with Fritzlaff) that 'there was just enough'. Several others commented that they nearly did not come because they usually perceive audience participation as a 'threat' and avoid it like the plague. Others agreed with John Lombard, that the interactivity was under-realised (Lombard, for Canberra City News: http://citynews.com.au/2016/review-unpacking-migrant-experience/) with the caveat that they appreciated *sensing* there was more. For example, the 'fortune cookies', distributed by the school students through the audience, containing messages that tell of a shared future in which we are all refugees. 'I wish you a roof over your head.' 'I wish that your family stays together.' 'I wish you could come back' were planned to reveal instructions, suggestions or questions that the audience could utilise to prompt or redirect the action[157]. Several other elements operated like a synecdoche or potentiality of something to unfold further. However, others appreciated the honesty of not overreaching beyond what was possible with the means accessible to us at the time.

On this point, one observer commented:

I think the Dinka storyteller in your doco is really important…So very important to explore the parallels of experience across different cultures.

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[157] Some of the 'slip questions' could have included: 'Sing a song in your native tongue'; 'Say welcome in your native language'; 'My favourite dance is…'; 'One thing my parents taught me is…'; 'How many languages do you speak?'; 'The hardest thing I have left behind is…'; 'The thing I look forward to is…'; 'It happened right in front of me…', each of which may have prompted responsive scene development in different ways.
Mostly, it was the pressures of time and finances, and lack of production support, that precluded the realisation of this element. This observation also applies to the film clip of Peter Kuot's storytelling: https://youtu.be/SEy_d-iILDM (3 minutes)
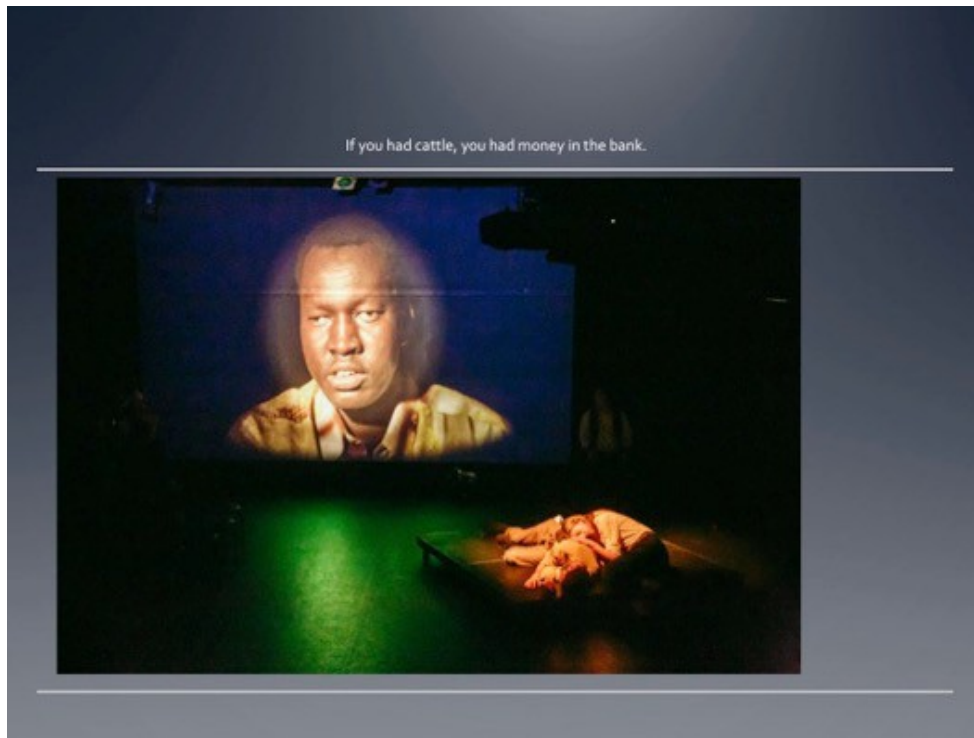
Figure 16: '*If you had cattle, you had money in the bank*'; *Storyteller: Peter Kuot; Visual projection: Samuel James; Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski*
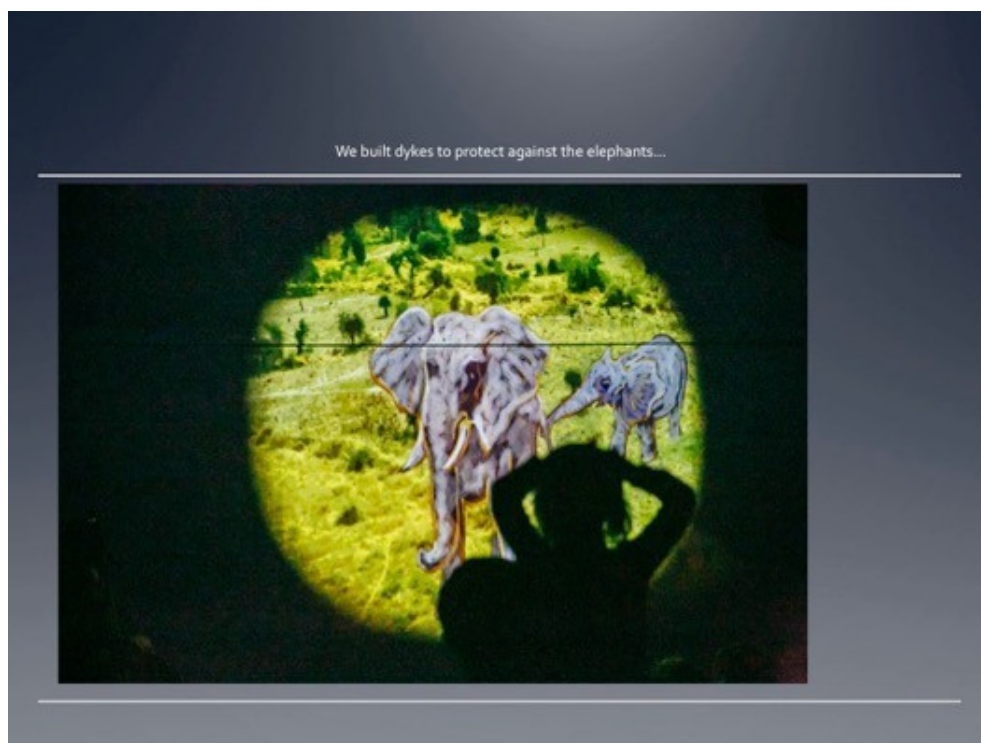

Figure 17: '*We built dykes to protect against the elephants*'; *Zsuzsanna Soboslay with Samuel James; Visual projection: Samuel James; Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski*

Although Reverend Peter Kuot and some of his community were keen to contribute as performers, in the end, Peter–who works in Canberra Hospital as a cleaner (mostly on night shifts) in order to sustain his unpaid pastoral duties—was unavailable for the performance dates[158]. As the spiritual bedrock of his community, no one else would attend without his physical presence—something I pre-emptively understood[159]. Hence, the week before our performance season, Peter's storytelling was filmed. The three-minute edit, with inserted animations, both captured and condensed the sense of 'deep time' and vast landscape in Peter's storytelling style[160] and emphasised the key images and symbolisation within his stories (the invading elephants; the dykes built to protect their most precious resources[161]). In the scene immediately following, the school boys emerged from within the audience creating a *temenos* around the sleeping Everyman. The 'protective circle' came directly from the image of the dyke built to protect the precious cattle that was core to Kuot's narrative[162].

The 3-minute clip featuring Kuot operates like a parable—a parallel narrative of the arduous experience of almost all refugees, and the losses incurred in exile. Indeed, the Everyman narrative is itself a parable—and in the way that creativity brings in its magic, it must be why I chose it as the framework for the whole. (I discuss the implications and significance of working with 'parables' further below.)

In one sense, there is a universality to the story of exile and loss; and yet specificity is also required (the particular land and cultural values the storyteller comes from). As one audience member said in their feedback:

> *I would have liked perhaps more prompts to draw attention to the*
> *special qualities of this part of the earth we have all come to live in*
> *and on, how we might come to terms with the depth of our ignorance,*
> *overcome the tendency to treat it and its people, and those still*
> *waiting and waiting to come here, with such brusque neglect…but as*
> *you say, to get as far as you did was already the result of an*
> *immense effort! And the event as a template felt welcoming, open*
> *and full of promise.*

Yet one of the most significant pieces of feedback I received from a member of the audience was that she appreciated we did not attempt to summarise or finalise any of Kuot's experiences[163], but let them be witnessed, whilst retaining a sense of the unknowable about them. The community is fragile; their story of reminiscence, longing and struggle needed to be tenderly represented. Hemmings warns against the co-opting of life

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[158] This aspect of having arts projects accessible to communities is discussed in more depth in the case study of the *Culture Hub* in Chapter 9.

[159] Later in this thesis, I discuss other issues to do with lines of trust in fragile communities.

[160] The edit also had the effect of helping present Peter as more comfortable than he was in long takes of film. The editing process was thus also a kind of honoring of his skills in another storytelling format.

[161] The symbol of the dyke, or protective circle, as understood from Peter's stories, generated the next sequence in the performance, and indeed propelled the investigations I uncovered with the school children.

[162] It also generated the juggling, the fight, and the 'home memory' scenes.

[163] Matarasso calls this 'instrumentalising' participants; Hemmings warns against the co-opting of life narratives to one's own research gains.

narratives to one's own research gains: perhaps some experiences need to remain unexpressed (Clare Hemmings, 2017).

I felt considerable pressure in this process of editing this film clip—nonetheless one I embraced as an essential part of the project. At the time, Peter and I both knew and did not know each other. There were shared understandings and also gaps in our experience. I was both aware and unaware of protocols in his community (of which I discovered more and describe further below).

I note that taking care of the known/unknown, spoken/unspoken visible/invisible—is a key task of the parable. Kuot himself was both aware and unaware of circumstances I operated within and under. Yet he knew enough of film *per se* to embrace it as a popular and significant way of condensing storytelling and making it accessible. He also desperately wanted and still wants his stories shared. Although visibly uncomfortable during filming, he readily agreed to the process, and trusted Sam James and me to the telling. Our editing (from three months of conversations, into a ninety-minute interview, culled back to a three-minute clip) was a process of finding what was useful (for our own storytelling) whilst respecting and holding a much larger whole.

At its best, theatre is a caring practice in its craft; we certainly worked hard to take care of and honor Peter's narrative, whilst also answering to an overarching requirement to create something that 'worked' within the experiential structure of the whole.

8.8 A complicit audience

I engaged five musicians—one performing outdoors pre-show and during the Soup Kitchen. Skilled as jazz, ensemble and environmentally responsive artists, this aspect heightened the *interactive* quality and potential of the piece's structure. In reflecting on this aspect, I understand (*pace* Jeffers) that part of the focus is in what ways audiences are part-collaborators. Although they were not actually co-directors of the piece, they were not what Jeffers identifies as the audience that 'shuts up and listens' (Jeffers, 2013). Indeed, at moments throughout the performance, they are asked to take civic responsibility.

For example, the 'here is a spoon' scene (the 'language class' mentioned above) is an example of where the actors played with the audience as collaborators. The script was devised with reference to archival audio materials gleaned from the National Film and Sound Archive and became a sprightly comic skit in the performance. (Please play the first few seconds of the following archival materials:
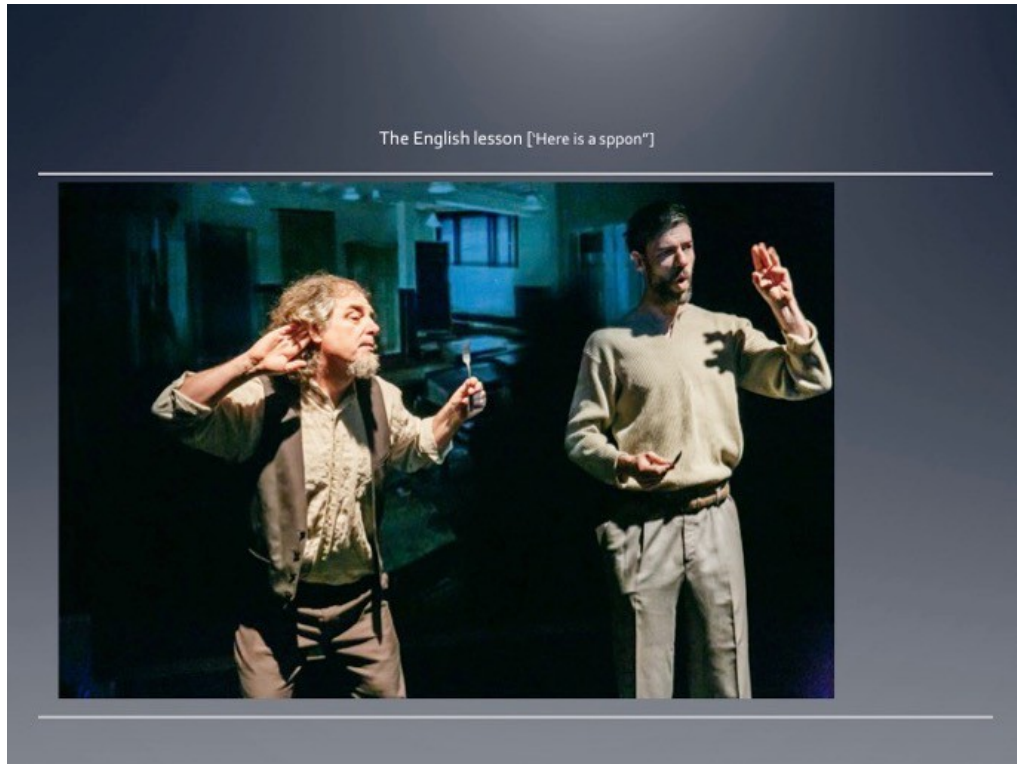
Figure 18: 'The English lesson'; Performers: Robin Davidson, CS Carroll; Visual projection: Samuel James; Photo: Andrew Sikorski
(https://www.dropbox.com/s/pypnn0v4n89mi4v/here%20is%20a%20spoon.m4a?dl=0)

Whilst this segment was well responded-to for its immediate impact and humour, it was another two years before I heard feedback I consider critically important to our discussion.

One audience member—two years after the event, and almost by chance—mentioned to me that what he most valued was something he did not consciously acknowledge at the time. Over the weeks following his viewing of the production, he realised that during the 'stranger in a strange land' scene (in which the actor spoke Gaelic, his mother tongue), he had wanted to bark out 'speak English', as happened to so many immigrants to Australia in the 1950s—including my parents, for whom this carried significant, and critically limiting, impact for the rest of their lives. He said he both regretted **not** 'acting (this) out', but also regretted the way he wanted to respond in the first place. He said it was *invaluable* to be put into a position to experience that regret; it had never happened to him before, in attending any other piece of theatre. He reflected on this aspect for many months after the performance.
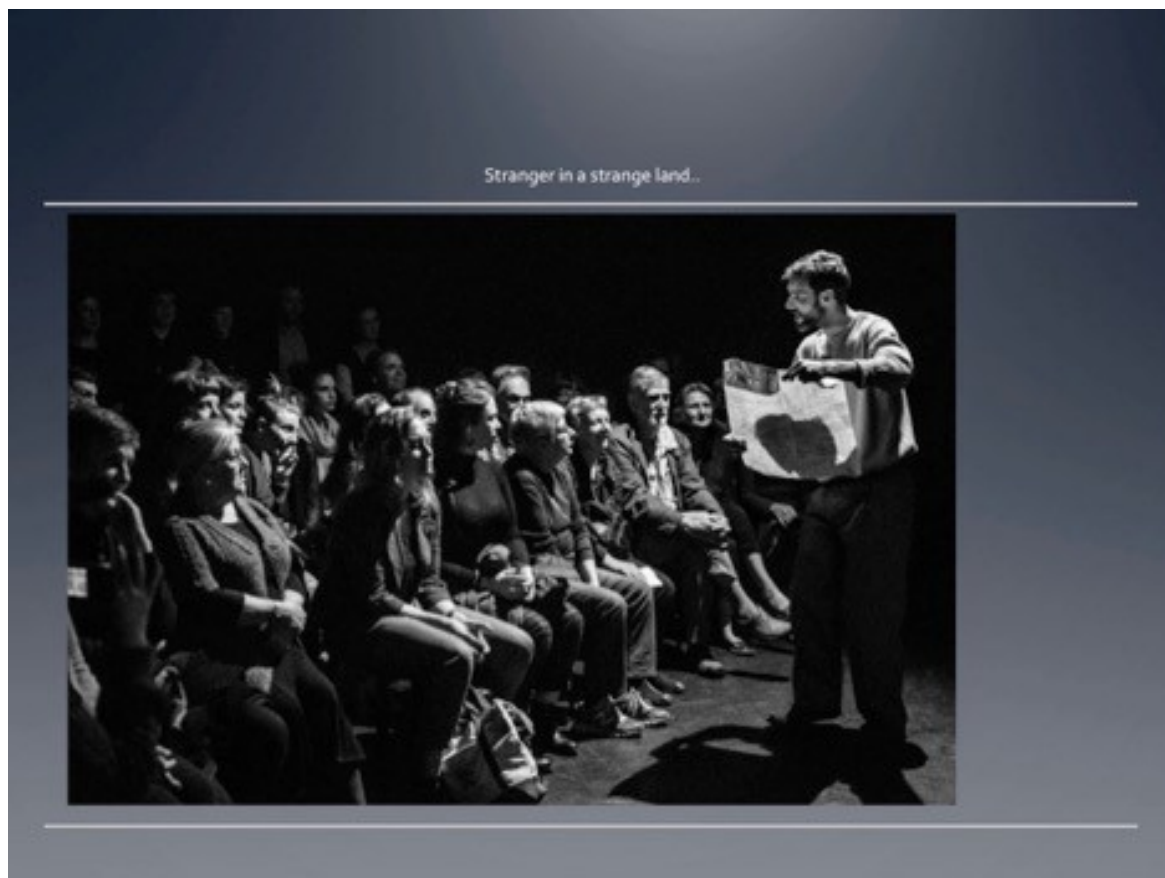
Figure 19: *'Stranger in a strange land'; CS Carroll asks directions, in Gaelic (his personal mother-tongue), from the audience; Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski*

This points to a critical factor regarding the ongoing significance of an event for and in a community, and whether our official evaluations capture such experiences. As someone of Anglo-Celtic background—literate, fully employed—the being-perturbed by a piece of art is a significant outcome. Brett's response reflects back on a situation before he was born; yet the echoes and reverberations of the experiences of his parents (and their influence on his upbringing, and hence of his psychic formation) is hugely significant. So too is the differential in his own personal experience, between what his ancestors considered as 'givens', and what the performance caused him to (re)consider. The consideration is something that stretches back and forward in time, through the present into the future.

