'AN EYE OPEN IN THE DARK'

LIFE STORY ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

JANE PALMER

2011

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

_____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FUNDING

PUBLICATIONS

Palmer, J., T. Smith, J. Willetts & C. Mitchell 2007, 'Creativity, ethics and transformation: key factors in a transdisciplinary application of systems methodology to resolving wicked problems in sustainability', *Systemic development: local solutions in a global environment: Proceedings of the Australia New Zealand Systems Conference 2007*, Auckland, NZ, ed. J. Sheffield, ISCE Publishing, 2009.

Palmer, J. 2009, 'Interviewing, memory and trauma: A case study of older people in Aceh, Indonesia', *Proceedings of the 8th National Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference: A new era for ageing research: What's in your toolkit?*, 23 October Melbourne, pp. 165-168, Monash University, 2009.

Publications in conjunction with the Centre for Military and Veterans' Health:

Palmer, J. & N. Ellis 2008, 'A layered approach to horizon scanning: Identifying future issues in military and veterans' health', *Journal of Futures Studies*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 77-92.

Palmer, J. & N. Ellis 2009, 'Methodology for a think tank: The future of military and veterans' health', *Foresight*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 14-27.

PRESENTATIONS

Palmer, J., T. Smith, J. Willetts & C. Mitchell 2007, 'Creativity, ethics and transformation: key factors in a transdisciplinary application of systems methodology to resolving wicked problems in sustainability', paper presented to the *Australia New Zealand Systems Conference on Systemic Development: Local solutions in a global environment*, Auckland, NZ, 2-5 December.

Palmer, J. 2009, Panel member and presentation to *APFRN Workshop on Asia Pacific Transculturalisms: New theoretical perspectives*, University of Wollongong, 8-9 June.

Palmer, J. 2009, 'Interviewing, memory and trauma: A case study of older people in Aceh, Indonesia', paper presented to the *8th National Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference: A new era for ageing research: What's in your toolkit?*, Melbourne, 23 October.

Palmer, J. 2010, 'The importance of the past in adaptation: Stories from old people in Aceh', paper presented to the *Indian Ocean and South Asia Research Network Conference on Advancing a Sustainable Future: Strategies for cross-disciplinary practice around the Indian Ocean*, University of Technology Sydney, 17-19 March.

Palmer, J. 2011, 'The hidden past and future trajectories of social-ecological systems: A case study from Aceh, Indonesia', paper presented to the *Conference on Re-framing Sustainability: Climate change and North-South dynamics*, Helsinki, Finland, 10-11 February.

∞

These situations are like scintillations on the historical radar. They are like phosphorescence in the wake of events. The forceful daylight of empirical reason fails to pick them up. The strength of the beam it turns on them renders them invisible. The class of 'non-event', whose existence and importance creative research is peculiarly fitted to describe, is like the sky at night, coruscated with self-illuminating dust. But to see this demands an eye open in the dark (Carter 2004: 170).

∞

FIELDWORK LOCATION

(FIGURES 1A AND 1B)

FIGURE 1A
TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF INDONESIA
SHOWING LOCATION OF ACEH PROVINCE

(©Enrique Indonesia Cartographic Publishing)

x

FIGURE 1B

TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF ACEH SHOWING FIELDWORK LOCATION

(©Enrique Indonesia Cartographic Publishing)

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

I argue in this thesis that the past which is materialized in real time at the site of 'a life' has particular significance for social-ecological systems. This past is different from that recorded in histories, socio-economic trends or the causal explanations of science. It differs particularly in revealing the accretiveness of an individual's experience as a force in the present – in system precariousness for example – and in revealing those false starts and 'futures denied' which are potentialities for renewal in the future.

The site of a life was explored through my fieldwork in Aceh, Indonesia, a place where material experience and culture are very different from those which are the subject of Western theorizing on memory, ageing, and recollection.

This doctoral project is a response to the following question:

- Can the life stories of old people be a source of understanding the past which can inform planning for sustainability in the future?

I develop a particular additive approach to transdisciplinary research in addressing this question, in which discipline-based theory from a number of fields is used to jointly illuminate a potential kinship between old people and sustainability, specifically between the remembering of the old and the remembering used in adaptive cycles of social-ecological systems.

As a result of my review of theory on memory, recollection and ageing, and my fieldwork interviews with old people in Aceh, Indonesia, I conclude that recollection in such circumstances is not the construction of identity or meaning discussed by many Western theorists of memory, but more akin to the remembering discussed by trauma theorists, where the storytelling process and the engagement of the listener are as important as the story. These life stories materialize the past as accretive at the site of the individual's life, and in their a-chronologic, non-narrative style give prominence to particular events in a very different landscape of the past from that provided by historical narratives. They also constitute an implicit critique of Western discourses about development and progress which underlie theories of adaptation and sustainability.

I conclude that beyond culture and discourse, history and scientific explanation, life story ethnography offers a unique contribution to the intelligence gathering, assessment and predictive functions of social-ecological systems. The richest source of life stories is the old; in the face of current culture and discourses of ageing, this thesis is an essay in enabling those voices to be heard.

INTRODUCTION

Moral project and research questions

The 'moral project' with which this doctoral research started was based on a concern about the devaluing of 'oldness' and increased scape-goating of the old as those who are 'responsible' for future economic unsustainability. The reasons for this and responses to it by critical gerontologists, ethicists and others are discussed in Chapter 1.

However my focus was not on rehabilitating the old by pointing out, with Seabrook, that the old 'demonstrate to us our own fate' (Seabrook: 170), or in addressing the underlying social and economic assumptions in the scape-goating of the old (see for example Clark 1999; Estes 1999). I wanted instead to focus on 'oldness' as a quality which may have value in itself, and believed that to take a step back and see this quality as 'remarkable' in some way (Inayatullah 1998: 817) would be a significant step in re-valuing 'oldness' and hence the old.

To show that this remarkableness might be something of value in thinking about the future at a time when the old are seen as a threat or a burden in prevailing global debates about sustainability, would be another significant step in re-valuing oldness. A need for new kinds of qualitative data and modelling of social-ecological systems has already been identified (see for example Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003a: 165; Adger et al. 2009). I found a potential kinship between sustainability theory and gerontology in the idea of 'remembering'; remembering has been described by sustainability theorists as part of the adaptation cycle where reorganisation of a social-ecological system takes place using the resources and memory of a system which have been conserved over time (see for example Walker et al. 2004; Folke 2006; Walker et al. 2006). This use of 'remembering' suggested that recollection of the lived past by old people may be able to make a contribution to adaptation and resilience within social-ecological systems.

However in reviewing current theory and discourse about sustainability, ageing and memory, I realized that they have emerged largely in the West. To test and possibly extend the boundaries of the world within which such theorizing takes place, I carried out fieldwork interviews with old people in the rural areas of Aceh, Indonesia. The

interviewees, who had survived decades of conflict and poverty, and recent natural disaster (the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami), revealed through their stories and their storytelling performances a different past from that of the West, and a *way of recollecting* the past which appeared to be different from that already theorised. Together with existing theories of historiography, memory, subjectivity, trauma and psychoanalysis, the fieldwork stories demonstrate a way of understanding the past which is different from history and theories of causation, and can contribute to a deeper understanding of the trajectories of social-ecological systems.

The research questions with which this research project started were as follows:

- Can the life stories of old people be a source of understanding the past which can inform planning for sustainability in the future?

- What in particular can the life stories of old people in a non-Western country add to this understanding?

Fieldwork

A doctoral research project is in most ways a linear process, where its beginning - the selection of project design, fieldwork location, theoretical frameworks, methodology, personnel, and its institutionally imposed structures and timelines - can to a large extent determine its end.

However I wished to take an approach which allowed room for something new to emerge during the course of the project: the unexpected event, or transformative change in participants, including myself, and in the wider discourses touched by the project. I found this in the life stories from Aceh, in which I found a hitherto unseen past with unexpected poetic, political and cognitive force in the present, and potentially for the future.

I also wished, on the advice of anthropologist colleagues[1], to let the sources speak, and avoid theorizing in advance of the data. The life stories of the old Acehnese are new to

---

[1] Email from Catherine Smith 21/10/2009 and email from Daniel Birchok 23/10/2009.

Western ears, poetic and politically charged. The 'newness' of the stories and the painfulness of the act of storytelling have in some ways overcome theory (see Chapters 3 and 4) and brought with them a heightened sense of responsibility for the interpretation of the data, and for ensuring its careful dissemination to a wider audience. These issues are discussed in Chapter 2, and the stories themselves are used to inform all of the subsequent Chapters. I also became increasingly aware throughout this project of the ways in which the text of the stories conveyed their message; the poetics of the stories are explored in Chapter 5.

Transdisciplinarity

It has been argued convincingly that attempts to resolve complex 'real world' problems reveal the value of transdisciplinary approaches (see for example Mitchell et al. 2009). While I have taken a transdisciplinary approach in this thesis (see Chapter 2), I approached the relationship between old people and future sustainability as an *exploratory* rather than problem-solving project: it appeared that strategic introduction of material from the field might usefully expand on any potential kinship between ageing populations and sustainability in the area of memory[2].

The two obvious disciplinary contributors to a discussion of convergence between ageing populations and social-ecological futures are gerontology and sustainability studies, themselves already practised in a transdisciplinary way by many researchers. However the fieldwork I undertook in Aceh not only contributes to theory development by connecting these areas through a study of 'remembering', but raises other issues – for example the relationships between recollection and narrative, and between trauma and telling - which directed me to other fields such as psychoanalytic theory, trauma studies, literary theory and memory studies. The introduction and application of these and other theoretical frameworks continues throughout all of the following Chapters.

An exploratory approach to the issues of ageing and sustainability has thus legitimized

[2] Mitchell and Willets expand the concept of 'problem' for transdisciplinary research to include 'a sector, a situation, a societal issue or problem' (2009: 6).

working with a wide field of disciplines and theory, unrestricted by that defining of a 'problem' which generally prescribes those disciplines deemed necessary for resolving it.

Contribution of the thesis

I believe that the outcomes of the project include the following original contributions to discourse in a number of areas:

- That life story ethnography, working with recollections of the old, can contribute to meeting a need for new models of understanding social-ecological systems already identified by adaptation and resilience theorists

- That this understanding is a product of the accretiveness of experience for the life-storyteller and an a-chronologic quality of recollection

- That this understanding is achieved through an engagement with the storyteller as well as the story

- That this understanding reveals the contingency of current trajectories of social-ecological systems and the potential for other trajectories.

Structure of the thesis

In view of the importance accorded in this doctoral project to engagement with the storyteller as well as the story itself, I have used as a way of structuring the thesis Paul Ricoeur's description of the three stages necessary for telling a story and engaging the listener-reader (explored further in Chapter 2):

1.   Prefiguration

Prefiguration is the establishment of parameters for storytelling, such as a shared understanding of the nature of a 'plot', ideas of temporality and accepted ways of interpreting stories (Ricoeur 1984: 54). In this thesis prefiguration includes a critical review of shared understandings (existing discourses) on ageing (Chapter 1), and a discussion on the nature of 'the transdisciplinary project', researcher reflexivity and the conceptual connections between fieldwork and theory (Chapter 2):

Chapter 1. Preliminary: The politics of 'old'

Chapter 2. Offcuts of infinity: theory, fieldwork and the project

2.   Configuration

Configuration is the creative process of interpretation and producing a story out of events (Ricoeur 1984: 66). In this thesis configuration includes the construction of a new idea of subjectivity based on the sedimentation of experience in both memory and body (Chapter 3), examination of theory and fieldwork data to describe a new relationship between life stories and history, and the particular contribution made by life stories to understanding the past (Chapter 4). This stage also includes a proposed hermeneutics for interpreting the poetic force of life stories (the kind of 'product' which may become part of the prefiguration stage of future projects) (Chapter 5):

- Chapter 3. Constructing the subject: accretion and temporality

- Chapter 4. Constructing the past: history and recollection

- Chapter 5. (De)constructing stories: a hermeneutics

3.   Refiguration

Refiguration is the 'application', the conveying of the story to listeners or readers whose emotional responses or learning constitute the third stage of story production (Ricoeur 1984: 70). Thus in the end, storytelling is an 'activity that in only completed in the spectator or the reader' (Ricoeur 1984: 48). However as Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) notes, this requires the writer, at the configuration stage, to *face the story outwards to the reader* so that its significance can be understood or re-interpreted (1981: 257). My final Chapter sets the earlier conclusions about the significance of life stories in a new context – that of the social-ecological system - so that the value of such stories and of the ethnographic approach to understanding the past might be 'completed' by theorists, practitioners and policy-makers in the field of adaptation and resilience:

- Chapter 6. Ethnography for the future: remembering as revolution

- Conclusion

1.   PRELIMINARY: THE POLITICS OF 'OLD'

INTRODUCTION

> Generational diversity provides the last societal divide where stereotyping, generalising and criticising is socially acceptable (Mark McCrindle quoted in McCrindle Research 2007: 314-315).

> Old people reflect the great distributive injustices of the world; only for them, these appear in a magnified and aggravated form since they have for the most part endured lives of labour, deprivation and insufficiency (Seabrook 2003: 185).

> The goal of critical research is…[to make] problematic our categories…[so] the present becomes less rigid, indeed, it becomes remarkable (Inayatullah 1998: 817).

<div align="center">∞</div>

This doctoral project identifies hitherto unnoticed, non-historical, aspects of 'the past', which are visible in life stories, particularly in life stories of the old. These particular qualities emerge through considering a particular collection of life stories in the light of theories of memory, historiography, psychoanalytic theory and trauma theory. I then argue that life stories offer a new kind of indicator of the influence of the past on current and future social-ecological conditions. This is elaborated through bringing the stories to bear on political, cultural and scientific discourses in the fields of sustainability, resilience and adaptation.

My research is intended to counteract widespread public commentary which problematizes the old as an economic burden, and is a response to other indicators that the old in many societies are devalued or ignored. The following are examples of the Western media's focus on the 'escalating demands' of the aged for health and social services at the expense of 'other' generations (emphases are mine):

> The real cost of a long life: An ageing population will be *the straw that breaks the back* of health care… (Cresswell 2010).

> How the baby boomers *took their children's future* and why they should give it back (Kaletsky 2010).

The health needs of tens of millions of aging baby boomers *threaten to overwhelm* the nation's hospitals and caregivers within a decade or two, but the *geriatric tidal wave* does not appear to have been fully recognized at the National Institutes of Health (Freudenheim 2010).

Eastern Europe faces *generation crisis* (Dempsey 2007).

Across the developed world the swelling numbers of graying baby boomers sliding into comfortable retirement over the next decade are looming as a *huge burden on the public purse and an inter-generational nightmare* (Symons 2011).

The value of ethnography is that, in line with Inayatullah's comment above, it seeks to suspend existing theoretical frameworks, and, through representing 'the insider's point of view', allow 'critical categories and meanings to *emerge* from the ethnographic encounter rather than imposing these from existing models'(Hoey 2011). My thesis situates an ethnographic study of the life stories of a particular group of old people in a cross-disciplinary theoretical framework, in order to challenge the way 'the old' have been problematized, ignored or devalued.

This Chapter begins with an exploration of how old people are often situated politically as a burden or economic non-contributors, and suggests that this problematization of 'the old' as a group is associated with 'blame' for economic pressures, and the attribution of negative qualities to group members; at their extreme, these are the hallmarks of demonization. It then reviews the response to such problematization by critical gerontologists, policy analysts and policy-makers, and others. The example of refugees seeking asylum in Australia is used to demonstrate the stages in a process of demonization; the critical response to this process argues against homogenization of asylum seekers as a group, and for the importance of individuals' stories. Such stories draw attention to relationships between refugees and those in destination countries, and the capacity of the latter to respond to those who have been demonized.

The following preliminary questions are addressed in this Chapter:

- How are the old situated politically and how does that prefigure the way old people's voices are heard in the community?

- How can this political prefiguring be disarranged to open up other potential ways for the old to be valued in social and political processes?

Paul Carter discusses the historically unremarked conversations between Aboriginal people and white colonisers in Australia's past which could have been 'an opportunity for grounding the future differently'; instead, such conversations became 'simply a gap in the record' of march of progress histories (Carter 2004: 170). In changing the way the voices of particular groups are prefigured (or overlooked) in discourse (and hence whether they listened to, and how they are interpreted or valued), opportunities for 'grounding the future differently' potentially become apparent. The 'parable' of the asylum seekers described later in this Chapter is an example both of this prefiguring, and of the potential role of individuals' stories in grounding the future differently.

PROCESSES OF PROBLEMATIZATION: GROUPING, VILIFICATION AND DEMONIZATION

Throughout the world, ageing populations have been designated an issue to be addressed by government fiscal policy and experts such as economists, sociologists, gerontologists and health planners (see for example Andrews 2001, 2002; Productivity Commission 2005; Noveria 2006; United Nations Programme on Ageing et al. 2007). This problematization of 'the old' rests on a bracketing of those over a certain age (usually 60 or 65 years) into a group, who are described as taking resources, particularly government resources, from another group, also identified solely by age and whose members are younger than 60 or 65 years. As the health expenditure on those in the 'old' group rises with the increase in size of this group, the competition between groups is cast as a deprivation of one group by the other.

The problematization and blaming of a particular group by others has occurred historically for a range of reasons, as the following examples attest.

European governments, middle classes and intellectual elites responded to economic pressures between World War I and World War II by promoting the 'Jewish Problem'. The

competition to join a new but limited middle and professional class, during difficult and turbulent economic times, turned an historical and cultural anti-Semitism into a counterreaction by non-Jewish Germans against the concurrent rise of the Jewish middle class (Hagen 1996: 379).

A combination of cultural antipathy, economic anxiety and insecurity was evident in the response of 'native' Californians to immigrants during the 1980s. This was a period of economic downturn in California resulting from the post-Cold War collapse of defence and aeronautical industries. The role of immigrants in taking Californian jobs was used by government to deflect 'any serious discussion of post-Cold War economic reconstruction for California' (Smith et al. 1995: 666) and 'provide[d] fertile ground for nativist and xenophobic policies to garner widespread popular support' (Armbruster et al. 1995: 659).

In Australia, Philip Griffiths has argued that a combination of cultural ('racialised') and economic rejection was part of the anti-Chinese response in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when workers were periodically mobilized against the Chinese for political purposes, always at times of greater unemployment and economic hardship (Griffiths 2006: 401).

Scapegoating of the aged occurred in the United States during the 'Social Security crisis' in the 1980s. Quadagno (1989) suggests the 'crisis' itself was used to direct attention away from other economic factors such as government funding decisions, taxation shortfalls, and the rise in the number of households headed by women working in low-paid jobs with a lack of government support (Quadagno 1989: 370). Instead attention was directed to the unreasonableness of social security entitlements and thence to the ageing population as the group responsible for increased poverty levels amongst children and younger adults:

> As the critique of Social Security gained credibility, the rhetoric became more heated … 'Something is wrong with a society that is willing to drain itself to foster such an unproductive section of its population, one that does not even promise (as children do) one day to be productive' (Quadagno 1989: 365).

These examples of problematization exhibit in common the identification of a group by some defining characteristic (ethnicity, culture, age), the association of this with other

perceived negative characteristics of individuals within the group (vilification), the attribution of blame to the group as a whole for a current social or economic crisis or period of stress (demonization), and finally, the development and justification of policies or attitudes intended to exclude members of the group from the community or disadvantage them economically and socially.

The eviction, killing and denial of rights which have variously characterized policy in the historical examples above would now be in breach of international law and conventions concerning human rights. Nevertheless in 2010 the former economics editor of *The Times* newspaper in Britain suggested that in order to prevent national bankruptcy and reduce pensions, 'perhaps pensioners could be deprived of the right to vote after 75 or 80' (Kaletsky 2010). British author Martin Amis also proposed in 2010 that as a solution to the 'silver tsunami' of the aged, euthanasia booths should be installed on street corners to encourage elderly people to die earlier rather than later (O'Neill 2010).

It is argued in this Chapter that the process of problematization of 'the aged' (including blame and vilification) has parallels with the problematization of asylum seekers in Australia now and in the recent past. Connections between problematization and policy lie in the use-value of generalizations and categories in obtaining ready acceptance of changes to policy. This use-value is evident in the cases of both asylum seekers and the aged.

The problematization of the aged is elaborated in the following section.

PROBLEMATIZING 'THE OLD': THE CONFLATION OF ISSUES, GROUPS, AND PEOPLE

> Treating people with respect is different from and may even clash with dealing with them cost-effectively, efficiently, even fairly in some circumstances….hard, sometimes tragic choices often need to be made…but one should avoid denying that something of value has been harmed in the process (Krygier 2002: 26)

∞

The examples of problematizing in the previous section identified groups by ethnicity, race or age. However while members of a society which problematizes groups based on race or ethnicity are aware that they will never share those particular identifying characteristics,

most members of a society will grow old: 'The old demonstrate to us our own fate' (Seabrook 2003: 170). Yet paradoxically 'the old' are identified as a separate group for the purpose of social and economic analysis, by a demographic 'cut-off' age which has varied over time, but is generally 60 or 65 years[3]. Participation in this group is inevitable and predictable for most people; the 'problem' arises when the size of older cohorts has a particular relation to the size of younger cohorts. The following analysis indicates the ways in which the issue of the 'ageing population' has resulted in demonization of 'the old' as a group, supported on occasion by the vilification of 'old people'.

The Times journalist and economist Anatole Kaletsky in June 2010 claimed that 'the great social conflict for the world in the next 20 years…will not be a struggle between nations or social classes but between generations'. Segueing from 'generations' to individuals (and conflating 'generation' with 'economic status') Kaletsky asked: 'Is it better for society to offer free bus travel to wealthy 80-year-olds rather than students or impoverished youngsters looking for their first job?' (Kaletsky 2010).

In his commentary on Martin Amis' solution to the 'silver tsunami' referred to above, journalist Brendan O'Neill noted that:

> Western society finds it increasingly difficult to value *older generations*,
> instead viewing them as a burden on social services and the environment…The
> *ageing population* is most frequently referred to as a problem or ticking time
> bomb rather than seen as a testament to human ingenuity and leaps forward in
> medicine and living standards. *Older people* are now seen, not as sources of
> wisdom, but as suckers-up of resources that might better allocated to younger,
> healthier people (O'Neill 2010, my emphases).

This commentary includes reference to 'older generations' (a demographic group), 'older

---

[3] In industrialized countries, the age of 65 has changed over time from 'the average life expectancy' in the 1940s (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare), to 'older' (Andrews 2001, 2002), to 'late middle-age' (see for example Janssen et al. 2005).

people' (individuals) and 'the ageing population' (a demographic trend generally described by demographers in terms of a rise in median age[4]). Amis' comments in interview combine a demographic trend and an (older) group into a 'silver tsunami' which he describes as socially destabilizing, and proceeds to a description of old people themselves as aesthetically displeasing ('demented old people…stinking out the restaurants and cafes and shops' (O'Neill 2010, quoting Amis)).

In another (and possibly not wholly serious) example of conflating population trends, demographic categories, and people, the author of *Please just f* off…it's our turn now: holding baby boomers to account*, segues in his introduction from predictions concerning the impact of an ageing population on economic growth, to describing baby boomers as 'cantankerous', 'dull', 'whining' and 'lazy'; he then calls for them to remove themselves from the employment sector (Heath 2006). The potentially negative social and economic impacts of a demographic trend are attributed, not to the 'ageing population' but to a particular demographic group (those born between 1945 and 1965), and then to the alleged personal qualities of the people who make up this group. Other factors in emerging social and economic conditions are not discussed.

The above are all examples of policies and potentially influential attitudes which rely on a conflation of old *people*, a demographic *trend* (a result of increasing longevity and historical birth-rates) and 'the aged' as a demographic *group*. In the above examples from Heath and Amis, and the 1980s example from Quadagno, this conflation produces 'blame' for a defined social or economic problem and assigns it to a defined group, which is reinforced by vilification of those individuals as possessing particular unattractive qualities (for example 'greed' or 'laziness'), or by declaring that they have fewer needs than those in other demographic groups.

A careful use of language is needed to clarify distinctions between individuals, groups and

---

[4] In Australia for example, median age rose by 12 years during the 20th century, from 22.6 to 35.2 years and is projected to increase by 8 to 11 years by the year 2051, resulting in a median age of 43 to 46 years (Weston et al. 2001: 2).

population trends. The consequences of policy based on defining groups by a single criterion such as age were evident in the 1980s in the US: in 1987, the Villers Foundation, a health care advocacy organisation (now Families USA) noted that the American Census Bureau applied a different poverty standard to the elderly and assumed that an adult 65 years of age of older could avoid poverty on less income than an adult 64 or younger. The Foundation noted that if a consistent poverty standard were applied to all age groups, the poverty rate for the elderly would be higher than the poverty rate for the overall population (The Villers Foundation 1987: 12-13). In this case, defining economic needs of individuals by defining them into a demographic group was used to reduce official overall poverty levels and reduce public expenditure on the identified group. Such categories simplify policy development but produce anomalies and injustices for the individuals who are categorized.

Just as advocates for 'the disabled' have preferred to use the term 'people living with a disability' so that the emphasis is on the fact that they are *people* first (see for example NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care; University of Technology Sydney 2010), so too I will in this thesis use the term 'old *people*' or '*people* who are old', to distinguish people from the demographic group 'the old' (or 'the aged' and 'the elderly' which are more commonly used in social and economic policy).

The *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia 2001* which included a discussion of potential service needs arising from the ageing population noted that "[t]he use of age rather than physiological condition as a primary determinant of the type and level of care to be provided…needs to be challenged" (Andrews 2001, 2002: 52). Applying this challenge more broadly, it is possible that the parameters used by the American Census in 1987, and by Amis in 2010, like any other form of categorization based on a single characteristic of individuals such as age, race or gender, might be of limited value in discussions about 'how can we live together?' (Latour 2004: 108).

Moreover, the naming of 'the ageing population' as a social or economic problem or issue also carries with it a number of assumptions about the *affordability* of a particular group, allocation of resources as a *competition* between age groups, and disparities in the *contributions* which each group makes to the other. These assumptions, and the discourses

14

which produce them, are discussed further in the following sections.

Assumptions about 'the old'

Theorists of 'life course stages' have critiqued the use of chronological age to identify needs and potential social or economic roles of older people: 'Using age 65 as a legal determinant of old age is no longer an acceptable convenience' (Cain 2003: 321). Cain and others have suggested that needs assessments focus on 'predicted time-remaining-to-live, rather than time-already-lived' (2003: 313).

Hence it has been argued that the actual costs of health services for older individuals will, in the future and despite increased longevity, continue to peak only in the final two years of life:

> It is the distance from death not birth that is the key factor in predicting health
> resource use. Of all health expenditure on those aged 75 and over, almost half
> is spent on those within two years of death – and that constitutes only 13
> percent of that age group. Increasing life expectancy does not increase the
> proportion of people within two years of death; everyone dies just the once
> (Gibson et al. 2002: 2)

Moreover Sanderson et al argue that if age is defined in terms of 'years yet to live', then an increase in median age (and thus an 'ageing population') could be accompanied by an increase in population 'youthfulness'. For example in terms of years-yet-to-live, the age of 40 (in the year 2050), might be the new 30 (measured in years-yet-to-live in the year 2000) (Sanderson et al. 2005: 811-812). Likewise, they suggest that old-age dependency ratios (number of post-retirement people to number of working people) can be shown to decline in the future when longer working lives (and, it could be added, greater workforce participation (Drummond et al. 2010)) are factored in as the population ages and life expectancies increase (812-813). The authors suggest that this warrants caution is making predictions about the (un)sustainability of pension systems.

While the 'baby boomer' phenomenon in Australia and elsewhere will indeed increase at some stage the number of people within two years of death, the analyses above point to the weakness of media headlines about 'the real cost of a long life' which form a part of

discussions about 'the aged' as a problem. They show the importance of focusing on the real world particulars (the health and 'years yet to live' of individuals) rather than numbers such as age, and 'the aged population'.

These challenges to assumptions about the *unaffordability* of the old are supported by several studies which indicate that correlations between health expenditure on the old in OECD countries and the size of 'the old' as a proportion of the population are likely to be statistically insignificant (Anderson et al. 1999: 20; Sheehan 2002; Reinhardt 2003; Strunk et al. 2006). Olivia Ekert-Jaffé's 1989 analysis of older people's consumption patterns in France argued that reduced fertility rates effectively increase the per capita consumption and cost of each child in a household (Ekert-Jaffé 1989: 575); hence per capita expenditure in an ageing population increases in the young demographic as well as the old.

This section has challenged some of the assumptions underlying problematization of the old, particularly concerning resource consumption and affordability. The following sections explore more radical ways of reframing ageing and 'old', including reframing the relationship between 'generations', and the negative associations of ageing.

'The old' versus other generations

> The United States has spawned the generational equity debate precisely because it does not have adequate social programs to meet the needs of families over the entire life course (Clark 1999: 161).

∞

Gerontologists have been critical of 'apocalyptic demography' (Clark 1999: 154) both because of the implications for the wellbeing of those individuals who fall into the 'problem' demographic, and on the grounds that it represents a naïve and divisive approach to social and economic issues. Rather than viewing a society as a whole, and the needs of all its members across their life course, the proponents of 'intergenerational equity' produce competition between generations as the explanatory 'engine' of emerging crises, rather than critically reviewing 'the underlying social and economic relationships that characterize a society' (Clark 1999: 148). Estes argues even more strongly that the putative 'illness burden' which the impending elderly will inflict on the economy, and hence the unaffordability of a whole generation, has been used in the US as a tool in an ideological

war on the idea of health care as a right (Estes 1999: 29).

Generalizations about the aged as a greedy and powerful generation make homogenous a diverse group of people with diverse needs (Minkler 1992: 65-66) and diverse attitudes. Street and Cossman overturn a common generalization that American elderly voters with political clout will always support programs which benefit themselves at the expense of younger generations and that 'they are both willing and able to disadvantage other generations' (Street et al. 2006: 77). Their analysis of data from the US General Social Survey (GSS), for the years 1988, 1994 and 2000 indicated that support for increased spending on social security and health was lowest among the elderly, who gave the highest support for increased educational spending (Street et al. 2006: 82).

More recently, the Institute for Economic Affairs in the United Kingdom has produced a paper titled 'Sharing the burden - How the older generation should suffer its share of the cuts' which relies heavily on ideas of competition between generations to argue for reductions in government expenditure on pensioners:

> For perhaps the first time in economic history, developed countries use the
> taxes of the working generation to provide income and healthcare to the retired
> for a long proportion of their total lifespan.
> …
> Where pensions are provided by the state, this leads to an implicit debt: that is it
> leads to an unfunded obligation on the younger generation to provide income
> and healthcare to the older generation.
> …
> There are very good reasons to make a clean break from the post-war pension
> settlement. The most important is the burdens that pay-as-you-go pension
> systems place on future generations when the population is declining (Booth et
> al. 2011: 14).

As the above quotes indicate, the burden is not only the budget cutbacks in the recent government expenditure review, but the pensions of old people. The resulting media coverage of this discussion paper includes, from *The Independent*, 'The charmed lives of Britain's pensioners in an age of austerity' (Prosser 2011), and from *The Telegraph:*

'Pensioners should share pain of spending cuts, says Institute of Economic Affairs' (2011).

The concern with the old as *unproductive* and hence a burden on those who are productive has been met with the kinds of responses which look critically at the rise of volunteerism; the promotion of 'civic engagement' amongst the old appears aimed at re-framing them as a productive 'social resource':

> We…ponder whether the status of contemporary later life as a unique time in human history necessitates the carving out of a new set of "productive" roles in order for its occupants … to be valued. If the choice is between being "burdens" and "contributors," the message is clear (Minkler et al. 2008: 197).

This form of 'assimilation' with younger generations both 'forget[s] the years of social and political struggle that took place to remove the tyranny of work into deep old age…[and] eclipse[s] the question of what is special about later life and how it informs the social life course and wider human condition' (Biggs 2008: 119).

Moreover, it suggests the necessity for the old to continue to participate in processes of political struggle for rights where '[t]he most frail, the most ill, and the most demented are also the most likely to lose' (Thomas 2004: 257).

Minkler and Holstein's concern is not only with the implicit judgement of the old in the civic engagement movement, but also that it is motivated by an increased erosion of state welfare services, in the US and elsewhere, which 'places in private hands what once was a public commitment to meet basic human needs' (Minkler et al. 2008: 197). (See also Estes 2008).

As John Vincent has noted:

> …despite the way it is frequently presented, this problem [of resources for an ageing population] is not merely, or at all, a demographic issue. The issue is in essence one of redistribution and the role of the state in evening out unacceptable inequalities of wealth (1999: 120).

Moreover at a time of global economic structures and finance, 'the same relationships between demographic change, social solidarity, redistribution and a secure old age apply on

a global as well as a national scale' (Vincent 1999: 122). For the old in poorer countries, the move of younger people from rural to urban areas in order to find work has meant that "[a]ll over the world, people are learning that whether or not they take care of their elderly is less a question of family commitment than a question of economics" (Seabrook 2003: 147). Leonard Cain, noting the globalization of trade, markets, workers and consumers, calls for a global approach to scholarship and policy related to age to prevent further victimization of both the old and the young in poorer countries (Cain 2003: 323).

Other arguments for economic justice for 'the old' have pointed to the role many old people play in the informal economy through financial and labour contributions, for example in raising grandchildren or caring for people with disabilities (Williamson et al. 2003: 4), and to the commodification of old people's needs, particularly in consumption of health services and technology, as a contribution to the capitalist economy (Estes 1999: 26). More obliquely, Williamson et al suggest that not only is economically valuable support provided by the elderly to families where, for example, both parents are working, but 'reducing Social Security and Medicare benefits…would put millions of families under pressure to provide economic support for their aging parents' (Williamson et al. 2003: 3). Thus the payment of benefits by the state to the old has advantages also for younger generations, and is an example of the ways in which distributive fairness is not always a matter of how much monetary support is provided directly to members of each generation.

In addressing the political, social and economic construction of 'the elderly' as a burden, critical gerontologists have suggested that the term 'intergenerational equity' should be replaced with 'generational interdependence' which looks at the whole life course of individuals, rather than at competition between groups defined by life stages (Minkler 1992: 68-69). The generational interdependence framework 'emphasizes the common interests of generations rather than potential generational conflict' (Williamson et al. 2003: 5). Reframing the debate in this way diminishes the possibility of setting up the aged as a separate 'other' for whom different, and less beneficent, policies may be appropriate.

Moreover reframing population ageing from a intergenerational fight for resources to intergenerational solidarity is, suggests Biggs, an 'intergenerational enterprise' which must be negotiated between all generations (Biggs 2008: 119):

> While hearing the often unheard voice of older adults in this context is a
> necessary starting point for intergenerational solidarity, giving primacy to the
> voice of an undifferentiated grouping called "older people" as those principally
> able to dictate the meaning of old age is insufficient…Indeed, expecting older
> adults to be the sole voice and arbiter of old age can be seen as an abdication of
> responsibility by other ages. It assumes a privileged ability among older adults
> to de-mystify age stereotyping, as well as a capacity to recognize and put aside
> self interest. This is a far more exacting standard of behavior understanding
> than is expected of other age groups (Biggs 2008: 119).

Such negotiations would have implications not only for the distribution of resources, but for personal and social relations between generations. The reframing of these relations is the subject of the next section.

Reframing 'old'

Gerontologist Michel Philibert describes two different approaches to gerontology. One seeks to describe and predict the universal 'nature' of an old person; the other approach regards the process of aging as individual (Philibert 1974: 47). A focus on continuity of the individual, rather than 'balkanization' of the individual into several subjects – one 'young', one 'middle-aged', and finally 'old' supports the 'whole of life' approach to distribution of social resources proposed by Clark (1999) and Minkler (1992).

Estes notes that an individual's experience of being 'old' is contingent upon both a society's expectations of an old person and of social structures and the way resources are distributed which advantage or disadvantage the old (Estes 1999: 26-27). Postmodern theory, rather than focusing on the experience of the individual or on an essentialized and universal old 'nature', has suggested that the individual's experience is constructed as a series of positions which they occupy at various times within discourses of ageing, gender or ethnicity. This idea of subjectivity in the process of ageing is explored in Chapter 3.

Various studies of ageing have produced new frameworks for viewing the changes which occur in individuals as they age. Many of these are a response to restrictions on the old produced by ageism and the 'cultural devaluing of old age' (Vincent 1999). John Vincent

notes:

> At the core of critical gerontology literature lies a humanistic perspective and an overt espousal of liberal values. It values emancipation from the traditional constraints of ageing, and sees the function of social science as about the liberation of individuals (Vincent 1999: 5).

Lifespan developmental psychology assumes a continuity and evolution of the subject, who in old age is at least in part a product of earlier experience and not constructed solely by prevailing discourses (for example concerning age, ethnicity or gender). Philosopher Harry Moody proposes the field of lifespan developmental psychology as the new 'myth of our time', one which allows us to see that 'there may well be gifts of understanding that are, in an existential sense, reserved for the last stage of life' (Moody 1991, 1992: 83, 85). Instead of focusing on physical and mental debility, old age might be regarded as a continuation of a life-long learning process and the continued pursuit of happiness (Thomas 2004: 280).

Within a framework of life course stages, old age has been seen as a process of continuous transformative learning, and a spiritual path in which earlier conflicts can be resolved through 'a renewed and old-age-specific willingness to remember and review earlier experiences' (Erikson 1986: 40). Other theorists see life as culminating in 'gerotranscendence': 'a shift in meta-perspective, from a materialistic and pragmatic view of the world to a more cosmic and transcendent one' (Tornstam 2003: 3), or in 'generativity', leaving a 'positive legacy for future generations' through adopting, for example, a role of environmental stewardship and undertaking volunteer work in the environment (Warburton et al. 2007: 44, 50-52). The idea of generativity, based on the development of an 'ecological identity' (Thomashow 1996), carries the implication that an old person is still capable of focusing on the future.

Such viewpoints suggest the contingency of, and alternatives to, the ways in which old people are constructed as a homogeneous group, and hence as a problem, by 'experts, policymakers and the media' (Estes 1999: 27). Cain notes that even the construction of *generations* or *cohorts* rather than age groups relies on surveys and demography which fail to capture 'the differences in experiences and opportunities and perspectives of rich and poor, majority and minority ethnic groups, rural and urban…' (Cain 2003: 309-310). He

suggests that a combination of methodologies are required to address these differences:

> …many gerontologists appear to be so preoccupied with these complex
> methodologies [generational analysis and cohort analysis] that the moods and
> the colorations emanating from the twists and turns of history are overlooked
> ... Unless those who identify as gerontologists turn to cohort analysis and
> historical enrichment, turn to the reconstruction of the life courses of ordinary
> citizens, (including minority representatives) through oral histories and similar
> innovative research methods, and break away from excessive dependence upon
> survey research and the like, gerontology will continue to suffer from data
> malnutrition as well as lack of heart (Cain 2003: 320-321).

Reframing ageing as an evolving and varying relationship between a person and others has implications for all generations, not only in the negotiation of such relationships at a conceptual level, but in day to day interactions. In particular, Dale Dannefer and his colleagues suggest that the nature of 'care' for the aged might be reframed so that, rather than being a problem, and something given to an old person as a passive recipient, it is acknowledged as 'a mutually generative, interactive and hence truly dialectical process' (Dannefer et al. 2008: 106):

> …care cannot be understood without recognizing that it is generically a
> relationship with some degree of bi-directionality and mutuality. The care
> relationship, in our view, is part of a commonness of civic and personal
> development, the mobius strip of necessity and meaning (Dannefer et al. 2008:
> 105).

The action research project undertaken by Dannefer and his colleagues in accordance with this principle involves residents, staff and families in long-term care facilities jointly considering ways in which the most important issues of nursing home life, 'boredom, helplessness and loneliness' are addressed at the same time as improving conditions and acknowledgement of 'undervalued and undercompensated' caregivers (Dannefer et al. 2008: 104). Such projects reflect William Thomas's description of elders as 'those whose circumstances require close cooperation with others' (Thomas 2004: 206) and his proposal to replace long-term care facilities with 'intentional communities' in which the old 'offer us

an opportunity to care for them' (272).

The potential value of the kinds of reframing described above, from ageing as a problem to an essential part of a negotiated social solidarity, can be seen when attention is turned away from the ageing populations of Western nations to the issues faced elsewhere. While demonization of 'the aged' has occurred in Western countries partly because of perceived economic threats to lifestyle, in other contexts old people are also excluded from economic participation and support services, particularly in development projects and in disaster relief.

The non-Western 'old'

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has noted that in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in Banda Aceh, 'older survivors' needs were largely overlooked' (WHO 2008: 14). Training programmes, income-generation schemes, and micro-loan projects for refugees were rarely designed to include older people (WHO 2008: 24). However

> …older people contribute to their communities their decades of accumulated experience, knowledge and understanding. This insight makes them an essential resource and potential partner in developing emergency preparedness and response programmes (WHO 2008: 3).

It is not only in situations of disaster response or political crisis that older people are disadvantaged. Increasing urbanization and economic changes are also changing the traditional roles and support systems of older people. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing 2002 noted that as younger people migrate to the cities for jobs, '[o]lder persons may be left behind without traditional family support and even without adequate financial resources' (Global Action on Aging 2002 (1991), para.32). On the other hand a study of older people in Vietnam noted: 'Older people said that their children did look after them, but do not know, and never ask, what they are thinking' (Seabrook 2003: 157, citing HelpAge International).

The problem paradigm applies worldwide, as the proportion of the population classified as 'aged' increases (see for example Noveria 2006 for a discussion of the ageing population in Indonesia). HelpAge International, an advocacy and research organisation, reports from its

surveys of government organisations that ageing issues have a low priority and are seen primarily as welfare issues, 'in which older people are regarded as a burden on society and passive recipients of care' (HelpAge International 2005: 1). Few non-governmental organisations (NGOs) include older people among their target group, because of the common misconception that older people are 'difficult to train, resist new ideas, and cannot participate effectively in community and economic activities' (HelpAge International 2005: 15).

In Aceh, Indonesia, HelpAge International found that

> Contrary to what most people think, a very high proportion of older people in Aceh [are] still engaged in income generating activities. Unfortunately, many NGOs are not familiar with the fact that the majority of older people in Aceh are productive members of their communities. As a result, many…NGOs are not targeting older people in their livelihood programmes. This had led to frustration amongst older people. Especially when older people are left as primary carers for children, they need to be included in appropriate livelihood recovery activities (Forum Lanjut Usia Kesuma Bangsa (Forum Lansia) 2008).

International organizations and national governments have responded to the problematization of the old by calling for a greater acknowledgement of the contributions made by older people and for empowerment of older individuals. The following section sets out some of these principles, which remain in marked contrast to the continuing public debate about the 'economic burden' of the old on other generations.

Policy response to ageing populations

The *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia* includes as its first goal, that '[s]ociety has a positive image of older Australians, appreciates their diversity, and recognises the many roles and contributions they continue to make to the economy and the community' (Andrews 2001, 2002: 34). The United Nations Program on Ageing states that '[m]ore research is needed to identify the contributions made by older persons to the social, cultural, spiritual and economic "capital" of all nations' (United Nations Programme on Ageing et al. 2007: 3).

Other studies have pointed to the 'silver lining' of the ageing population issue. The Australian Productivity Commission's 2005 report *Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia* noted that while 'the effect of population ageing on labour supply is to slow Australia's economic growth over the coming decades', nevertheless:

> An ageing population is predominantly a reflection of beneficial trends…Had more children been born in Australia in the 1970s and 1980s, our current and impending population structure would have been younger, but our workforce would have included far fewer, and less highly educated, women. Given that education also promotes productivity, two of the 'Ps' bearing on economic growth – participation and productivity – would have been significantly lower (Productivity Commission 2005: xxxvii, xxxviii).

A recent report from Canada likewise suggests that the baby boomers' choosing to move out of the workforce could create opportunities to 'better utilize underrepresented pools of labour such as immigrants and aboriginals, retain more of our older workers, increase immigration levels, or utilize offshore labour from countries with a more bountiful labour supply' (Drummond et al. 2010: 4).

In Australia it has been noted that:

> If … the youth population is relatively static over [these next decades], the easing of upwards growth pressure on schools and tertiary training institutions may create opportunities to free some resources towards adult learning without an overall increase in resources for education purposes (Andrews 2001, 2002: 31).

The 'Proclamation on Ageing' by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992 called for nations to act so that, inter alia:

> Older persons are viewed as contributors to their societies and not as a burden;
>
> The entire population is engaged in preparing for the later stages of life;
>
> Old and young generations cooperate in creating a balance between tradition and innovation in economic, social and cultural development (United Nations

General Assembly 1992).

The UN General Assembly's 'Principles for Older Persons' adopted in 1991 included, inter alia, the following principles:

> Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations;

> Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential;

> Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution (United Nations General Assembly 1991).

The 'Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing' 2002 supported the 'Principles for Older Persons' with the following goals (inter alia):

> Empowerment of older persons to fully and effectively participate in the economic, political and social lives of their societies, including through income-generating and voluntary work;

> Ensuring the full enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, and civil and political rights of persons and the elimination of all forms of violence and discrimination against older persons;

> Recognition of the crucial importance of families, intergenerational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity for social development.

However despite these internationally agreed principles, the public debate and commentary from health planners and economists and the treatment of the old in many countries suggest that the aged continue to be regarded as a burden, and a group whose well-being can either be ignored (in economic restructuring and urbanization, in disaster relief and in development programs) or will come at the cost of the well-being of younger generations. In the following section, I discuss community and government responses to another group

which has been problematized: asylum seekers arriving in Australia. Critiques of this problematization have much in common with the kind of analysis from critical gerontologists presented in the previous section. These critical responses to the issue of asylum seekers also point to potential ways of reframing the issue of the ageing population, in particular through ethnography which as a process engages with the members of a group rather than developing universalizing descriptions of the group as a whole.

THE PARABLE OF ASYLUM SEEKERS: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

> The process of demonization works through disidentification – the other, who in our initial ignorance, seemed similar to us, is gradually seen as basically different…
>
> …The inner logic of demonization leads to a growing readiness to inflict damage and to suffer it as the necessary price to be paid for defeating the enemy…(Alon et al. 2006: 32, 83).

<div align="center">∞</div>

Problematization of asylum seekers

The following summary of Australia's response to asylum seekers is an example of how contentious policies are justified through the construction of a group as a threat to social wellbeing, and the associated vilification and demonization of members of the group so that society is able to 'disidentify' with them and thus act to 'defeat' the threat.

Australian Government policies since 1992 for asylum seekers arriving by boat have included interception, mandatory detention with prolonged periods of incarceration (Phillips et al. 2010: 4), off-shore detention in order to process claims under the UN Convention on Refugees rather than Australian law, and temporary protection visas which limited access to government services and required a new application for refugee status every three years (White et al. 2009: 342). Such policies have depended on portrayal of asylum seekers as a threat to national sovereignty ('we will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come' (Wesley 2002: 57, quoting then Prime Minister John Howard), (Devetak 2004: 107)), threats to Australia's cultural identity, to its economy, or to its national security. These threats, which continue to be a factor in most discussions on asylum seekers today, build upon a form of nationalism promulgated by the One Nation political party which attained a peak of popularity in 1998 (see for example

Goot et al. 2001; Mughan et al. 2003; Goot 2005).

During the period since 1992, asylum seekers approaching Australia by boat have been described by politicians and media commentators as 'illegals', 'queue-jumpers' and, after the September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the bombings in Bali which were linked to Islamic fundamentalist groups, as potential terrorists (see for example Mathew 2002; Wesley 2002; Devetak 2004; McDonald 2005).

The Australian government elected in 2007 continued to frame its policies on asylum seekers in terms of 'managing risk' and 'border control' (Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship 2008) but based on an explicit set of 'values' which included: mandatory detention only during assessment of claims for refugee status, or for those who may pose a risk to the community; no detention for children; regular reviews of those in detention; those in detention to be treated fairly and reasonably and detention conditions to ensure 'the inherent dignity of the human person'.

By early 2011, the Australian government had abolished Temporary Protection Visas (Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2008) but had not yet obtained agreement in the Senate for its proposed changes to mandatory detention provisions which were based, at least partially (Karlsen 2009), on the values described above. Asylum seekers arriving by boat under current Labor Government policies however are detained on Christmas Island with limited access to legal or administrative advice upon arrival (Australian Human Rights Commission 2009: 38), although a decision of the High Court in November 2010 has expanded opportunities for asylum seekers to seek legal redress[5].

The Federal Parliamentary Opposition's 'border security' policy includes a 'tougher' class of temporary protection visa which may limit stays in Australia to as little as six months depending on assessments of risk in country of origin, requirements that refugees work for welfare benefits, no family reunion rights for refugees and no right of return if they travel overseas (Maley 2010).

─────────────────────

[5] The issue of asylum seekers in Australia is a rapidly evolving one. The comments in this thesis were updated in April 2011.

A paper presented in 2010 by the Leader of the Opposition described asylum seekers as illegal, 'queue-jumping' and 'self-selected migrants' who are preventing legitimate refugees from migrating to Australia (Abbott 2010), and connected the issue of asylum seekers with issues of international crime and terrorism. The paper suggested that 'some recent immigrants seem resistant to Australian notions of equality and an open democratic society' and that there is 'an anxiety that the great prize of Australian citizenship is insufficiently appreciated and given away too lightly'. It suggested that the Federal Government's changes to policies on asylum seeker presented the danger that 'millions of Australians will feel less secure in their own country' (Abbott 2010).

Critiques of policy on asylum seekers

With the stricter policies introduced in 2001, asylum seekers stopped being a primarily humanitarian issue for the government as they had been, for example, during the 1970s influx of Indochinese refugees from the Vietnam War, and became an external threat to Australia's 'territorial integrity' (McDonald 2005: 299, 314-295). In contrast to earlier policies of 'good international citizenship', the Prime Minister at the time claimed:

> …It is in the national interest that we have the power…to prevent, beyond any argument, people infringing the sovereignty of this country (McDonald 2005: 305, citing then Prime Minister John Howard).

In 2001 the then Government responded to the rescue by the Norwegian vessel *Tampa* of 430 refugees from a sinking boat, by using the Australian military to prevent the rescue ship from landing on Australian territory: 'People claiming to be fleeing persecution were overpowered by a determined military response', after which the government claimed 'it had restored Australia's security' (Devetak 2004: 101).

The role of political party electoral ambitions in constructing these events is not explored here (see for example Ward 2002; McAllister 2003; Devetak 2004; McDonald 2005). At a broad policy level however, Devetak suggests that the collapse of the Cold War, and the rise of less identifiable non-state actors who move across borders has resulted in asylum seekers replacing communists as 'the enemy' of the state (Devetak 2004: 102). Demonizing asylum seekers through connecting them via people smugglers to organized

crime has 'continued the venerable Australian tradition of exploiting the politics of fear' (Devetak 2004: 106).

The potential role of racism or xenophobia in this construction of 'the enemy' is not often discussed (for differing views see Peyser 2002; McAllister 2003; Devetak 2004; Berns 2009), although opinion polls have demonstrated that much antipathy in Australia and elsewhere to immigrants has an ethnic basis and is directed specifically at those from the Middle East (McAllister 2003: 458-459).

Formal criticism of Australia's policies has been made within a human rights framework and refers for example to Australia's obligations under the UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees 1951, the Convention on the Rights of a Child 1989, and damage to its standing as an 'international citizen' (for example Mathew 2002; Wesley 2002; Edwards 2003; Willheim 2003; Devetak 2004: 107; Australian Human Rights Commission 2009; Castan Centre for Human Rights Law (Monash University) 2009).

The over-arching world view within which law and policies on border control and deterrence are framed is that which constructs defensive security as an inevitable and common sense necessity. Sandra Berns points to this kind of response as part of a general policy trend which has re-framed the world in terms of 'risk', and quotes sociologist Ulrich Beck: 'the central issue in world risk society is how to *feign* control over the uncontrollable' (Berns 2009: 54). Within this risk-governed world, the Australian government's response to asylum seekers represents a broader change from 'engagement and openness to watchfulness and security' (Wesley 2002: 62).

Assumptions about asylum seekers

Statistics have been used frequently to indicate an unstoppable 'flood' of asylum seekers to Australia. Australian newspapers have cited a recent UNHCR report which showed that over 2009, asylum claims to Australia and New Zealand increased by 30%, comparing 'unfavourably' with countries like Canada (-10%), France (+19%), Italy (-42%), Germany (+25%) (see for example Maley et al. 2010).

However the same UNHCR report also compared Australia's increase of 29 per cent with Hungary (+50 per cent), Finland (+47 per cent), Poland (+47 per cent), Belgium (+40 per

cent) and New Zealand (+36 per cent)" (Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship 2010), figures which were not quoted in newspaper reports.

In terms of total numbers of refugees hosted, the UNHCR's *2008 Global Trends* report notes that four-fifths of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries. The largest numbers of refugees in 2008 were hosted by Pakistan (1. 8 million), followed by Syria (1.1 million), Iran (980,000), Germany (583,000) (the only industrialized country in this bracket), Jordan (500,000), Chad (330,000) and Tanzania (322,000) (UNHCR 2009: 2, 8-9). These figures suggest that any threat to Australia from an uncontrollable influx of refugees is very small when compared with the numbers hosted by other countries.

The term 'queue-jumper' when applied to asylum seekers arriving by boat suggests that 'boatpeople' have obtained an unfair advantage by pushing more legitimate claimants out of the way. Gelber has argued that the term 'queue-jumping' ignores several issues: the conditions of extreme hardship from which refugees are fleeing; the principle observed in the medical field of attending to those in urgent need first rather than those which have waited longest in the queue; and the non-existence, or impossibility of joining, a queue in many refugee situations. In conditions of extreme hardship, [those] who turn to people smugglers are conveyed to Australia in a matter of a few days, while the wait in line for an Offshore resettlement grant in Australia is over one year long' (Peyser 2002: 454). The urgency of escape from potentially life-threatening situations make one-year waiting periods impracticable (for those in life-threatening situations); thus describing asylum seekers as 'queue-jumpers', Edwards suggests, is 'to distort the realities on the ground' (2003: 202). Gelber concludes that:

> This means that not only is there no queue for refugees to join, but even if there were I would argue that it would be inappropriate to ask them to join one (Gelber 2003: 30). (See also Wesley 2002: 57).

Further, it has been pointed out that for those in greatest need of urgent asylum, the formal UNHCR procedures of the off-shore resettlement program are inadequate. For similar reasons, it is claimed that the term 'illegals' is inappropriate, and, for those fleeing from a territory where their life or freedom is threatened, incorrect under the 1951 Convention for Refugees (Phillips 2010: 3), (Devetak 2004: 106), (Edwards 2003: 200).

The problematizing of asylum seekers raises again the distinctions between 'issue', group and people. McDonald suggests that the debate has focused on 'protecting Australia from asylum seekers as a group rather than addressing the *problem* of asylum seekers', which would be a much more globally-oriented approach (McDonald 2005: 306). A UNHCR representative has recently suggested that the debate move even further beyond 'the refugee problem' as an issue to 'the problems faced by refugees' (Refugee Council of Australia 2010a); thus focusing on the people rather than a group or an issue.

In an attempt to 'humanize' refugees rather than perceive them as an employment problem, an adviser to the Australian Minister for Immigration noted that 'refugees are some of the most vulnerable people in the world…because of where they have come from, the horrors they may have experienced' and hence cannot be expected to arrive 'job ready' (Media Adviser to Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship 2009). Nevertheless, the recent report on 'Economic, Civic and Social Contributions of Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants' by the Refugee Council of Australia noted:

> Research conducted overseas confirms that, after overcoming initial barriers, refugees subsequently achieve a rapid convergence in earnings with other migrants and the native population, and thus a longer-term perspective is required. International studies also conclude that because refugees lack the option to return to their homelands, they are more likely than other migrants to invest in country-specific human capital (e.g. education, training and citizenship) (Refugee Council of Australia 2010b: 4).

On the other hand, a report by the Edmund Rice Centre also seeks to correct the perceived threat that refugees will take jobs from 'Australians':

> The reality is that refugees, like migrants, create demand for goods and services, thus stimulating the economy and generating growth and employment. A recent UCLA study has shown that unauthorised immigration boosts the US economy by $800 billion per year (Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education 2001).

The Australian policy response a decade ago based on demonization of asylum seekers as

queue-jumpers, illegals and a security threat was, in its own terms, ineffective. In the year after the introduction of Temporary Protection Visas in 1999, there occurred one of the largest surges in arrivals of 'boatpeople' (up to 6, 540, compared to 6,170 during 2009). During that period 'the percentage of women and children also went from around 25 per cent to around 40 per cent' (Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship quoted in Phillips et al. 2010) Under the previous government's controversial policy of returning asylum seekers' boats to international waters (a policy reaffirmed by the now Opposition in May 2010), Karvelas notes that only six such boats were ever turned around (2010).

The opportunities lost as a result of using demonization and vilification of asylum seekers as a basis for policy are spelt out by Devetak. If they had not been regarded as 'threats' asylum seekers 'would have been recognised instead as suffering strangers requesting hospitality. Australia's sovereignty and security would never have been perceived as threatened, Australia's international reputation would not have suffered, and neither would the asylum seekers' (Devetak 2004: 108). Alternative responses might, suggests McDonald, include one 'which does not encourage a denial of ethical responsibility to the vulnerable beyond the borders of the Australian nation-state, and which rejects the primacy of violent means of achieving "security"' (McDonald 2005: 315).

In the example of asylum seekers, it is clear how policies of deterrence and rejection which appear to transgress internationally accepted principles of human rights were (and still are) justified by the identification and demonization of a group, supported by vilification of members of the group as 'illegals', 'queue-jumpers' or potential 'terrorists'. In such a sequence, we see echoes of current analyses of the ageing population 'crisis', and the 'lazy', 'greedy' or 'unproductive' old people who are threatening the welfare of younger generations.

The following section looks at how critiques of assumptions and policy in the case of asylum seekers might be used to re-frame both 'the old' and the 'problem' of the ageing population.

Turning away and turning back: the need for ethnography

The ethical and justice issues associated with asylum seekers have been written about

extensively (Manderson 2001; Thompson 2001; see for example Burnside 2003; Larking 2003; Singer et al. 2010). However it is not only 'recognition of suffering strangers' and an ethical base and compassion which are missing from many of the policy responses described above. The experiences and journeys of the asylum seekers connect them to geographies and events far removed spatially from Australia, and to histories that represent the other side, the coeval obverse, of wealthy and secure nations' histories. To have turned away from or rejected these embodied connections to the other parts of the world and its history is to have foregone an opportunity for knowledge and understanding of something– an historical and geographical context – that is bigger than Australia or the asylum seekers themselves.

Learning about the 'other' however requires careful listening. Noting that the more traumatic an event, the more likely it is that accounts by survivors will vary between tellings, Szörényi argues that the testimony of asylum seekers, who are also seen as 'victims' and 'outsiders', is often treated with suspicion and as unreliable (Szörényi 2009: 176-177). Even where testimony from refugees is presented positively in order to encourage empathy, Szörényi suggests that this retains the 'us' and 'them' distinction and the disempowered victimhood of the refugee who 'lacks what [we] can take for granted' (Szörényi 2009: 184). Further, testimonies to 'bolster humanitarian goals' tend to homogenize the experiences of individual refugees into 'the refugee experience':

> The stories presented in this way are sometimes told in the first person, and sometimes paraphrased. They are often very brief, running to a paragraph or two. Each story is thus positioned as an example from a collection of similar stories, organized either according to region of origin, or stage in processing…A singular 'refugee experience' is thus manufactured from the myriad and disparate political situations and life histories that can cause people to relocate. As Malkki notes, this method of conceptualizing a generalized 'refugee experience' works to depoliticise and dehistoricise…It naturalises similarities that may well have more to do with the effects of a generalised global regime of systems for control and resettlement of refugees than with any inevitability of response to the experiences of displacement (Szörényi 2009:

178).

'[S]tories are received differently, depending upon who is telling the story, when they are telling it, and for what reason' (Cormier 2007: 1); the tacit 'boundary' decisions about whose views are heard and judged worthy or relevant (Midgley et al. 2001: 619), (Midgely 1996: 14-19) influence the outcomes of research and policy development. Bracketing individuals into a group and then vilifying members of the group is an attempt to establish a boundary which excludes those voices from credibly contributing to dialogue, and the physical rejection of the group (as in off-shore detention of asylum seekers) ensures that opportunities for these groups to establish credibility and be heard are not made available.

The need to listen carefully to the voices of individuals is evident also in trauma healing practices, especially those conducted by overseas organizations in countries which have experienced traumatic political events or natural disaster. Argenti-Pillen notes that Western trauma discourse carries assumptions about memory and personal identity, and the secular moral authority of the State which, when introduced into non-Western societies during times of great upheaval, can threaten the traditional healing systems of the latter (Argenti-Pillen 2000: 90-93, 98-99). In these conditions, where traditional culture may have become destabilized, an 'ethnographic method' for guiding the introduction of Western trauma specialists is most needed:

> Ethnographic research questions are not primarily about 'therapy' or 'mental health' [but] the ways in which communities establish a relationship with their past, and the manner in which foreign discourses are incorporated within the local culture (Argenti-Pillen 2000: 100).

An example of an ethnographic approach to trauma studies is Grayman et al's survey of nightmares in Acehnese conflict survivors which draws on James Siegel's ethnography of dreams (Siegel 1979; Grayman et al. 2009), as well as historical knowledge of the GAM[6]-military conflict. In distinguishing between types of dreams and their connections with conflict experience, the spirit world and God, it provides a deeper understanding of the

---

[6] *Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*: Free Aceh Movement

impacts of trauma in Aceh than that provided by the application of standard Western symptomatology.

Decisions by the Australian government to excise various territories from Australian legal jurisdiction so that 'boat people' will not have access to Australian courts of law, nor be able to communicate with the Australian community, can be seen as beginning the process of 'disidentification' and separation which is part of demonization (Alon et al. 2006: 32, 83). The international law principle of '*non-refoulement*' upheld by the UNHCR is 'that a State may not oblige a person to return to a territory where he may be exposed to persecution' (UNHCR 1994 (updated 2010)). *Refouler* is 'to turn away' or 'to turn back' and the above suggests that in turning away from refugees, Australian society has also subjected itself to a form of 'self-*refoulement'*, turning back upon itself and away from the world in order to avoid that which does not fit comfortably with its existing identity or concern for security.

Just as asylum seekers have been demonized, and they and their testimony made inaccessible, so too has the cultural devaluing of oldness, and the production of 'the old' as an impending economic burden on 'others', devalued the voices of the old. In debates about the future, old people are framed as a separate, threatening and competing group who therefore speak solely out of self-interest or 'greed' (see Bywater 2006; and Street et al. 2006 for a critical view). The work of critical gerontologists and others in drawing attention to the assumptions underpinning this demonization and problematization of the old, as others have done for asylum seekers, appears to have done little to counter such views in public debate and commentary in Australia. It has also done little to turn back old people's 'waning social power and function all over the world' (Seabrook 2003: 185)

Manderson notes that our sense of selfhood is based on our relationships with others: 'there is no self without them' (Manderson 2001: 3). Hence the person in poverty or in need of asylum who seeks our assistance is already owed, 'for their otherness is the very condition of our existence. We live not just among them but because of them' (2001: 3). Anna Szörényi notes that the quality of being human, or having subjectivity, is 'the ability to respond to the other's address' (Szörényi 2009: 186):

> In this understanding of subjectivity as ethical, I am a subject precisely to the

extent that I acknowledge and act on my responsibility towards another, and if I fail to acknowledge this responsibility I am negating not only the subjectivity of the other person, but of myself (Szörényi 2009: 186-187).