It also raises a critical question about feedback and evaluation, as generally practised in the performing arts industry, and in relation to funding acquittals. As Caroline Wake, in her review of Balfour's publication *Refugee Performance* points us to, what is the place and scope for evaluation over *longer* periods of time than is generally afforded in the project-by-project funding climate in which we operate (Wake, 2014, p.114)? Indeed, what can be defined as our duty of care (to our subject[s]) in such circumstances?

8.9 Past–present–future

For myself, I understood, in a visceral sense, that one of the things I so value is what folds in (from the past) into an event, and what folds out (and *ahead*) as possibly of equal value to an event itself. This was evidenced in the feedback I detail above. It is also evident in an

aspect not often talked about: that even without funding or structure around a 'next phase' project[164], I could not walk away from the relationship I had established with the Dinka community. After the performance season, I visited one of the Dinka church services, delivering flowers and an olive tree, to help establish their community garden. I also gave Peter copies of the film clip, stills images and the program. In further conversations, the seeds of the *Culture Hub* were created during *The Compassion Plays* and are described further below.

But first reflecting back, I felt deeply pained where some other relationships had not been supported—for example, in the dismissal of input from the voluntary visual artist. True, this incident, and his mental illness, proved beyond what any such event could hold. But isn't that perhaps the nature of our subject? How do we hold the extreme, the unpredictable, and the unimaginable (indeed, what Levinas calls the 'enormity' of the other, which calls to our care)? How do we hold, and explain, the 'beyond'? The response to this question is complex, and reflects on what makes work, and ethics, possible or impossible.

James Thompson, in his work in Sri Lanka, wryly acknowledges that he knew his 'Brecht (and others) but perhaps not my Grotowski and Barba', indicating his social activism was more to the foreground than his understanding of a more puzzling, erratic, personality-driven European theatre praxis[165]. At the time of *The Compassion Plays*, I had not yet read 'my' Matarasso, my Thompson, Conquergood, or Schininà. My realisation is, not that I did not value what I observed and sensed was happening, but that I did not have a theoretical framework around it, to help protect (and defend) myself and the project against the ever-present pressures of commercial presumptions and pressures, and perhaps the suspicion from several quarters that 'mess' has no place in art. I believe this notion of 'mess' is somewhere intertwined in Thompson's stated faith in the protective quality of art. However, it is something my own nerves were telling me, when I had found myself talking at a refugee arts conference in the UK in 2015, about wanting to 'fray the edges of the form'[166] (which *The Compassion Plays,* albeit half-consciously, seems to have achieved).

How do we dare to represent such mess—that is, the 'outsider' art, the 'untidy' foyer? How do we even begin to approach it? I suggest that perhaps mess is an *imperative* in CACD. Sam James, from his extensive experience working with many CACD artists and professionally constituted groups around Australia[167], has often taken producers to task about their use and abuse of community participants 'in service to aesthetic vision'. However, his input in production meetings has often been dismissed, as aesthetic considerations were argued to have precedence. Is this good enough in our practices (and

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[164] Matarasso calls this 'instrumentalising' participants; Hemmings warns against the co-opting of life narratives to one's own research gains.

[165] I had always been troubled by Grotowski and Barba's egocentrism; however, I did not have a language for these intuitions as a student.

[166] This was a comment I made in discussion with Tom Green from Counterpoints arts UK, an arts and social change organisation that has been running biannual events by, for and with refugees and on refugee issues more than a decade. I consider it an example of what an environment allows to be spoken. As Kirshenblatt-Gimblett reminds us, in her discussion about contexts, and con/texts, who makes the cut, and who decides where that cut is made?

[167] The list of companies shall remain unnamed, as the point of this discussion is not to lay blame, but to remain focused on the central here to do with putting aesthetics above ethics in our practices.

is it only those who are forced to experience it, in the front line, who also carry the burden of communicating its value to where the generals marshal their forces)[168]?

8.10 The question of documentation: what kinds of knowledge matter?

Andrew Sikorski's images, as included in this document, capture the journey, intensity and *gravitas* of the performance, respecting the ontological truth of the experience. In contrast, our documentary videographer, despite having worked on a previous incarnation of the project, focused entirely on the actors, their expressions and their own personal performance intensities, which completely missed the point of the situated experience. Indeed, his work missed the piece's mystery, and its genesis in a kind of 'not knowing'. As a result, his documentation proved completely unusable. As he had been paid eight per cent of my cash budget, this really mattered—but one cannot use inappropriate and misleading materials, no matter what the cost.

Our discussion about disparities of documentation reflects on the relations between experience and documentation *per se.* I note the recent performative event staged by Leisa Shelton, at Punctum Arts in Castlemaine, burning her archive of thirty years, challenging us as a community to re-examine what she states as 'disrespect' for lineages of practice (embedded in the direct relationship of performer to audience) and the bodies of work of senior artists. Her action is a critique of the onus of proof (of cultural value) being placed in documentation, rather than in the actual lived experience of performance[169]—and the memories of attendees, when they are encouraged to value and remember.

There were many more documentations demanded of Artist Residents at the end of our projects, including extensive demands to attend 'feedback' meetings and provide reports[170]. This *per se* is not unusual in contemporary performance practices and situations; however, it should be noted that for the most part such professional-level feedback is often (as here) expected to be performed without pay. At the conclusion of the Residencies, I had to censor some of my responses. I now look back through my notes and read emails and drafts I severely edited back, as (although reflecting experiential truths) they might have proved fractious at the time[171]. There are several layers of reality operating here, including: what was 'true'; what was asked for, and what could be heard?

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[168] In my experience attending arts and disability forums throughout 2019, this is an issue that speaks to the requirements of *anticipatory care* and seems to confirm that it is only direct experience that paves the wave for anticipatory processes. Whilst it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss here, I mark this as an area that needs much research—partly, because it throws into discussion whether imagination (and anticipatory care) can precede experiential learning and training.

[169] 'Archiving the ephemeral': Leisa Shelton and Punctum Arts, documented on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/Addendum-archiving-the-ephemeral-106241860735803/?_Tn_=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCsm- VcctYqzcbahfK_MqhFVA5ZS9wusbsH051z9ScKfpT0i5eiyWKmprYMiF_gKMl6LdVAS6hYevS9

[170] In my experience, this is not an unusual expectation on receipt of even small amounts of funding, for even short-term engagements. If venues, producers, and government agencies are serious about fully engaged and productive feedback, why are artists not paid at consultant rates to accomplish these tasks?

[171] As a simple example, the performance venue was simply not ready, requiring quite extensive repairs well into the start of the Residency seasons. Other aspects were more to do with the readiness of capacity of the venue to produce according to their own ideals. At one point, I had been severely reprimanded for informing my visual artist that negotiations were untimely and therefore 'difficult', as if this tarnished the image of the venue as cohesive and reliable.

'Instrumentalisation' is so often embedded in feedback forms; yet to what extent is any one form a greater truth than another? My experience in this project reflects on a larger question: what do we relegate as primary, secondary and tertiary in significance, including in our documentation? And how does the above reflect on Elizabeth Hare's observation of the 'spirit of radical questioning' at the origins of CACD, that supposedly 'resists coercion in the interests of creative security'[172]?

8.11 Validity of experiences 'off the frame'

We remember that the lives of the Parragirls was beyond what was documented of them in their childhoods. We also recall the silences they kept when under threat or surveillance. Here I re-introduce a concept I raised in my introduction, of the value of the negative—not just of the 'unspeakable', but the very gaps in process that like weeds in a wall betray cracks in our thinking, in our feeling and in our structures. As Parragirl playwright Jenny McNally found, the weeds will have their way and begin to speak. Yet rather than thinking of these weeds as 'negatives', they could be configured as part of the 'becoming' of projects, something we can embrace and hence learn from. We might conjecture they are part of the 'critical silences' of which Wake speaks—negatives that may better be configured as 'productive' in our practices. It is in such moments that we remember Tronto's phrase that care is *a disposition,* a lens through which we can (choose to) see things differently.

In what ways can a piece of community/participatory theatre be respected and evaluated as something disposed to a 'becoming'? Even though we created a pleasing and affective end-product, I contend that the notion of a 'becoming' was and remains critical to *The Compassion Plays.* I link back to Sevenhuijsen's work on anticipatory care, which I have linked to concepts of imagination and future-building. Indeed, 'anticipatory' care might lie in the capacity to see the negative spaces and incorporate each project's 'negative capabilities' that Keats imagines as pursuing:

> …a vision of artistic beauty even when it leads (to) intellectual confusion
> and uncertainty, as opposed to a preference for philosophical certainty.
>
> *(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Negative_capability; accessed*
> *April 14, 2019)*

Keats' phrase also resonates in the other case studies which follow, where 'confusion and uncertainly' prove to be the most productive platforms from which we break (into) new ground.

8.12 *The Compassion Plays*: (in)conclusions

The trajectory of *The Compassion Plays*—who and what it represented and talked to, and what it cared about—uncovers differing expectations about what such performance events and projects value. But are these values shared by the culture which creates, supports, or

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[172] A recent ABC TV documentary reflects on the pressures of getting a show 'on the road', and what factors are left out of those considerations. The program highlights the detriment to artists—particularly to their mental health. 'The Show Must Go On', first broadcast on ABC TV on (date), now available in iView.

surrounds the venture—taking note that what 'surrounds' it might not be supportive? Is theatre (and, specifically, community theatre's uncertainties) a welcomed form of expression in the community within which it is performed? Are there differences between 'professional' and lay communities about what is valued? or is it more important to reconsider Elizabeth Hare's observation of the 'spirit of radical questioning' at the origins of CACD, that supposedly 'resists coercion in the interests of creative security'?

Leaving such questions unexamined leaves practitioners—and the communities they try to serve—open to multiple abuses. Limited funding can contribute to poor-quality outcomes, or prevent outcomes occurring at all. On the other hand, conforming to pre-conceived aesthetics and outcomes might lead to polished results that can leave communities with a sense of betrayal of their values—particularly astringent if those values are not centred within 'received' practices, whether those practices are to do with subject matter, symbolisation, or temporality/duration. Yet what real choices do we have, regarding creating according to deep care values? So much funding in Australia is now project by project. As if any parent could nurture their child every second or third year.

As early care scholars have identified, much care work sits in the gaps between received understandings, practices and forms. Indeed, care ethicists identify that much of the care-taking that keeps our society functioning is performed by an invisible, mostly unpaid army of unidentified participants (including grandparents, daughters, and friends of friends), in ways that Barnes takes pains to demonstrate helps keeps capitalism going, but with little reward to participants. FCE scholars are fierce in calling governments to account on their nonchalance regarding caring for those who, without acknowledgement, take up these kinds of care. Similarly, many of us in CACD work in areas which sit in the gaps between received forms, in positions not often validated in our broader 'audit' culture. Such gaps leave carers and CACD workers equally open to abuse.

8.13 Research into abusive practices

Mark Seton has done significant work in the area of abuse of actors in the performing arts (Seton, 2010, *passim*). In this section I ask whether the expectations on performances, in the climate I describe, are not fundamentally abusive in other ways as well[180]. Demands so often put on projects to produce 'goods and services' without professional fees also set up serious questions about expectations and demands in the practice of making theatre— which, particularly in socially engaged arts, may entirely miss the point. And it brings up particular questions concerning exploitation of arts workers in hostile environments, and of delicacies excluded from end-processes. The critical questions, however, lie not in these instances as stagnant 'problems', but as experiences in process—things emerging from within structures, concepts and beliefs that need to be addressed.

8.14 Helping communities to care
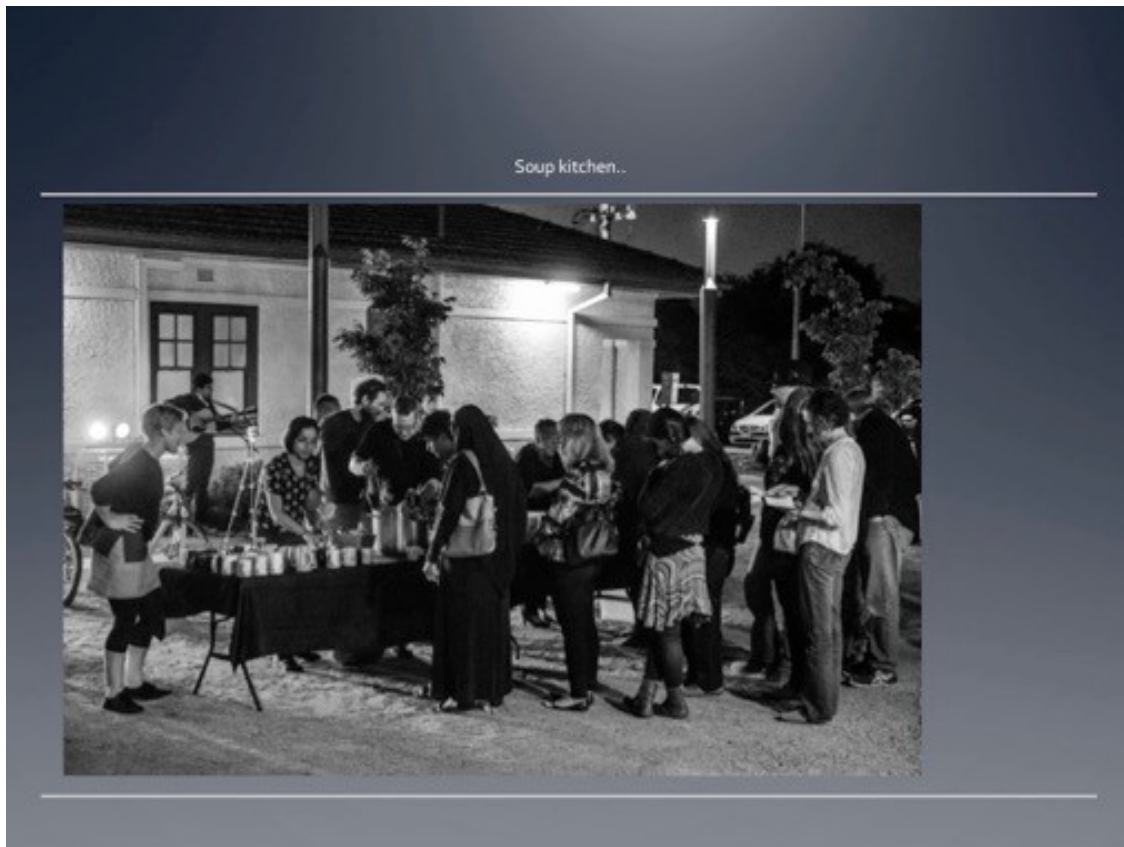
Figure 20: The Compassion Plays' *Soup Kitchen—manned by volunteers from the Co-Op Food Shop over the four days of the performance season. Photo credit: Andrew Sikorski*

In some specific activities that led into and extended beyond *The Compassion Plays*, I realised that, whilst I had experienced difficulties with sectors of the community, there were other groups of people ready and willing to be involved. They included setting up and manning the soup kitchen over three days, the Australian National University Food Co-Operative stating were 'grateful to have the opportunity to act on something (they) had wanted to do for a long time'; a local church offering the Dinka ongoing use of their community gardens, stating they were 'just looking for how to do something like this, for just such a community'; and a group of different individuals from the earlier, problematic 'Buy Nothing' group delivered so many seedlings and flowers to me to gift to the Dinka that I could not unpack them in one delivery.

For each group, the project enabled them to demonstrate their care. Indeed, a crucial realisation I made was about working with a group's and their individuals' respective readiness to care. However, this is problematic in terms of care ethics—and in particular FCE—where FCE scholars categorically state that ethical relations should not be

dependent on such *ad hoc* 'readiness', but demand activation on principle (indeed, as a factor of our citizenship)[173].

The arts do not occur in a vacuum, disconnected from cultural and political values. In this engagement, in the time and location of *The Compassion Plays*, for the greater part it seemed simpler if the actions were dissociated from arts practice. Sadly, I cannot help but have my suspicions that a greater part of the hostility or antipathy is of theatre itself, indexing (at worst) a deep loathing and (at best) a wariness of the arts on some level. Yet art can also have an educative role: *surely* it can lead, and not just follow[174]? In which case, what is the place of the facilitator/artist? As we are constantly subjected to underfunding in these demanding roles, does this exhibit due care, or reflect on our wider cultural values of perhaps not caring for care?

Yet, these complications are a risk of the very subject matter of *The Compassion Plays*. As Jane Goodall states:

> There is something primordial in the refugee experience. It is the experience of all of us if we are true to ourselves—in that we must all 'own' it, as part of our communal lives. And yet there is this fight and flight response. Get away from me. I do not know you. This is not real.
>
> The world is only my own safe place in it. If we let that response dominate, what poor creatures we are.
>
> *(Jane R Goodall, email dated 12 June 2016[175])*

Our capacity for *poesis* comes from our capacity to imagine how we can be, what we can do, or what we may bring forth. This includes our capacity to do good or ill. As Hamington, Lachman and others demonstrate, our bodies are the machines of giving good or bad care. But perhaps it is only ethical practices that guide us toward the former.

I conclude this chapter with some key questions: Is theatre—as a practice of bodies, between bodies, requiring the complexity of interactions between multiple partners—something that encourages cooperation, or does it encourage and help sustain competitiveness, oppositions and hierarchies?

Is a fair-minded and equitable practice viable or sustainable? Are the arts only an afterthought once circumstances are stable, or can they provide the provocations we need to activate social change?

There are many theories about the dynamics of opposition, and the creative fodder produced by oppositional practice. But in the end, does this constitute an ethical practice appropriate to working in community? From personal experience, the less oppositional the

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[173] Tiller 2016—for the Gulbenkian Foundation—and Barnes *et al* 2016 are all strong on this: and indeed, Levinas—whose ideas inform but are not pursued in this thesis—insists that the face to face encounter with the other *demands* our care.

[174] As I articulate in Part I, 'anticipatory care' has a creative authority.

[175] Goodall's statement was originally in an email to the author. It was since used (with permission) as the envoy for the performance program.

approach, the more a project can result in the fruitful expression of individual differences and capabilities. This may require a re-conditioning of our expectations—and *being supported* in re-structuring those expectations, rendering the reception and valuing of such different and differing experiences possible.

8.15 …and must the show go on?

The Compassion Plays was neither fully participatory, but neither was it 'traditional' in the sense of the Western traditional well-made play. This in itself had proved a valuable thing to explore. But as I have tried to discuss, the value of an event folds in-and-out from it and might occur over a much longer period of time than generally realised. Even though the general consensus was that *The Compassion Plays* proved a memorable outcome, other factors have proved even more important to the current discussion.

The project illustrates several complexities: for one, that there are multiple communities that we perform with, to and for, each with their complex layers of readiness and resistance and histories. The 'show must go on' mentality in our industry risks homogenising this complexity. In particular, elements swept aside because they did not serve the 'end-point' were troubling and remain critical to the discussions below, which discuss aspects of trying to establish longer-term work with refugee communities.

Whilst *The Compassion Plays* took as its starting point the experience of restlessness and uprootedness of refugee experience, the following project, *The Culture Hub,* has its seed in a different intention—to create a space of re-gathering and recovery for a people in exile. Central issues I examine include the 'micro ethics' of working with a specific refugee community, even and especially when this creates discomfort and unsettles what Tiffany Page calls the 'epistemological certitudes' of our knowing (Page, 2017, p.5). Other parts of the discussion explore the concept of radical heterogeneity (*ibid,* p.6) and posits a new way of working across 'different shores of understanding'. In order to do so, however, our expectations of what we are doing—and the appropriate values and aesthetics in relation to what we are doing—come into question.

Chapter 9
'2000 hours': The Dinka Culture Hub 2018–19

9.1 Linguistics, literacy and linguality

The value of 'pay forward' practices.

> Were the social gatherings applied theatre or were they a related activity that applied theatre should acknowledge; or were they, ultimately, a cultural activity that challenges the very use of the term?
>
> *(Thompson, 2009, p.3)*

In this section I describe my extended work with members of the South Sudanese Diaspora located in Canberra (2015–19)—a project established in consultation with community, without fiscal or tenured backing beyond a local government grant of $10,000 to cover some costs. I believe it demonstrates the difficulties of working in a field (CACD) which Thompson says 'takes itself so seriously', perhaps in an attempt to quell the disquiet that comes from the 'uncertain and uncomfortable encounters' of which Mahmood and others speak (Mahmood, 2012b; cited in Page, 2017). I note that I have discussed *The Compassion Plays* with high seriousness; however, I believe that Thompson's statement here refers to a position of holding on to received processes (the Boal method; the Action Theatre process) as methodologies that either must be adhered to, or that in some way ratify the weight and validity of participatory arts and which might preclude other, emergent forms from being recognised or devised.

'2000 hours' indexes the length of time, in a voluntary capacity, it has taken to set up 'The Culture Hub' and plan for a further ArtsXChange—both projects intended to provide the means for the Dinka community to gather and practise their culture and share that culture in exchange with others[176]. The effort and attention in each phase demonstrates some of the great demands of care-taking in CACD practices: in outcome-driven funding climates, to what do we pay attention—and to what might we perhaps be forced to ignore? Who gets paid for our attentive and detailed work on the ground? If, in order to get to the point of making participatory arts it takes 2000 hours, what supports the very process and *getting-to* phase that is an intrinsic part of working with such communities? My discussion returns to a key question posed by care ethics scholars: who has the capacity and the means to elicit, support and enact such care? Early FCE scholarship identifies that care transactions were too often relegated to unpaid 'women's work'[177]. As I raised in the previous section, do our wider communities and structures have to be 'ready' to give care for it to be enacted? FCE scholars assert that care as an ethics lies above such circumstances; that it needs to be articulated and enacted as a visionary touchstone,

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[176] —and in the future ArtsXChange, to create art with others from diverse communities.

[177] In this current context, we can observe how much necessary work and engagement is covered by (retired) community volunteers.

looking ahead, rather than as an excuse for the limits of our habits, prejudices and capabilities.

The following Case Study is a demonstration of being caught between definitions: of whether care lies in rubrics we follow or is rather something we move together towards. I suggest that care ethics is intimately linked to what we *imagine* care might be, as distinct from what we can ratify it has already become. This links my discussion to Tronto's iterative and responsive 'key ethic elements', and to the demands of Sevenhuijsen's 'anticipatory care', calling on our imaginations and hopefulness to create new forms of care and care actions that may or may not be linked with and within established forms and aesthetic practices. In part, my argument highlights these issues as a challenge to funders, organisations and institutions who demand pre-specified outcomes—as if we can pre-determine the forms that appropriate cultural care can take, even before projects begin. In working with 'others' and their 'alterity' (Balfour, 2012, pp 213–238), there is already too much (unspoken, invisible, or unrevealed) to risk any such presuppositions further silencing participants who are likely to have already been subjected to significant silencing. In this way, the Parragirls share an experience of holding the 'unspeakable' on a par with the experience-in-exile of the South Sudanese.

In their demands for immediately 'intercultural' cross-over practices, it is easy for official organisations to fund and support events that are simplistic or shallow. As I have written elsewhere (http://www.realtime.org.au/the-touch-of-nations-the-companies-we-keep/), it is simple for intercultural exchanges to become 'gaudy spectacles, shuffled performances before screeching microphones (in) nostalgic serenades for the ethnic hordes…where the curries for sale in the food stalls have more culture in them than anything happening on stage'. Culture takes time to germinate in new soil; it also needs careful gardeners. Whilst food is certainly a significant aspect of care, in the case study that follows I suggest that nourishment takes many forms. Indeed, my own presumptions—my 'surelies'—about the forms nourishment take have also been deeply challenged.

The project was created out of extensive discussion with community elder, Peter Kuot, the north Canberra Dinka church pastor and spiritual leader, as well as other members and volunteers associated with the community, and some dozen people working in multicultural and refugee assistance programs. Information was also gleaned from the academic research conducted by Dr Nawal el Gack, and the writings of Sydney-based lawyer Deng Adut, whose autobiography details many of the difficulties experienced by South Sudanese transitioning into life in a new country (Adut, D. T., & Mckelvey, 2016; El-Gack, 2018). However, the most significant contributions to this chapter arise from the face to face encounters I have had with Peter Kuot, youth leaders and community mentors, and in mediating between the community, government and other organisations, and the demands such engagements have made.

As discussed in my methodology chapter, feminist writers such as Tiffany Page highlight the critical significance of such factors as *what we do not know,* that is, where our epistemological presumptions are disrupted. In theatre practice, too, there have been theorists concerned to elicit such disruptions to our thinking and our seeing. From the mid-

20th century, Brecht worked to achieve a '*Verfremdungseffeckten*', with 'distancing' techniques he hoped would cause an audience to stay alert and critical of the staged materials. In some ways, there is here a similarity with later theorists (such as Clark and Trezise, referred to in The Parragirls project) who question the notion of reliance on empathy in museum and site-specific visitations—and thence, to historical interpretations. However, the impetus of my present argument is not just to create thoughtfulness, but *caring* thought, and initiate and sustain creative and progressive civic actions which show care. As Tronto and Sevenhuijsen remind us, there is a quasi-improvisatory quality in anticipatory care if it is to be responsive, and hence response-enabling to others.

Much of the chapter which follows describes incidents and occasions where perhaps respect (for differences, for the unknowable and unknown) needs to supersede demands and expectations of direct reciprocity. Whereas respect can be reciprocal, needs and abilities may not be, hence creating a kind of imbalance (perhaps of knowledge, and actions). Indeed, Tronto has recently stated that most recent statement here that care is centred in imbalance; therefore, what creates a democracy of care?—a question I return to below (Tronto, 2015). As I have questioned in Part 1, and will demonstrate in the following case studies, in working with refugee or immigrant groups (or perhaps with any group from whom we substantially differ), 'equity' can be a highly problematic term, and our structures, supports and expectations need to reflect on this. I begin the discussion by first paying homage to Antonin Artaud, who believed that theatre required 'cruelty', by which he meant a disruption of life's surfaces and securities (Artaud, 1959 [1938]). For Artaud, 'Being' carries sharp edges. The cruelty of life makes us uncomfortable. Accordingly, a quote from Artaud begins our next section.

'Being has teeth'–a background to our investigation

As Reverend Peter Kuot explains, in this edited clip from *The Compassion Plays,* traditional Sudanese communities evolved in a system of values very different to what is lived in contemporary Australia: https://youtu.be/SEy_d-ilLDM[178]

In another interview, here provided as an audio file[179], Kuot describes the conditions from which and to which his compatriots arrived in Australia (7 minutes interview. 18'00' to finish): https://www.dropbox.com/s/na5d4spbt9ujrof/PK%202XX%20interview.m4a?dl=0/

Some of the complications that being in exile have created for his community include: difficulties in transitioning from a largely oral to a primarily written culture; varying levels of literacy in the broader community; isolation (particularly of older women, and women with young children); lack of recognition of qualifications (where they exist); and possibly a high degree of racial prejudice (El-Gack, 2018) against them. According to Kuot[180] up to 2019

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[178] Peter Kuot, interviewed by Zsuzsi Soboslay, with Sam James, November 2016

[179] Interview conducted by Becca Posterino, for the Radio 2XXX commissioned 'Curious Hearts' series launched Friday July 12 2019. Peter's interview runs from 18'00' to finish; interview with the author runs from 9'18'-18'00'.

[180] Much of this information has also been gathered in conversations and meetings with some social justice organisations, and with various volunteers and mentors associated with the community including Mrs. Jenifer Murdock, Mr. Roger Hacker, Ms. Meg Richens, former EO of UnitingCare Kippax in West Belconnen; with Mr. Charles Wood from Anglicare Australia and Father Richard Browning, chaplain of Radford College, which became the host school for the Gatherings. Father Browning has also written a book as a result of his experiences leading school groups on 'service learning' trips to work with communities in Timor Leste.

there is a sharp increase in levels of mental illness and domestic violence amongst adults, and homelessness amongst Dinka teenagers. Dinka children want to fit in to their new school communities and cannot bridge the intergenerational divide with their parents—especially in behavioural and role expectations, and in understanding the authority of community elders.

Infractions within the Dinka community in Melbourne—widely covered in national media throughout 2018–19—affect all Dinka throughout Australia. Indeed, the Canberra community decided to change their self-identification from 'Dinka' to 'South Sudanese' in order to disassociate from the events in Melbourne[181]. This means they have abandoned their distinctive language-centred cultural identification, in order to achieve a degree of self-protection by dissociation. Reverend Kuot emphatically stated the significance of restoring forms of cultural continuity and pride as a first priority, and as a much-needed stabilising influence. It was at his request that I assisted the community in finding a suitable venue for their cultural practices, to assist in the articulation of their cultural values, and to find funding to support to create and sustain the Gatherings.

Complications in putting a structure around the cultural project included and still include factors such as: the community like to gather for 5–7 hours, which makes hourly venue hire prohibitively expensive; their late-night drumming and dancing can create problems with venues that are close to domestic housing; they do not easily commit to Western timetables, living in 'rubber time' with respect to both arriving and leaving classes, playgroups[182], sports, meetings and festive gatherings. Intensive community commitments, which they may not explain to others, may impinge on their ability to seem to show commitment to things that have been organised with them, or on their behalf. Many are subject to frequent relocation, making it difficult to establish a 'home base' and sense of locale; financial, social and familial obligations reach back into the Sudan, to refugee camps in Kenya, and to the complex obligations presented by polygamous relations. These obligations cause much conflict with the Department of Social Security in Australia which requires welfare recipients to nominate 'donations' and 'dependents' without realising that dependents can extend to much wider definitions of 'family' than are generally countenanced here[183]. This has led to legal challenges and court appearances, requiring the mediation of mentors and advocates, and in turn creates a cycle of caution amongst the South Sudanese, who are fearful of getting more things 'wrong'[184]there can be a bewildering lack of communication between South Sudanese amongst themselves, in terms of the sharing of information resources (such as, to do with school-entry family support, and inclusion in training-for-work schemes). These gaps may have to do with the complex system of hierarchies and allegiances within and between tribes, and who does

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[181] Accordingly, the community will henceforth be referred to as 'South Sudanese'.

[182] Some of this information has been compiled amongst other social service providers including several Community Centres, and a Family and Children's Centre which hosts a Dinka-specific playgroup

[183] As highlighted in a recent conversation with Kuot (November 22, 2019), communication protocols are hugely significant amongst the South Sudanese. At my request, Kuot drew a map highlighting some of the complex system of codified social and clan hierarchies and obligations, which provide important templates for behaviour and obeisance to traditional law in the Sudan.

[184] as I witnessed in many meetings and some events, shame is an important driver to the South Sudanese community.

and does not have authority over such communications. Coming to understand the reasons behind such difficulties may take months of conversation, or rather, might require the right kinds of opportunity to have such conversations. The conversations cannot happen at all without trusted mutual understandings developed over time.

There are also (potentially within any given situation) internecine struggles between tribal and family groupings, sometimes linked with incidents to do with the long civil war in the Sudan; as well as an interrupted lineage—in particular, a loss of elders through war and immigration, making it difficult for new leaders to emerge, or, if they emerge, to be recognised and accorded adequate support (especially in new structures) from within their own community[185]. Navigating these histories, as well as the community's present conditions, make negotiations mediating between Western and Sudanese ways and attempting to assist or enable cultural practices, delicate and time-consuming[186]. Such understandings do not fit within recognised Western bureaucratic time-frames: for example, a certain attitude of 'rubber time' to attending meetings, completing risk-assessment documents[187], or following -through on other details within bureaucratic timeframes[188] makes project management and coordination difficult.

The community operates in a unique and specific geometry and temporality, which is often only understood when a clash occurs, a deadline is not met, or something agreed to does not get delivered. However, what might seem unreliable within one cultural and social framework often displays complete reliability in another (for example, an individual may not have authority to answer a question, or fill out a form, until there has been the equivalent of consultation throughout the 'village'). In such a context, any act of mutual witnessing, or attempted act of cooperation, is an act of both awareness and blindness, both ways. As Kuot has acknowledged, his community does not know the questions they need to ask, in order to avoid 'trouble'—and neither at first, as facilitators, do we.

And this is all before we get to making 'art' together. Or have we, on various levels, been making art already?

It is clear that Lowe's 'quality framework' checklist of asking 'Who, what, when, where, why?' (Lowe, 2012)–which he cites as a kind of safeguard for 'doing care' in CACD—is always already complex when working with such groups as the South Sudanese. Linguist Marie-Louise Pratt identifies such experiences as expressive of the 'radical heterogeneity and failures of coherence' of 'the contact zones'. She describes a 'utopian quality' to speech communities theorised as 'discrete, self-defined, coherent entities, held together by a homogeneous competence or grammar shared identically and equally among all the

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[185] I hazard to suggest that perhaps 'respect for elders' needs to be witnessed in order to be learnt

[186] Mosselson, transferring 'microethics' from the life sciences across to sociological and arts research, has called such incidences 'ethically important' and 'ethically charged' moments.

[187] —without which no government funded project cannot begin

[188] This also applies to acquittals

members'. She cites Benedict Anderson's understanding of these as 'imagined communities'[189] (Pratt, 1991, p.2).

Indeed, one of the complications experienced by immigrant groups in their adoptive countries is that they are perceived as homogenous. In a recent conversation with Kuot, when I asked him to draw a map for me of the geometry of how communities operate in the Sudan, he identified sixty-four tribes within four main language groups—some of which were 'kingdoms' and others 'chiefdoms' (this distinction itself signalling different social rules) with more than 100 specific languages spoken. Each group, clan and 'section' traditionally accords power and wisdom to elders in ways unique to each grouping[190]. There is no unified South Sudanese identity—even amongst those who share a language (such as 'Dinka').

Anderson proposes three features that characterise the style in which the modern nation is imagined:

> First, it is imagined as *limited,* by 'finite, if elastic, boundaries'; second, it is imagined as *sovereign;* and, third, it is imagined as *fraternal,* 'a deep, horizontal comradeship' for which millions of people are prepared 'not so much to kill as willingly to die'.
>
> *(Anderson, quoted in Pratt, 1991, p.3)*

—and that 'as the image suggests, the nation-community is embodied metonymically in the finite, sovereign, fraternal figure of the citizen-soldier' (Pratt, 1991. p 3). We note a poignant relevance of this last to the South Sudanese, as many children had been co-opted as child soldiers in the Sudan. However, I here call critical attention to the distinction Anderson understands between literate and oral cultures, and the power imbalances created and consolidated by the invention of 'print capitalism':

> The commercial circulation of books in the various European vernaculars was what first created the invisible networks that would eventually constitute the literate elites and those they ruled as nations.
>
> *(Pratt, 1991, p.4)*

Literacy of course refers to far more than being able or not able to read. For the South Sudanese community in Australia, who have superlative abilities perhaps not recognisable in Australia[191], being illiterate unfortunately also references the 'invisible networks' they do not connect to, the fiscal and social habits of contemporary Australian capitalist culture that vary so widely from theirs.

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[189] Pratt here cites Anderson: 'Communities are distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined' (Anderson, 1991, p 15) To my mind, this recalls Shildrick's notion of the 'medical imaginary' and the 'imaginary' of the 'unified subject' (Shildrick, 2008, 2014), discussed in Part I above

[190] Conversation with Peter Kuot, November 22, 2019.

[191] Some of these abilities include phenomenal skills in memory; others include a resilience and adaptability to their physical environment (such as exemplified in Kuot's story of a community's ability to cope with severe flooding (of the Nile) by building rafts on which they can live (and from which they can fish) for weeks.

For traditional South Sudanese villagers, cattle are their bank. We can imagine, therefore, that the Australian Department of Social Services is bewildering. The sharing of social security payments with distant family relatives—sometimes in Kenya and the Sudan—whilst 'normal' and honest obligations within traditional family structures—has led to court prosecutions in Australia, on charges of fraud and embezzlement; however, such behaviours sit within the shape of obligations that are normal for the Sudanese. There are startling social differences as well: John Garang, a youth leader with whom I have had many conversations, notes an obligation in Australia to smile regardless of whether he feels like it. Whilst there are heavily coded expectations within and between each traditional tribal group, to smile when you do not feel like it is not one of them.