Responsibility, Manderson suggests, is not a matter of choice but a 'fact of proximity' (Manderson 2001: 3-4). The idea that one social group exists only in relation to others was discussed earlier in this Chapter; gerontologist Simon Biggs argues that the nature of ageing needs to be the subject of intergenerational negotiation, where 'the experiences of each age-group need to inform that negotiation' (Biggs 2008: 119). This negotiation would clarify differences between generations rather than trying to assimilate them:

A starting point would be to recognise that, while we are all increasingly in the same environmental boat, and this poses a stimulus to solidarity, recognition of common interest also depends on recognising the special, complementary qualities that each generational group can bring (Biggs 2008: 119).

Based simply on the increase in numbers of old people in many countries over the next couple of decades, it can be expected that greater allocation of national resources will be provided to this group until the demographic 'bump' has passed; the above discussion, and recent media and public comment, suggest however that this allocation will continue to be seen as advantaging the old unfairly at the 'expense' of younger generations. Moreover, the devaluing of old age and the old appears to be a world-wide phenomenon, merely compounded by the economic blame attached to 'baby boomers' as the impending old in Western countries. Vincent noted that the needs of each generation are likely to be argued at a global scale in the future; the fierceness of the intergenerational equity debate already occurring within relatively wealthy countries, indicates a limited interest in addressing global equity issues between wealthy and poorer countries.

This chapter has been concerned with the ways the voices of the aged are invalidated or unheard, rather than, for example, whether or not ageing is accompanied by developmental processes such as transformative learning or spiritual evolution. Claims for the special qualities of old age, and for a reframing of 'old' and the discourses about ageing, have been reviewed in order to show the concern of other researchers to remedy the marginalization of the aged. Devaluing the old involves attributing more 'self-interest' to them as individuals

than to those in other demographic groups; it allows a homogenized representation of old people; and produces the old individual as irremediably different, and separate from, younger individuals and from 'themselves when young'. While the 'differentness' and complementarity of the generations, as Biggs (2008) notes, is needed for social solidarity in the face of all-embracing environmental or social issues, the above discussion suggests that differentness needs to accommodate an equal humanness and hence importance to members of each group. The discussion above on asylum seekers, whose 'differentness' is even more visible that age, emphasises the impact of losing a sense of the humanness and individuality of members of a group.

Minkler's and Clark's suggestion that the distribution of social resources be based on 'whole of life' needs, indicates that the individual who persists through time is ethically and politically important in an alternative view to intergenerational competition, one which cuts across the divisiveness of age groupings. Beyond historical narratives of oppressed groups, the speaking individual whose past experience is connected in a significant way to her/his present storytelling and present claims for consideration, is, as Szörényi's critique of homogenization suggests, necessary for restoring the humanity of both the demonized and the demonizers. Such stories are also politically and socially necessary for distributive justice and reparation.

Debjani Ganguly notes that the testimony of an individual about a traumatic past is aimed at recovering 'personhood' and claiming rights as an individual' (Ganguly 2009: 434). One of the purposes of ethnography is to elicit these stories of individual experience. Dannefer's action research noted earlier in this Chapter is a response to the need for 'micro-interaction' to augment theory about social change:

> Whatever is occurring at the macro-level, micro-interaction is the site where human agency is universally expressed…[F]ace-to-face interaction also offers a potential entry point for change, including efforts at deliberate progressive change, even under adverse macro-level conditions. It is, after all, a site at which imagination and intentionality are formulated and articulated by individual actors (Dannefer et al. 2008: 102).

These interactions, and individuals' stories of experience, are a form of what Estes calls the

'extra-technical' - the researcher's own 'story' with its world views and assumptions - which augments the 'technical' theory (Estes 2008: 121). In this thesis I have used an ethnography of old people's recollections as an 'extra-technical' resource to add to discussions of theory.

CONCLUSION

The homogenized view of refugees as victims, or queue jumpers, or 'illegals', and the homogenization of old people through assigning them to a group based on a single demographic attribute, are used as the basis for a wide range of policy discussions in which the homogenized group is often marginalized and their views devalued (as more unreliable or self-interested than other groups). Such homogenization, moreover, is rarely challenged by knowledge of individual life stories, and in the case of Western commentators on the aged, almost never by life stories from old people in other cultures. Oral histories of community members who are old, rather than merely supplementing other forms of historical inquiry (Labelle 2005), have the potential to reframe public debate and policy development for the following reasons:

- Only in the details of a life, told by one who lived it, can be found an understanding of the world at the 'site' of experience;

- Only at this site can the homogenization of old people be disrupted, and the inadequacy for research and policy-making of a single identifier such as age be exposed.

Further, ethnographic listening demands *engagement* of the researcher or adaptation strategist with an often marginalized group of informants – the old or asylum seekers for example. Through this engagement and a reflexiveness on the part of the researcher (Spivak 1988; Wyschogrod 1998, discussed in Chapter 2), the researcher takes to a yet wider audience an understanding which begins the work of dismantling the homogenization and marginalization of such groups.

This Chapter is a critique of the current political positioning of old people and the assumptions on which this rests. The next Chapter sets out the theoretical and methodological approaches of this thesis to developing a different positioning of old people

as an integral part of social-ecological systems, which does not require them to be economically productive; it proposes an ethnographic approach which resists homogenization of old people and forges new connections between life stories, historical narrative, and the future of social-ecological systems.

2. 'OFFCUTS OF INFINITY': THEORY, FIELDWORK AND THE PROJECT

> The outcomes of creative research are…offcuts of infinity (Carter 2004: 184).

<div align="center">∞</div>

INTRODUCTION

This chapter concerns the theoretical framework and methodological approach taken in this doctoral project to explore connections between the phenomena of 'oldness' and 'adaptation/resilience' in social-ecological systems. It proposes a transdisciplinary approach to the research project which:

- views the project as a device which defines in time and space a 'pocket of local order' (Schwanen 2007: 11) with its own boundaries, content and processes regulated by its goals

- begins with an additive approach to existing theory in order to find ways in which juxtaposed phenomena and the kinships between them can be illuminated from several theoretical perspectives;

- views stories from the field not as qualitative data for the grounding of new theory but as the materialization of gaps (the overlooked) in theory and discourse;

- views the *life* which is the subject of the life story, the fieldwork *interview* and the *thesis* as devices ('chronotopes') which define the space, time and form in which stories, storytelling and the interpretive work of the research project are produced;

- views the project, fieldwork interviews and the production of the thesis as events which enter history with implications, including ethical implications, for the storyteller, writer, listener and reader.

The above principles guide the use of theory, the relationship between theory and

ethnographic material, the gathering of such material, its interpretation, and the conduct of the researcher at each stage of the project. These principles are elaborated in the rest of this Chapter.

META-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The transdisciplinary doctoral project: resolving problems or exploring phenomena?

Doctorate research has many of the qualities of a project, bringing together resources, people, ideas and theories in particular places at particular times to serve a goal. Geographers Tsing and Greenough (2003b, 2003a) describe projects as 'relatively tight clusters of ideas and practices that appear as particular historical undertakings' and point to their power in re-framing our understanding of the world, for example in environmental projects, where landscapes and communities 'assemble and reassemble themselves' over the course of the project (Tsing et al. 2003b: x), (2003a: 15). These assemblies form for a time 'pockets of local order', where decisions about inclusion and arrangements of entities are governed by the goal of at least one of the entities involved (Schwanen 2007: 11, 15).

The solo researcher undertaking a project which has bearing on several disciplinary areas (in the case of this thesis: anthropology, history, psychology, philosophy and ecology for example) must devise a way of 'transcending' disciplines – their particular epistemologies, theoretical precepts and accepted methodologies – rather than providing the specialised analysis offered by a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary team of researchers. In this project I propose that such transcending be effected by an *additive* approach which examines phenomena in the light of existing theoretical works within several disciplines and then strategically introduces new material from the field in areas which appear to be unaddressed or outside the boundaries of these works.

This approach to transcending disciplines has similarities to transdisciplinary research which is 'problem-focused'. A complex problem provides a focus and *problem-solving* framework for considering, as a disciplinary outsider or non-practitioner, the various contributions to understanding offered by a range of disciplines. In this broader and brighter light potentially lies a new solution/resolution. A problem-based project has its own momentum and goals defined both by the meaning of 'problem' and 'problem-

solving' (or 'resolving' (Wickson et al. 2006), (Mitchell 2006)) and the way in which the particular problem of the project is described. Problem-solving to this extent is a 'goal-oriented' project.

Problem descriptions however are limited by the disciplines out of which they emerge ('the formulation of a wicked problem *is* the problem!' (Rittel et al. 1973: 161-167)). Further, as Thompson Klein points out, sometimes there is an issue of 'problem choice' (economics or sustainability for example) underlying any detailed problem description (Thompson Klein 2004: 518). These choices and descriptions in turn are made before a transdisciplinary search for 'coherence', 'correspondence' or 'patterns' can begin (Wickson et al. 2006: 1053).

The essay 'Against Projects' by Paul Carter and Charles Anderson (Carter et al. 1997), and Carter's later work on material thinking (Carter 2004) have addressed more generally the 'goal-oriented' project. They have criticised the 'rhetoric of projects' (notably those of engineers and architects) as repressing anything not directed to the project *goals*, and '[treating] as nothing those times (and places) of waiting, idling and dissipation in which what was usually overlooked as formless began to take form' (Carter 2004: 47-48). In the previous chapter I argued that old people's voices can fall between the cracks of more 'important' stories, or at least stories about more important groups; so too can the voices of certain groups fall between the cracks of a 'goal-oriented' project and outside the boundaries which determine which entities and actions are of relevance in pursuing the goal. Such a project is like a 'system' where boundaries and categories define whose voices are to be heard and whose interests are to be served by the system (see Midgely 1996; Midgely et al. 1996). The issue of system boundaries is discussed further in Chapter 6. In this doctoral project I wish to take an alternative approach which allows a more open exploration of selected issues.

Hence I embarked upon this doctoral project *without* the idea of a 'problem' which needed solving. Instead I was motivated to conduct an exploration of the issue of ageing populations. Chapter 1 explains the political impetus for such a project: the devaluing and problematization of oldness and the ways in which the knowledge and views of old people are overlooked or devalued. The other main impetus was a curiosity to see whether there

were points of convergence between the issues of ageing populations and environmental sustainability. In particular there appeared to be a potential kinship between old people's 'remembering the past' and the 'remembering' of social-ecological adaptation cycles.

The research project which is the subject of this thesis is therefore not a milestone- and progress-focused kind of project, nor a problem-based project[7]. Instead it starts with the juxtaposition of two phenomena, selected on the basis of a perceived kinship, and proceeds with an additive approach to theory and the introduction of new material in the form of fieldwork.

Research questions (expanded)

An initial review of works from historiography, gerontology and memory studies revealed complex relationships between oldness, memory and the past. These connections also raised a number of questions:

1. What are the differences between the subject's relationship with the past and the historian's (see Chapter 3)

2. What conception of 'the subject' is required in order for such a distinction to be made? (see Chapter 3)

3. What kinds of understandings of the past are provided by recollection and history, and how are they different? (see Chapter 4)

4. How does ageing change the structure and perspective of recollection? (see Chapters 3 and 4)

5. What is the relationship between narrative theory and the non-narrative, painterly 'daubs' of recollections by old people? (see Chapter 5)

6. Can responses to these questions enable recollection to inform trajectories from present to future envisaged in theories of adaptation and resilience? (see Chapter 6)

---

[7] However the production of the thesis itself is, of course, concerned with milestones and deadlines.

Overarching all of these questions was the culture-specific nature of theory to date, and hence the question raised in the Introduction to this thesis:

7. What in particular can the life stories of old people in a non-Western country contribute to answering the above questions? (see this Chapter and Chapters 3-6)

These questions, and the review of theory which generated them are the subject of Chapters 3-6. The kind of process required to put together the various frameworks and the fieldwork at various stages in the project is indicated in the chronological selection of 'mindmaps' shown in Appendix 1.

As such questions arise, the transdisciplinary project becomes to some extent 'problem focused'; however rather than the problem defining the project, the project, through juxtaposing phenomena and an open exploration of theory, creates its own problem and questions. Responding to these questions is the creative work of the project, and how it approaches this creative work is its methodology. One methodological approach to exploring juxtapositions is a consideration of the implications of work in one disciplinary area for work in another (see for example McMichael's public health perspective on the impacts of climate change (McMichael et al. 2006)), or the application of the epistemology and world view associated with one theoretical framework to another, in order to produce some new 'third' theory or entity (such as the application of social science epistemologies and theory to environmental science to produce entities called 'social-ecological systems' (see for example Campbell et al. 2009)).

Another creative approach transcends disciplines by performing concrete operations in the world and then introducing them to theory. An example of this research is Stephen Muecke's 'arrangement' of phenomena which he describes in 'A Chance to Hear a Nyigina Song' (Muecke 2008). He brings together a ritual song performance by an Aboriginal man, the translated commentary, and his own telling about it to an audience in another country, in the belief that 'in this juxtaposition something new might emerge' (2008: 80). The project was motivated by his interest in 'the concept of making and unmaking in Aboriginal philosophy' (2008: 81). What emerges is a series of reflections about the materiality of ritual in making and unmaking country (particular acts at particular places and moments in time), leading to further reflections on reconciliation between black and white Australia as

an equally material process:

> Wherever there is cultural difference, negotiation must continue; encounters:
> some rough, others pleasant; visiting: food and drink taken together; songs and
> stories exchanged, and laughter … (Muecke 2008: 93).

For this doctoral project I proposed to juxtapose two phenomena – 'oldness' and environmental adaptation/resilience and then be hospitable in Derrida's sense across discipline-based theory to 'whomever [whatever] comes…nonidentifiable and unforeseeable' (Derrida in Borradori 2003: 128-129). Like Muecke and the Aboriginal song project, I hope that in making such a juxtaposition, and reflecting on a wide range of theoretical works, 'something new might emerge'. Nevertheless such hospitability in my case is bounded by my selected phenomena of interest, and a prior supposition that there may be a significant relationship between them which warrants further investigation.

Juxtaposition of phenomena in the sense used here is therefore an intentional act performed by a person rather than an accident of fate 'discovered' in situ. It involves selection of those phenomena or entities to be juxtaposed, and an expectation that something of interest will emerge by 'running about to the right and the left, laying the separate notices together, and thence mediately deriving some third apprehension' (Carter 2004: 5, citing Thomas de Quincey). Thus it implies not only *intentionality* but also, with Stephen Muecke, *expectation* (of something emerging). These interests, intentions and expectations limit the project, as Carter suggests, to an 'offcut of infinity'. They constitute a 'prenotion' which allows us to decide which of 'the otherwise ungraspable' number of ideas and entities are to be examined (Carter 2004: 184).

Nevertheless, to explore what might emerge from juxtaposing phenomena of interest, the researcher needs to be as hospitable as possible at the outset to diverse disciplinary inputs. This hospitability is made easier where there is no 'problem' to be described and solved, or identified outcome to be achieved. In moving beyond the problem as the focus for transdisciplinary research, I hope to have made a more open space for disciplinary contributions to aggregate and reveal something new, or possibly something missing – new gaps in existing understandings of oldness and adaptation/resilience.

I considered the phenomenon of oldness initially through theoretical works from different disciplines and interdisciplinary areas concerned with 'oldness', 'memory', 'recollection', 'storytelling', 'history', 'trauma' and 'narrative'. The selection of these theoretical works developed as my reading on ageing and memory expanded, but generally selected with the 'prenotion' of discovering what might be special and valuable about the memory of the old, and then how this might relate to adaptation/resilience cycles. This 'prenotion' alerted me to bridging concepts which connected, for example, Ricoeur's work on the ways in which historical narrative deals with the 'long view' of the past and the trajectory of history up to the present (Ricoeur 1984: 66-67), Freeman's work on the narrative construction of identity over time (Freeman 1998), and Zurbruchen's and Goodall's work on the role of remembering in (re)constructing history (Goodall 2000), (Zurbuchen 2005). These connections are considered in Chapters 3 and 4.

My doctoral project did not commence with 'a problem', nor is it a discourse analysis or genealogy of disciplines such as occurs within the fields of critical gerontology and identity studies; such forms of inquiry draw on work in several disciplines to critically analyse representations of, for example, 'ageing', 'madness', 'ethnicity' and 'gender'. Discourse analysis concerns itself valuably with laying out to view the development and social/political/power implications of hitherto unquestioned or obscured discourses. While Chapter 3 includes a review of others' work on 'the subject' in discourse, the general approach of this doctoral project is to consider *together,* theoretical works from various disciplines and the results of fieldwork; I have proposed that the illumination these collectively cast on 'oldness', 'memory', 'narrative', 'trauma' and 'history' can reveal new connections and answers to questions such as those proposed above, as well as room for other sources of understanding the world. This additive approach, based on a strong 'prenotion' and awareness of the potential kinship that exists between the phenomena is intended to pre-empt criticism that the work is 'so prone to juxtaposition rather than synthesis, that ascribing a coherent position to [the researcher] on any question is extremely difficult' (Marrouchi 1999).

The transdisciplinary approach of this thesis to ageing and sustainability, and more specifically 'oldness' and 'adaptation/resilience' starts in Chapter 3 by making connections

between existing theoretical work across a range of disciplines in the area of a subject's relationship with the past. This is motivated by questions of what might be special about the memory of older people, whether it might reside for example, in the *accumulation* of memory, in the lengthy *duration* of experience, in the nearness of death as the *end*, or in particular, possibly cohort-specific, *responses* to the circumstances (such as the interview) in which memories are elicited. This review of theoretical work also reveals the dominance of Western data and Western intellectual traditions in gerontology, cultural studies, history, psychology, neurobiology and associated discourses of subjectivity, memory and identity.

Hence there appeared to be potential to obtain new material in the form of recollections of old people in a non-Western context, to address some of the questions above and to introduce into discussion of existing Western theoretical frameworks. The ways in which theory and fieldwork inform each other in this thesis are discussed in the following section through the work of Paul Carter and of Mikhail Bakhtin.

Carter's 'material thinking': materializing the overlooked

Carter argues that reflecting on the relationships between works in different creative disciplines (visual arts and writing for example), and putting them together can produce de Quincey's 'third apprehension'; this he suggests is *material thinking* (Carter 2004: 5). Materials in Carter's sense are 'significant spatio-temporal groupings' of matter (180) such as a work of art, a place, or a conversation. Material becomes the subject of material thinking insofar as its significance is under examination: thus material is 'matter that signifies' (182). Carter is concerned particularly with the overlooked – with hair, dirt, dust and noise of the past – as material manifestations of events which occupy the gaps in official histories.

Moreover, the significance of matter for material thinking is not simply 'in the eye of the beholder' or the 'material thinker', but a quality of the material itself. Sally McLaughlin makes this point when she suggests that it is not statements about things which give them their qualities. Rather statements are used to draw attention to things, and they draw attention to 'things as they are'. She cites Magda King:

> Our everyday having-to-do-with things could never decree the apple tree to be

handy if it were not 'in itself' handy, at hand, and if its fruit were not 'in itself'
handy for eating (McLaughlin 2004: 161).

Materials for Carter are more than just 'things' which exist in space and time. Significantly for this doctoral project, he makes the point that "[t]he exercise of memory [is] a material process of putting back together scattered pieces" (Carter 2004: 11, footnote). While the nature of these 'scattered pieces' is the subject of further examination in later chapters of this thesis, the process of recollection is a form of material thinking, an act of perceiving a 'material kinship' between two different objects then '[b]unching perceptions or grouping phenomena in new ways that are memorable' (184, 188). In this thesis I use the idea of intentional bunching or grouping based on a 'perceived kinship' as the definition of 'juxtaposition'.

However the juxtaposition with which this doctoral project commenced lies between two more abstract phenomena – initially ageing populations and environmental sustainability and then more specifically oldness and adaptation/resilience; potential kinship is perceived at a more theoretical level and concerns the concept of 'remembering' in theoretical work in both areas. This kinship is discussed further in Chapter 6 particularly, but it is based on potential similarities between the remembering component of social-ecological adaptive cycles, and the 'long view' of both history and the old. I will argue however that in materializing the past in the life stories of old people through fieldwork in Aceh, new connections between the phenomena of oldness and adaptation/resilience can be forged, beyond those discoverable solely through an examination of theory.

Carter uses the gritty, ordinary and overlooked material in the world to 'dismember' prevailing myths or master narratives. He draws attention to the unhistoric and unremarked notebooks of the colonial Australian astronomer William Dawes, recording conversations with a young Aboriginal woman, in order to suggest that such a relationship could have 'grounded' a different future for relationships between black and white people in Australia (Carter 2004, Collaboration 6: Speaking pantomimes). The result is not an analytical critique of these myths or narratives (although Carter refers to it as an 'analytical preliminary' (Carter 2004: 11)) but rather a revelation of what it is that dominant myths and narratives leave out.

For Carter, having regard for the overlooked and 'noneventful' provides us with an understanding of the world which does not rely on the established 'fixed foundations' of official history ('history's pretence of clear-sightedness') (Carter 2004: 183, 175). He is concerned particularly with everyday unhistoric corporeal matter, the past materialized in 'smells, say…' (Carter 2004: 85). This is 'formless matter' outside and unattached to the formal record of 'historic events'. Hence it is free to be combined and recombined by the 'material thinker' with bits and pieces of deconstructed myths and master narratives. This formless matter is exemplified not only by conversations and writing which have been ignored by history, but in the smells, colours and sounds which produce visceral responses of memory, parts of memory which writer Annie Dillard describes as disappearing when memories are recorded in writing:

> '…After you've written, you can no longer remember anything but the writing…you've created a monster. After I've written about any experience, my memories – those elusive, fragmentary patches of color and feeling – are gone. They've been replaced by the work' (Annie Dillard quoted in Freeman 1997a: 375-376)).

In this thesis, I argue that the stories and the storytelling performances of old people occupy a space outside official histories because they are not merely overlooked but fail to be called up in historiographical, political, social or, indeed, environmental analysis. The act of *calling up* stories and storytelling in fieldwork enables a kinship to be confirmed between oldness with its special perspective on the past, and adaptation and resilience with their focus on the future; it establishes new connections between theories of memory, ageing, history, adaptation and resilience.

Arthur Bochner notes:

> We can call on stories to make theoretical abstractions, or we can hear stories as a call to be vigilant to the cross-currents of life's contingencies (Bochner 2001: 132).

It is the latter purpose which is served here by my fieldwork with old people in Aceh; the significance of the *contingency* and *non-historic* quality of the stories can be valuably

interpreted by various theoretical approaches to storytelling, memory, the past and the future which are discussed in this thesis; the fieldwork stories also challenge claims in some areas – for example concerning the narrative structure of reminiscence in old age, and the detachment or eschatological perspective of the old.

I have used the life story as the basis for fieldwork, because it is a form which reflects *par excellence* the age of the 'informant' – as opposed, for example, to stories about rural livelihoods, or what happened during the recent civil conflict or the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Moreover as a literary form, it will be argued, the life story offers a perspective which is different from that of the historian in that its locus is the individual rather than those events which contribute to an historical narrative. Life stories concern both historic and nonhistoric events, but relate them as the storyteller's *experience* – Carter's 'overlooked' material which stands outside historical narrative. Catherine Kohler Riessman notes that:

> Nature and the world do not tell stories, individuals do. Interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations … Individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives (Riessman 1993: 2).

I argue in Chapter 4 that recollection, narrative and the construction of identity are not necessarily related. The important quality of a life story is not whether it takes the form of a narrative, but that the locus of storytelling is an individual's life. The literary form of story based on 'a life' is an example of Mikhail Bakhtin's *chronotope* where '[t]ime becomes, in effect, palpable and visible; the chronotope makes narrative events concrete, makes them take on flesh…' (Bakhtin 1981: 250). In the following section I examine the value of the chronotope in understanding the unique qualities of a life story.

Bakhtin's chronotope: time made palpable

An emphasis on the material particular, as a challenge to ideological and religious 'master narratives', is at the basis of Bakhtin's idea of the 'chronotope'. The chronotope is a narrative device where time and space are 'materialized' in particular localized events or conditions. In the following I argue that it is a valuable device for understanding the ways

in which the life stories of old people show us the past, and the ways in which the research project itself connects with the wider world. In proposing 'the life', 'the interview' and 'the thesis' as chronotopes, I suggest that these devices bring together space and time for speaker, writer and audience, but are also acts which carry ethical responsibilities especially for the researcher as instigator.

The chronotope connects particular spatial forms with ways of moving through time. Examples include: the *threshold* as a sudden shift in speed accompanying a sudden shift in space; *metamorphosis* as a discontinuity in time signified by discontinuous material changes; the *meeting* as the place of denouement or ending of a particular time; the *road* as continuous time moving linearly forward; and the *drawing room* as a small, cosy time untouched by the vast outside world (Bakhtin 1981). In narrative which uses the chronotope of the *road*, for example "[t]ime, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it (forming the road)" (243-244).

Literary chronotopes have changed over the course of history. Bakhtin's history of the novel points out that the focus has moved further and further from the cyclical and collective space-time of agriculture, into a wider, less comprehensible world which gives heightened importance to the individual's life. In biography, he suggests, 'a life' as chronotope became a linear path towards death as 'the irremediable end', rather than incorporating death as part of a larger cycle of nature and collective life (213, 199).

In the sixteenth century French writer François Rabelais attempted to reverse this religious focus on future death by embracing a chronotope which emphasised the everyday here and now: '[t]he wholeness of a triumphant life, a whole that embraces death, and laughter, and food and sexual activity' (Bakhtin 1981: 199). In celebrating and making important the functions of the human body – the 'fundamental realities of life' – and thus reducing the relative importance of death, Rabelais brought about 'the *materialization* of the world' (237, 193, my emphasis).

The anti-transcendental corporeal chronotope resonates with the everyday overlooked details of life which are the grist in Carter's material thinking (Carter 2004: 183), and with Stephen Muecke's reflections on the materiality of reconciliation between black and white Australians: 'food and drink taken together; songs and stories exchanged…' (Muecke 2008:

93).

Moreover Bakhtin's Rabelaisian chronotope, Muecke's materialization of apparently abstract phenomena like 'making country', and Carter's work with the 'debris' of history, are each a form of material thinking which 'not only interprets the world but changes it' (Carter 2004: 12). This political aspect of material thinking is explored below.

Materialization and politics

In Bakhtin's Rabelaisian world, the time between now and death is an expansive, richly detailed series of moments to be lived fully, in real, bodily time, rather than sublimated in the shadow of future death. Such sublimation to an end, Bakhtin suggests, empties the time between now and then of significance. Similarly, mythological or ideological narratives see the future as a weak pre-determined enactment of timeless and static ideals and myths of the golden past ('historical inversion'). If this 'false picture of the world' – the metanarrative –were exposed, 'the world would start to move, it would be shoved into the future' (Bakhtin 1981: 169, 129).

Carter notes that the unremarked gaps in our history (Carter 2004: 170), and the annihilation of the past through a destructive view of progress which wants only to 'clear away' detritus (Carter 2004: 19, 21), represent missed opportunities for 'grounding the future differently' (Carter 2004: 170). Working with material that does not fit into a master narrative or history reveals 'the toxic radiating cloud of disappearances that most progress-marking events involve' (Carter 2004: 59). These disappearances include the 'multiple unfinished happenings' which occur in a community and which stand outside historically significant time (Carter 2004: 100, 195). Material thinking however works both with old and established abstractions, *and* with the humble and everyday material these ignore, by 'loosening positions that have been fixed….[and] putting things back together in a different way' (Carter 2004: 179).

As Rabelais attacked the transcendental, ascetic and death-oriented view of the world through extreme and grotesque descriptions of bodily functions in 'real time', recombining these with death as something 'just in passing' (Bakhtin 1981: 194), so material thinking dismembers 'mythic structures…ideological positions…master narratives' (Carter 2004:

11) and recombines bits of these with overlooked 'rubbish'. What is produced are politically and historically challenging alternatives to prevailing myths (Carter 2004: 11), (Bakhtin 1981: 189), and an affirmation of the everyday as a source of understanding the world. Finding new pasts in what has been overlooked, Carter suggests, can find us new futures (Carter 2004: 133). In Bakhtin's terms, this is constituting anew the 'great but abstract world' (Bakhtin 1981: 234).

The creative work which makes this recombining or reconstitution happen can occur in a number of ways. Stephen Muecke's arrangement of song, commentary, story and presentation depends for its revelatory impact both on his own story and on his *making something happen* through both conjuring his presence at a song performance and then telling the story at a later time to others. Paul Carter creates a poem from overlooked written records from colonial Australia to reveal alternative pasts and futures (Carter 2004, 'Collaboration 6: Speaking pantomimes').

It is a new focus on hitherto overlooked or devalued *matter*, which produces shifts in understanding. To engage with this 'materialized world', the transdisciplinary researcher needs to add to theory by 'loosening its positions' and recombining it with new material from the world (Rabelais' bodily functions, Carter's noise, dust and snatches of conversation). While Gayatri Spivak points out that theorizing is itself an 'action in the world' (Spivak 1988: 274) with material consequences, material thinking seeks to produce new understandings of the world which depend on *both* the transcendental and the everyday.

Within Carter's 'overlooked', and Bakhtin's world of the everyday, lie the life stories of the old people I interviewed during fieldwork in Aceh. The intellectual and political aim of this doctoral project is to foreground both the stories and the storytellers; it will be argued in Chapter 6 that in materializing the past, both story and storyteller can expand the idea and practice of adaptation and resilience in social-ecological systems.

METHODOLOGY

Exploring phenomena through new material

One significant 'prenotion' in commencing this doctoral project was that there is a special

quality of recollection associated with 'oldness', overlooked, as argued in Chapter 1, because of the social devaluing of the old. As my research progressed through theoretical works on ageing, memory, narrative and historiography, it became clear that recollection, while concerning itself with the past, is a significant *act in the present*, and hence also has potential implications for the future. Theoretical argument is presented in later Chapters to support such a link between past and future. However in order to see how a link might materialize, I proposed to undertake fieldwork with older people whose recollections would concern the period of the past commonly referred to as 'within living memory'; in view of the predominance of Western theory in the areas of memory and gerontology, I proposed that recollections should come from old people who were not necessarily steeped in Western conceptions of 'autobiographical identity' and the life course stages of Western ageing. Further, the prospective juxtaposition of oldness and adaptation/resilience suggested that fieldwork might usefully occur with old people who have had to confront and adapt to significant change over their lifetimes.

The stories told by the old people in Aceh, emerge from an alternative to those ideations prevailing in the Western system of ageing, with its particular economic, social and family structures, normative life course stages and constructs of 'successful' or 'productive' ageing, and cultural fears and antipathies concerning the old. Furthermore, stories from old people who had lived through the kinds of dramatic and public social, political and environmental change recorded in histories of Aceh, offer a chance for resonance with a wider audience.

This in turn helps the process of 'refiguring' the research for uptake in the wider world which was discussed in the Introduction, including making connections between this kind of 'remembering', and the remembering of adaptation and resilience. Calling up stories which emerged from a past fraught with massive changes has the potential to materialize a relationship between these two kinds of remembering which in theoretical discussion might appear as semantic sophistry around the word 'remember'. In undertaking my fieldwork, I anticipated that the pathway between acts of recollection by old people, and thinking about social-ecological trajectories into the future, may be more evident when the subject matter of those recollections included life-changing events and conditions such as war and

conflict, prolonged poverty and hunger, and natural disaster.

Since the recollections of special value in this process of materializing the past would be those that fell between the gaps of those formal histories, they were best sought not by asking old people questions which marched chronologically through history's significant events, but by an approach characterized more by 'waiting, idling', so that the 'formless' could begin to 'take form' (Carter 2004: 47). 'Idling' was realized in this project as open-ended interviews which asked old people to talk about their lives from childhood up to the present – to tell me anything they wished to mention or any story they wished to relate. As will be seen in later chapters, these 'life stories' brought something new to theories about memory, history, narrativity and identity; they were not, for example, the identity-forming narratives discussed by various memory and identity theorists, but fragments which represented the 'multiple unfinished happenings' and precarious trajectory of survival in a community. To this extent, they are stories of 'what it was like' rather than histories, and capture 'what happened' without the teleological or chronological 'imperatives' (Carter 2004: 86-87, 73) of history or autobiographical narrative.

In view of my own positioning within Western theory and discourse (discussed further below), Chapter 5 is an attempt to gain another perspective on my fieldwork, by undertaking a textual analysis of the stories based on techniques of narrative analysis. This approach, a kind of theoretical triangulation, allows an examination of the stories which is not pre-framed by theories of memory and recollection. Techniques of narrative analysis, while also generated in the Western context, have, like Grounded Theory , the advantage of focusing attention first on the stories rather than the theory (see for example Strauss et al. 1998: 12). This examination of the stories has involved the coding of interview transcripts into content themes (using the NVivo program), allowing such themes to evolve as the review of the transcripts progresses. While this coding and thematic analysis informs each of the following Chapters, in Chapter 5 an analysis of the structure of the stories and the style of storytelling reveals important connections between the stories and the storytellers in the present. (A summary of the themes or topics (nodes) which I developed is at Appendix 2, along with a 'case summary' of the interviewees and the nodes against which each interviewee's story was coded).

However, the aim of these processes of coding and text analysis in this thesis is not, as in Grounded Theory, to generate new theory based on common themes which emerge, but to establish new connections between several theoretical areas which each offer some interpretation or illumination of the fieldwork data. For example it will be demonstrated later in this thesis that historiography, literary theory, gerontology, memory studies, psychoanalytic theory and neuropsychology each cast a light on the special qualities of memories of old people. Chapter 6 argues that philosophy of time, cultural studies, literary theory and human geography can each help to explain the contribution of life stories to assessments of social-ecological systems. Fieldwork thus provides a focus for exploring kinships between various theoretical frameworks and developing a theoretically additive approach to interpretation of data.

Ethnography is the process of seeking to find out about how people live 'in their own words', that is, as told from the 'inside' rather than from the observer's perspective (Hall 2010). Thus the fieldwork process, which involved my residing in Aceh for six months, conducting interviews with older people in their own communities, and using the (translated) words of the interviewees in theoretical discussion, constitutes a form of ethnography, albeit with a focus on the past. In Chapter 6 the value of ethnographies of the past is discussed further.

The collection of life stories is arguably also a form of 'oral history'. Labelle points to the many meanings of 'oral history': while often regarded by labour historians and social historians as a research *methodology* rather than a branch of history, folklorists regard oral histories as narratives which 'give artistic form to human memories' extending back into a past beyond the biographical time of the individual storyteller (Labelle 2005). My interest in the stories told by old people in Aceh was not concerned with the folkloric past, although this may have influenced the ways in which the stories were told, nor with the development of a social history to stand alongside, for example, other colonial and postcolonial histories or ethnographies of Aceh (examples include Hurgronje 1906; Siegel 1969; Reid 1979a; Siapno 1997; Aspinall 2009). I intended instead to foreground the particular *lived past* (experience) recounted in stories and the poetic force of such stories which arises from the 'oldness' of the storytellers. Hence while the gathering of stories may be seen

methodologically as a form of oral history, its purpose and the theoretical framing of the stories fall outside the fields of 'oral' or 'social' history.

The fieldwork in this doctoral project is thus rather an ethnography of old people in that it concerns 'the ways of life of living human beings' (Hall). In its focus on recollection and the past however, the fieldwork addresses Jack Katz's point that:

> …the events the participant observation fieldworker can study up close in the 'here and now' of the research have already been shaped by social experiences in some other 'there and then' (Katz 2004: 3).

Providing opportunities for telling stories about the past resonates with Paul Carter's interest in phenomena which appear only as '…phosphorescence in the wake of events' (Carter 2004: 170) or the detritus of history:

> I would like to see a rubbish hill rising. Collected there would be the debris of the operation, a selection of unknown classifiable things that have hitherto fallen between the cracks of knowledge (Carter 2004: 70).

I have therefore throughout this thesis described my fieldwork as *life story* ethnography, and ethnography of the past. The responsibilities of the researcher in undertaking such an ethnography are discussed below.

Framework for ethical engagement of the project with the world

> I thought maybe in this juxtaposition something new might emerge, not as a leap of the imagination but as a real bit of history. Something happened to make these words come together (Muecke 2008: 80).

> Oral testimony is only a potential resource until the researcher calls it into existence (Portelli 2003: 70).

<div align="center">∞</div>

'A life' is time 'made palpable', which allows the 'enormous event' to be seen 'on the level of real life' (Bakhtin 1981: 223). As with any material, the life stories of old people have an integrity which resists manipulation by the researcher, who needs to practise 'an ethics of scattering and recombination' in using the material and combining it with theory (Carter 2004: 180, 183).

The *telling* of the story is itself guided by the protocols and time limits of the interview, the interview becomes a chronotope which provides the place, time and structure for the story to be *performed*. Through the chronotope of the interview, each storytelling performance is a creative transformation of material, 'an activity of concurrent actual production' in the here and now (Carter 2004: 191) which both materializes the past in a particular story, with all its 'hair, mud, dirt, dust and noise', and produces it ('faces it outwards' (Bakhtin 1981: 257)) for the listener.

Moreover the interpretive work of the researcher is a material act (months spent in a particular room thinking and writing for example), and its product, the thesis or the report, is a chronotope which structures the work of the researcher and the interactions of its audience with it afterwards. Written so that it 'faces outwards' to its audience, the text 'anticipates possible reactions to itself' (Bakhtin: 257). This facing outwards occurs in the semantic meaning of the text, but only reaches its audience 'through the gates of the chronotope' – the report or thesis - which structures the way it is 'audible and visible for us' (258). For Bakhtin, the written product – in his examples, the novel - is a 'spatio-temporal expression' (258) which is necessary for the work to enter the experience of its listener-reader.

The listener-reader's interpretive *response* to the work is also a part of this interaction and of its uptake in the world. Bakhtin concludes that:

> The work and the world represented in it enter the real world and enrich it, and
> the real world enters the work and its world as part of the process of its
> creation, as well as part of its subsequent life, in a continual renewing of the
> work through the creative perception of listeners and readers…(258).

The three chronotopes used within the project – 'a life' (to focus the stories), the fieldwork interview (to produce the performance of the story) and the thesis (to produce the interpretive text) – each develop through the equivalent of Ricoeur's three stages of narrative discussed in the Introduction to this thesis: *prefiguration* (by defining respectively what is understood as 'a story', a storytelling and an interpretive text); *configuration* (the construction of the story, the performance of the story, and the interpretation and analysis which results in a text), and *refiguration* (the engagement of the

life story, the interview performance and the thesis with their audience at particular times and places).

A concern with the final stage - engagement with the world outside the project - can be seen in Paul Carter's description of his book *Material Thinking* as 'the middle 'event' between the collaborations which inspired it, and those future events to which the book might lead (Carter 2004: 191). It is Bakhtin's facing outwards of the text to seek 'reconfiguration' by its audience; and it is Stephen Muecke's address to his reader at the end of his essay on the Nyigina Song, in which he gives thanks 'to you in this case, for having me here today as a chance visitor' (Muecke 2008: 93). In Aceh 1946, a fighter in the Tjumbok Rebellion prefaced his essay on the events of that time with:

> I … hope that my mistakes will be criticized honestly by my wise readers.
> With the saying 'there is no ivory tusk without a crack', I place this book in the
> lap of its readers (Abdullah Arif in Reid et al. 1970-71 (1946): 37)

In this doctoral research project, facing the text outwards includes making explicit the connections between the recollections of old people and theory and practice in the field of adaptation and resilience. In this way it becomes possible to argue for changes to the way sustainability assessments are conducted, and for greater attention to be paid in adaptation strategies to ethnography. Unlike action research, or other projects with iterative structures, this final 'renewal and exchange' process of a linear doctoral project does not directly re-engage the participants in the project, but occurs primarily through the audience at the project's end. To this extent, the participants are like many historical 'sources': '…at best, …left untouched, unchanged by the whole process except in what they have given up — the telling…' (Popular Memory Group 2003: 85; Sangster 2003: 88).

Entering the reconfiguration phase of engagement with a readership may involve political strategy, framing the work in a way which seeks to influence perspectives or incite action. Katz notes that:

> All research is essentially a search for community, at least in the sense of an
> effort to be embraced by an audience to which the study's results will be
> pitched.

...Because community is always political, each search for community has its distinctive political aspirations/pretensions... (Katz 2004: 4).

The final chapter of this thesis includes a political analysis of the implications of old people's stories for western constructs of adaptation and resilience. It suggests that the extolment of adaptation and resilience in western theory and in interventions by the developed world in the developing world disguises a kind of 'inequitable adaptation and resilience'. I argue that the life stories of the old in developing countries can act as indicators of this kind of inequitable resilience, as well as revealing a hidden precariousness - a closeness to a 'threshold' beyond which social systems may be unable to recover (Walker et al. 2004).

Beyond the life of the storyteller, and the interview in which they tell their story, is, as noted at the beginning of this chapter, the project itself. The project occupies its own particular space and time: Schwanen describes projects as entailing the 'local connectedness and momentary "thereness" of phenomena' (Schwanen 2007: 10). As such 'the project', although not a literary device for the structuring of a text, has similarities to a Bakhtinian chronotope, a conceptual ordering of space and time through the institutions, resources, places and participants which it brings within its orbit. In bringing about the 'ephemeral co-location' of this 'set' for a specific duration, each particular project becomes, as Muecke suggests, 'a real bit of history' (2008: 80).

All of the stages of project work - undertaking fieldwork, interpreting or theorizing, and facing the research output outwards to its audience make demands of the researcher as well as project participants and the end readership. These demands are explored in the following sections.

Issues of interpretation

The following two Chapters examine and compare ideas of memory, subjectivity, recollection and history, and their relationship with the past. These Chapters enable a distinction to be drawn between the production of history by the 'observer-historian' and the storytelling performances of the fieldwork interviewees. The latter have cognitive, ethical, and emotional impacts on both the performers and their audience, which are

different from those of historical inquiry. The storytelling – marked by pain, tiredness, anxiety, timetables, lunch and prayer breaks and creative effort in the present – is 'called up' in the interview by the researcher. This 'calling up' for the purposes of the project is an act which carries with it ethical and intellectual responsibilities both during the interview and in analysing or theorizing the fieldwork before and after. This section particularly concerns the intellectual issues associated with fieldwork in a culture and language different from the researcher's own.

As indicated earlier, I am not using the interviews to write an alternative history of Aceh. In this respect, Mary Zurbuchen sounds a timely note of caution about alternative historiographical interpretations based on individual voices such as those of the victims of violence in Suharto's Indonesia:

> The danger for alternative historiography … in writing 'against' Suharto [and the painful legacies of the New Order] as a project of perceived victims is that this could lead to new kinds of unbalanced memories. Can national histories be written for a new generation of student that will situate, not eliminate, the cross-cutting categories of *pelaku* (perpetrator) as well as *korban* (victim)? (Zurbuchen 2005: 26).

This issue of political tendentiousness and victimhood is related to the suspicion that fieldwork interviewees in economically poor regions will focus on stories of disaster and deprivation in the hope that the researcher will offer some financial or other relief. As Scott et al note:

> Foreigners who may be able to offer know-how, services, products or investments may be more appreciated than critical development geographers and other academic researchers (Scott et al. 2006: 35).

I occasionally encountered an attitude of suspicion by other researchers towards the motives of interviewees in storytelling; however my fieldwork experience included only a very few interviews where I felt that the 'life story' was told in a way intended to elicit at least sympathy, and at most a financial contribution. For most interviewees, the story of their lives is a sad one because it is also the recent story of Aceh: of extended periods of

62

conflict, material insufficiency, and lack of access to education and health services. The life stories 'materialize' this history in the everyday quests for food, livelihood and safety, as well as providing information on political and environmental context. Many interviewees were reticent initially about their lives, and uncertain about the purpose of the research and what they could contribute. The small number of interviewees – at most two – who appeared to be seeking some support from the researcher was greatly exceeded by the majority who were generous with their limited energy and hospitable with the limited food and drink in their households. It is impossible to be certain of the intentions and motives of others, but in the old Acehnese I found most notably an absence of condemning others for acts of oppression, a concern to be helpful in my research project, and an interest in conveying to me, a stranger in Aceh, 'what it was like' in the past.

The interpreter is a crucial figure in the ways in which the interviewees, their world and their words are represented. Interpreting during an interview requires decision-making 'on the run' about how to translate complex concepts, complicated by the fact that '[language] speaks of a particular social reality that may not necessarily have a conceptual equivalence in the language into which it is to be translated' (Temple et al. 2002: 5). The researcher needs to be always aware of limitations on interpretation imposed by the circumstances of cross-language interviews. Kate Maclean suggests that it is useful for the reflexive researcher to 'problematize' any potentially misleading terms in a translation (Maclean 2007: 787); this leads the researcher to reflect on her own understanding of significant concepts within her own culture and language (Maclean's example from her fieldwork is the concept of 'citizenship') (Maclean 2007: 789). The following discussion explains how I sought to incorporate this kind of reflexiveness in interpreting and translating.

The approach to translation in this doctoral project has been to discuss with Acehnese people and other scholars the meanings of some concepts for which there do not appear to be exact equivalents in English (*seungsara* – suffering, *seumikee* – remembering/thinking about/contemplating, are two examples of inexact pairs). Occasionally, the translator has simply noted uncertainty about the translation:

Bapak M-d[8] (72 years old)

> …I might be driven crazy… [Interpreter's note: Bapak said *hana pah*: I am not sure how to translate this, usually it means something that went out wrong and not according to someone's plan, sometimes people also use this word to express crazy in a polite way].

These inexactitudes are however examples of the remarkable in fieldwork – glimpses of other realities which, as Maclean suggests, also cast a reflexive light onto the researcher's own understanding of the world. Kate Grenville's novel *The Lieutenant* is based on the notebooks of colonial Australian astronomer William Dawes (the same Dawes referred to earlier in my discussion of Paul Carter's *Material Thinking* (2004)). It shows the reader how communication across languages between the Aboriginal girl (called Tagaran in the novel) and the astronomer (Daniel Rooke in the novel) leaps forward when Rooke suspends his too-ready assumption of understanding:

> There was the first ebullient entry: *Marray – wet*. He could remember the triumph of it. He had been so satisfied with himself, he saw now, that he had even put a full stop.
>
> He was chilled by the confidence of those entries. How misplaced had been his triumph, how wrong the dogmatism of that full stop. *Marray*. Yes, it might have meant *wet*. It might have meant *raindrop*, or *on your hand*. It might have meant *dirty* or *mud*, because the drops on his palm made mud out of the dust that had been there. It might have meant *pink*, the colour of that palm, or *skin*…
>
> …He took up his pen, dipped it in the ink and turned the full stop into a comma, adding: *the English of which is not yet certain* (Grenville 2008: 231-232).

Later, Rooke notes:

---

[8] Bapak is an honorific term for addressing adult men, Ibu for adult women. All proper names of interviewees have been replaced by abbreviations to preserve anonymity.

> …you did not learn a language without entering into a relationship with the people who spoke it with you…It was the slow constructing of the map of a relationship.
> Learning a language was not a matter of joining *any two points* with a line. It was a leap into the other (Grenville 2008: 233-234).

It is this suspension of assumptions which allows Rooke to translate in a much deeper way the word Tagaran uses to comfort him at their final meeting, when he confesses that he has been ordered to take part in a punitive (killing) expedition against her tribe:

> She went over to the fireplace and held out her hands to the coals. He thought it was her polite way of ending their conversation. But then she turned back to him and held out her hands for his. She pressed his fingers with her own …
> '*Putuwa*,' she said, pressing and smoothing. '*Putuwa*.'
> Their hands were the same temperature now.
> '*Putuwa*,' he repeated.
> She pressed harder, smoothing with larger gestures and he understood the word to mean the action she was performing, that is to warm one's hand by the fire and then to squeeze gently the fingers of another person. In English it required a long rigmarole of words … Tagaran was teaching him a word, and by it she was showing him a world (Grenville 2008: 255).

Like the sense of 'crazy' hinted at in my translator's comment earlier, an attempt to convey meaning in English words must also convey something of the *world* of the original term. *Hana pah* (literally 'not exact' or 'not a good fit', but also 'there is no good fit' (Daud et al. 1999) might be understood to imply a disconnect between a person and the world, possibly because the person does not 'fit in' to the world, or because they are delusional. In this context the speaker is describing the magnitude of his grief after the 2004 tsunami destroyed his village and killed many people including his own child, and the need to believe in God in order to manage this grief 'or I might be driven crazy'; the mismatch between the man and the world in this case might instead be the result of something wrong with the world, rather than with the man. A belief that the world is still operating according to God's plan ('But we still have strong faith that this is God's plan, we belong to God,

God creates us and God takes us back' (transcript Bapak M-d)) then appears as a way of avoiding craziness by 'righting' the world, and faith as a way not of 'righting' the person but of allowing the person to perceive the world thus 'righted.'

This and the many other examples of uncertainty in interpretation and translation from Acehnese to English cannot be resolved in a project of this scope but they do caution the researcher, like Grenville's narrator Daniel Rooke, against making assumptions that a translation has fully represented the words of the speaker.

The written transcripts of my interviews with old Acehnese were also made by my interview interpreter, who is Acehnese. This had significant benefits because she was able to consult her parents (a senior Acehnese religious leader and an Acehnese businesswoman) when she felt uncertain about the translation of particular words (there are variations in Acehnese language from district to district). The transcripts include, as I had requested, pauses, laughter and asides, and are translated word for word rather than in the 'sound bites' required for maintaining a conversation during the interviews. The transcriptions make it much more evident than did the running 'sound bites' how different, in fact, each story was from another. Except for minor punctuation, tense or plural/singular corrections however, I have used the translation as provided to me. To add yet another layer of translation into textbook English, especially one originating from a non-Acehnese speaker such as myself, would have attenuated still further the relationship between the storyteller's original words and their understanding by readers of this thesis.

I believe therefore that the verbatim transcripts made by my interpreter from digital recordings of the interviews have preserved as much as possible of the meaning intended by the speakers.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of the way in which the chronotope of 'a life' produces a particular interpretation of the past through life stories, and Chapter 5 analyses the life stories through an examination of their structure and content. To some extent these interpretive methods answer concerns about loss or change of meaning in the processes of translation. Focusing analysis on chronotope and composition allows the potential conceptual mismatches between words to remain unresolved. However imprecise my understanding of the complex concepts used to represent experience in Acehnese, the

composition and chronotope used in life stories enables them to span, and pull together through the locus of 'a life', widely disparate spatial and temporal scales and to shift the listener's perspective between past to present; these qualities will be used in later Chapters to argue for the value of life stories in theory and practice of adaptation and resilience.

There remain however issues of representation which have little to do with accurate translation of words; the politics of representing the voice of 'the cultural other' in research is discussed further below.

Ethics of engagement with the interviewees

A life story is both a response to the interview situation which prompted it, and a story about 'what happened', that is those events and conditions which have 'entered into the biography' of the storyteller (Labov 1997: 399). However both the act of calling forth these life stories in interviews, and the act of interpreting, theorizing and writing about them, are actions undertaken by the researcher with potential impacts on others, and hence occur either tacitly or explicitly within an ethical framework.

The political and ethical dilemmas in the position of a researcher undertaking 'extractive' research have been eloquently argued (England 1994; Gade 2001; Till 2001; Scott et al. 2006). On the other hand, it has been pointed out that this kind of research can lead to increased understanding between cultures, and the potential to make theory more accountable, which are positive outcomes (Hyndman 2001; Scheyvens et al. 2003a). Moreover Scheyvens et al note that it should not be presumed that participants do not retain the capacity to exercise some discretionary 'research resistance' at both individual and community level (2003b: 5).

In observing the ethics guidelines and the approval process of my home university, I was mindful not only of issues concerned with safekeeping of records or anonymity of sources. I also hoped to ensure that participants were not imposed upon financially or time-wise, and that they were informed and willing to assist me in the project. The process nonetheless did remain an 'extractive' one, since only minor financial compensation was offered for time spent away from the fields, and there was no immediate real return from the project to the participants.

However my experience undertaking fieldwork raised ethical issues which had less to do with this kind of intellectual 'taking', or protection of anonymity and data, and more to do with the potential for unwitting harm and trauma to participants. The following is an outline of the fieldwork process I undertook to interview 24 old people in Aceh over the age of 65, and the ethical issues this raised for my interactions with them.

My fieldwork in Aceh Besar district took place over six months (November 2008-May 2009), which allowed me some cultural adjustment time and the opportunity to locate a skilled English-speaking Acehnese interpreter who respected and enjoyed talking with older people. I had been informed by colleagues that most of the older people in Aceh lived in rural areas and this was supported by the available statistics which indicated that about 70% of Acehnese live in rural areas (BPS Statistics - Indonesia 2010). There are more than 220,000 people over the age of 60 living in rural districts or towns compared to 22,000 of this age group living within the four main cities of Banda Aceh, Sabang, Lhokseumawe and Langsa (a ratio of 10:1 for those over 60 compared to a ratio of 7:1 for the total population) (Arifin et al. 2007: 20, Table 2).

Consequently I focused my efforts on gaining access to older people in rural areas and decided early in the fieldwork process that all my interviewees would be non-city dwellers so that the content of life stories might overlap to a greater extent and allow other qualities of the recollections to emerge more clearly. I obtained assistance in locating older people in rural areas through the Asian Development Bank, HelpAge International, and academics at the State Islamic University (IAIN) and University of Syiah Kuala in Banda Aceh and my home university. I also had the opportunity to briefly discuss my project with Byron Good, Professor of Medical Anthropology at Harvard Medical School, who was completing a psychosocial needs assessment in Aceh at the same time (Good et al. 2007); he advised me, inter alia, to be wary of mistaking symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) for cultural and age-related behaviour [9].

To ask older people to talk about the past, especially a past as traumatic as that of Aceh, is

---

[9] Professor Byron Good, Harvard University, personal communication in Banda Aceh, 18 January 2009.

to delve into an unknowable reservoir of experience and has the potential to cause emotional and physical pain in the present. Most of the 24 people I interviewed were between 70 and 90 years old, born before World War II. I interviewed twelve men and twelve women (a recording of one woman's interview was however unusable). Many had lived as children through the time of the Dutch occupation (up to 1942), then through the Japanese invasion and occupation (1942-1945), the 1945-46 Tjumbok rebellion which overthrew the old Acehnese aristocracy, the 1950s Darul Islam movement for Acehnese independence, the 1965-66 anti-Communist purges by the Suharto-led Indonesian military, then 30 years of conflict between the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) and the Indonesian military which officially ended in 2005. Three of the four villages where I conducted interviews had been inundated and completely destroyed by the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, resulting in the deaths of many or most family members, the destruction of homes and livelihoods, and at least two years of living in temporary barracks.

A map of Indonesia showing the location of the province of Aceh, and a map of Aceh showing the location of the Kabupatan (district) of Aceh Besar where the interview took place are shown in Figures 1A and 1B at the front of this thesis.

This history of conflict and the tsunami disaster has had impacts on Acehnese people which include: trauma, both physical and psychological; prolonged periods of fear and anxiety; overwork, exhaustion and physical debility from a young age; and loss and grief. Old Acehnese in particular suffer from an accumulation of most of these impacts (Good et al. 2007: 5). At the beginning of the fieldwork, and based on a 'pilot' interview undertaken in Banda Aceh and several in Australia, I had developed the following principles for my interpreter and myself, which although rather simple and obvious needed to be constantly recalled by us during the fieldwork:

- Do not let it become an 'exam' for the interviewee

- Do not become blasé when a story appears similar to that told by another interviewee

- Do no harm

- Talk about this with my interpreter

I believe I was fortunate in working with an Acehnese interpreter who was greatly interested in the project and the stories told in the interviews, and hence, in her role effectively as the interlocutor of old Acehnese, gave them her unwavering attention and sympathy. Her tertiary education and her respect for old people meant also that we did not encounter the situation where 'interpreters may not appreciate the rationale for asking the same question to different people in subsequent interviews' (Scott et al. 2006: 38). In accordance with our agreed principle 'Do not become blasé', we did not indicate during the interviews whether we had 'heard that story before', although sometimes the stories had similar content.

It has been suggested that the appropriateness of an interpreter depends to some extent on 'the degree to which they can engage with people of different backgrounds, and be conscious of their own positionality' (Scott et al. 2006: 37). While my interpreter shared the Acehnese ethnicity and Islamic culture of our interviewees, she came from a more affluent background. The kind of respectfulness she showed for the old seemed unmarked by this economic disparity, but I do not know whether it was noted by the interviewees or had an impact on their stories[10].

The principles of 'not making it an exam', 'not becoming blasé', and 'doing no harm' were intended to guide our vigilance in balancing the interests of researcher and researched. My interpreter entered fully into the spirit of these principles, and occasionally alerted me to distress in interviewees on occasions where the concentration required and the time-lags of translation resulted in slow reaction times on my part. It was also important at the beginning of each interview to make clear that, unlike an examination, there were no 'correct' responses to our questions, and that anything the interviewees wished to tell us about their lives would be valuable and interesting. There was an almost universal self-

---

[10] My interpreter also came from a family where Islam was a matter of scholarly and religious leadership as well as practice, and she provided me with much valuable background on the religious aspects of old people's life stories.

deprecating concern by interviewees that they 'knew nothing', or were 'stupid and uneducated', and a courteous and frequent checking to see whether their stories were of interest or relevant to the research project. The only, and honest, response to this was that everything they said was of deep interest and extremely relevant.

The interviews were in this way as open-ended as possible, with the *benang merah* [11] only that the interviewees tell stories about their life from childhood up to the present, although for the reasons indicated below, not necessarily in that order. Linear biographical time was used occasionally to offer a prompt when conversation halted ('and then what happened after you left school?'), but in general very few of the transcripts are chronologically structured. The way in which the interview structured the stories is explored further in Chapter 5; in this Chapter I focus on the ethical aspects of the process.

Most of the old people I interviewed were concerned to meet the needs of the research project, and brought to the interviews both an Acehnese tradition of courtesy to strangers and personal kindliness. This, coupled with somewhat attenuated communication via an interpreter, meant that at times the speakers extended themselves to the point of distress in order to answer my questions. In response, I often curtailed interviews or reverted to a topic on which the interviewee had appeared more relaxed or animated. Sometimes it was necessary to 'let go' of my concern about younger people answering questions on behalf of their older relative, and engage family members in a wider conversation in order to reduce an apparent sense of isolation and anxiety in the interviewee. What is reflected in the fieldwork transcripts for this thesis is often a quick 'moving on' from conversations causing distress. As a result the interviews did not proceed on a neat trajectory over the life course of each interviewee, but were marked by the following:

- the telling of stories which were not chronological accounts, but collections of anecdotes, many traumatic or sad;

- interviewees forgetting or not wanting to talk about the past;

---

[11] The 'red thread' which connects.

- interviewees weeping, impatient or irritable, or laughing in an apparently self-deprecating or ironical way;

- evidence in some people of possible depression or PTSD symptoms (agitation, lack of eye contact, withdrawn manner, severe aches and pains);

- interviewees relaxing and becoming more animated when the conversation turned to their children, grandchildren, or to work – a craft, farming, home-based factory, fishing, midwifery.

The physical manifestations of past trauma and current poverty, compounded by age, also affected the interaction between interviewer and interviewee:

- physical discomfort for the interviewees who spent often more than an hour sitting cross-legged on a thin mat on a concrete floor;

- shortness of breath and exhaustion after an hour of interview;

- vision problems for many interviewees suffering from cataract and scarring of the eyes, which meant they were unable to clearly see me or my interpreter.

Byron Good suggests that when Acehnese people talk about the past, rather than using the active verb 'ingat' meaning *remember*, they use the more complex and passive term 'teringat' – *being in a state of* reminded or remembering[12]. My interpreter informed me that most of our interviewees used '*teringat*' (or '*tingat*', its Acehnese equivalent), although she had also occasionally translated as 'remember' the word '*pikee*' (or '*seumikee*') which is associated with thinking as contemplating, pondering or reminiscing[13].

Thus the interviewer who asks people to recall a traumatic past may be creating a situation where remembering is replaced by a process more like an 'occupation' of the interviewee (the Oxford Indonesian dictionary defines '*teringat*' as 'enter your mind' (Sahanaya et al. 2006)). This reflects a wider point about 'the importance of the interview in the life of an

---

[12] Professor Byron Good, Harvard University, personal communication in Banda Aceh, 18 January 2009.

[13] Ainul Fajri, written comments on transcripts 5 February 2009 and 2 May 2009.

older person and…the responsibility of the historian to understand and empathise with the strong emotions which an interview may evoke' (historian Paul Thompson quoted in Bornat 2003: 191).

In cases of traumatic memory, the interviewee may be unable to give a verbalized account of what happened. Hyndman notes that in field research '[t]he event is not what happens. The event is that which can be narrated' (Feldman quoted in Hyndman 2001: 264). She goes on to quote Stanford University anthropologist Liisa Malkki's work on Hutu refugees:

> … It may be precisely by giving up the scientific detective's urge to know 'everything' that we gain access to those very partial vistas that our informants may desire or think to share with us (Malkki 1995: 51).

Nevertheless, the most disconcerting aspect of the interviews was the effort which interviewees made to meet the needs of my research project. No-one declined to answer questions (only one did not wish to be recorded), many checked that they had understood what was required of them and that I understood what they were telling me. They provided detailed anecdotes even when distressed, thanked me at the end of the interview, and wished me well in my research. My assumption that I would 'guide' the process did not take account of the seriousness with which each person approached the interview and my research, and that the needs and interests of the researcher would also become a factor in those of the interviewee.

I concluded that even in post-traumatic environments, the relationship between interviewer and interviewee is a negotiation between two agents whose awareness of their own and the other's needs and interests informs the research process and the costs which each is prepared to pay.

This conclusion is an example of those unexpected and illuminating experiences of the researcher which were discussed in the Introduction; such impacts on the researcher are the subject of the following section.

Transformation and visibility of the researcher

> The geographer returned from a lengthy spell in *terra exotica* has gained insight into other argumentative systems, epistemological parameters, and realms of conceptual meaning. Such liberation from one's own culture can alter the whole trajectory of being a geographer (Gade 2001: 377).

∞

Jennifer Hyndman's discussion of the ethical issues in fieldwork suggests that fieldwork can result in personal transformation and perspective change, and changes the researcher's world upon their return:

> The field-worker, like the travel writer of the past, is changed by exposure to new places and insights, and she or he returns to a changed place … The field, then, is both here and then, a continuum of time and place (265).

Fieldwork, or 'embedded' research (Wickson et al. 2006: 1053), especially in a country which is culturally unfamiliar to the researcher and has had a traumatic recent history, has the potential to provide the kind of 'disorientation' which Edward Taylor describes as potentially transformative. This transformation, often arising without conscious reflection, occurs 'when a radically different and incongruent experience cannot be assimilated into the [existing] meaning perspective' (Taylor 1998: 7). It has implications at a level beyond the work of the research project and may result, suggests Taylor, in a perspective transformation, for example to a more inclusive and discriminating world view (1998: 11). Hyndman notes for example that in her own research, the 'field' becomes 'a network of power relations in which I am a small link' (2001: 263).