'Linguality'

Becoming bi- or multi-lingual means to become able to think and imagine in different languages. Essentially, we need to become multi-lingual as community artists, learning many complex languages within languages. To understand the community *enough* to understand what they needed took me over two thousand (unpaid) hours to understand its habits of thinking, what its spoken forms of expression refer to, and begin to understand its unwritten and undocumented diversities in relation to and contradistinction from ours[192]. This was undertaken, in order to find the meeting ground between and way forward amongst our cultures. Along the way, it has required the realisation of my own 'imaginary' of how society functions in Australia—many of which features can rightly be called into question by virtue of the logics of culture that drive and condition the behaviour of the South Sudanese.

9.2 Ambiguities 'at the crossroads'

Marie-Louise Pratt identifies her own community projects as 'crossroad sites'—'safe houses' and places of temporary protection—which touch on the Gulbenkian imperative for CACD to fulfill 'civic duties' of care in our increasingly complex communities (Calouste-Gulbenkian Foundation, 2017; Pratt, 1991). Our exchanges need to accommodate what we do not know of each other, where we are confounded by our presumptions, where we do not know where we are going, but where we remain, face to face, asking deeper questions of each other.

This discussion highlights where circles of care are required to support and accommodate the complex geometries of the communities with which we engage and support the further unfolding complexities of our exchanges with each other. It is important to draw out, and draw upon, where and how each culture's geometries, mechanics and networks differ from others. A Sudanese man sharing his Social Security benefits with several family members is not a criminal; rather he is acting according to his understanding of honorable relationality in his community. In our intercultural practices, such complexities and points of difference require new interdisciplinary models[193] that demonstrate patience for rough

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[192] In becoming proficient in a language, or musical instrument, it is often stated that proficiency occurs after 10,000 hours. What does this say of the expectations regarding proficiency in intercultural practices?

[193] For example, for a community for whom cultural practices are essential, it is not logical to divide projects and goals into 'either' social work or arts.

edges, and forms of engagement that are 'along the way'—let alone, what is valued, and agreed as of value—across differing communities. What this means, in the overlap between care ethics and CACD, is that we need fluid and adaptive care paradigms that in turn can create a new and specific aesthetic of care relevant to this community.

The following is a series of further observations I have made as the community and I developed the *Culture Hub* together, concerning what was needed, almost step-by-step, to initiate and sustain the Gatherings.

Location

The search I undertook for a suitable venue for the Gatherings took several months. With the need to gather for five-to-seven hours at a time, hourly venue hire costs in Canberra (usually well over thirty dollars per hour, even for the simplest scout hall) were prohibitive; and requisite ceiling heights also excluded many venues. I next approached a local public school which already had a highly successfully Refugee Bridging Program operant for many years. The buildings manager, sympathetic to our project, nonetheless would have needed to charge $150 per hour for hire—a cost deeply prohibitive to this community[194].

In the end I approached a local private school which was located *close enough* to most of Kuot's community in North Canberra. It transpired that the College already ran service learning programs with underprivileged communities, in other countries and interstate. As the School Chaplain, Father Richard Browning, stated, 'It's a no brainer: these are people on our own doorstep'. This heightens one of the central concerns of this thesis, to draw attention to places of need that might be invisible to people right next to us. It also transpired that the Sudanese community already had a direct relationship with Radford College: their youth leader, John Garang, was running basketball and soccer practice every Saturday afternoon in the school gymnasium. With permission from the school principal, the College agreed to become the host for the community's cultural gatherings. Curiously, it took an 'outsider' such as me to make this link possible. As Kuot states, his community do not necessarily 'know the question they need to ask'—and as facilitators, or members of the 'establishment' culture these communities arrive into, perhaps neither do we.

9.3 'The need to dance' (August 2018)

Beyond pre-ordained parameters

The Major Gatherings were pre-empted by an opportunity for South Sudanese youth and children to perform a cultural demonstration at the College's *Dirrum* (a social change forum) event in August 2018. I wrote the following description as a means of processing the complexities I observed, in what was ostensibly a 'simple' demonstration:

> *They roll up in shiny cars and clothes before changing into thin t-*
> *shirts and printed cloth, their skin whited with chalk powder. It is*
> *Canberra in winter; the wind is biting cold. They walk, barefoot, into*

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[194] Nonetheless, it did have me start to look for funding to cover whatever the costs would inevitably be required

the grassy courtyard. Their bodies are lithe, wiry and excited, if also shivering.

The voice of the singer is sinewy, astringent. Forming a circle, the group moves into a dance—a kind of hopping on alternating feet, followed by a series of jumps.

One of the men leaps into the centre. As a frog jumps ten times its own height, so it seems with his body, crouching and leaping. The song carries a story and he is illustrating something. After a spectacular moment, he very simply recedes into the circle.

There is a code here, in the dance, and in the patternings. There is a kind of repetition and looping that Felecia Faye McMahon, in her work with groups of refugee Sudanese in North America, identifies as 'coordinated rhythmic movements and vocal agility through quickly changing musical modes' (McMahon, 2013, p.240). At a certain point, the loop slips and begins a new round; the story has shifted; there is a different signification. Our audience stands riveted—some, but not all, sway and jiggle to these rhythms. I cannot ascertain how many of us consciously feel these shifts; nonetheless, on various levels, the performance is witnessed and appreciated. At the very least, the audience is excited by the energy, the stamina, the performance *aesthetics*, and can guess at a few layers of meaning. The cheering at the end of the 'showcase' is appreciative; but, following a few words spoken by Garang (that were lifted away by the wind), I do hear a number of people say, impressed but bewildered, 'I wonder what that was about?' Over time, and via the school newsletter, more in the community have come to understand what the event opened to in the Culture Hub.

The ages of this particular group of performers range from a cluster of under-8-yr-olds, to around a dozen men and women in their late twenties and early thirties. Although aesthetically and structurally similar to dances that belong to his country of origin, the dances John Garang has created both capture and miss layers of meaning that belong to source traditions. Garang is not one of the so-called 'Lost Boys' who, during the height of the civil war, crossed the Sudan into Ethiopia, but shortly thereafter were ousted from Ethiopia and forced to cross back and walk another 600 km into northwest Kenya where a camp was established to protect them (McMahon, 2013, p.232)[195]. However, his experience has a lot in common with them.

In the Dirrum gathering we were witnessing the lack of a kind of exchange—elder to child—that both Garang and the Lost Boys missed out on[196]. The dances are a patchwork of storytelling composed out of the memory of structures heard and witnessed as children. Amongst her North American study group, McMahon identifies that occasionally, Sudanese elders who have lived in cultural continuity will criticize her group's work as 'immature'—that is, lacking an understanding of codified meanings, symbols and deeper narratives that belong to a continuous lineage. Yet what such dances do achieve is a contemporary composite, layered with their experiences of who they were, where they

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[195] Humanitarian groups soon sent them to countries such as the Americas and Australia.
[196] Garang tells me he is aware of the gap in lineage.

travelled, and where they are now, held within a deeper metrical structure (McMahon, 2013, p.240) that seems to have become embedded in their memories from very young[197]. Perhaps, this is a kind of grammar (a grammar of the body[198], of movement rhythms) that, as with many languages, are already deeply absorbed by the age of seven. I myself have experienced a whole spoken language returning to me in my forties whilst travelling to 'home country', which I had not spoken and indeed rarely heard since I was 6 years old.

Here, in Canberra in 2018, we (spectators) are outsiders—individuals who hear 'with varying capacities, from varying positions, from different interests from one moment to the next' (Rayner,1993, p.4) and observe performers who are both inside and outside of themselves and their respective levels of knowledge. They both know and do not know what their dances refer to. As Garang tells me, he works to a structure, a scaffold, of performance that he remembers—even if there have been no elders to guide him in how to maintain exact traditions. Nonetheless, in this demonstration on the grass, in the bitter August cold, the performers enact a structure, a tone, a way of moving, that (as McMahon says) 'seems to carry us to the Sudan' (McMahon, 2013, p.233)[199]. They practise, in order to maintain relationship to a land and place to which they cannot (yet) return. The Sudan has moved their ancestors and those movements now move them—if with alterations. There is a template here: and there are certain values (implied, interrupted or missing) in this template and its variations.

A pragmatics of care relations

Many old and new cultures dance; many share stories, or yarn; but when is culture not just a pastime, but symbolically, practically and essentially significant to those who practise it? And what qualities mark that difference? Franca Tamisara writes about dance as an experience that, on a pre-objective, expressive level, adds meaning to the 'what' of performance; or where, in other words, 'expression overflows and gives life to representation…that escapes analysis (Tamisari, 2016, p .263). For the Yolngu (north-east Arnhem Land) community with whom she dances, physical knowledge is linked to other forms of knowledge (including landedness) and by virtue of this practice, she learns to take up the responsibility of performing as it pertains to cultural Law (*ibid.,* p.101). Dance, and other forms of art that do 'the actual work of social change' (Thompson, 2009, p.11) are necessary because they move knowledge through us, through our embodiment, and through our expressive embodiment(s) to others. For communities who dance, they together become enculturated to Law. For communities who witness the dance, we can sense the 'irreducible enormity' which calls to our care.

This is not to say that performance is only about ratifying Law. It can serve to question it as well. As made clear by Schieffelin, in his work with the Kaluli in PNG, communities that

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[197] We remember Page's 'syncopated metrical structure' from Chapter Three above

[198] The idea of 'grammar' here both refers to Tadashi Suzuki's notion of a 'grammar of the feet', and to Noam Chomsky's notion of a deep structure in language.

[199] Whilst we may need to be careful of the unificatory 'imaginary' of such a statement, whether this is a racial stereotype is a moot point, one that troubles me but which I cannot answer to here: however, it certainly is a tradition that comes from 'somewhere else', that comes from a way of being in a cultural, social and physical landscape that is not ours. Indeed, I am troubled by McMahon's presumptions here but cannot further address these sensibilities in this thesis.

share intention also take great risks in their performative events in order to challenge the currencies in which they operate—a point to which I return below.

9.4—The second Gathering (October 2018)

It took 5 months (following receipt of funding) for the Community to commit to our first evening Gathering[200]. This was due to several cultural protocols and difficulties (including grieving the infractions in Melbourne, against which the community said that they cannot be perceived to be celebrating)[201].

The second evening gathering was proposed to be ecumenical, bringing visitors and special guests from interstate, and incorporate more of the Radford and local, non-Sudanese communities. There were several hundred expected in attendance, including children, families, youth, and interstate dignitaries. It would also host representatives of our funding body (the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs) and other VIPs. Peter asked for a 'cards room' for the elders, which I negotiated with the College to provide; I also set up a playroom for younger ones. I believed we needed to show care for all ages. It took several dozen hours over several weeks to gather this 'equipment' to enable this care for others, across all ages, to become alive.

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[200] there were other issues such as a comprehensive risk assessment demanded by our auspice body Anglicare, which also took three months to finalise.

[201] In his autobiography, Deng Adut attempts to explain the cultural phenomenon that marks his people's grieving processes, which break open a completely new order to temporality (Adut & McKelvey, 2016). Recently Peter Kuot also explained to me other protocols around the communication of death in his community, which is meant to follow strict pathways and protocols which are protective of the physical and emotional requirements of his community (and particularly sensitive to the needs of children and youth).

We were setting up from about 2.30pm in order to prepare catering and accommodate the drop-offs of young people for sports. Elders and adults arrived from about 5pm; ceremonial dancing and speeches began from 6pm; youth arrived from about 8pm (once the speeches had finished), but the event overall finished at 1.30 the next morning. In working with this community, there is always an issue about shepherding and navigating time. Radford College offered free facilities, *pace* a minimal fee (of about $250 per Gathering) *if*

required to cover insurance, and costs for a caretaker *if required* to come lock-up if the events went over-time. It was hard to communicate to the Dinka the real value of what such flexibility cost to the host school—let alone to the lives of us as facilitators with our own personal, family and community commitments. However, to make the event work in a way that corresponded to the South Sudanese habits and protocols, we agreed to the following. As the flyer shows, we had organised a barbeque, food donated by Oz Harvest (that also required volunteer preparation), and a vegan feast catered by Canberra Magic Kitchen.

And then…!

Event description

> *The Dinka were not joking when they said it all really starts at 10 o'clock…I stepped home to get a pullover, and by the time I returned (10.30) the place was rocking! With the new drum, sat on and played by three or four 9-year-olds, perhaps 350 people, dancing in a long and complex snake-line of complex rhythms, with several intimate, intense orbits of different groups on the edges, all in contrapuntal rhythms. All sorts of social negotiations going on as well. I just could not believe the difference between the relative order of the earlier dances and what had begun to happen. It was incredibly exciting, the children were hungry and started hoeing into the food, and babies in prams were almost tipping themselves over and out. Father Richard and I finished packing and washing up by 1.15 the next morning, but we both knew that it was an artificial curfew. The Dinka really could have kept going for hours. Apparently, the group posts up on Face book and it is like the drums in the village call people in from all the outposts.*
>
> (For a carousel of 20 images, go to: http://bodyecology.com.au/the-culture-hub-2018-21/)

And then the youth leader plaintively said at the end of the night: 'Why can't this happen in every town in Australia?' At nearly two in the morning, I could not begin to answer him.

Commitment, communication, catering

For the August *Dirrum* event, John Garang had asked for water and food to be supplied for all Dinka participants. It seemed odd to me that such a basic need was somehow both presumed, but also left to circumstance; however, the College agreed to cover costs for catering to about 30 dancers, absorbed within the large Dirrum function.

But catering afternoon tea for 30 is different for catering to 400 over 7 hours. It transpired the Dinka would not bring food for themselves for the duration of their 5–7-hour Major Gathering in November. Garang explained to me that there are cultural protocols—such as, that 'a son-in-law cannot eat from the mother-in-law's pot'. My mind began to spin.

But surely, surely (1):
Surely (the 'privileged white female' part of me says), **surely**, providing food for your little ones (at the very least) is a priority? Does not its necessity override such protocols? What I come to realise is this: It is the 'surelies' that grate, that trip us up. I see that I have to be careful with my 'surelies'. Might they be treacherous?

Considering the degree of complexity in the songs that McMahon has transcribed, and in what I hear and see Garang and his group perform at the *Dirrum* gathering, there are layers of unexpressed meaning within the behaviours we observe. John Garang expressed the food protocol as a fact he believes will no longer be relevant to the next generation, but which remains significant for current parents and grandparents. This seems so alien to my experience—indeed, counter to 'natural instinct'—until I suddenly remember a recent incident in my own life. I had an argument with my mother in law at her beach house when she screamed at me for trying to feed my children their lunch earlier than when 'they all' usually ate. (So, the in-law thing: not so uncommon after all.)

But surely, surely (2):
For the November Gathering, Garang also asked for water bottles (enough for 300–400 people) which Fr. Richard and I strongly resisted. Garang insisted it is an immutable sign of respect, to hand each person their own personal plastic bottle of water. Garang was so insistent that Richard and I finally gave up on it. However, three weeks later, Garang queried our objections with a truly open-ended question, 'Why not'? This gave me the opportunity to explain the problem of the bottles' recycling as an unfair burden on Radford College; and I could also explain that we did not agree the Coca Cola company should be making a profit at our expense when good water is so readily available at the Gymnasium. To my surprise, Garang returned to his community and re-negotiated the issue. I only saw a single six-pack of plastic water bottles the whole evening.

During the November Gathering, I witnessed a mild altercation that taught me of the enormous weight of expectations in this community amongst themselves. A young couple were insulted they had not been told to bring money for a fund raiser on the night[202]. Despite my assurances it probably did not matter, they said it did not make them 'look good' to their own community, therefore they had to go home to get some money. I witnessed the weight of expectations of the community upon itself, to be seen to perform a certain way, and I admired Garang for mediating such weighted expectations.

In the course of the early evening, ninety minutes of speeches in Dinka language were not translated—problematic in a Gathering conceived of as 'ecumenical' and supposedly inclusive of invited non-Dinka guests; but apparently no one in the local Sudanese community had the authority to insist on some of the interstate dignitaries' speeches being translated into English. The event thus fell short of an 'intercultural' gathering (and I noted

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[202] The fundraiser was organised internally by the community to raise money for a new drum that had already been brought out from the Sudan. An irony of this situation is that nobody in the community really had expertise to play it; however, it carries great symbolic significance. Another irony of this situation, however, is that Garang expressly forbade the offered involvement of other musicians, who wanted to express their solidarity by contributing their priviplaying in exchange with the community. There is something significant in this episode about the place of witnessing; however, this discussion is beyond the scope of this thesis

with high irony the degree of pressure to which I had been subjected by prospective funders to achieve an 'equitable cultural exchange'). To all present—including the Dinka leadership—these 90 minutes of one language inaccessible to many others was a sign that, no matter how celebratory the event, we had only just begun our work together.

Nonetheless, leaders in the community insisted it was a breakthrough, especially against the background of unrest and tragedy in Sudanese communities in Australia:

> For what you have done to us, we are no longer feel being isolated from now on as you have seen the face of joyful. I have much deep appreciation to all of you. Because you have joined hands without doubt.
>
> *(Peter Kuot, email to author, 20 November 2018)*

The key phrase in Kuot's statement is the 'without doubt'. *The Hub* still operates as a place to the side of the prejudice and suspicion the community faces every day, as people who look different and think very differently.

9.5 Commitments and follow-through

Despite their own pleas for further funding, the community's apparent lack of commitment to organising continuous Gatherings, to maintain the 'meeting places' for elders and parents, coupled with their lack of communication with me, the Committee and/or the host school, posed problems. Complications such as ambiguity of authority and for taking what we (as white capitalist Australians understand as) responsibilities for and during events, and the community's continuing non-compliance with lenient (by Western standards) start and finish timeframes, proved great difficulties. The community could not agree to meeting times, would leave governance issues unattended, and emails and texts unread and/or not responded to for weeks on end. The sustainability of the project came into question.

However, as always, there were reasons behind the silences and lack of communication. Later discussions with community leaders revealed that there are highly complex interrelations between notions of individual *versus* collective responsibility, trust between factional/tribal groups, and information sharing within and across community and its factions. As I have come to understand, delays and resistances are often an index of crossed tribal or clan allegiances and animosities, and differing areas of authority, which cannot be addressed without complex negotiations. If they are suspicious of any outsider's approach (such as that of a potential benefactor, or journalist[203]), they may not reply— or not immediately, partly because they need to refer a request to the equivalent of their whole 'village' before responding. But they also will not ask for assistance with that mediation.

Literacy is far more than the ability to read and write—but often, more significantly, about the differences between the ways that communities, oral or otherwise, stitch their identities and communications together. The South Sudanese community have social, cultural and

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[203] The Kenyan-born journalist who approached me complaining the Dinka did not reply to his queries, was making his own presumptions of the shared empathy and camaraderie he presumed would be understood and received by the South Sudanese he approached

political literacies and protocols that differ from ours. We are as illiterate of their protocols as they are of some of ours. As Reverend Peter Kuot has identified, 'everything is politics' but in seeking help to integrate and understand what to do, 'we do not even know the questions we have to ask'.

That journey—to knowing, understanding and communicating—requires a steady bridge[204]. Wide circles of support are required, concentric circles that map and try to understand the different geometries and value systems of communities on both sides (facilitators and communities, carers and cared-for).[205] Van Dooren and Bird Rose call these processes 'inter-weavings' (Rose et al., 2017); Kirschenblatt-Gimblett wants us to remember who and what cuts or has cut the weavings asunder (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). In complex communities, such as the South Sudanese, such 'cuts' cause havoc. If our engagements are to show care, the dialogic engagement FCE scholars advise needs to take many shapes and forms. Equity can only occur where there is transparency; and for a community for whom cultural practices are essential, it does not work to divide projects and goals into 'either' social work, or arts. Thompson says, 'to try to unravel a social from an aesthetic theatre in (such) contexts becomes impossible' (Thompson, 2009, p.4). What this means, in CACD, is that concentric care paradigms need to be enabled across many criteria.

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[204] As many writers and CACD workers complain, in publications and in person, that bridge cannot be built by project-to- project funding.

[205] I have had some significant conversations with the artist and cultural mediator Kim Mahood regarding her practices of 'cultural mapping' with groups in the Tanami Desert of Western Australia. My idea is to map out the similarities and differences between cultural understandings of the Sudanese against maps of law and culture in contemporary Canberra is a project I am looking for an opportunity to develop.

9.6 imagining a future together

Dear K.,

1) We received seed funding from the Office of Multicultural Affairs to cover costs to establish a monthly Culture Hub and garden club with this community. The hub allows for the Dinka's traditional 5-7 hour gatherings to occur in a 'safe village' atmosphere, mentored and supported by Radford school staff, students and families, and various community and mentor volunteers. Traditional Dinka arts include dancing, drumming, singing (creating their own personal songs), weaving, beading, sewing.

2) I want to extend this 'village' to various mentoring and arts exchange opportunities in 2019. This will develop the 'intercultural' and longer-term arts and health scope of this project.

A special arm of the project will focus on enabling Dinka women to participate in cultural activities within the wider community. Partnerships will include up to 15 Canberra artists, and (hopefully) the National Portrait Gallery.

Whilst the initial Culture Hub process provides a means for the Dinka to consolidate their own strengths, the plan for next year is to provide more crossover cultural and social opportunities with an even wider Canberra community. We hope to support workshops, excursions, public performances and an exhibition, as well as the publication of bi-lingual books (ACT Libraries will come on board for this). Providing transport and opportunities for language and work up-skilling will be built in to the project.

The University of Canberra, which already has a strong investment in Arts and Health outreach projects, is in discussion with me regarding evaluation processes, and providing a link to health services in the new Canberra Hospital.

I am interested in your innovations in establishing grass roots funding processes and models. Do you operate in other areas apart from southwestern Sydney? How broad is your concept of 'regional'?

I'd be pleased to discuss potential partnerships with individual artists, and cultural organisations.

Very kindest wishes and thanks for your attention.

Zsuzsi Soboslay
0402 283 615

Figure 22: *Email sent to Kathleen O'Neill, Community Engagement Coordinator, Settlement Services International (Sydney Office), 7 August 2018.*

Analysis

The proposal for an ArtsXChange is an attempt to extend the *Culture Hub* into an ecumenical future, by creating a broader arts project at the local UnitingCare in Kippax(UCK), an outer Canberra suburb close to several migrant communities, in particular hoping to create accessible processes for women, who tend to bear the greater brunt of isolation. The document is attached in Appendix 4.

The project provides a ground-up approach. Meg Richens, former Executive Officer of UnitingCare Kippax (UCK) has emphatically stated the project is the 'missing link' (her hands holding a cat's cradle as she speaks)—the gap in what UCK, as social service providers, can give, nurturing the social capital that can stitch their services together. This is not unusual to the terms that writers such as Schininà, Conquergood *et al* apply to their work in the field. The image also links with the hope to repair the broken weaving of lineage from old to new country, and 'grow' respect for new elders where the lineage has been broken.

The Project has twice failed to achieve further funding. There is little to no transparency (shared with applicants) in such funding decisions. A project officer from our local arts council gave the undetailed response that the project was 'too big', that they were 'worried

about me', and furthermore that I should 'come have a coffee and we'll take about how to make this project small enough for us to fund'. Richens found this feedback uproariously funny—indeed, she nearly fell off her chair laughing when I told her—because she deals with 'big' every day in her demanding work in community, and I saw in front of me someone who every day reaches into the 'impossible' with both good humour, efficacy and efficiency. (But we also need to note: she is paid a full-time wage to do it, and to sustain her work I community). Whether big or small, the project maps out a far-reaching framework for continuity, rather than piecemeal reactivity, and hence of sustaining the hopefulness to which Peter Kuot gestures in his email. The project seeks to nurture the resilience of the community by providing a buttress around it. Within that buttressing, 'small' outcomes can be achieved; but without that buttress, it is almost certain that very little can happen.

It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the project's intention is to achieve these outcomes *through art,* and this is perhaps where at times the minds of funders cannot imagine the impossible within their own definitions of aesthetics. Thompson, in witnessing the practical care of a physiotherapist in relation to his injured colleague, notices the beauty of that care, which moves him to theorise a move from valuing *effects* towards *affects*, even in miniature actions. Thompson also notes 'the tendency...to bifurcate effect and affect, justice (and art) from care' (*ibid.*, p.16). In his moment of transformative recognition, he advocates instead a 'dynamic blurring' of professional and personal, public and private, the intimate and the political, leading him to articulate a new evaluative criterion (*ibid.,* p.3). I suggest it just this kind of 'blurring' that could open us to new evaluative criteria, and which we have to fight for in our work with complex new communities.

At present, however, grant criteria require may unwittingly require the instrumentalisation of participants (which Matarasso categorical states is unethical). For example, are fixed ideas on 'intercultural' outcomes negligent of 'other ways' of practising—and in particular, of practices that are 'along the way'?

Funding criteria can prove myopic, unstable and 'reactive' from one year to the next:

> Yes, guidelines and priority areas will change each round, and you should expect this to happen each time. This is to reflect changes to the Government's priorities, and to incorporate feedback from previous rounds.
>
> *(Email from the Assistant Director Social Recovery, Inclusion and Participation, Community Services Directorate, ACT Government, dated 19 August 2019)*

It seems more and more unpredictable when government departments will actually be open for submissions; and when a funding round is to be announced. Applicants are often given two weeks from opening to closing, which hardly gives time for communities to respond adequately and richly to stated criteria. In many ways, a project needs to be well-established before one can apply for 'seed' funding.

However, whilst inviting 'innovation', many schemes are locked into an 'evidence-based' paradigm which a cultural project would be pushed to conform to in the first place. For example, the Department of Social Services' 'Try Test Learn' fund (which could allocate between $500,000–$5 million *per project* between 2016–18) required a project to 'prove' its participants will be 'off' Social Security within a year. (I prefer not to bluff my way into funding.) A round table discussion with a small group of independent advisors to the Department[206] expressed some gratitude when I pointed out to them how unhelpful and unprovable was such a criterion[207].

To date, I have only identified one application form that makes it possible for communities with limited literacy to apply for community funds with 'self-sufficiency', and that application is not local to our area (see Settlement Services International [SSI] Community Innovation Fund, South-Western Sydney region[208]). The SSI is also available to help applicants with limited English. This is an organisation attentive to both the social needs and the literacy level of its communities and is visionary in its understanding of how arts are intrinsic to the health and hope of refugee communities, but its remit is limited[209]. For the most part, however, it seems that the only people who can afford to attend to applications are either in full-time employ (within bureaucracies), or retired volunteers. From my position as an independent artist in Canberra, I repeatedly see how both groups may lack the perspective, perceptual skills and 'innovation' that independent arts workers can bring to projects.

9.7 The art of 'along the way'

In projects such as the Culture Hub, 'embodiment practices' including how one comports oneself and remains present in the project management, and intercultural exchange, requires training and expertise. I point to how such embodiment practices might be summarised in my concluding chapter below. Volunteers attached to a community—and spending many hundreds of hours assisting them—acknowledge that their availability and willingness is not necessarily matched by specific skills and abilities which might make 'breakthrough' difference in terms of supported funding and structures. From the outside, it

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[206] This took place at an event titled 'Innovation Month: Exploring the role of Government in Community-Led Change', led by Collaboration for Impact, Friday 12 July 2019. I was the only independent artist in a room of fifty people.

[207] The ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs—whilst habitually capping funds to less than $10,000—has repeatedly stated it expects communities to be 'self-sufficient' at the end of one funding round. This indicates that it may not be a community's health that drives the grant round. What kind of 'value for money' can be argued when a grant distributes approximately $130 *per family* in need, in one financial year, as the limit of what is available. This is based on the calculation that $10,000 across one year serving 75 families in a community and bearing in mind that South Sudanese families tend to be large—that is, supporting five or more children within one unit, with many also sustaining polygamous relationships. The calculation does not account for costs within the five key partner organisations, hours served by volunteers, or any of the 2000 hours over 18 months of myself as central mediator and project manager. The burden of proof far exceeds—perhaps by 1000%—the investment value.

[208] The SSI application document can be accessed here: https://www.dropbox.com/s/qlxsxfeh3hoac60/SSI_CIF_Application_Kit_July_2018.pdf?dl=0

[209] 'Hi Zsuzsi, my initial thoughts are your project takes a very holistic approach moving people through the process of settlement and into employment. The process itself is important and the holistic approach is an investment often not taken. I hope that you are able to find funding. I unfortunately don't have any funding ideas at the moment.' Kat O'Neill, Community Engagement Coordinator, SSI Settlement Services International [Ashfield, Sydney]; email received on Fri, Aug 17, 2018

takes a long time to understand a complex community's needs. From the inside, it takes a long time for communities to understand and acquire the skills of governance and take the steps towards autonomy that the smallest of grants require. Finding ways in which to provide ongoing mentorship, without causing burnout to those putting projects in place, is imperative. There is also the very real risk of losing 'corporate knowledge' due to burnout and thus very quickly prove inefficient.

In summary, culture may be nourishment; but those who help nourish need a culture of faith, goodwill and support to nourish them as well. Where there are additional factors in complex communities—such as the experience of trauma, abuse and exile—the CACD worker finds herself: managing working with the 'double-narratives' of many of the community's lives; defending the validity of the arts in an environment where even social workers pronounce that 'the arts don't count'. Such comments are belied by the insistence of communities themselves on the arts' critical place in their well-being; juggling 'compassion fatigue' and having to justify one's long-term commitment and faith against ever-shifting grant criteria, and lack of transparency.

9.7 Project evaluation

If I cannot dance, I do not want to be part of your revolution. [210]

Any ultimate evaluation of a project such as the Gathering might have to be made by the community, in its own terms, and in its own language[211]. However, as Schieffelin points out in his work in Papua New Guinea, a community does not tend to talk about the success or failure of their own performative events (Schieffelin, 1985). The value of the séance to the Kaluli in PNG is in terms of how it gathers *and provokes* its community, providing an opportunity for dialogic engagement on communal issues, and provoking action. Members *argue* with shamans and the performance. It is their right to do so. They walk away and may or may not come back. Yet their 'walking away' is not a sign of failure: sometimes the opposite, as the point of an event includes how its realisations move out into the world. Seances, and the accompanying feasts, rituals, magic and illusions, suspend usual social and political hierarchies. In upending normal authority structures, it takes risks in so doing. The performance is an avenue, or pathway[212], not an end-point. It is a place of liminality and transition.

Such studies ask us to address key questions regarding the nature of our subjects, the subjects of our care, and how we enact and evaluate our care actions—which sometimes include performance. Every time I write an evaluation paper to my funders, I baulk at what I have to prove, and prove to have achieved within a limited timeframe. By contrast, Thompson[213] insists that care—especially caring relationships that extend over time— creates an aesthetic of its own making; that is, that care *per se* (or what I call 'deep care')

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[210] Thompson (2009, p.11) points out this was misattributed to Emma Goldman; but one can understand the impulse to misquote her in this way.

[211] We certainly get a glimpse of the community evaluation in Kuot's own statement about 'joy'

[212] 'To be, I would now say, is not to be in place but to be along paths. The path, and not the place, is the primary condition of being, or rather of becoming.' (Tim Ingold, *Lines and the Ether*).

[213] Special thanks to Maurice Hamington for pointing me to this article, and to Thompson's work in general.

is an iterative process—that is, it is a process that creates, adjusts and re-creates forms as it devolves relationship with and amongst co-participants.

An iterative practice may create its own terms as it evolves. Indeed, as I have discussed, and which Matarasso and others call into question, habituated questions such as, 'Is it 'emancipatory?' or 'Does it advance or develop community?' can bring a false dichotomy into our processes, and risk bringing in a dismissal of the real achievements of our projects. Reverend Kuot's own evaluation (of enabling contributors to witness 'the face of joy') belongs to a different order of processing the world—as celebrated by Jane Goodall in her review of *The Compassion Plays*. As Arne Naess[214] tells us, Spinoza's concept of joy (*hilaritas*) is of an ever-expanding increase in experience. According to this definition, my own involvement—although arduous, and impoverished and impoverishing—has also been 'joyful'.

9.9 Describing and attributing 'value'

An insistent requirement of so many funding applications is to answer to the question, 'Was it value for money?' My own 2000 hours in the *Culture Hub* have not been valued, financially; however, the intergenerational, interculturally engaged and intra-culturally restorative value of the Gatherings would not have been possible had I not put in those hours. How do we value hours which were not voluntary by choice but were fulfilled because this is what *the work* requires? In terms of sustainability, how can this be justified? On the other hand, I have been criticized for 'only' putting a $3000 fee on my potential 'consultancy':

> Your budget included $3000 for 'Base-rate consultancy fees—ongoing liaison, research, and other mentoring and advisory'. $3000 does not go far with consultants, so it is not clear how they can do the long-list of things listed.
>
> *(Email from Assistant Director Social Recovery, Inclusion and Participation, Community Services Directorate, ACT Government; received 19 August 2019)*

Indeed, what consultant worth their salt would work for so little? I suggest this comment represents a blind-sighting of where expertise lies, from whom it is given, and to what purposes. I also suggest that it fundamentally misunderstands the values, skills and purpose in community cultural exchange practices, and the place and skills of artists, who by dint of projects and training may often have acquired a huge number of resources and capabilities—including or surpassing those of external consultants.

When can communities articulate their own needs, abilities, questions, doubts, hopes, and capacities to come-forth and *be met* within their own criteria, and not be forced to conform to opportunistic funding rubrics and paradigms? We are either willing to embrace and

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[214] Naess discusses Spinoza's concept of joy in relation to ecological thinking (in Sessions, 1995)

welcome these new communities, or not. How can we demonstrate our civic duty to embrace their creative capabilities?

'Look both ways'

During the November Major Gathering, the Sudanese community's refusal to share performance with some highly skilled, non-Sudanese drummers was a lost opportunity for exchange (especially as, by their own admission, no-one yet knew how to play their own new drum). Rigidity can go both ways. However, long-term goals (and long-term supports) can enable such exchanges in the future, once trust is built, with enough to spare for taking 'risks. In a sense the ongoing *Culture Hub* is its own evaluation. Its weekly sports events grow by 15–20 more youth attendees every few weeks[215]. It also grows-forth in other contexts. The Hub has extended to other events and opportunities, the community invited to join pan-African events, intercultural poetry jams and writing workshops, and representation at government forums. Part of the worth of a project might be in how it opens to and is reached towards/from new contexts.

The *Hub* has been subject to interruptions. The community is a long way from the Sudan, but everything that occurs there and in the Kenyan refugee camps affects them here. During a few months late 2019, there were several insurgencies in the Sudan, as well as infractions in Melbourne, that interrupted proceedings in Canberra—because, as Kuot explained, people 'cannot be seen' to be dancing whilst there is tragedy in their wider community. But such interruptions are part of the shared life ecologies of participants, and a dialogic process does not only prove itself as a duologue between those in immediate presence, but in its multiplicities and disruptions, sometimes across distances which we, from a different set of cultural values, have little right to question. Rather, these disruptions call to and require our attentiveness, and the aspect of yielding, even to what we do no understand. I state that one of my biggest learnings from this project is, that there was always a reason for what was not happening.

In Part 1 of this thesis, I noted early care ethics' focus on deficits, bifurcations of roles, chronological ordering, rigid models, and finite timeframes, which were then overturned by FCE scholars' more fluid and perspicacious concepts of dialogic interrelationships and interdependencies. We are intertwined with each other, in conscious and unconscious, visible and invisible ways. In CACD, part of our work, in creating dialogic relations with complex communities, is to help translate and make transparent the 'invisible networks' that help sustain the meaning and potency of all our communities—perhaps especially in communities trying to take root in new lands.

At best, the *Culture Hub* and Gatherings speak of something yet to come. The events have been restorative (restoring cultural practices the community has yearned for); were witnessed (by very willing others); were served (by people with good intentions), *and yet and yet*…. It was and remains a great example of community cultural development *along-the-way,* with moments of great excitement, exhilaration and beauty.

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[215] We need to note the draft submission of this thesis preceded COVID19 lockdowns.