Taylor uses as an example of disorientation the experience of working within another culture; Shoshona Felman seeks to produce a similar transformation in her students through teaching based on the testimony of witnesses who experienced traumatic historical events:

> Testimonial teaching fosters the capacity to witness something that may be surprising, cognitively dissonant. The surprise implies the crisis. Testimony cannot be authentic without that crisis, which has to break and to transvaluate previous categories and previous frames of reference (Felman et al. 1992: 53-54).

74

This kind of transformation through dissonance resonates with ideas of transdisciplinarity in which the practitioner seeks to transcend the boundaries of understanding within particular disciplines and worldviews, to make discoveries and connections which can only be seen from a new meta-perspective (Nicolescu 1998; Ramadier 2004; Max-Neef 2005). The new perspective which is attained allows hitherto unseen connections and contingencies to be perceived and articulated which provide, for example, a more inclusive, more integrated understanding of the relationship between phenomena. Wilber (1995 (2000)) and Slaughter (2006) suggest that where this meta-perspective is focused on a complex problem, it opens up new opportunities for creative solutions, and for a less egocentric, less culturally determined approach to problem-solving.

My fieldwork in Aceh produced the kind of 'dissonance' discussed by Taylor and Felman. With limited language skills, and working in a culture where religious beliefs and gender relations for example appeared very different from those in my previous experience, I found that I eventually let go of my anxiety and opinions about 'the way things were done' in Aceh. In the absence of these stressors, my interactions with Acehnese people occurred more easily and my initial concerns and reactions became almost irrelevant. I learned, and changed my views, about many issues, including the role of Islam in everyday life, the complex and politically charged relations between Western non-government organisations and many Acehnese; the unexpected priorities for families and communities in the wake of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami; and the kind of lived experience of Acehnese over the past 80+ years which bore very little relationship to any experience of my own or my ancestors. I also learned about the way Australia and other Western countries are perceived, or in some cases, barely perceived at all, despite strong formal ties in diplomatic, education and economic sectors. All of this learning has informed the interpretation of the interview transcripts, my reflections on my relationship with the interviewees, and the development of some of the moral and political dimensions of this thesis. The researcher who arrived in Aceh in November 2008 is very different from the one who wrote this thesis in Australia in 2010-2011.

The researcher may change, but Gayatri Spivak reminds us that the researcher is always present and framing the research and its results (Spivak 1988: 274). Similarly, Portelli

notes that '[i]nstead of discovering sources, oral historians partly create them. Far from becoming mere mouthpieces for the working class, oral historians may be using other people's words, but are still responsible for the overall discourse' (Portelli 2003: 72).

Spivak suggests that, while blurred, the distinction between 'representing' as *speaking for* the other, and 're-presenting' as *describing* the other, needs to be maintained in order to discover when the former is pretending to be the latter (for example when a Marxist economic materialist claims to merely 'describe' those who are impoverished as belonging to a particular economic class (Spivak 1988: 277)). If Western researchers wish to '*re-present*' the cultural 'other' they need to learn first to clearly *represent* themselves (Spivak 1988: 275) so that the cultural and ideological framing of *re-presentation* is not hidden in an apparently 'transparent' researcher (Spivak 1988: 274).

A project is a product of particular goals and intentions (Schwanen 2007: 15) even where there is no originating 'problem-description'; making these explicit offers an opportunity to overtly position the researcher within the project. Such a position is described by the political, intellectual or emotional motivations for instigating the project, boundary decisions about people, times and places to be included in the scope of the project, choices concerning resources, and the intellectual and cultural frameworks within which analysis, interpretation and dissemination of results is to take place.

In making her/his positionality within the project explicit, the researcher is able to put her/his own cultural assumptions in some perspective in order to understand better the meaning of the storyteller's words, while maintaining the separateness required in order to act as a proper 'witness to the eyewitness' (Carter 2004, Collaboration 1). For Felman, this 'empathy with separation' is an essential quality of the witness to a trauma victim's testimony:

> While overlapping, to a degree, with the experience of the victim, he
> nonetheless does not become the victim – he preserves his own separate place,
> position and perspective; a battleground for forces raging in himself, to which
> he has to pay attention and respect if he is to properly carry out his task.
>
> The listener, therefore, has to be at the same time a witness to the trauma

witness and a witness to himself. It is only in this way … that he can become

the enabler of the testimony – the one who triggers its initiation, as well as the

guardian of its process and of its momentum (Felman et al. 1992: 58).

The guidelines for interviews discussed earlier in this section were useful to me in both enabling and acknowledging the story, while remaining sensitive to the well-being of the interviewee.

The second factor in saying anything valuable about the cultural other through '*re-presenting*' (describing) them is to explore what it is in their conversations or performances that appears remarkable to the researcher. In order to go beyond mere exclamation ('framing of the world-as-exhibition' (Hyndman 2001: 264)), this needs to be done in conjunction with self-understanding. Unlike exclamations, drawing attention to what is 'remarkable *to us*' entails a reflexivity about how the commentator perceives and judges the other. This is an extension of the 'opportunity to deconstruct hegemonic terms' noted above, which Maclean suggests can emerge from a reflexive approach to translation of conceptual terms (Maclean 2007: 789).

The 'self-conscious' project locates the researcher, the participant 'others', the processes of interpretation and theorizing, and the project outcomes or impacts within a structure which clearly marks within it the path of the researcher as one of reflexivity, learning and transformation. The interpretive stages of narrative – prefiguration, configuration and refiguration, drawn from Paul Ricoeur's work, were discussed in the Introduction to this thesis; framing the doctoral project in terms of these three stages also helps to make explicit the responsibilities and the role of the researcher as they emerge differently at each of these stages. Figure 2 at the end of this Chapter shows a process which locates the cultural and other factors, including the selection of 'chronotopes', which 'prefigure' the work of the project, the goals and responsibilities of the researcher in 'configuring' the material, and the ethical, political and cultural factors which influence the outcomes produced for 'refiguration' in the wider world.

Examples of my 'prefiguring' assumptions which pulled together resources, people and ideas at particular times and places included potential kinships between life story recollection and the 'remembering' of adaptation/resilience cycles, and my political motivation in re-examining the role of the old in society. Physical, psychological and other qualities of the old Acehnese people, reflected in the content and style of their stories, are also a part of the 'prefiguration' stage of the project. At the configuration stage, the impacts of the interview process on both participants and the researcher, and the ways we responded to each other, have been outlined above and informed my interpretation of both stories and storytelling.

Configuration in this doctoral project includes presenting the outcomes of the research so that they face outwards to the world, not only as an examinable dissertation, but also to enter discourse, articulate a political and ethical view about ageing, adaptation and resilience, and potentially inform future world views and policy on 'the old' as well as future thinking about social-ecological systems. The interactions in which the text meets the world and is interpreted or re-interpreted by them, constitute the final 'reconfiguration' stage of the text and the project.

CONCLUSION

This research project is concerned with adding new material to existing theoretical frameworks for understanding the past. Rather than 'evidence' for the occurrence of past events, such material provides a different kind of understanding of the past through the spatiotemporal chronotope of 'a life'. The ethnography of life stories obtained through fieldwork in Aceh *reveals gaps* in history and theory, but is also *illuminated by* several juxtaposed theoretical frameworks which themselves prove to have a kinship with this kind of data.

There are obvious kinships between life story recollection and theories of memory and subjectivity, historiography, narrative and literary theory and trauma theory; less obviously, there is a potential kinship between the remembering of life stories and the 'remembering' of adaptation cycles in theories of the behaviour of social-ecological systems. An additive approach to theory in interpreting fieldwork thus has potential not only for understanding fieldwork data more deeply, but to forge new connections between apparently very separate
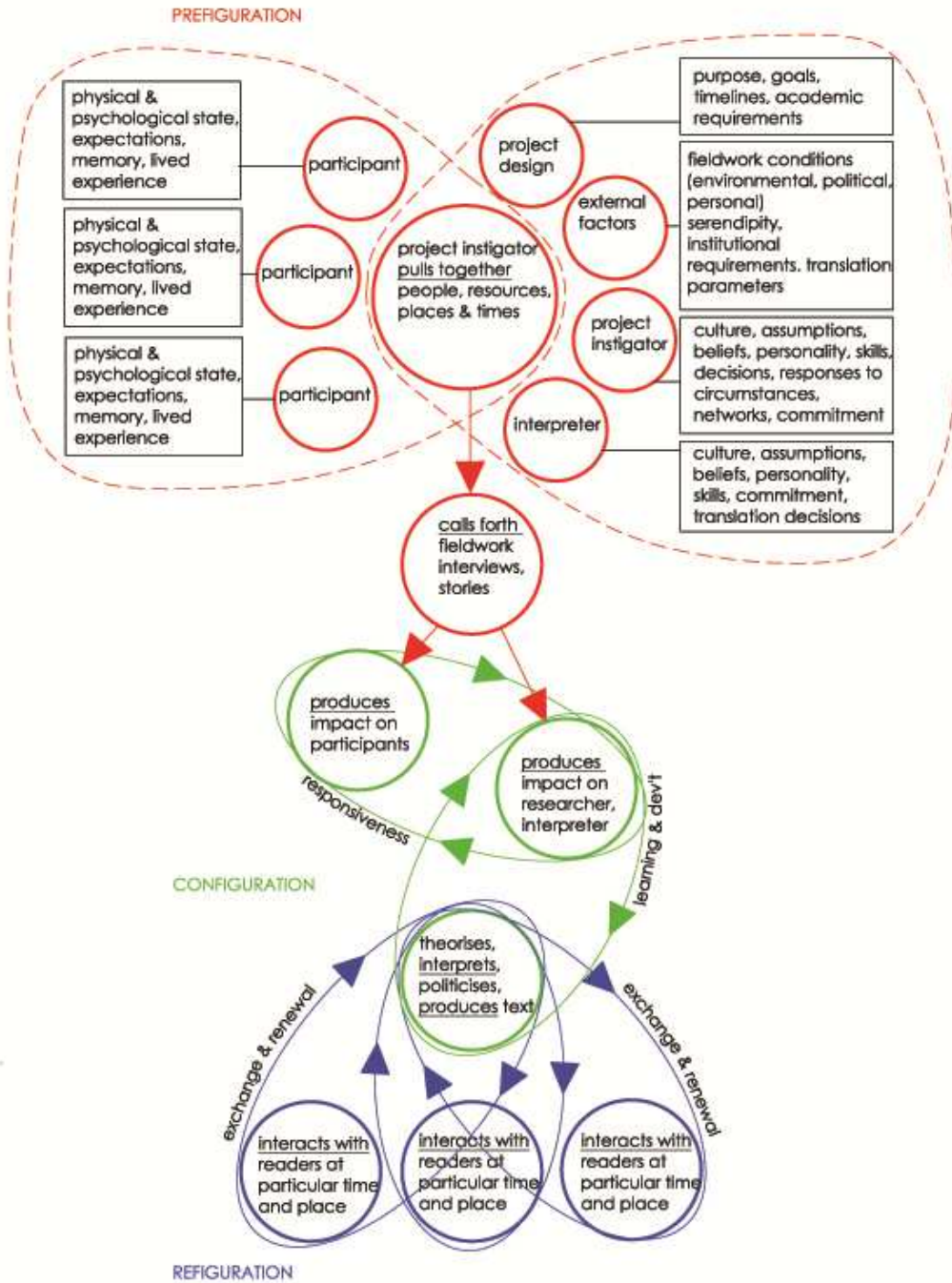
FIGURE 2: PROJECT MAP

theoretical frameworks.

Moreover the production of a life story is an action with repercussions for storyteller and listener, reflected in the speaker's performance and the listener's response. The 'data' is thus both the story and the act of storytelling, and interpretation of the data must address both. The kind of engagements between speaker and listener, and eventually between the listener and other parts of the world, are as important in understanding the contribution made by life stories as the interpretation of the story 'text'. The following Chapter is a review and comparison of theoretical approaches to the connections between the 'subject' and their recollections; I use my fieldwork data from Aceh to exemplify or challenge some of this theory, and to propose some new distinctions between history and life stories in their respective connections with the past.

Chapter 4 then explores the different kinds of understanding resulting from these distinctive connections with the past, and Chapter 5 examines the particular ways in which the text of each life story conveys its kind of understanding to the listener-reader. These Chapters draw on many ideas from psychoanalytic theory, psychology, memory studies, literary theory, historiography and cultural studies. In the final Chapter, Chapter 6, a further field of discourse – adaptation and resilience theory – is introduced and the value of life story ethnography for adaptation in social-ecological systems is examined.

3. CONSTRUCTING THE SUBJECT: ACCRETION AND TEMPORALITY

INTRODUCTION

> … a period is only seen as such by the historian. For those who lived in the period, it would just be the way life was lived (Danto 1981: 206).

> We tell stories because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated … The whole history of suffering cries out for vengeance and calls for narrative (Ricoeur 1984: 74).

∞

Both the interviewee who tells a life story, and the historian writing a history of a nation, movement, development or period, are telling a story about 'what happened' in the past. One overarching aim of this thesis is to answer the question:

> What are the differences between the ways in which a history and a life story illuminate our understanding of the past?

The period which is the historian's subject was the period of an individual's experience. Danto's point above is that the historian's point of view is always 'outside', so that an historical period has 'an inside and an outside, a kind of surface available to the historian and a kind of inwardness belonging to those who live the period in question' (Danto 1981: 205). This difference persists even where those subjects of the 'historical period' are still living and so become both the one who experiences and the one who looks back at events from the 'outside' at a later date; this dual position is occupied particularly by those who are old. The relationship between these inside and outside views of the past is explored later in this Chapter.

However the memory of the individual is at least in part also a product of the memories of family, community, nation etc, and of conditions and events experienced by previous generations. I argue below that the memories of an individual include 'learnings' from the past and from others (such as contemporaries and historians), but that the remembering of the individual can nonetheless be conceptually distinguished from collective or social remembering. Further, objects and places which are described as 'sites of memory' possess memory in a different way from the individual memorist.

The claim for a particular kind of contribution from the memorist in understanding the past rests on a conception of the 'subject' whose memories and whose past are, in some sense, their own. This conception of a subject whose experience stretches continuously and cumulatively from the past into the present is a contested one. 'The subject' has been deconstructed by various theorists as a series of positions within prevailing discourses such as those concerning gender, ethnicity, age or sexuality; the nature of the subject and subjectivity is the focus of this Chapter.

In particular, my argument that the accretiveness of experience is what makes life stories a unique contribution to understanding both the past and the present relies on psychoanalytic conceptions of a continuous subject, evidenced most strongly in the material impacts of traumatic events, and on the capacity of the subject to negotiate and resist discourse. These impacts and capacities in turn require continuity not just of 'a body' but of a subjectivity which is produced as a result of accrued experience over time, and a subjectivity which can return, through memory and psychoanalysis, to earlier cognitive, emotional, and even physical states.

This Chapter addresses the questions:

1. What are the differences between the subject's relationship with the past and the historian's?

2. What conception of 'the subject' is required in order for such a distinction to be made?

In accordance with the additive theoretical approach proposed in the previous Chapter, I propose to identify a set of historiographical principles, using mainly the work of two leading twentieth century historiography theorists, Louis Mink and Paul Ricoeur, and then to use these principles to explore connections between an individual's experience and recollection. The set of historiographical principles will thus act as the 'prenotion' (of Chapter 2), delimiting the discussion of memory and recollection for the purposes of this Chapter.

I have chosen Mink and Ricoeur to lead my examination of historiography because they are both early theorists, in historiography, of the 'narrative turn', which has now taken place in

many other disciplines (see Angus et al. 2004; Berger et al. 2004; Roberts 2006 for discussion on narrative turns in the fields of psychotherapy, sociology and international relations respectively). In 1993, medical sociologist Catherine Kohler Riessman noted that 'leading U.S. scholars from various disciplines are turning to narrative as the organizing principle of human action' (1993: 1). The narrative turn has been particularly strong in memory studies and studies of ageing (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995; Baars 1997; Freeman 1997b; Biggs 1999; Heikkinen 2004; Hewer et al. 2010).

In qualitative research, the 'narrative turn' has been claimed to be a more sensitive approach to the interpretation of field data which avoids the assumptions of particular theories or methods; it also promotes reflexivity when the researcher includes her/himself in the narrative:

> The narrative turn promotes multiple forms of representation and research; away from facts and toward meanings; away from master narratives and toward local stories … away from writing essays and toward telling stories … (Bochner 2001: 134-135).

> … at the beginning of the 21st century, the narrative turn has been taken. Many have learned how to write differently, including how to locate themselves in their texts (Denzin et al. 2003: 4).

Based on the review of narrative historiography below, Chapter 4 will discuss the limitations of narrative in understanding the life stories of the old people I interviewed in Aceh, and hence in understanding the past which the stories represent. In the following I use the overview of historiography, along with the transcripts of my fieldwork interviews, to expand on the relationship between the memorist and her/his past. I argue that the past as told in life stories not only has a different relationship with the storyteller from history with the historian, but that stories of experience have a very different kind of value for the historian than they do for ethnographers and for theorists in the fields of psychology, psychoanalysis, memory and trauma studies.

LESSONS FROM HISTORIOGRAPHY: THE HISTORIAN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PAST

> … it is salutary to be reminded that historiography is a matter of fallible inference and interpretation, but the reminder does not touch the point of the common-sense distinction between history and fiction … that the events and actions of past actuality happened just as they did, and there is therefore something for historiography, however fallible, to be about, something which makes it true or false even though we have no access to that something except through historical reconstruction from present evidence (Mink 1987b: 184).

<div align="center">∞</div>

Each of the subsections below examines one aspect of narrative historiography in order to arrive at a summary set of historiographical principles.

History as a narrative reconstruction

Louis Mink argues that while we prefer to see historical facts as 'resisting … manipulation, we remain uncomfortably aware that they are the conclusions of very complex and fallible arguments' (Mink 1987c: 94). Yet we remain convinced that 'the past is after all *there*, with a determinateness beyond … our partial reconstructions … We still want to call historical knowledge a *re*construction not a construction *simpliciter*' (Mink 1987c: 93-94).

The idea that history writing is different from fiction, but, like fiction, is a construction designed to render the world intelligible, is the basis of the Ricoeur's argument that 'historical knowledge proceeds from our narrative understanding' (1984: 92) and that, consequently, history is told as narrative. Hence '[h]istory cannot escape literature because it cannot escape itself: history presents the results of its enquiries, its research, as narrative, and so necessarily enters into and partakes of the world of literary forms' (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 11). Arthur Danto claims that, history as explanation must be 'followable', that is, have narrative direction, and an 'acceptable' or credible conclusion (cited in Ricoeur 1984: 150).

It must be noted that while narrative (and emplotment) has been the preferred genre of traditional historians, in the late twentieth century postmodern historians engaged with a range of alternative writing forms based on other genres such as film and the novel, including montage, micro-narratives and multiple points of view; Curthoys et al note

however that many remained 'uncertain where they stood in the more theoretical debates about history and language, discourse, and subjectivity' (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 201-202). This imaginative experimentation in style has not flourished, possibly because of concern to retain an ideal of 'truth', especially in histories of catastrophe such as the Holocaust (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 212). Nevertheless the influence of postmodernism can be seen in a new concern with narrator reflexivity and methodological transparency, discussed later in this Chapter.

As narrative, history represents events or 'what happened' through three dimensions of creative imitation or 'mimesis', according to Ricoeur (1984: 45); these have been discussed briefly in the Introduction and Chapter 2. The first, which Ricoeur denotes with a subscript as mimesis$_1$ is our 'pre-understanding' of the world upon which any narrative depends, through for example the already established conceptual frameworks of linear time, symbolism, 'plot' and 'action' (54, 57). This *prefiguration* makes possible mimesis$_2$, the *configuring* of a series of episodes into a singular 'plot' with a story and an ending (66-68). Mimesis$_3$ is the connection of the narrative at a specific time with a particular hearer or reader – producing for example the reader's interpretation or emotional response - *refiguration* - and is the point at which 'the traversal of mimesis reaches its fulfilment' (70). This last dimension of narrative mimesis is Bakhtin's 'uptake' of the written work discussed in Chapter 2, the fulfilment of the author's intent in 'facing the text outwards' to its reader or listener: 'it is the reader who completes the work' (Ricoeur 1984: 77).

Making sense of change

The historian's purpose in using narrative is one of sense-making: to organize what was for those living at the time an infinitely complex 'chaotic present' into an 'intelligible past' for those living now (Mink 1966: 184; Ricoeur 1984: 99). The various kinds of intelligible pasts produced in this process are the subject of Chapter 4.

Mink points out that history is viewed by historians as a set of unique and unrepeatable events from which, therefore, no useful rules for action in the present can be derived (1987c: 96-97). What is needed instead of rules, he suggests, is a way in which history can bridge past and present by explaining change and development. Moreover such explanations would also need to accommodate the possibility that an earlier past may be

completely 'discontinuous with our own [current] institutions, interests, and modes of understanding' (1987c: 101). Hence an important problem for history is 'not the explanation of *events* but the understanding of *advents*….' (1987d: 115), explaining the emergence of a new set of conditions from the old. This is the kind of 'historical understanding' which captures, for example, the development of class consciousness (1987d: 115, 116).

The narrative and sense-making historiography of Mink and Ricoeur sees the crucial purpose of history as achieving an understanding of unfolding events, or of the advent of the new. Historians have argued that without this explanatory or sense-making quality, records of the past are mere 'chronicles'. One of the arguments used in the past by historiographers to suggest an absence of history writing in Indonesia for example, was that Indonesian stories of the past were simply records of sequences of events – chronicles - without a broader explanatory narrative: '…there was in the Southeast Asian tradition no interest in the past for itself' (Wang 1979: 4). Nevertheless Indonesian scholars have pointed to a range of written texts from Indonesia's past which concerned themselves with traditional 'historical' issues such as conflict and its resolution, and the development of culture and religion (see for example Harun 2004; Fakhriati 2009).

The value of evidence

While Ricoeur regards history texts as a narrative construction of the historian, his use of the term 'mimesis' as a form of correspondence between writing and the past maintains, like Mink, a realist ontological position on 'what happened':

> [W]e mean by historical event what actually happened in the past … [W]e admit that the property of having already occurred differs radically from that of not yet having occurred. In this sense, the pastness of what has happened is taken as an absolute property, independent of our constructions and reconstructions … (96).

For Ricoeur the historian is a 'judge' of evidence. In attempting to judge between possible explanations, historians therefore seek warrants, 'the most important of which is documentary proof" (175). Acknowledgement of both the narrative 'point of view' and of

the narrator as a judge of evidence is essential for understanding historical narration (178). This acknowledgement must, suggest Curthoys et al, be part of the historian's own reflexivity:

> No one – including us – would do history, would pursue historical research, unless she and he thought they could arrive, however provisionally, at some kind of truth about the past.
>
> …
>
> [However] [a] self-conscious recognition of the fictive elements in historical writing, we argue, strengthens – not weakens – the search for truth…[by exploring] the possibilities of kinds of historical writing that seek to relate multiple narratives, and self-reflexively foreground[ing] our awareness of our own present relation to the past (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 5-6).

'Evidence' for historians includes texts and artefacts from previous times, themselves the products of earlier individuals. History is connected to the recollection of individuals because 'events get their properly historical status from having been initially included in an official chronicle, eyewitness testimony, or a narrative based on personal memories' (Ricoeur 1984: 112). Nevertheless, there is no 'ideal chronicler' or 'absolutely faithful witness' who can record everything that happens as it occurs (145). Moreover the fallibility of the historian in speaking for those who lived in the past ethically requires, Wyschogrod suggests, a rigorous reflexivity on the part of the historian to make plain the historiographical practices and assumptions on which the narrative has been constructed (Wyschogrod 1998: 39). In recent times, 'evidence' has increasingly included oral histories from the living, which are valued in different ways from that of a 'chronicler of events'. The role of oral history is discussed further later in this Chapter.

Human action and structural change

Historians look in the present for traces of events they hypothesize must have occurred in the past to explain other events. However it is not sufficient, Ricoeur suggests, simply to arrive at a material cause and effect. An historical explanation encompasses actions and intentions:

How could the inhabitants of this place have been able to construct such a colossal city wall! The *explanandum* is a Humean effect: the walls are still standing. The *explanans* is also a Humean cause: the material means used for their construction. But the explanation is only a historical one if it takes a detour through action (city planning, architecture, etc.) (141).

It is 'plot' which is able to accommodate intention, action, intended and unintended consequences as well as circumstances 'in one intelligible whole' (Ricoeur 1984: 142). In narrative, lies 'the kind of explanatory answer solicited by the kind of questions that historians very often ask and are often asked of them – *how* and *why* questions' (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 143). For Ricoeur, the plot is told from the omniscient perspective of an historian/narrator who looks at and makes sense of 'what happened', rather than the perspective of the actor or agent in events at the time (171). The multi-vocal narratives produced through oral history, albeit with the historian as the ultimate 'autonomous narrator', are discussed in later sections of this Chapter.

Historiography has more recently drawn upon sociology, geography and demography, and relationships between entities such as classes, trends, economic development, entities incapable of 'memory' or text production: 'historical time appears to have no direct connection to the time of memory … It no longer seems to refer to the living present of a subjective consciousness' (Ricoeur 1984: 76). In this kind of historiography, the important connection between the subject and history, Ricoeur suggests, is overlooked; instead historians claim that historical explanation consists of developing various universal laws which guarantee that event type X or Y was bound to occur in certain conditions (112-113). This 'covering law' model of history denies both the uniqueness of the past, as noted above, and the importance of empathy, understanding, or interpretation which enable the historian to attribute value and significance to past events (114, 118). Neither does the 'total' history offered by developing a pattern of social or economic trends take account of the relationships, culture, and consciousness of 'those who apparently fail' as well as history's victors; it cannot provide a 'history from below' (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 140).

To counter the shortcomings of such an historiographical approach, Ricoeur suggests that

narrative can provide a 'relay station' between ideological or structural explanations of history such as Marxism (179), with their 'quasi-plots' and 'quasi-characters' – peoples, nations or civilizations – and 'the agents of real action' operating in lived time (181-182). This is Bakhtin's call, discussed in Chapter 2, to reconnect the world with the lived time of human beings.

The historian's point of view

History as text depends on 'what happened', so that production of the former 'is not the writing, but the rewriting of stories' (Mink 1966: 187). Mink suggests that 'what happened' only becomes an historical 'event' when it is described as such in a text, and situated within a causal explanation not available to those experiencing the incidents at the time (1987a: 177). Only to the historian are such retrospective truths available as 'In 1717, the author of *Rameau's Nephew* was born' (Ricoeur 1984: 146).

Thus the past visible to the historian is seen through a lens which notices or selects certain phenomena as 'events' and ignores others. This retrospective, but selective gaze sees things together in one synoptic judgement (Mink 1966: 184) – 'not as witnesses might, but as … part of temporal wholes' (Arthur Danto quoted in Ricoeur 1984: 146-147). It approaches the 'god's eye view' in which successive moments are 'all co-present in a single perception, as of a landscape of events' (Ricoeur 1984: 159-160).

Moreover the frequent effacement of 'the narrator' who takes this standpoint is, suggests Roland Barthes 'designed to…guarantee and enhance the privileged status of history as objective knowledge' (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 146, citing Barthes). Elizabeth Wyschogrod reminds us that the homonymous use of 'history' to refer to both the events and the text reflects the intimate relationship between them, and, as noted above, that the historian must be reflexive and clear about their selectiveness in deciding what constitutes an 'event' (Wyschogrod 1998: 2, 39). Effacement of the narrator has become less acceptable in postmodern writing, and with the rise of strong public conflicts over 'what happened' during, for example, white colonial settlement of Australia:

> Indeed, far from returning to conventional omniscient narration, some
> historians have learnt from these disputes that it is all the more important to

explain to readers their historical method and assumptions, explain just how and why they reached their conclusions, and foreground the existence and normality of interpretive difference (Curthoys et al. 2006, 2010: 233).

Nevertheless despite a commitment by the historian to reflexivity, and to honour ethical obligations to their sources, in the end the historian must adopt a 'point of view': 'it is our privilege that allows us to interpret, and it is our responsibility as historians to convey their insights using our own' (Sangster 2003: 93). Even in writing 'radical oral history', Portelli notes, the historian takes responsibility for performing ' an autonomous act of narration' (2003: 73).

History as an act in the present

The relationship between a history and 'what happened' is not solely constituted by the historian's special synoptic and selective view backwards and the rendering of the past into an intelligible narrative. The telling or writing of history gives the past a force in the present, in much the same way that other texts act in the present. Shelley Errington suggests that the telling of Malayan chronicles (*hikayat*) is an act of 'calling the past into being' and hence perpetuating, for example, the reputation of the chronicle's subject (1979: 38). Stephen Muecke notes the 'calling up' of country through Aboriginal ritual (Muecke 2008: 81), while Paul Carter regrets the diminution of the 'magical or cultural efficacy' of rituals when they are transformed into a 'mime' for tourists or anthropologists (Carter 1996: 36). History writing as an instrumental act will be discussed in the next Chapter, where it will be argued that both history and recollection as written, uttered, performed or read, are as much about the present as they are about the past.

Historiographical principles

The following historiographical claims arise from the above; they concern both the relationship between the historian and the past – the focus of this chapter – and the nature of historical understanding, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Principles:

1. *Narrative reconstruction*: History is a selectively constructed narrative '*prefigured*' by conceptual frameworks (of plot, event etc), '*configured*' or

constructed by the historian within these frameworks, and '*refigured*' by the reader or listener (Ricoeur's mimesis₁, mimesis₂ and mimesis₃ respectively).

2. *Making sense of change*: History is a device for *sense-making and* enables us to understand the *coming into being* of the present even when it appears conceptually discontinuous with the past.

3. *Based on evidence*: History is based on *evidence* of actual and unique events (for example in the form of testimony, eyewitness accounts, and documentation), rather than on pre-established 'covering laws' from which events can be 'deduced'.

4. *Mediating scale*: History is complex emplotment which encompasses human intention and action as well as large-scale structural change.

5. *Historian's viewpoint*: History reflects the narrator's selective, synoptic and retrospective 'point of view', as well as her/his empathy, understanding, interpretation, and judgement about the evidence.

6. *Acting in the present*: The writing of history is an act of production with purposes and impacts in the present.

In this Chapter and Chapter 4, I use these historiographical principles to explore similarities and differences in the relationships of history and recollection with the past.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE PAST

> … What does testimony mean, if it is not simply … the observing, the recording, the remembering of an event, but an utterly unique and irreplaceable topographical *position* with respect to an occurrence? What does testimony mean, if it is the uniqueness of the *performance of a story* which is constituted by the fact that, like the oath, it cannot be carried out by anybody else? (Felman et al. 1992: 206).

<div align="center">∞</div>

The historiographical principles of the preceding section concern the historian as much as the product which is a history: the retrospective and synoptic position from which the historian selectively views the past; the historian's interpretation, empathy and judgement

in assessing evidence; the act of constructing a narrative which makes sense of the past and mediates between individual actions and large scale structural changes; and the historian's purposes in producing a particular history *now*, such as developing a nationalist narrative, revealing hitherto unseen connections between events, or rehabilitating the voices of those excluded from official records.

In this Chapter, I wish to draw on the ideas of the historian's *viewpoint* or *relationship* with the past, which includes assessing the past as 'evidence', bringing to bear on the evidence qualities such as empathy and interpretive skill, and the production of history as a purposive act in the present (Principles 3, 5 and 6 above). These ideas will be used below to discuss the memorist's relationships with the past and the act of producing recollection in the form of life stories.

Inside and outside the past

Hirsch et al (2009) draw attention to the distinction between listening to the stories of a survivor of the Holocaust as an historian and listening as a psychoanalyst. While the historian may query the details of a description of a death-camp (Principle 3: 'assessment of evidence'), the psychoanalyst is 'listening to the survivor-witness "from the inside"' (162). For the psychoanalyst, the witness is 'transmitting' rather than 'proving' what happened in the past (154-155). The descriptions of events by an eyewitness reflect a connection with those events, and a wish to convey their personal significance, which is distinct from the historian's relationship, however empathetic, with the narrative they are constructing. The following description by an old Acehnese man of the historic departure of the Japanese occupying forces in 1945, in contrast with historical accounts of this event, shows this distinction:

> Bapak I-k (83 years)

> The day when [the Japanese] left, they went to the mountain and buried all of their equipment, why they did that, we never know, I don't even know exactly what sort of things that they buried, gun? After that, in the middle of the night, we heard the sound of the truck's engine and all of the army was leaving to Banda Aceh. In the morning, I went to their base camp, and I saw everything

was *trang* [clear and shiny], like the sun shone again.

Bapak's story allows us to see the world through his eyes at a particular moment in the past. The force of the words comes in part from the use of metaphor and in part from the detailed description unfolding events to the listener. This is narrative analyst Labov's 'transfer of experience' where 'listeners achieve awareness of the event in the same way that the narrator became aware of it' (Labov 1997: 413). The narrative qualities of the old Acehnese' stories are examined in detail in Chapter 5. However Walter Benjamin notes that stories 'model the course of the world' (Benjamin 1936a: 95) rather than explaining it or informing others about it. Compare the account of the Japanese surrender at Lhoknga, not far from Bapak's village, provided by historian Anthony Reid, which both explains and informs:

> Within a few days popular pressure had produced an influx of villagers who surrounded the Japanese camp. As many as 10,000 Acehnese were involved by the end of the month, and bloody clashes developed around the Japanese perimeter.
>
> At about noon on 1 December [1945] the Japanese appealed for negotiation to avert a really major blood-letting…The Japanese troops were to leave Lhoknga on foot and concentrate all their troops at the Blang Bintang airport [near Banda Aceh]…They would take with them only such arms as they could carry, and the remainder would be left with the Acehnese besiegers (Reid 1979a: 193-194).

The same historian however has also collected the stories of individuals who were part of the Japanese occupying forces to illuminate the experience of the Japanese; an example is the following memoir excerpt concerning the Japanese surrender in Java, Indonesia:

> When I received the Imperial Proclamation … at midday on 15 August[14], I quietly shed a few tears. It was the first crushing defeat of the Japanese Empire

[14] The Japanese Emperor surrendered to the Allies on 14 August 1945 after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the US on 6 and 9 August
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/august/6/newsid_3602000/3602189.stm).

since its foundation, and it caused me to be overcome by a flood of inexplicable

emotions … My mission in the South had come to an abrupt end …

The Indonesian people felt sympathy for Japan due to her defeat. For instance,

one morning which I shall never forget, a former close [Indonesian] friend of

mine, Dr Samsi, on hearing of Japan's surrender, fell head-over-heels as he

rushed into my office and expressed his grief for Japan's misfortune. I tried

console and comfort him by saying, "Japan has finally been defeated.

However, there is not doubt that Indonesia will succeed in becoming

independent [from the Dutch]. Stand firm so you can have the strength to fight

for that independence". Dr Samsi died a year before I visited Java [in August

1964]. He was the man I most wanted to see.

(from the memoir of Shibata Yaichiro in Reid et al. 1986: 341-342).

I include this excerpt for two reasons. In this thesis, many of the transcripts from field interviews concern the traumatic experiences of the Acehnese under the Japanese occupation. Reid's collection of Japanese memoirs is a valuable reminder that suffering occurs on both sides of conflict, and that many Japanese believed that their removal of Dutch authority through the occupation was assisting Indonesia, and Aceh in particular, towards independence[15].

Secondly, the past is just 'the way the world is given' to those who live it, and becomes an object of historical interest only at a later date (Danto 1981: 163). So too, however, does a kind of exterior or historical consciousness appear in old people when they tell of their past experience. Shibata's memoir above, and the story told by Bapak I-k, are both examples of an insider's story told from the distance of age. This inside/outside quality is occasionally reflected in descriptive anachronisms such as the following:

Ibu A-h (74)

---

[15] Reid notes that subsequent Indonesian histories have been ambivalent about this role of the Japanese, since drawing attention to it might 'risk diluting the transcendent quality of [declaring independence in] 1945' (Reid 2005: 174).

> … so [the Japanese] brought that in a large box as big as TV box, they
> distributed those cloths to each family. One family could only get three cloths.

Nevertheless the difference between the historian's connection with the past and the individual's, even with the 'outside' perspective of old age, can be seen in David Thelen's report on an individual's description of events:

> A 75-year-old man from Westfield, New Jersey, reported: 'there are two things
> that have had a profound effect on my life. One was the Great Depression …
> The second was the Second World War … I think it makes you a stronger
> person from having lived through adversity and having overcome it.' While
> history textbooks ordinarily put these two events in different chapters, the New
> Jersey man recalled that both events had remarkably similar consequences for
> him (Thelen 2000: 25).

Here the story is not 'evidence' *for* a narrative, as it might be for an historian (or a sociologist) (Principle 3); rather it *is* the narrative. The narrator's relationship with their past is not one of judge/assessor (of evidence), but of witness and 'transmitter', in particular because it is a story being told to a listener: 'The condition for the existence of the written source is emission; for oral sources, transmission…' (Portelli 2003: 70). The significance of 'utterance' is discussed later in this Chapter, and the nature of 'testimony' versus 'evidence' in Chapter 4.

Luisa Passerini (2003) notes however that the historian's use of oral sources has to date been predominantly factual:

> This is not enough. We cannot afford to lose sight of the peculiar specificity of
> oral material, and we have to develop conceptual approaches…which can
> succeed in drawing out their full implications. Above all, we should not ignore
> that the raw material of oral history consists not just in factual statements, but is
> pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore
> includes not only literal narrations but also the dimension of memory, ideology
> and subsconscious desires (53-54).

Like the statement by the 75-year-old man from New Jersey quoted above, oral histories

reflect a subjectivity on the part of the storyteller 'which includes cognitive, cultural and psychological aspects' (Passerini 2003: 54). The idea of subjectivity is explored later in this Chapter. Tellingly however, for the historian the stories arising from this subjectivity are '*clues* which we are able to derive…through the discipline of oral history [which] need now to be harvested, selected, arranged and freed from their ambiguity' (Passerini 2003: 55, my emphasis). 'Moreover, the *evidence* of oral history is embedded not only in narrative accounts but also in the process of interviewing. An informant's mode of presentation can be scrutinized for *clues* to the meanings that historical actors gave to their experiences when they occurred' (Blee 2003: 336, my emphases). The following Chapter further clarifies the distinction between the historian's relationship with life stories as evidence (or clues) and the storyteller's relationship with the story as testimony.

The style and content of recollection will also be a reflection of the ways in which it is elicited, for example through a project such as Reid's commissioning of written memoirs of war experiences, or the ethnographic project of gathering life stories. In the former, a more formal, historically researched perspective on the war, as well as the individual's recollection of emotions and personal experiences, informs the story. The responsiveness of recollection to the circumstances in which it is called up (Principle 6) is discussed further in Chapter 5.

Moreover recollection of events at a later time is informed by the recollections of others, particularly in the case of events of public or national importance, and those experiences shared by a community. The following sections discuss the ideas of social memory and sites of memory as shared memory, and how these relate to the recollection of the individual.

Social memory

> There is an enormous and lasting reservoir of memories of torture, violence, and displacement enacted against communities and individuals in Aceh. Profound loss and a potent sense of injustice are remainders of the violence. Careful consideration should be given to specific efforts to work through these memories as a part of the on going [sic] peace process in the context of rebuilding Aceh (Good et al. 2007: 76).

∞

In the statement above, Good is referring to 'social memory' or 'collective memory'. This is the memory of a community or a nation (Bowen 1989; Hewer et al. 2010), or Welzer's negotiated 'conversational memory' between a group of people (Welzer 2010), and is the subject of commemoration in public memorials and museums (Auschwitz in Poland, Ground Zero in New York (Seremetakis 2004; Hirsch et al. 2009)).

While Seremetakis (2004) refers to the capacity of 'an entire city or region to remember', it is, nonetheless, the people of the city or region who do the remembering. Debjani Ganguly points out that:

> … even *testimonios* that are read as witness documents of collective suffering
> do aspire to recover the 'personhood' of the traumatised victim/s, and in both
> national and international contexts such aspiration is articulated in the language
> of 'rights' squarely based on a conception of the 'individual'… (2009: 434).

Similarly, while social memory may exist 'between subjects and not within them' (Welzer 2010: 5) the *work of remembering*, of listening and negotiating social memory, and articulating it in recollections of the past, is done by individuals.

The Acehnese term *seungsara* is an example of the difficulties in distinguishing the memory of 'the subject' from collective memory, and from collective history. For the Acehnese, *seungsara* is a kind of all-encompassing and prolonged suffering which is experienced by individuals, for example during extended periods of privation, illness or fear and insecurity, and is also an integral aspect of the struggles and heroism of Aceh's history. An understanding of this history of *seungsara* informs the identity, beliefs, and experience of Acehnese individuals throughout their lifetimes [16]. Both the *seungsara* of personal tribulation, and the *seungsara* of Acehnese history inform individuals' remembering.

An Acehnese person's historical awareness of *seungsara* is however different from the

---

[16] I am indebted to Catherine Smith, Australian National University, and Dwi Rinanda, Universitas Syiah Kuala, Banda Aceh, for conversations about the nature of *seungsara*.

historian's connection with *seungsara* during historical inquiry - this is Danto's and Hirsch's distinction between the inside and outside perspectives on the past. An individual's 'experience' will include *learning* the cultural significance of history and *learning about* the experience of others. Memories of others' experiences can themselves be traumatic and never forgotten:

> Bapak I-k (83)
>
> During [the Japanese] time, one of my uncles also has a story. They hanged buckets of stones and other materials in his body, in the front body, in the back also in his left and right side. Unfortunately he is very tall man, he has to stand in the very back of the line, because it is too heavy, he couldn't stand properly. The army came and hit him, they forced him to carry more stone, but he couldn't. They asked him to carry more, but he couldn't as he is already carried a lot. One of the army came to him and tied him up in the tree. He eyes and his ears were bitten by the red ants, he was bitten all over his face.

This recollection of another's experience is as vividly and emotionally told as the recollections of the storyteller's own experiences in the same period. It suggests that the recollection of a contemporary's experience, even when the storyteller was not an eyewitness, can have a similar force in the present to remembering what happened to oneself. For the Acehnese, it is possible that remembering a learned, and shared, history of *seungsara* is an emotional and political force in the present. Such 'social memories' may structure the recollections of an individual and hence their life story.

Thus the production of a life story through recollection is the *work* of the individual, and the locus of the recollections – their chronotope - is *the life* of the individual as it interfaced with the world. The following section argues that the storyteller is thus a site for memory in a very different from other 'sites of memory'.

Sites of memory

> … the past is waiting in the multitudes of sites of memory, in all its textual, performative, memorialized, and socially embedded richness (Zurbuchen 2005: 30).

<div align="center">∞</div>

Community, ethnic, political and religious identity, and nationalism all depend on learning about and remembering history and the lives of others. 'Sites of memory' which commemorate past events are an important way in which social memory is preserved.

It is the idea of memory embodied in objects that was the theme of a 2010 conference on 'contained memory':

> While memory is understood to be integral to the constitution of the self, it works in concert with external repositories of memory ranging from personal mnemonic objects to collective, social, and public memory residing in community traditions, artifacts in museums, and archives, including electronic and other recording systems. Memory is embodied in intergenerational rituals and practices and intangible forms of storytelling, song, and performance, as well as in natural elements and the physical memory forms of monuments and memorials (Massey University School of Visual and Material Culture 2010).

Objects, buildings and cities have all been claimed as 'sites of memory' or 'sites of history'. Balzac's 'marvelous [sic] depiction of houses as materialized history' is, suggests Bakhtin, an example of an historical period becoming 'not only graphically visible, but narratively visible' (Bakhtin 1981: 247). Paul Carter's collaborative performance piece within old house ruins is another example of the past materialized at a site where 'the lost grounds of the deserted garden…[are] provisionally given back' (Carter 2004: 117, Collaboration 4: An ephemeral architecture).

In the case of cities which suffer from natural disaster:

> We take this enmeshed memory for granted until the material supports that stitch memory to person and place are torn out from under us, when these spaces suddenly vanish under debris … Then … we are separated from the

material of memory that enables an entire city or region to remember what it was before the disaster (Seremetakis 2004).

The construction of memorials, or of new buildings on a 'site of memory' such as Ground Zero, New York, is a retrospective materialization of history: 'a symbolic-material practice that forms a concrete version of past events' (Gutman 2009: 56). As Nadia Seremetakis reminds us, it is not just buildings and places but objects which can be 'full of memory' and which can trigger deep emotions; such memory is linked to sounds, aroma and sights, as for example in the Peloponnese:

> Each grove of olive trees carries the signature of a person …
> The mark of the hands, of labor, is imprinted and witnessed on the trees (Seremetakis 2004).

However as with the negotiation and construction of social memory, memorials and objects become 'full of memory' (Seremetakis 2004) because the symbolic relationship between object and the past is established and recollected by individuals. James Burton retains this distinction between 'sites of memory' and 'remembering subjects' when he suggests:

> There may be situations in which it is informative to consider a given site in which the past is actualized without determining 'who' or 'what' is doing the remembering, replacing these with other questions, such as how archivally the site operates (how much and in what ways it constricts or filters the past), in whose interests (whether those of individuals, groups, institutions) this occurs (Burton 2008: 335-336).

The distinction between a remembering subject and a site of memory is made clearer by considering the emotional 'affective, subjective, submerged, even silent – feelings, perceptions, apprehensions, misapprehensions' (Hirsch et al. 2009: 161) which are part of a subject's remembering:

> … memories … were laid down in particular circumstances and hold those original feelings, interpretations and associations within them (Biggs 1999: 217).

These emotions and associations survive attempts to 'reconstruct' memory; Clifford Geertz noted a few years after the anti-Communist purges in Indonesia that while 'the truth of what has happened is obscured by convenient stories … passions are left to flourish in the dark' (Geertz 1973b: 324). The 'affective' aspects of remembering remind us how complex an undertaking it is for the subject, an undertaking categorically distinct from the roles performed by other sites of memory such as memorials and ritualized objects. These affective qualities of memory also point to the difference between the historian's relationship with the past, however empathetic (Principle 5), and that of those who experienced it.

RECOLLECTING AND RECOLLECTIONS

Below I examine firstly the relationship between recollection and memory, to argue that, however ontologically obscure, memory is a phenomenon required to explain the connection between an individual's experience and their recollection of it; memory thus plays a crucial role in distinguishing on the one hand the connection between a narrator and their recollections, from, on the other hand, the connection between an historian and the past which they *reconstruct* from evidence (historiographical Principle 3).

Secondly, I argue that framing recollections within a life story reveals a different quality of the past – its accretiveness within the life of an individual – from the framing of recollection as additional evidentiary detail for the historian.

Together with the preceding section, the following suggests that the relationship between the memorist and their experience gives recollection in the form of life stories a special role in understanding the past which is not replaceable by history.

Recollection and memory

Recollection as requiring agency, a capacity to act and to tell the story of what happened, is seen as an essential part of psychoanalytic therapeutic processes in which recollection comes to articulate memories previously 'suppressed' or subconscious:

> … the story can be told, the person can look back at what happened; he has given it a place in his life history, his autobiography, and thereby in the whole of his personality. Many traumatized persons, however, experience long

periods of time in which they live as it were, in two different worlds: the realm
of the trauma and the realm of their current, ordinary life (Van Der Kolk et al.
1995: 176).

Likewise, Culbertson notes that recollection requires narrative in order for the traumatized survivor to be able to tell what happened and 'establish a relationship again with the world' (Culbertson 1995: 179). This process 'can only begin after memories have been remembered' (179).

The ontological status of 'memory' is less clear than that of 'recollection', which is regarded, like the writing of history as an action in the here and now (Principle 6). 'Recollection' bears an ontological similarity to 'remembering', something 'done' by an individual. The complex status of 'memory' however can be seen in the following descriptions of traumatic memory:

> Traumatic memories are the *unassimilated scraps of overwhelming experiences*,
> which need to be integrated with existing mental schemes, and be *transformed
> into narrative language*. It appears that, in order for this to occur successfully,
> the traumatized person has to *return to the memory* often in order to *complete it*
> (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995: 176, my emphases).

> Most disturbingly, *bits of memory*, flashing like clipped pieces of film held to
> the light, *appear unbidden* and in surprising ways, as if possessed of a life
> independent of will or consciousness (Culbertson 1995: 169, my emphases).

Here memories are scraps of experience or narrative, involuntary image flashes and something to which the individual 'returns'. While 'transformation into narrative language' could be seen as a form of 'recollecting', the location of memory and its relationship to experience and recollection remains elusive. Nevertheless, in some sense memory is 'real': Culbertson points out that even '[r]epressed memories are nevertheless memories; they are not circumstances of what "never happened" or what has been "forgotten"' (Culbertson 1995: 175).

The location of memory, and its connection with experience and with recollection, is explored by Burton and others through the work of the 19th-20th century philosopher Henri

Bergson. For Bergson, memories, which are specific instances of recollection, are mere 'slices' of the past, whereas the past ('duration') is continuous, indivisible and cumulative: 'One moment is added onto the old ones, and thus, when the next moment occurs, it is added onto all the other old ones plus the one that came immediately before' (Lawlor et al. 2010). For the individual, duration is like a tape winding from one spool to another; as we grow older our future grows smaller and our past larger (Lawlor et al. 2010). This duration - the whole of the individual's experience - is 'virtually' recorded in what Bergson calls 'pure memory'.

However consciousness 'spatializes' and quantifies duration into a sequence of discrete moments (for example in clocks and calendars). The distinction between continuous 'duration' of the past and its spatialization into 'moments' corresponds with Bergson's distinction between 'pure memory' of the individual's continuous past, ('our ongoing existence, our own endurance, unconscious and undivided (Burton 2008: 328)) and those selective recollections based on the individual's 'current needs and interests'. Burton, after Bergson, argues that the 'pure memory' is not a kind of store of 'memory-images' in some physiological substrate of an individual's brain. Rather the pure memory of all of the individual's experience is 'virtually present' at all times, available for the production of selective 'recollections' of the past. Instead of seeing memories engraved on the 'wax tablet of the mind' it is more accurate to say that 'when we recall something we are writing it on a wax tablet … since it is only in making the recollection a part of the present that we actualize it' (Burton 2008: 330).

'Pure memory' is ontologically distinct from experience since it remains more or less available to the individual in the present, depending on the archival rules s/he uses to govern access (Burton 2008: 327, 331). These archival rules reflect the 'essentially utilitarian' nature of mental functions; the purpose of recollection, according to Bergson, is to guide action in the present (Burton 2008: 324). Like the historian who must make an 'offcut of infinity' from all that has ever happened based on purposes of the present and the demands of sense-making narrative (Principles 2 and 6), the consciousness of the individual makes an offcut of pure memory in the form of a particular 'memory' or recollection based on 'current needs and interests' (Burton 2008: 326).

However the utilitarian value of memory in guiding action in the present may not necessarily be through the development of 'rules for action', like the historiographical 'laws' critiqued by Mink and Ricoeur; instead recollection may simply provide useful information for the memorist in pursuing 'current needs and interests'. The use to which recollection is put is more akin to Donald Schön's (1995) 'reflective transfer' where reflections on experience in one situation are 'carried over' into new situations 'where they may be put to work and tested, and found to be valid and interesting, but where they may also be reinvented' (31). Reflective transfer requires both 'relevant' remembering and reflection. Chapter 4 explores further the application of remembering the past in order to actualize a particular future.

Recollection is for Burton, via Bergson, a utilitarian act of the individual in response to her/his current needs and interests, which actualizes part of a virtual 'pure memory' of the individual's entire past experience. On the other hand, as noted above, some remembering occurs involuntarily, especially for the victims of trauma, and only later is converted into a narrativized recollection – a story – about the individual's past. For the purpose of this thesis, I will therefore use 'recollecting' as the act of conscious and voluntary remembering and 'involuntary remembering' for the appearance of unbidden memories such as those associated with trauma. Grayman et al (2009) have suggested that for trauma victims this latter form of remembering is more akin to 'reliving' the experience. The nature of traumatic memory is discussed further later in this Chapter.

An individual's recollection is thus an act of the present, like the production of history, and similarly selective based on the needs or interests of the present. However recollection emerges from the individual's 'virtual memory' of all of her/his experience, rather than emerging as the result of a quest for evidence by the historian. That each life story is also an interpretation of the past and framed within discourses, for example about pain, the teleology of suffering, and more recently the 'trauma' discourse, does not diminish its special force as a record of events which were *experienced,* and moreover *experienced by one individual*. Karyn Ball, in an otherwise critical essay on truth and the interpretive nature of testimony, notes nonetheless the power of stories of experience:

> No one would dare counter the testimony of a [Holocaust] death-camp survivor

with the charge that his or her narrative was partial and contextually determined and that to declare otherwise would be the same as capitulating to a bourgeois nostalgia for substantial identity (Ball 2000: 9).

The following section examines the different ways in which recollection of events can be used to understand the past, depending on whether the focus is on the events or on the life of the one recollecting.

Events versus 'a life': framing recollection

Within the Bergson/Burton theory of pure memory and selective recollection, when an individual's recollection is focused on telling a life story it is produced from a virtual memory of a life time's experience, as a set of recollections to meet the needs and interests of the storyteller and/or the listener. This is not unique to life stories; any recollection might be described in this way. However the teller of a life story is focused on the 'duration' of the teller, rather than a period or event of historic interest. First-person accounts of the latter are used by historians, including social historians, as evidence for the events of a period. Life stories on the other hand focus the listener on 'the life' of the storyteller.

Below I contrast collations of stories with a shared theme, and whole 'life' sequences centred on an individual over a (life) time. The first is a set of fragments from several individuals which I have coded by content: hunger and clothing shortages under the Japanese occupation during World War II. This set of fragments provides a window onto life under the Japanese in Aceh; a collection of oral histories such as this might be used by a social historian to write about this period of Aceh's past.[17]

 Bapak A-d (68)

---

[17] As discussed in the previous Chapter, apart from minor corrections to verb tense and plural/singular forms, I have left the transcripts as they were provided by my interpreter/transcriber. The small corrections I have made are based on the assumption that the Acehnese storytellers were proficient in the grammar of their own language and that the quotations used here should not make them appear significantly less so.

During the Japanese, I was grow[ing] up. My life had never been more suffering than during the Japanese. We weren't able to plant rice, people are hungry, eat whatever, raw food, banana … if we plant something, they will take the harvest. Even if you have parents, they will take your parents. We're looking for money just to cover enough food, during the Japanese, life is very hard …

Ibu A-s (70+)

Yes, [I lived] with my mother. My father was working for the Japanese, it was a hard time. Our cloth made from *goni* (refer to material made from ramie fibre, usually used as a rice bag). Our meal in that time was anything that was possible to eat, corn, papaya or coconut. We mixed that ingredient with a little rice.

Ibu A-w (90)

Food was not enough; our rice stocks were taken by the Japanese. We kept some food stock above the roof, so the Japanese wouldn't find it. We ate cassava in that time, *aneuk meutuah* ['my dear', 'blessed child']. We ate cassava, banana, jackfruit … If I could, I don't want to remember any of that anymore, it was very sad in that time.

Ibu A-h (74)

The Japanese would come after the rich people to take their rice; hence we lived in hunger, because they managed everything you know.
Our rice fields were full with *pacang trieng* [refer to sharp bamboo stick], so the villagers couldn't do anything. That was the Japanese.

Bapak A-y (80+)

Because the planes were dropping the balloons [probably parachutes] also from the sky, so by using these sticks in the *sawah* [rice-fields], of course they couldn't make any landing there.
… the *sawah* were full with that sharp bamboo stick … we couldn't work in the

sawah.

Bapak I-h (78)

> And then during the Japanese, that is even worse. My stomach is like this
> [showing with gesture, big stomach]. We mixed our rice with chopped banana,
> or papaya, or corn. Sometimes we didn't eat for several days. Our rice stocks at
> home were taken by the Japanese.
>
> Our children in the village are not cared for and suffering from *kudee* [skin
> disease], and *gutee* [bugs that live in human scalp], don't have cloth. Same
> condition happened to my wife in the village, she had no cloth. So she swapped
> her only cloth with others. For example, if she needs to go out, then she will
> wear the cloth, and the children will stay at home naked."

These fragments are an important record of life under the Japanese. Zurbuchen notes that Indonesian national history has been the monopoly of government and 'ordinary people have not been seen as authoritative sources' (2005: 16, 21). Yet memories of physical and mental trauma arising from the Japanese occupation provided some of the most powerful stories in my fieldwork interviews, stories which could help to 'fill the gaps' in understandings of the past provided by official narratives of that period in Aceh's history.

Enabling such recollections (as does Anthony Reid in his collection of Japanese memoirs (Reid et al. 1986), and Luisa Passerini in her oral history study of factory workers under Italian fascism (Passerini 2003)), may be important in the emergence of new, more complete histories. However my interest in the story fragments concerning the Japanese occupation is not in their contribution to a new or more detailed history of that period but as *part* of a life story, the locus of which is the storyteller rather than a context of events.

As noted in Chapter 1 in another context, Anna Szörényi criticizes the use of collections of 'anecdotes' told by several members of a community or group (such as refugees), arguing that this produces a false collective 'experience' which erases the record of the experiences of individuals:

> A singular 'refugee experience' is thus manufactured from the myriad and
> disparate political situations and life histories that can cause people to relocate

(Szörényi 2009: 178).

The life story makes connections between 'a life' and the events of history in ways which are explored in Chapter 4. However the following two life story sequences are sufficient to reveal a different past, coeval with periods studied by historians, but not usable as story 'wholes' by historians[18]:

Ibu A-w (90)

[childhood poverty]
[My parents] worked as farmers; they went to the mountain, breaking the rocks, finding rattan, it was very sad in that time [the time of the Dutch]. That's the only work that the villagers can do, they tried to plant crops, but the result was not satisfying. When I was born, they did the same too, sand mining…any work that they can do…

[traumatic memory]
Yes, after the Dutch left, the Japanese came, they came from the sea. Well, when the Japanese came I was in the field, then they released shots, the villagers were running away, I fell down in the field but I managed to get up and ran to the mountain, people were shocked. I remember everything about that. I remember what they were doing; they sometimes went to the sea to take something from their ship …

Very sad, more than just sad. *Prang prung* [sound of gun shot] the sound of gun shots and people were running everywhere. [My brother] was very little in that time; I brought rice for him to our hiding place behind the bamboo tree. Usually they released shots at 12 o'clock. They just randomly shoot everything, people died and fell down in the ground with blood everywhere … *prang prung* … my God. Very sad, some of the villager got shot, some of the others didn't. Unlike today…

---

[18] The full transcripts of these life stories are available on the CD at Appendix 3.

[hardship]

Yes, I continue working; I start everything from scratch, working to earn something. Oh dear, the Japanese time was very bitter, don't know how to say it …

Well, after [the Japanese] left … for a while, we lived as usual, we started to build our life with our own kind. But then other things happened. Because the foreigner was gone, so we live amongst each other and things happened amongst civilians, amongst us … [possibly the Tjumbok Rebellion 1945-46, the Darul Islam movement 1953-59, the anti-Communist purges 1965-66] …

[sickness]

Q: So, does she go to the doctor?

I did, I've been hospitalized for nine days, after that I am taking medicines everyday. I went here and there because people said that they have good medicine there, but ever since my sickness is never cured. In that time, during the high-blood pressure, I feel painful all over my body; I can't even do my daily prayer …

I'm having high-blood pressure when I was in the barrack [after the tsunami], then I was hospitalized, after that, I stopped doing many things …

[faith]

The youngsters now, I pray to God that they must live better; they must not feel what we've been through in the past.

I don't know where we will move after this … heaven!

…

There's no where else to go beside to the God. We'll go there together, in the end of the day when the God calls

Bapak A-b (69):

[work, work-related trauma]

I went to the sea. I went to the sea and to the mountain for rock mining when I was younger. One time when I was in the mountain, I was buried by the soil [landslide?]. In that time, I was with my two friends. So they dig out the dirt

trying to rescue me. Both of my friends thought that I must be dead under there. So when they succeed in rescuing me, I don't know anything. I feel faint, it's all black. That's what I remember. They took me to the traditional massage person. I stayed at home for 7 months not realizing what has happened …

[natural disaster]
When I was in that house, in the day of tsunami, we were ordered to flee to the mountain, around 6.00pm we left the house …
We walked there, what else, there's no other option. Timber waste and rubbish were everywhere, even though we have vehicle we couldn't use it. So we walk there …
We all gathered there, I met my family there one by one because we didn't go to the mountain together. When tsunami struck, people were all running in panic, so it was a chaos, you know, when the water rose. It was night time in the mountain when I finally met all my family. When I ran and arrived in the mountain, I thought people left behind me had all died. Because seemingly the world is turned up side down, people are individualized [separated?]. When we gathered in the mountain, we shared stories, I ask my daughter, where were you before my dear, and then she would say: I was stuck in the tree. She would ask, what about you, and then I said, I was in that up-high house …
That house was full with people. If God willing to, the house must be cracked and all the people there must be falling down on each other. Maybe around two or three hundred people were gathered there or even more.

Everyone is praying inside the house, any kind of prayer … other people were dragged in the water, they were those who weren't able to reach the house …
After the tsunami happened, I stay at home, I couldn't walk, *ka leumoh* [I feel weak, I lost the spirit of life].

[memory of trauma]
When I lie down, I think about [being buried in the landslide] … or later when I sleep at night. Of course I still think about that accident. I remember that.

…

> I remember the day of the accident when the landslide happened and I was
> buried, I remember and am scared, it's so real.

The force of these two life story sequences lies not only in their content, but in the fact that a particular set of stories all 'belong' to one person, and bear a relationship with that individual which stories of similar experiences told by others do not. In Labov's terms, noted in Chapter 2, the experiences have 'entered into the biography' of the storyteller (1997: 399). While the description of another's experience may differ by only as much as the personal pronoun – 's/he was hit by the military' versus 'I was hit by the military,'[19] Wittgenstein would argue that 'I feel frightened' is more like a 'cry' than a 'report' (Wittgenstein 1972, S.244). In the case of past-tense recollection, 'I felt frightened' and 'She felt frightened' are both reports, but a difference is retained in the connection between the experience and the speaker.

In contrasting two ways of studying history, Thelen (2000) notes that '[s]hifting the starting place from "context" to individuals profoundly shifts the way we understand both and indeed the way we organize the study of history (25). In the previous Chapter I argued that the life stories of individuals may *add* to history. The nature of this addition can be seen in Thelen's example earlier of the survivor of the Great Depression and World War II, in Reid's collected memoirs from members of the Japanese occupying forces in Indonesia, and in the above life stories of the two Acehnese. What is revealed in these examples are aspects of the past which, while possibly adding 'historical detail' (Principle 3) more significantly provide a *new* understanding of the past, or, as Carter would suggest, an understanding of a *different* past which is, for history, only 'phosphorescence in the wake of events'.

Further, a life story, while providing both additional detail on public events and a glimpse of an alternative past, also expresses the cumulative quality of the past for the individual; this quality of accretiveness of experience and the related idea of a continuous and accretive

---

[19] In Basa Aceh and Bahasa Indonesia a single pronoun is used for both 'he' and 'she'.

subjectivity, are discussed below.

THE REMEMBERING SUBJECT

> But the unique and precious element which oral sources force upon the
> historian and which no other sources possess in equal measure is the
> speaker's subjectivity…Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but
> what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what
> they now think they did…
> Subjectivity is as much the business of history as are the more visible
> 'facts' (Portelli 2003: 67).

∞

Locating the subject

The value of narrative for history, as Ricoeur suggests, is its capacity to bridge between the actions of individuals and large scale structural changes (Principle 4).

A significant quality of the novel, suggests Martha Nussbaum, is a focus on the life of the individual in order to provide the reader with an understanding of the quality of another's lived experience. This is most evident in novels which revolve around the lives of individuals, such as those of the *Bildungsroman* or 'picaresque' genres, which 'trace the process of coming into mature adulthood by a protagonist who encounters many hurdles and painful setbacks' (Ganguly 2009: 433). Nussbaum makes the point:

> We must recognise that the whole commitment of the novel as genre, and not
> least of its emotional elements, is indeed to the individual, seen as both
> qualitatively distinct and separate ... individuals are seen as valuable in their
> own right (Nussbaum 1995, 2004: 70-71).

Similarly, Nussbaum suggests that the novel offers a 'vision of individual life quality' which 'actually motivates…serious institutional and political criticism' (Nussbaum 1995, 2004: 71):

> ... a story of class action, without the stories of individuals, would not show us
> the point and meaning of class actions, which is always *the amelioration of
> individual lives* (Nussbaum 1995, 2004: 70-71, my emphasis).

Ganguly notes that the literature produced by the Dalit people of India, a nation where the

overarching political narrative of democracy and equality ignores the continuing oppression of a particular group, is about restoring humanity and the 'recovery of personhood' for individuals in a context where such personhood has been denied (Ganguly 2009: 432). Memoir or biography, and *testimonio* [20], become the 'public poetics' which reveals unique and persistent suffering 'even in a "just" world' (Ganguly 2009: 433).

The understanding this literature imparts depends upon a particular connection of the individual through memory to a continuous and accretive past. Such a claim challenges postmodern conceptions of 'the subject' as a disjunctive set of 'positions' it occupies in prevailing discourses (for example in discourses of gender or ethnicity) and the social and economic power relations such discourses produce. The postmodern subject recognizes itself through being interpellated (hailed) by discourse, such recognition being one of a set of 'strategies and practices of individualization' (Montag 1995: 75). As the subject may occupy positions across several discourses, there is no 'necessary coherence' between all of these multiple positions (Henriques et al. 1984: 203). I discuss below the ways in which 'remembering', reflecting, learning and changing might be more than 'strategies for individualization' but instead necessary qualities of a subject whose material experience accretes in body and memory over time.

A critical history of 'the subject' traces its emergence in the scientific, social and economic discourses of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as both the thinking, reasoning subject, and 'the abstract legal subject, the subject of general rights and of possessive individualism' (Venn 1984: 133). Modern twentieth century psychology and philosophy, suggests Venn, have been based on 'the individualism of the unitary rational subject' upon whom the social environment exerts influences for good or bad, in contrast with the later postmodern subject who is a 'constructed figure' produced in discourse and through social relations (150-151).

The subject who is continuously (re)constructed in various contexts is represented by Lévi-

---

[20] *Testimonio* are accounts told in the first person, for which the 'unit of narration is usually a "life" or a significant life experience' (Ganguly 2009: 432, citing John Beverley).

Strauss as a 'mere [point] of social attribution' (Balke 2002: 34):

> I never had, and still do not have, the perception of feeling my personal
> identity. I appear to myself as the place where something is going on, but there
> is no "I," no "me" (Lévi-Strauss 1978: 3-4).

Psychoanalytic theory however has proposed that 'subjectivity' is self-awareness, albeit 'always positioned in relation to particular discourses and practices and produced by these' (Henriques et al. 1984: 2, 3). This 'self-awareness' reveals itself in Levi-Strauss's 'I appear to myself as …'. The potential for a single subject to be positioned in multiple discourses and hence to be aware of themselves as 'a multiplicity of subjectivities – as mothers, wives, consumers, workers of one kind or another …', opens the possibility of the subject's *resistance* to positioning within particular discourses (Henriques et al. 1984: 116, 117, 225). Within a psychoanalytic framework, this resistance indicates an 'interior' or unconscious aspect of the subject which persists from early life and through various positions in discourse, and which is not available to consciousness. Rather than the subject being 'simply the sum total of all positions in discourses since birth' (204), it becomes an accretion - a single subject with a 'history' of positions in discourse.

In this way 'bourgeois individualism' (Henriques et al. 1984: 96) with its implication of a core subject whose qualities are independent of discourse and social practices, can be rejected in favour of a continuous unconscious which, while operating within such discourses and practices, is able to learn from, resist, and respond to them.

'The unconscious' is one answer to Stuart Hall's (1996) question about *what* it is that finds itself interpellated in discourse. This can also be asked as: What is 'the individual' *before* it is hailed by discourse as 'the subject'? Hall concludes that after the dissolution of the stable, continuous subject, the *body* is all that is left to signify the whole array of subjectivities 'condensed into one individual' (1996: 21-24). Nonetheless Hall suggests that psychoanalytic theory is necessary to understand the mechanisms of resistance where the body refuses to be completely 'docile' (1996: 25). What is needed, Hall suggests, is:

> … a theory of what the mechanisms are by which individuals as subjects
> identify (or do not identify) with the 'positions' to which they are summoned;

as well as how they fashion, stylize, produce and 'perform' these positions, and why they never do so completely, for once and all time, and some never do, or are in a constant, agonistic process of struggling with, resisting, negotiating and accommodating the normative or regulative rules with which they confront and regulate themselves (1996: 27).

Judith Butler (1997) argues that it is discursive *practice*, rather than discourse itself, which produces the subject as an identity, for example through repeated use of particular names, categories or descriptions. This political construction of the subject through an identity which excludes others, produces struggle when the latter '[return] to trouble and unsettle the foreclosures which we prematurely call 'identities' (Hall 1996: 28). In this struggle, individuals can produce change by changing, or appropriating, the discursive practices which exclude them:

The appropriation of … norms [such as racial or gendered 'slurs'] to oppose their historically sedimented effect constitutes the insurrectionary moment of that history, the moment that founds a future through a break with that past (Butler 1997: 159, 163).

As psychoanalytic research theorizes the unconscious as that which negotiates, and sometimes resists, its position in discourse, so too does Butler allow for 'the possibility of an agency' (Butler 1997: 155-156), which can operate on discourse to change the way it is practised. The relationship between this 'unconscious' or 'agency' and the body is the subject of the following section.

The body and memory

We achieve our bodiliness, 'my body', through life experience: our body becomes familiar to us as we live with it. The 'normal' life of the body remains hidden to us; we only perceive incapacity or other experiences produced by illness such as pain (Heikkinen 2004: 574).

∞

Like Hall, Butler acknowledges the body as a continuous entity underlying changes in the subject, but which also incorporates social practices over time as 'second nature':

> … the body does not merely act in accordance with certain regularized or
> ritualized practices; it *is* this sedimented ritual activity; its action, in this sense,
> is a kind of incorporated memory.
>
> …
>
> One need only consider how racial or gendered slurs live and thrive in and as
> the flesh of the addressee (Butler 1997: 154, 159, citing Bourdieu).

This incorporation of experience, the sedimenting of social practices in the body over time, produces its own 'rhetorical effects', effects which '[n]o act of speech can fully control or determine' (Butler 1997: 155-156, citing Felman). It is the undeniable rhetoric of the body in the old Acehnese whom I interviewed, revealed in the weariness, tears, pain, laughter or gestures of frustration (see Chapter 2), which reveals the sedimented layers of the past and places 'the historical moment … literally before our eyes' (Berger 1972: 26).

The bodily and other impacts of trauma will be discussed in the final section of this Chapter. However I wish to take Butler's idea of sedimentation of discursive practices (experience) in the body, and argue in the following that experience is also sedimented in memory and thus available for recollection at a later time.

For Butler, political change is brought about through a subject's agency in initiating new discursive practices; another path to change however is remembering, and conveying understanding to others, of events which have caused suffering and oppression. This requires an acceptance of memory, however fallible or interpretive, as a basis for claims about 'what happened':

> In the wake of deconstruction, one can no longer assume an absolute foundation
> of shared experiences upon which to build an invincible moral stance. What
> matters in the long run is that both individuals and groups retain partial
> memories from personal and collective experiences, and that memory-images
> and narratives provide both the content and impetus of political and moral
> claims about historical oppression in the past and present (Ball 2000: 8).

Beyond the fallible and interpretive act of remembering however, are the material impacts and the subject in whom these impacts accrue. Acceptance of memories of experience as a

basis for action is an acknowledgment that these experiences, and their material impacts, belong in a very particular way to those who remember them.

The connection between recollection and experience was explained earlier, in Bergson's terms, by virtual memory as the involuntary incorporation of the past, sedimented in much the same way as experience is in the body. This conception of memory accommodates access in the form of recollection, and hence the moral or political claims that such recollection supports; in addition, it is argued later in this Chapter, these distinctions between experience, memory and recollection allow for psychoanalytic 'memory intrusions', post-traumatic nightmares, or the drift into (pleasant or unpleasant) reminiscence which occurs *without* intention.

Other theoretical frameworks which support this idea of a subject's ongoing and sedimented memory are discussed in the following section.

The evolving subject

Various fields of inquiry depend on the continuity and accretiveness of a subject who, while potentially occupying a multiplicity of positions across several discourses, remains locatable as a single temporal and spatial thread in a discourse of change and evolution. The implication of much writing in memory studies (e.g. Freeman 1998; Burton 2008), in gerontological theory about 'life course stages' (e.g. Erikson 1986; Settersten 2003a), in psychoanalysis and psychiatry (e.g. Van Der Kolk et al. 1995), and in theories of education, learning and evolution (e.g. Wilber 1995 (2000); Taylor 2001; Slaughter 2006), is that there is a continuous subject in whom experience and memory accumulate, personality or character forms over time (or 'unfolds' in a pre-ordained plan (see for example Hillman 1996)), and learning or growth occurs. Associated with these developments are changes in the body – growth and deterioration, acquiring and losing strength, the advent and healing of pain or disease (e.g. Culbertson 1995; Philo 2005; McFarlane 2007).

Erik Erikson's work on life stages proposed a 'theoretical backbone' of eight stages, each one building on the other in a process of the individual's psychosocial development (Erikson 1986: 32-33). Development takes place through the resolution in each stage of conflicts arising from earlier stages, culminating in a 'final focal effort' in old age 'to

remember and review earlier experiences' (Erikson 1986: 40). This process depends on a conception of 'I' as 'a center of awareness in the center of the universe, and this with the sense of a coherent and continuous identity; in other words, we are alive and aware of it' (Erikson 1986: 52).

This model has been critiqued as representing a fixed and irreversible sequence which repeats itself across generations (Settersten 2003b: 16). Life-course theory, on the other hand, claims that individual development is multidirectional, with both gains and losses in different 'spheres' such as family, work and education, and interdependence between these various 'trajectories'. It emphasises the impacts of the historical period of each 'cohort', but also the importance of the distinctive experiences of individuals within each cohort, and the way these depend on the individual's age at the time of each experience (Settersten 2003b: 17, 22-25). Differential experiences within cohort will also be a reflection of differences between 'rich and poor, majority and minority ethnic groups, rural and urban' (Cain 2003: 309-310).

Nevertheless, these multiple trajectories are based on the 'fundamental premise … that individual development is lifelong … Development does not stop in adulthood, but extends from birth to death. Even in later life, development need not only be about decline, but may also involve psychological, social, and biological gains' (Settersten 2003b: 17). The development of the individual over the life course occurs within historical time and, like Henriques' discourse-responsive subject discussed above, within 'the unique social and cultural conditions that exist during those times' (Settersten 2003b: 22). (See also Elder et al. 2003: 56; Fry 2003: 270). Leonard Cain suggests that:

> Unless those who identify as gerontologists turn to cohort analysis and historical enrichment, turn to the reconstruction of the life courses of ordinary citizens, (including minority representatives) through oral histories and similar innovative research methods, and break away from excessive dependence upon survey research and the like, gerontology will continue to suffer from data malnutrition as well as lack of heart (2003: 320-321).

In life-course scholarship's focus on historical time and cohort, the study of old people has a particular interest because 'the longer a life is studied, the greater [the life's] risk of

exposure to social change. Long lives are thus most likely to reflect the particular contours of a changing society' (Elder et al. 2003: 58).

However life course stages in the developed world bear little relation to those in other parts of the world, nor to the life stages of marginalized groups. Christine Fry (2003) points out the inappropriateness of the standardized model of the life course for those outside mainstream institutions such as the labor market (271). In non-industrialized countries where work and family arrangements are made differently, 'information about education, work, marriage, and children provides very little specificity about age' (272). In discussing child labour in poorer countries, Dale Dannefer (2003) offers a more political critique of the subject's development through the life course. He points to a structural economic interdependence between the rapidly cycled lives and the 'unending long days of low-paid work' which are part of the life-course pattern of children in poor countries, and the life-course of those in wealthy countries with its 'protracted childhood and … lengthy retirement' (265). This interdependence of life courses, and the discrepancies in well-being which it supports, are discussed further in Chapter 6 in terms of variations in resilience and recovery benchmarks across wealthy and poor societies.

It may be argued that life-course modelling, or the literary novel's invitation to empathy with an individual's life experience, or the evolving 'unconscious' of psychoanalytic theory are merely 'strategies of individualization' (Montag 1995: 75), which promote an illusory 'originary' subject (Henriques et al. 1984: 95). However the *benang merah* through all of these 'strategies' is the idea of learning, an accretive concept which is the basis of several other theorists' work on individual development and evolution (see for example Wilber 1995 (2000); Taylor 1998; Tornstam 2003; Slaughter 2006). Learning, with its additive quality dependent on remembering, reflection and habituation, (see Schön 1995 for a discussion of the relationship between remembering, reflection and learning), is an activity of a continuous and evolving subject. It is a practice not captured in the serial or simultaneous occupation by the subject of positions in discourses, although 'learning' itself is defined by and practised within cultural discourse.

Remembering, reflecting and the cumulative impacts of experience, which include learning, are fundamental to my interest in the life stories of older subjects which represent accretive

experience over time; these stories 'model the past' in a way which serial positionings in discourse, or narrative history, are unable to do.

Remembering or recollecting, like reflection and learning, are the acts of an agent with temporal continuity. The significance of recollection as an agentic act in the present is discussed in the following section.

The act of recollection

Benjamin notes that 'traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel' (Benjamin 1936a: 91). The life stories of the old Acehnese are performances produced by individual speakers, reflecting the aesthetic, political and emotional responses of the speaker to the interview situation. These responses constitute what Danto defines as the 'style' of a story, something immanent in the way it is told but which is expressed 'immediately and spontaneously', rather than as something studied or mannered (Danto 1981: 204, 206). The ways in which this style is manifest in each story from Aceh is the subject of Chapter 5.

Conversely, I have argued above that traces of the past described in stories cling to the storyteller, sedimented in both body and memory. The storyteller thus relates to the story as both its performer (like the history-writer) and its incorporation (unlike the history-writer). The final section of this Chapter on trauma draws a further distinction between recollection based on what has been sedimented in body and memory and the production of history.

The *performance* of a life story also makes explicit the continuity of 'the subject' over time. There are many examples in the storytelling by the old people in Aceh where the speaker consciously connects their past with their present, often in a reflective comment where the speaker moves from the story to 'interaction in the here-and-now' (Pasupathi 2006: 136).

The connections between past and present in these stories are not generally explanations, where past conditions are described *in order to* make sense of the present (historiographical Principle 2); they occur *after* the story, as a pointing back to the past from the present context, rather than as a conclusion. In the following example (where underlined), the storyteller ends a description of his life with a half-sceptical suggestion that he might

expect happiness only after death:

Bapak I-h (82)

When I get married, the independence is achieved. When I am married, I have difficult time too, very poor, *ciet putoh leuh* [phrase to describe that someone's condition as really at dead end, poor, miserable, no money etc].
Q: After that?
Hah? After that … ehmm … after getting married my condition remained the same. I still live under the poor, not happy at all, uhmm ... because I don't have anything, I don't own land or cow, nothing that I owned, because my parents were poor and didn't leave me something to inherit. So my life was hard, you know.
Let's say that I don't live happy, but when I die, I never know. (Laughing)

Others explain that hard physical labour in the past had resulted in pain in the present:

Ibu H-s (72)

I am sick dear, my body is in pain.
Well, I feel pain in my knees dear, and my arms …
I have to use a stick to go to the mountain. You know, picking up the tree branches [to sell for fuel]. Well, dear, if I didn't go there, then I will have no money for food.
And also because I carried heavy water during the salt making [before the tsunami which destroyed the home-based salt-making industry].
My knees must hurt because I walk a lot, well, older people always feel pain in their knees right?

For others, comment on past privations expresses relief or thankfulness in the present:

Bapak A-d (68)

In the past, everyone is poor, I am poor, and then where should I work with? Where should I look for money?
In the past I don't even have spare cloth. I only have one cloth to wear during

my trip to the market, and to the rice field, only one cloth, for praying too. Whenever I want to buy the new one, I cannot. <u>But now, because of God, everything is easy. There are many places to buy cloth</u>.

For interviewees who were unable to attend school during the Japanese occupation and subsequent conflicts, or because of poverty, comments express both regret and acceptance in the present:

Bapak S-h (78)

I didn't go to school, some villagers went to school. But I didn't. <u>What can I say, it's already happened</u>. But I can read the capital letters. I learnt from other people.

Bapak D-a (71)

So, I quit school right, so I went to the Quran reading in the *balee* [an up-high building usually built in front of the mosque for village meetings, religious study, Quran reading etc]. I couldn't go to *Pasantren* [religious school] because, you know, my father had passed away … I had to work, I didn't have time. <u>I don't think about that anymore</u>.

Similarly, another interviewee whose husband fought in World War II also expressed her acceptance and resignation today about a lost struggle in the past to gain compensation for her husband's service when he became seriously ill in later life:

Ibu M-m (74)

We were old and very sad in that time, we gave up, and we don't want that acknowledgement anymore. <u>Now, I am thankful that I have my children that I can depend on</u>.

These stories and the expressions of current feelings or beliefs which follow connect the past to the present, but are distinct from a life narrative in Mark Freeman's sense, that is: 'the interpretive process of reading the text of one's past and extracting from it a more or less coherent and meaningful plot [or] … narrative integrity (Freeman 1997a: 375). The

stories, together with the comments, weave together the past of the subject and the past of Aceh: conflict, suspension of schooling, rural poverty, natural disaster; however instead of forming a narrative, they *materialize* the historical past, in Bakhtin's and Carter's sense, or *model* it in Walter Benjamin's sense, in stories of lived experience transmitted to the listener. Reflective comment is then used to connect the storyteller's past with their presence 'today' in the interview. Ways in which the poetics of the story texts help to materialize or model the past are examined in Chapter 5.

In the previous Chapter, I noted that the issue of 'truth' or 'truthfulness' arises in listening to life stories; the listener makes a judgement about whether the speaker is engaged in fictive invention and remembering. Like the historian, the listener may also explore other sources about the past to check, not the intentions of the speaker, but for misrememberings; in this thesis, examples of other sources (discussed in Chapter 4) include historical records of the activities of Japanese nationals after World War II, or the activities of the Indonesian Government and the Communist Party. Wyschogrod claims that the historian is 'bound by the promise that … she is committed truthfully to convey some aspect of [the past] …' (Wyschogrod 1998: 4); so too the discussion in this thesis of stories told by old Acehnese assumes as a matter of the researcher's judgement, not accuracy in remembering, but truthfulness in the storyteller as a *commitment* to tell the listener some aspects of their lives. Memories of trauma also raise particular issues of 'evidence', 'truth' and authenticity (Principle 3), and produce a particular kind of relationship between the story, the storyteller, and the listener (Ricoeur's 'mimesis₃') which is discussed further in the next Chapter.

The remembering of *traumatic* events also connects the past and the present of an individual subject in ways which are distinct from the processes of recollecting and memory described above; such cases are marked often by involuntariness of remembering or forgetting, and raise more sharply issues about the continuity of 'the subject', the accretiveness of experience, and the impacts for the subject of the act of producing recollections.

THE ACCRETION OF TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE IN BODY AND MEMORY

> The survival experience, or the Holocaust experience, is a very condensed version of most of what life is all about: it contains a great many existential questions, that we manage to avoid in our daily living (Felman et al. 1992: 72).

∞

In this section I wish to reinforce the significance of individual 'life stories' as stories of accretion, by focusing on the experience and recollection of trauma. As already noted, an acknowledgement that the relationship between experience and memory is 'shaped by' interpretation does not invalidate the force of those memories in providing, via recollection, 'both the content and impetus of political and moral claims about historical oppression in the past and present' (Ball 2000: 8). Such claims depend on verbalized recollection of trauma which serves a very different purpose from that of historical 'evidence', and with significant implications for the speaker and the listener. These implications, which are discussed in the following Chapter, arise, I argue below, because of the continuity of the subject and the accretiveness of material experience.

In Chapter 6, I propose that understanding the past through life stories can reveal the precariousness of the present. Trauma makes perhaps one of the most undeniable connections between the past and precariousness of the present, although for individuals this connection may be obscure.[21] Below I examine the nature of trauma and the ways in which trauma connects the subject in the present with the subject of the past.

Trauma and utterance

> The condition for the existence of the written source is emission; for oral sources, transmission…(Portelli 2003: 70).

∞

---

[21] When for example it takes the form of 'disconnection' (repression or dissociation) (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995).

The connections between traumatic past experience and its impacts on the individual in the present have been explored most extensively in the fields of psychology and psychoanalytic theory. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is 'a set of reactions that can develop in people who have experienced or witnessed an event which threatened their life or safety, or that of others around them, and led to feelings of intense fear, helplessness or horror' (Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health 2010). The long term psychological and physiological impacts of trauma are documented within the field of psychiatric medicine (see for example McFarlane 2004). This literature demonstrates connections between traumatic events and symptoms of PTSD, even where the event and the diagnosis are thirty years apart (McFarlane 2004: 877-878).

The cumulative impact of many traumatic events on the subject may also be responsible for the conclusion of the report on a Psychosocial Needs Assessment conducted in Aceh, that despite experiencing less direct violence than the young during the thirty year GAM-military conflict which ended in 2005, '[t]he oldest respondents (aged 54-82) are at greater risk for depression and general anxiety' (Good et al. 2007: 5). While the Assessment report found no direct correlation between duration of conflict trauma and wellbeing of victims, it noted that '[i]t is possible that the duration effect is important at the individual and clinical level' (Good et al. 2007: 64). Herman notes that '[p]rotracted depression is reported as the most common finding in virtually all clinical studies of chronically traumatized people' (Herman 1992: 382). The Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health also notes that there is a greater likelihood of PTSD in people subject to 'repeated traumatic experiences such as sexual abuse or living in a war zone' (Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health 2010).

The history of Aceh, and the examples of life stories presented earlier, reveal the past of 'lived memory' as serially traumatic for many Acehnese, and that these traumatic experiences often began in early childhood. Significantly, there has been no study of the accretive impacts of decades of conflict on older Acehnese people, nor how they responded to and dealt with their experiences. Good et al suggest that further research needs to be done on the apparently lower resilience of older people after the most recent conflict. As some of the older people I interviewed in Aceh provided hitherto unheard stories of trauma

dating back to the pre-World War II period of Dutch colonialism, this thesis may in part form an addition to research in the area.

As noted earlier, the ability of the individual to verbalize recollections is, for psychoanalysts, an important criterion of trauma 'recovery', indicating an assimilation of the traumatic experience into the individual's identity and memory of the past (see for example Van Der Kolk et al. 1995):

> Telling, in short, is a process of disembodying memory, demystifying it, a process which can only begin after memories have been remembered (Culbertson 1995: 179).

Culbertson notes however that such verbalized recollections come at a cost; something of the teller's memory is lost in the process:

> What we normally call memory is not the remembered at all of course, but a socially accepted fabrication, a weaving together of the thin, sometimes delicate and intertwined threads of true memory, the remembered, so that these might be told…
>
> …it is what others need. And so it is what I need to be believed, even to understand, if not believe, myself. But it is not my memory, it is not remembrance. It is a social construction of a reality that is more crucial to me in the other forms it takes (Culbertson 1995: 179, 184-175).

Similarly, Annie Dillard's comment noted in Chapter 2 concerns the 'killing' effect which verbalized remembering produces on memory: '[M]y memories – those elusive, fragmentary patches of color and feeling – are gone. They've been replaced by the work' (quoted in Freeman 1997a: 375-376)). Taylor too draws attention to experiments by Schooler et al which show that a 'verbalized' memory can overshadow visual memory. The tendency of *verbal* descriptions of people to focus on facial features, for example, 'makes it difficult to put the face back together again for the holistic recognition task' (Schooler et al. 1990: 65).

Schooler et al conclude that:

> Memory for taste, touch, smell, sounds, affect, and frequency may also be
> vulnerable to verbalization. The present analysis suggests a likely criterion for
> whether memory for a stimulus is susceptible to verbal overshadowing: *it must*
> *be associated with a memory that defies complete linguistic description*
> (Schooler et al. 1990: 66, my emphasis).

Memories of trauma may also 'defy complete description'. As Biggs noted, memories are 'laid down in particular circumstances and hold those original feelings, interpretations and associations within them' (Biggs 1999: 217). Recollection may fail to function where the emotions and senses associated with it are too traumatic, where 'the need to know [is] at odds with a desire to close down the senses' (Sebald 2003: 23; quoted in Zurbuchen 2005: 7). An involuntary memory, suggests one anthropologist, might sometimes occur unmediated by words; its articulation 'no more than a scream'[22]:

> … a cry, which cannot be called a description, which is more primitive than any
> description, for all that serves as a description of the inner life (Wittgenstein
> 1972: 189).

Hence, although experience is 'sedimented' in both body and memory, traumatic experience may be inaccessible to recollection, like Caruth's 'unclaimed experience' (Caruth 1996), where 'we quite literally do not know what has happened: we cannot say what it was … we only know that "something happened"' (Edkin 2003: 39). The inability to articulate such experience, and yet the possibility of 'therapeutic' recollection, support the conception of memory as an involuntary sedimentation of experience which remains potentially, or virtually, available and may be accessed only in certain circumstances, for example during psychoanalysis.

Even when recollections of trauma are verbalized, their utterance may serve a different purpose from that of accurately describing past events. These purposes, and the associated 'truth' or 'truthfulness' of such recollections is discussed in the following Chapter.

---

[22] I thank Daniel Birchok, University of Michigan, for this insight.

Where traumatic experience is recollected, the distinction between 'remembering' and 're-experiencing' becomes a difficult one. Hirsch et al make the point that survivor testimonies record 'the psychological and emotional milieu of the struggle for survival, not only then, but also now' (Hirsch et al. 2009: 155, quoting Geoffrey Hartman). Studies by Van Der Kolk et al suggested that 'scenes were re-experienced [in nightmares] over and over again without modification…[W]e saw an unmodified reliving of traumatic episodes of ten, twenty, or thirty years ago…' (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995: 172). (See also McFarlane 2004). Grayman et al note that many of the dreams of Acehnese post-conflict fitted the 'textbook definition' of a posttrauma nightmare as one 'that repeats either an exact or a nearly exact version of past lived experience during the conflict' (2009: 310). They suggest that these dreams could be more properly described as 'intrusions of memory' rather than nightmares (311).

The following example is one of several from Aceh where an old World War II memory is told as though it is a recently lived experience rather than a memory of events 65 years ago:

> Bapak I-k (83)
>
> …cutting tree branch, breaking rock, working for the Japanese. I was hit behind my head by the Japanese, until my head was dizzy.
> I don't remember what year it was; I just say it how it is.
> …
> Sweat is all over my face, I feel very exhausted, and the sweat is *meutep-tep* [dropping continuously], suddenly I realized they came behind my back and puk [sound of punching] they hit me. I couldn't see anything after that. And then an army came after me to split me [take me away] from the hitter and dragged me under a tree, I sat there and didn't continue the work.
> When it's time to go home, people go home. At one o'clock everyone is leaving and so am I.
> …
> Well, after they hit me, of course it's hurting, I feel dizzy and confused about what has happened. I couldn't even see the ground, it was black. I couldn't see anything. His friend [in the Japanese army] came and took me to the tree. At

one o'clock when everybody is leaving, he called me and asked me to go home.
I came back again tomorrow.

Chapter 5 will explore further the way in which a story such as this 'transfers' the experience of the storyteller, by unfolding events to the listener in the same way they unfolded to the storyteller (Labov 1997: 413). However the impact of this style of storytelling is that the speaker himself appears to some extent to be re-living the experience as he tells it. The vivid detail of such a story after a period of 65 years suggests that the affective (emotional) aspects of the experience are strongly present in the storyteller today. This phenomenon of detailed recollection of long ago events is discussed in the following section.

Recollective recentness

The strength and clarity of memories over time has been the subject of psychology studies on autobiographical memory. The 'lifespan retrieval curve' indicates that events experienced between the ages of 10 and 30 years are better remembered later in life than experiences in other periods, even by older individuals with dementia (Conway et al. 1999: 35). Reasons offered for this 'reminiscence bump' in the curve include the 'novelty' of events occurring at these ages, or, alternatively, that these events have a special relationship to the development of the 'self' (35).

However Conway and Haque's (1999) research on older people in Bangladesh revealed a second 'reminiscence bump' corresponding to the period of conflict with Pakistan which resulted in an independent Bangladesh. The authors argue, on the basis of other studies in traumatized societies, that memory of the self during 'public events' is greater than during private events in the reminiscence bump period, because the former establish the self's 'generational identity' as part of a 'socio-historical epoch' (36, 37). For older Bangladeshis, the standard reminiscence bump from around the age of 10-30 years was overshadowed by a stronger 'bump' around the conflict period. The authors conclude that either this period has been 'encoded' in memory as a collective 'lifetime period', or as a remnant of collective posttraumatic stress disorder. These memories are moreover of a different type from those associated with formation of the self in early adulthood; instead of memories about the development of the self (which were typical even for younger subjects

who had lived through the conflict), the memories of the old were about the individual and the group 'enduring and surviving threatened extinction' (42-43).

Such research suggests that the periods of the past for which memory is strongest have more to do with their significance to the development of the self or to the survival of the self, than chronological position in the past. Among the old Acehnese I interviewed during my fieldwork, there were strong and detailed memories of specific incidents during the Japanese occupation of 1942-45, both by those who were small children and those who were young adults during the period.

> Ibu A-w (90)
>
> They released shots as they like, sometimes to the mountain, sometimes to the villagers. They didn't shoot me…Their shots were coming from the sea. I was in the village, I hid behind the bamboo tree, I dug a hole in the ground, and hid there with a little rice that I managed to bring. They were shooting from the sea…well, even though they didn't shoot me, of course I have to run and hide too.
>
> Bapak I-k (83)
>
> They paid us one cup of rice at 4 o'clock. One cup of rice usually served with two big chopped papaya, we mixed it and ate it, or sometimes *janeng* [poisonous vegetable]. This [pointed to his hand], is injured while skinning the papayas. Not only for days, but months we've been chopping papaya for food. We cooked it, rice this much and papaya this much [showing with his hand] and eaten by the whole family.

Stories about the period of the Japanese occupation were generally the most detailed within the interviews. This supports the finding that memories of threats to survival overshadow memories of development into an adult during the standard 'reminiscence bump'. This phenomenon provides the basis for the definition of 'recollective recentness' for the purposes of this thesis, as a *foregrounding in consciousness* of events regardless of their chronological location in the individual's past. Recollective recentness is a factor in the narratively powerful 'transfer of experience' by a storyteller to the listener, which is

discussed in the analysis of story texts in Chapter 5.

Moreover in the Aceh interviews another kind of event appeared to be foregrounded in consciousness and was mentioned often: the dramatic improvement in life circumstances brought about by the end of conflict and the advent of irrigation. Both of these events, which brought with them physical and material security, are of great significance in the life stories – the obverse of that prolonged absence of security which characterizes most of the storytellers' lives:

> Bapak A-d (68)
>
> But now, we are able to go out in the night, working is easy; we can go anytime we want to go.
>
> Bapak S-h (78)
>
> But now we feel happier, we can go to the rice field. Furthermore, we have the irrigation; the country is not poor anymore.
>
> Ibu R-h (65)
>
> … well, life is pretty much safe, no fighting. Uh ... if we go to the field, we don't think about it anymore, not scared.

Thus recollective recentness – prominence manifested as frequency or detail in recollection – is an indicator not only of what was most threatening, when life was most precarious, but also of what is most *precious* – hard-won relief from previous insecurity or privation. Chapter 6 examines the precarious and the precious revealed by recollective recentness as a factor in assessing adaptability and resilience of social-ecological systems.

Trauma and the body

> The ultimate truth, … the ultimate act of witness, comes from inside the gas chamber and from the mute testimony of memory emerging from the body (Hirsch et al. 2009: 158).

<div align="center">∞</div>

The connection between the past and present of the remembering subject, especially in the

case of traumatic memory, is the foundation of psychiatric and sociocultural theory about the impact of trauma, including its impacts on the body.

> The continued experience of pain long after the fracture or injury has healed can arise because pain remains a central element of the undigested memory of the traumatic event (McFarlane 2007: 560)

> The body telling is the body then and the body now as well, the passage of events and time not clear at first, but established in the course of creating the story (Culbertson 1995: 190)

Traumatic memory is cumulative both in the body as physical pain and in psychiatric symptoms such as depression or anxiety. In psychiatric medicine, the physical symptoms of stress disorders and depression include aches and pains and lack of sleep (Good 2009), headaches, rashes, hyperventilation, diarrhoea, tremor and tachycardia (Pearn 2000: 435-436). In Aceh, many of the old people I interviewed experienced chronic pain in their limbs, tremor, headaches, and difficulty breathing. While some of these symptoms are likely to be age-related, Byron Good sounds a caution about assuming that physical conditions are solely age-related (or that ways of describing the past are 'cultural'), rather than related to stress or depression (Good 2009):

Ibu S-l (71)

… well, I am kind of afraid, my heart is unstable *[hatee ka goyang]*. When the wind blows, I feel scared, also when the rain is falling. I am thinking, what kind of disaster you give us again dear God … while I am sitting, I am crying.

Bapak A-b (69)

But now, I don't go fishing any longer, I can't walk, I feel exhausted huh, and I have no strength anymore.
After tsunami happened. I stay at home, I couldn't walk, *ka leumoh* [feeling weak, lost the spirit of life etc].

Bapak I-k (83)

Recently I've tried to do the rock breaking but I feel I cannot do it anymore, my eyes were dark and I couldn't see anything, and I quit.

I just return from there but the medicine doesn't work. The drugs that I am supposed to consume two times in a day, three times in a day, one after lunch, I've tried all but nothing worked …

I don't know why, I feel tired while I am sitting. While I was sitting and talking like this, I feel tired and hardly breathe.

Ibu M-m (74)

Since I am sick, I don't go anywhere anymore. I've been sick for six months, every single day I am sick. Today is the first time I can get up from bed.
…
I feel my body weak, you know I can't go anywhere, to visit the neighbour, or meet anyone …

Different kind of sickness, sometimes my stomach hurt, then I took medicine for stomach ache, but then my chest hurt, then my knees feeling weak. I thought I couldn't go for medication anymore my dear. I couldn't afford the doctor so I went to traditional medicine.

Bapak R-z (84)

Yeah, hard breathing, it is very difficult to exhale.

Bapak S-h (78)

I am often getting sick recently so I couldn't work hard anymore. Uhm … I have high-blood pressure, my wife too …

Bapak S-f (82)

I could not go anymore, I am exhausted…
If I stand under the heat of the sun, I am shaking.

These reports of illness and pain are part of life stories which also report mental and physical trauma. I did not specifically seek information on symptoms of posttraumatic

stress, and the interviewees' comments above arose either in the course of conversation about other topics or as responses to a general inquiry about their health. While some symptoms may reflect impacts of age and poor health services as well as the somatic impacts of trauma, the physical symptoms my interviewees describe are very similar to those reported in a recent study of conflict impacts in Aceh (Grayman et al. 2009). Grayman et al's list (2009) included:

Loss of spirit or energy

Exhausted for no reason

Crying often

Unable to work

Helplessness

Fearful

Hard to socialize

Unable to sleep at night

Shaking uncontrollably

Weakness

Body hurts

Remembering what happened

Frequent headaches

Hard or slow to think

Forgetfulness

Heart problems including heartache, racing heartbeat, "It feels as if my heart has fallen", weak heart (Grayman et al. 2009: 299).

The relationship between experience and the body was described above as one of

'sedimentation' – as a result of which the body 'enacts' the past in a way which is not governed by intention (Butler 1997: 155-156). There is nevertheless an awareness in Aceh conflict survivors of a connection between past trauma and their bodies:

> Many respondents refer directly to somatization of mental distress, which is to say not just that psychological distress brought on by the conflict frequently manifests as physical illness, but also that people in Aceh understand that some of their physical ailments, particularly in the heart, are caused by psychological distress (Grayman et al. 2009: 300).

Ledbetter suggests that even where the body is culturally distrusted as something which requires higher guidance by the mind (Ledbetter 1996: 11), descriptions of pain and victimisation make reference to the body because 'to have [bodily] pain is to have certainty' (Ledbetter 1996: 13, 14). The storyteller's body, unlike the unfolding of the story, makes the past visible 'in one synoptic judgement' (Mink 1966: 184), 'all co-present in a single perception' (Ricoeur 1984: 159-160). John Berger's description of a film versus a painting is analogous with this distinction between the story and the storyteller as a manifestation of history in a 'temporal whole' (Arthur Danto quoted in Ricoeur 1984: 146-147):

> In a film, the way one image follows another, constructs an argument which becomes irreversible. In a painting all its elements are there to be seen simultaneously …
> Original paintings are silent and still in a sense that information never is. The silence and stillness permeate the actual material. This closes the distance in time between the painting and one's own act of looking at it. In this sense, all paintings are contemporary. Their historical moment is literally before our eyes (Berger 1972: 26).

The body of the storyteller places the 'historical moment … literally before our eyes'. Veena Das notes moreover that the body in this way can act as testimony, as the 'condensed expression of the trauma of individuals' (Das 1995: 181) and hence as tacit political criticism:

> The somatic states that bore witness to the excesses of the Cultural Revolution
> in China … for instance, came into being in a world wherein speech was
> silenced. They are criticisms of the historical wrongs that the individual has
> been made to suffer (Das 1995: 181).

Moreover, for Das, the medicalization of trauma victims' conditions as 'major depressive disorders' or 'post traumatic stress' diminishes their role as 'moral commentary and political performance' about such issues as the mass violence or prolonged privation which caused them (Das 1995: 175-177). Like Das, psychiatrist Alexander McFarlane notes the interest of the nation state in re-narrating trauma; the experience of those in military service who return from war zones is framed in terms of courage and national sacrifice rather than focusing on the suffering of individuals and 'the awfulness of what happens' (McFarlane 2000: 23-24). He notes that myths of courage and bravery have also produced in the medical profession a 'cultural amnesia' which prevents learning from previous experience of wartime casualties:

> There are powerful social forces that conspire to prejudice observation in this
> area of knowledge.
> …
> It is easy to find the evidence to support the argument we want to prove; the
> challenge is to hold onto the facts that tell us novel and other truths that we
> would rather not know. Traumatic experiences are events that burst such
> awareness that they cannot deny into people's lives. It is not surprising that the
> enduring lessons about psychological trauma are hard to learn and hang onto
> (McFarlane 2000: 25).

The medicalization of trauma in Western discourse has also been purveyed to other cultures, although modified in the process of its adoption (Argenti-Pillen 2000; Grayman et al. 2009). Argenti-Pillen warns of the potential impacts of introducing Western trauma discourse 'in circumstances of massive destruction, extreme suffering, and concomitant cultural destabilization' (Argenti-Pillen 2000: 99). She notes that Western trauma discourse carries with it deep cultural elements such as particular conceptions of memory, identity, causation, and the idea that the state rather than God is the moral authority

(Argenti-Pillen 2000: 99-100). The introduction of trauma healing services in other cultures requires a broadly scoped ethnographic approach which goes beyond 'the "therapeutic context" of healer and client' and examines 'the manner in which foreign discourses are incorporated within the local culture' (Argenti-Pillen 2000: 100).

An example of an ethnographic approach to trauma studies is Grayman et al's survey of nightmares in Acehnese conflict survivors which draws on James Siegel's ethnography of dreams (Siegel 1979; Grayman et al. 2009), as well as historical knowledge of the GAM-military conflict. In distinguishing between types of dreams and their connections with conflict experience, the spirit world and God, it provides a deeper understanding of the impacts of trauma in Aceh than that provided by the application of standard Western symptomatology.

As there are cultural differences in the experience of trauma, so too will there be differences between cultures in the ways that experience accumulates and produces its impacts in the present. Ethnographies of ageing, remembering, or teleologies of pain are needed to identify these differences. They may reveal alternative understandings of the cumulative impacts of experience or of 'the self' to those discussed above.

Throughout the history of conflict, hunger, poverty and natural disaster in Aceh, each individual has occupied a sequence of Felman's 'topographical positions' with respect to events, as a child during the Japanese occupation, as a fighter in the Darul Islam movement, or as an old person escaping the tsunami. These various positions, I have suggested here, are not only a sequence of 'positions within discourse', but *places of material experience*, in which the subject's experience of one place is sedimented onto her/his experience in previous places in both memory and the body.

As the excerpts from transcripts above indicate, life stories 'model' this sedimentation of experience in memory rather than narrativizing it, just as the storytellers themselves embody the sedimentation of experience in the body. The story*telling* of the old Acehnese as performance both *embodies* the past and *models it in a story* as a non-narrativized accretion of story fragments.

Life stories of the old, as models of the past, have particular qualities associated with age

which are explored in the following section.

THE ESCHATOLOGICAL VIEW

Unlike the historian's synoptic view of the past, the old person's perspective is also that of someone approaching the end of their own *longue durée*. Riita-Liisa Heikkinen notes that:

> Our relationship to the future changes as we grow older, as the future grows shorter. In Heidegger's analysis of temporal experience, the most profound level of understanding is the realisation that one's personal existence is coming to an end. This realisation elevates the experience of personal time to a unity in which the past, the present, the future and one's existence are seen as a whole, a single episode (Heikkinen 2004: 575).

Mark Freeman notes Gabriel Marcel's comment that all stories are 'coloured' by their endings (Freeman 1997a: 378); the interpretation of the present in terms of a future end is eschatology. Eschatology is criticized by Bakhtin as diminishing the importance of the time between now and then:

> Eschatology always sees the segment of a future separating the present from the end as lacking value (Bakhtin 1981: 148).

Eschatology, Bakhtin suggests, has gained significance as a way of understanding the world with the rise of individualism, and hence the importance of death as the 'ultimate' end (Bakhtin 1981: 216). Benjamin on the other hand, rather than seeing a focus on death as a way of emptying the present and immediate future of significance, suggests that the individual who is dying immediately possesses a special kind of authority which makes their past worthy of storytelling.

> … suddenly in his expressions and looks the unforgettable emerges and imparts to everything that concerned him that authority which even the poorest wretch in dying possesses for the living around him. This authority is at the very source of the story (Benjamin 1936a: 93).

The emptying of significance from the present by death, and the giving of significance to the past by death, are both forms of eschatology – writing or re-writing the present and past

in terms of 'the end' or 'death'. They can be seen in the claim that a retrospectively constructed narrative can make sense of a life, and in the suggestion that one might, in the present, anticipate a desired narrative at the end of life and 'live accordingly' (Freeman 1997a: 392).

I argue below that, while the transcripts of the Acehnese interviews reveal an awareness of death as imminent, and of the present as a form of 'waiting' or 'winding down', there is no sense that this either diminishes the significance of the past and present, nor that it confers on the speaker a special authority.

Death itself was widely seen by the old Acehnese as a ceasing of worldly care and responsibilities:

> Ibu R-h (65)
>
> When we have died, our business in the world is finished.
>
> Ibu S-p (65)
>
> Well, if I died, if you ask of course all the human's business is finished. We don't have to think about our inheritance, our children, we only think about our *amalan* [the goodness that you have made during your life].
>
> Bapak Y-h (80+) (from notes of interview)
>
> Of course he always remembers because this is history, he will always remember, when we die, that's when we forget everything.
>
> Bapak S-h (78)
>
> If we die, of course every relationship stopped. Our next generation will continue life.

For the interviewees, their life at present is a time of 'winding down' or 'waiting':

> Ibu R-h (65)
>
> That's it, my life, lived slowly.

Bapak A-y (80+)

Usually, old people just wait for the dying day.

Ibu H-s (72)

I remember [the past] sometimes, but I just live my life.

Bapak S-f (82)

So I am just sitting around and praying.
…
That's my life now, I don't over think much, about people, about other way, just simply me and my life.

Other comments by the old Acehnese focus on feelings of tiredness or weakness, and the giving up of work:

Ibu S-p (65)

Many children came to my house to study Quran reading, but now, it's been a week since they didn't come anymore, I was old enough and quit.

Bapak S-f (82)

When I was strong, I walked here and there to teach people, share my knowledge, but now, as I am getting old, and hardly walk, I just sit and wait for people to come to me.

Bapak D-a (71)

Well, I miss it [working in the field], but I don't have enough strength to work there.

The comments about 'sitting around', taking things slowly, are also reflected in other findings that the 'oldest old tend to … see themselves as living mostly in the present, "one day at a time"' (Johnson et al. 1997: 148-149):

… the oldest old shift their focus to concentrate upon basic existential concerns

about life and death. In fact, most have come to terms with imminent death by viewing that possibility without fear or trepidation. In a narrowing social world, altered goals often lead to feelings of detachment, increased introspection or interiority, and even a feeling of remoteness from the typical worries and concerns of daily life (Johnson et al. 1997: 148).

A focus on basic existential concerns ('just me and my life') is evident in the Aceh transcripts. The old Acehnese, who disengage from work because of tiredness or weakness, appear, like the narrators in Johnson and Barer's study, to have 'come to terms with their reduced stamina and their many losses' (Johnson et al. 1997: 154). This is also reflected in Heikkinen's study which found that among the 'old old':

> … life revolved around their own everyday. Their routine actions, routine choices in everyday life made the 90-year-old narrators feel "being-at-home". They had turned away from the things they no longer needed in life. Outwardly, their circle of life had become smaller, their needs had lessened but at the same time more condensed (580).

Nonetheless, this acceptance of current limitations and of a life now 'lived slowly' does not mean an uncritical or detached attitude to the past, or, as discussed in the following Chapter, to the actions of various groups during conflict which resulted in the suffering of the individual and their community. Heikkinen found a distinction between the old and the very old in this regard:

> … in the earlier stages of the study, [the narrators] voiced criticisms of [socio-cultural] changes. At age 90 years, however, they no longer criticized society or its people. To quote Heidegger …, 'their unsettledness … had quietened down' (Heikkinen 2004: 580).

It is possible that this age distinction may be a factor in the critical reflections of the old Acehnese, most of whom were still in their 70s and 80s. On the other hand, the absence of long-term material security and a history of chronic trauma suggest, as argued above, that 'life course' theory of the relatively wealthy and secure developed world may not be directly applicable in other societies. The following descriptions by the older Acehnese of

reflect a critical understanding of current inequity or privation:

Bapak I-k (83)

During the Dutch, planting is easy. But now, since people made many mistakes, so God has punished us that's why the tree, the plant couldn't grow…
The world is crashing down, people don't have the guidance for life.

Bapak M-d (72)

But the villagers who live here in this village, I can say that the cause of the poverty here is the knowledge [or science]. We're having less knowledge about trading, about this and that. We go to the sea, but we have less knowledge about fishing, we're planting crops, still we have less knowledge about crops … everything is less knowledge, that's why we are never developing.

Bapak S-f (82)

What's good now? For me nothing, I still eat little. What I said before is my point of view that people now are not suffering, because during the Japanese, we're all living in the same suffering situation. But now, some people are poor and some of the other are rich.

Ibu A-a (80)

It's not enough dear, sometimes I have to ask money from the people, they came here and gave me food. It was really difficult especially for a woman; it's hard to go out very far.

Bapak I-h (78)

Now? If you asked about my happy moment, I don't have [one]. Ehm…You know … We don't have anything; I have to share this much food [showing with his hand] with the rest of family members.

Ibu A-h (74)

Now, the Javanese become rich. After the Japanese left [1945], they didn't

return to their place. They moved to many places here and lived there and have their own livelihood. They're richer than us now, they own many lands.

Thus the old Acehnese reveal both a sense of relief from care, but remain concerned to convey the social and economic conditions of the speaker in the past, and now in the present. Other 'critical' qualities of the stories are discussed further in the following Chapter.

The interview situation itself calls forth recollections which are often unhappy ones. However there are indications that even outside the interview situation, the interviewees cannot forget the hardship of the past. As discussed in Chapter 2, this inability to forget is represented by the Acehnese word '*tingat*' which means 'being in a state of remembering, or reminded', rather than '*ingat*' which means a more active 'remembering':

Bapak A-b (69)

When I lie down, I think about it…or later when I sleep at night. Of course I still think about that accident. I remember that.
…
I remember the day of the accident when the landslide happened and I was buried, I remember and am scared, it's so real.

Ibu A-h (74)

I remember my past while I am changing clothes, I think about the history in the past, my history. I think about how sad my condition, my cloth that I used in the past … how sad was that. Also while I am eating, I remember about the situation of our food in the past, that we had to mix rice with chopped banana.

Ibu A-a (80)

Sometimes I think about it a little.

Bapak D-a (71)

About the past huh? I think about it …
I remember …

Hm … of course I remember those memories, because I feel really sad thinking about the past.

Ibu H-l (≈80)

Seumikee [reminiscing], you know, sometimes while I was sitting, huh.
About how hard life is, huh.

Bapak I-s (80)

You know, about how suffering I was in that time, while I am sitting, I think about it.

Bapak I-k (83)

Sometimes I remember, I remember all of those old times, huh. About me.

Bapak M-d (72)

How can we forget, of course I remember. At least a little thing will cross my mind, but I never had a dream about it.

Bapak S-h (78)

The day when they left, how could I forget? …
Of course, I remember. About the way we lived.

As noted above, the particular chronically traumatic experience of the old Acehnese is likely to produce more 'reminiscence bumps' than those who have lived in more politically and economically stable times or places; it may also therefore be a factor in a continued critical reflection on the past which seems to differ from the suspension of care in the old which was noted by Heikkinen.

On the other hand, as indicated by the comments about 'waiting' and 'winding down' quoted earlier, many of the interviewees had let go of responsibility in the sense of 'concern or commitment' (Heikkinen 2004: 579) about the future. The interviewees were asked towards the end of the interviews what they thought the future held. The absence of their own future – '"there is no future; my future is behind me."' (Johnson et al. 1997: 160) is

reflected in different ways in the responses:

Ibu A-s (70+)

I am not worrying about that, I believe in God…
This is my destiny, it is what it is. I don't know what else will happen.

Bapak A-y (80+)

Old people will die. My children should think about the way to guide their
children too. Usually, old people just wait for the dying day.

Ibu H-s (72)

I cannot say it dear, because it is not happening yet, so I don't know. How do I
know the future?

Bapak I-k (83)

I don't know yet [about their future], whether happy or unhappy. We will see
what happens.

Ibu A-a (80)

I don't know what to say … It's all up to the God.

For some, even the contemplation of future disaster was stated in a matter of fact way and
with wry amusement:

Bapak M-d (72)

I don't know how to answer that, about the future … What if the big wave
comes again, we'll finish (laughs).

Bapak D-a (71)

Sometimes, uhmm … you know, our field was located 150 meters away from
the river, but in the present, the distance is only 50 meters, it's getting closer
(laughs). So I think, if this [stone mining] continues to happen, if the
government doesn't do anything regarding this, I think by the next two years,

my land will maybe vanish in the landslide.

This apparent suspension of *responsibility* for the future contrasts with responses to a direct question about the future of children and grandchildren. The responses to this question produced a set of *hopes and expectations*; telling summary statements about what it was like in the past and a hope or belief that life would be better for the next generations:

Ibu R-h (65)

Of course I remember, let say, that I have lived in a hard situation, I hope that … uhm … my children and my grand children don't suffer the same.

Ibu A-h (74)

I think the youngsters now live better, but people of my age now, were never happy …
Well, so many changes have happened now. At least younger people now don't know how suffering we were in the past.

Ibu S-p (65)

It is so easy to find money now, because the country is peaceful. So, it is okay for the children and the grandchildren. I think everything will be okay for them.

For the old Acehnese the past, while recollected in the consciousness of approaching death – the eschatological perspective - is not emptied of significance; the accumulated experiences of each interviewee's life are such that remembering it is not optional; the difficulties of the past remain the subject of vivid recollection – recollectively recent - and, it is hoped, never to be repeated. A better future for coming generations, while no longer their responsibility – again an eschatological perspective - is nonetheless prayed and wished for.

CONCLUSION

Some of the ways in which the continuity of the subject and the cumulative impacts of experience have been theorized include:

- the continuous 'unconscious' of psychoanalytic theory, whose experience is constructed over time by prevailing discourses about gender, sexuality, ethnicity etc, but who carries the capacity to resist and change discourse;

- the work of trauma theorists in various fields on the connections between present events (such as recollective episodes) and past experience;

- theories of learning and evolution which rely on remembering and reflecting on past experience.

Other theorists have argued that the subject, rather than a continuous entity or consciousness, is constructed at the moment of recognizing itself in discourses which 'hail' it; or as a sedimentation of discursive social practices which through repetition produce the subject and accumulate in the body.

In this Chapter I have extended this theorizing of the subject using the life stories of old Acehnese, to argue for a continuous subject in whom experience, howsoever related to discourse and social practice, is sedimented in both the body and *memory*. Further, the 'recollective recentness' of past difficulties is a factor in the non-chronological, non-narrative quality of the storytelling. I have argued that life stories therefore are *models* rather than narratives of experience, which reveal the quality of accretiveness in experience through the locus of the individual storyteller as both a mnemonic and bodily repository of the past. The understanding of the past provided by these models is discussed in the following Chapter.

4.   CONSTRUCTING THE PAST: HISTORY AND RECOLLECTION

> Private memories cannot, in concrete studies, be readily unscrambled from the effects of dominant historical discourses. It is often these that supply the very terms by which a private history is thought through. Memories of the past are, like all common-sense forms, strangely composite constructions, resembling a kind of geology, the selective sedimentation of past traces (Popular Memory Group 2003: 78).

<div align="center">∞</div>

INTRODUCTION

Both this and the previous Chapter are focused on elaborating the distinction between history and life stories. The previous Chapter compared the relationships which the individual memorist and the historian have with the past. It concluded that:

The traditional historian, including those who work with oral histories, constructs a narrative based on the *evidence of others*, and *plots* the development of events and conditions over time in a way which leads, either ineluctably or, in more recent histories, via several possible and contested paths, to the present.

The life-storyteller represents their own *experience,* sedimented in memory and body, by *modelling* the past in the form of recollections and the expressive rhetoric of the body.

This Chapter proposes to answer the following research questions from Chapter 2:

3. What kinds of understandings of the past are provided by recollection and history, and how are they different? (or how do recollection and history differently configure the past?)

4. How does ageing change the structure and perspective of recollection?

The discussion in this Chapter moves away from Ricoeur's 'prefiguration' stage – those framing concepts such as narrative or plot, or relationships between experience, memory and recollection, which were discussed in Chapter 3. In the following, the focus is on the 'configuration' stage – the kinds of purposive interpretations and constructions undertaken

by the historian and the teller of a life story from their particular perspectives.

Integrally connected with 'configuration' however, is the process of 'refiguration', the understanding of the history or life story by the audience *for whom* it is configured. The historian or storyteller in configuring their 'text' assume an ultimate connection with, and reconfiguration by, the reader or listener; the text and the way it is presented (its style) are configured to 'face outwards' to the reader or listener.

The purposive configuration of a text and its reception by an audience are the subject of the following sections. As in Chapter 2, a preliminary discussion of the way history is configured is used to focus the later discussion of recollection and life stories.

PURPOSES OF HISTORY

History as 'world-making'

> [Communist writer DN Aidit's] history was not intended primarily as an account of events leading to a current situation but rather … as a pattern for organizing thought. It provided a past which was a model for the future not simply in terms of recommended action but in categories of perception, presenting certain ways of looking at things and excluding others (McVey 1979: 349).

∞

As noted in Chapter 3, historical inquiry is a 'retelling' of a story whose conclusion is already known (Principle 5). The historian looks back with an apparently synoptic or 'god's eye view' at a 'landscape of the past', but in a selective way guided by the interests and needs of the present (Principle 6). The narrative which is constructed must credibly and 'acceptably' lead to its end (Danto cited in Ricoeur 1984: 150). In this section, I examine forms of purposiveness and instrumentalism in history-writing, and how these form part of 'collaborative world-making' in the present (Tsing 1999: 27).

All of the historiographical principles outlined in Chapter 3 are concerned with history's fulfilment of a purpose, which is to render the past intelligible and convincing to an audience. As noted previously, 'what happened' only becomes an 'event' when the historian describes it as such in the text. The *purposiveness* of such event-production resides in the historian and is directed to her/his readership.

This purposiveness can be seen most obviously in nationalist histories which foreground, for example, those past events which unite rather than divide a society, or in remediating histories which seek to represent hitherto unheard populations or untold events. Anthony Reid notes that other principles of historical understanding, including reliance on evidence, may even be overruled in a politically precarious environment such as the early independence period in Indonesia:

> … too close a concern with the remembered past of the various Indonesian peoples always threatened to endanger rather than confirm the newly defined unity [of the post-colonial Republic]. The historical orthodoxy therefore acquired a somewhat brittle quality which did not invite too rich an elaboration. Its central elements … were great Hindu kingdoms bringing political unity to the archipelago, followed by 350 years of Dutch oppression dignified by the resistance at some time or another of each Indonesian region and people. The needs of the orthodoxy allowed little room for historical judgement or even causation, except when discussing the Dutch (Reid 1979b: 297-298).

Remedial histories may be explicitly political histories such as Saskia Wieringa's work (2002) on sexual politics in Indonesia, which includes an alternative account of events leading up to and during the military-led anti-Communist purges of 1965-66. History's (and historians') service to political and moral ends reflects a concern for history 'to serve the present and future' (Wang 1979: 4,6).

A discussion of the ways that histories position themselves in relation to the future appears later in this Chapter. However the conception of historical texts as having a moral purpose, a plot which conveys, not a set of predictive 'covering laws', but universal truths (Ricoeur 1984: 41), is reflected in the narrative tradition in Islamic literature and history called *adab*, which is first and foremost 'concerned with ethics and behaviour in human life' (Harun 2004: 24):

> History in this sense may be viewed as a lasting moral lesson aimed to teach both rulers and their officials the right way of conduct and performing their duties (2004: 44).

In nationalist and *adab* histories can be seen most clearly the intentions with which a text is constructed in order to involve the *reader*; the construction of the narratives is closely tied to their reception. In other cases, value frameworks guide the construction of history but are not as explicit; 'march of progress' histories, for example depend on ideas of progress which may serve some interests and not others: '"progress" is difficult to define, except locally and temporarily from the viewpoints of stakeholders' (Midgely 1996: 16, 21).

The political and moral purposes of historians, and their assumptions, are responses to the circumstances and needs of the present. In responding to these circumstances and needs, it is suggested below, history is used to form and re-form both individual and social memory.

History as 'memory-making'

The elision in official Indonesian histories concerning the Japanese occupation during World War II was noted in Chapter 3. As Reid points out, such histories are part of nation-making projects and help to form not only 'official' memory but the memories of individuals. The shared past thus constructed may become, John Bowen suggests, the 'primary trope' of national identity (1989: 691).

'Shared representations of national history' have significant implications for the recollections of individuals (Hewer et al. 2010: 18, 19), as the following example suggests. Research involving interviews with Polish people about their understanding of the legacy of World War II, and the invasion of Poland by Russia, concluded that history and memory are both psychological constructs which are 'culturally engineered' (Hewer et al. 2010: 20, 29). The researchers proposed that the act of remembering 'is a social action because what is recalled is influenced by and located within a framework of cultural belief and ideology':

> [W]e remember what we are told to remember; we commemorate what we are told to commemorate and we forget what we have not been told to remember (Hewer et al. 2010: 29, 30).

The conception of remembering as a *social action* extends the distinction drawn in Chapter 3 between remembering as an action by an individual, and 'social memory' as something negotiated within a society and then 'remembered' by its members. Hewer et al's argument suggests that where social memory becomes so historically or culturally entrenched that

alternative histories are unacceptable, it becomes 'not a remembering but a stipulating: that *this* is important, and this is the story about how it happened' (Susan Sontag quoted in Zurbuchen 2005: 27).

A powerful example from Indonesia of remembering manipulated by history is the official narrative of the Suharto Government concerning the anti-Communist purges of 1965-66. It is an example of the cultural engineering of memory which largely prevails today. The killing of six army generals by PKI (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, the Indonesian Communist Party) members on the 30 September 1965, and the dumping of their bodies in a well (*Lubang Buaya* or 'crocodile hole') outside Jakarta, has been officially 'narrated' as an attempted coup to overthrow the Sukarno government, and as necessitating the killing of more than 500,000 civilian communists or suspected communists by the military and religious groups over two years in order to restore political order (Cribb et al. 2010). Questioning this narrative remains difficult within Indonesia, and the memories of old people I interviewed in Aceh largely reflect an understanding that the PKI rather than the military was the source of the mass violence during that period.

One interviewee who lives close to Indrapuri, a town outside Banda Aceh, spoke in some detail of events during the period which all of the old Acehnese referred to as 'the PKI':

> Ibu A-h (74)
>
> Well, I felt frightened during the PKI. Because they took many people, and they never came back. They took people to the well and threw those bodies there alive or dead, some of them were tortured, their body was cut into pieces. People said, they took many people from Banda Aceh, carried in a truck to a well in Indrapuri and threw them there, by the PKI. You know, because we're Muslim so they killed us. That happened during Suharto, many big people [people with good position] were killed in Jakarta.

There is no corroborative evidence that the PKI performed these acts in Aceh, where 3000 suspected PKI members were executed during 1965-66 (Grayman et al. 2009: 292, citing James Siegel). However the story strongly parallels alleged events in 1965 at *Lubang Buaya* as broadcast by the military. The military's narrative, later promulgated widely in

the media, claimed that the generals, before being thrown in the well, had been the subject of sexual torture and mutilation at the hands of *Gerwani*, the women's movement associated with the PKI. While the autopsy report released later revealed that no mutilation of the bodies had occurred, this action is still attributed to *Gerwani*, and *Gerwani* members are still regarded as 'guilty'[23] (see Wieringa 2002 for a detailed discussion of the military's narrative). The story told by Ibu A-h above, in which mutilated bodies were thrown down a well in a place not far from the capital city (in this case the capital city of Aceh), bears a striking resemblance to the military's narrative about the deaths of the generals in *Lubang Buaya*. This and other stories told by my interviewees in which the 1965-66 mass murders were attributed to the PKI, are examples of the ways in which social memory and hence individual remembering, can be constructed ('stipulated') through official narratives (Zurbuchen 2002 contains a description of the difficulties of obtaining testimony from victims about the events of 1965-66).