In becoming intertwined in this work, I have experienced both the centrifugal quality of working with communities who identify they are 'centred' in ways different from how we—generically, as white Anglo-Australians—'do' Being[216]. In recent negotiations, I have also experienced the still, quiet centripetal space in the middle of the vortex, where all we have is the opportunity to ask raw, vulnerable questions of each other. I remember the moment in one of our later *Hub* planning meetings—by then almost pushed to the point of resigning from the project—that what I valued, where the greatest shifts happened, was where we risked asking questions that changed the game. *Why* did we need to give water bottles to each of 300 people? *Why* did no-one respond to the philanthropist who wanted to assist their school-aged children with education packs he wanted to distribute? *Why* did the community not turn up to support the interstate guest speaker? *Why* could no-one act on the agreement with the College to pack up by 11.30pm? Responses have not been easy for Sudanese elders to provide. However, in asking the questions, reasons could be shared and therefore understood. There have always been good (if inconvenient) reasons. The moments that afforded us self-reflexivity have been precious.

To consolidate this discussion, I refer the reader to the following interview, where I have had the opportunity to reflect on my own learnings (author interview from 9'18' to 18'00') https://www.dropbox.com/s/0sfzin7dzbcjc8z/ZS%202XX%20interview.m4a?dl=0/.

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[216] Here I identify my privilege amongst the 'we' of white Australian culture, even though I too am born of parents who experienced themselves as 'strangers in a strange land'

Chapter 10
Moon Stories: 'vulnerable authority' in deep care

Moon Stories: The Day the World Changed! is a project that commemorates the 50th anniversary year of the broadcast of the first Moon Walk from the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station, just outside the ACT. It deals with history, human footprints, cultural differences and 'deep time'. The project establishes partnerships between Parks ACT, Heritage ACT, NASA/CSIRO (via the Deep Space Tracking Station), Namadgi High School, Mt Stromlo/ANU, and members of the community, sharing 'moon walk memories' and our aspirations for the future–on earth, and in the skies. It incorporates a group of Canberra dancers over 55 (Canberra Dance Theatre's GOLDS) and media/technology students from the Faculty of Arts and Design, Canberra University.

Ngunnawal elder Tyronne Bell shared his wisdom about indigenous knowledge of the stars with the school children; and artist John Reid and collaborators created a special public event 'Walking the Solar System with Moon in Tow. Mount Stromlo ACT. ANU Moon Week. 2019'.

Adjunct activities include:

Augmented reality [AR] content, created for the ACT Heritage 'Canberra Tracks' digital way-finding app. The app features interviews with John Saxon, Operations Supervisor during the first moon walk broadcast. The AR clips are activated from a collector's set of 4 postcards specially designed to celebrate the Anniversary.

Figure 23: Moon Stories project summary (retrieved from http://www.bodyecology.com.au/moon-stories-2019/)

10.1 Project description

Moon Stories performance video: https://youtu.be/lg-a2rJFwZo (15 minutes).

Moon Stories: The Day the World Changed! was a collaborative project I set up in late 2018, to contribute to the first moon walk broadcast anniversary commemorations of 2019. The 1969 Apollo spacecraft landing was relayed from Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station (in Tidbinbilla National Park), at the southern footstep of the Canberra region. This is a little-known fact, even amongst Canberrans, overshadowed by the 'big brother' achievements of NASA and by several 'false facts' in circulation (for example that the broadcast came from Parkes in far-western NSW). A key part of the investigation was to uncover some of this broadcast's 'secret history', but even more so to examine differences in the relevance and cultural understanding of the moon landing itself, across cultures and between generations[217][218].

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[217] On the one hand, for people aged 55 and over, July 22, 1969 was 'the day the world changed'. For young people today, humans have 'always' been on the moon.

[218] In late 2017, entrepreneur Elon Musk claimed that 'SpaceX will launch two paying passengers on a private flight around the moon in late 2018' (https://www.space.com/35844-elon-musk-spacex-announcement-today.html, which also somehow diminishes the sense of extra-ordinary achievement of the Apollo landing in 1969.

The Year 6 (11–13 years old) children of Namadgi High School, whose school precinct is within 20 minutes of Honeysuckle Creek, had no idea this history was right on their doorstep. As children from an underprivileged demographic, excursions to places such as the current Deep Space Tracking Station, and Namadgi or Tidbinbilla National Parks, are not usually part of their life experience.

Indeed, there was something about the particular cohort of children selected as participants in the project who seemed to have missed out on developmental experiences many Canberra families take for granted (excursions; storytelling; craft activities, and the development of fine motor skills, such as in the use of scissors). Not only is the story of Honeysuckle Creek's involvement in the first broadcast part of the 'hidden history' of the region, so too is the reality of such underprivilege, right on Canberra's doorstep—in a city more known for its middle-class, double-income and generally well-educated demographic—or so it is presumed to be.

My first two weeks of working with the cohort left my head reeling. Our first classes were in a gym, which seemed too vast a space, almost intimidating—ironic in a project about aspiring to reach for the impossible. Indeed, for some of the children, 'reaching to the stars' initially seemed a stupid exercise. 'Drama' or 'creating a play' seemed formidable. However, each of these children were bright, if somehow frightened of their own bodies. I sensed that, for some children, it was initially more interesting to fight 'big ideas' than contribute to them. One of the brightest of the kids snarled down the indigenous elder, Tyronne Bell, who gave a talk to the class at the beginning of school term and was asked to leave the room. His was a very deep struggle with authority, even when it was presented with such humble demeanor as it was by Tyronne.

Nearly thirty-three percent of the (overall school) cohort are of indigenous ancestry. After sharing his cultural understandings of the moon, cyclic time and seasonal change, Tyronne asked these children if they knew where their mob came from. Only one child had a vague idea. I was witness not only to this group's generic disconnection from place (Honeysuckle was on their doorstep), and an acculturated withholding from potential (these children did not understand they could be storytellers) but an even deeper displacement (most did not know where their mob came from). Some children from other cultural backgrounds seemed a little more connected: Ahmed's eyes gleamed when I suggested he ask his parents for stories of how their culture related to the moon. Masooma could remember her experience of an eclipse when visiting her family in Karachi.

The Deputy Principal and I invited carers and families of the children to an afternoon tea, to take the opportunity to share their own 'moon stories'. It was a breakthrough for the School (which has a long history of inertia from families regarding extra-curricular activities) that several children reported their carers 'wanted to come but could not' on that day. There was a 100% return rate on permission slips for the various excursions—another first. These details are mentioned because of the significance they mark, in that this event captured the imagination and enthusiasms of a community which has somehow become disenfranchised from engagements that the rest of middle-class Canberra cannot even imagine is a problem to attend.

The project achieved three public performance outcomes—two at Namadgi National Park Visitor's Centre (part of Heritage Week), and two at Mt Stromlo Observatory, in the week of the landing anniversary. It also supported two imaginative 'Walking the Solar System' events, created with Dr John Reid and collaborators; and involved members of the Canberra Dance Theatre's GOLDs (Growing Old Disgracefully) troupe of dancers over the age of fifty-five, whose substantial inputs included co-choreography, and contributing '*Where were you when humans landed on the moon?*' stories that were incorporated into the live performances and the projection film. One dancer created her own solo. Several members of GOLDs accompanied Namadgi school excursions to the Canberra Deep Space Tracking Station and bonded with individual children. The School cohort attended the live performances at Namadgi Visitor's Centre.
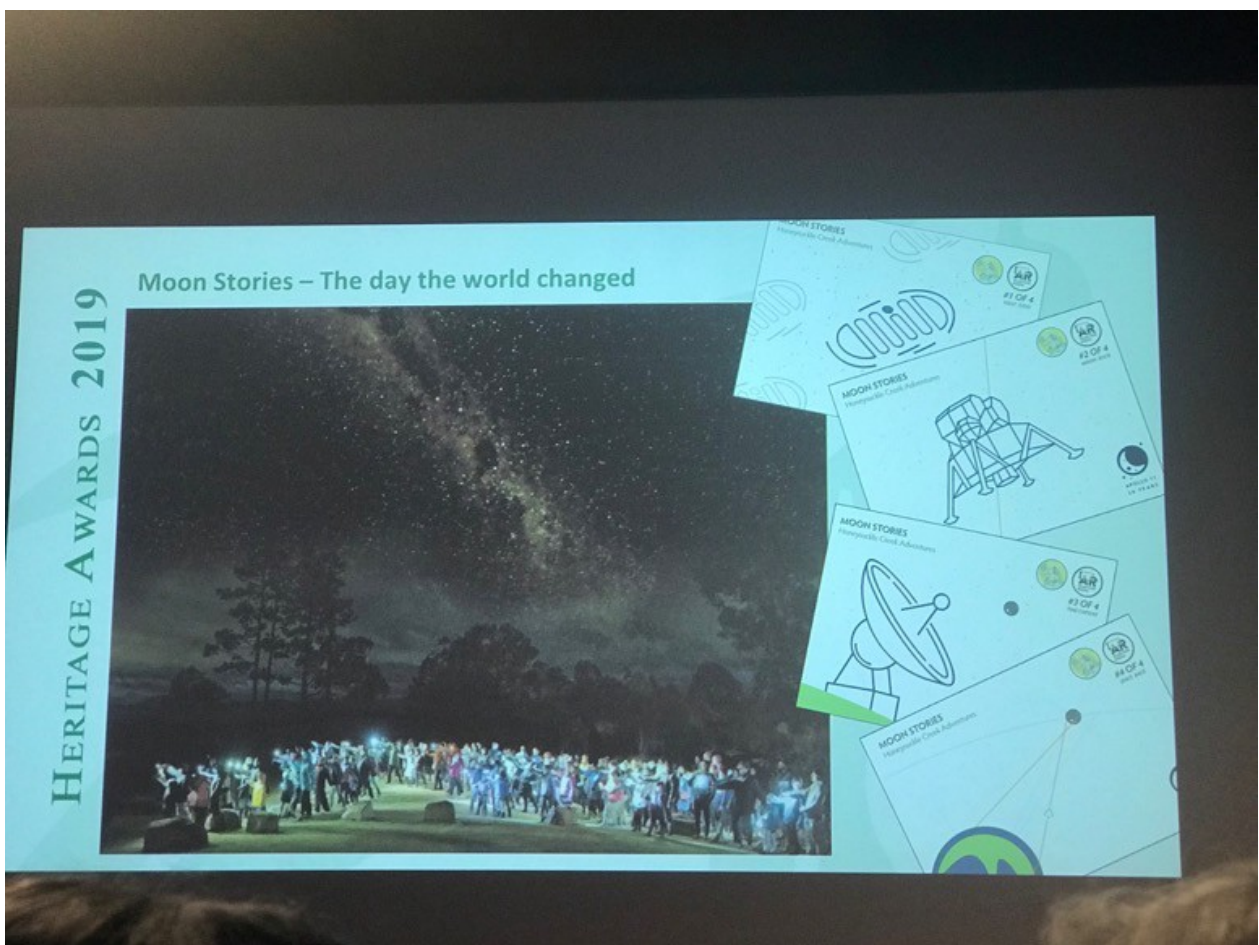
Figure 24: Image projected onto screen during National Trust Heritage ACT awards, October 2019, showing postcard designs, and Rob Little's photograph of John Reid's Walking eh Solar System with Moon in Tow, taken at Mt Stromlo on July 22, 2019. Photo credit: Tiffany Mahon

Another significant experience occurred when students from the Faculty of Arts and Design, on secondment for their integrated professional learning unit at the University of Canberra, came to film school student contributions (of puppetry and storytelling) at the school. They edited the 15-minute projection film (now available at https://vimeo.com/339881850) to my storyboard; as well as created film content and design of the postcards and linked to the Canberra Tracks Augmented Reality app (both accessible via http://www.bodyecology.com.au/moon-stories-2019/).

The project was nominated for, and won, a National Trust: Heritage ACT award in October 2019, as a 'vibrant, intercultural and intergenerational project, showing 'great initiative in (its) approach to the task of examining the impact of the first moon landing on the community into which its broadcast was cabled fifty years ago. The judging panel was impressed by the 'great variety of technologies used in the project and by the wide range of people involved.'

10.2 The value(s) of evaluations

In this project, we are dealing with notions of 'success' (via measurable outcomes), but also of values driven by other criteria. I here recall Hibberd mentioning that the Bishop-Kester debate—about aesthetics *versus* ethics in community arts—rests on a false supposition. I suggest that pitting aesthetics (a measurable 'centred' value) *versus* ethics is parallel to what Shildrick implies is a false supposition of the autonomy of the body and its experiences in the first place[219]. I suggest that in this project we came to an aesthetic that grew out of the requirements of caring for the contributors involved. This was especially heightened in the work with the school children, with which the project, and this evaluation, begins.

I quickly adapted expectations of working with the initially nervous and disengaged children (namely, 'to deliver a live performance outcome') to working with them in an entirely different way. In backing off from the pressures of a live performance and presentation, to create 'Letters to the Moon' (as stories and drawings) which were then filmed, and realise a bespoke puppet play that was then also filmed, thus creating a more intimate, less threatening and less pressured outcome.

School student process: https://youtu.be/CbqQAcFPqD4 (2 minutes).

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[219] In her original argument, this is to do with medical ethics, and patient experiences.

Script excerpt

Visuals

Moon image: stock footage; night sky

Audio (v/o)

∼

Dear Moon

You make the night sky shine

In the darkness you make the water flow

For Moon from Ahmed

∼

I really want to come to the moon just once in my life. It is always been my dream to come and visit you.

Does it hurt when you turn all black and disappear?

Masooma

∼

I feel a bit sorry for you because people stepped all over you in 1969. I bet you cannot read this because you do not have eyes.

From George

∼

I like Venus better it looks cool. Venus is my favourite planet. I do not like looking at you because you are a show off.

From Leroy

∼

It must have been pretty upsetting to have the Apollo 11 astronauts walk all over you.

Hannah

∼

Some of the children undertook research at an unprecedented level, during and after the excursion to the Deep Space Tracking Station, showing an interest in factual research and touching on the joys of creative research and outcomes, which initially and *per se* seemed frightening to them. The class purportedly became the most popular of the children's school week. The children also benefited from excursions out to Tidbinbilla and Namadgi National Parks and the Canberra Deep Space Tracking Station, and from seeing their work incorporated into a much larger project on the performance days.

An excursion to a site of Heritage significance is not usually on their radar. Indeed, for most of these children, an excursion anywhere is rare. Many of this cohort would not have been able to participate on *any* level if the Project Funding had not been generous enough to cover all costs (of materials, transport, and tutor fees). The school children had the opportunity to interact with several others: in the visit of former console operator John Saxon to the school (discussed further below); in the visits of Uncle Tyronne Bell and Dr John Reid, and the visit of University of Canberra students to do the filming.

Seconded University of Canberra media students were enrolled in a 'Project Hub' outreach/integrated learning unit, in its trial year. Three of the four had previously been involved (one extensively) in media outputs, but none in creative project outcomes. My engagement with them highlighted that the arts, and aesthetic outcomes, have particular demands that many people are not necessarily prepared for such as fluidity of process, and the relationship between fluidity, research and discipline. Helping students manage their university assessment timeframes against production/publication and distribution timeframes was another complex factor.

One of these students had a learning disability and the other displayed signs of a moderate mental health and interpersonal management issue. It served the project well for these issues to be embraced and overcome. It was part of the team's overall learning to understand how to manage each other, whilst staying focused on the needs of the 'client'.

Rather than considering these as 'exceptional' circumstances, I would argue that these conditions are more and more to be expected within contemporary participatory engagements. Sometimes it seems that the projects know no bounds—except that there is a boundary created by the shared intention to create/make art together. The arts, of whatever medium, are a discipline, and provide opportunities to learn skills and focus attention towards shared goals. Participatory work informs both method and outcomes; in working from a strengths-based approach, I enjoy the *diversity* of outcomes that such work demands, if it is to remain true and meaningful to contributors.

The increasing presumption or expectation that 'partnerships' are now key factors in almost all projects belies the time and effort required to establish and sustain such partnerships. For *Moon Stories*, my project commitment was 800 hours, of which 500 were paid; however, a previous 600 hours were put into preparation before submitting the application; and the project included supervision of tertiary-level students in exchange for their input with media. The exchange was well worthwhile—the media students were a 'dream team'—however it is lucky for the project that I had extensive tertiary teaching experience and have worked in mental health. The budget cap put on funded amounts means that production management can be faced with many unpaid and/or severely under-paid requiring highly specialised knowledge. I suggest this would be less an exception than the norm. There are no ideal partnerships, and no ideal and compliant communities. Where the rhetoric of current funding seems to embrace an ecumenical approach to diversity and inclusion and require more and more partnership 'anchors' to prove a project's worth even before it begins, I suggest that the specificities of such

inclusion need to be considered in great detail—as variable 'new norms', rather exceptions—and need to be funded accordingly[220].

However, the key value of the project lies not in these numbers and this 'hardware', but in its 'intangibles'—in the building of relationships, the connecting to people, the opportunities otherwise not imagined; I believe this was recognised in the Heritage award. It was also understood by Tiffany Mahon, Deputy Principal of Namadgi High School. She sees her own role (as School Deputy) as being perhaps the 'only steady one' in the school children's lives. We both knew, by intuition, that our primary task with these children was to issue care. Indeed, she said to me that she saw her role as giving them *love*. For my part, I could see their brightness: I could see their fear against aspiration, of reaching far; I saw their suspicion of the 'vast', of moving beyond the known, of being part of a larger whole (and perhaps too of their need, in the first instance, to resist 'love'). In the end, they got to experience making a significant and beautiful contribution to being part of a larger whole[221].

10.3 An integrated aesthetics

The aesthetics outcomes were not 'incidental' to the process: rather, I believe that aesthetics also calls to our care. We wanted and needed the outcomes to be beautiful. We also needed the children to see a beautiful result to which they contributed great value. There is nothing simple about a project like this. It demands great care and attentiveness—both to encourage and bring forth, and not to scare children away from, their potential. My initial ambition to create theatre with the students was quickly abandoned, as the pressure to learn presence, to perform, to represent, would have been too great. Thompson calls to the 'protective' qualities of performance: when a trained actor has technique to hold her, that is one thing; but these children had no technique and indeed no understanding, at first, of how performance might be protective of and around them.