The ease with which 'misinformation' can alter memory has been the subject of recent research by cognitive psychologists (Paterson et al. 2009a; Paterson et al. 2009b). This research concluded that:

> It seems that once witnesses encounter misinformation, especially misinformation delivered by a co-witness, they are very likely to incorporate this misinformation into their memories of the event. Once this happens it is very difficult, if not impossible for the witnesses to recover the original memory; they come to believe that the misinformation was part of the original event (Paterson et al. 2009b: 15).

The authors suggest, however, that there is a difference between 'remembering' and 'knowing', where 'knowing' refers to 'memories that people believe to be true, but do not have any specific recollection of acquiring' (Paterson et al. 2009b: 3); when subjects are asked to focus on what they remember rather than what they know, it is possible 'to

---

[23] I thank Dan Birchok, University of Michigan, for drawing attention to the parallels between my informant's story and that of the military in 1965.

distinguish true memories from those obtained second hand' (3). In the case of the story above about the bodies in the well, the speaker was not claiming to describe a first-hand eye-witness account, but a part of 'known' history. This methodological strategy of distinguishing between 'knowing' and 'remembering' (first-hand) reflects Passerini's claim that oral sources 'start to speak more clearly…in the context of those "bedrock assumptions, responses and notions" (as opposed to "specific public ideals, deliberately propagated")' (Passerini 2003: 60)

Not only has official history *produced* memories of 'the PKI', but with the telling of each story about the period, the official history becomes a more entrenched narrative about the past, reflected for example in what Kenneth George (1997) describes as the remarkable silence of Indonesian artists at the time about the events of the period. An historian may nonetheless still find evidence to prove that what happened does not match social memory; as the work of historians in researching the events of 1965-66 in Indonesia is matched by the revelations of those whose recollections have hitherto been suppressed, these hidden 'wellsprings' of memory and emotion will, suggests Zurbuchen, be tapped by new alternative histories (2005: 16)[24].

The constructing or reconstructing of history to meet emerging needs in the present and the future has been more explicit in several non-Western historiographies, which are discussed below.

---

[24] An example of the way such recollections are emerging in art is the 2001 film *The Poet (Unconcealed Poetry)* by Garin Nugroho, 'set in 1965 in Aceh in a camp where members of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) … and alleged communists are imprisoned. The central figure in the film is Abrahim Kadir, an Acehnese poet who plays himself, who in the camp was assigned the task of blindfolding those who were led off to execution … [T]his small scale reconstruction of the events of 1965-66 was the first independent Indonesian film on the subject' (NYU School of Law: Centre for Religion and Media 2007).

Historicizing the future

> … in the Andean vision of the past, history is *in front of* the observer and
> moves *backward* toward the observer … This spatiotemporal view of
> history contrasts with our own, in which the past is located *behind* the
> observer, and historical process moves *forward*, always remaining behind
> our backs (Rappaport 1994: 52).

<div align="center">∞</div>

As nationalist historians provide chronologically ordered narratives of events to serve a preferred political present or future, other forms of history, particularly non-Western, use different conceptions of time to narrate both the past and the future.

Where time is cyclical, in particular, the future is already cast as a repetition of previous cycles; Nancy Farriss suggests that reconciling apparently unrepeatable events with cyclical time is merely a matter of sufficiently enlarging the cycle:

> If events appear to follow an irreversible sequence, creating the illusion of time
> as a linear movement, that is only the fault of a limited perspective. No matter
> how unique a pattern of events may seem, no matter how long the sequence, it
> will eventually be repeated, when the governing forces of all the cycles of
> different dimensions coincide in one huge cycle (Farriss 1987: 573).

Thus the Mayan cycle of thirteen qualitatively distinct twenty-year periods (the *katuns*) 'serves as both history and prophecy' in describing the past and the future (Farriss 1987: 570). Such cycles, like those described by Clifford Geertz in his writing on Bali, 'don't tell you what time it is; they tell you what *kind of time* it is' (Geertz 1966: 47, my emphasis). In periods of traumatic change, such as the Spanish conquest, 'the Maya could give meaning and predictability to these experiences … by merging them into the cyclical pattern of the cosmic order' (Farriss 1987: 580, 589).

On the other hand, the Cumbal people of present day Colombia view history as in front of, rather than behind, them, and as moving 'backward toward the observer'. History in such a view is highly relevant to the present, and can be 'corrected' to serve the present (Rappaport 1994: 52). The history of land divisions and family genealogies for example, can be amended to serve current requirements for governance and justice. This is not,

Joanne Rappaport points out, the adduction of new empirical data to revise historical 'facts'. Instead, aspects of the past have a 'use value' in the present, and are appropriated into a chronology or set of background events in which the actions of the present can be embedded as a necessary corrective. In the case of the Cumbales, there are sets of chronologies concerning dispossession and restoration of lands, which have only been formed into 'histories' as the restoration process has unfolded:

> The constellation of supporting details … are generally events that created the conditions making the repossession strategy necessary; all are related implicitly or explicitly to land loss. Thus, the historical chronology is at once a representation of the past and a political appropriation of the organizing model used to correct it (Rappaport 1994: 51).

Bochner makes the point more generally that 'facts' acquire their significance and intelligibility when located in narratives which provide 'a temporal frame that considers what came before and what comes after' (Bochner 2001: 153-154). The Cumbal land histories are constituted in just this way to make the regulatory changes of the present politically intelligible and justifiable in a larger schema – the cart materializing behind the horse at just the moment it is required.

This constitution of history from the observation point of the present both 'explains' the present on the one hand, and on the other hand presents a model of the world in which current action now appears (is 'reborn' (Rappaport 1994)) as a natural and necessary event scarcely requiring explanation. It thus performs the roles of both 'history' as explanation and 'story' as model, which were discussed in Chapter 2. Moreover in its orderliness, the past which lies before the observer is the opposite of the 'wreckage' confronting Benjamin's 'Angel of History' whose face is also turned towards the past but who sees only 'the pile of debris' growing before him' as he is irresistibly propelled backwards by the 'storm' of progress (Benjamin 1936b: 249). The Cumbales have seized the past, like many political historians, and produced both order and control in the form of a legitimized capacity to correct the past and guide the future.

A third approach to time which regulates both the past and the future is described by John Bowen in his work on the highland people of Gayo in Aceh. Bowen notes the complexity

of 'history' in Indonesia: the 'dialectic' between dominant (national) and local historical forms, the attempts of nationalistic histories to unify disparate cultures, and 'local efforts to preserve or reformulate cultural identity' (Bowen 1989: 693). Gayo histories are an example of the latter, which have operated politically to produce a history of smooth, genealogically determined power transitions up to the present:

> … histories are not organized around a sequence of beginning, middle, and ending. They tell of a beginning, vaguely imply a middle, and then skip to a final section that is less an ending than a commentary.
>
> …
>
> As narrative ambiguities are smoothed out, political time becomes linear and hierarchical (Bowen 1989: 672, 680).

These histories also construct a political territory 'by describing borders, places, or movements within it' in narratives where 'the power [of a ruler] to control a territory is a defining characteristic' (Bowen 1989: 691). These narratives, Bowen suggests, are a form of Bakhtinian chronotope in which a chronology also claims a space (686 (footnote)).

In Bowen's analysis, 'political time' is a re-modelling of the past 'to infuse a sense of unity and theme into long stretches of time' (Bowen 1989: 691). This kind of time is neither cyclical nor progressing backwards towards us to naturalize action in the present, but an historiographically smoothed, linear progression from the past towards an already actual present and a preferred future. Unlike the Cumbal histories which foreground particular past events to support current action, the objective of these histories is to render invisible those events which do not fit a chosen theme. Such historiography is based on a policy of *painting out obstacles* rather than *highlighting milestones.*

The simplified and apparently ineluctable progress of political time, the selectively viewed past reversing into the present in Cumbal time, and the long Mayan time cycles which roll up current events into a larger cosmic order, are examples of historiographical approaches which serve the needs or aspirations of the present and future.

Linda Smith notes:

> It might be said that [Maori] historical knowledge is irrelevant in a

contemporary context. But from a Maori perspective, it is only as irrelevant as the thought of Western philosophers such as Plato or St Augustine, whose ideas have been of such central importance to Western epistemology. Maori knowledge represents the body of knowledge which, in today's society, can be extended, alongside that of existing Western knowledge (Smith 1999: 175).

Using this historiographical discussion as a basis, the following section explores the use of memory and recollection to serve the present and the future.

PURPOSES OF MEMORY

As noted in Chapter 3, the act of recollecting and relating stories about the past may do more than preserve a record of the past. Errington suggests that the relating of chronicles in Malaya was more important for its naming and memorializing of individuals than for its recording of events:

> Again and again, in *Hikayat HangTuah* [an old Malayan chronicle], people do or do not do things for the sake of their *nama* (name, reputation, title). The desire to be spoken about, for one's *nama* to be mentioned in other countries and by people in the last age, becomes what we can only translate as a 'motive' for action.
>
> … [This] desire … links the story being told to the present of its telling. For, having the story told is to have it fulfil itself. In this way, the *hikayat* does not so much record the past as bring it into being or perpetuate it ... the only perpetuity which this world offers (Errington 1979: 38).

Similarly, in the case of the Cumbal land histories discussed above, the remembering and oral transmission of genealogies *call up and perpetuate* nicknames and various narratives as part of maintaining governance and justice in the present (Rappaport 1994).

The use of historical recollection to preserve or call up the past accords with the idea discussed in the previous Chapter of both recollection and history-writing as *performative*. It was noted there however that remembering also evokes the emotions associated with the remembered event (Biggs 1999: 217); thus the recollection of historical events may fail to

function where the emotions and senses associated with it are too traumatic, where 'the need to know [is] at odds with a desire to close down the senses' (Sebald 2003: 23; quoted in Zurbuchen 2005: 7). In such circumstances, the official history of the anti-Communist purges by the Indonesian military has been able to dominate memory and remain relatively uncontested within Indonesia.

The official manipulation of memory discussed above is not the same as a misremembering of the past which over time is repeated by others and comes to be accepted as history. Nevertheless misremembering, like political history, may also serve purposes more important than an accurate record, as discussed in the next section.

Memory as history-making

The following is the story told to me by one of my Acehnese interviewees about a Japanese national who, after the Japanese evacuated at the end of World War II, remained to train Acehnese soldiers:

Bapak M-d (72 years)

Later on [after WWII], there was Japanese named Kaikaiwa, so they said, that this Kaikaiwa told them that he had to go back, that he left something behind. So Kaikaiwa went back to the land, and cut all the wires. So they lost the contact equipment. The Japanese were here for quite a long time. Kaikaiwa trained people here about fighting…

So … here's the thing … the Cumbok [Tjumbok] group was sitting in one place. They wanted to invite the Dutch again. Since Kaikaiwa noticed this movement, he went there to see their position, for instance, where were they gathered? Where was the place? So he rides this bicycle, he brought these ingredients to sell. So he went there to sell the ingredients, when he arrived there, he was spying on the village here and there. The point is that he wanted to dismiss their movement. So he went to higher place where he could watch them, and shot the group to break the movement. He intended to dismiss this group, not to kill the people. Then, people were running everywhere … the group was successfully dismissed. After that, there were no more rebellion

group that wanted to make chaos, everything was secured.

As Bapak was a child during the Tjumbok rebellion of 1945-46, it can be assumed that the details of this story came to him from others as a part of community memory. Bapak's use of the phrases 'so they said', and elsewhere 'according to the story', supports this view. The exact details of Bapak's story concerning Kaikaiwa can never be confirmed, but it corresponds sufficiently with documentation of events around that time to constitute an 'historical' anecdote, albeit one which Bapak 'knew' from others rather than remembered as an eyewitness. Japanese defectors remained in Aceh after the end of World War II and helped to train the Acehnese in military skills. One Japanese civilian, Kuroiwa, established a crack artillery unit, the *Divisi Rencong*, in nearby Lhoknga, over the mountain from Bapak M-d's village (Reid 1979a: 117, 194). This unit was involved in the overthrow of the ruling class of *ulèëbalang* (represented by Teuku Mohammad Daud Tjumbok) (Reid 1979a: 209), a battle which was fought across several districts including Aceh Besar, where the above interview took place (Reid et al. 1970-71 (1946): 51).

Bapak M-d's account of 'Kaikaiwa' is a second-hand account of the past which draws on real (historically evidenced) events and the reports of others. This kind of misremembering may be repeated over generations and eventually become 'history'. Other second-hand accounts of events, such as the following, reflect eye-witness accounts by the speaker's contemporaries:

Ibu A-w (90)

I remember [the day the Japanese left], but you know, I didn't witness it by myself, I was at home, but I heard people were talking about that. Men were gathering in the market, they said that the Japanese left like they were being chased by ghost or something, they were throwing everything that they held in their hand and ran away.

Ibu's story of the Japanese 'running away' or being 'chased' and the throwing away of weapons and supplies after the surrender of Japan in 1945 is supported by the following eyewitness accounts of other interviewees:

Bapak R-z (84)

The day when [the Japanese] left, ehmm, I was following them to Lhoknga.

Q: You chased them alone?

No, we did it altogether with the villagers.

Q: Where did they run to, where did they go?

We arrived at Lampisang, when we heard the sound of gunshot from Lhoknga; we stopped and didn't continue the chase to Lhoknga.

Bapak I-s (80)

Well, I don't know how to describe it, but when they left everyone was scrambling for whatever things that were left by the Japanese. Everything that they left, we took them all … even the thing that we didn't know what it was, we just took it. You know … the whistle; we were struggling to get it (laughing)

Wires and everything, we took them all.

Bapak S-h (78)

I remember because … uhm … It happened very fast. Everyone is leaving to Seulimuem. And suddenly the Japanese were running and had thrown away all of their belongings, some of their guns were thrown in the rivers … you know … they even threw their rice, in that time they used the red rice. They also left many cables [wires?] … the villagers collected all of them.

(Q: Did he see some of them? Was he there?)

I was there, I saw it. They left rice in the big warehouse, the oil, the benzene and everything. They just ran very fast, these Japanese.

In the similarity of these recollections there may, suggests Welzer (2010), be an influence which is akin to the cultural engineering described earlier. Welzer suggests that social memory, produced through acts of 'memory communication' (5), is a way of agreeing on the importance and meaning of particular historical events; this is an agreed 'evaluative' and 'emotional' frame for the recollection of particular events by individuals (6,15). In the case of Acehnese recollections of the departure of the Japanese, there are common themes of the Japanese 'running', the Acehnese chasing them and the Acehnese taking their

supplies. The emotional or evaluative 'frames' of these stories might include the courage of the Acehnese, justified delight in Japanese humiliation, the need to commemorate freedom, or the justness of Acehnese actions in taking Japanese supplies. These frames enable recollections of individual experience to maintain an evaluative congruence, with the potential to change as social attitudes change:

> … both individual and collective life stories are constantly overwritten in light
> of new experiences and needs, and especially under conditions of new frames
> of meaning from the present (Welzer 2010: 15).

While distinguishable from 'we remember what we are told to remember' (Hewer et al. 2010: 29, 30), these negotiated and agreed frames of meaning (Passerini's 'bedrock assumptions, responses and notions' (2003: 60)), become part of social memory and hence influence the way events are remembered; they may result in a converging set of recollections with the force of historical evidence.

Goodall notes that 'a particular account [of the past] may be called up to correct alleged misapprehensions or distortions in existing understandings', and re-telling 'memories' is one way of fixing these distortions (Goodall 2000). The conditions which enable such accounts to alter convincingly over time are, suggests Bain Attwood, those which connect 'remembering' to a new historical narrative, and to emerging changes in wider political and cultural discourse. He traces the development of the narrative about the removal of children from Aboriginal families in Australia to suggest that over time, a 'narrative accrual or coalescence was clearly occurring: stories of removal were being reproduced again and again, and/or were being interpreted in terms of "the stolen generations"' (Attwood 2001: 196). These stories from memory were gradually re-framed, under new political and intellectual leadership, within new historical narratives which become possible because of other cultural developments such as the 'search for roots' and identity politics (Attwood 2001: 198). The latter are Welzer's 'frames of meaning' which develop within a community to produce a moral and emotional congruence between the recollections of individuals.

The resulting convergence of memories results in a 'process of narrative repetition and accretion' which, with timely leadership and a receptive cultural milieu, enables the

emergence of a new or revised history. Attwood thus cautions against regarding recollections as 'a transparent window onto the past' (211); however he notes that memories, whether factual or not, are significant in coming to understand connections between the present and the past through what they reveal of 'imagination, symbolism and desire' in those who remember (2001: 211, quoting Alessandro Portelli). Those memories of the Acehnese described above are likely to reflect in part the way the Japanese occupation is imagined today, and a preferred (desired) ending.

Both Attwood and Zurbuchen call for a critical approach to those histories which emerge from newly available memories. In the same way that Anna Szörényi (2009) expressed concern about the production of a single 'refugee experience' which replaces the stories of individuals' experiences (discussed in Chapter 1), Attwood notes the homogenization of experience resulting from the political coalescing of narrative concerning Aboriginal stolen generations, which obliterates important distinctions in the treatment of individuals and the attitudes of the various parties involved (189).

Zurbuchen likewise makes a plea that new histories of Indonesia which emerge from 'wellsprings of memory' do not simply entrench the same social divisions between *pelaku* (perpetrator) and *korban* (victim) (Zurbuchen 2005: 26). Goodall too warns of the need 'to resist the adversarial pressure to lock down narratives and to dig in for rhetorical trench warfare' (Goodall 2002: 24).

Recollection thus has the potential to catalyze new histories particularly where those voices previously unheard speak within a shared 'evaluative' or emotional frame and coalesce into a single strong narrative which can be used as a basis for demanding that history be re-written. History and recollection operate on each other, sometimes, as in the case of the official history of the anti-Communist purges in Indonesia, one more strongly than the other. Both kinds of operation, as the above suggests, may be driven by overt political purposes, and even when a history appears to be based on an apolitical shared remembering, as in the anecdotes about the departure of the Japanese, such recollections repeat and reinforce each other because they serve particular values:

> One could say that every present, every generation, every epoch creates the past
> that has, in functional terms, the highest value in terms of their focusing on the

future (Welzer 2010: 15).

A history thus stands in relationships with nations, communities and individuals as a narrative which may prevail or be resisted, 're-collected' and re-written by those who collect memories and form them into a new narrative. Anna Tsing notes that communities are formed through 'dialogue at the edges of much wider discourses and institutions' (Tsing 1994: 285). The narratives of a community too are formed through a cross-scale articulation between the local, regional and global:

> The most amazingly successful "articulation" product of Suharto-regime politics in Indonesia was the identification of rural spokespeople with "development"… [R]ural people began to imagine themselves and their communities within the terms of development discourse (Tsing 1999: 12-13).

Constructing and reconstructing the past is thus, in Tsing's terms, a kind of 'collaborative world-making' (Tsing 1999: 27) where history and recollection constantly modify each other to meet the social and political needs of the present and, implicitly or explicitly, to provide the basis of a preferred future.

However recollection has also been claimed to serve other more personal or spiritual purposes. The 'narrative turn' which has influenced historiography now influences memory studies and has given rise to discussions about individual 'life review' and the construction of life stories. These claims for a particular kind of purposiveness in memory and recollection are discussed in the following section.

Life review and constructing a life narrative

> With the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience' (Burton 2008: 329, quoting Bergson).

> All the ingredients of what I see or hear or say are put into a context of what went before and is expected to happen next (Baars 1997).

<div align="center">∞</div>

The distinction between memory and recollection discussed in Chapter 3 depends on a view of recollection as 'discretionary,' a selection from pure memory oriented to the practical needs of the present. Such practical needs have been claimed to include a sense of identity

and a sense of a 'self' which continues from past to present:

The continuity of 'the subject' was also discussed in Chapter 3. It was argued there that experience accretes in the memory and body of the subject, and is manifested both bodily and in the individual's recollection, reflection and learning. While this conception of the subject rests on past experience informing actions and interactions in the present, Mark Freeman has argued that the subject has a further need to make sense of and give meaning to their life through the development of a personal life narrative. In this narrative, the subject, like Ricoeur's historian, weaves together past experience into a 'plot' which establishes identity and a purpose in living (Freeman 1998: 42).

Freeman suggests that an urge to review one's life and find not only a narrative but a meaningful narrative, may be based on a 'mythopoeic desire' to 'raise our own existence … to that level of meaningfulness, of sacred integrity … more readily found in times past' (1998: 45-46). Further, to the claim that narrative can only be arbitrarily imposed upon the disjointed moments that comprise a life, Freeman responds by suggesting that 'formless' lives are those which 'have no rhyme or reason, no moral centre, no point'. A life lived well has a 'poetic connectedness' seen through the construction of a narrative (1997a: 382).

Narrative 'is not something merely imposed upon the flux of unordered experience, but grows out of the very temporal conditions of our existence' (1998: 47), including the essentially retrospective nature of interpretation of experience (1997a: 377, 1997b: 173). As noted in Chapter 3, the process of reviewing the past and assessing the 'moral point' of one's life is seen by life course theorists as the culmination of earlier life stages, a 'final focal effort' of old age (Erikson 1986: 40). For Freeman, age brings with it the ability to see the *narrative* of one's life:

> … late life remains, in much of the modern West at any rate, the narrative phase par excellence. It is a phase in which one often acquires some measure of distance from the life one has lived, in which there is often a sizing–up of things, in which, in the face of an ever-closer end, there is often an attempt to gauge the integrity of one's past ...(1997a: 394).

Narrative life stories may also, suggests Jan Baars, have value in helping others to

understand 'the complex and manifold identities of individuals', beyond the prevailing economically and politically expedient age-related concepts of identity (Baars 1997: 10).

The ultimate application of life narratives for Freeman however, is more than the retrospective marshalling of life's events into a kind of moral order. As well as gaining the temporal distancing of old age, an individual may be fortunate enough earlier in life to develop a capacity for self-distancing which *anticipates* memories in later life – 'anticipating the kind of story we would hope to be able to tell as death draws near – and living accordingly'(1997a: 392).

The view that narrative recollection is governed by the need for meaning or integrity in the 'here and now' raises issues about how to distinguish memories from 'fantasies in the service of the present'. Moody accordingly asks:

> Are there standards, then, or criteria, by which a life review could be judged successful? How are we to know whether an act of reminiscence is a discovery of final meaning or perhaps just another "metaphor of self" constructed for obscure purposes, or even a new form of self-deception? (1991, 1992: 67).

An instrumentalist view of life stories blurs the distinction between 'memory, narrative, fiction and propaganda' and reduces the past simply to 'source material for current concerns' (Biggs 1999: 217). Further, it makes the postmodern self endlessly revisable - a 'videotape [which] can be continually erased and re-recorded' to suit circumstances (217). This is a version of the postmodern subject which only exists until it revises its position in discourse, as discussed in Chapter 3.

This problem is reflected in Freeman's query: 'If in fact [life] narratives are, finally, untrue to life, as many claim, why should they be deemed valuable at all?' (Freeman 1998: 31). His response - that 'truth' in such narratives is not correspondence with fact but 'that which is disclosed or made manifest to us' by the narrative (Freeman 1997a: 387) – resonates with Attwood's view that recollections of events are more important for what they reveal about 'imagination and desire' than for their historical accuracy (Attwood 2001). Freeman's response does not however address the issue of distinguishing in life review between interpretation and self-delusion.

Moody suggests moreover that there are limitations to purposive autobiographical review in achieving a sense of meaning, especially as one approaches death; such a search for meaning is, he suggests, based on the modern preoccupation with the self. A life review cannot provide a sense of meaning beyond the end of the life course, that is, it cannot provide a true 'meaning of life', rather than 'the meaning of *my* life' (which is shortly to end): the 'bankruptcy of privatism becomes all too evident in old age, but by that point, individuals alone cannot invent meanings to save themselves from despair' (Moody 1991, 1992: 54). Moreover, as Dannefer (2006) points out, the very concept of life narrative (the 'legitimation of biography' … or the 'journey of life') may be culture specific (110). Alternatives to the quest for a personal meaning of life are discussed later in this Chapter.

Biggs however responds to the potential for self-delusion in life review by reversing the direction of the relationship between memory and the needs of the present; instead of present need producing the retrospective formulation of life stories, '[i]nterpretation and choice in the here and now would be subjected to a rigor and direction supplied by lifecourse experience' (Biggs 1999: 219). As the accretiveness of experience was shown in the previous chapter to presuppose a continuous and evolving subject, so, Biggs suggests, the subject gains *authenticity* through 'an ability to integrate lifecourse memory and experience accumulated at deeper levels with surface expressions of identity' (Biggs 1999: 218).

This kind of authenticity in old age – identity as a product of experience rather than ephemerally adopted 'to suit current circumstances' - is similar to Tornstam's 'emancipated innocence' in the old, which 'allows important feelings and questions to be expressed regardless of the barriers of social conventions' operating in the here and now (Tornstam 1997: 152). Similarly, Erikson proposes 'existential integrity' as a state of the old whose 'disinvolvement' from life enables them to describe experiences, and express views and emotions, without concern for social appropriateness or audience reaction (Erikson 1986: 14, 37-38)[25].

---

[25] The capacity proposed by Biggs to apply experience in order to behave 'authentically' and to better inform

On the other hand, the constructionist response to the idea of a self-generated and potentially delusional narrative of self is to point to the formative role of discourses in which such a narrative must necessarily be constructed, and the impacts on the self of a society's repeated discursive practices (Butler 1997). Both Butler's subject and the continuous accretive subject proposed in the previous Chapter allow for a subject to negotiate and change its identity-forming position in discourses, and indeed change the terms of the discourses altogether. For the continuous subject described in Chapter 3 and for Biggs' subject however, such agentic behaviour is *also* informed by past experience. While Freeman's subject who acts retrospectively raises issues of narrative 'truth' and the subject's 'truthfulness' about past experience, the subject who acts today in the light of past experience raises issues of authenticity – consistency between past experience and present choices – and the subject's capacity to reflect upon and utilise past experience.

When recollection and life stories concern the pursuit of a meaning-making narrative for reconstructing the self or for reconstructing history, the story and the storyteller are judged in a way similar to historians. Called into question are the correspondence of the story with what really happened, the homogenization and elisions made in stories to produce a single strong narrative, and the potential for self-delusion or endless unprovable 'revisability' of the story.

Alternatively, where narrative and goals of meaning-making are no longer required, recollection in the present becomes an issue of acting authentically – acting consistently with the knowledge acquired from recollection. Sometimes however, neither meaning-making nor authentic behaviour is an issue for the identity of the self over time; the

---

decisions and attitudes in the present, implies a willingness to use experience to 'do better'. Since this latter is a contestable claim, it may be more useful to define authenticity by borrowing from Wyschogrod's historiographical definition of 'truthful', by which the historian makes plain the historiographical practices in which their narrative is embedded (Wyschogrod 1998: 39). Similarly, the subject whose present actions are informed by experience might act *authentically* when, not only are their current interpretations and choices based on past experience, but they make clear, at least to themselves, *how* this experience has guided their responses to the circumstances of the present. One may thus be authentic in doing either good or bad.

following sections discuss two versions of this alternative conception of self.

Alternatives to the meaning of life 1: the episodic self

The struggle for a coherent and worth-while narrative for one's life is not universal. Galen Strawson argues for a subject in whom experience is accretive, but for whom 'it is only the *present shaping consequences of the past* that matter, not the past as such' (Strawson 2004: 438, my emphasis). His claim for an episodic 'I' is part of an argument 'against narrative'; following the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, Strawson suggests that memories are only of use 'when they have changed into our very blood, into glance and gesture, and are nameless, no longer to be distinguished from ourselves' (Strawson 2004: 432). So too, the 'shaping consequences' of the past, like the sedimenting of experience discussed in Chapter 3, are simply present in the self and require no overlay of temporal *narrative* to be thus incorporated.

In fact, suggests Strawson, narrative may actually impede self-understanding. He concludes that 'the best lives almost never involve this kind of [narrative] self-telling' (Strawson 2004: 437), in part because, given the inevitable errors made in recollection, 'the more you recall, retell, narrate yourself, the further you risk moving away from accurate self-understanding' (Strawson 2004: 447-448). This is another way of making the point that once an attempt is made to construct a narrative, issues of error and accuracy arise which can be avoided by the simple expedient of an 'episodic' self which requires no narrative support.

The two novelistic narrative types – the *Bildungsroman* and the picaresque (discussed in Chapter 3) – illustrate versions of Strawson's 'episodic' self and Freeman's 'narrative' self. While both the *Bildungsroman* and the picaresque novel trace the path of an individual to personhood, in the former '[t]he journey ends with the hero as a fully "socialised, normalized, and incorporated" member of his society' (Ganguly 2009: 436). This is the conclusion sought by Freeman's narrative of a 'life lived well'. In contrast, the picaresque, with its chaotic and episodic structure produces no such resolution at the end:

> As opposed to the organic plot, the organically developed individual and the
> semblance of a restored moral order of the *Bildungsroman*, the hallmarks of the

picaresque are the episodic plot movement and the protagonists' tortured consciousness at odds with his chaotic environs and an oppressive and immutable social order … (Ganguly 2009: 438).

The subject in the picaresque is, rather than an organically developed individual, a product of an episodic and unstructured past, although often less happily so than Strawson's episodic and non-narrative self.

Alternatives to the meaning of life 2: just being

Unlike self-conceptions of younger individuals, few oldest old conceptualize their self-concept in terms of a social role, "the good mother" or "the dutiful wife". Instead … the oldest old shift their focus to concentrate upon basic existential concerns about life and death (Johnson et al. 1997: 148).

∞

Studies of the 'old old' (for Johnson and Barer (1997), those who are 85 years of age or older) have concluded that they, like Strawson's episodic self, no longer think about past experience; for them 'being' is an issue in itself. Heikkinen describes her experience interviewing men and women around the age of 90. Although she refers to them as 'narrators', she suggests that they have already learned what it means 'to be me' and now concentrate on 'their existence for its own sake' (2004: 579). Analyzing this state in terms of Heidegger's concept of 'care' - an engagement with the world entailing 'concern, carefulness and commitment' - she concludes, as did Erikson in his discussion of the 'disinvolvement' of later life (1986: 51), that great old age brings a disengagement which is the ending of 'care':

For the 90-year-old narrators, the mission of living a life seemed to have been completed … They no longer felt obliged to take care of themselves or others (Heikkinen 2004: 579).

Even though the self of the old old arises out of experience, it also changes continually in response to the environment, suggest Johnson and Barer (1997: 161). These changes are marked by physical weakness and a loss of control, but also an ending of responsibilities and anxieties.

The temporal qualities of life, which Freeman suggests promote narrative as a form for life review, also appear to change in later life. Johnson and Barer note in the old old 'a de-emphasis on the past' (1997: 148-149, 159) as previous successes and failures become 'inconsequential' (160). They quote from their interviewees:

"Continuity is no longer important. What is important is to be happy today."

"Forget the past, wipe your slate clean, and live in the present." (1997: 159)

The authors found that attempts to develop an 'accurate chronology' of their interviewees' lives had to be abandoned, because the ways in which times were reported by their respondents were too confusing. This non-linear way of remembering is reminiscent of the static and non-narrative past described by the novelist Paul Bowles at the age of 84: 'I remember it as one remembers a landscape, an unchanging landscape' (quoted by Gussow 1999) (and by Johnson et al. 1997: 159).

This research suggests that a narrative construction of self as a search for meaning loses its value for those who 'no longer have to become anything' (Heikkinen 2004: 579-580). Strawson and Moody warn of the potential for error and delusion in constructing a narrative of the self, and Biggs proposes instead of narrative a form of authenticity in which past experience informs current responses; consistent with both of these points, Heikkinen suggests that, having lost the need to construct a purpose and hence a narrative for their existence, her 90 year old interviewees have 'become their *authentic* selves' (579-580, my emphasis).

Earlier sections of this Chapter discussed the purposive *reconstruction of the past* through recollection, in order to revise history and bring about political change in the present. The past of the oldest old, and of the episodic self, are far removed from this kind of purposive recollection. Somewhere in between, however, is a form of recollection in life stories which points to injustices or anomalies without constructing a narrative. The following section examines the 'dissensual' story – stories which tacitly dissent from dominant discourse while operating within it - and the story of 'bewilderment' – those stories of events which cannot be made to 'make sense' and must be simply accepted.

Alternatives to the meaning of life 3: the 'dissensual' and the bewildered

The *Bildungsroman* and picaresque genres may represent the stories of victims of systemic discrimination (such as the Dalit in India who are Ganguly's subject (Ganguly 2009)), through the way in which the individual's socialisation and incorporation is 'frustrated by a malformed and discriminatory social order'; such social orders 'simultaneously assert in principle and deny in practice the universality of rights and the abstract equivalence of citizenship' (Ganguly 2009: 436). This is the *dissensual* narrative which reveals the limitations of the society into which the novel's protagonist nevertheless seeks incorporation:

> … the dissensual force of these texts lies precisely in their embodiment through
> an aesthetic of suffering of the *unrealisability* , the 'not-yet-ness', of citizenship
> rights and human rights universalism (Ganguly 2009: 441).

A different kind of dissenting narrative is presented in Jocelyn Solis' ethnography of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the United States; Solis describes the ways in which immigrants, by telling their stories, offer 'counternarratives' which simply assume, and thereby lay claim to, identities and rights in the face of the dominant narratives of 'illegality' and public rejection (Solis 2004).

Resistance to the purveyors of dominant narratives, yet acceptance of the narratives themselves, can be seen in Rudolf Mrázek's report of an interview with a former political prisoner in Indonesia, Mrs Sosro. Mrs Sosro describes an incident during her imprisonment in which a policeman, knowing she was literate, slipped a book to her as a gift during his visit to her cell. She tells Mrázek that she found the book boring:

> Through all her laughter and intensity, thus I recall it, Mrs. Sosro wanted to tell
> me, and herself, that she was tough enough, even with the book given — to
> like, to dislike, and to be bored, as she chose; that the book so good-heartedly
> slipped under her pillow could be unmade as a gift (105)

This resistance is not told as part of a life narrative or counternarrative; indeed it appeared to Mrázek that he and his interviewees 'moved and stumbled through a particular landscape that was theirs and, in a revealingly different way, mine' (Mrázek 2006: 103). Part of that

landscape is Mrs Sosro's refusal to accept the gift as something 'to be dumped on her, to envelop her like a cloud, to cover (explain) everything' (105)

Mrs Sosro's statement of boredom with the book is both a rejection of the assumption that she would be happy and grateful, yet her critique is also confirmation of the value that she, like the gift-giver, places on literacy and hence, of her participation in the same discourses about progress and education.

As old Acehnese people tell their stories, there are glimpses of the 'dissensual', often a simultaneous acceptance of God's power and purpose *and* regret or sadness about the way life has been. These stories appear to point to the limitations of Allah's greatness. Belief in God as cause is a common 'meta-story' in the interviews, but the stories of suffering, especially during periods of conflict, suggest a degree of horror and an attribution of responsibility to perpetrators which are not entirely subsumed into this meta-story. The following excerpts draw the listener's attention to both suffering and the meta-narrative within which such suffering is framed:

> Bapak M-d (72)

> But we still have strong faith that [the tsunami] is God's plan, we belong to God, God creates us and God takes us back. Yesterday we were still alive, and today we are dead bodies. If we didn't remember about that value, then no doubt that everyday is a mourning day, we might cry all day and I might be driven crazy for losing so many.

> Bapak A-d (68)

> I am happy now. In the past I don't even have spare cloth. I only have one cloth to wear during my trip to the market, and to the rice field, only one cloth, for praying too. Whenever I want to buy the new one, I cannot. But now, because of God, everything is easy. There are many places to buy cloth.

Other excerpts clearly acknowledge the role of particular groups (GAM, the military, the Japanese) in suffering of the past, at the same time as invoking God's power:

> Bapak S-h (78)

Then you must also understand the GAM movement, which we also have the peace with … now. I think now everything has settled. *Insyaallah* we pray that we would never have to experience that kind of thing anymore.

Ibu A-h (74)

Thank God the Japanese left, I think if they stayed one year longer, people in this country would all die because of hunger.

Others simultaneously express sadness about the suffering of the past and a belief in God's power:

Ibu S-l (71)

[I pray] [s]o we will never be suffering the same thing again that happened in the past especially for our children and grandchildren. So they will be good persons … I pray for that while I am sitting.

Ibu R-h (65)

After giving birth, I cannot work with the baby at home, uhm ... what … let's say just enough food to eat, that's it. We only have a little money God gives us. Harder we work, bigger the money. Since we have children, our life is always in misery.

These statements point to the 'not-yet-ness' of Allah's answer to prayer; the failure of prayer in the past; or of suffering scarcely reduced by acceptance of God's role in events. Yet there is also acceptance of an overarching narrative of God's beneficence and power to alleviate suffering. In these cases, the 'dissensual' quality of the stories is not, like the narratives of the Dalit described by Ganguly (2009), in the form of a political resistance to the way the narrative is played out in life, but more an acceptance of the inconsistencies and inexplicability of life. Not even in reflective comments, discussed in the following Chapter, do the old Acehnese state these inconsistencies; rather their stories reveal 'secret histories of society' in which both text and 'the language of the body' implicitly become criticism (of the way things are)' (Das 1995: 177-178, 181).

Grayman et al's study of posttraumatic nightmares and 'memory intrusions' in conflict victims in Aceh suggests that some experiences will produce stories which reflect only incomprehension:

> … the bewilderment felt by people in Aceh over the extreme and inconceivable displays of sadistic violence inflicted by TNI [Indonesian military] and BRIMOB [Indonesian mobile police brigade] on ordinary Acehnese civilians— a level of violence that renders obsolete any capacity to recognize Indonesian forces (and, by extension, Indonesia) as anything but an incomprehensible "other" (Grayman et al. 2009: 311, citing Siegel).

Many of the traumatic or difficult circumstances related by the old Acehnese are presented very matter of factly, without explicit attributions of blame or cause. Whether this reflects an inability to find a narrative which could accommodate or 'make sense of' such experiences, or whether it reflects the acceptance referred to above, would require a more detailed ethnography than the one I undertook:

> Bapak A-d (68)

> I like going to school, but then, after school, the war has happened again … the occupation has started again, and then we're in the run again, the school is over.

> Bapak D-a (71)

> In 1953, I was just entered the fifth grade of elementary school. After that, many of the schools were closed during that DI/TII [*Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia*]; many of the teachers were taken [kidnapped] by them, and some of the teachers also ran away to Banda Aceh (laughs).

> Ibu A-h (74)

> [T]hey took the adults to B– [village] to do the airport construction, and to Bl– [village] to do the rock breaking in the mountain. Although your child passed away in the village, they couldn't come back to the village to grieve for the family in loss. They couldn't come back to the village even just for a while.

At their most causal, life stories tacitly subsume all experiences under the metanarrative of God's will.

The life stories of the old people in Aceh thus appear neither as revisionist narratives nor as attempts to give point to, or make sense of, the individual's life, even where the role of God is invoked to explain events or acceptance of events. The stories are of episodic experience which draws attention to suffering and unanswered prayers, to faith in the greater plan and goodness of God, and to the storyteller's reflective sadness about the past.

Trauma studies have produced various constructions of recollection which fit some of the storytelling of old people in Aceh: an existentially imperative transmission of 'what it was like' from speaker to listener; a therapeutic outpouring of involuntary remembering; or an act of testimony by a witness on behalf of a collective. In these recollections, the *act* of recollecting and telling may convey more understanding about the past than the content of the recollections themselves. These roles for life stories are explored in the following sections.

TRAUMA AND THE PURPOSE OF TESTIMONY

> Survivor testimonies … do not excel in providing *verités de fait* or positivist history. … Their real strength lies in recording the psychological and emotional milieu of the struggle for survival, not only then, but also now (Hirsch et al. 2009: 155, quoting Geoffrey Hartman).

∞

Testimony and past events

As discussed in the previous chapter, traumatic memory, unlike other recollection, is often involuntary or passive (in Indonesian, *teringat* – to be in a state of remembering - rather than *ingat* – to remember or recollect). A healing response to trauma, it has been claimed, involves the development of 'the necessary narrative which we call memory regarding the event' (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995: 160), in order to be able to speak of the event to others:

> [I]n contrast to narrative memory, which is a social act, traumatic memory is inflexible and invariable. Traumatic memory has no social component; it is not addressed to anybody, the patient does not respond to anybody; it is a solitary

activity (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995: 163).

Even when able to speak about a traumatic experience, the telling may be less like a narrative about the past and more like a re-experiencing of the event which is in a sense 'timeless' (177). This is Culbertson's 'persistence of the past in its own perpetual present' (Culbertson 1995: 170), and raises the issue of whether severe trauma can ever 'really be integrated, be made part of one's autobiography' (Van Der Kolk et al. 1995: 178).

Culbertson argues that ordinary narrative is in any case inadequate to the task of describing past trauma. As with mystical experience, attempting to describe such experiences in ordinary narrative is difficult or at best only partial: such experience is 'not constructed, merely present' (Culbertson 1995: 177). There were many occasions in my interviews in Aceh when the interviewee was unable to find words[26]:

Ibu A-w (90)

How I should describe this …?

…

Oh dear, the Japanese time was very bitter, don't know how to say it.

Ibu A-n (74)

I can't even think about how hard that history was.

Bapak I-h (82)

I don't know what to say, it's really difficult. I have no words to describe.

…

I don't know how to describe this anymore, because it's too sad.

---

[26] It must be noted that while these examples and several others are related specifically to attempts to describe traumatic or difficult experiences, at other times the difficulty in finding words seemed to reflect uncertainty about what was expected of the interview. Often the initial response to a question about a person's early life was 'I don't know what to say.' However even in these latter cases it is possible that anxiety about the interview process is augmented by anxiety about being able to find words adequate to describe the past.

Bapak I-s (80)

I don't know how to say it, you know, because my mind wasn't in it.

Others have written of more extreme examples of the inability to express the past in narrative form. Hirsch et al report the case of a former concentration camp inmate who, when questioned about his experiences by a war crimes prosecutor, fainted and entered a coma for several weeks (2009: 154). While the implications of this are debated in terms of the nature and value of eyewitness testimony as evidence, this response by the testifier suggests that some experiences such as those of Holocaust victims lie within an 'unspeakable and unrepresentable realm that … can only be transmitted through the body language and the non-verbal performance of the traumatized witness' (2009: 154).

Testimony arrives with the force of an event that might, for some testifiers, be 'the very secret of survival and of resistance to extermination' (Felman et al. 1992: 62). It may make possible (see Chapter 3) the 'return of the self' as someone who can recount their own biography (Culbertson 1995: 179). As an event, testimony has impacts on both the testifier and the wider world ('survivors … unwittingly embody a *cultural shock value* that has not yet been assimilated' (Felman et al. 1992: 74)). In the case of events as overwhelming as the Holocaust, these impacts include enabling others to understand what was at that time 'unimaginable' (Felman et al. 1992: 84).

However testimony and the discussion of the impact of trauma also sit within an evolving discourse of trauma itself. Ehrenreich suggests that trauma discourse has now embraced such a wide range of experiences, including single events such as accidents, that it may have forgotten its role in 'call[ing] attention to the experience of oppressed people' (2003: 17). Even today, 'the consequences of collectively experienced mass violence have not even been named, much less understood theoretically' (2003: 26):

To recognize that there are common human elements in people's responses to single traumas, prolonged and repeated trauma, and collectively experienced massive violence has been a source of enormous insight. But to fail to see the important differences between the responses to different kinds of stressors, to see responses to the more severe, prolonged, collectively experienced traumatic

events as merely special cases of the responses to simpler forms of trauma—to believe we understand the former because we understand the latter—can only impoverish our understanding and enfeeble our ability to respond to the needs of victims of trauma (2003: 26).

Early trauma increases the stress impacts of trauma later in life, in a condition known as 'complex posttraumatic stress disorder' (Green et al. 2000; Ehrenreich 2003; Castro et al. 2007; Castro 2008). Many of the older people interviewed during my fieldwork had experienced traumatic events and prolonged stress dating back to their childhood in the pre-World War II period of Dutch colonialism or under the Japanese occupation during World War II, with further periods of trauma culminating in the 2004 tsunami. Early in each fieldwork interview, I asked the interviewee to tell me about their life when they were a child. This almost invariably brought forth a story of being a child 'during the Dutch' or 'during the Japanese', and then a brief description of the difficulties of that time, especially of poverty, parental absence or of experiencing, fleeing from, or witnessing violence:

Ibu F-m (86)

I don't remember it so clear, because I didn't really pay attention. In the time of the Dutch, one night, I was running across the river because I was afraid they would hit me. I stayed beyond the river for a week, when I came back to the village, the Dutch were gone, and the Japanese were there. That's it …
The villagers here were afraid when the Dutch released the shots, when they used their guns. Of course we would run and seek protection away from the shots. But they never hit us, not even once.

Bapak I-h (82)

Well, what can I say? My parents are poor people, when my father was 7 months old, his parents also were chased by the Dutch. So my father lived without his father.
The road construction was built by hand, not like today. People were dying under the sun, during the Dutch. Everyone was forced to work for the Dutch, if we're not coming, they will chase us and hit us.

The Dutch government had a more reasonable punishment [than the Japanese]
for people whenever they'd made a mistake. They would just take us and
punish us without really hurting us.

Bapak A-d (68)

Our parents were taken by the Japanese, working for them.
My parents are still alive after the Japanese left, but they stayed there …
working together.
They're not coming back, because they already found work there.

Both the life stories of old people and the recent history of Aceh suggest that many old
people have experienced repeated trauma over 60, 70 or 80 years and may well count
among Ehrenreich's overlooked and 'oppressed people'. In particular, the controls
exercised by the Dutch, the Japanese and then the prolonged physical and economic
insecurity, interrogations and torture throughout the GAM-military conflict are examples of
Herman's description of abuse in which:

…the perpetrator seeks to destroy the victim's sense of autonomy. This is
achieved by control of the victim's body and bodily functions. Deprivation of
food, sleep, shelter, exercise, personal hygiene, or privacy are common
practices (1992: 383).

Many of the stories told in my interviews concerned the indignities of lack of clothing,
hunger, poverty and fear of moving around the village, leaving the house, going to the rice
fields or going to school. Being spied upon through windows, arbitrary arrests,
interrogations and witnessing killings are a part of many of the old people's life stories.

The stories from Aceh draw attention to a life time of psychological and physical responses
to trauma - events and conditions which threaten life or safety (Australian Centre for
Posttraumatic Mental Health 2010). Whereas history tells a sense-making story about the
trauma-causing events, what gives rise to them and what impacts they have on later events,
in the field of trauma studies or psychosocial studies, the trauma of the individual is not
merely an event but something embodied most significantly in the individual as both
witness and storyteller. In witnessing, speaking and embodying, the storyteller offers the

listener-reader an understanding of the past very different from the narrative of the historian.

It was argued earlier that this understanding is non-narrative: that the past is 'shown' or 'modelled' in the story and the storyteller, rather than explained. This modelling can be seen in my interview with Pak I-h, an 82 year old man who practises traditional medicine but whose services are often unpaid because other members of the community are equally poor:

> Bapak I-h (82)
>
> Uhmm … my life? Ehmm … I don't know what to say, it's really difficult. I have no words to describe. I look for money by breaking the rocks, cutting the tree, that's my livelihood, also looking after the cow, nothing else. I want to work in the field, but I don't own land, I want to plant rice, but I don't own sawah (refers to rice field). The cow that I look after is not mine.

Bapak I-h's distress was clear not just in his words, but in 'the rhetoric of the body' (Butler 1997) as he pounded the floor with his fist in extreme frustration[27]. What is shown in this storytelling is more than the difficulty of obtaining a livelihood in Aceh. In the interview, the impact of prolonged poverty is evident in Bapak's body and clothes; his distress is evident in behaviour which does not form part of the interview 'transcript'. While his descriptions have 'evidentiary' value in understanding aspects of Aceh's rural economic history, the interview has a different value as an *act of engagement* in which the speaker *shows* the past to his audience. This engagement is discussed in the following section.

Reconfiguring testimony: the engagement of speaker and listener

> The absence of an empathic listener, or more radically, the absence of an *addressable other*, an other who can hear the anguish of one's memories and thus affirm and recognize their realness, annihilates the story (Felman et al. 1992: 68).

<div align="center">∞</div>

---

[27] The interview questions were re-directed at this point to focus on particular medical practices.

Listening to trauma testimony which is offered as evidence in a court of law raises again the issue of 'truth' in evidence and 'truthfulness' of the testifier. Felman and Laub question a process which requires so much of the witness and yet merely adds words to the sum of evidence in support of a judgement. The significance of the event of giving testimony is, they suggest, much more than those words

> … if the essence of the testimony is impersonal (to enable a decision by a judge or jury – metaphorical or literal – about the true nature of the facts of an occurrence; to enable an objective reconstruction of what history was like, irrespective of the witness), why is it that the witness's speech is so uniquely, literally irreplaceable? (Felman et al. 1992: 204-205).

This answer to this question is provided in the authors' analogous discussion of *Shoah*, a documentary film about the Holocaust; they argue that the significance of the film lies in the reception which its 'visual witnesses' produce in the audience, such that audience members also become witnesses to the witnesses (Felman et al. 1992: 206, 211). Those speakers in the film become catalysts who 'assist us … in the effort toward comprehension' (Felman et al. 1992: 213).

For the testifier, the absence of such an empathic listener 'annihilates the story' since the listener hears only the words and not the speaker's 'anguish':

> Testimonies are not monologues; they cannot take place in solitude. The witnesses are talking *to somebody*: to somebody they have been waiting for for a long time (Felman et al. 1992: 70-71).
> …
> [m]emory is conjured…essentially in order to *address* another, to impress upon a listener, to *appeal* to a community (204).

In the example of a concentration camp victim who 'misremembers', in a burst of traumatic recollection, the number of gas chamber chimneys in the camp, Felman and Laub suggest that such a witness is testifying 'not simply to empirical historical facts, but to the very secret of survival and of resistance to extermination'. The witness's performance of testimony in this case is a breakthrough event necessary for her own survival - 'a genuine

advent' (Felman et al. 1992: 62).

Felman and Laub's discussion of *Shoah* points out that trauma witnesses engage with listeners in contexts other than the formal context of a courtroom. Here it is clear that recollection is directed not at self-understanding – the kind of marshalling of the past into a coherent narrative which was discussed earlier – nor at providing a statement of the facts; rather it is directed at transmitting something to the listener which is beyond the facts, on which depends the social existence of the speaker.

In some ways this concern for engagement with the listener parallels the concern of the historian, whose text is constructed for the reader; its purpose and shape are closely tied to its reception. Histories, like fiction 'reveal concern for performance' (Zurbuchen 2005: 20). Achieving this connection with the reader is, suggests Ricoeur, the historian's 'act of the productive imagination' (1984: 76).

Like historical narrative, stories of experience are 'faced outward', to be reconfigured at 'the intersection of the world of the text [story] and that of the listener or reader' (Ricoeur 1984: 77). The story's content and style of telling respond to the particular circumstances of its instigation - the questions asked, the relationship between the questioner and the speaker, the place where the stories are told, and the wider social or political context. The way that stories are told in order to achieve 'refiguration' by their audience is the subject of the next Chapter.

The interviews with old people in Aceh thus consist not only of stories about an often traumatic past, but the difficult *act of storytelling* as an event in its own right. Each speaker brought together and presented their past experience in an effortful and sometimes painful performance. The cost of remembering is clear in almost all of the interviews:

> Bapak A-b (69)
>
> Of course I still think about that accident. I remember that.
> I remember the day of the accident when the landslide happened and I was
> buried, I remember and am scared, it's so real
>
> Bapak A-y (80+)

But don't tell them [the military or the GAM] OK. Don't bring your mind there
I am happy, I never quite think about all of that stuff.

Ibu R-a (65)

Sad. If I remember what it's like in the past, I am sad.

Ibu S-p (65)

Yes, I do think about it sometimes, during the chaos, I cry when I remember,
thinking about my relatives that were hit by them, but not my close family …

Here, where recollection is painful, the connection between speaker and listener includes the listener as 'witness to the witness', who also carries responsibility as an instigator of the remembering. The ethics of this instigation were discussed in Chapter 2, where it was noted that the interviewer then needs to maintain the role of empathic listener as well as sufficient perspective and self-awareness to be a competent 'enabler' of testimony.

The role of the listener in hearing more than the 'facts', and thus becoming both a 'witness to the witness' and an enabler of testimony, is most starkly evident in stories of trauma. Jan Baars, in criticizing the 'life story as therapy' approach to old people, notes more generally that the value of the stories is realized only when they are listened to by an audience:

> … the capacity of the narrative to transfigure the experience of aging rests not
> only on the narrative itself, but especially on the act of reading and listening
> (Baars 1997: 11).

The issue of truth and truthfulness in the telling of life stories falls away when the stories are 'heard' not as veridical or non-veridical narratives about the past but as an often effortful performance to engage the listener and to make them understand something about the individual's past. In the case of stories of trauma, this 'something' may be the speaker's anguish; in the life stories from Aceh, speakers were concerned to convey not only an understanding of life at a particular time and place, but the sadness and suffering of that life. The next Chapter examines ways in which the speakers made efforts to ensure that I as a listener was given sufficient historical or cultural background to properly understand these stories and their emotional associations.

As noted in the previous Chapter, the significance of the historical 'cohort' to which a generation belongs is a material factor in the experience of those individuals. The connections between life stories of individuals and the particularities of an historical period, and the ways in which they jointly might provide an understanding of the past, are discussed below.

HISTORY AND LIFE STORIES IN THE SAME FRAME

> [In historical time] the 'excessive *longue durée*' … makes us forget 'the diversity of life – the movement, the different time spans, the rifts and variations' (Ricoeur 1984: 105-106, citing Braudel).

> [Oral sources] represent…a manifestation of a subjective reality which enables us to write history from a novel dimension unconsidered by traditional historiography. This will avoid its narrow concern with piling up facts and its failure to make explicit the political nature of all historical writing, while also presenting in the concept of subjectivity a tool of analysis peculiarly appropriate to social history (Passerini 2003: 55).

∞

Experiencing history

As noted in Chapter 3, changing the focus of history from context (events) to individuals 'profoundly shifts the way we understand both and indeed the way we organize the study of history' (Thelen 2000: 25).

The accretive quality of individual experience is the subject of many longitudinal studies in fields such as health, gerontology and psychology, including the impacts of historical or public events on the individual. Maccini et al's (2006) quantitative study of the impacts of negative environmental shocks during childhood on social outcomes for Indonesian women decades later, adduces historical evidence to examine individual lives, and the authors note the importance of such research for public policy and economics:

> Women with 20% higher rainfall in their year and location of birth attain 0.14 centimeters greater height, finish 0.15 more years of schooling, live in households with 5.2% higher expenditures per capita, and have spouses with 5.1% higher earnings (2006: 2).

While this study sought information on events at one period and measured outcomes many

years later, the authors' interpretation indicates an accretive set of impacts over the course of a life; as rain increases agricultural output, the household's wealth increases and hence girl children are better fed and in better health. This in turn improves their performance at school, which results in 'higher spousal quality' and hence higher socioeconomic outcomes (Maccini et al. 2006: 23-24).

Similarly, Adrian Bailey (2009) notes the accretive impacts on health of early life conditions, such as the level of local unemployment, where both historical data and longitudinal studies of individuals show that the contexts of early life 'exert a systematic affect upon later life illness'(2009: 412). He suggests that 'embodied lifecourses' can reveal complex connections between the accumulation of life experience and (dis)advantage in later life (412).

These examples of cohort effects (see also Settersten 2003a) point to the value of the individual life as a locus for examining and interpreting the past. Studies of individuals' life courses, like trauma studies, make connections between individual lives and material events or conditions; social, geographic, economic or political events at an historic scale are the 'irreducible real processes' in which subjects are historically situated (Henriques et al. 1984: 109, 217).

The above examples of early life rainfall and socioeconomic context are only two of the many ways in which ethnography reveals connections between 'historical' events and the conditions of individuals in the present and the future. Such ethnographies may take the form of seeking life stories, or of asking those who lived through a particular event to describe their experience. Felman and Laub note comments by both documentary film-maker Claude Lanzmann and historian Raul Hilberg that this seeking should start with small questions about 'apparently trivial specifics' (1992: 218-219):

> "Was the weather very cold?" … "From the station to the unloading ramp in the camp is how many miles? ... How long did the trip last?" "It was the silence that tipped them off? ... Can he describe that silence?" … What were the [gas] vans like? ... What color?" … It is not the big generalizations but the concrete particulars which translate into a vision and thus help both to dispel the blinding impact of the event and to transgress the silence to which the splitting of

eyewitnessing reduced the witness. It is only through the trivia, by small steps – and not by huge strides or big leaps – that the barrier of silence can be in effect displaced, and somewhat lifted (Felman et al. 1992: 218-219, referring to Lanzmann).

Similarly, historian Hilberg constructs a 'gestalt' of the past through questions about details:

"In all my work," says Hilberg, "I have never begun by asking the big questions, because I was always afraid that I would come up with small answers; and I have preferred to address these things which are minutiae or details in order that I might then be able to put together in a gestalt a picture which, if not an explanation, is at least a description, a more full description, of what transpired" (Felman et al. 1992: 218 (footnote)).

When the individual becomes the locus for viewing the past and inquiry begins with the 'small' details of experience not visible to the historian, a hidden past, coeval with history, emerges: the 'crocodile waiting to come up' (Geertz 1973b: 324). The potential importance of this hidden past is discussed in Chapter 6.

Historians who have critically considered the limitations of Western historiography have argued for more ethnographic approaches to history. Some of these are discussed below.

The convergence of historiography and ethnography

[The historian] is the agent of an irrepressible desire, a passion for the dead others who are voiceless and who exist both inside and outside the threads of an articulated narrative, hidden and awaiting exhumation (Wyschogrod 1998: 38).

∞

The alternative temporalities of Mayan and Cumbal histories, discussed above, throw light on the contingencies of historiography and the limitations of an historical understanding which is not both ethnographic and critically self-reflexive.

Linda Smith (1999) suggests that the requirements for historical proof have resulted in the dismissal by many Western historians of traditional communities' oral histories as

'irrelevant … or … the lunatic ravings of drunken old people', of no value to those writing a universal 'true history' of the world based on the progress discourse of human and social development (29, 30).

Increasingly however, oral sources are now being seen by historians as potentially offering an understanding of other histories - the non-victor's history, history from below – and of the 'cognitive, cultural and psychological' factors in events (Passerini 2003: 54). For historians, oral histories constitute 'evidence', albeit a kind of evidence different from documents and quantitative trends. Interviews are valuable for constructing history, Trevor Lummis (2003) suggests, insofar as their interpretations of the past can be supplemented by information about how they have changed through time, their distribution across social groups and 'the reality which formed them': 'If they cannot be used [in this way] to contribute to historical understanding, there is no reason for historians to interview people' (Lummis 2003: 277).

Even those historians such as Passerini (2003) who claim a stronger intrinsic value for the subjectivity evident in interviews, are focused on finding 'clues' to the past in the form of cultural forces, passions and motivations which give rise to political change. An example of a history which uses such clues is Ronald Fraser's *Blood of Spain* (1979), based on 'innumerable tiny personal narratives' from 300 survivors of the Spanish Civil War; the history thus produced is a form of 'composite autobiography, the re-creation of experience in the form of a thousand partial and warring viewpoints' (Popular Memory Group 2003: 82).

These approaches use oral material to construct a single or multi-vocal narrative of an historical period or sequence of events. They suggest that while traditional historical inquiry has ignored oral sources as unreliable or irrelevant to history's meta-narratives of progress and development, forms of research which connect historical inquiry with ethnography are now developing.

Nonetheless Goodall notes that the value attached to Aboriginal life stories in Australia has ebbed as interest in community histories is replaced by the legal discourse of land rights which require archival 'proof' of a traditional past 'far outside the reach of living memory' (Goodall 2000). She calls for historians to work closely with communities and individuals

in exploring, while possibly never resolving, questions about the past:

> … there is now a great need to be alert to the processes of history making in
> order to conceive projects which allow shared work in the early stages of these
> processes, not only at the end. These will be projects … which take the risk of
> not knowing the answers to all the questions at the outset. The public work
> which leads us into genuinely new relationships will be that which poses
> questions on which diverse groups of people want to collaborate and which
> fosters a strong enough sense of confidence to allow an exploration of
> complexities and ambiguities (Goodall 2002: 24).

Such 'new relationships' concern particularly the historian's relationship with the 'source': 'Oral history turns the historian into an interviewer and changes the practice of the historian into a personal interaction with the past within living memory' (Bornat 2003: 190). To this extent, the historian, the psychiatrist, the anthropologist, the documentary film-maker and the war crimes judge might share a similar transformative learning experience in listening to storytelling about the past.

Nevertheless the historian's use of oral history, focused on construction of new, multi-vocal or more complete narratives about the past, is different from the focus of this thesis, which is the *lifetime* of the individual, and stories structured around the chronotope of 'a life'. The understandings provided by such stories have already to some extent informed work within, for example, trauma studies, gerontology, and psychology; it will be argued in Chapter 6 that they can be a valuable source of understanding and assessing adaptive capacity and resilience in social-ecological systems.

CONCLUSION

The *silencing* of voices through cultural narratives which marginalize 'the old' or 'the stateless', was discussed in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 theorised as *materialization*, the ways that the story of a life might reveal and occupy the gaps in history; it argued that the chronotope of 'a life' is a device for storytelling designed to bring forth a story which represents this materialization of the past in the everyday world of 'lived' time. Moreover the resulting account of the past reflects the *inside* perspective of the subject and the *accretive* quality of

an individual's experience, which were discussed in Chapter 3. This Chapter has reviewed the *purposes* – the 'why' - of history and life stories, and how these purposes provide different understandings of the past which influence and illuminate each other.

Recollection and historical inquiry are acts which are instigated in particular circumstances and constructed within those social, economic and political discourses through which it makes sense to speak or write. The purposes of history are realized in the production of a convincing narrative which makes sense of the past and has value for political, social or moral agendas of the present. The life storytelling of the old Acehnese whom I interviewed are performances with the purpose of transmitting to the listener, often in an a-chronologic, non-narrative form, the embodied and recollected experience of the speaker. Trauma theorists have suggested that in some cases, such transmission of experience may be key to the very survival of the speaker.

Just as Inayatullah claims that critical research problematizes the present so that it 'becomes less rigid, indeed, it becomes remarkable' (Inayatullah 1998: 817), so life-stories problematize and make remarkable the past of living memory, through the chronotope of 'a life' rather than through focusing on an historical period or sequence of events. The remarkableness of this different past includes, as do the oral histories obtained by historians, its translation via the purpose and imagination of the storyteller, into a performance which *engages* its audience – bodily, emotionally, intellectually - as part of the process of achieving understanding. In the case of life stories, this understanding of 'a life' stands alongside, but is not part of, historical inquiry.

In the next Chapter, I argue that life stories as *texts,* even in translated and transcribed form, reveal a number of ways in which words are used to engage with an audience and face the story outwards for the final stage of 'reconfiguration'.

5.   (DE)CONSTRUCTING STORIES: A HERMENEUTICS

INTRODUCTION

> For it is granted to [the storyteller] to reach back to a whole lifetime …
> His gift is the ability to relate his life; his distinction, to be able to tell his
> entire life (Benjamin 1936a: 107).

> Any story worth telling arrests our ordinary processes of thought, drawing
> us up short for at least a moment … It asks us to begin again, rethinking
> or remembering our perspectives through the images, sounds, or feelings
> of the story (Tsing 1999: 4).

∞

The purposes of life-storytelling were discussed in Chapter 4; these purposes are not always narrative life review or the re-writing of history described in memory theory, life course theory, cultural studies and political history. Instead life stories are often an a-chronological *transmission* of embodied and recollected experience to the listener, sometimes in the form of testimony, or as a tacitly critical (dissensual) portrayal of the speaker's experience of social conditions or historical events. The experience thus represented reveals a model of the past rather than an explanation or justification. However as my work with the old people's stories from Aceh progressed, it became clear that other tools were required to explain the success of this transmission, the richness of understanding about 'what it was like' which was conveyed by the words of the speakers. In this chapter I address the question raised in Chapter 2:

5. What is the relationship between narrative theory and the non-narrative, painterly 'daubs' of recollection of old people?

I examine transcripts of the Aceh interviews – words, lines, stanzas and whole life stories – to find qualities which make them much more than a litany of past events. In doing so, I use some of the tools of narrative analysis methodology which:

> … examines the informant's story and analyzes how it is put together, the
> linguistic and cultural resources it draws on, and how it persuades a listener of
> authenticity ... We ask, why was the story told *that* way? (Riessman 1993: 2).

In order to undertake this analysis however, I first review below some of the opportunities

and constraints in interpreting text which emerge from a cross-language, cross-cultural interview, and through the intermediary of an interpreter. Some of the ethical issues relating to these circumstances were discussed in Chapter 3; below I focus on issues which have directly affected the structure and content of the text.

FRAMEWORK FOR TEXT ANALYSIS

Limitations of translation

> (From 'Empiricism in the desert') … sometimes there is a momentary gnarr of a voice, or a shard of music, whisked away again by the laughter of ions: these ghostly fragments populate the atmosphere with their chatter, bounced off Heaviside layer[28] and frayed by air, long ago orphaned from singer or speaker. Startled by random ventriloquy, there are times when I would have sworn that the flung syllables – whose fragmentary import memory refuses to dredge to tongue, to flicker briefly in their turn in air – are in my own voice (Various Artists Ltd 1986).

∞

The lines above evoke the evanescence of the spoken word, particularly words spoken in another language. Not even the digital recordings of the words of the old Acehnese capture the resonance of sounds in a particular space, and the 'rhetoric of the body' (Butler 1997), which made me almost believe that I could understand if I just 'listened harder'. However this Chapter attempts to pin down those significant qualities of the spoken word which remain in the written transcriptions. Despite their attenuated connection with the original utterance, the stories of the transcripts retain many important qualities of the original, including for example a clarity in reports of personal experiences and conditions such as poverty and their impacts, a constant movement within the stories between first person singular and first person plural, and between stories of personal experience and matters of historical or cultural importance for understanding the story.

Occasionally metaphors in Acehnese have been translated into figurative forms in English, although local knowledge is sometimes required to appreciate them (emphases are mine):

---

[28] The ionosphere, an electrically conductive layer in the upper atmosphere that reflects radio waves (named after physicist Oliver Heaviside) < http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/258889/Oliver-Heaviside>.

Bapak D-a (71)

All the Keuchik [village chiefs] that ruled in this Kecamatan, *we slept on durian skin*[29].

Bapak I-h (78)

The sickness that I couldn't cure, is liver, there is no medicine that is able to cure it, not even the hospital. If there's any, *then it must be a piece of winding-sheet*[30].

However metaphor was either not commonly used or not translated as such; in the following examples, further linguistic work would be needed to establish any figurative meaning, since they may simply be colloquialisms equivalent to English expressions such as 'my mind was not on the job' or 'my heart wasn't in it' (emphases below are mine):

Bapak I-s (80)

I don't know how to say it, you know, *because my mind wasn't in it*. After work, I immediately go home and sleep, I didn't think about it. (Laughing)

Ibu H-l (≈70)

I don't know when this house was built. I don't remember that anymore dear. I didn't pay attention, I don't know, because *my heart wasn't there,* so I don't know.

Hence like language rhythms and phonics, figurative or metaphorical uses of words are also outside the scope of the text analysis below. This Chapter focuses instead on story *content* (including reports of events or conditions and the speaker's reflection on them), the *structure* of the stories and the structure of the interview 'narrative' as a whole.

---

[29] Durian is a strong-smelling large fruit with very rough skin.

[30] Islamic funerary practice includes ritual washing of the body and shrouding it in a winding sheet.

The limits of listening

Apart from issues of translation and transcription, the interview situation has had its impact on the story content and structure. Anderson and Jack (1991) have discussed researcher 'insensitivity' to statements from an interviewee which only later are seen as indicators of valuable and deeply held beliefs or emotion. Such insensitivity arises particularly when the researcher is focused throughout the interview process on evaluating how the interviewee's stories fit with existing theoretical frameworks. The authors suggest that, 'ideally, the processes of analysis should be suspended or at least subordinated to the processes of listening' (15, comment by Kathryn Anderson). Similarly, William Tierney notes the experience of one life historian who had outlined a chronological framework for her interviewee, a Guatemalan woman named Rigoberta, but who found that her subject constantly 'upset' the chronology with digressions on cultural practices. As a result:

> "… I became what I really was: Rigoberta's listener. I allowed her to speak and then became her instrument, her double, by allowing her to make the transition from the spoken to the written word" (Tierney 2003: 297, quoting Elisabeth Burgos-Debray).

While oral histories are not therapeutic interviews, Anderson argues that it is important to enable storytellers to tell their stories 'as fully, completely, and honestly as they desire' (1991: 18). This means a shift from 'information gathering' to 'interactions' and supports Liisa Malkki's point, noted in Chapter 2, that the researcher may need to give up the urge to know 'everything' and accept those 'very partial vistas that our informants may desire or think to share with us' (Malkki 1995: 51).

Beyond the researcher's preoccupation with gathering data for theorizing, the researcher conducting interviews through an interpreter is even more likely to make errors of judgement about what is important to the speaker. During my interviews in Aceh I was aware that I occasionally 'missed a beat' (perhaps once in each interview) and had not followed up on a potentially important story. Reading the transcripts later made this even more evident:

Bapak A-b (69)

After the tsunami happened, I stayed at home, I couldn't walk, *ka leumoh* [feeling weak, lost the spirit of life].

JP: So can you ask him was he fishing until the tsunami?

Bapak A-d (68)

My parents live in *seungsara* [miserable, suffering] … So that's how we lived, looking for a little rice to eat.

JP: And how many children does he have?

Ibu A-w (90)

I'm getting married after that. Because I already grown up when I enter school. So when I graduated, my parents set me up a marriage.

JP: And how many children does she have?

The inappropriateness of some of these responses was, I believe, partly a result of my pre-interview assumption that a life story should include 'life data' – age, marriage, children etc - and partly because translation attenuates the interaction referred to by Anderson and Jack. By the time my question had been interpreted for the interviewee, the response given and translated back to me, I had already moved on mentally to the next question. While the misalignments between questions and answers appear remarkable in the transcripts, these are a record of words only, without the meaning added by pauses or body language. Nevertheless, there is a sense of missed opportunities in some of the transcripts; this is the kind of issue which could have been addressed with Anderson and Jack's approach of making listening more important than obtaining 'data', and their detailed proposals for achieving this (Anderson et al. 1991: 23-24).

Nevertheless, while revealing the awkwardness of some of the interactions in the interviews, the written transcripts are a remarkable opportunity to examine more closely the stories that were told, the speaker's verbal engagement with the researcher and the interpreter, and the process of being interviewed. The completeness of the transcripts reflects the importance of recording not only the storyteller's words but my own and my

interpreter's words: 'When the researcher's voice is cut out, the narrator's voice is distorted' (Portelli 2003: 71).

While Chapter 4 concluded that the interviews in Aceh were generally not in the form of a narrative, I discuss below some of the narrative analysis tools which can valuably be used in examining the content and structure of the interview transcripts.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Narrative analysis has traditionally focused on the text, in both written and spoken form – structure, order, syntax, rhythm and semantics - and is concerned with how we make sense of the text as narrative or stories. Catherine Kohler Riessman (1993), Laurel Richardson (1990), Labov and Waletzky (1997 (1967)), William Labov (1997), Mark Freeman (1997b, 1997a, 1998), among others, have explored the idea of narrative sense-making by the individual to 'construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives' (Riessman 1993: 2).

Labov suggests that narrative is 'perhaps the only example of a well-formed speech event with a beginning, a middle, and an end', and applies it to speech about experiences, particularly those which 'have 'entered into the biography' of the speaker', as opposed to 'simple recounting of observations such as the events of a parade by a witness leaning out a window' (1997: 396, 399). The significance, and accretiveness, of that experience which enters into the biography of the speaker was discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. However Chapter 4 also concluded that life stories are not necessarily 'sense-making' narratives of this experience, and hence are not necessarily in the class of Labov's structurally defined 'narrative':

> … narrative construction is equivalent to assigning a theory of causality ... The study of how narrators assign praise and blame is a major aspect of narrative analysis (Labov 1997: 409).

Nevertheless, many of the elements described by Labov and Waletzsky (1997; 1997 (1967)) provide valuable ways of examining the transcripts from Aceh. These include:

- the 'reportable event' as one which justifies the attention of listeners: 'A narrative of personal experience is essentially a narrative of the most reportable event in it' (Labov 1997: 406). Descriptions by my interviewees of family responsibilities and work are interspersed frequently with accounts of dramatic events, generally of personal experience but sometimes of others' experiences, to illustrate what life was like during, for example, the Dutch period, the Japanese occupation, the GAM-military conflict;

- orientation clauses: 'An *orientation clause* gives information on the time, place of the events of a narrative, the identities of the participants, and their initial behavior' (Labov 1997: 402). As the analysis of my transcripts below indicates, interviewees showed care in providing me, as a foreigner, with historical, geographical or social/cultural context for their life stories;

- the 'transfer of experience', in which the listener becomes aware of events in the same order as the speaker who experienced the events: '[T]he transfer of experience of an event to listeners occurs to the extent that they become aware of it "as if" it were their own experience' (Labov 1997: 413). This 'dramatic mode' (Pasupathi 2006) was the most common way in which reportable events were related;

- the 'coda' which brings the listener's perspective back to the present. In the transcripts from Aceh this is often achieved by the device of a *'deixis'* which steps outside the story and points back to it from the present (Labov et al. 1997 (1967): 36): 'That's it', 'That's the history of my life', 'So that's what happened every month'. The interviewees also use as a coda, statements about the present which are not 'totally relevant' to the story they are telling (36): 'But now, I don't go fishing any longer, I can't walk, I feel exhausted huh, and I have no strength anymore', 'I don't know where we will move after this … heaven!', 'Hm … of course the younger people now, they don't realize what happened to us in the past', 'Well, we are thankful that at least we have the airport, where the airplanes can land', 'Now, I am thankful that I have my children that I can depend on'.

As in the discussion of 'testimony' and storytelling in Chapters 3 and 4, approaches to

narrative analysis also emphasise the importance of the relationship between the narrator and the listener. The 'reportable event' is one in which the listener gives the speaker permission to 'hold the floor' (Labov 1997: 404). Moreover, in recounting a narrative of personal experience, a good story (the story with the greatest impact on the audience) reflects the speaker's skill in unfolding the story for the listener as it originally unfolded for the speaker, rather than relating the story from the point of view of the present. This is the 'transfer of experience' from speaker to listener (Labov 1997: 411).

Riessman distinguishes between the more generic term 'narrative' as a rhetorical device defined structurally, for example, by Labov and Waletzky (causal sequences, temporal order), and 'stories', which are, she suggests, a specific sub-genre of narrative. In the following, I have substituted 'life story' for 'narrative' – the whole of the speaker's responses in the interview – and refer to the shorter reports of experience within this as 'stories' or 'story fragments'.

While the 'narrative analysis' approach to interpretation of spoken words has focused on 'sequence, thematic, and structural coherence … temporal order, evaluation' (Riessman 1993: 51), Riessman suggests that James Gee's (1991) poetic structuring of discourse, for example into 'stanzas' or 'scenes', may sometimes provide a better representation of what the speaker is doing, and of interpreting what is important in the discourse (51).

Gee sees a richness in the relationships between the words themselves: narratology based on literary theory has 'greatly undersold how much meaning is, in fact, available in the structure of the language as a text' (1991: 16). While interpretation of a text might vary between readers/listeners, at least in English the emphases, pitch changes, and pauses in spoken language provide cues for focusing on that part of a statement which is the most important, or is intended to convey new information (21-23). Language, according to Gee, is structured through such pauses and other forms of break in speech, into 'idea units', which are generally a line or a sentence, then stanzas – 'a group of lines about a single topic' which constitute a vignette or a 'scene' – then pairs of related stanzas which Gee calls 'strophes', and finally larger units called parts, which together make up a story (23-24):

> Each level [idea units, lines, stanzas, strophes, story parts] makes its own

contribution to meaning. However, it is crucial to see that each level makes its own contribution by amalgamating this contribution with the contributions of all the levels below it (27).

Each stanza 'represents … what the "camera" is focused on, or a "scene"' (23-24). The production of stanzas and their components, which at each level convey more than the sum of their parts, is the process of narrative construction (32-33). What is conveyed by the whole narrative, and which distinguishes it from a 'report', is a world view: 'the hearer can reconstruct a certain part of a philosophy of life from a particular point of view' (37).

This conveying of more than the sum of its parts is a quality of the life story indicated in Walter Benjamin's claim that stories 'model', rather than inform or explain, and Nussbaum's argument that novels offer a 'vision of individual life quality' which motivates, rather than explicitly argues for, 'serious institutional and political criticism' (Nussbaum 1995, 2004: 71). Moreover as discussed later in this Chapter, critical to the functioning of a story as a model is the work of the listener: Benjamin's *interpretation* by the reader (1936a: 89); Gee's *reconstruction* by the hearer (1991: 37); Nussbaum's *responsive contemplation* of the novel (1995, 2004: 74); and Bakhtin's *creative perception* of listeners and readers (1981: 254, original emphasis).

In Chapter 4 it was argued that construction of a life *narrative* is only one way of viewing life stories. Moreover, not all such stories are told to convey a world view. Descriptions or reports of events which are extraordinary and difficult to describe, for example, may be focused on 'transmitting' what it was like (Felman et al. 1992: 84), and on reinstating the 'self' as a biographic entity (Culbertson 1995: 179). Laurel Richardson (2003) suggests that life stories are better represented as short poems than as narratives:

> A life may indeed have a plotline, but not everything lived, or everything of significance to the person, fits neatly into the lengthy unfolding story. We are not characters. The points of our lives are not morals. Our lives are not even in-depth narratives (190).

However as will be demonstrated below, although Gee's discussion of syntax and grammar are specific to the English language, topic-focused *stanzas* which form story *parts* can be

clearly seen in the Aceh transcripts. As my analysis below concerns the written word rather than the original sound recordings in Acehnese, I have used the idea of a stanza as a 'scene' or 'vignette' rather than aural criterion which is 'a series of lines… that …sound as if they go together by tending to be said at the same rate and with little hesitation between lines (Riessman 1993: 45, citing Gee).

The following section examines the ways in which the Achenese speakers use 'orientation' and more direct addresses to engage their listeners in the story.

Engaging with the listener: orienting and questioning

> Well, she probably doesn't have a clue about our condition here, so I'll just share the story, and she will probably take her own conclusion (Ibu A-h (74)).

<div align="center">∞</div>

A quality which stands out in the transcripts of interviews with old people in Aceh is that of 'orientation', reflecting the speakers' concern to convey to the listener the information necessary to understand the speakers' lives. As the following selection of excerpts indicates, this includes information about religious or cultural practices, the historical events or political situation at the time of the experience the speaker is describing:

Bapak D-a (71)

In 1953, I had just entered the fifth grade of elementary school. After that, many of the schools were closed during that DI/TII [*Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia*]; many of the teachers were taken by them, and some of the teachers also ran away to Banda Aceh (laughs).

Bapak M-d (72)

In that time, I hadn't had male circumcision. In that time, the Nagasaki was bombed, thus the Japanese surrendered and returned to their country. After that, I had my circumcision done, when the Japanese left.

Ibu R-h (65)

After that ... [the Japanese occupation] uh … I didn't continue school because it

was chaos … ehh … chaos and we didn't even have the courage to go by foot that's why I cannot do anything [*han jeut sapue*: usually refers to reading and writing ability] , it's the chaos, huh? ...

There is moreover an active engagement with the listener. Particularly in the case of recounting traumatic experience or past privation, the storyteller sometimes seeks a direct response from the listener, in the form of empathy or acknowledgement. The fragment below is an example of the kind of engagement with the listener which goes beyond contextualising, and asks for a response to a possibly rhetorical but challenging question:

Bapak M-d (72)

… This country is rich, but the citizen is poor. As you can see, that's a mountain…we *crah glee* [open new land for agricultural activities], we planted chillies, cassava and other crops, and worked in the rice field. Going to the sea for fishing is something else that we can do, so this country is rich right? Everything is provided by the nature; in the sea we can find fish, the river is full with shrimp and crab, but people are poor … why is that happening?

This questioning has some similarities with the refugee narratives quoted by Anna Szörényi and discussed in Chapter 1. Engagement with the audience is challenging, asking them 'to not only listen, but to respond' (Szörényi 2009: 186). Szörényi's letters from refugees address the audience directly in asking them to examine their own values:

"If I talk to an Australian I will ask this question, 'You are a citizen of this country, you are its conscience. You teach your children respect of human rights and to support civil rights. Please treat others, as you would like to be treated'" (185-186).

Such challenges enable refugees to 'occupy the position of viewing subject, interpreters of the world around them, and interlocutors of their audience' (Szörényi 2009: 186).

In most of my interviews with the old Acehnese however, what stands out is that rather than *challenging* me to respond, or *inviting* me to empathize, the speakers use orientation, reflection and other kinds of engagement to *guide* me towards a greater knowledge of the

conditions in which the speaker's life experiences occurred. The examples analysed in Table 1 below demonstrate this guidance in often seamless shifts between context-setting, accounts of experience, and reflection.

The speakers did however engage directly with me at times by asking questions, some rhetorical or reflective, others to make clear the limits of their memory, or the position they are taking in relation to the story: 'I'll just share the story, and she will probably take her own conclusion', '… but I don't really remember my dear'. Other kinds of engagement step temporarily outside 'the story' to clarify or emphasise to me (or my interpreter) that conditions were very different in the past; these comments acknowledge the need to bridge both the cultural differences between speaker and listener and the generational difference between speaker and interpreter (who was 26 years old). In the following underlined comments, the speakers reveal a consciousness of their audience and a need to face their story outwards to the listener:

Bapak D-a (71)

Can you imagine the price of one baby cow in that time was one million, compared to today's price that has reached four million?

Bapak S-h (78)

After the independence … hm … there was the PKI [*Partai Komunis Indonesia*] movement, but they didn't disturb us. They knocked people out…but they didn't fight in a war. Do you remember the PKI movement in 1965? Then you must also understand the GAM [*Gerakan Aceh Merdeka*] movement, we also have the peace with them now. I think now everything has settled. *Insyaallah* we pray that we would never have to experience that kind of thing anymore.

Ibu S-p (65)

Well, ehm…during the time when we planting the rice, we experienced the war, ehmm like *prang sodara* (*Prang* means war, *sodara* means family), the DI [*Darul Islam/Tentara Islam Indonesia*] movement. Maybe you didn't

experience this dear. …

After that, the DI war happened for quite long time, ehm … then the communism movement happened. Maybe you don't remember [pointing to interpreter]. The communism happened when my first child was little. That war didn't take long, only one year, but even in a year we cannot go for work.

The concentration of orientation information in the stories of the old people, and their clear positioning of the listener throughout the interview, are not only useful to the listener, but are also assertions of the importance of the speaker's own culture and history as the context for experience. In the interviews and transcripts, the old Acehnese reveal an awareness of themselves as *givers* of important historical and cultural information for the benefit of the researcher.

Addressing the audience is one half of Monisha Pasupathi's (2006) 'dramatic mode' and 'reflective mode' respectively; in dramatic mode the speaker uses language in order to 'render the story vivid and, arguably … to capture and maintain the listener's attention' (134); in this mode, the listener is 'transported in time' to the 'there and then' of events as they were experienced by the speaker – Labov's 'transfer of experience'. In reflective mode on the other hand, the speaker is engaged with the listener in the present, to explain their feelings about the events:

What storytellers and their partners are doing in conversational storytelling transpires on at least two levels of interest: the level of their *interaction in the here-and-now* and the level of the story – the *then-and-there* (Pasupathi 2006: 136, my emphases).

The above suggests that 'interaction in the here-and-now' includes not only reflective comments but the speaker's orientation of the listener by providing historical or cultural context and challenging or seeking acknowledgement from the listener. Similarly the coda at the end of a story, which returns the listener to the present, is a shift from the 'there-and-then' to the 'here-and-now' of the interview.

Bakhtin claims that biography has historically included a 'superstructure' of meaning which stands outside the lived time of the subject; this often consists of a symbolic overlay

such as 'guilt →punishment→ redemption →blessedness' (Bakhtin 1981: 128).
Biographies, he suggests, carried this 'vertical axis' of metaphorical, atemporal symbolic
meaning to give each moment transcendental significance outside the ordinary and
uninteresting events which were happening on the horizontal axis of real time.

The reflective or philosophical commentary in the Aceh life stories in some ways
constitutes just such a vertical axis by adding a layer of interpretation to the horizontal axis
of lived experience in real time. Reflection (and orientation) in Gee's terms are 'off line'
from the main plot and suspend the dramatic mode of the story to guide the listener's
interpretation or understanding. They are enabled by the special perspective of looking
back over the past from the point of view of the present, which allows the speaker to add a
reflective commentary and context. This resembles the privileged perspective of the
historian who, as Ricoeur points out, is now able to point out that 'In 1717, the author of
Rameau's Nephew was born' (1984: 146) (historiographical Principle 5). The significant
distinction between the historian and the memorist however is that the memorist has the
privileges of both witnessing and retrospection.

Recounting self and recounting community

Gee's distinction between the 'main line' of the narrative's plot, and material which is 'off
line' potentially cuts across Pasupathi's 'there-and-then'/ 'here-and-now' and Labov's
'orientation' or contextualizing:

> States, generic events, repeated events, and habitual events are all off the main
> line of the plot (Gee 1991: 29).

In the analyses below I have retained a distinct category for 'orientation', since this is an
important concern of the Acehnese speakers. I have used the term 'recounting' for those
descriptions of 'states, generic events, habitual events' that the speakers provide about
themselves or their community ('I was married then', 'I grew up during the Dutch time',
'the villagers were hungry'), which are not in the dramatic mode of transferring experience
to the listener, nor providing geographical, cultural or historical orientation. Both
recounting and orientation are part of what the speaker does to construct the 'there-and-
then' for the listener, as well as unfolding more dramatic events in order to 'transfer

experience'.

In the Acehnese stories, recounting includes many descriptions given in the 'first person plural' or collective mode, of events or conditions which entered not only the biography of the speaker but of the other members of the community; the storytelling of the Acehnese concerns itself with community life as much as the speaker's own life. Hence the life stories often have an 'exterior' rather than an 'interior' quality, a distinction drawn by Bakhtin in tracing the development of the novel from its early pre-modern focus on the external world of the protagonist to other genres which explore the internal life – the 'drawing room' existence - of the individual:

> "Landscape" is born, that is, nature conceived as horizon (what a man sees) and as the environment (the background, the setting) for a completely private, singular individual who does not interact with it (1981: 143).

During this latter development, the elements of a biography such as success, happiness, or merit 'began to lose their public and state significance and passed over to the private and personal plane' (1981: 143). Autobiographies for example contained descriptions of events which while 'enormously important in the private life of a given individual have no importance at all for others' (Bakhtin 1981: 144, 145).

However this kind of focus on the interior life of the individual is not reflected in the 'autobiographical' storytelling by old Acehnese people. Repeatedly, stories offered in response to a prompt like 'tell me about your life as a child', or 'what did you do then?' concern themselves with making clear that the interviewee's experience was a shared one:

> Bapak A-y (80+)

> I was not the only one who did that for a living, many people did that too.

> Bapak D-a (71)

> So the villagers, as Abu has said, we were very poor.

> Ibu F-m (86)

> The rice that we harvested in the rice field has been taken by the Japanese.

Many people lived more suffering than us, they were hungry.

Bapak I-h (78)

I can say that during the Japanese, we're nothing … Our children in the village are not cared for and suffering from *kudee* [skin disease], and *gutee* [type of bug that lives in human scalp], don't have cloth [clothing].

Responses to questions about a person's life are very often cast in the first person plural, beginning with 'we' rather than an 'I' set against the outside world. Thus descriptions of an individual's past resemble the pre-modern 'biography' in which 'the individual is open on all sides, he is all surface' (Bakhtin 1981: 132). What is offered by the speaker is not a 'private life' but a collective or public one. The world is not 'viewed through the window' as the 'background' for the individual's life; it *is* the individual's life. Oral histories may lie outside the conventions of 'narrative', so that 'the boundary between what takes place outside the narrator and what happens inside, between what concerns the individual and what concerns the group, may become more elusive…' (Portelli 2003: 66). This was a remarkable quality of the stories told by old people in Aceh, and is a subject worthy of further research in the future.

It is evident that a life story is a very large topic to be addressed in the time frame of a single interview; there is, as shown in Table 1 below, a sense of the interviewee summarising, and of the researcher maintaining a pace of the interview. The relationship between the interview transcript and the life of the speaker is a kind of choreography by the researcher and the interpreter (within the interview format and mediated by translation), of the speaker's original material. The transcript reflects both the speaker's way of telling a story and the prompts from the interviewer to continue or expand on a story.

Portelli has suggested that oral sources are 'unique and necessary because of their *plot*— the way in which the story materials are arranged by narrators in order to tell the story…the 'senile ramblings' of a disappointed old man reveal much about his [Communist] party's history that is untold in the lengthy and lucid memoirs of its official leaders' (Portelli 2003: 67). This then is 'plot' in a different sense from the structured sense-making of Ricoeur's historiography:

Oral sources are credible but with a different credibility. The importance of oral testimony may lie not in its adherence to fact, but rather in its departure from it, as imagination, symbolism, and desire emerge. Therefore, there are no 'false' oral sources (Portelli 2003: 67).

The result can be likened, not to a narrative with plot, but rather to a 'found poem': 'gathered material *rewritten and given form*' (Gray 2010, my emphasis) or 'verbatim theatre': 'the words of real people … *reproduced* on stage' (Neill 2010, my emphasis). The transcripts produced in this process are a significant record of old people's stories, but represent just one 'take' on a life from an infinite range of possible 'takes' in which the material and the choreographed 'product' would all be very different from one another.

The excerpts of two transcripts on the following pages reveal rapid shifts between modes of speaking and types of information. Orienting, recounting, transferring experience and reflecting and clarifying, the speakers move between past and present, history and memory to provide 'partial vistas' which convey a complex array of life-long patterns of livelihood, community and domestic conditions, historic events, conflict and disaster.

TABLE 1: ANALYSIS OF TRANSCRIPTS BY STANZA AND MODE

Ibu F-m (86)

STANZA: 'there-*and*-**then**', 'HERE-AND-*NOW*'	**MODE(S)** 'there-*and*-**then**' 'HERE-AND-*NOW*'
(JP: So can we just ask Ibu to remember back to when she was a little girl? What was her life like?) WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL? (Interpreter: Yes … when you were little) *Well, nothing in particular,* in the Dutch time *I was growing up. I was engaged already…well, they said that I am ready physically to become a wife.* BUT…THE STORY IN THAT TIME…I DON'T REMEMBER IT SO CLEAR, BECAUSE I DIDN'T REALLY PAY ATTENTION.	orientation: historical context *recounting* DIRECT ADDRESS[31]
In the time of the Dutch**, one night, I was running across the river because I was afraid they would hit me. I stayed beyond the river for a week, when I came back to the village,** the Dutch were gone, and the Japanese were there. *THAT'S IT.*	**transfer of experience** orientation: historical context *CODA*
My parents were still alive during the Dutch time, *when I was a teenager, they were still alive. My father and my mother passed away when I'm married, it was when M–'s mother was born [1944].[32] That is my oldest child. I was married in that time.* (JP: Was that in the time of the Japanese?)	*recounting* orientation: historical context

---

[31] Those comments where the speaker confirms the question, or informs the listener that s/he does not remember, are included below as 'direct address' alongside direct questions to the listener.

[32] The interviews in this village were conducted in M–'s house.

Yes, in the time of the Japanese, *after [when] I divorced my first husband,* the Japanese had already left.	
In that time, we received rice assistance; the rice came from the Japanese' warehouse *I could leave M–'s mother at home, because I stopped giving her breast milk.* (JP: Where was the warehouse?)	orientation: social context *recounting*
WELL, I DIDN'T REALLY PAY ATTENTION ABOUT IT [THE DEPARTURE OF THE JAPANESE]. *I knew it because my parents told me, they said* "The Japanese are gone, they went back to their country, they were defeated, and the emperor in their country was defeated, so all the army went back to their country".	DIRECT ADDRESS *recounting* orientation: historical context
(JP: So she was still a young girl then, was she married by that time?) *Yes, I already married; M–'s mother was born in that time.*	*recounting*
(JP: So can she tell me, after the Japanese left, what was her life like, was she working or was she at home with the children?) After the Japanese left, we still live in difficulty. I can say that, every rich person had their rice taken by the Japanese, and the Japanese had taken all of our stocks. They took everything. **The villagers here for example, if they were able to buy rice for one or two kilograms, in the family of seven, of course it wasn't sufficient, how could we cook it? So we picked papaya and banana, chopped it and mixed it with the rice. We shared the food with our children** … IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT.	orientation: historical context social context **transfer of experience** REFLECTION
After the Japanese left, the DI movement started, Cumbok War, a lot of movement happened, BUT I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER MY DEAR In the time after the Japanese left, OUR LIFE WAS KIND OF DIFFICULT DEAR, *we didn't have cloth, rice was not available, in case we wanted to borrow money from someone we couldn't, because everyone was just as poor as we were. The rice that we harvested in the rice field has been taken by the Japanese.* Many people lived more suffering than us, they were hungry. *In that time, I was with my little children, with young M–'s mother; there were three of us in that time.*	orientation: historical context DIRECT ADDRESS REFLECTION *recounting* orientation: social context

Bapak I-k (83)

STANZA:	MODE(S)
'there-*and*-**then**', 'HERE-AND-*NOW*'	'there-*and*-**then**' 'HERE-AND-*NOW*'
(JP asked about Bapak's life when he was young, before the recorder was started) *…cutting tree branch, breaking rock, working for the Japanese.*	*recounting*
I was hit behind my head by the Japanese, until my head was dizzy. (JP: That's not good). I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT YEAR IT WAS; I JUST SAY IT HOW IT IS. (JP: Yes, just share whatever. So maybe he could just start talking a little bit about….). **Sweat is all over my face, I feel very exhausted, and the sweat is *meutep-tep* [drops continuously], suddenly I realized they came behind my back and *puk* [makes sound of punching] they hit me. I couldn't see anything after that. And then an army came after me to separate me from the hitter and dragged me under a tree, I sat there and didn't continue the work. When it's time to go home, people go home. At one o'clock everyone is leaving and so am I.**	**transfer of experience** DIRECT ADDRESS
(JP: Did they give your payment for the day?) *They did. They paid us one cup of rice at 4 o'clock. One cup of rice usually served with two big chopped papaya, we mixed it and ate it, or sometimes* janeng *[the poisonous fruit].*	*recounting*
Well, after the hit me, of course it's hurting, I feel dizzy and confused about what has happened. I couldn't even see the ground, it was black. I couldn't see anything. His friend [in the Japanese army] came and took me to the tree. At one o'clock when everybody is leaving, he called me and asked me to go home. I came back again tomorrow.	**transfer of experience**
(JP: Can he remember what he was doing before the Japanese came?) Before the Japanese came, it was during the Dutch, *I planted kacang [beans or nuts]. I used 15 sacks of seed. I worked in the field that was owned by an Indian.*	orientation: historical context *recounting*

(JP: And was he going to school when he was younger as well?)	
Yes, I went to school. BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY, *whenever I write something, my teacher will be angry and hit my palm with a ruler, and ask me to sit. Other people too, if they start writing, the teacher will hit their body part. If I write something and nobody reported me to the teacher, then I wouldn't get any trouble.* WHY WE WERE FORBIDDEN TO WRITE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. *They didn't allow us to write.* **Sometimes, I made a joke with my friends at school; we pretended that we were writing something, and then I show it to my teacher, my teacher will say "What is this for?"**	*recounting* REFLECTION **transfer of experience** orientation: geographical context
(JP: Is the school here?)	
L– [village], right after the long bridge.	
When they were watching the *pasi*, [during the Japanese occupation] two people among them were injured. They tried to pick the coconut. WELL, YOU KNOW, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT WE WERE HUNGRY, NOTHING TO EAT. **Two people were suffering from leg break, hand break.** *THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED IN THE* PASI.	**transfer of experience** DIRECT ADDRESS orientation: social context *CODA*
WHEN THEY [THE JAPANESE] FIRST LEFT? NOT ONLY HAPPY, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE IT IN A WORD. **The villagers yelled "Allahuakbar" [God Al-Mighty], to prove their Islamic identity. Every where we go, we will hear that word.** If we didn't yell that word, it means that we are not Moslem. If we yelled 'Allahuakbar', then it is meaning that we are Moslem.	DIRECT ADDRESS **transfer of experience** orientation: cultural context

The analysis above demonstrates the frequency of orientation clauses (focusing on the there-and-then) and direct address to the listener (focusing on the here-and-now), both of which are used to clarify or emphasize a point for the listener. These parts of the life story are integrated with recounting and transfer of experience (the there-and-then), as well as the occasional reflection (in the here-and-now). The breakdown of the story text in this way shows both the temporal shifts (between then and now) and the shifts between big picture context and specific incidents, which make the life stories a complex materialization of both the historic and non-historic past. In addition to the rich picture they present, the life stories offer commentary and reflection and, unlike history, actively engage the audience to participate in the development of the story.

The following section elaborates the way in which the life story represents the accretiveness of experience, discussed in Chapter 3.

BRICOLAGE, LANDSCAPE AND MACCHIARE*: THE POETICS OF ACCRETION*

It has been argued in Chapters 3 and 4 that the abiding 'binding' element in each life story is its focus on the *lived experience of the speaker* which is accretive. The story is not simply a description of events as observed 'by a witness leaning out of a window' (Labov 1997: 399) but represents this accretive quality. The ways in which we are able to read this from the text at a poetic or literary level are discussed below.

One reading of the connections between the story fragments related in each interview is to see the whole as a form of *bricolage,* constructed from 'whatever is at hand' by someone whose 'heterogeneous repertoire … even if extensive, is nevertheless limited' (Lévi-Strauss 1966 (1962): 16-17); as *bricolage,* the story is constructed by the storyteller out of 'whatever comes to mind' from the repertoire of memory.

Such a conception of life stories would be consistent with their non-narrative and 'picaresque' representation of a life, discussed in Chapter 4, including the rapid shifts in mode and content, time and space, shown in Table 1 above. In the picaresque narrative particularly, '[t]he chaos of the protagonist's outer and inner worlds is matched by the abrupt and fragmented nature of the narrative, which leaps from incident to incident in a

jagged array of nauseating tableaux' (Ganguly 2009: 439).

Ledbetter suggests that such 'leaps' or discontinuities can be profound when they arise because the story is too difficult to tell, or to tell completely within the allotted time:

> Could it be that an interruption in the text, where the story line appears broken and our own expectations for the narrative are not met, is the narrative's most profound and defining moment? Could the story be calling us to a closer look at its failure to clarify, conclude or justify an issue that is simply too complex and ambiguous to be settled by simple description and narrative consistency? I am convinced that such 'problems' in narrative serve an interpretative purpose of pointing us towards a narrative ethic (Ledbetter 1996: 2).

The interruption or broken story line which disrupts our expectations is a kind of disorientation, or rather 'de-orientation', a breach of orderliness which opens up other possibilities for understanding by forcing the listener to listen closely to the story fragments and refrain from marshalling them into a coherent narrative. Paul Carter draws our attention to the difference between the openness of the explorer in a new country, who experiences 'a … sense of the unfolding ground', and the return journey in which the country has become a known and named 'landscape' (Carter 1996: 190, 256), (see also Carter 1988):

> 'First appearances' to the explorer are like the auditory apprehension of an unknown language, where 'words are not heard as units of information but as phonetic compounds ... imitative perhaps of natural sounds or else punningly reminiscent of words in one's own language (1996: 190).

In such a non-ordered, non-instrumental view of a landscape, we are unable to orient ourselves and must pay attention to the 'smallest environmental details' (Norberg-Schulz 1980: 21).

Burton's work on Bergson discussed in Chapter 3 suggests that recovering different parts of memory is a matter of the memorist 'relaxing' her/his utilitarian rules of orientation to the past. Requiring that the audience look anew, disoriented or de-oriented from the conventions of visual representation in art, utility in memory, or narrative in storytelling, is

another kind of poetic force evident in the disjointed and shifting stories of the old Acehnese. Understanding the set of story fragments told by each individual requires a close peering at the unfamiliar, albeit with contextualizing assistance from the speaker, to see (or construct) a picture of a life.

In the case of the stories from Aceh, the stanzas are often apparently incomplete fragments of stories, interrupted sometimes by the interviewer's moving on to 'the next thing', sometimes by the speaker's clearly not wishing to go on ('I don't know how to say it', 'it is too sad'), or because the speaker is summarizing a long period – an entire childhood for example - in a few short fragments within the time constraints of the interview. In these cases, the stanzas are not in Gee's sense parts of a single whole story, but a jagged sequence of events, often traumatic or difficult, experienced several years apart, and not always recounted in chronological order:

Bapak I-h (78)

So … ehm … my life is like this … when my parents are still alive, my life is very difficult. It's hard to get food, until then I have to fight for myself. I have to work for someone, cutting the tree, taking care of the cows. I have breakfast in the morning, but I have nothing to eat in the afternoon. It is very difficult.

(JP: When he was a little boy?)

Huh … the difficult time? Hmm … It is when I was little, this big [showing with gesture], my difficult time, maybe around fifteen years old, you know, it is already time to be responsible for ourselves. After I'm getting married, my life is even harder. It is even harder. I can say, after I'm getting married, sometimes we have food in the morning, and nothing in the night. Sometimes we had lunch but most of the time, we don't eat, at least once in a day. Because my parents left me nothing, they are poor. Until now, when I have children, life continues to be hard. I look after the cow, from B– [sub district] to Banda Aceh by foot.

(JP: Is it during the time when the Dutch were here? Or …)

Yes. And then during the Japanese, that is even worse. My stomach is like this [showing with gesture, big stomach]. We mixed our rice with chopped banana, or papaya, or corn. Sometimes we didn't eat for several days. Our rice stocks at home were taken by the Japanese. That's the story in that time.

(JP: And who was in the house then, was it his mother and his father and …)

During the Japanese, I lived with my mother and father. My mother was poor, and my father was sick. They went to P– [sub district] to get rice. They bought the rice for few kilos, and in the way home, they met the Japanese, and the rice was taken by them, they only saved us a small amount of rice.

Interviewees in Aceh used non-conventional, non-narrative means to convey 'what it was like' for them (and others) in the earlier parts of their lives. Nancy Farriss has noted that:

[i]n nonliterate modes of communication, especially in visual imagery, information is conveyed as a totality of impressions without a starting or ending point; and the same applies to a certain extent to the "speech performances" of oral communication. Pattern or structure is emphasized in nonliterate modes, while in writing it is process (1987: 567).

The visual metaphor for such oral stories as a 'totality of impressions without a starting or ending point' contrasts with the linearity of histories, in the same way that, as noted in Chapter 3, John Berger contrasts a film with a painting; rather than a linear sequence, the painting's 'historical moment is literally before our eyes' (Berger 1972: 26).

Collections of story fragments which together present a whole life to the listener figuratively resemble Paul Carter's descriptions of *macchiare* paintings from early sixteenth century Venice in which *macchie* (solid blots of colour) were used to build up an image where figure and background are equally significant and construct each other. The *macchie* provide one way of understanding why the sum of the story fragments told by an individual is greater than its parts, not as hierarchically nested parts of a whole but as an accretion which does not diminish the importance of any one fragment.

A 'picture' of the past constructed from *macchie* is more dynamic than an 'unchanging

landscape' of the past (Gussow 1999); Carter suggests that the many layers of the painting are built up 'through the continuous vibration of the medium itself, whose varying tones produced locally different forms, intensities of colour and rates of progress' (Carter 1996: 169). Part of the power of the 'medium' of the Acehnese life stories is that it is *oral speech*, the spoken and improvised word which Plato believed to have 'life, vitality, and naturalness' (Notopoulos 1938: 482). While the oral poets of classical Greece used a repertoire of remembered traditional phrases, these were used in the spontaneous creation of new poems, in 'the creative use of memory, which is *movement* of thought, rather than a fixed formalized retention of it in the written word' (Notopoulos 1938: 471, 482).

Like a painting, a poem too can present itself 'all at once':

> Sometimes time is experienced as a concordant whole, such as when reading a familiar poem, where the whole piece is experienced despite the fact that some of it has already been read and more is yet to come (Richardson 1990: 124-125).

Thus listening to a poem may be one of the few moments in which human beings can integrate past, present and future in a 'moment of bliss' (Baars 1997: 7, citing Augustine):

> … in reciting a poem, I express its words sequentially, which makes them immediately part of the past, but they are kept alive in our memory anticipating the words to come. Until, in that richest final "now" we have heard the whole poem (Baars 1997: 7).

Chapter 3 discussed the recollective recentness of particular events and the 'reminiscence bumps' of clarity in remembering events which threatened survival. The fragments selected by the old Acehnese in order to tell their life story are often both traumatic and detailed, suggesting a recollective recentness; each *macchie* or story fragment has a weightiness (brushprints with 'depth, contour, physical size, drag and lean' (Carter 1996: 165)), comprised of context, description and reflection supplied by the speaker to build up a picture of 'a life'.

This 'kinetic' work of constructing a life story is most visible when in the presence of the speaker – in Butler's 'rhetoric of the body' (Butler 1997) and Das's 'criticism by the body'

(Das 1995). The role of the body in the poetics of life stories, and in connecting the 'now' of the interview with the 'then' of the life story is elaborated in the next section.

THE COLLISION OF PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The body in the interview

> How one talks and what one talks about is always circumscribed by the context in which speech unfolds … Because an interview is a jointly constructed text arising from the intersection of two subjectivities … framing the findings as though they are independent of the method in which they were produced … is falsifying and misleading (Richardson 2003: 194).

<div align="center">∞</div>

Bakhtin notes that the written 'work' is the chronotopic device through which readers interact with a text at particular times and places; however the chronotope used to represent events – 'a life' for example – lies 'in a different world' from the chronotope of the work (the transcript) which records it (Bakhtin 1981: 254). This distinction between worlds can also be made between the time and space of the story and that of the storytelling:

> If I relate (or write about) an event that has just happened to me, then I as the *teller* (or writer) of this event am already outside the time and space in which the event occurred. It is just as impossible to forge an identity between myself, my own "I," and that "I" that is the subject of my stories as it is to lift myself up by my own hair (Bakhtin 1981: 256).

Hence the speaker in the interview exists in a different world from the person who lived the life s/he is describing. This parallels the distinction between the 'dramatic' or 'recounting' modes of the 'there-and-then' and the 'reflective' mode or coda in which the speaker points to the past from the perspective of the 'here-and-now'. The old Acehnese 'perform' their life stories in interviews where they stand outside the 'past' they describe. The time and place of the interview is not the time and place of the 'life' they recount; the particular perspective provided by the distance of age was discussed in Chapter 3.

Nevertheless the storyteller, unlike the historian or the historical novelist, provides by their presence a link in body and memory between the 'there-and-then' of their life to the 'here-

and-now' of the interview. As noted in Chapters 3 and 4, the performance of life-story-telling is an act with particular implications for both speaker and listener *because* what is represented is sedimented in the body and memory of the speaker. The storytelling has an efficacy in the present – its impacts on speaker and listener – because of the continuity of the subject from then until now, and the power of recollection and utterance to engage with the listener in the present. At its most extreme this engagement is Felman and Laub's (1992) 'knowledge as advent', Caruth's (1996) reclaiming of 'unclaimed experience', and Culbertson's (1995) reclaiming of the self.

Butler notes that while the body is involved in both writing and speech, for the latter 'the simultaneity of the production and delivery of the expression communicates not merely what is said, but the bearing of the body as the rhetorical instrument of expression' (1997: 152). As 'an instrument of expression' the bodies of the old Acehnese add to the weight of every sentence recorded in the interview transcripts: lines on the face, bent backs, tiredness, clouded eyes and missing teeth, coughing and difficulty breathing, discomfort in glaring light and on hard floors, crying, gestures of frustration, dry laughter at the end of a story. A few of the gestures are recorded in the transcripts; in addition, in line with the arguments of this thesis for the accretiveness of experience in body as well as memory, I have noted the age of each speaker before each quote to enable some conception of the speakers' physical presence to accompany the reading of the transcripts.

Riita-Liisa Heikkinen offers an eloquent description of her face-to-face experience with her older interviewees:

> The practical encounters in this study saw the researcher, seated in her office, facing one elderly narrator at a time who did not know exactly what to say but whose initial concern was to adjust his or her own being to the researcher's style. Neither knows where the speech will lead them, despite all the advance planning. Expression and comprehension are achieved first through the body, through vision, through a glance: intellectual clarifications follow later. We experience the bodily presence which precedes any scientific conception of the event … (Heikkinen 2004: 572).

The role of the body in conveying the accretiveness of experience is paralleled in the story itself by those qualities discussed in Chapter 3: the eschatological 'letting go of responsibility' in old age which is reflected in the life stories, as well as the 'recollective recentness' of past difficulties and continued reflection on them which appears stronger in life stories of the old Acehnese than in studies of older people in the West.

'The interview' is a complex chronotope which produces a particular text and performance out of a particular place and window of time. In the life story interviews in Aceh, the accretion of the speaker's past in her/his body and memory constructs the interview physically, intellectually, ethically and emotionally; some of these issues were discussed in Chapters 2 and 4. While in historical inquiry the events and their interpretation occur in Bakhtin's 'different worlds', the recounting of a life story in an interview is performed by a speaker whose body and memory brings with it, into the present, all that went before.

Extending the conception of the storyteller as an incorporation of the past is the subject of the next section.

THE SITE OF THE PAST

Throughout the Acehnese life stories, orientation, recounting, dramatic and reflective modes are used to shift between spatial and temporal scales of global (historic world events), local (social or geographical context) and individual (incidents of personal experience). In the following I argue that this cross-*scalar* quality can be replaced by other less hierarchical ways of describing the connections between 'global, 'local' and 'individual' when 'a life' becomes the locus of description.

Using scale as a conceptual tool to examine the breadth and range of phenomena encompassed in life stories brings with it issues of hierarchy. Sallie Marston et al's (2005) critique of scale as 'level' is that it produces value-laden hierarchies such as global/local, which have, for example, 'assigned the global more causal force, assumed it to be more orderly … and less contingent, and, by implication, relegated its other [the local] to the status of the case study' (421):

> Invariably, social practice takes a lower rung on the hierarchy, while 'broader
> forces', such as the juggernaut of globalization, are assigned a greater degree of

social and territorial significance (427).

Scale, Marston et al also remind us, is an observational *choice* depending on the interests of the researcher:

> [Scale] "is not simply an external fact awaiting discovery but a way of framing conceptions of reality" (Marston et al. 2005: 221, citing Delaney and Leitner 1997).

This choice depends on the questions which are posed by the researcher; the issue of scale is raised when 'one asks how multiple levels interact' (Sayre 2009: 102). In answering such a question, levels or scale are defined in relation to one another. This is scale as *relational* rather than an absolute quality of any particular space or period of time or spatio-temporal phenomenon.

Marston et al however goes beyond scale, constructed or relational, to propose a flat ontology in which the focus is on the *site* – the social site – at which human and non-human entities interact, rather than on relative scales or other qualities assigned to entities outside the site. Social sites come into being through practices and interactions between the natural and non-natural world, 'with varying degrees of organization,' and may be repetitive but also possess creative potentialities for change:

> …a given site is always an *emergent* property of its interacting human and non-human inhabitants (Marston et al. 2005: 425).

Instead of viewing the world through value-laden hierarchies of stronger/weaker, larger/smaller, global/local, the 'messy, fleshy components of social reproduction' need to be studied, at 'the very places where ideas are formed, actions are produced, and relationships are created and maintained' (Marston et al. 2005: 427).

The call to study 'humans and objects in their interactions across a multiplicity of social sites' (Marston et al. 2005: 427) rather than as part of a nested hierarchy of defined levels of influence resembles Bakhtin's call to remove the 'vertical axis' of superimposed meanings from social processes:

> [I]n contrast to transcendent ontologies and their vertical semiotics of scale, flat

ontologies consist of self-organizing systems (Marston et al. 2005: 422).

The shifts across spatio-temporal scale in the life stories of old Acehnese, particularly when moving from 'personal experience' to historical orientation or reflection, can be seen within Marston et al's flat ontology rather as descriptions of a 'site'. At this site, cosmological organizing (religious) principles, conflict events within the Aceh region and within the village community, work and livelihood practices, marriage, childbearing and child rearing practices, and natural disaster or environmental changes, are not allocated places in a hierarchy of influence, nor as the components of a narrative, but as a set of forces which form the storyteller's experience at the site of the individual's life. As noted in Chapter 1, an individual's life is a primary ontological unit because it is the place where such phenomena meet 'imagination and intentionality' (Dannefer et al. 2008: 102), and hence where 'social things happen' (Marston 2000: 427). The interaction of phenomena at the site of an individual's life produces the processual, changing and accretive quality of the life over time; a life story is thus a representation by the individual of themselves as a 'site' of the past.

CONCLUSION

Chapter 3 argued for the accretive quality of experience and the continuity of the subject; Chapter 4 proposed that this results in life stories which reveal a different kind of past from that of the historian. This Chapter has argued that close attention to the written transcripts of life stories shows the reader important textual, but non-narrative, connections made by life stories between present and past.

Through the stops and starts of telling, bracketed laughter, brief reflective comments and sudden coda which signal the story is over, the transcripts not only describe for the reader the events and conditions of the past, but reveal the difficulty of the storytelling now, and hence the emotional import of the past in the present. Moreover the life stories contain questions, rhetorical or otherwise, which are an invitation to the listener to share in the telling, and hence in the speaker's understanding of the past.

The face-to-face and interpreter-mediated interview provides an opportunity for communication mishaps but also for engagement, improvisation and responsiveness

between interviewee and interviewer. This engagement can be seen in the transcripts as a large part of the life story and is the occasion for many of each story's most telling moments: presenting as context for the listener a seemingly endless series of traumatic events, or explaining to the listener that what happened cannot be put into words because it is 'too sad'.

In its brevity and rapid movement across scales of space and time, between descriptive, reflective and dramatic modes, the life story has the rich 'now' of a (found) poem, as well as the often disorienting quality of Ganguly's 'jagged array of tableaux'. Such stories provide glimpses of how the past has played out at the site of the storyteller's life, and, in avoiding a narrative with a beginning and a middle which produce the present as the inevitable end, reveal a contingency not contemplated in history. Chapter 6 proposes that studying the many aspects of this contingency of the past through life story ethnography can open up potential alternative trajectories into the future for social-ecological systems.

6.   ETHNOGRAPHY FOR THE FUTURE: REMEMBERING AS REVOLUTION

> … in one of his paintings, *Coupe X Rainforest, Tasmania* … Wolseley tried to represent this destructiveness. He painted the linear grids and herringbone patterns of tyre tracks belonging to tree felling and processing machinery. He showed these squashing into the mud delicate ferns, eucalyptus cups, seeds and spores. The message was clear to anyone with an eye to decipher it. Following these false tracks of so-called economic progress, we were on the point of destroying vital clues to our past and present bearing. Deep time and deep space lie locked up in the physical environment of the rainforest. Lose that and we lose our own power to see beyond ourselves. We actually lose the power to reason (Carter 2004: 19).

∞

INTRODUCTION

This Chapter takes the work of the previous Chapters in establishing the uniqueness of the contribution made by life stories to understanding the past, and examines the implications of this for areas of research and practice concerned with the future. It proposes a dialogue between the disciplinary cluster already joined in the work of the previous Chapters (memory studies, history, psychoanalytic theory and psychology, cultural and political theory and gerontology) and the theoretical work of environmental scientists, human geographers and others on adaptation and resilience of social-ecological systems. It addresses the last of the research questions raised in Chapter 2:

> 6. Can responses to these questions enable recollection to inform the trajectories from present to future envisaged in theories of adaptation and resilience?
>
> In particular, how can the understanding of the past provided by life stories contribute to intelligence gathering, assessment and predictive capacities of social-ecological systems?

It is commonly understood that the past provides 'lessons' for the future: 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' (Santayana: 284). It is also seen by researchers and policymakers as a source on which to draw in the future. For example, the UN Programme on Ageing calls for:

[r]esearch on older survivors of starvation and malnutrition in rural and remote areas of developing countries and countries with transitional economies, and adaptation mechanisms (2007: 7).

Futurists have called for deeper and more critical understandings of the past in order to challenge entrenched attitudes and behaviours and open up a range of possible futures outside the trajectory of 'business as usual' and 'the way things are done now' (see for example Slaughter 2006; Inayatullah 2008).

In this Chapter I argue that life stories reveal significant qualities of the present with implications for the future which are invisible to history and are not measured by commonly used biophysical and socio-economic 'state of the system' indicators, examples of which include those contained in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA (sic)).

Chapter 1 of this thesis concluded that the voices of the old, like those of the culturally 'other', are ignored or devalued in narratives of progress and economic development, and by discourses which homogenize groups through the single identifier of age.

Chapter 2 argued that the recollections of a life materialize the past in their representations of lived experience in real time.

Chapter 3 drew on psychoanalytic, education, identity and trauma theory to argue for the continuity of an individual's experience and hence their life as 'a model of the course of the world' (Benjamin 1936a: 95). In distinguishing the life story which represents this model from the narrativization of the past by historians, this Chapter argued that the life-storytelling represents the *accretiveness* of experience in both body and memory, which gives particular significance to the life stories of the old. It also noted the phenomenon of a-chronologic 'recollective recentness' in memories of life-changing or traumatic events.

Chapter 4 examined both history and recollection as responses to the needs of the present, including the construction of political, community or individual identity. It concluded that while a life story aims to *transmit* the storyteller's experience to the listener through a form of engagement not available to history, both history and recollection can inform and change each other.

Chapter 5 analyzed the transcripts of interviews with old people in Aceh in order to propose a hermeneutics of the content and structure of life stories. The text analysis shows that events which are 'recollectively recent' are mentioned frequently or in detail, that a substantial part of each Acehnese life story is focused on orienting the listener unfamiliar with the speaker's culture, and that periodic comments directly address the listener to clarify, challenge or seek acknowledgement. The integration of historic and non-historic events at various spatiotemporal scales in each life story suggests an alternative locus of research on the past: rather than focusing on hierarchical relationships between the global, the local, and the personal, research may valuably focus on the 'flat' *site* of the individual's life where phenomena appeared, were considered, negotiated, accommodated or rejected – the site of 'imagination and intentionality' (Dannefer et al. 2008: 102) where 'social things happen[ed]' (Marston et al. 2005: 427).

This Chapter focuses on the value of life story ethnography and the 'life' as a site of the past, for theorizing the future, especially in recent work on adaptation and resilience in social-ecological systems. The potential kinships identified between life stories and social-ecological systems which form the basis of this Chapter are discussed in the following section.

LIFE STORIES AND SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

> Thus we have "to isolate a fragment of the world's history to a closed system and get to know the possibilities (and necessities) which govern the developments inside a system…" (Ricoeur 1984: 135-136, citing von Wright).

<div align="center">∞</div>

The unique understanding of the past offered by life stories has value for any field of inquiry concerned with describing or explaining social conditions both now and in the past. One such area which has a particular kinship with the idea of memory and recollection is the field of adaptation and resilience in what have been termed 'social-ecological systems' (SESs) (see for example Walker et al. 2004; Folke 2006; Campbell et al. 2009); adaptation and resilience have now become significant areas of research in their own right (see for example Holling 2001; Walker et al. 2004; Folke 2006; Turner et al. 2008; Adger et al.

2009). Within this research a significant gap in qualitative modelling has been identified, which is discussed in the following section; a potential kinship between life story recollection and the remembering action of adaptation cycles is then explored, followed by an examination of the potential role of life story ethnography in expanding the descriptive, explanatory, and predictive functions of social-ecological systems.

Qualitative data and social-ecological systems

Systems are constructed to solve problems (Gregory 1996: 605-606), to manage 'an inherently complex reality' (Funtowicz et al. 1993: 744), to model, predict and control an environment ('hard' systems such as cybernetics), or to model both a problem and its human and non-human context in order to achieve 'mutual understanding' and learning ('soft' systems) (Checkland 1985; Gregory 1996; Midgely 1996: 14; Checkland 1999). Critical systems theory has drawn attention to the implicit boundaries defined by systems, the ethical issues of power relations in systems - 'whose views should enter into the planning process, and how this should be achieved' (Midgely 1996: 14) – and the emancipatory and transformative potential of thinking critically with, and about, systems (Midgely 1996; Gregory 2000; Mingers 2003; Palmer et al. 2007).

In addition to addressing the ethical issues associated with boundary definition and complex power relationships between system 'actors', systems must also have ways of describing, explaining or responding to surprise and emergence[33]. Systems need to retain flexibility and a capacity to transcend 'old forms' (Crumley 2005) and potentially 'to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social … conditions make the existing system untenable' (Walker et al. 2004). 'Surprise' can be seen as a result of 'systemic negligence in intelligence gathering' (Crumley 2005: 42).

Systems are thus constructs which model contexts and processes, human and non-human, in order to provide the modeller, or the system actors, with a basis for intervention or a mutual understanding in pursuing shared goals. Nevertheless, as discourse about

---

[33] '[E]mergent entities (properties or substances) 'arise' out of more fundamental entities and yet are 'novel' or 'irreducible' with respect to them' (O'Connor et al. 2006).

'emergence', adaptation and transformation indicates, systems straddle the world of the positivist and the world of the constructivist; the term 'system' refers not only to a construct or model, but to the sets of material processes it describes. A forest fire may transform both the forest (eco)system and the system construct which models it; on the other hand, the system construct may remain unchanged if it has already incorporated such events into its descriptive and predictive modelling. When a system becomes 'untenable' for its human or non-human actors, both the system construct and material aspects of the human or non-human world need to adapt or transform, since the former is no longer a useful model, and the latter has become too uncomfortable or unliveable for its inhabitants. Change in the world may be informed by the predictive elements of the model, just as the model is, or should be, responsive to material and structural changes in the world. Richard Quantz, in a literary interpretation of systems thinking, notes the significance of this distinction in the field of education:

> … thinking of schools as systems is not a discovery of the way the world works but a *metaphor for describing the way we think* about how the world works. To the extent that schools are like systems, then the metaphor works, but to the extent that they are different from systems, then the metaphor misses. By using the metaphor of a system we are led to see certain things, but other things become harder to see (2008: 53, my emphasis).

This Chapter is concerned in particular with the modelling and 'intelligence gathering' of social-ecological systems, where an SES is defined as:

> a system that includes societal (human) and ecological (biophysical) subsystems in mutual interaction … The SES can be specified for any scale from the local community and its surrounding environment to the global system constituted by the whole of humankind (the "anthroposphere") and the ecosphere (Gallopín 2006: 294).

Existing models of SESs and their limitations are outlined later in this section; I argue that life story ethnography augments established forms of information (for example trends in socio-economic indicators) and historical narratives. It is able to introduce into modelling

the *temporally obscure* qualities of experience as accretive, and of recollection as reflecting the significance rather than the chronology of past events – recollective recentness rather than chronological recentness. These aspects of experience and recollection are currently not modelled in social-ecological systems, yet potentially have a significant influence on actions and responses in parts of the 'anthroposphere' which a social-ecological system aims to describe.

I have chosen to focus on social-ecological systems because of a potential connection between the new kind of 'data' ethnography can offer and the recently perceived needs for new qualitative data and new models to adequately describe and assess SESs.

Examples of the socio-economic assessment indicators already in use include those of the UN Millennium Development Goals (United Nations 2010). These goals address issues of global inequity in health, sanitation, poverty and hunger, trade and debt, education and gender equality, as well as the issue of environmental sustainability. Generic indicators adopted to assess progress in meeting the MDG goals include: employment rates; incidence of poverty level incomes; incidence and death rates from diseases; immunisation and health care coverage; quantities of per capita food consumption; school enrolments and adult literacy rates; women's participation rates in education, employment and politics; proportion of forested land area; proportion of species protected or threatened; access rates to improved water and sanitation; levels of development assistance; tariff levels and trade balances; debt relief commitments from international creditors; rates of use of communications technology.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (2003a) is a program established under the 'environmental sustainability' goal of the MDG. It has developed a framework for action and a set of principles which stresses the importance of the connections between ecological and human well-being and the difficulties of assessing how one influences the other. While it states its overall goal as the establishment of the scientific basis for actions needed to enhance the contribution of ecosystems to human well-being without undermining their long-term productivity (2003b: 26), it notes also that:

> [A] dynamic interaction exists between people and ecosystems, with the

changing human condition serving to both directly and indirectly drive change in ecosystems and with changes in ecosystems causing changes in human well-being. At the same time, many other factors independent of the environment change the human condition, and many natural forces influence ecosystems.

Effective incorporation of different types of knowledge in an assessment can both improve the findings and help to increase their adoption by stakeholders if they see that their information has contributed to those findings (2003b: 26).

It notes a lack of data on 'the material resources of individuals, their social relations, the state of governance, the role of freedoms and choices, and the state of equity' and that information which is available is 'usually inadequate for analyzing temporal trends or for comparing one part of the world with another' (156). The MA report concludes that, as most models of human well-being focus on economic indicators, 'such factors as freedom of choice, security, and health, will require *a new generation of models*' (165, my emphasis).

Other difficult to measure qualities of a social-ecological system include accumulated social capital, such as 'trust', 'social networks' and 'social memory', which have been claimed as essential for future adaptation (Folke 2006: 262), and yet for which there are currently neither accepted models nor indicators. Moreover, Folke notes other qualities, such as those of individuals who play important roles in resilience and adaptation through leadership and vision (Folke 2006: 262) which are difficult to include in a 'decision making calculus'.

Some of the data issues pointed to in the MA framework are those that require qualitative, ethnographic research within a community: for example social relations, and the role of freedoms and choices. Further, the MA's comments suggest that even obtaining an understanding of the material resources of individuals is an issue requiring more than a survey of annual income and assets; access to resources may depend, for example, on social or family structures, obligations and responsibilities. Obtaining this kind of understanding is the work of ethnography, and an example of the contribution which alternative data collection and interpretation methodologies might make to assessing SESs.