This is vastly different from arguing that a project substantiates the time, effort and costs by proving 'value for money' (a rubric that appears on funding application forms). Matarasso, who regularly rails against 'instrumentalisation' of participants, nominates this as part of the complexities of 'informed consent':

> People do not have to demonstrate improvement to justify the costs involved. [However] it might be possible to see consent itself as a process, or what in social science research has described as 'rolling informed consent'[222]. Change, after all, is something that can happen to

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[220] The budget was $48,000 distributed amongst 15 key artists/technicians, 12 volunteer dancers, two 'Honeymen' (former console operators) and 12 school children, performed in 3 venues and producing 6 separate media outcomes (1 major film, 2 minor films, 4 x AR linked postcards, and 2 photo documentations (of the Walking/Traversing the Solar System events) created over 5 months.

[221] Tiffany and I are currently trying to find ways to persuade the Department of Education that this kind of project is what the school needs to have continue. We are still working on it.

[222] Here Matarasso refers us to Heather Piper and Helen Simons 'Ethical Responsibility in Social Research' in Somekh, B. & Lewin. C., eds., 2005, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, London, p.57; and Simons, H., 2009, *Case Study Research in Practice*, London, pp.103 ff

everyone who enters the transformative space of participatory art,
including the professionals.

(Matarasso, A Restless Art, 2019, 9/03/2019)

I certainly was changed in the process. I had to listen deeply, to the circumstance, to the children, to all contributors. The aesthetic is mine, yet the project called to my responsiveness and adaptability and asked me to change. In some ways I was operating as a jazz musician does—listening, adapting and creating according to the circumstances/conditions in the room. This was much like Marcus Schlosser's notions of 'responsive flows', 'skilled coping' and Benjamin Libet's 'readiness potentials' in my previous discussion about agency (Libet, 1992; Schlosser, 2019).

10.4 The intimacy of the vast

Asking the children to write 'letters to the moon' was probably an echo of storytelling at bedtime, of making something quotidian from the vast. This is what we grasp for, when we make performance: reaching back and reaching forward: our bodies as the site of intersection between where we stand and what we do not yet understand.

The project had special moments of exchange—between young and old; between elders and a younger mob, most of whom did not know their tribal homeland. The outcomes have also been shared with people who might not usually go to a performance event—at Honeysuckle Creek, at Mt Stromlo during a star-gazing night; for the students who had never been involved in a creative project before; for those who picked up the postcards in participant institutions, and at visitor venues. This is not about working with the already-converted: indeed, it *may* have served as an opportunity to convert a new community to some of the values of art.

Feminist care ethicists warn against narrative 'captures' that only confirm what we already know or were seeking to find. Contributor potential is something we sense (hovering) even when we cannot yet see it. The not-yet-seen is part of our presence. This to me is where performance gives hope: it cares for the potential of co-participants. Whilst the latest visible outcome of the project is the National Trust award, its deeper value is in the collaborators, who were and remain 'front and centre stage', and in the relationships built in the process. Indeed, in the end, although about aspiring to the stars, the project was about focusing in on participants' latent capabilities. Like a boomerang—what you throw out, comes home. As Aunty Isabel says, 'everything we do is for the children'—but it is also, specifically, for the bringing of hope to the children, in their own capabilities and imaginings.

The project was enabled by a reasonable degree of funding, and the cooperation of many stakeholders. Heritage ACT *per se* operates with openness and leniency, and engages in dialogue with project artists, before, during and after applications. It demands a lot, but it also gives a lot too. On the one hand, the value of such a project is proven in tangible results, in its performances, the two Solar Walks, the postcards linked to AR, and the public and private (school-only access) films; however, in terms and categories under which Heritage and the National Trust operates, the values were discussed in terms of its

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'intangibles' (what does 'heritage' *mean* to people, and *how* does it mean?) and the project planning was discussed in those terms. The intangibles included the intergenerational and intercultural relationships nurtured in the project, and the transformation itself of the children and other people involved, as documented in a series of emails and surveys conducted amongst participants.

In some ways, then, the project was a 'dance':

> From Middle English *daunce, daunse,* a borrowing from Anglo-Norman *dancer, dancer; cf.* OF *Danceiuer*) from Frankish *danson* (to draw, pull, stretch out, gesture (*cf.* Old HG *danson* to draw, pull' from Proto-Germanic *danson*, from *danson* to draw, pull

which we might like to highlight as follows: What do 'new unnamed forms of practice' pull or stretch out, or draw us to? Looked at another way: if we *do not* dance (or create), what is missing?

For the South Sudanese community, to *not* dance is to starve. Cultural practices are so clearly linked to their communal cultural identity that they feel their identities almost disappear when they cannot dance. As Thompson argues, the *comfort* dance gives are critically restorative of something communities value (Thompson, 2009, p.7), but it is also future-building: if we can keep dancing, we re-enter the world renewed. The South Sudanese appreciate being *seen* to dance, being witnessed. Perhaps the sharing, the blurring between cultures (for example, in the drumming exchanges) is not so far off into the future. It is certainly the hope for the planned ArtsXChange to enable an interweaving of cultures and practices.

Jerzy Grotowski, in a reverie he titles 'You are someone's son' (Grotowski, 1987), insists that dance is not the step on the ground, it is what happens in the air between steps. We can extrapolate from this to suggest that, by implication, dance is what is passed between generations. This is like the mind stitching patterns that relates things to each other. For the children of Namadgi School, Honeysuckle Creek is on their doorstep, and they had no idea they were connected, geographically and socially, to that history, or to those people. The exchange and growth go both ways: when John Saxon visited the school and told them what it was like to be at the console, helping broadcast this event, one student asked him whether he saw his family much over that time. After a moment's pause, John said it was probably his one regret that he did not see his children grow up. This proved a place of meeting on a new kind of equal ground.

John Saxon took a risk in coming to the school: he was quite anxious and not knowing how it might turn out. The dialogic exchange between himself and Phoenix (a boy of indigenous background) had a poignant beauty, an aesthetic worthy of its own moment's pause—a reflection on what was possible (now), but what had been impossible (before), because of the demands of that moment in history. The present moment was a rubbing against each other of the skins of different values. It was also a moment held in mutual respect—between young and old, 'professional' and student, and between cultural differences.

That thought, that difference, that grating, that humility—and John's gracious response, risking everything, really: his life-long passion for his work; his importance in the history of the space mission[223]—makes a difference in the world.

10.5 Coda: Walking 'with' the others of our practices

A few months ago, I received a letter from the Head of Learning at my daughter's high school, that a second child had committed suicide in the past six months. This young person was only 17; at the end of last year, the other victim had just graduated. As my own daughter approaches the supposed 'final reckoning' of her Higher School Certificate, I wonder (because after all, we are desperate to protect and nurture our own children), what does this death, what does her life, what does *it all* mean? If Merleau-Ponty is anywhere near right, regarding the intertwining of self and other, the skin of one is (supposedly) no lesser than the skin or breath of another: each has a validity and a right to be, and in fact, be pulled at (*'dancer'*), to come forth. Is this by and large how our institutions—whether teaching, assessing, socialising, or community—operate?

Several Parragirls—most of whom began in the world in dysfunctional families—had learnt distrust because of the institutions to which they were consigned. At times, throughout the Memory Project, they have had experiences that life can be co-created differently. For Jenny McNally, what exactly did the opportunity to have her words, her thoughts and gestures performed, *mean?*

The expressive aspect and sensual understanding of performance—what is immediately experienced yet 'escapes analysis' (Massumi, 2008) adds meaning to the 'what' of performance. As Franca Tamisari learnt from the anthropology teacher who used to dance his lectures, the intersection of thought and feeling is what creates meaning. 'Feeling (is) a mode of attention (that) revives knowledge and it is knowledge which makes this feeling intelligent' (Tamisari, 2016, pp 99–100). I think this is why, on some pre-conscious level, I included the Namadgi children (who seemed afraid to dance) in a project which includes dance—even if they did not (yet) dance themselves.

This might be part of why Thompson calls to the 'protective and inspirational force of performance', and especially of its *beauty* (Thompson, 2009, p.261). We remember that he arrived at this idea in witnessing the *practical care* of a physiotherapist in relation to his injured colleague. Thompson was startled by his recognition of the *beauty* of the exchange, noting that his response leans to 'a language more usually associated with artistry'. He emphasises 'the tendency in the literature ...to bifurcate [any] work of public justice and private care'. In his moment of transformative recognition, however (as occurs in dance) he advocates a 'dynamic blurring' of professional and personal, public and private, the intimate and the political, leading him to articulate a new evaluative criterion (Thompson, 2015, p.432).

On the special place of performance and its *affects*, which engage and embrace the sensory realms, he states that 'the actual work of social change is bound up in how we

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[223] To use Shildrick's term, in this exchange he had no status apart from a 'status in the moment'.

create, who creates and when we create art' (*ibid.,* p.11). Whilst under-formed in Thompson's thesis, the preventative possibilities of touch, being touched, being reached, being sensed, receiving, given, listening, sounding, moving and being moved…these protective possibilities both help form a shield but also form the very membrane we need to articulate regarding who we are and might be in the world .This extends to our children, and to anyone to whom we hope to speak in an 'intimate and sensory key'.

Is beauty only in the eye of the beholder, or is it always already there, wherever care is 'good' care? It may be that, in bringing together aspects usually separated (aesthetics and care), Thompson is pointing to a cognitive dissonance in contemporary lives: a presumption of divisions of experience between art (and aesthetics) and life. However, I contend that it is exactly this crossing-over, this 'dynamic blurring' that is one of the key values in 'good' CACD work—something that signals the 'affective solidarity and mutual regard' he so values, even though the mutuality, and degrees of expertise, might manifest differently. The values of such circumstances are not where art 'rises above' life, but where and how life infiltrates and transmogrifies art with the shape and concerns of life and care, and indeed, potentially gives shape to new forms that might enunciate their own set of values[224]. Life, and care, works on us and on our art, and potentially pulls us forth. This is my new definition of 'participatory'.

It is perhaps so very clear why Entelechy's work in AmJam—with largely non-verbal people of profound and complex needs—is so valuable. In that work, I am called to, called-forth, and:

> …freed from myself in the present dialogue, even though the other's thoughts are certainly his own, since I do not form them. I, nonetheless, grasp them as soon as they are born, or I even anticipate them. And even the objection raised by my interlocutor draws from me thoughts I did not know I possessed such that if I lend him thoughts, he makes me think in return.
>
> *(Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p.370)*

This is especially important as the number of cultural differences requiring representation in our art and our media only multiply, in parallel to the humanitarian, social and environmental crises we now move into.

Indeed, there is something in Thompson's aesthetics of care that recognises a kind of third realm[225] (my term) of arts practice, where responsiveness, reciprocity and a sense of equity (of inputs, and of co-participants) might (e)merge. I identify this as a chiastic relationship—a crossing-over with life—that remembers my incorporation of Merleau-Ponty's 'chiasm' in Part 1. As I have shown, it is where entities (which include bodies and

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[224] Thompson seems to be making the case that beauty *per se* has a need; beauty has a form that needs and shapes attention

[225] This term pays respect to Victor Turner's notion of the 'liminality' of ritual performance: 'I have used the term 'anti- structure'…to describe both liminality and what I have called 'communitas'. I meant by it not a structural reversal…(but) the liberation of human capacities of cognition, affect, volition, creativity, etc., from the normative constraints incumbent upon occupying a sequence of social statuses' (Turner, 1969)

art forms) meet, or learn how to meet, each other. The (assessable) skill level might be in how fully we hear and attend to the core principles that enable this 'third realm', and through our attentiveness, enable its diverse new architectures to form.

Whatever our preferred disciplines or formalities, the question of what kinds of economies and authorities we serve is critical. But vulnerable authority is a new and different notion, which might also perhaps better tolerate new and different geometries. Walking with, performing through, and walking alongside are models which can assist us in giving care, and allow for the kind of fluid dance between dependence, independence and interdependencies we have traced in this thesis. As anyone who has been disabled (for any length of time) knows—as I was, following the birth of my second daughter and for many years thereafter—agency is critical, but variable. Enabling agency is the act of care; and FCE scholars argue that enabling care is also an act of civic duty.

Chapter 11
Concluding chapter: Enabling Care

Formulating touchstones for care practices

My five case studies demonstrate some of the difficulties of working, with care, in the field of CACD. I have noted issues to do with underfunding, competitive climates and circumstances where facilitators may be under-resourced and worked to the point of exhaustion. This has parallels in the studies by feminist care ethics scholars of the critical yet often underpaid and underacknowledged position of carers in our wider economies. In addition, organisational and funding rubrics may preclude the development of forms appropriate to differing circumstances, bringing aesthetics into our enquiry.

Project by project funding is deleterious to practitioners, communities and to aesthetic potentials communities might achieve. As I state in the body of this thesis, it is hard to show due respect to the complexities and creative capacity of communities within truncated project timeframes, or to show up and 'show care' in communities only intermittently.

The deep-rooted questions *What matters? What is present? What needs care?* take sustained support, time, skills, a trained intuition and deep care to activate and inform our work in CACD. That which calls to our care can bring forth outcomes that may be messy, inconclusive, 'frayed', but also exquisite—and sometimes, all of these. As my thesis demonstrates, our most effective and affecting work may deliver some challenging outcomes.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the events Edward Schieffelin witnessed amongst the Kaluli in PNG were unpredictable and subject to challenge by community participants (Schieffelin, 1985). The iterative process was important to the significance and purpose of performance events, which include resolving complex community issues. The ramifications of such events, which might take several days, *fold out* from them in multifarious, long-term ways. I discuss similar affects in the work of Thompson (in a Sri Lankan war-zone), Schininà (with Serbian refugees) and Conquergood (with refugee Hmong in Thailand) (Thompson, 2009; Schininá, 2012; Conquergood, 2012;), and in my own cases studies where levels of meaning and engagement go far beyond providing an evening's entertainment, a polished production, proving 'value for money' or an event that upholds a venue's 'branding'.

This thesis asks us instead to tolerate tensions—between intuitions and outcomes; between requirements and timeframes, and the potential latent capabilities of participants in our projects. The friction of tension—in part, caused by the force of what has not-yet-arrived—is part of the creative process[226] and it drives us forward to create something new. In the *Moon Stories* project, the children were initially frightened of their own creative capacities. The aesthetic value of the film—in which the children could witness their involvement in something that *was* polished and well crafted—had a significant impact.

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[226] De la Bellacasa insists we consider tension as positive.

Their passions were ignited and their latent capabilities explored, pointing them to something beyond their perceived self-limitations. But the beauties of their capabilities could so easily have been missed. As James Thompson discovered, initially to his chagrin but ultimately to his delight, we need to redefine and remain flexible in our notions of beauty to recognise when, and in what ways, it is revealing itself before us.

How can care be taught?

> I carry the principles of my training with me, in my own embodiment,
> into each situation.

Theorists insist that 'care is a fact of our embodiment' (Birch, 2012; Blechschmidt, 2004; Hamington, 2004). Yet this fact is subject to complexities such as outlined by feminist care ethicists who state that our embodiment is complex and intertwined with others, including the more than human. Whilst it is an irony that care is generated in iniquitous situations (as Tronto says, 'care is about inequality', is 'always requiring something from us', and is 'always infused with power' (Tronto, 2015, pp. 1&3), yet I have shown that the concepts of agency, authority, and rights include the right to decide, to choose, and at times the right to be 'left alone' to one's capacity to grow-forth. Immediate, definable outcomes of 'success' are not necessarily signs of good care. The complex 'webs of care'(de la Bellacasa, 2017) into which we are drawn include what may be invisible.

Embodiment practices

If care is part of our embodiment, then learning how to live with, sense in, and actively embrace the complex nature of our embodiment is critical to care practices. As practitioners, we learn to tolerate and ride the wave of changing sensations, needs and circumstance with more or less grace. Embodiment practices that have influenced my own work vary from Ideokinesis, Butoh and meditation practices such as Vipassana, which trains a conscious awareness and tolerance of the experience of flux and change in thoughts and bodily experiences. These practices are self-reflexive processes (as per Chapter 4's feminist vulnerable methods, anchoring their process in relationality plus an embrace of the unknown).

Jacqueline Millner explains that care ethics teaches us to care, by reminding us both of our vulnerability but also of our sensible and relational intelligences (Millner, 2019). She (and others) remind us that care, and ethics, is an embodied practice to which we can be trained—as much by preparing us mentally as physically to what lies ahead in our work in the field.

Accordingly, I draw this thesis to a conclusion in a series of touchstones. Each touchtone necessarily refers back to an early precept: How do we understand our embodiment? What accompanies us in it? To what are we related? The disciplines and trainings I have mentioned above have helped ground my practice and given me patience to ride the wisdoms of the body, the variability of sensations, and to embrace the invisible and unknown. Whatever exits in science including nuclear physics—for example, where a molecule is both particle and wave motion simultaneously—is on some level known to our bodies and ourselves. Whether we have learnt to *sense* these truths is partially due to

whether or not we have had validation from our trainings, our circumstances, or in our institutions.

Therefore, I outline the following touchstones in the hope that they contribute to the field of practice.

Touchstones for future CACD practices:

1. Respect presence **(**observe what is here; seek complexity).

2. Tolerate difference (seek beauty in divergence).

3. Be fluid (know your tools but be prepared to let them go).

4. Develop vulnerable authority (make choices but keep listening and adapting).

5. Be present to your impulses (but do not necessarily enact them!). Listen and develop dialogic relations with them. Our ethical practices need to embrace Isabelle Stenger's sophisticated understanding of the constraints of any body and context, each constraint calling to our care because of how and where it intersects with us or with others in our 'interdependent entanglements' (Stengers, 2013, p.42; de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.155). Our own impulses are only a part of the impulses of the others with whom we are interwoven.

6. Embrace creative tension, in both process and outcomes. Sit with doubt and uncertainty. Value what unnerves you. Value what irritates you. Develop tolerance for deviance. Somehow find or create a context that values you in that valuing.

7. Be patient with time. Remembering that the gestation of a child, of a plant, stretches forwards and backwards in time, and that the success of a process might be in both visible and invisible or non-verbal outcomes. Be patient with time, but also value each moment for what it uniquely gives. Think ahead; breathe into the next move. Your body *wants* to reach forward, and towards others (Birch, 2012).

8. Trust to intuition (especially around holding silence); but remain in relationality. Think ahead; anticipate care needs. Remember that the success of an artist's work is sometimes 'to yield'.