A broader approach to assessing sustainability is not merely a matter of utilizing 'data sets that might not pass the "usual standards" in experimental biological science' (Campbell et al. 2009), but of acknowledging interrelationships between human and non-human parts of systems such that governance for example is seen as 'a part of the SES rather than an external institutional structure imposed on an ecological system' (Campbell et al. 2009). Thus an SES description needs to include structures of governance and 'rights regimes' as well as species diversity and sustainability.

The call for new models notes specifically the need for such models to incorporate historical data; this builds on Daniel Pauly's (1995) identification of the 'shifting baseline syndrome' in which assessments of apparent baseline conditions in marine environments can be shown to already represent a shift from earlier baselines recalled anecdotally by older fishermen (see for example Turner et al. 2008; Adger et al. 2009; Campbell et al. 2009).

Adger however notes that changes to physical places and to ecological systems also produce cultural and symbolic losses over time:

> These impacts are systematically undervalued and do not enter into the decision making calculus for adaptation responses (2009: 349).

Such impacts may become the 'hidden limits to adaptation' (Adger et al. 2009: 340) which emerge from within a society.

Turner et al (2008) suggest that these changes are the 'invisible losses' suffered over many years by indigenous peoples (Turner et al. 2008), which have un-quantifiable impacts on community adaptation capacity. Such losses include cultural and lifestyle losses, loss of identity, health losses (for example through enforced changes to diet), loss of self-determination, influence and 'order in the world', and opportunity losses as people become 'so … focused on trying to fix the injustices of the past that it is hard to focus on moving forward and seizing opportunities' (2008: 5). For many communities 'current conditions already represent significant losses compared with the past' (2008: 9). This goes beyond concerns that future planning for adaptation take account of indigenous disadvantage in the present (see for example Barnett et al. 2009: 15); it seeks rather more careful and

community-based knowledge-making, especially about culture and history to enable an assessment of 'current conditions' to take account of invisible accumulated losses from the past.

Community-based knowledge-making about the past can, this thesis proposes, valuably include the qualitative intelligence provided by an ethnography of the lived past; when interpreted, such intelligence might cast the system model in a different light, or even result in a re-definition of fundamental concepts. However such 'data interpretation' is not a testing of a scientific hypothesis by evidence. Ricoeur notes that the historian's appraisal of what 'probably' happened in the past is very different from that of the scientist's assessment of probability, and closer, he suggests to that of a judge, requiring 'empathy, understanding, or interpretation' (1984: 114):

> The moment of interpretation is the one when historians appraise something,
> that is, when they attribute meaning and value to it. This moment must be
> distinguished from the moment of explanation, which establishes causal
> connections between events (1984: 118).

Similarly, the interpretation of ethnographic material, rather than 'explaining' the present or producing a 'rule' for the future, provides instead a new picture of the past from which might emerge hitherto unseen or unacknowledged values, assumptions, expectations, cumulative stresses, and adaptation and coping strategies. A hermeneutics has been developed over the preceding three Chapters for interpreting life storytelling as a performance which provides a picture of the past at the site of the individual's life. This new picture of the past reveals it as accretive, non-narrative, and sedimented in body and memory. Life storytelling 'transmits' the past to the listener 'from the inside', using the chronotopic device of 'a life' to make the individual the locus of the story.

Life story ethnography is a more open-ended process than historical inquiry, 'finding room for the overlooked, the misheard' (Carter 2004: 73, 74)), and developing out of the relationship between the 'performer' and the 'audience'. It also differs from the kind of intelligence gathering designed on the basis of indicators pre-defined by a system (social, economic, biological). Ethnographic gathering of intelligence focuses on the past of

historical 'non-events', a gathering of material not yet visible to systems, but to see it, says Carter, 'demands an eye open in the dark' (2004: 170).

Life story recollection and system remembering

There is therefore an identified need for models of SESs which incorporate new kinds of qualitative description. A reason for focusing on the contribution that life story ethnography in particular might play in SES futures is the recent work on adaptation and resilience of SESs which makes specific reference to the role of 'remembering' in rebuilding after a system disturbance (see for example Holling 2001; Walker et al. 2004; Folke 2006; Turner et al. 2008; Adger et al. 2009).

Remembering and memory have been used to explain interactions between larger scale and smaller scale 'adaptive renewal cycles', illustrated in Figure 3 below. These nested cycles, where longer and slower cycles, as well as shorter and faster cycles, influence those in between, have collectively been termed a 'panarchy' (Gunderson et al. 2002). The adaptive cycles of the panarchy are one of the four aspects of adaptability defined by Walker et al (2004) as 'the collective capacity of the human actors in the [social-ecological] system' to manage the various factors in 'resilience' which includes:

> *Latitude*: the maximum amount a system can be changed before losing its ability to recover (before crossing a threshold which, if breached, makes recovery difficult or impossible);
> *Resistance*: the ease or difficulty of changing the system; how "resistant" it is to being changed;
> *Precariousness*: how close the current state of the system is to a limit or "threshold.";
> *Panarchy*:… the influences from states and dynamics at scales above and below (Walker et al. 2004).

The role of 'remembering' is explained by Folke (2006) and Gunderson et al (2002) using the example of conserved resources in an old-growth forest ('biotic legacies' (Gunderson et al. 2002: 76)) which feed into renewal/reorganization after a phase of 'creative destruction' caused by a fast-moving event such as a forest fire - a 'revolt':

Memory is the accumulated experience and history of the system, and it provides context and sources for renewal, recombination, innovation, novelty and self-organization following disturbance … The panarchy … is therefore both creative and conservative through the dynamic balance between rapid change and memory, and between disturbance and diversity and their cross-scale interplay (Folke 2006: 259).
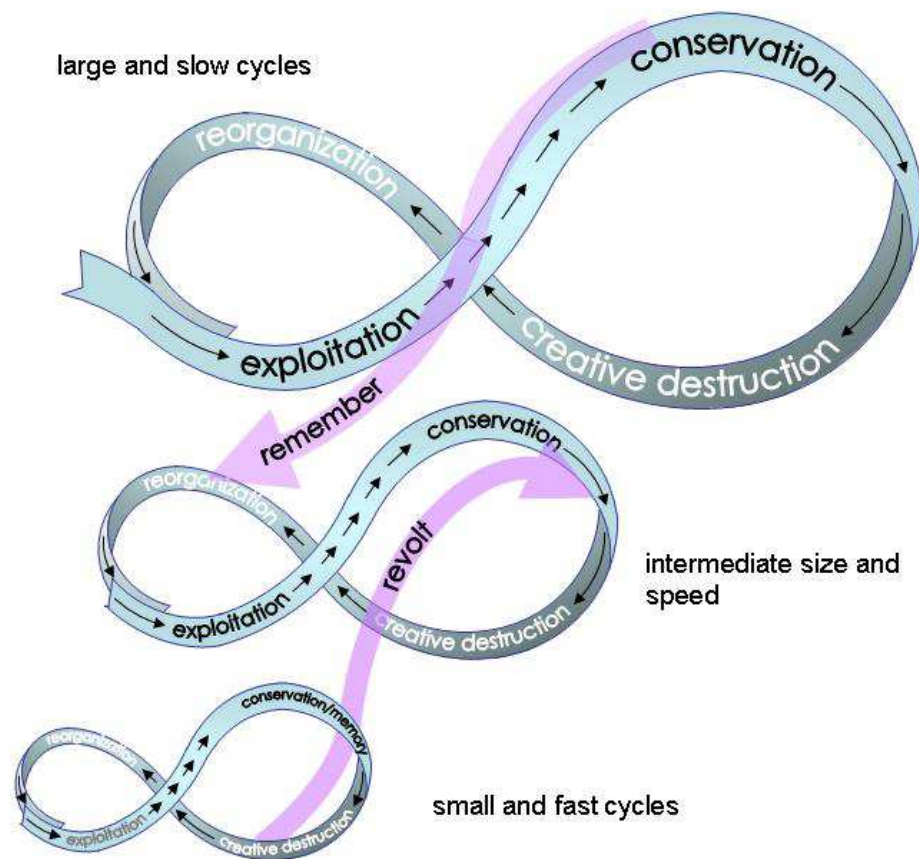

FIGURE 3: PANARCHY: NESTED CYCLES OF ADAPTATION

(after Gunderson et al. 2002: 75; Folke 2006: 258)

However as Chapters 3 and 4 indicate, while memory accretes over time, the *act of recollection* may have a rapid and revolutionary effect on the speaker, the listener or on the re-writing of history at the moment that the 'crocodile' resurfaces (Geertz 1973a: 324 (see

Chapter 4)). Where social-ecological systems include human memory as part of the 'conservation', or 'growth and accumulation' cycle (Holling et al. 2002: 47), recollection of hitherto unknown or unacknowledged pasts may be more akin to an act of 'revolt' than the adaptive learning from the past originally envisaged in a panarchy. Recollection, for example of past political oppression or chronic trauma is a release of the past which may rapidly instigate the 'back loop' creative destruction phase of an adaptive cycle. The human memory and human remembering components of adaptive cycles may sometimes be better represented as Figure 4.

Moreover, the sustainability of a system is not merely about managing resilience and recovery. Walker et al (2004) suggest that the most important qualities of systems are *both* adaptability and *transformability*, which is '[t]he capacity to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social (including political) conditions make the existing system untenable' (2004). Whereas adaptability concerns dynamics *within* a system, the latter is 'fundamentally altering the nature of a system' (2004). Transformability is the capacity to embark upon the unknown:

> … we speculate that attributes required for transformability will emphasize novelty, diversity, and organization in human capital — diversity of functional types (kinds of education, expertise, and occupations); trust, strengths, and variety in institutions; speeds and kinds of cross-scale communication … (Walker et al. 2004).

Transformability therefore depends both on identifying an existing system as 'untenable', and enabling the emergence of the new. While this Chapter later argues that ethnographies of the past may reveal hidden conditions which may make a system precarious or untenable, the final part proposes that life stories also reveal the many paths not taken, 'futures yet unthought' (Grosz 1999) and 'a whole new world of political possibilities' (Marston et al. 2005: 427) with which to transform a social-ecological system.
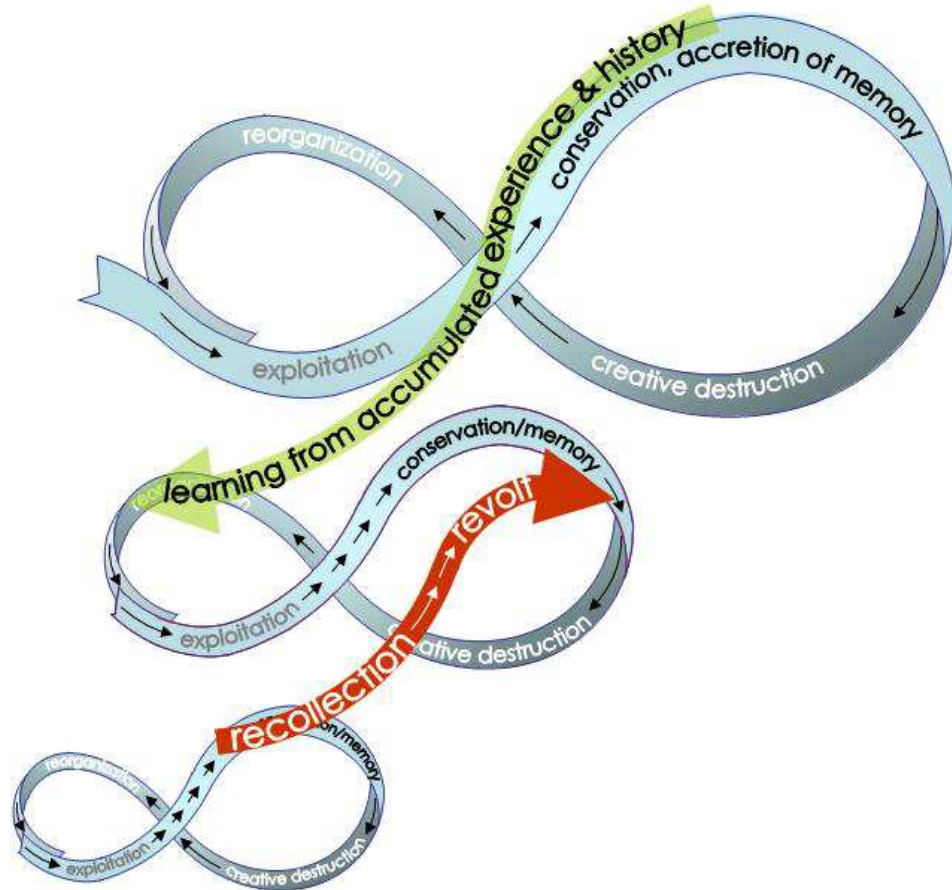
FIGURE 4: HUMAN RECOLLECTION AND MEMORY IN ADAPTIVE CYCLES

For these reasons, I argue below that life story ethnography should form part of the intelligence gathering of social ecological systems and inform strategies for adaptation and resilience. I argue that such ethnographies can reveal:

- hidden conditions with the potential to produce precariousness or 'surprises' in social-ecological systems;

- the contingency of the past and hence hitherto unseen possibilities for future transformation.

The relationship between a system and an ethnography is explored in the next section.

ETHNOGRAPHY AND SYSTEMS

Hierarchies and sites

The emergence of the new (novelty) which enables transformation has been framed within 'scale' or other hierarchies to allow emergence of new entities whose whole is greater than the sum of their parts. Walker et al (2004) note that changes at larger or smaller scales can trigger 'local surprises' in a social-ecological system, and the panarchy in Figure 3 above illustrates the process of 'revolt' at smaller cycles which can produce surprise at the level above. Change at one scale, for example the geomorphological change which brought about the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, or political change at a regional or global scale such as the rise of anti-Communist feeling in the Western world, can bring about abrupt and devastating change in communities existing in apparent equilibrium. The unprecedented and brutal suppression of Communism by the Indonesian military in 1965-66, supported by Western nations, was discussed in Chapter 4. The killing of over half a million Indonesian civilians (Cribb et al. 2010), including the erasure of entire villages, can be seen as a devastating outcome of global political movements not anticipated only a few years earlier.

These are 'relational scales' where, as the panarchy indicates, a system does not operate at a fixed scale or 'level', but always relative to longer and shorter temporal scales and larger and smaller spatial scales (Sayre 2009). Relational scales have a kinship with holonic structures, where a holon is defined as 'that which, being a whole in one context, is simultaneously a *part* in another' (Wilber 1995 (2000): 26, citing Arthur Koestler). Like

scale, the holon offers a relational framework where entities which are smaller, or at a lower level, nevertheless have a kind of completeness and value in themselves, rather than operating merely like pixels or parts of a jigsaw puzzle. Emergence can occur when a holon (a new 'whole') is greater than the sum of its parts. New and more evolved holons do not merely include but transcend the earlier holons and 'fashion … something novel … the co-creation of new worlds' (Wilber 1995 (2000): 119). Each successive level of evolution produces holons which include more and more earlier holons (Wilber 1995 (2000): 64).

However holons, like scales and systems, run the risk of reification. Rather than merely offering an explanatory model of relationships between entities, holons themselves are given qualities of emergence, precariousness and intrinsic value in varying degrees: 'The greater the depth of a holon, the greater its degree of consciousness' (Wilber 1995 (2000): 65)). Peter Checkland notes that a molecule, mammal or Mars are holons of a certain level only as 'determined by the observer' for the purpose of a particular type of inquiry (Checkland 1988: 237), just as a system is a description of the world for the purposes of a particular group or individual.

Part of the descriptive or explanatory force of scalar and holonic hierarchies is that they produce objects or phenomena as 'smaller than' or 'part of' others. As discussed in Chapter 5, Sallie Marston and her colleagues argue that scale is just one 'regime' which defines both the 'problems' and the field in which these problems may be solved (Marston et al. 2005: 426); it carries with it the assumption, for example, that 'globalization' is a large scale force acting irresistibly on the small scale of the local (a directional process where 'larger' equals 'more powerful'). This not only reduces its explanatory value, but constrains the emergence of an absolutely new relationship between phenomena. Marston et al propose instead a set of non-hierarchical links between 'contemporaneous lives' at 'social sites'. Social sites consist of those 'relatively stable objects and practices that continuously draw each other into relation and resurface in social life' and which interact with other contemporary sites (Marston et al. 2005: 425, 426 with reference to Schatzki).

In Marston et al's flat, non-scalar ontology, everything that happens is viewed in terms of its interactions with the social site, which is the primary place 'where social things happen,

things that are contingent, fragmented and changeable' (Marston et al. 2005: 427). Instead, for example, of reifying 'globalization', the researcher places the social site at the centre and examines the way the discourse of globalization is taken up (institutionalized, modified) at social sites. This dissection of 'globalization' in terms of what it means at a social site, has the potential to open up 'a whole new world of political possibilities' (Marston et al. 2005: 427) beyond the 'inevitable' and 'irresistible' effects of global processes.

This refocusing on a social site as the place where 'things happen', is similar to Anna Tsing's reframing of the relationship between the (non-Western) local and the global as a two-way interaction at the margins, which changes both: 'explorations of "cultural imperialism" and "globalization" continue to downplay the creative agency of non-European-origin peoples' (Tsing 1994: 283). Similarly, Judith Butler notes that the interactions between the dominant and the marginalized do not always operate in accordance with the normal directional lines of influence from powerful to less powerful. She uses the example of vilifying language which may be taken up by the vilified group and given a new meaning, in turn producing change in the dominant or mainstream group: 'The word that wounds becomes an instrument of resistance in the redeployment that destroys the prior territory of its operation' (Butler 1997: 163).

A focus on social sites as the place 'where social things happen' contrasts not only with scaled hierarchies of events but also with march-of-progress historical narrative. In the discussion in Chapter 2 about the relationship between history and life stories, the life of an individual subject was proposed, in line with Bakhtin's work on Rabelais, as the 'materialization' of the past, and the life story as a way of seeing the otherwise invisible 'detritus' of history. The experience of those for whom the past unfolded at a social site, replete with hesitations, false starts – 'sentences half-caught, laws enforced prejudicially and broken accidentally' (Marston et al. 2005) – is not a part of such narrative histories:

> Anecdotes bear critical eyewitness to the historian's eyewitness. Incorporating
> the trifling, the dirt, the rubbish, they give the lie to history's pretence of clear-
> sightedness (Carter 2004: 175).

The need for an alternative, and ethnographic process, is indicated by Carter's alternative to historical inquiry:

> A process that … was going to capture 'what has happened' needed to be free of a teleological imperative. It didn't have to lead anywhere … [I]t could afford to idle on the spot, finding room for the overlooked, the misheard (Carter 2004: 73, 74)).

The ethnographic process of listening to whatever comes, 'nonidentifiable and unforseeable' (Derrida in Borradori 2003: 128-129), offers a way into the past outside history's ineluctable path to the present, and which might provide clues to those qualities of social-ecological systems not easily captured in a 'decision-making calculus': trust, social networks, social memory, cultural losses (and strengths). Finding out more about these can, as the following discussion shows, reveal what is precarious and what is precious in social-ecological systems.

The special temporal qualities revealed in life stories – the accretiveness of experience and the 'recollective recentness' of particular kinds of events – were discussed in Chapter 3. These are the hidden qualities of the past which only become evident in ethnographic work, where there is time and space to learn about the past as it unfolded to the speaker. They are yet to be incorporated in modelling of SESs, but carry a latent capacity to cause surprise to systems in the future which is discussed in the following section.

HIDDEN QUALITIES OF SOCIAL-ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS

> Forty-five years later, survivors like Susiani are telling their stories about the massacres and mass political detentions that changed the lives of millions.
> …
> As I left her home after interviewing Susiani, she pointed to herself and said, 'Remember what I told you, it's important. I'm still here' (Pohlman 2010).

<div align="center">∞</div>

Hidden qualities 1: The precarious and the precious

Recollection can identify the precarious and the precious in the world described by a social-

ecological system, in particular those conditions of the 'anthroposphere' such as accretive stress or recently won improvements to security or livelihood. These factors are discussed below. The following section will examine the hidden qualities of the 'system as construct' – those assumptions and discourses upon which system descriptions rest and which can be challenged by ethnography.

The accretiveness of an individual's experience in memory and body was explored in the discussion in Chapter 3, including the findings of psychoanalytic research on the impacts of chronic trauma. Turner et al's discussion of 'invisible losses' in indigenous communities (Turner et al. 2008) turns on the idea that accretions of stress in a community reach a point where a further intervention in a community could be 'devastating'.

As individuals form part of social-ecological systems, changes in the system can produce accretive stress in individuals, which in turn may affect the viability of the system. Examples of this exchange can already be seen in farming communities in Australia and elsewhere. In Australia, farming has been identified as a high stress occupation with high rates of suicide[34]:

> … personal vulnerability … in a rural setting, may be heightened by factors such as … previous significant losses and the consequent lessened resilience to further adverse life events (National Rural Health Alliance 2009).

Stress on farmers has recently been compounded by changes to farming practice and regulations (Fraser et al. 2005: 346); these kinds of regulatory changes affecting farmers need therefore to acknowledge cumulative, and often cross-generational stress. Attempts to transform a system because it appears to be 'untenable' in one area, for example its regulatory frameworks, may fail to address the hidden precariousness of farmers' mental health and hence the future viability of the farmers themselves.

Another example of the potential precariousness of agricultural social-ecological systems is the simultaneous introduction of economic reforms and genetically modified crop varieties

---

[34] See for example http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/6065220.stm>.

in India; together, it has been claimed, these have had unanticipated devastating effects on farmers. The number of suicides among farmers rose significantly in the years after the introduction of genetically modified crops which had an unexpectedly high failure rate. Economic reforms which increased farmer debt have exacerbated the financial consequences of failed crops: 'Those who have taken their lives were deep in debt' (Ho 2010).

These examples suggest that individuals' experience can be a hidden source of precariousness in a social-ecological system and may be overlooked in interventions intended to address other more visible issues such as water management or productivity, with unanticipated and potentially devastating consequences.

Apart from the accretive stresses operating on individuals and communities, the phenomenon of recollective recentness discussed in Chapter 3 may also affect the capacity of a social-ecological system to absorb change. Recollective recentness, or the non-chronologically based foregrounding of particular events in consciousness, is often associated with past experiences which threatened survival; however as noted earlier, a similar prominence in recollection is given by the old Acehnese to the advent of irrigation both as the welcomed harbinger of food security and as relief from an insecure past. This recentness is evident not only in the frequent references by the interviewees to irrigation, but to the emotions which accompany it; the comments below express both relief and gratitude:

Bapak D-a (71)

I feel happy now, because comparing to the time before the irrigation was installed, we have more harvest products up to three times or four times than before. I feel quite happy now …

Ibu S-h (65)

Sometime, when we plant the rice, the rain didn't fall, and then the rice field will go dry. What can we do, the rain falls from the sky? But now, because of God's kindness, we have the irrigation and are able to harvest twice a year from the government assistance with the new seed.

Bapak A-d (68)

Furthermore, if we go to the field to plant the rice, the water is there because the new project called irrigation. In the past, we don't have water, when it's dry then it is dry. Today we have irrigation.

Ibu S-p (65)

But thank God, with my rice field, I am able to buy some kitchen supplies like *kareng* (dried small fish), coffee, and sugar. I will sell my harvest to buy these ingredients, I can fulfil my needs by selling the harvest.

Irrigation as a prominent symbol of relief from a much harsher past, has the potential to become a tension in debates about water management regimes in social-ecological systems. In Indonesia generally, greater industrialization, degradation of catchments and expanding populations have led to government initiatives for tighter management of water allocations, to generate 'more income per drop of water' (Khan et al. 2004; Helmi 2005; Irianto et al. 2007). There are likely to be future challenges to the adaptability of Acehnese rural social-ecological systems, including pressure for crop diversification (Bruns et al. 1996), and changed water management structures throughout all regions. It will be important that the processes for such change take account of the 'recentness' of relief from threat (hunger and poverty) – the preciousness and the potential fragility of food security in rural Aceh – as well as the more evident accumulated stresses arising from conflict and natural disaster.

A promising example of intervention in agricultural social-ecological systems in Aceh has been the recent introduction of different rice varieties and changed irrigation systems in rice fields to manage water more effectively, which appears to have increased production and reduced labour (Asian Development Bank 2005). In reducing food shortages, increasing profitability and making rice-growing easier, such an intervention addresses long-term farmer stress on several levels as well as increasing sustainability of water systems.

The recentness of *relief* from hunger and poverty is the obverse of the recollective recentness associated with traumatic events – remembered 'as though they were yesterday'. The impact on social-ecological systems of chronic traumatic experience and its prominence in living memory, is potentially cross-generational. The effect of parental

posttraumatic stress disorder on children, for example, has been researched in the Western context; it includes biochemical impacts *in utero*; parent-to-child emotional projection or neglect; family and community cultures of silence and shame; and transmitted assumptions about the world as a dangerous and cruel place (Yehuda et al. 2001; Weingarten 2004; Yehuda et al. 2005; Seckl et al. 2006). An ethnographic study of cross-generational impacts of conflict and natural disaster in Aceh has yet to be undertaken.

Moreover the prominence in memory of recent privation, and the preciousness of physical or material security, may affect expectations for the future across generations:

> … the attitudes and expectations of older family members continue to have significance in determining family obligations and responsibilities … [O]ur research showed that people continued to carry out parenting roles throughout their lives (Bornat 2001).

Studies of poverty and access to education have indicated that the expectations of one generation for the economic security or education of the next are likely to influence outcomes for the latter (see Bradley et al. 2002; Davis-Kean 2005; Lane 2009). It is evident from my fieldwork interviews with old Acehnese that expectations for future generations are influenced by the 'recentness' and importance of the ending of a prolonged and difficult period. When old Acehnese were asked about their expectations for the next generation, responses varied from negative to positive, and most indicated that the future was out of their hands; however generally expectations were focused on peace and financial security for their children and grandchildren and rarely did they include higher education or wealth. There was nevertheless a concern that children today attend school, something which was denied or only intermittently available to the old people of Aceh:

> Bapak A-d (68)

> They must live better, it's peace now. They didn't experience the hard life, now everything is easier, going to the farm is easy, looking for money is easy.

> Bapak D-a (71)

> …so maybe we have enough food, but not the higher education … to enter

Unsyiah [University of Syiah Kuala], many villagers cannot afford it.

They [the children] go to school. After that they will work in the field of …

construction as a labourer.

Ibu R-h (65)

Of course I remember, let's say, that I have lived in a hard situation, I hope that

… uhm ... my children and my grand children don't suffer the same.

For me, thank God, my children live a happy life, also my grand children.

Ibu S-p (65)

It is so easy to find money now, because the country is peaceful. So, it is okay

for the children and the grandchildren. I think everything will be okay for them.

While government investment and participation rates in higher education are increasing throughout Aceh, this is having less impact among the 'rural poor' (World Bank 2008: 9, 12). Having sufficient *raseuki* [livelihood income], going to school and living free from fear and hunger, appear to be the most important hopes of old Acehnese for the next generations, and, Bornat and others suggest, such expectations are potentially a factor in the participation of children in higher education or professional employment. In one coastal village I visited, the facilitator who performed introductions for the interviews noted: 'many younger people here don't have education, they work as a driver or as a labourer in construction, but not many have full-time jobs. Some become civil employees. It is common for people on the coastline to be jobless and not educated.'[35]

Expectations, framed as they are by an *accretion of experience* and the a-chronologic *recollective recentness* of past events, have potential impacts on future generations and hence on the future adaptability and resilience of social-ecological systems. The influence of cross-generational expectations in areas such as education, livelihood, leadership, cultural and community identity, will be, as Adger's and others' comments suggest

[35] From my notes of discussion immediately after the interviews with older people had been completed in that village.

(Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003a: 165; Turner et al. 2008; Adger et al. 2009), important factors in assessing and sustaining social ecological systems.

However these forces are invisible in most socioeconomic surveys, even where current conditions of social-ecological systems are 'historically contextualized' using trend data. They are invisible for several distinct reasons:

- Both are temporal concepts related to the consciousness of an individual. Accretiveness of experience is registered in an individual's memory and body over time, and recentness is a temporal gradation of events awarded by the 'memorist'; they are aspects of duration as experienced by individuals, and hence collectively by communities, which are not captured by historical narrative or by data trends.

- The kind of investigation which reveals accretions of experience and the temporal gradations of the past, is often ethnographic, one-to-one and story-based, and hence a potentially cross-cultural, labour-intensive and prolonged process beyond the scope of most socio-economic surveys.

- The individuals who have the longest experience of accretiveness, and more 'reminiscence bumps' in memory, are the old. However, as argued in Chapter 1 of this thesis, the voices of the old are often politically and culturally silenced.

However the 'invisible' aspects of the past and their influence on social-ecological systems today and in the future are not confined to those produced by the accretiveness of experience and recollective recentness. The following section examines the implicit political critique of systems which can be found in life stories.

Hidden qualities 2: Assumptions of the system as construct

Critical examination of life stories reveals hidden or unacknowledged anomalies between the experience of a community and the often unchallenged assumptions in discourses which underlie the construction of social-ecological systems, particularly those concerning progress, development, adaptation and resilience. These include socioeconomic assumptions about ageing and the life course in Western theory, for example, which are not congruent with the experience of those in many non-Western countries:

A consideration of the educational and work careers of children in global perspective thus reminds us that the empirically observable life-course patterns of the greater share of the earth's human population are – from childhood onward – quite different from the prevailing Eurocentric notions of either "normal human development," or of an institutionalized life course with sustained periods of schooling and retirement. The structures of relationships and opportunities encountered in much of the world may call into question the scope of applicability of favored concepts (e.g., successful aging or planful competence) and, even, accepted categories (e.g., play/leisure, retirement, volunteerism, long-term care) (Dannefer 2003: 261).

Dannefer's argument that the life styles and longevity of those in the developed world depend on the rapidly cycled and impoverished lives of those in the developing world (Dannefer 2003: 265) suggests that 'managing resilience' in the developed world may, without critical examination, come to depend upon a form of inequitable resilience in the developing world. Holling discusses the 'perverse resilience' of a too rigid system – one which successfully resists all forces for change and allows no innovation – and the 'poverty trap' of low resilience (Holling 2001: 400). The above comments suggest another kind of negative resilience in which a system's repeated 'recovery' in the face of disaster or conflict offers little opportunity for improvement because its relationships with other systems depend on its continued poverty or oppression.

Other policy analysts have addressed aspects of relationships between 'developing' and 'developed' nations which may entrench this kind of asymmetric dependency. The MDG has targeted relief from bilateral debt for indebted poorer countries and from trade restrictions which disadvantage poorer nations (United Nations 2010, Target 8B). Land use and farming practices which have been altered to meet market demands in developed countries can leave farmers in developing countries more vulnerable to fluctuations in pricing and the natural environment (see for example Ho 2010 discussed previously); even avoidance of genetically modified (GM) crop varieties to meet European market preferences has been claimed to entrench economic disadvantage in developing countries (Cohen et al. 2002). The use of cheaper 'off-shore' labour to reduce manufacturing costs in

developed nations has ethical consequences for wages and working conditions in developing countries (for discussion see Arnold et al. 2003; Hartman et al. 2003 and other papers in the same issue). Military interventions by Western powers intended to stabilize a region may have unanticipated economic and political consequences (for discussions see Seybolt 2007; Riedel 2011), as may Western sanctions (Margulies 2007).

The above examples suggest some of the ways in which maintenance of the security and living standards of Western populations may be dependent on continued economic vulnerability, poor working conditions and insecurity in non-Western countries.

Socioeconomic disparities between those in developed and developing nations are measurable by comparing indicators of, for example, family income, national productivity, health, mortality and longevity, and, with more difficulty, comparing less quantitative information on work practices, regulatory frameworks, fiscal management, civil services. However the structural *disparities* revealed by this information only become structural *inequities* when discourses about 'rights' and 'justice' are invoked, which in turn are used to critique the discourses of 'globalization', 'the free market' and 'development' itself. Even in such critical analyses, Gayatri Spivak would argue, there remain anomalies for Western analysts attempting to 'represent the other' within such critiques (Spivak 1988) (discussed in Chapter 2).

The ethical and conceptual complexities of such critiques make them very different from a comparison of socioeconomic indicators. This complexity arises partly because concepts of justice or equity concern *relationships* between individuals or collectives, such as colonization, development, exploitation, dependency, opportunism, aid, partnering. The same relationship may be described one way at one time (as colonialism) and later differently (as exploitation or development). Bankoff notes that in the period from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, 'colonized' regions were depicted as disease-ridden and 'dangerous and life-threatening to Western people'. This idea evolved over the 20th century:

> Post-1945, it was mainly about "development" and Western intervention was
> known as "aid". In the 1990s, it was about "vulnerability" and Western

intervention is known as "relief"… (Bankoff 2001: 27).

The divisiveness of the term 'development', with its construction of different worlds, is noted in Escobar's definition:

> Development is understood here as a particular set of discursive power relations that construct a representation of the Third World. Critical analysis of these relations lays bare the processes by which Latin America and the rest of the Third World have been produced as 'underdeveloped' (Escobar 1995: 219).

These relationships encompass a group of attitudes of one group to another. Linda Smith's 'Decolonizing Methodologies' (1999), Anna Szörényi's and others' work on relationships between refugees and 'asylum' countries (Gelber 2003; Szörényi 2009), Anna Tsing's discussions of 'the global' and 'the local' (1994; 2000) all concern themselves with gaps between Western assumptions about, on the one hand, refugees' understanding of their position and rights, the value of indigenous oral histories, or the agency of local communities within global structures, and, on the other, the actual experience and self-conception of the groups about whom such assumptions are made. Identifying these gaps, as shown in Smith's and Szörényi's writing, reveals tensions in relationships between Western and non-Western populations which have historically manifested themselves in conflict or movements of social struggle (see for example Escobar 1995).

The old Acehnese I interviewed had lived through all of Bankoff's stages in the evolution of relationships between 'developing' and 'developed' nations, beginning with Dutch economic expansion and colonization which resulted in forced labour and the removal of parents from the family home, and a 'head tax' on all agricultural production. However their life stories provide a more complex picture of life under the Dutch, especially in contrast to the period of the Japanese occupation. Many recall the Dutch period as relatively benign, and as a time of new infrastructure and planning:

> Ibu A-h (74)
>
> Yes … The Dutch didn't disturb us, they were just sitting around, building an army post. They didn't relate so much with the villagers. Only, they forced us to pay so-called head tax. They were living among themselves. If we didn't pay

250

the head tax, they would take us to the airport, and took us to the Jawa [Java Island].

…

When the Dutch were here, they just built their base in Banda Aceh, they built up-high houses in Banda Aceh and they didn't disturb the civilians.

Bapak A-y (80+)

In the past, there were water resources in the mountain, but now, there are not. In the past, during the Dutch time, the trees, 2/3 of the trees in the mountain were prohibited [from being] cut, we were allowed to cut 1/3 trees there. In the present, people just cut all the trees.

…

Because the trees can keep the water. In the past, during the Dutch, 1/3 of the trees that grew up to … uhm … down to the mountain feet … cannot be cut.

Bapak I-h (78)

Well, what can I say? My parents are poor people, when my father was 7 months old, his parents also were chased by the Dutch. So my father lived without his father.

…

The road construction was built by hand, not like today. People were dying under the sun, during the Dutch. Everyone was forced to work for the Dutch, if we're not coming, they will chase us and hit us. We have to pay tax for each person, they called it "*peng kepala*" (tax that they should pay for each person), or *peng rodi* (cash for work).

…

The Dutch government had a more reasonable punishment for people whenever they'd made a mistake. They would just take us and punish us without really hurting us.

Bapak S-f (82)

So … our life during the Dutch was very simple. If we wanted cloths, it was

available; if we wanted food, it was also available although it was not much. But it was not too much. Our living situation in that time was that we have to pay what they call as head money, a tax. Each person should pay one rupiah. If you're working, you're entitled to pay 0.5 rupiah. So our life during that time is peaceful. There were no disturbances at all.

These recollections of a relatively peaceful and orderly time, albeit of disempowerment and austerity, contrast with many recollections of later times, from Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945 onwards, when one period of chaos followed another up until 2005. These periods of chaos are evidenced in the 'dissensual' quality of life storytelling (discussed in Chapter 4), which '[embodies] through an aesthetic of suffering … the *unrealisability* , the "not-yet-ness"' (Ganguly 2009: 441) of security and sufficiency in Aceh. The dissensual 'not-yet-ness' quality evident in life stories suggests that Acehnese political narratives of independence (the 30-year GAM-military conflict which ended in 2005) and Islamic pride and leadership (the Darul Islam (DI) movement of the 1950s) are remembered as times of oppression and insecurity by those who lived through them. The following stories from the old Acehnese describe a life of chronic conflict and food and clothing shortages, in which development and freedom appear to have played little part:

Bapak A-d (68)

I went to school after the independence, after the Japanese…
I go to school for five years, after five years, I quit school…
I like going to school, but then, after school, the war has happened again…the occupation has started again, and then we're in the run again, the school is over …
And then continue again [to school], another rebellion has happened, ehm …
Prang Cumbok [Tjumbok War], after that, the war has stopped, and then the DI movement has started.

Ibu A-w (90)

Well, after they [the Japanese] left … for a while, we lived as usual, we started to build our life with our own kind [villagers]. But then other things happened.

Because the foreigners were gone, so we lived amongst each other and things happened amongst civilians, amongst us …

Bapak A-y (80+)

I was also cutting the trees during the Japanese, but not always…after the independence I did it continuously … hm … nothing was good at that time.

Bapak D-a (71)

So, in 1951 to 1953, the DI/TII war was happening. During this DI/TII war, the villagers also lived in difficulties.
… In 1953, I had just entered the fifth grade of elementary school. After that, many of the schools were closed during that DI/TII; many of the teachers were taken by them, and some of the teachers also ran away to Banda Aceh.

Bapak I-s (80)

In that time [during the Darul Islam war], we were suffering too, same like the occupation. We couldn't go anywhere. We didn't know where to buy things, even when we had money, no market…
Many people died in that time.

Ibu R-h (65)

… and then the DI/TII rebellion started. DI started, huh? They ride a sedan car, like this [showing] using *kelewang* [traditional big knife], then the person fell down, with his head off his neck.
… After that ... uh ... I didn't continue school because it was chaos … ehh … chaos and we didn't even have the courage to go by foot. That's why I cannot do anything [*han jeut sapue*: reading and writing ability], it's the chaos, huh?
… comparing to GAM conflict, GAM conflict is worst, rather than the conflict before. In the past … uhm … let's say, the fights happened, we can dig a hole inside the house and hide. But now, we have nowhere to hide.

Ibu S-p (65)

After the war (World War II), we feel the war for around three years, and after that, ehmm ... we feel safe for two years … ehm … no, one year of peace, then the chaos happened again. Three times of war, we feel not good again, we feel not safe going to the field, even our parents, they are chasing after the man – our father, chased by the military.

These sets of story fragments reveal a powerlessness both under the Dutch and during the civil conflicts which succeeded Indonesian independence. They also support analyses of Indonesia as undergoing 'development' under Dutch colonialist policy as far back as 1901 (Booth 1995: 290; Aspinall 2009: 27), and indeed more so than during the latter half of the twentieth century when there has been minimal development investment in Aceh:

People in Aceh … feel marginalised and isolated from the national development process, economically as well as politically … because of the long socio-political conflict (Nazara et al. 2007: 3,4, 21).

Aceh has experienced very low or negative growth rates for most of the past 3 decades, lagging behind Indonesia and North Sumatra in most years. The main reason for this slower growth was the longstanding conflict affecting the province, although structural economic deficiencies also contributed to the economy's poor performance. As a result, Aceh has poverty levels well above those seen in most other regions in Indonesia (World Bank 2008: 8, original emphases removed).

Aid-driven inflation, and continuing concern about future security continue to suppress investment [in Aceh] (Thorburn 2008: 10, 11).

Just as the above stories nuance the narratives of Dutch colonialism and Acehnese independence by describing the world at the site of 'a life', so too do life stories offer a more complex understanding of post-disaster relief. Relief funding from aid agencies in Aceh after the 2004 tsunami has been targeted not only at rehabilitation and reconstruction, but at vulnerability to future events; various mitigation strategies include protective land use planning (see van Noordwijk 2008)), construction of city refuges with floors above inundation level, and re-planning or relocation of entire villages to higher ground.

However for the Acehnese I interviewed, the most evident form of assistance was the construction of new housing. Nevertheless of note in the following stories is the foregrounding of other villagers (and GAM guerilla fighters), as providers of assistance in the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, and a certain vagueness about the sources of organizational assistance:

Bapak A-b (69)

In the mountain, food was kind of difficult. Even when we had a little food, we couldn't eat it. We don't have enough food in that time. Two days and two nights we spent our time in the mountain, food was rare, but there were people came to help and gave us food, I didn't know where it came from. When we moved to SMIK [*Sekolah Menengah Ilmu Kejuruan* or Senior High School for Vocational Science], we started to have food, the assistance started coming.

Ibu A-s (70+)

For one week in the mountain, we haven't received any assistance. But after a week we have the first assistance, but it was not from the government. It was the village initiative, they brought the food supplies from B– [village], and then they share the supplies for each family. After that, much assistance started to come, government and organizations. They provided us with tent, clean water, and food. We lived under the tent for two years my dear.

…

After we moved from the tent, we were provided with a wooden house by Oxfam, we stayed there. And recently they replaced that wooden house with this one.

…

… the [wooden] house is similar like this, but the quality is not good. During the rain fall, the water would leak to the house. Recently this house was built…[by] what are they called? Who built this house?

[daughter replies]

IOM [International Organization for Migration] built this house.

Bapak M-d (72)

And then, the government prohibited us to go back to build the community here in this village. It is forbidden to build a community within two kilometres of the coastal line. It was making us more devastated, we didn't know what to do, we figured out where they would relocate us. We tried to defend this village. Then several people started to go back to the village and built temporary shelters. By the end this village received housing assistance. It is the last village that received housing assistance.

Bapak R-z (84)

People took fish to the mountain, without rice, nothing else, just fish. The rice that we found stuck in the wreckage was mixed with sea sand. After that, in the afternoon, we sat in the open field, then the GAM [Free Aceh Movement] members arrived, they were coming from the mountain side, and bring sugar, rice, and other stock, then we felt relieved and happy.

These stories suggest the importance of community in 'relief' immediately after natural disaster and a perception of 'assistance' as something which 'arrives' rather than something in which the recipients actively participate. The exception was Bapak M-d's community, which refused to have the village built on higher ground. The stories often attribute better living conditions to God ('But life now is better, God provided for us', 'God gave us a lot in the present'). In Ibu A-s' description above of the problems with her first new house, like Mrs Sosro's boredom with her gift in prison (see Chapter 4), can also be seen the refusal to be only a passive recipient of assistance. These understandings of survival at the site of the individual life place assistance in a bigger picture than that provided by official figures on distribution of food or accommodation. This picture supports the findings of HelpAge International Indonesia that 'many NGOs [non-government organisations] are not familiar with the fact that the majority of older people in Aceh are productive members of their communities. As a result, many…NGOs are not targeting older people in their livelihood programmes (Forum Lanjut Usia Kesuma Bangsa (Forum Lansia) 2008).

It was noted above that scalar hierarchies of cause and effect overlook the agency of those

allocated a lower place in the hierarchy. Bankoff argues similarly that insufficient attention has been paid to the way vulnerability and hazard have been 'normalized' within various cultures, through the development of local knowledge, coping practices and decision-making frameworks (30). He suggests that these are features of a culture's adaptability which may be more important for adaptation than assessments of vulnerability and risk (Bankoff 2001: 31). However the critical or 'dissensual' quality of many stories from the old Acehnese suggests that a focus on individual *life stories*, rather than culture, might show that at the site of 'a life' traumatic events and privation accrete and are neither forgotten nor normalized.

Escobar's 1995 critique of 'developmentalism' claims that development is in crisis, through the divisive and homogenizing assumptions it makes, for example, about 'basic needs' (Escobar 1995: 218); new discourses of struggle are emerging to offer potential transformation of societies: discourses of democracy but constructed differently for non-Western settings; discourses of 'difference', 'autonomy', and 'self-determination'; discourses of 'anti-development' in which, Escobar claims, lies the potential for 'more radical transformations of the modern capitalist order and the search for alternative ways of organizing societies and economies, of satisfying needs, of healing and living' (219-220). The kinds of transformations envisaged by Escobar would involve the development of a new set of concepts to describe societies focusing on the needs at Marston et al's 'social site,' rather than hierarchies of global, regional or local forces.

Disparities in socioeconomic indicators between the Western world and the non-Western world can be understood more deeply through examining the relationships between the two; ethnographic research and discourse analysis reveal hidden assumptions, attitudes, expectations and motivations within such relationships. These are not only hidden factors in the future of social-ecological systems, but may challenge the very nature and definition of development, adaptation and transformation.

Listening to life stories is one way of grasping the *contingency* of the past and the present which is not accommodated in historical narrative or theories of cause and effect. Hence for Marston et al, focusing on what happens at the social site opens up new possibilities – a limitless virtual world outside cause and effect, from which myriad potentialities might

materialize in the future ; the relationship between life stories and seeing these potentialities is explored in the following section.

MATERIALIZING THE PAST AND ACTUALIZING THE FUTURE

Marston et al use Giles Deleuze's distinction between the limitless potentialities of the virtual and the ways only some of these materialize as the actual – often repetitiously but sometimes as something completely new (Marston et al. 2005: 422) – random genetic changes in biology, 'accidents' which produce new ways of doing things. Philosopher Elizabeth Grosz critiques the classical conception of 'causality' in which the future is an 'effect' of the present and past, and the contemporary use of statistical projection in which future events are predicted as probabilities, on the grounds that both 'are incapable of envisioning the absolutely new' (1999: 21):

> In seeking an open-ended future, one is … required to … accept the role that
> the accidental, chance, or the undetermined plays in the unfolding of time
> (Grosz 1999: 18).

Actualizing is a kind of *movement* and an act of producing different forms of development and change out of the limitless virtual world – '*divergent paths of development* in different series and directions' (Grosz 1999: 27, my emphasis).

This is a very different process from *realizing possibilities* which are 'the concretization of a pre-existent plan or program; by contrast, the movement of actualization is the opening up of the virtual to what befalls it (Grosz 1999: 27).

Chapter 4 discussed the pragmatic privilege of the present under which history or recollection rewrites the past; the Cumbi 'refresh' the past to produce an orderly path to the present, and the Acehnese Gayo piece together a trajectory which leads to the present. History might also be seen as an actualization in the present of a virtual history, where those contingencies which befall the virtual (the needs and interests of the present, the forensic skill or integrity of the historian, the political influence of various actors in the present, the availability of data and records for example) play as great a role in the written product as 'what happened'.

History has a role to play in recording what has already actualized to those in the past, as do the explanations of scientists and social scientists. However it is *consciousness* which experiences the unfolding of the future as it happens:

> 'Thus the living being essentially has duration; it has duration precisely because it is continuously elaborating what is new and because there is no elaboration without searching, no searching without groping' (Grosz 1999: 15, quoting Bergson).

Danto's 'inside' view (1981: 205), that of the individual to whom events unfold as experience, is the view of the groping consciousness to whom the world is actualizing in a particular way. The same individual may later become the storyteller who represents, or resignifies, this unfolding from the perspective of the present, but it is a story told from the perspective of an 'insider' – one to whose consciousness it unfolded - rather than an observer or researcher.

Life stories, I suggest, are a way of representing an individual's recollection of this unfolding, perhaps most clearly represented in those anecdotes constructed as a 'transfer of experience' to the listener (see Chapter 5). Further, however reconstructed through the process of recollection, the storyteller's life unfolded in particular ways rather than others. As discussed in Chapter 4, focusing on the experience of the individual subject allows us, for example, to disentangle the unique stories of individual refugees from an homogenized refugee experience (see Szörényi 2009), and to focus on the real lives and experiences of individual Dalit in India rather than '*the* Dalit experience' in Indian society; such a focus 'keeps alive the singularity and inevitability of pain even in a "just" world' (Ganguly 2009: 433). There are at least as many actualizations of the virtual world – unfoldings of the actual to consciousness - as there are life stories (and as many interpretations of it as there are episodes of recollection). To 'homogenize' these experiences into a 'cohort experience', or a social history, is to overlook differences in actual experience; in Grosz's terms it is to overlook the many different experiences of duration and unfolding.

A life story is a representation of how things unfolded (actualized) for an individual over a lifetime. Unlike history, a life story can represent the 'groping' of consciousness towards

the future because it is not bound by a narrative which excludes contingency, false starts and hesitations from the path to the present. The old people's stories from Aceh give us glimpses of twenty-four actualizations of the virtual, twenty-four materializations of the world over the period of a lifetime. These 'actualizations' are accretions of experience over time as it unfolded for the storyteller. Understanding the past in this way requires an ethnographic process of listening to life stories:

> Increasingly, it is recognized that oral and life-history narratives, including audiovisual representations, are acceptable ways of articulating both knowledge and experience [in social-ecological systems] (Turner et al. 2008: 8).

Moreover, 'ethnography' is not a methodology restricted in use to developing countries or particular ethnic groups such as the Acehnese. Older people in any country constitute a group with whom an ethnographic approach will provide an understanding of the way the past unfolded to consciousness. Jack Katz has noted that ethnographic research often confines its focus to the 'here and now', an 'artificially bounded fragment of a larger social reality' which excludes the 'there and then' of the past:

> The social reality of any place exists not only as a present for those currently in occupancy but also as a past in the lives of those who have left and as a *future denied* to others who took courses of action that led them elsewhere (Katz 2004: 301, my emphasis).

Katz suggests that ethnographic studies in communities be extended to include the past of those who have left the community, which may reveal, as its obverse, 'hidden meanings of attachment among those who stay' (Katz 2004: 301). In this thesis, ethnographic fieldwork focuses on the past through interviewing the old; like the past of those who have 'left', the past of those who are old illuminates not only a hitherto hidden past, but also many 'futures denied'. This conveying of both the story and its obverse – what failed to happen, was started but never finished – is the 'amplitude' of stories suggested by Benjamin (1936a: 89).

While anecdotes can be 'as factual as a temperature record' (Pauly 1995: 430), Paul Carter suggests that they offer a different way of describing the past which focuses on *duration*

rather than history's eventful moment, and allows space for the 'overlooked or the misheard' to emerge:

> … matters can be characterised *temporally*. Expected appearances, inexplicable disappearances, processes of growth and rates of decay can be intimated (Carter 2004: 85, my emphasis).

Life stories reveal not only what actualized, but *how* it actualized, its contingency and the other possibilities never realized – Katz's 'futures denied': schooling attempted and ended, rice fields unplanted or unharvested during conflict, working lives shortened through ill health and livelihoods abandoned because of conflict.

Studies by neuropsychologists suggest that the same parts of the brain which allow us to recollect the past are also those which enable us to imagine the future (Schacter et al. 2007, 2008; Schacter 2009; Gaesser et al. 2010). As the quote at the beginning of this Chapter suggests, ignoring the past paralyzes us by removing our bearings; even more significantly, he suggests that the ways in which people of the past conducted themselves in the face of the unfolding unknown, for example in meetings between indigenous Australians and white colonialist settlers, reveal other ways in which the world could have proceeded: Katz's 'futures denied', or Grosz's 'futures yet unthought'. The idea of the future unfolding to consciousness captures both the *directionality* or bearing which takes us from the past to the future, and the *contingency* of this bearing.

Transformability of a social-ecological system relies on finding ways of recognizing and utilizing the new: 'to create untried beginnings' (Walker et al. 2004). Grosz provides a way of seeing the new as the limitless potentialities of the virtual which are not yet actualized; moreover actualization as a process manifested to *consciousness*; life stories, with their recollective representation of this process, offer a picture of the actualized past which, in its hesitations, false starts, 'sentences half-caught, laws enforced prejudicially and broken accidentally' (Marston et al. 2005: 423), suggests many other unactualized potentialities – futures denied or 'paths not honoured' (Clarke 2011) – which allow us, in Carter's words, to 'see beyond ourselves'. The site of 'a life' is not only the site of imagination and intentionality, and of the accretiveness of experience in body and memory, but of the

consciousness to which the virtual world actualizes, and fails to actualize, over time.

Stella Clarke (2011), in a recent review of an historical novel, notes the optimism of stories which 'salvage from history's ruins a moment of fragile rapprochement'. Such fiction, she suggests, 'emphasises the tragedy of *paths not honoured or taken*, resisting the descent of the negative view' (Clarke 2011, my emphasis). The 'unhistoric' conversations between a white man and an Aboriginal girl discussed by Paul Carter (2004) (see Chapter 2), is an example of such optimism; it suggests how the world *could have been*, and possibly might still be. However the life stories of Acehnese represent the world as it was, and suggest by its *absence* the path not taken. Freedom of movement without fear, access to education and to livelihood, were denied to many older Acehnese for most of their lifetime; their importance is reflected in their prominence in life stories.

The descriptions of withdrawal from schooling, unsuccessful attempts to grow or buy rice during periods of conflict, livelihoods abandoned because of blindness or ill health, represent the false starts, 'laws enforced prejudicially' which describe both the tragedy of what happened and point to what did not happen.

The recounting of an often painful past carries the implicit critique or dissensual quality which asks the audience to consider the contingencies which befell the past; thus it becomes possible to see other possibilities. Seeing 'beyond ourselves' is, for Grosz, a process of 'groping' towards the new, towards 'an open future not bound directly or strictly to the present' (1999: 25-26). Folke's summary of the role of memory in adaptation cycles of social-ecological systems was noted earlier:

> Memory is the accumulated experience and history of the system, and it
> provides context and sources for renewal, recombination, innovation, novelty
> and self-organization following disturbance (Folke 2006: 259).

Transformability of SESs also requires 'novelty', the introduction of new components in order to 'create a fundamentally new system' (Walker et al. 2004). I have argued above that life stories open up the contingency of the past, and possibilities for the future not offered by historical narrative. They give those who listen an awareness of the contingencies of the past and ask the listener to look outside the narratives and systems

which explain 'historic' or measurable events and render invisible what happened, and what *could* have happened, at the social site and the site of the individual. Understanding this invisible world - the contingent world of 'a life' and the hitherto unexplored world of its futures denied or futures unthought - is as necessary as understanding Turner's invisible losses in the transformation of a social-ecological system.

CONCLUSION

Assessments of adaptability search (ideally) as widely as possible for both social and natural influences on the future; the kinship between adaptation theory and life stories lies in the value of remembering for the adaptation and the future.

A life story is a recollection of how the past actualized to the storyteller; listening to and interpreting such stories reveals what happened, and what could have happened, at the site of the storyteller's life. In other ways too, life stories reveal hidden qualities of the past with the power to surprise and redefine the future. Ethnographic understanding is as much a part of adaptability and transformability as measurement and management of biodiversity or access to education.

Like good history, life stories and the people who tell them bridge the gap between the often incomprehensible past and the present (Mink 1987c: 104); along with the lessons of history, new ethnographies can produce new analyses of political and cultural discourse; they can alert us to a precariousness where another intervention could be 'devastating'; they give us our present bearing; and, in showing us the contingency of the past at the site of the individual, point to another world of hitherto invisible possibilities for 'renewal, recombination, innovation, novelty and self-organization' (Folke 2006: 259).

CONCLUSION

'Smoothing over discontinuities implies a dread of gaps opening up in the chain of logic, a fear perhaps of thinking and acting freely. This dread arises because those gaps are imagined as abysses or voids. But they are not: they are simply where the ground is rough, over-tracked, ambiguously delineated, humid or mist-streaked. It is a mistake to step over them without taking notice of what is there' (Paul Carter, Repressed Spaces, The Poetics of Agoraphobia, quoted by Walker 2006: 115).

∞

My concern throughout this doctoral project has been to see whether 'oldness' – a quality increasingly prevalent and yet increasingly devalued today – has a contribution to make to thinking about the present and the future, and in particular about the present and future of social-ecological systems. In one sense, the answer is obvious: if there are old people in a society, then their views and needs, like everyone else's, are relevant to resolving issues such as climate change, water scarcity, land use management and the other social, economic and environmental issues of the day.

However there has also been a call for new kinds of qualitative data to deal with the complex sustainability issues of adaptation and resilience in social-ecological systems. Systems explanations which depended on trend data and assessments of current socio-economic conditions, for example, have been declared inadequate, both in gauging the current resources and trajectories of social-ecological systems, and in enabling the conception of totally new solutions:

It should be stressed that the majority of "human system models" focus on economic efficiency and the economically optimal use of natural resources. Thus the broader issues of human well-being … including such factors as freedom of choice, security, and health, will require a new generation of models (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003a: 165).

[Cultural and symbolic losses] are systematically undervalued and do not enter into the decision making calculus for adaptation responses (Adger et al. 2009: 349).

For other reasons, the knowledge of the past provided by history is incomplete; generally narrative in form, history has traditionally rested on elisions which overlook the 'unhistoric' past and construct a plot which marshals the past into a trajectory leading inevitably to the present. Other potential trajectories, and the contingency of history's trajectory, are invisible.

> … what passes for history today is no longer self-evidently natural or useful. … [T]he coming into existence of different kinds of histories like much of [Paul] Carter's work is asking the question – what might be adequate forms, sounds, dreams, tropes and paradigms of knowledge for the early years of what will not be History's century? (Healy 2006: 208-209).

The work of historians more recently on oral history, and the possibility of multi-vocal and contested historical narratives is challenging this criticism of history's limitations. Nevertheless, life stories stand outside mainstream historical inquiry with its focus on particular periods or sequences of events. Therefore the aim of this project has been to find out whether, outside history, systems and social sciences, there is a *contribution to understanding* social-ecological conditions which might be made by the old; a contribution which is not simply the fact of their citizenship, but rather a source of understanding, through life stories, which is currently overlooked in the increasing dread of ageing and the marginalization – even vilification – of the old.

In the writings of critical gerontologists it is clear that the researcher who considers the old as a 'demographic group' runs the risk of homogenization and the very categorization of people by a single identifier which underlies many of the negative generalizations about the old and ageing. I discovered instead Marston et al's idea of the 'social site' as the place where things actually happen and which, she argues, should be the focus for examining those events or influences elsewhere scaled (and ranked) as 'global', 'regional' and 'local'. This suggested that engaging with the old might involve a commitment to an old person as a 'site' which could be placed at the centre of a consideration of complex sustainability issues:

> [W]hen we downcast our eyes to the 'dirt and rocks', at least we have the place

> – the only place – where social things happen, things that are contingent, fragmented and changeable (Marston et al. 2005: 427).

> [F]ace-to-face interaction … is, after all, a site at which imagination and intentionality are formulated and articulated by individual actors (Dannefer et al. 2008: 102).

In attempting to establish a relationship between, on the one hand, the individual as a valuable site for research on sustainability issues, and on the other hand, the need for different kinds of data in understanding social-ecological systems, I found that theorists of adaptation and resilience use the term 'remembering' to describe the contribution made by the conserved resources of a system to renewal and recovery. It suggested to me that there might be a potential kinship between adaptation theory and ageing through remembering the past, a remembering in which old people, by virtue of age, have a unique expertise. Such remembering is already used, especially by hitherto marginalized groups, to reconstruct the past in order to change the political realities of the present.

A review of theory concerning memory and its relationship with the past suggested that most of this work has been undertaken in the Western world, where recollection in old age is often seen as a way of making sense of the past – constructing a life narrative, in much the same way as historians construct a narrative of the past – in order to give 'meaning' to the life as it was lived and the (generally more detached) perspective now attained. In addition to exploring the potential kinship between systems and individual remembering, I was therefore concerned to add *new material* to a consideration of existing theoretical frameworks, and in particular new material from a non-Western environment and culture. I believe this has tested, and expanded, existing understandings of memory and recollection by offering new memory content (memories of different traumas and privations, different historical events and within a different cultural context), and, integrally related to this content, different memory structures (non-narrative, non-chronologic, less 'I' focused) which challenge the 'meaning-of-life review' or activist 're-writing of history' described by Western theorists of memory, history and the life course.

I have used ideas of 'the material' and materialization propounded by Russian literary

theorist Mikhail Bakhtin and Australian cultural theorist and historian Paul Carter to develop the connection between new ethnographic material and theory. Bakhtin drew attention to Rabelais' focus on the events of everyday life in real time as a counter to grand religious or ideological meta-narratives which ignored or suppressed them; Carter proposes that everyday conversations, sounds, or even smells of the past might reveal a whole range of trajectories not taken which have been overlooked in march-of-progress histories.

> The historical time-sequence is measured by different standards of value, other kinds of events take place in it, it has no interior aspect, no point of view for perceiving it from the inside out.
>
> …
>
> In the process of accommodating … concrete human corporeality, the entire remaining world also takes on new meaning and concrete reality, a new materiality; it enters into a contact with human beings that is no longer symbolic abut material … (Bakhtin 1981: 170, 217).

> Instead of standing high and dry in their appropriate year, matters can be characterised temporally. Expected appearances, inexplicable disappearances, processes of growth and rates of decay can be intimated …
>
> At the other extreme of the temporal scale, notice can be taken of enduring presences to which no date can be assigned, slow transformations that begin or end nowhere in particular but are always present. Smells, say … (Carter 2004: 85).

As a 'site' therefore, the memorist and storyteller has both temporality and place. In examining foundational postmodernist ideas of 'the subject' which suggest that it is a changeable and ephemeral construct, I noted Judith Butler's development of 'the subject' to include the *sedimentation* of social practices, a sedimentation which is visible in the body. I have extended this idea of sedimentation to memory, thus explaining the impacts of past experience in the psychological present as well as the physical present. In focusing on the process of sedimentation in memory and body, I wished to give prominence to the remembering 'subject' as a continuity in which experience is *accretive* and a life story is a representation of this accretion. The idea of *accretion* leaves aside the issue of causality

between earlier and later events, or of a narrative plot which connects experiences; what matters in a life story is that the experiences described, or witnessed, were experienced or witnessed by one individual who thus becomes both the site of the past and its storyteller.

Life stories have temporal qualities which are different from those of history. In my fieldwork, I found them to be frequently non-chronological, non-narrative, and to give prominence to traumatic or life-threatening events which have a kind of 'recollective recentness' unrelated to chronology. Thus, rather than resembling the literary form of a *Bildungsroman*, they are often more akin to the picaresque form: 'a jagged array of nauseating tableaux' (Ganguly 2009: 439).

Moreover life stories, unlike history or causal explanations, tell the listener about the way the past *unfolded to consciousness*, its contingency and the many paths not taken. Understanding this can give the researcher myriad new possibilities for transforming and renewing social-ecological systems.

Life stories also respond to, and act upon, their audience in a way which is different from historical or other explanations of the past. The engagement between the Acehnese speakers of my fieldwork and myself as listener/researcher, and eventually between myself as researcher and other parts of the world, shapes the stories and brings with it ethical responsibilities and emotional impacts different from those of traditional history and science, but akin to those now working in oral history and ethnography. These influences and impacts are as important as the stories themselves in the act of interpreting their contribution to understanding the social-ecological past.