9. Remain hopeful; hold on to the knowledge that a future exists, that can be co-created together.

10. Work across the senses. No body and no organ works alone. Consciously support others in a system. Become 'decentred' in our 'multiple agencies' (Rose, van Dooren, & Chrulew, 2017).

11. Eat well, play, listen (to music, to the rhythms of each other).

12. Be quiet within the noise.

13. Enjoy dancing.

This is a beginning.

I hope that these touchstones, and my thesis, can be a contribution to our shared futures. In our COVID—affected era, our practices may be under constraints, but we should never stop asking questions of what is being asked of us. Intertwined with each other, the world still wants to meet us.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Australia Council evaluation criteria

(correct as of 9 September 2020)

A) Australia Council for the Arts, Community Cultural Development assessment rubrics, received from Council, April 2019

CACD work is of artistic excellence when:

- There is artistry at all stages – the process, the people, the outcome
- The activity is by, with, and for the communities and reflects the context and circumstance of each community The identified community is directly involved in the consultation, planning, creation, presentation, distribution and evaluation
- The practice demonstrates the aspirations of all stakeholders and is co-created
- Community participation is planned in such a way that it increases the capacity for ongoing artistic development beyond the life of the partnership, including professional pathways into the arts
- Personal and community transformation is paramount, including either awareness raising on social issues or broader community organising strategies
- Culturally appropriate practice at all times
- Research and evaluation focused on the instrumental value of the arts
- Sector leadership, as a multi art form, multi dimension arts practice CACD organisations provide leadership across the wider arts sector and simultaneously create new models of working for non-arts sectors

B) Assessment criteria, materials distributed to Community Cultural Arts peer assessor panel, received from Council, April 2019

Assessment Criterion (FYF Organisations): Artistic Merit

You will assess the organisation's artistic achievements and vision. You may consider how the track record and vision support:

- The making and sharing of great arts and culture.

- The development of great artists and arts workers.

- Broader and deeper connections with audiences and communities.

- Diverse cultural expression.

- A vibrant society and culture.

Assessment Criteria (FYF Organisations): Contribution to the Strategic Priorities of the Australia Council

You will assess the organisation's vision may contribute to one or more of the strategic priorities informing Council's next Strategic Plan:

- Memorable arts experiences for everyone—how we experience and engage with the arts, with a particular focus on shifting patterns of consumption.

- Our arts reflect us—contemporary Australia's diverse population represented in the arts, ensuring relevance to people of all backgrounds and circumstances.

- First Nations arts and cultures are cherished—understanding and valuing the world's oldest living culture, and investing in First Nation's arts and culture.

- Arts and creativity are thriving—ensuring the Australian arts sector continues to be a vibrant part of our society, while addressing challenges faced by individuals and organizations working in the arts.

- Arts and creativity are valued—leading the discussion and advocating for the public value of the arts to Government and society more broadly.

Parragirls
Reimagining Parramatta Girls Home through art and memory

Edited by Lily Hibberd, Bonney Djuric

Parragirls profiles how contemporary art helped transform the lives and memories of former residents of Parramatta Girls Home in Western Sydney, and a long-neglected site located on the lands of the Burramattagal people of the Darug nation.

Focusing on the art and activism of Parragirls themselves, this groundbreaking book reveals how art can change places and perceptions, using images and creative writing to reimagine the difficult spaces and memories of a former child welfare institution.

Classification | Art | Social History | Culture

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8. Reimagining a place
9. A site of conscience
   So that this history is never forgotten

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About the Editors

LILY HIBBERD is an artist, curator and writer. She co-founded Parragirls Memory Project with Bonney Djuric in 2012 and has co-produced numerous major artworks and exhibitions with Parragirls. She is Adjunct Lecturer at UNSW Art & Design Sydney and her collaborative new media research with Parragirls was supported by an Australian Research Council DECRA fellowship.

BONNEY DJURIC OAM is an artist, writer and co-founder of Parragirls and the Parragirls Memory Project, and director of the Parramatta Female Factory Precinct Association. Her contribution to the recognition of Forgotten Australians has been honoured by the New South Wales and federal parliaments. She is Adjunct Lecturer at UNSW Art & Design Sydney.

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Appendix 3
Review of *Anthems and Angels*

(Review, 'All set adrift', by Jane Goodall of *Anthems and Angels: The Compassion Plays*, *RealTime* issue #135 , Oct–Nov 2016 *http://www.realtimearts.net/article/135/12455/*)

All set adrift

Jane Goodall: Zsuzsi Soboslay, *Anthems and Angels: The Compassion Plays*

Zsuzsi Soboslay, Anthems and Angels
photo Andrew Sikorski

As twilight deepens, a figure in top hat and skeleton suit sneaks in among the small crowd in the courtyard, then shakes a tambourine to command attention. A beady eye scans the assembly, and the reckoning begins. We're kind to our animals, says Death, but what of others? 'The world pushes against our shores, like an angry tide,' and what do we do to help those who are set adrift?

The opening of Zsuzsi Soboslay's *Anthems and Angels* in the beautiful courtyard of Gorman Arts Centre in Canberra evokes the mediaeval play Everyman, in which Death is sent to fetch someone at random. Anyone will do, because Death is the great leveller. In the face of it, we are all Everyman, and whatever sense we have of ourselves and our lives melts away. There is nothing to come. We are only what we have been. 'The summoning of Everyman' in the original morality play triggers a desperate appeal for companionship on the way. After he is deserted by friends, family and all the material goods he has called his own, Everyman reaches out to Good Deeds and a succession of personified moral virtues, who declare themselves too weak for the journey. All this is compressed into a brief prelude in *Anthems and Angels*, as Death fixes upon the chosen victim and ushers him, together with the audience, into the darkened theatre.
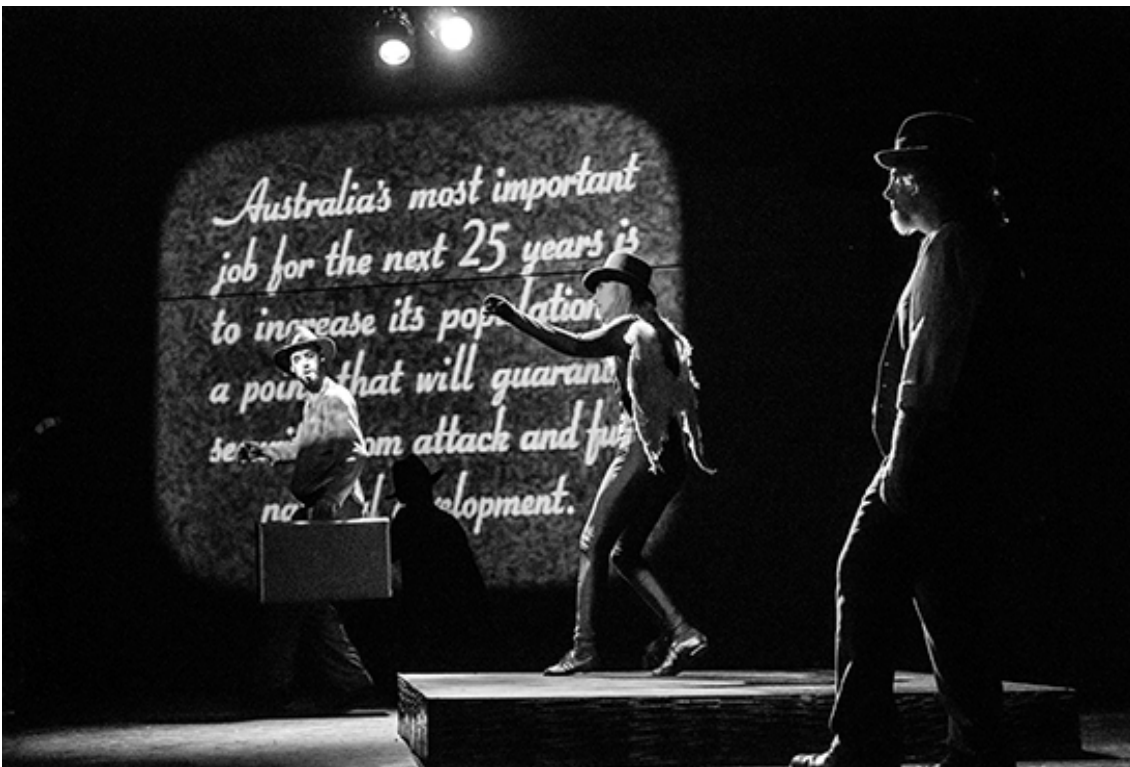
Video screens display black and white images of ruins in a war zone, and a line of refugees progressing down a narrow path on a hillside. Where is this? When? Probably somewhere in Eastern Europe during the Second World War, but in Death's endgame, time and place are sliding in all directions. As Everyman takes his place on a small vessel, steered across the high seas by a lone boatman, this is Anytime and Everywhere. The Angels of Earth, Air, Fire and Water speak over the sound of the waves.

But in a well-judged transition, Soboslay's drama then has Everyman stepping off the boat and into the life of a new immigrant in a fully realised scene from 1950s Australia. He doesn't speak the language and the figure of the boatman transforms into an established settler, who tries to teach him...but Death won't leave him—or any of us—here for long. Everyman sleeps, and we re-enter the existential register as the exquisite melody of the 16th century Coventry Carol is sung, a capella.

The tides are rising again. There will be no control over what happens next in the blizzard of the world. Paper fortune cookies are distributed through the audience, containing messages that tell of a shared future in which we are all refugees. 'I wish you a roof over your head.' 'I wish that your family stays together.' 'I wish you could come back.'

Anthems and Angels
photo Andrew Sikorski

As an audience, we belong to a culture that has lost touch with the language of metaphysics and mythology. When it comes to 'the refugee problem' our talk is politicised. It's a battle of vested interests: those of politicians, 'people smugglers,' voters, the media. Dialogue on Twitter and comment lines in the 21st century do less to create meaningful communication than a shouting match across the garden fence did way back in the 20th. Theatre offers different languages. It connects with other zones in the human psyche, the atavistic parts of the brain that do not deal in categories, and where the mystery of being alive on this planet may be experienced in larger terms.

Anthems and Angels is an experimental work, the first of three in a series titled *The Compassion Plays*. It is, perhaps predominantly, an experiment in poetics. What kinds of tones and images speak to us across the deepening rift between cultures and nations? Soboslay herself has a natural gravitas, and holds the stage with consistent strength as the figure of Death. Co-performers Robin Davidson and C S Carroll have the versatility to work through a range of subtle tone changes. Video artist Sam James provides visual poetry and there is haunting live music from Benjamin Drury, Jess Green, Richard Johnson and Michael Misa.

Anthems and Angels: The Compassion Plays, direction, script Zsuzsi Soboslay, performers Robin Davidson, C S Carroll, Zsuzsi Soboslay, video artist Sam James, musicians Benjamin Drury, Jess Green, Richard Johnson, Michael Misa; Gorman Arts Centre, Canberra 2–4 Nov

Appendix 4
Extracts from application for funding to support the ArtsXChange

(submitted 28 September 2018, funder's identifier withheld)

Project summary

Project summary

The Dinka ArtXChange will be embedded in UnitingCare Kippax (UCK) in west Canberra, home to the majority of Canberra Dinka refugees (75 families), UCK is a short walk from library, family health, community services & shopping centre, servicing a range of cultural groups. In a series of innovative, arts-led engagements, facilitator Zsuzsi Soboslay will create opportunities with local Dinka to a) participate in strengths based arts processes; b) increase opportunities for inter-cultural exchange; c) engage in skills-sharing & language up-skilling; & d) enable exhibitions & performances in public spaces in an intermeshed programme responsive & nourishing to this community. Engagements are across the age spectrum. We aim to assist Dinka to move towards creative & social self-sufficiency.

About you

About you

Zsuzsi's cohesive, arts-based, universal-access pilot program will assist us reach a wider group of people through activities that we can't currently provide. It will act as a soft entry point to our other supports & opportunities, meaning we can reach people who might not otherwise ask for help & achieve multiple outcomes through engagements that build trust & strengthen networks via arts-based activities.

About your project

About your project

The project will create an active arts hub providing opportunities for Dinka to lead &/or engage in various activities, including collage, weaving, beading, dance/movement, & creative journaling.

A pool of local artists with specialties ranging from visual arts, to dance, music, theatre, circus skills, puppetry & parkour will conduct initial workshops. Rebus Theatre—its specialisation working with 'outsiders' in the Canberra community (including people of mixed abilities; & intensive work with people suffering PTSD) will offer an applied theatre technique called 'Forum Theatre' to support problem-solving around the effects of social displacement, such as an increase in depression & incidences of domestic violence, identified as key concerns by Dinka elders.

The workshops will begin as a series of 'drop in' opportunities--for men &women, young or old--in the Kippax Uniting Community Centre, West Belconnen Child & Family Centre (WBCFC), Strathnairn Arts & Ginninderry (a new development to the west of Belconnen). Some arts activities can be offered within existing programs--such as the established Dinka playgroup @WBCFC. Some will extend into 6-week or longer series to enable deeper story-sharing, skills acquisition, & foster relationships & trust between participants & agencies involved.

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Exhibition Catalogue

Living Traces, Parragirls Female Factory Precinct Memory Project, an exhibition of limited edition prints and artisan books designed and produced by former residents of Parramatta Girls Home in collaboration with print and bookmaking artists Gwen Harrison and Sue Anderson, curated by Lily Hibberd. September 24–October 2, 2016. 1 Fleet St Parramatta North, NSW.

Conferences and Forums

Abdul Ghani, Adnan (2017). 'The art of self-organising.' Presented at Platforma refugee arts conference Newcastle-Upon Tyne, October 2017. Abdul Ghani was the initiator of the autonomous Support Group Network at Restad Gard Asylum Centre, Sweden.

Hemmings, Clare (2017). Keynote presentation, *Feminist Utopias: Past, Present, and Imagined*, Gender Institute Conference, ANU, 8 September 2017.

Millner, Jacqueline (2019). Roundtable workshop, *Care: forging an alternative ethics through art*, School of Art, ANU, 4 October 2019.

Tiller, Chrissie (2017). Introduction to the 'Power-up' model of group empowerment. Platforma refugee arts conference, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, October 2017.

Podcasts

'How artists and cultural practitioners are responding to the issue of refugees and forced migration'. Discussion facilitated by Paul Barclay, Street Theatre, Canberra, May 11 2016. http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/bigideas/artistic-reponses-to-migration-and-the-refugee- crisis/7488082. First broadcast 9 June 2016.

'New Beginnings: exploring the personal stories of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in Canberra and Australia'. *Episode 8*: employment, exploitation and discovering the art of new beginnings of Canberra's South Sudanese. Producer: Becca Posterino. Interviewees: Jenny Wells, Director of the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs, Rev Peter Kuot, spiritual leader of the north Canberra South Sudanese community, and Zsuzsi Soboslay, artist and cultural worker. Launched: Friday 12 July 2019. https://curiousheartsau.wixsite.com/newbeginnings/podcast/episode/414a78a7/episode-8-employment- exploitation-and-discovering-the-art-of-new-beginnings-for-canberras-south-sudanese/

Blogs and Websites

Entelechyarts—current projects, https://entelechyarts.org/status/current/

Matarasso, F. (2019). 'A Restless Art'. Retrieved from https://arestlessart.com/home/

Moon Stories: http://www.bodyecology.com.au/moon-stories-2019/

Soboslay, Zsuzsanna (2015). http://zsuzsacsardasinlondon.blogspot.com/2015/07/post-1-intro-ambience-jam-elders-and.html

Performance events

It's Time for Transparency. Writer/director: Jenny McNally. First performed at the launch of the *Living Traces* exhibition, 24 September 2016. Performers: Performers Zsuzsi Soboslay and Ruby Soboslay Moore. Video, 7 mins, *copyright* 2017: editor: Lily H Hibberd; videographer Lucy Parakhina. https://vimeo.com/267252400/, last accessed 11 December 2019.

Anthems and Angels, Act I, April 15, 2015. Workshop showing, Street Theatre Canberra; workshop funded by Arts ACT. Writer/Director: Zsuzsi Soboslay. Actors: Dene Kermond, Clare Moss, Musicians: Nick Tsiavos, Stephen Fitzgerald. Sound: Kimmo Vennonen. Photography: Michael K Chin. Underwater Imagery: Plankton Productions/Ocean Ark Alliance. http://bodyecology.com.au/repetoire/anthems-and-angels/?portfolioCats=4

The Compassion Plays, November 4–6, 2016. Performance season, Ralph Wilson Theatre, Gorman Arts Centre. Funding: Mr. Geoff Barrett, Monash University Faculty of Arts Postgraduate Research Fund. Writer/director: Zsuzsi Soboslay. Performers: Zsuzsi Soboslay, CS Carroll, Robin Davidson. Musicians: Ben Drury, Jess Green, Richard Johnson, Michael Misa. Sound: Kimmo Vennonen. Visual Artist: Samuel James. Design Consultant: Imogen Keen. Stage manager: Anni Doyle Warwzynzak. Photographer: Andrew Sikorski. Producers: Ainslie and Gorman Arts Centre. http://bodyecology.com.au/repetoire/anthems-and-angels/?portfolioCats=4

Moon Stories: The Day the World Changed! April 30, 2019, July 12. Namadgi Visitors' Centre, and Mt Stromlo. Funded by ACT Heritage; created in partnership with ACT Parks, Namadgi High School, Canberra Dance Theatre and University of Canberra, Faculty of Arts and Design.
Writer/director: Zsuzsi Soboslay, with students from Year 6, Namadgi High School; GOLDs performers, in association with Canberra Dance Theatre [CDT]; musicians: Nick Tsiavos, Richard Johnson. Technical (film): Tyler Cherry, Ernie Foster, Warren Derwent, Peter Bakos. Postcard design: Ernie Foster.
Performance video (15 minutes) https://youtu.be/lg-a2rJFwZo Namadgi school video: https://youtu.be/CbqQAcFPqD4

The Compassion Plays: Reviews

Jane Goodall, for *Real Time online: http://www.realtimearts.net/article/135/12455/*

John Lombard, for *Canberra City News: http://citynews.com.au/2016/review-unpacking-migrant-experience/*

Hayden Fritzlaff, for *Scissorspaperpen: https://scissorspaperpen.org/2016/11/29/review-anthems-angels-the-compassion-plays/*, accessed November 29, 2016, inactive 2020.