My fieldwork in Aceh revealed a past which is different not only from history but from the past of old people elsewhere, particularly in many Western countries. In contrast with life stories from the West, the life stories of the old Acehnese:

- show that recollection by the old is generally not accompanied by a 'detachment' from the past but rather an ongoing regret or sadness;

- show different priorities in their concern about the future of children/grandchildren, for example meeting basic needs of material security and safety;

- reveal potential precariousness arising from chronic trauma, and the relative recentness of food security and the cessation of conflict;

- reveal unique material conditions, including socioeconomic and environmental conditions, in the post-conflict, post-disaster present;

- show a different importance attached to sources of strength and recovery, such as religious faith and family structures.

I have argued in the last part of this thesis that new ethnographies of life stories can show us the *contingency and accretiveness of the past at the site of the individual*, and present an implicit criticism of current discourse about progress, development and sustainability. Such ethnography opens our eyes to other pasts, hitherto invisible precariousness and new potential trajectories for the future.

As an adjunct to existing ways of assessing social-ecological systems, an ethnography of living memory can set up a new model where those qualities overlooked by histories of particular periods, and existing system indicators, cast a new and critical light upon the system, and point to possibilities not yet contemplated in current models.

In the adaptive cycles described for social-ecological systems, life story recollection is not simply stored material to draw on during recovery and reorganization, but a new window onto the contingencies of the past at the site where imagination and intention have already met and responded to them: the site of the individual's life.

The main burden of this thesis has been that, beyond culture and discourse, history and scientific explanation, lie unique sources of revelation and critique for all of them: the life stories of individuals. Such revelations and critique are richest in life stories of the old, but it is exactly those voices which, in current culture and discourses of ageing, are in danger of being unheard.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbott, T. 2010, 'Immigration, border protection and population fundamentals', paper presented to the *Menzies Research Centre seminar*, Melbourne, 4 May 2010, <http://www.tonyabbott.com.au/Pages/Article.aspx?ID=4080> viewed 26 May 2010.

Adger, W.N., S. Dessai, M. Goulden, M. Hulme, I. Lorenzoni, D.R. Nelson, L.O. Naess, J. Wolf & A. Wreford 2009, 'Are there social limits to adaptation to climate change?', *Climatic Change*, vol. 93, no. 3-4, pp. 335-354.

Alon, N. & H. Omer 2006, *The Psychology of Demonization: Promoting Acceptance and Reducing Conflict*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., Mahwah, NJ.

Anderson, G.F. & P.S. Hussey 1999, *Health and Population Aging: A Multinational Comparison*, The Commonwealth Fund, Johns Hopkins University, viewed 20 May 2010 <http://www.globalaging.org/health/world/hpa.pdf>.

Anderson, K. & D.C. Jack 1991, 'Learning to listen: Interview techniques and analyses' in S.B. Gluck & D. Patai (eds), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, Routledge, New York. pp. 11-26.

Andrews, K. 2001, 2002, *National Strategy for an Ageing Australia: An Older Australia, Challenges and Opportunities for All*, Department of Health and Ageing, viewed 12 June 2008 <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/ageing-ofoa-agepolicy-nsaa-nsaa.htm/$file/nsaabook.pdf>.

Angus, L.E. & J. McLeod (eds) 2004, *The Handbook of Narrative and Psychotherapy: Practice, Theory and Research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA

Argenti-Pillen, A. 2000, 'The discourse on trauma in non-western cultural contexts: Contributions of an ethnographic method' in A.Y. Shalev, R. Yehuda & A.C. McFarlane (eds), *International Handbook of Human Response to Trauma*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York. pp. 87-102.

Arifin, E.N., A. Ananta & T.H. Siagian 2007, 'Demography and politics in the New Aceh', *Masyarakat Indonesia*, vol. 33, no. 1, pp. 9-39.

Armbruster, R., K. Geron & E. Bonacich 1995, 'The assault on California's Latino immigrants: The politics of Proposition 187', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 655-663.

Arnold, D.G. & N.E. Bowie 2003, 'Sweatshops and respect for persons', *Business Ethics Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 221-242.

Asian Development Bank 2005, 'ADB approves technical assistance to Indonesia to assess options for sustainable irrigation: Earthquake and Tsunami Emergency Support Project', *Press Release*, Philippines.

Aspinall, E. 2009, *Islam and Nation: Separatist Rebellion in Aceh, Indonesia*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Attwood, B. 2001, 'Learning about the truth: The stolen generations narrative' in B. Attwood & F. Magowan (eds), *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand*, Bridget Williams Books, Wellington NZ. pp. 183-213.

Australian Centre for Posttraumatic Mental Health 2010, *Trauma and Mental Health: Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*, <http://www.acpmh.unimelb.edu.au/trauma/ptsd.html> viewed 3 September 2010

Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship 2008, 'Fact Sheet 68 - Abolition of temporary protection visas (TPVs) and temporary humanitarian visas (THVs), and the resolution of status (subclass 851) visa', viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.immi.gov.au/media/fact-sheets/68tpv_further.htm>.

Australian Human Rights Commission 2009, *Immigration Detention and Off-shore Processing on Christmas Island*, viewed 27 May 2010 <http://www.hreoc.gov.au/human_rights/immigration/idc2009_xmas_island.html>.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (undated), *Australian Trends in Life Expectancy*, Australian Government, viewed 23 February 2011 <http://www.aihw.gov.au/mortality/life_expectancy/trends.cfm>.

Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship 2008, 'Labor unveils new risk-based detention policy', *Press Release 29 July*, viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2008/ce08072.htm>.

Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship 2010, 'Conflict, insecurity and displacement are key to asylum applications', *Press Release 23 March*, viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.minister.immi.gov.au/media/media-releases/2010/ce10025.htm>.

Baars, J. 1997, 'Concepts of time and narrative temporality in the study of aging', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 283-296.

Bailey, A.J. 2009, 'Population geography: Lifecourse matters', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 407-418.

Bakhtin, M.M. 1981, 'Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel: Notes toward a historical poetics (1937-38, 1973)' in M. Holquist (ed.) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, University of Texas Press, Austin. pp. 84-258. Trans. C. Emerson & M. Holquist

Balke, F. 2002, 'Tristes Tropiques. Systems theory and the literary scene', *Soziale Systeme*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 27-37.

Ball, K. 2000, 'Introduction: Trauma and its institutional destinies', *Cultural Critique*, vol. 46: Trauma and its cultural aftereffects, pp. 1-44.

Bankoff, G. 2001, 'Rendering the world unsafe: 'Vulnerability' as Western discourse', *Disasters*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 19-35.

Barnett, J., S. Dovers, S. Hatfield-Dodds, J. McDonald, R. Nelson, J. Palutikof & S. Waller 2009, *National Climate Change Adaptation Research Plan: Social, Economic and Institutional Dimensions (Consultation Draft November 2009)*, National Climate Change Adaptation Research Facility, Griffith University, Brisbane.

Benjamin, W. 1936a, 'The storyteller: Reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskov' in H. Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations*, Fontana (1992), London. pp. 83-107. Trans. H. Zohn

Benjamin, W. 1936b, 'Theses on the philosophy of history' in H. Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations*, Fontana (1992), London. pp. 245-255. Trans. H. Zohn

Berger, J. 1972, *Ways of Seeing*, British Broadcasting Corporation and Penguin Books, London.

Berger, R.J. & R. Quinney 2004, *Storytelling Sociology: Narrative as Social Inquiry*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO.

Berns, S.S. 2009, '"Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold"', *Griffith Law Review*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 53-81.

Biggs, S. 1999, 'The "blurring" of the lifecourse: Narrative, memory and the question of authenticity', *Journal of Aging and Identity*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 209-221.

Biggs, S. 2008, 'Aging in a critical world: The search for generational intelligence', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 115-119.

Blee, K. 2003, 'Evidence, empathy and ethics: lessons from oral histories of the Klan' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 333-343.

Bochner, A.P. 2001, 'Narrative's virtues', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 131-157.

Booth, A. 1995, 'The state and the economy in Indonesia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' in J. Harriss, J. Hunter & C.M. Lewis (eds), *The New Institutional Economics and Third World Development*, Routledge, London. pp. 283-305.

Booth, P. & C. Taylor 2011, *Sharing the Burden - How the Older Generation Should Suffer Its Share of the Cuts: IEA Discussion Paper No.34*, Institute of Economic Affairs, London, viewed 26 February 2011 <http://www.iea.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/files/Sharing%20the%20burden%20-%20how%20the%20older%20generation%20should%20suffer%20its%20share%20of%20the%20cuts.pdf>.

Bornat, J. 2001, 'Reminiscence and oral history: parallel universes or shared endeavour?', *Ageing and Society*, vol. 21, pp. 219-241.

Bornat, J. 2003, 'Oral history as a social movement: Reminiscence and older people' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 189-205.

Borradori, G. 2003, *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jurgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Bowen, J.R. 1989, 'Narrative form and political incorporation: Changing uses of history in Aceh, Indonesia', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 671-693.

BPS Statistics - Indonesia 2010, *Statistics Indonesia*, <http://www.datastatistik-indonesia.com/component/option,com_tabel/kat,1/task,menu/Itemid,959/ > viewed 29 July 2010

Bradley, R.H. & R.F. Corwyn 2002, 'Socioeconomic status and child development', *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 53, pp. 371-399.

Bruns, B. & Helmi 1996, 'Participatory irrigation management in Indonesia: Lessons from experience and issues for the future: Background paper prepared for the Economic Development Institute, World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations', *Proceedings of the Indonesia National Workshop on Participatory Irrigation Management*, *4-8 November* Vinh City, Nghe An Province, Vietnam, viewed 15 May 2011 <http://www.inpim.org/leftlinks/Documents.htm>.

Burnside, J. 2003, 'Ethics and the outsider', *Res Publica*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 1-6, viewed 1 June 2010 <http://www.cappe.edu.au/docs/pdf/Respublicavol122.pdf>.

Burton, J. 2008, 'Bergson's non-archival theory of memory', *Memory Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 321-339.

Butler, J.P. 1997, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, Routledge, New York.

Bywater, M. 2006, 'Baby boomers: and the illusion of perpetual youth', *New Statesman*, October 30, London, viewed 26 January 2011 <http://www.newstatesman.com/200610300032>.

Cain, L.D. 2003, 'Age-related phenomena: The interplay of the ameliorative and the scientific' in R.A. Settersten (ed.) *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New*

Understandings of Later Life, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. pp. 295-326.

Campbell, L.M., N.J. Gray, E.L. Hazen & J.M. Shackeroff 2009, 'Beyond baselines: Rethinking priorities for ocean conservation', *Ecology and Society*, vol. 14, no. 1, viewed 12 January 2010 <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol14/iss1/art14/>.

Carter, P. 1988, 'Invisible journeys: Exploration and photography in Australia 1839-1889' in P. Foss (ed.) *Island in the Stream: Myths of Place in Australian Culture*, Pluto Press Australia Limited, Leichhardt, Sydney.

Carter, P. 1996, *The Lie of the Land*, Faber and Faber Limited, London.

Carter, P. 2004, *Material Thinking: The Theory and Practice of Creative Research*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.

Carter, P. & C. Anderson 1997, 'Against projects, The *dis/appearance: waiting room* collaboration', *Thresholds*, vol. 14, pp. 7-15, <http://ia331417.us.archive.org/2/items/thresholds141997mass/thresholds141997mass.pdf>.

Caruth, C. 1996, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.

Castan Centre for Human Rights Law (Monash University) 2009, *Submission to Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee: Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Immigration Detention Reform) Bill 2009*, Melbourne.

Castro, C.A. 2008, 'Impact of combat on the mental health and well-being of soldiers and marines: 7 things I think I know', paper presented to the *Conference on Combat Stress: Understanding the Challenges, Preparing for the Return*, Northampton, New Hampshire, 26-28 June, <http://www.smith.edu/ssw/admin/documents/CS_Powerpoints/10%20Things%20I%20Think%20I%20Know%2026JUN08.ppt> viewed 23 September 2010.

Castro, C.A. & D. McGurk 2007, 'The intensity of combat and behavioral health status', *Traumatology*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 6-23.

Checkland, P. 1985, 'From optimising to learning: A development of systems thinking for the 1990s', *Journal of the Operational Research Society*, vol. 36, no. 9, pp. 757-767.

Checkland, P. 1988, 'The case for "holon"', *Systems Practice*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 235-238.

Checkland, P. 1999, *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice*, John Wiley & Sons, West Sussex.

Clark, P.G. 1999, 'Moral economy and the social construction of the crisis in aging and health care: Differing Canadian and U.S. perspectives' in M. Minkler & C.L. Estes (eds), *Critical Gerontology: Perspectives from Political and Moral Economy*, Baywood Publishing Company Inc, New York. pp. 147-167.

Clarke, S. 2011, 'Lessons in life of unknown scholar: Review of Caleb's Crossing by Geraldine Brooks', *The Weekend Australian (Review)*, 16-17 April, Sydney, p. 20.

Cohen, J.L. & R. Paarlberg 2002, 'Explaining restricted approval and availability of GM crops in developing countries', *AgBiotechNet*, vol. 4, viewed 19 January 2011 <http://www.joelcohen.org/pdf/RestrictedApproval.pdf>.

Conway, M.A. & S. Haque 1999, 'Overshadowing the reminiscence bump: Memories of a struggle for independence', *Journal of Adult Development*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 35-44.

Cormier, J.J. 2007, 'Review of Francesca Polletta, *It Was Like a Fever: Storytelling in Protest and Politics* (University of Chicago Press, 2006)', *Canadian Journal of Sociology Online*, < http://www.cjsonline.ca/reviews/fever.html>.

Cresswell, A. 2010, 'The real cost of a long life: An ageing population will be the straw that

breaks the back of health care, and politicians won't address the problem', *The Australian*, January 28, Sydney, p. 11.

Cribb, R. & M. Ford 2010, 'The killings of 1965-66', *Inside Indonesia*, vol. 99, viewed 16 September 2010 <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-99/the-killings-of-1965-66-24011267>.

Crumley, C.L. 2005, 'Remember how to organize: Heterarchy across disciplines' in C.S. Beekman & W.W. Baden (eds), *Nonlinear Models for Archaeology and Anthropology: Continuing the Revolution*, Ashgate Press, Aldershot, UK. pp. 35-50.

Culbertson, R. 1995, 'Embodied memory, transcendence, and telling: Recounting trauma, re-establishing the self', *New Literary History* vol. 26, no. 1: Special Issue: Narratives of Literature, the Arts, and Memory, pp. 169-195, viewed 7 August 2009 <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/new_literary_history/toc/nlh26.1.html>.

Curthoys, A. & J. Docker 2006, 2010, *Is history fiction?*, University of New South Wales Press Ltd, Sydney.

Dannefer, D. 2003, 'Whose life course is it, anyway? Diversity and "linked lives" in global perspective' in R.A. Settersten (ed.) *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. pp. 259-268.

Dannefer, D. 2006, 'Reciprocal co-optation: The relationship of critical theory and social gerontology' in J. Baars, D. Dannefer, C. Phillipson & A. Walker (eds), *Aging, Globalization and Inequality: The New Critical Gerontology*, Baywood Publishing, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. pp. 103-120.

Dannefer, D., P. Stein, R. Siders & R.S. Patterson 2008, 'Is that all there is? The concept of care and the dialectic of critique', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 101-108.

Danto, A.C. 1981, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Das, V. 1995, *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.

Daud, B. & M. Durie 1999, *Achenese-Indonesian-English Thesaurus*, Pacific Linguistics, The Australian National University, Canberra.

Davis-Kean, P.E. 2005, 'The influence of parent education and family income on child achievement: The indirect role of parental expectations and the home environment', *Journal of Family Psychology*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 294-304.

Dempsey, J. 2007, 'Eastern Europe faces generation crisis', *The New York Times*, August 30, New York.

Denzin, N.K. & Y.S. Lincoln 2003, 'Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research' in N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds), *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. pp. 1-45.

Devetak, R. 2004, 'In fear of refugees: the politics of border protection in Australia'', *The International Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 101-109.

Drummond, D. & F. Fong 2010, 'The changing Canadian workplace', *TD Economics: Special Report*, viewed 5 May 2010 <http://www.td.com/economics/special/ff0310_canlab.pdf>.

Edkin, J. 2003, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education 2001, 'Debunking the myths

about asylum seekers', *Just Comment*, September, Sydney, viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.erc.org.au/just_comments/1029891642.shtml>.

Edwards, A. 2003, 'Tampering with refugee protection: The case of Australia', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 192-211.

Ehrenreich, J.H. 2003, 'Understanding PTSD: Forgetting "trauma"', *Journal of Social Issues* vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 15-28.

Ekert-Jaffé, O. 1989, 'Vieillissement et consommation: Quelques résultats tirés des enquêtes françaises sur les budgets des ménages', *Population (French Edition)*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 561-579, viewed 20 January 2008.

Elder, G.H. & M.K. Johnson 2003, 'The life course and aging: Challenges, lessons and new directions' in R.A. Settersten (ed.) *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. pp. 49-81.

England, K.V.L. 1994, 'Getting personal: Reflexivity, positionality, and feminist research', *Professional Geographer*, vol. 46, no. 1, pp. 80-89.

Erikson, E.H. 1986, *Vital Involvement in Old Age*, Norton, New York.

Errington, S. 1979, 'Some comments on style in the meanings of the past' in A. Reid & D. Marr (eds), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, Singapore. pp. 26-42.

Escobar, A. 1995, 'Imagining a post-development era' in J. Crush (ed.) *Power of Development*, Routledge, London. pp. 205-222.

Estes, C. 2008, 'A first generation critic comes of age: Reflections of a critical gerontologist', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 120-131.

Estes, C.L. 1999, 'Critical gerontology and the new political economy of aging' in M. Minkler & C.L. Estes (eds), *Critical Gerontology: Perspectives from Political and Moral Economy*, Baywood Publishing Company Inc, New York. pp. 17-35.

Fakhriati 2009, 'War and peace: An analysis of Acehnese manuscripts about conflict and its solutions in Aceh', paper presented to the *International Conference on Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies II: Civil Conflict and Its Remedies*, Banda Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia, 23-24 February 2009.

Farriss, N.M. 1987, 'Remembering the future, anticipating the past: History, time, and cosmology among the Maya of Yucatan', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 566-593.

Felman, S. & D. Laub 1992, *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History*, Routledge, New York.

Folke, C. 2006, 'Resilience: The emergence of a perspective for social-ecological systems analyses', *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 253-267.

Forum Lanjut Usia Kesuma Bangsa (Forum Lansia) 2008, *Information package*, HelpAge International, Ladong, Aceh Besar.

Fraser, C.E., K.B. Smith, F. Judd, J.S. Humphreys, L.J. Fragar & A. Henderson 2005, 'Farming and mental health problems and mental illness', *International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, vol. 51, no. 4, pp. 340-349.

Freeman, M. 1997a, 'Death, narrative integrity, and the radical challenge of self-understanding: A reading of Tolstoy's *Death of Ivan Ilych*', *Ageing and Society*, vol. 17, pp. 373-398.

Freeman, M. 1997b, 'Why narrative? Hermeneutics, historical understanding, and the significance of stories', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, vol. 7, no. 1-4, pp.

169-176.

Freeman, M. 1998, 'Mythical time, historical time, and the narrative fabric of the self', *Narrative Inquiry*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 27-50.

Freudenheim, M. 2010, 'Despite aging baby boomers, N.I.H. devotes only 11 percent to elderly studies', *The New York Times*, June 29, New York.

Fry, C.L. 2003, 'The life course as a cultural construct' in R.A. Settersten (ed.) *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. pp. 269-294.

Funtowicz, S.O. & J.R. Ravetz 1993, 'Science for the post-normal age', *Futures*, vol. 25, no. 7, pp. 739-755.

Gade, D.W. 2001, 'The languages of foreign fieldwork', *Geographical Review*, vol. 91, no. 1-2, pp. 370-379.

Gaesser, B., D.C. Sacchetti, D.R. Addis & D.I. Schacter 2010, 'Characterizing age-related changes in remembering the past and imagining the future', *Psychology and Aging, Advance online publication. doi: 10.1037/a0021054*.

Gallopín, G.C. 2006, 'Linkages between vulnerability, resilience, and adaptive capacity', *Global Environmental Change*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 293-303.

Ganguly, D. 2009, 'Pain, personhood and the collective: Dalit life narratives', *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 429-442.

Gee, J.P. 1991, 'A linguistic approach to narrative', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 15-39.

Geertz, C. 1966, *Person, Time, and Conduct in Bali: An Essay in Cultural Analysis*, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.

Geertz, C. 1973a, *The interpretation of cultures*, Basic Books, New York.

Geertz, C. 1973b, 'The politics of meaning' in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, Basic Books (e-book), New York. pp. 311-326. Viewed 19 October 2010

Gelber, K. 2003, ' A fair queue? Australian public discourse on refugees and immigration', *Journal of Australian Studies*, vol. 77, pp. 23-30, viewed 22 May 2010 <http://www.api-network.com/main/pdf/scholars/jas77_gelber.pdf>.

George, K.M. 1997, 'Some things that have happened to the sun after September 1965: Politics and the interpretation of an Indonesian painting', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 603-634.

Gibson, D. & R. Griew 2002, 'New models and approaches to care', *Proceedings of the 2020 A Vision for Aged Care in Australia*, Melbourne, The Myer Foundation (paper received by email 23 November 2009).

Global Action on Aging 2002 (1991), *International Plan of Action on Ageing*, Global Action on Aging, Madrid <www.globalaging.org/waa2/documents/international_plan2002.doc> viewed.

Good, B. 2009, personal communication, 18 January 2009, Banda Aceh.

Good, M.-J.D., B. Good, J. Grayman & M. Lakoma. 2007, *A Psychosocial Needs Assessment of Communities in 14 Conflict-Affected Districts in Aceh*, International Organization for Migration, Banda Aceh, Indonesia.

Goodall, H. 2000, 'Fixing the past: Modernity, tradition and memory in rural Australia', *UTS Review*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 20-40.

Goodall, H. 2002, 'Too early yet or not soon enough? Reflections on sharing histories as process', *Australian Historical Studies*, vol. 33, no. 118, pp. 7-24.

Goot, M. 2005, 'Pauline Hanson's One Nation: Extreme right, centre party or extreme left?',

Labour History, vol. 89, pp. 1-18, viewed 20 May 2010 <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lab/89/goot.html>.

Goot, M. & I. Watson 2001, 'One Nation's electoral support: Where does it come from, what makes it different and how does it fit?', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 47, no. 2, pp. 159-191.

Gray, R. 2010, 'The omnivorous writer', *The Weekend Australian Review 10-11 April*, pp. 18-19.

Grayman, J.H., M.-J.D. Good & B.J. Good 2009, 'Conflict nightmares and trauma in Aceh', *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, vol. 33, no. 2, pp. 290-312.

Green, B.L., L.A. Goodman, J.L. Krupnick, C.B. Corcoran, R.M. Petty, P. Stockton & N.M. Stern 2000, 'Outcomes of single versus multiple trauma exposure in a screening sample', *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 271-286.

Gregory, W.J. 1996, 'Discordant pluralism: A new strategy for Critical Systems Thinking', *Systems Practice*, vol. 9, no. 6, pp. 605-625.

Gregory, W.J. 2000, 'Transforming self and society: A "Critical Appreciation" model', *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 475-501.

Grenville, K. 2008, *The Lieutenant*, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne.

Griffiths, P.G. 2006, '*The Making of White Australia: Ruling Class Agendas 1876-1888*', Doctoral thesis, Australian National University, Canberra <http://thesis.anu.edu.au/public/adt-ANU20080101.181655/index.html >.

Grosz, E. 1999, 'Thinking the new: Of futures yet unthought' in E. Grosz (ed.) *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca. pp. 15-28.

Gunderson, L.H. & C.S. Holling (eds) 2002, *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*, Island Press, Washington

Gussow, M. 1999, 'Writer Paul Bowles dies at 88', *The New York Times (Arts) on the web*, New York, <http://www.nytimes.com/library/books/111999obit-p-bowles.html>.

Gutman, Y. 2009, 'Where do we go from here: the pasts, presents and futures of Ground Zero', *Memory Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 55-70.

Hagen, W.W. 1996, 'Before the "Final Solution": Toward a comparative analysis of political anti-semitism in interwar Germany and Poland', *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 68, no. 2, pp. 351-381.

Hall, B. 2010, *How to do Ethnographic Research: A Simplified Guide*, Public Interest Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, viewed 6 August 2010 <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/anthro/anthro/cpiamethods>.

Hall, S. 1996, 'Who needs 'identity'?' in S. Hall & P. du Gay (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage, London. pp. 15-30.

Hartman, L.P., B. Shaw & R. Stevenson 2003, 'Exploring the ethics and economies of global labor standards: A challenge to integrated social contract theory', *Business Ethics Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 2, pp. 193-220.

Harun, J. 2004, '*Bustan Al-Salatin*, "The Garden of Kings": A universal history and *adab* work from seventeenth-century Aceh', *Indonesia and the Malay World*, vol. 32, no. 92, pp. 21-52.

Healy, C. 2006, 'Encounter historian Carter', *Southerly*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 199-209.

Heath, R. 2006, *Please Just F* Off...It's Our Turn Now: Holding Baby Boomers to Account*, Pluto Press, Melbourne.

Heikkinen, R.-L. 2004, 'The experience of ageing and advanced old age: a ten-year follow-

up', *Ageing and Society*, vol. 24, pp. 567-582.

Helmi 2005, 'Moving beyond water provision: Strategic issues related to transition of irrigation management in Indonesia' in G.P. Shivakoti, D.L. Vermillion, W.-F. Lam, E. Ostrom, U. Pradhan & R. Yoder (eds), *Asian Irrigation in Transition: Responding to Challenges*, Sage, New Delhi. pp. 461-472.

HelpAge International 2005, *Older People in Disasters and Humanitarian Crises: Guidelines for Best Practice*, HelpAge International, London<http://www.helpage.org/Resources/Manuals>.

Henriques, J., W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn & V. Walkerdine 1984, *Changing the Subject*, Methuen, London.

Herman, J.L. 1992, 'Complex PTSD: A syndrome in survivors of prolonged and repeated trauma', *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 5, no. 3, pp. 377-391.

Hewer, C.J. & M. Kut 2010, 'Historical legacy, social memory and representations of the past within a Polish community', *Memory Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 18-32.

Hillman, J. 1996, *The Soul's Code: In Search of Character and Calling*, Warner Books, New York.

Hirsch, M. & L. Spitzer 2009, 'The witness in the archive: Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies', *Memory Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 151-170.

Ho, M.-W. 2010, *Farmer suicides and Bt cotton nightmare unfolding in India*, The Permaculture Research Institute of Australia, viewed 31 December 2010 <http://permaculture.org.au/2010/01/26/farmer-suicides-and-bt-cotton-nightmare-unfolding-in-india/>.

Hoey, B.A. 2011, *What is Ethnography?*, Marshall University, Huntington, WV, viewed 30 January 2011 <http://www.brianhoey.com/General%20Site/general_defn-ethnography.htm >.

Holling, C.S. 2001, 'Understanding the complexity of economic, ecological, and social systems', *Ecosystems*, vol. 4, pp. 390-405.

Holling, C.S. & L.H. Gunderson 2002, 'Resilience and adaptive cycles' in L.H. Gunderson & C.S. Holling (eds), *Panarchy: Understanding Transformations in Human and Natural Systems*, Island Press, Washington. pp. 25-62.

Hurgronje, C.S. 1906, *The Achehnese*, trans. A.W.S. O'Sullivan, vol. 1, E J Brill, Leiden.

Hyndman, J. 2001, 'The field as here and now, not there and then', *Geographical Review*, vol. 91, no. 1-2, pp. 262-272.

Inayatullah, S. 1998, 'Causal layered analysis - Poststructuralism as method', *Futures*, vol. 30, no. 8, pp. 815-829.

Inayatullah, S. 2008, 'Six pillars: futures thinking for transforming', *Foresight*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 4-21, <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/10.1108/14636680810855991>.

Irianto, G., S. Huda, I. Amien & H. Manan 2007, 'Integrated approach on sustainability of irrigation scheme', paper presented to the *4th Asian Regional Conference and 10th International Seminar on Participatory Irrigation Management*, Tehran, Iran, 2-5 May.

Janssen, F., A. Peeters, J.P. Mackenbach & A.E. Kunst 2005, 'Relation between trends in late middle age mortality and trends in old age mortality - is there evidence for mortality selection?', *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, vol. 59, no. 9, pp. 775-781.

Johnson, C.L. & B.M. Barer 1997, 'Discourses on self and time' in *Life Beyond 85 Years: The Aura of Survivorship*, Springer Publishing Company, New York. pp. 146-162.

Kaletsky, A. 2010, 'Retirement revolution to shake the world', *The Australian*, 3 June Sydney, p. 11.

Karlsen, E. 2009, 'Migration Amendment (Immigration Detention Reform) Bill 2009', *Australian Parliamentary Library Bills Digest*, vol. 26.

Karvelas, P. 2010, 'Rudd changes tack on boats', *The Australian*, 2 June Sydney, pp. 1, 6.

Katz, J. 2004, 'On the rhetoric and politics of ethnographic methodology', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 595 (September), pp. 280-308, <http://www.aapss.org/uploads/QR_katz.pdf>.

Khan, S., R. Tariq, C. Yuanlai & J. Blackwell 2004, 'Can irrigation be sustainable?', paper presented to the *4th International Crop Science Congress*, Brisbane, 26-27 September 2004, <http://www.cropscience.org.au/icsc2004/symposia/1/7/1399_shahbazkhan.htm> viewed 2 February 2010.

Krygier, M. 2002, 'The demands of decency', paper presented to the *Cranlana Symposium 2020: A Vision for Aged Care in Australia*, 29 July 2002, <http://www.cranlana.org.au/PDF/0000000320.pdf> viewed 12 June 2008.

Labelle, R. 2005, 'Reflections on thirty years of oral history in Canada', *Oral History Forum*, vol. 25, pp. 7-14.

Labov, W. 1997, 'Some further steps in narrative analysis', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, vol. 7, no. 1-4, pp. 395-415.

Labov, W. & J. Waletzky 1997 (1967), 'Narrative analysis: Oral versions of personal experience', *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, vol. 7, no. 1-4, pp. 3-38.

Lane, J. 2009, 'Indigenous participation in university education', *Centre for Independent Studies Issue Analysis No.110*, viewed 19 January 2011 <http://www.cis.org.au/images/stories/issue-analysis/ia110.pdf>.

Larking, E. 2003, 'Please consider', *Res Publica*, vol. 12, no. 2, pp. 7-12, viewed 1 June 2010 <http://www.cappe.edu.au/docs/pdf/Respublicavol122.pdf>.

Latour, B. 2004, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Lawlor, L. & V. Moulard 2010, 'Henri Bergson' in E.N. Zalta (ed.) *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Summer 2010 (21 June 2010) edn, Stanford University, Stanford. Viewed 31 August 2010 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/bergson/>.

Ledbetter, M. 1996, 'Doing violence to the body: An ethic of reading and writing' in M. Ledbetter (ed.) *Victims and the Postmodern Narrative, or, Doing Violence to the Body*, Houndsmill, Basingstoke, Hampshire. pp. 1-21.

Lévi-Strauss, C. 1966 (1962), *The Savage Mind (La Pensée Sauvage)*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London.

Lévi-Strauss, C. 1978, *Myth and Meaning*, Routledge, London.

Lummis, T. 2003, 'Structure and validity in oral evidence' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 273-283.

Maccini, S. & D. Yang 2006, 'Under the weather: Health, schooling, and socioeconomic consequences of early-life rainfall', *SSRN eLibrary*, <http://ssrn.com/paper=885327>.

Maclean, K. 2007, 'Translation in cross-cultural research: an example from Bolivia', *Development in Practice*, vol. 17, no. 6, pp. 784-790.

Maley, P. 2010, 'Coalition to get tough on boatpeople', *The Australian*, 27 May, Sydney, pp. 1, 6.

Maley, P. & P. Taylor 2010, 'Asylum spike bucks world trend: UN report', *The Australian*, 24 March, Sydney, viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/politics/asylum-spike-bucks-world-trend-un-report/story-e6frgczf-1225844501245>.

Malkki, L.H. 1995, *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Manderson, D. 2001, 'The care of strangers', *Res Publica*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 1-4, viewed 1 June 2010 <http://www.cappe.edu.au/docs/pdf/ResPublicavol102.pdf>.

Margulies, P. 2007, 'Laws of unintended consequences: Terrorist financing restrictions and transitions to democracy', *New York International Law Review*, vol. 20, p. 65ff.

Marrouchi, M. 1999, 'Letter to the editor', *London Review of Books*, vol. 21, no. 13, viewed 6 July 2010 <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v21/n13/letters>.

Marston, S., J.P. Jones III & K. Woodward 2005, 'Human geography without scale', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 30, pp. 416-432.

Marston, S.A. 2000, 'The social construction of scale', *Progress in Human Geography*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 219-242.

Massey University School of Visual and Material Culture 2010, *Website for 'Contained Memory Conference 2010', Pupuri Pohewa, 9-11 December 2010*, Massey University, Wellington, viewed 28 February 2011 <http://www.containedmemory.org.nz/ >.

Mathew, P. 2002, 'Australian refugee protection in the wake of the Tampa', *American Journal of International Law*, vol. 96, no. 3, pp. 661-676.

Max-Neef, M. 2005, 'Foundations of transdisciplinarity', *Ecological Economics*, vol. 53, pp. 5-16.

McAllister, I. 2003, 'Border protection, the 2001 Australian election and the Coalition victory', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 445-463.

McCrindle Research 2007, 'Generational warfare', *Snapshot*, viewed 15 April 2010 <http://www.mccrindle.com.au/snapshots/GenerationalWarfare.pdf>.

McDonald, M. 2005, 'Constructing insecurity: Australian security discourse and policy post-2001', *International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 297-320, viewed 22 May 2010 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0047117805055408>.

McFarlane, A. 2004, 'The contribution of epidemiology to the study of traumatic stress', *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, vol. 39, no. 11, pp. 874-882.

McFarlane, A. 2007, 'Stress-related musculoskeletal pain', *Best Practice and Research Clinical Rheumatology*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 549-565.

McFarlane, A.C. 2000, 'On the social denial of trauma and the problem of knowing the past' in A.Y. Shalev, R. Yehuda & A.C. McFarlane (eds), *International Handbook of Human Response to Trauma*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, New York. pp. 11-26.

McLaughlin, S. 2004, 'New knowledge in design: A hermeneutic perspective on design activity and the production of knowledge', *Proceedings of the Futureground: Design Research Society International Conference 2004*, Melbourne, vol. 2, eds J. Redmond, D. Durling & A. de Bono, Monash University Faculty of Art and Design pp. 157-166.

McMichael, A.J., R.E. Woodruff & S. Hales 2006, 'Climate change and human health: present and future risks', *The Lancet*, vol. 367.

McVey, R.T. 1979, 'The enchantment of the revolution: History and action in an Indonesian

communist text' in A. Reid & D. Marr (eds), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, Singapore. pp. 340-358.

Media Adviser to Australian Minister for Immigration and Citizenship 2009, 'Letter to ABC 'Mediawatch' 26 October', viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/0938_dowding.pdf>.

Midgely, G. 1996, 'What is this thing called CST?' in G. Midgely (ed.) *Critical Systems Thinking and Systemic Perspectives on Ethics, Power and Pluralism*, 2003 edn, vol. 4, Sage Publications Ltd, London. pp. 108-122.

Midgely, G., I. Munlo & M. Brown 1996, 'The theory and practice of boundary critique: Developing housing services for older people' in G. Midgely (ed.) *Critical Systems Thinking and Systemic Perspectives on Ethics, Power and Pluralism*, 2003 edn, vol. 4, Sage Publications Ltd, London. pp. 25-43.

Midgley, G. & A.E. Ochoa-Arias 2001, 'Unfolding a theory of systemic intervention', *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, vol. 14, no. 5, pp. 615-649.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003a, 'Analytical approaches' in J. Alcamo & E.M. Bennett (eds), *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment*, Island Press, Washington. Viewed 10 January 2011 <http://www.maweb.org/en/Framework.aspx >.

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2003b, 'Introduction and conceptual framework' in J. Alcamo & E.M. Bennett (eds), *Ecosystems and Human Well-being: A Framework for Assessment*, Island Press, Washington. Viewed 10 January 2011 <http://www.maweb.org/en/Framework.aspx >.

Mingers, J.C. 2003, 'Towards an appropriate social theory for applied systems thinking: Critical Theory and Soft Systems Methodology' in G. Midgely (ed.) *Systems Thinking*, vol. 4, Sage Publications, London. pp. 1-13.

Mink, L.O. 1966, 'The autonomy of historical understanding' in W.H. Dray (ed.) *Philosophical Analysis and History*, Harper and Row, New York. pp. 160-192.

Mink, L.O. 1987a, 'The divergence of history and sociology' in B. Fay, E.O. Golob & R.T. Vann (eds), *Historical Understanding*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. pp. 163-181.

Mink, L.O. 1987b, 'Narrative form as a cognitive instrument' in B. Fay, E.O. Golob & R.T. Vann (eds), *Historical Understanding*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. pp. 182-203.

Mink, L.O. 1987c, 'On the writing and rewriting of history' in B. Fay, E.O. Golob & R.T. Vann (eds), *Historical Understanding*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. pp. 89-105.

Mink, L.O. 1987d, 'Phenomenology and historical understanding' in B. Fay, E.O. Golob & R.T. Vann (eds), *Historical Understanding*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY. pp. 106-117.

Minkler, M. 1992, 'Generational equity or interdependence' in E.P. Stanford & F.M. Torres-Gil (eds), *Diversity: New Approaches to Ethnic Minority Aging*, Baywood Publishing Company, Amityville, N.Y. pp. 65-71.

Minkler, M. & M.B. Holstein 2008, 'From civil rights to...civic engagement? Concerns of two older critical gerontologists about a "new social movement" and what it portends', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, pp. 196-204.

Mitchell, C. 2006, 'Zen and the art of postgraduate studies: Identifying, encouraging and evaluating quality: Carrick Associate Fellowship Nomination Form', unpublished,

Australian Learning and Teaching Council.

Mitchell, C. & J. Willetts 2009, 'Quality criteria for inter- and trans-disciplinary doctoral research outcomes', *Australian Learning and Teaching Council: Report on ALTC Fellowship*, <http://www.isf.uts.edu.au/publications/mitchellwilletts2009IDTDPGQualityCriteria.pdf>.

Montag, W. 1995, ''The soul is the prison of the body': Althusser and Foucault, 1970-75', *Yale French Studies*, vol. 88, Depositions: Althusser, Balibar, Macherey, and the labor of reading, pp. 53-77.

Moody, H. 1991, 1992, 'The Meaning of Life in Old Age' in N.S. Jecker (ed.) *Aging and Ethics: Philosophical Problems in Gerontology*, Humana Press, Totowa, NJ. pp. 51-92.

Mrázek, R. 2006, 'Literature or Revolution: Writing Robust in a Postcolonial Metropolis', *Social Text 86*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 103-125.

Muecke, S. 2008, 'A Chance to Hear a Nyigina Song' in *Joe in the Andamans and other fictocritical stories*, Local Consumption Publications, Sydney.

Mughan, A., C. Bean & I. McAllister 2003, 'Economic globalization, job insecurity and the populist reaction', *Electoral Studies*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 617-633.

National Rural Health Alliance 2009, *Suicide in rural Australia (Factsheet 14)*, Canberra, viewed 31 December 2010 <http://nrha.ruralhealth.org.au/cms/uploads/factsheets/fact-sheet-14-suicide.pdf>.

Nazara, S. & B.P. Resosudarmo 2007, 'Aceh-Nias reconstruction and rehabilitation: Progress and challenges at the end of 2006', *ADB Institute Discussion Paper No.70*, viewed 13 February 2010 <http://adbi.adb.org/discussion-paper/2007/06/29/2288.acehnias.reconstruction.rehabilitation/aceh.and.nias.before.the.disasters/>.

Neill, R. 2010, 'The real thing', *The Weekend Australian Review 9-10 January*, Sydney, pp. 4-5.

Nicolescu, B. 1998, 'The Transdisciplinary Evolution of the University - Condition for Sustainable Development', *Bulletin Interactif du Centre International de Recherches et Etudes transdisciplinaires*, vol. 12, viewed 29 March 2008 <http://nicol.club.fr/ciret/bulletin/b12/b12c8.htm>.

Norberg-Schulz, C. 1980, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, Rizzoli International Publications Inc, USA.

Notopoulos, J.A. 1938, 'Mnemosyne in Oral Literature', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, vol. 69, pp. 465-493.

Noveria, M. 2006, 'Challenges of Population Ageing in Indonesia', paper presented to the *Conference on 'Impact of ageing: A common challenge for Europe and Asia'*, Vienna, 7-9 June 2006.

NSW Department of Ageing Disability and Home Care 2010, 'Don't dis me with that language - The disability language A-Z guide', viewed 5 May 2010 <http://www.northcott.com.au/uploaded/File/The%20Disability%20Language%20A-Z%20Guide.pdf>.

Nussbaum, M.C. 1995, 2004, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life*, Beacon Press, Boston.

NYU School of Law: Centre for Religion and Media 2007, *Conference Program: Signs of crisis: Religious conflict, human rights and the new documentary film in Southern*

Asia, 17-20 May, NYU School of Law, <www.chrgj.org/docs/Signs%20of%20Crisis-Final.pdf>.

O'Connor, T. & H.Y. Wong 2006, 'Emergent properties' in E.N. Zalta (ed.) *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2009 Edition)*, Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA. Viewed 16 May 2011 <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/properties-emergent/>.

O'Neill, B. 2010, 'Longevity is a triumph, not a problem', *The Weekend Australian*, January 30-31, Sydney, p. 14.

Palmer, J., T. Smith, J. Willetts & C. Mitchell 2007, 'Creativity, ethics and transformation: key factors in a transdisciplinary application of systems methodology to resolving wicked problems in sustainability', *Proceedings of the Systemic development: local solutions in a global environment: Proceedings of the Australia New Zealand Systems Conference 2007*, Auckland, NZ, ed. J. Sheffield, ISCE Publishing 2009.

Passerini, L. 2003, 'Work ideology and consensus under Italian fascism' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 53-62.

Pasupathi, M. 2006, 'Silk from sow's ears: Collaborative construction of everyday selves in everyday stories' in D. McAdams, R. Josselson & A. Leiblich (eds), *Identity and story: Creating self in narrative*, American Psychological Association, Washington, DC. pp. 129-150.

Paterson, H.M., R.I. Kemp & J.P. Forgas 2009a, 'Co-Witness, Confederates, and Conformity: Effects of Discussion and Delay on Eyewitness Memory', *Psychiatry, Psychology and Law*, vol. 16 (Supplement), pp. S112-S124.

Paterson, H.M., R.I. Kemp & J.R. Ng 2009b, 'Combating co-witness contamination: Attempting to decrease the negative effects of discussion on eyewitness memory', *Applied Cognitive Psychology (online)*, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/acp.1640 >.

Pauly, D. 1995, 'Anecdotes and the shifting baseline syndrome', *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*, vol. 10, no. 10, p. 430.

Pearn, J. 2000, 'Traumatic stress disorders: A classification with implications for prevention and management', *Military Medicine*, vol. 165, no. 6, pp. 434-440.

Peyser, E.C. 2002, ''Pacific Solution'? The Sinking Right to Seek Asylum in Australia', *Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 431-460.

Philibert, M. 1974, 'The phenomenological approach to images of aging', *Soundings*, vol. 57, pp. 33-49.

Phillips, J. 2010, 'Asylum seekers and refugees: what are the facts?', *Australian Parliamentary Library Background Note*, viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bn/sp/AsylumFacts.pdf>.

Phillips, J. & H. Spinks 2010, 'Boat arrivals in Australia since 1976', *Australian Parliamentary Library Background Note*, viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/bn/sp/BoatArrivals.htm>.

Philo, C. 2005, 'The Geographies that Wound', *Population, Space and Place*, vol. 11, pp. 441-454.

Pohlman, A. 2010, 'I'm still here', *Inside Indonesia*, vol. 99, viewed 15 April 2011 <http://www.insideindonesia.org/edition-99/im-still-here>.

Popular Memory Group 2003, 'Popular memory: Theory, politics, method' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 75-86.

Portelli, A. 2003, 'What makes oral history different' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 63-74.

Productivity Commission 2005, *Economic Implications of an Ageing Australia: Research*

Report, Productivity Commission, Canberra <http://www.pc.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/69401/ageing.pdf> viewed.

Prosser, D. 2011, 'The charmed lives of Britain's pensioners in an age of austerity', *The Independent (Business)*, 23 February, London, viewed 26 February 2011 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/comment/david-prosser-the-charmed-lives-of-britains-pensioners-inan-age-of-austerity-2222766.html>.

Quadagno, J. 1989, 'Generational equity and the politics of the welfare state', *Politics and Society*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 353-376.

Quantz, R.A. 2008, 'Leadership, culture, and democracy: Rethinking systems' in D. Carlson & C.P. Gause (eds), *Keeping the promise: Essays on leadership, democracy, and education*, Peter Lang Publishing, New York. pp. 45-60.

Ramadier, T. 2004, 'Transdisciplinarity and its challenges: the case of urban studies', *Futures*, vol. 36, pp. 423-439.

Rappaport, J. 1994, *Cumbe reborn: an Andean ethnography of history*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Refugee Council of Australia 2010a, 'Current Issues: February 2010', viewed 28 May 2010 <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/current/index.html#feller>.

Refugee Council of Australia 2010b, *Economic, Civic and Social Contributions of Refugees and Humanitarian Entrants: A Literature Review*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Reid, A. 1979a, *The Blood of the People : Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, New York.

Reid, A. 1979b, 'The nationalist quest for an Indonesian past' in A. Reid & D. Marr (eds), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, Singapore. pp. 281-298.

Reid, A. 2005, 'Remembering and forgetting war and revolution' in M.S. Zurbuchen (ed.) *Beginning to remember: The past in the Indonesian present*, University of Washington Press, Seattle. pp. 168-194.

Reid, A. & A. Arif 1970-71 (1946), 'The affair of the Tjumbok traitors', *Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs*, vol. 4/5, pp. 29-65.

Reid, A. & A. Oki 1986, *The Japanese experience in Indonesia : selected memoirs of 1942-1945*, Ohio University, Center for International Studies, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Athens, Ohio.

Reinhardt, U.E. 2003, 'Does the aging of the population really drive the demand for health care?', *Health Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 6, pp. 27-39, viewed 26 January 2011 <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/22/6/27.full.html>.

Richardson, L. 1990, 'Narrative and Sociology', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, vol. 19, pp. 116-135.

Richardson, L. 2003, 'Poetic representation of interviews' in J.F. Gubrium & J.A. Holstein (eds), *Postmodern interviewing*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. pp. 187-201.

Ricoeur, P. 1984, *Time and Narrative*, trans. K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, vol. 1, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Riedel, B. 2011, *Deadly embrace: Pakistan, America and the future of global jihad*, Brookings Press, Baltimore.

Riessman, C.K. 1993, *Narrative Analysis*, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, California.

Rittel, H.W.J. & M.M. Webber 1973, 'Dilemmas in a general theory of planning', *Policy*

Sciences, vol. 4, pp. 155-169.

Roberts, G. 2006, 'History, theory and the narrative turn in IR', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 703-714.

Sahanaya, W. & A. Tan 2006, *Oxford Study Indonesian Dictionary*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.

Sanderson, W.C. & S. Scherbov 2005, 'Average remaining lifetimes can increase as human populations age', *Nature*, vol. 435, no. 7043, pp. 811-813.

Sangster, J. 2003, 'Telling our stories: Feminist debates and the use of oral history' in R. Perks & A. Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, Routledge, London. pp. 87-100.

Santayana, G. 1906, *The life of reason: or the phases of human progress*, vol. 1/4, Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd, London.

Sayre, N.F. 2009, 'Scale' in N. Castree, D. Demeritt, D. Liverman & B. Rhoads (eds), *A Companion to Environmental Geography*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester.

Schacter, D.L. 2009, 'Constructive memory: Remembering the past to imagine the future', 5th Annual Quinn Memorial Lecture, University of British Columbia, 9 October 2009, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bWd0ipgI8k&feature=player_detailpage> viewed 18 December 2010.

Schacter, D.L., D.R. Addis & R.L. Buckner 2007, 'Remembering the past to imagine the future: the prospective brain', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, vol. 8 (September 2007), pp. 657-661.

Schacter, D.L., D.R. Addis & R.L. Buckner 2008, 'Episodic simulation of future events', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 1124, pp. 39-60.

Scheyvens, R. & D. Storey (eds) 2003a, *Development Fieldwork*, Sage Publications Ltd, London

Scheyvens, R. & D. Storey 2003b, 'Introduction' in R. Scheyvens & D. Storey (eds), *Development Fieldwork*, Sage Publications Ltd, London.

Schön, D.A. 1995, 'The new scholarship requires a new epistemology', *Change*, vol. 27, no. 6, pp. 26-34.

Schooler, J.W. & T.Y. Engstler-Schooler 1990, 'Verbal overshadowing of visual memories: Some things are better left unsaid', *Cognitive Psychology*, vol. 22, pp. 36-71.

Schwanen, T. 2007, 'Matter(s) of interest: Artefacts, spacing and timing ', *Journal of the Swedish Society of Anthropology and Geography*, vol. 89B, no. 1, pp. 9-22.

Scott, S., F. Miller & K. Lloyd 2006, 'Doing Fieldwork in Development Geography: Research Culture and Research Spaces in Vietnam', *Geographical Research*, vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 28-40.

Seabrook, J. 2003, *A World Growing Old*, Pluto Press, London.

Sebald, W.G. 2003, *On the Natural History of Destruction*, trans. A. Bell, Random House, New York.

Seckl, J.R. & M.J. Meaney 2006, 'Glucocorticoid 'programming' and PTSD risk', *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, vol. 1071, Psychobiology of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Decade of Progress, pp. 351-378.

Seremetakis, N. 2004, *On the branches of memory*, Academy of Athens - Hellenic Folklore Research Centre

General Secretariat for the Olympic Games, Hellenic Ministry of Culture, viewed 25 August 2010 <http://www.seremetakis.com/en/odi_elia.htm>.

Settersten, R.A. (ed.) 2003a, *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y.

Settersten, R.A. 2003b, 'Propositions and Controversies in Life-Course Scholarship' in R.A. Setterston (ed.) *Invitation to the Life Course: Toward New Understandings of Later Life*, Baywood Publishing Company, Inc., Amityville, N.Y. pp. 15-45.

Seybolt, T.B. 2007, *Humanitarian Military Intervention: The conditions for success and failure*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Sheehan, P. 2002, *Health costs, innovation and ageing (Working Paper No.9, Pharmaceutical Industry Project)*, Centre for Strategic Economic Studies, Victoria University of Technology, Melbourne.

Siapno, J.A. 1997, '*The Politics of Gender, Islam and Nation-State in Aceh, Indonesia: A Historical Analysis of Power, Co-optation and Resistance*', Doctoral thesis, University of California, Berkeley.

Siegel, J. 1979, 'Epilogue: History in Atjeh today' in *Shadow and Sound: The Historical Thought of a Sumatran People*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago. pp. 267-282.

Siegel, J.T. 1969, *The Rope of God*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Singer, P. & R. Singer 2010, 'The ethics of refugee policy' in J.S. Fishkin & R.E. Goodin (eds), *Population and Political Theory: Philosophy, Politics and Society 8*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester.

Slaughter, R.A. 2006, 'Pathways and Impediments to Social Foresight', *Strategic Foresight Program Monograph Series 2003-2006*, no. 10, pp. 1-37.

Smith, L. 1999, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Zed Books, London.

Smith, M.P. & B. Tarallo 1995, 'Proposition 187: Global trend or local narrative? Explaining anti-immigrant politics in California, Arizona and Texas', *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 664-676.

Solis, J. 2004, 'Narrating and counternarrating illegality as an identity' in C. Daiute & C. Lightfoot (eds), *Narrative analysis: Studying the development of individuals in society*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. pp. 181-199.

Spivak, G.C. 1988, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' in C. Nelson & L. Grossberg (eds), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana Ill. pp. 271-313.

Strauss, A. & J. Corbin 1998, *Qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, Sage Publications, Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Strawson, G. 2004, 'Against narrativity', *Ratio (new series)*, vol. XVII, pp. 428-452.

Street, D. & J.S. Cossman 2006, 'Greatest Generation or Greedy Geezers? Social Spending Preferences and the Elderly', *Social Problems*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 75-96.

Strunk, B.C., P.B. Ginsburg & M.I. Banker 2006, 'The effect of population aging on future hospital demand', *Health Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 141-149, viewed 26 January 2011 <http://content.healthaffairs.org/content/25/3/w141.full.html>.

Symons, E.-K. 2011, 'What happens when the kids are stuck with the bill', *The Weekend Australian*, January 29-30, Sydney, p. 3.

Szörényi, A. 2009, 'Till human voices wake us: Responding to refugee testimony', *Life Writing*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 173-191.

Taylor, E.W. 1998, 'The Theory and Practice of Transformative Learning: A Critical Review', *Information Series No 374*, vol. 2006, no. 27 September, viewed 27 September, 2006 <http://www.cete.org/acve/mp_taylor_01.asp>.

Taylor, E.W. 2001, 'Transformative learning theory: A neurobiological perspective of the role of emotions and unconscious ways of knowing', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 218-236.

Temple, B. & R. Edwards 2002, 'Interpreters/translators and cross-language research: Reflexivity and border crossings', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 1-22.

The Telegraph 2011, 'Pensioners should share pain of spending cuts, says Institute of Economic Affairs', 26 February, London, viewed 26 February 2011.

The Villers Foundation 1987, *On the Other Side of Easy Street: Myths and Facts about the Economics of Old Age*, The Villers Foundation, Washington D.C. viewed.

Thelen, D. 2000, 'Popular uses of history in the United States', *Perspectives: Newsletter of the American Historical Association*, vol. 38, no. 5, pp. 22-25.

Thomas, W. 2004, *What Are Old People For? How Elders Will Save The World*, VanderWyk and Burnham, Massachusetts.

Thomashow, M. 1996, *Ecological Identity: Becoming a Reflective Environmentalist*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Thompson, J. 2001, 'Accepting refugees: What are the limits?', *Res Publica*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 5-7, viewed 1 June 2010 <http://www.cappe.edu.au/docs/pdf/ResPublicavol102.pdf>.

Thompson Klein, J. 2004, 'Prospects for transdisciplinarity', *Futures*, vol. 36, pp. 515-526.

Thorburn, C. 2008, 'Drivers of recovery: Tsunami reconstruction in Aceh, Indonesia, three years on', paper presented to the *International Group for Research and Information on Post-Disaster Reconstruction 4th International i-Rec Conference*, Christchurch, New Zealand, 30 April – 2 May, <http://www.resorgs.org.nz/irec2008/Papers/Thorburn.pdf> viewed 15 February 2010.

Tierney, W.G. 2003, 'Undaunted courage: Life history and the postmodern challenge' in N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. pp. 292-318.

Till, K.E. 2001, 'Returning home and to the field', *Geographical Review*, vol. 91, no. 1-2, pp. 46-56.

Tornstam, L. 1997, 'Gerotranscendence: The contemplative dimension of aging', *Journal of Aging Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 143-154.

Tornstam, L. 2003, 'Gerotranscendence from young old to old old age', *Online publication from The Social Gerontology Group, Uppsala*, viewed 15 September 2008 <http://www.soc.uu.se/research/gerontology/pdf/gtransoldold.pdf>.

Tsing, A. 1999, *Notes on Culture and Natural Resource Management: Working Paper (WP99-4) for Berkeley Workshop on Environmental Politics* Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley, California, viewed 14 January 2010 <http://www.escholarship.org/uc/item/92f9h7ct>.

Tsing, A. 2000, 'Inside the economy of appearances', *Public Culture*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 115-144.

Tsing, A.L. 1994, 'From the margins', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 9, no. 3 (Further Inflections: Toward Ethnographies of the Future), pp. 279-297, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656363>.

Tsing, A.L. & P. Greenough 2003a, 'Introduction' in P. Greenough & A.L. Tsing (eds), *Nature in the Global South*, Duke University Press, Durham and London. pp. 1-23.

Tsing, A.L. & P. Greenough 2003b, 'Preface' in P. Greenough & A.L. Tsing (eds), *Nature in the Global South*, Duke University Press, Durham and London. pp. vii-xii.

Turner, N.J., R. Gregory, C. Brooks, L. Failing & T. Satterfield 2008, 'From invisibility to transparency: Identifying the implications', *Ecology and Society*, vol. 13, no. 2, viewed 14 February 2010 <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss2/art7/>.

UNHCR 1994 (updated 2010), 'The principle of non-refoulement as a norm of customary international law. Response to the questions posed to UNHCR by the Federal Constitutional Court of the Federal Republic of Germany in Cases 2 BvR 1938/93, 2 BvR 1953/93, 2 BvR 1954/93', *Refworld*, viewed 1 June 2010 <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/437b6db64.html >.

UNHCR 2009, '2008 Global Trends: Refugees, asylum-seekers, returnees, internally displaced and stateless persons', viewed 31 May 2010 <http://www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.html>.

United Nations 2010, *We can end poverty: 2015 Millenium Development Goals*, UN Department of Public Information, viewed 10 January 2011 <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>.

United Nations General Assembly 1991, *Principles for Older Persons*, <http://www2.ochr.org/english/law/pdf/olderpersons.pdf>.

United Nations General Assembly 1992, 'Proclamation on Ageing', viewed 7 June 2010 <www.un.org/documents/ga/res/47/a47r005.htm>.

United Nations Programme on Ageing & International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics 2007, *Research Agenda on Ageing for the 21st Century*, United Nations Programme on Ageing & International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics, New York <http://www.un.org/ageing/documents/AgeingResearchAgenda-6.pdf> viewed 12 June 2008.

University of Technology Sydney 2010, *Language matters: Language and disability*, viewed 5 May 2010 <http://www.equity.uts.edu.au/language/matters/ablist.html>.

Van Der Kolk, B.A. & O. Van Der Hart 1995, 'The intrusive past: The flexibility of memory and the engraving of trauma' in C. Caruth (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. pp. 158-182.

van Noordwijk, M. 2008, 'Natural resource management in post-tsunami Aceh - challenges and opportunities', paper presented to the *International Symposium: Land Use after the Tsunami - Supporting Education, Research and Development in the Aceh Region*, Banda Aceh, 4-6 November.

Various Artists Ltd 1986, 'Empiricism in the Desert' in C. Payne, P. McCarthy & K. Brereton (eds), *Australian Mythological Sights, Sites, Cites*, Third Degree Publications, Sydney.

Venn, C. 1984, 'The subject of psychology' in J. Henriques, W. Hollway, C. Urwin, C. Venn & V. Walkerdine (eds), *Changing the Subject*, Methuen, London. pp. 119-152.

Vincent, J.A. 1999, *Politics, Power and Old Age*, Open University Press, Buckingham, Philadelphia.

Walker, B., C.S. Holling, S.R. Carpenter & A. Kinzig 2004, 'Resilience, adaptability and transformability in social-ecological systems', *Ecology and Society*, vol. 9, no. 2 (article 5).

Walker, B.H., J.M. Anderies, A.P. Kinzig & P. Ryan 2006, 'Exploring resilience in social-ecological systems through comparative studies and theory: Introduction to the

special issue', *Ecology and Society*, vol. 11, no. 1, viewed 14 October 2010 <http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss1/art12/>.

Walker, L.M. 2006, '"This Translation Without End", a slowing in fifteen steps', *Southerly*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 103-117.

Wang, G. 1979, 'Introduction' in A. Reid & D. Marr (eds), *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia*, Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd, Singapore. pp. 1-8.

Warburton, J. & M. Gooch 2007, 'Stewardship volunteering by older Australians: The generative response', *Local Environment*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 43-55.

Ward, I. 2002, 'The Tampa, wedge politics, and a lesson for political journalism', *Australian Journalism Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 21-39.

Weingarten, K. 2004, 'Witnessing the effects of political violence in families: Mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of trauma and clinical interventions', *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 45-59, viewed 12 October 2010 <http://www.witnessingproject.org/articles/Weingartencmdb2.pdf>.

Welzer, H. 2010, 'Re-narrations: How pasts change in conversational remembering', *Memory Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 5-17.

Wesley, M. 2002, 'Perspectives on Australian foreign policy, 2001', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 47-63.

Weston, R., L. Qu & G. Soriano 2001, 'The changing shape of Australia's population', *Australian Family Briefing (Australian Institute of Family Studies)*, vol. 10 (September), viewed 4 May 2010 <www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/briefing10.pdf >.

White, M. & P. Glover 2009, 'Australian Maritime Law Update: 2008', *Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 337-366, <https://maritimejournal.murdoch.edu.au/index.php/maritimejournal/article/viewFile/120/154>.

WHO 2008, *Older people in emergencies: considerations for action and policy development/ David Hutton*, World Health Organisation, Department of Ageing and Life Course,
, <http://www.who.int/entity/ageing/publications/Hutton_report_small.pdf>.

Wickson, F., A.L. Carew & A.W. Russell 2006, 'Transdisciplinary research: characteristics, quandaries and quality', *Futures*, vol. 38, pp. 1046-1059.

Wieringa, S. 2002, *Sexual Politics in Indonesia*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire.

Wilber, K. 1995 (2000), *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution*, Shambhala, Boston.

Willheim, E. 2003, 'MV Tampa: The Australian Response', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 159-191.

Williamson, J.B., T.K. McNamara & S.A. Howling 2003, 'Generational Equity, Generational Interdependence, and the Framing of the Debate over Social Security Reform', *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, vol. 30 viewed 21 January 2008 <http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0CYZ/is_3_30/ai_109352146>.

Wittgenstein, L. 1972, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe, Third edn, Basil Blackwell and Mott Ltd, Oxford.

World Bank 2008, 'The impact of the conflict, the tsunami and reconstruction on poverty in Aceh: Aceh Poverty Assessment 2008', viewed 15 February 2010 <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTINDONESIA/Resources/Publication/28001 6-1200376036925/acehpoverty2008_en.pdf>.

Wyschogrod, E. 1998, *An Ethics of Remembering: History, Heterology and the Nameless Others*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Yehuda, R., S.L. Halligan & R. Grossman 2001, 'Childhood trauma and risk for PTSD: Relationship to intergenerational effects of trauma, parental PTSD, and cortisol excretion', *Development and Psychopathology*, vol. 13, pp. 733-753.

Yehuda, R., S. Mulherin Engel, S.R. Brand, J. Seckl, S.M. Marcus & G.S. Berkowitz 2005, 'Transgenerational effects of posttraumatic stress disorder in babies of mothers exposed to the World Trade Center attacks during pregnancy', *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism*, vol. 90, no. 7, pp. 4115-4118.

Zurbuchen, M.S. 2002, 'History, memory, and the "1965 incident" in Indonesia', *Asian Survey*, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 564-581.

Zurbuchen, M.S. 2005, 'Introduction: Historical memory in contemporary Indonesia' in M.S. Zurbuchen (ed.) *Beginning to Remember: The Past in the Indonesian Present*, University of Washington Press, Seattle. pp. 3-32.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: MINDMAP STUDIES 2008-2011

APPENDIX 2: NVIVO SUMMARY REPORTS ON TRANSCRIPT CODING, NODES AND SOURCE CLASSIFICATION

APPENDIX 3 (CD): ACEH FIELDWORK INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS