Lessening Africa’s 'otherness' in the Western media: Towards a culturally responsive journalism

by

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This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia

November 2014
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Helene Maree Thomas
Abstract

Western reportage of the Global South and the related issue of media harm have long been explored and debated. How do we tell stories about people with cultures and backgrounds different from our own? Situated in the realm of ethics, the vexed relationship between Western journalism and non-Western contexts has often been addressed at a theoretical level. This study approaches this sensitive and complex topic from the perspective of journalism practice. Working from a base in Kigali, Rwanda the researcher’s experience as a journalist 'in the field' is drawn upon to reflect upon and analyse the challenges of telling stories about Rwanda.

First, the study exposes dominant news discourses that lead to constructions of ‘otherness’ in reporting the realities of Africa, and other non-Western societies. The study then goes on to explore a way forward for an ethical cross-cultural reportage that represents African subjects in a dignified and responsible manner.

The study blends theoretical explorations with insights gained from a participatory media project in Rwanda, as well as the researcher's own reflexive journalistic practice and presents its findings through a critical reflective analysis and a creative artefact (a radio documentary broadcast on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio National, on 30th March 2014).

Responding to a call by global media ethicists Shakuntala Rao and Herman Wasserman for non-Western Indigenous theories to find a theoretical space among Western media practitioners (2007, 47), two interdependent action research studies were designed to locate and understand African local social practices, and to determine the effect of
applying these to journalism practice. The study found that the media process benefited from respecting non-Western lifeways and values, reducing the potential for harm to the story subjects, and 'Othering' (Spivak 1985).

Upon further examination, the study also found resonance between the culture-specific ethical values identified within the study - reciprocity, respectfulness, responsibility, patience, and hospitality – and the protonorm of human sacredness that Christians and Nordenstreng believe 'binds humans into a common oneness' (2004, 21).

While on the one hand this study shows that there are diverging values between Western journalism practice and the cultural peculiarities in Rwanda, the connections made between the universal and the local have significant implications for the much wider debate that has been gaining momentum amongst media ethics scholars and journalism practitioners about whether it is 'possible to agree on ethical conduct for journalists around the globe’ (Wasserman 2008).

This thesis makes a valuable contribution to the current scholarly discussion around the representation of the Other in the global media by providing an example of a more culturally responsive practice for journalists, and in doing so also advances the debate in global journalism ethics.
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Acknowledgements

At the age of 14 I had an epiphany that would direct the path I took in life. Walking home with my school friends, I stopped in the middle of the footpath announcing, ‘I know what I’m going to be! I’m going to be a journalist!’

I spent most of my school holidays at a local newspaper doing work experience. When I was offered a cadetship at the age of 18 I thought was the luckiest person in the world. But within four years of my journalism career I realised I didn’t quite fit the mould of a news journalist. I always stood on the outside of media-scrums. My quiet timid voice could never compete with the robustness of the other journalists at press conferences. I preferred one-on-one private interviews that were long and drawn-out.

I cannot count how many times my night editor said, ‘beat it up, we haven’t got a front page story.’ The next day I would anxiously wait for the dreaded phone call from disgruntled story subjects. Those early years in my journalism career were fast-paced, unreflective, and in some cases, profoundly unethical.

I found myself back at university by my late-twenties studying what I had been practising for almost a decade. As I sat in the darkened lecture room with my four-year-old daughter beside me drawing pictures in her colouring-in book, I was moved deeply by the admiration my lecturer had for the journalists she was inviting us to learn about. It was in this lecture theatre that I gained a deep insight into the working lives of Svetlana Alexievich, Ryszard Kapuscinski, Joan Didion, John Steinbeck, Veronica Guerin and other inspiring journalists.
Through their work my passion for journalism was reignited. I aspired to forge my own path in journalism. And herein lies the first stages of this current journey.

There are numerous people who I would like to acknowledge for leading the way for me. Firstly, Dr Nicola Goc for designing the course *Journalism: the People’s Witness*. Her impassioned teaching of this course showed me the kind of journalism I wanted to practice. To Dr Elizabeth Tynan who introduced me to radio and the world of sound.

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The person who has been following my path more so than anyone else is my mother, Dianne Evans. She is the one person who has been holding my hand no matter where I am on this planet, praying for my safe return, and at the same time encouraging me to pursue my dreams. She has never let go.

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When I thought I had lost my way, always on the other end of the phone, or through Skype, there was my wise guide through of all this. Without him I could not have even begun this incredible journey in the first place. Whether I was in Rwanda or in Australia he was always by my side. My anam cara, my habibti, my husband, Adams Bisangwa, this PhD is also your PhD.

Other people I would like to pay gratitude to is Dr Martin Mhando, my co-supervisor. By chance we spent more time together in Africa than in Australia. Thank you to Dr Mick Broderick for his final and encouraging comments. The rest of my family for believing in me, particularly my nephew Jake Crisp who never ceased to remind me of how wonderful it was going to be to reach the end.

In Rwanda, it was the ‘true storytellers’ who taught me how to be true to myself as a storyteller. To the courageous and strong women who allowed me into their lives to tell their story. I hope I have never disappointed you. And to navajata, who upon hearing the women’s stories through her own radio made the decision to do something.

Thank you to my Executive Producer at 360 Documentaries, Claudia Taranto, who always believed in my story ideas; to my long-time friend David Kuel who kept up my intake of food and drinks during the final phase; and to all my beautiful friends, thank you for being so patient with me and gracefully accepting my absence at important events. I can now come out and play.

Finally to Rwanda for her warm embrace.

I will never forget.
Presentation of Audio Clips

As this is a production based PhD a CD-Rom has been included with this dissertation. The CD contains 6 audio tracks (the CD is included in the envelope inside the back cover). Guidelines have been given within the thesis as to how and when to listen to these audio pieces.

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Introduction

The problems of representing distant others

I became interested in the global media narratives about Africa because of my work as a freelance radio documentary maker which has involved travelling to the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda to tell stories about 'human life-worlds' (Jackson 2002, 84). I started out as a 'parachute journalist' (parachuting myself to eastern DRC in late 2008 during the deadly conflict between a Rwandan-backed rebel group and the Congolese army), but came to realise that 'fly-in/fly-out' journalism contributed to superficial and, often, incorrect understandings of complex events and issues. Over the past decade, I have built up a portfolio of long-form audio documentaries from the DRC, and more recently from Rwanda.

Over the course of my work, I have come to wonder if it is possible for Western journalists, like myself, to articulate a critical narrative of Africa beyond Westcentrism. As I seek justification for my own practice (McKernan 1996, 4), I am motivated by a desire to improve and develop a personal understanding of my practice as a foreign journalist in Rwanda (Carr and Kemmis 1986, 162), and I am pushed to ask a 'fundamental question': whether or not I ought to be doing what I am doing at all? (Bradbury and Reason 2001, 452).

I was a young teenager when I aspired to be a collector and narrator of the infinite and

inexhaustible stories that never cease to fill our lives. I worked enthusiastically to develop that journalistic curiosity of incessantly searching for, and journeying through storied landscapes\(^2\). I was journeying one of these landscapes when all the beliefs, values and assumptions I had formulated over twenty years of being a journalist unravelled during one brief but significant encounter.

It was June 2010. I was collecting material for a radio documentary which would tell the story of the Twa\(^3\) people, understood to be the first inhabitants of Rwanda, but a people who experienced severe discrimination by the rest of Rwandan society (the Hutu and Tutsi). I had spent time with other Twa communities who lived on the outskirts of Rwanda's capital, Kigali. The woman I was seeking an interview with - I will call her Françoise - lived with her family and other Twa families in an inner-city suburb. Her mud house was situated only a few roads behind modern multi-storey government offices, foreign embassy buildings and luxury hotels. I heard about this woman from a local NGO working on behalf of the Twa communities in Rwanda. Françoise was a pottery artisan.

I approached Françoise in the same way as I had approached other members of the Twa communities, by simply by showing up. My translator introduced me to her and explained the story idea. I had received a warm reception by members of the other communities and I was expecting a similar response. However, I quickly noticed agitation building in the voices of both the woman and my translator. Their raised voices attracted people from neighbouring houses. Within minutes there were around

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\(^2\) Jacobs (1996) argues that journalists see the world through narratives. He calls it an ontological narrativity.

\(^3\) The Twa are also referred to in some cases as Batwa. The latter is a slight variation on how the three social groups that make up Rwanda are referred to in the Kinyarwanda language, for instance, ba-Twa, ba-Hutu and ba-Tutsi. The prefix 'ba-' is plural and 'mu-' is singular. Hence, it is more correct to say or write 'ba-Twa' when speaking of a group and 'mu-Twa' when speaking of an individual. However, when writing the words in English it is correct to simply write Twa, Hutu and Tutsi. Combine the three social groups and the reference becomes banya-Rwanda, meaning Rwandans (Uwimbabazi 2012, 23).
thirty or more people encircling the woman, my translator and myself. I started to feel anxious in the face of the commotion of voices. I was not privy to the conversation owing to my ignorance of the Kinyarwanda language but I could see that my request had touched a sensitive issue.

Sensing the futility of the exchange, I asked my translator to explain to the woman that the story may bring awareness about the situation of the Twa communities and their ongoing struggle with poverty, and may lead to a change in their situation. In response, Françoise pointed to her dilapidated mud house, and told my translator that many mzungu researchers (Swahili word meaning a white person) had come asking for information but the only people to benefit from the exchange were the researchers⁴.

I left this encounter with a profound emotional discomfort in response to my own journalism practice. What I had thought was a curiosity borne of humanitarian impulses was perceived by this woman as exploitative and paternalistic. I began to question the journalistic assumption that I had the right to simply show up, ask the woman to tell me her story, and then tell it on her behalf. For the first time I came face-to-face with my own complicity in Western cultural domination and political hegemony over distant others and their stories. In their mission to document 'human lifeworlds', Western media practitioners demand dialogue and sharing from the Other, but perhaps Françoise was demanding 'humility and trust' and 'lasting loyalty' before sharing any knowledge or story, or an equality to the exchange (Jones, with Jenkins, 2008, 481).

To acknowledge that my 'liberal White desire' to know and understand the Other in the

⁴ According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, the difference between academic research and journalistic research is insignificant: ‘indigenous peoples and their communities do not differentiate scientific or ‘proper’ research from the forms of amateur collecting, journalistic approaches, film making or other ways of ‘taking’ indigenous knowledge that have occurred so casually over the centuries’ (1999, 2).
hope of a 'better, less fragmented world' could resemble a 'narcissistic, colonialist demand' for knowledge of the Other deeply troubled me (Jones, with Jenkins 2008, 480 & 482). According to Adrienne Rich to shift such unequal dynamics requires those with privilege 'to account for marginalising practices, and to uncover the ways in which such privileging allows for participation in or complicitness with maintaining hegemonic relations' (quoted in herising 2005, 134).

I had always thought of my work in Rwanda and eastern Congo as assisting to shift the power to the voiceless, into the 'terrain of the margin-dwellers', but as Jones clearly points out, there was an expectation, or even a demand, that they would 'share what they know' with me (Jones, with Jenkins 2008, 480). Up until this time in my journalism career I had not been self-reflexive about my practice. I had not questioned the assumptions, methods and conventions of journalism that I had so clearly taken for granted. This ethical crisis impelled me to attend to, and to analyse the political and ethical dilemmas of Western journalists telling Africa's stories. It motivated me to pose the question 'what's going on here?' (Raab 2013, 4).

Speaking about the conditions under which media gets made Nick Couldry writes, '...through media we can harm each other, and in the long run harm the fabric of public life' (2013, 53). Such harm occurs through misrepresentation, oversimplification and the absence of certain Others in the media. Numerous studies have shown how Western journalism practice has fallen prey to misrepresentation when representing the non-Western world (Bishara 2013; Franks 2013; Ibelema 2014; Karim 2000; Phillips 2011), dangerous and racist stereotyping (Cottle 2004; Entman & Rojecki 2001; Hall 1997; Jakubowicz et al 1994; Meadows 2001; Morey & Yaqin 2011; Ndangam 2002; Poole & Richardson 2006; Thiong’o, quoted in Dersso 2014; Watney 1989), and reductive
interpretations of complex issues and events (Härtling 2008; Karnik 1998; Mamdani 2010; Pottier 2002). This kind of journalism results in an increased divide between the interests of 'people like us' and distant others, and at the very worst, structural violence (Karnik 1998, 621).

According to Suzanne Franks' analysis of the media coverage of the Ethiopian famine in 1984, it was the way the media portrayed the famine – oversimplifying and depoliticising the disaster – that led to the condition of the sufferers worsening rather than improving, despite the unprecedented humanitarian response the media story generated (2013). Her analysis draws attention to the global media's preference for sensational stories over and above sustained informed coverage of long-term issues, especially in places such as Africa. Further to this, she argues that the media coverage of the famine in Ethiopia left a negative legacy on the way conflicts and disasters on the continent have been reported since.

Such a legacy can be seen in some of the recent coverage in the Western media of the Ebola health crisis in West Africa. A cover story in Newsweek magazine featuring an image of a chimpanzee accompanied with the words, 'A Back Door for Ebola: Smuggled Bushmeat Could Spark a U.S. Epidemic' (Flynn & Scutti 2014), is, according to two media scholars, reminiscent of the colonial discourse from the late 19th Century which constructed binary oppositions between European civilisation and African savagery (Seay & Yi Dionne 2014).

Laura Seay and Kim Yi Dionne argue that the article is a 'classic case of othering' and joins a 'long and ugly tradition of treating Africans as savage animals and the African

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5 I refer to the term distant others in the same way as Roger Silverstone: 'the other who only appears to us within the media' (2002, 762).
continent as a dirty, diseased place to be feared' (ibid)\(^6\).

Niranjan Karnik's study of Rwanda and the media demonstrates the fatal flaws in a journalism that fails to tell the full story and that perpetuates colonialist/racist theories, such as tribalism as cause of violence, and 'dark continent' or 'exoticisation theories' (1998, 611). Her study shows how the media are more than 'objective transmitters of information' and why it is vital to consider the journalistic processes in constructing stories (ibid). The Western media's coverage of the events leading up to the 1994 genocide, as well as during and after, reveals the 'powerful relationships that the news media has with regard to constructing events and influencing their course' (ibid, 612). Karnick's study provides an example of how Western news coverage of Africa can potentially inflict harm on distant others through its reportage:

The media created false or error-ridden stories, intentionally or unintentionally (the former due to planned violence, and the later due to ignorance). In either case, these stories made use of the very markers that we traditionally rely on to make judgments as to who deserves humanitarian assistance... The debates that came forward through the structures of media and government were those that had no answer. Were the Hutu using refugee camps to hide, re-arm and enter into more violence? Should humanitarianism turn a blind eye to these actions, or should they act punitively against the entire refugee population by shutting down all relief operations? Such questions have no answer because they hinge on each individual person's or organisation's moral position. Nevertheless, it is certain that these media-influenced debates had a chilling effect on the goals and actions

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\(^6\) See also Ishmael Beah's article 'The West ignores the stories of Africans in the middle of the Ebola outbreak', which notes the absence of stories that meaningfully explore the impact of the disease on families (2014). There are some examples of stories that have explored this impact, although they are few and far between. These include: ‘Woman saves three relatives from Ebola' reported on CNN online (Cohen 2014); 'Ambulance Work in Liberia Is a Busy and Lonely Business’ reported in The New York Times (Solomon 2014); and 'The Hidden Heroes of Liberia's Ebola Crisis' reported in BuzzFeed (Moore 2014).
of humanitarianism. The costs of inaction in these circumstances can be counted in bodies (Karnik 1998, 619-620).

To acknowledge that news coverage does more than portray situations and events, and potentially shapes them and affects them in different ways, is a warrant to address the distortions and violence that media misrepresentations produce. For Karnik this can only be done by changing the 'very nature of the stories', as well as the 'dynamic relationship of the media with the audience' (ibid, 612).

But two decades after the genocide in Rwanda, the Western media continues to portray African conflicts in a similar way: as a product of inter-tribal frictions. The media coverage of the conflicts in South Sudan and the Central African Republic, and the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, has reignited critical debate on coverage of Africa by the Western media with journalists, scholars and the public airing their views on the contentious matter and deploring the deficiencies of the reportage (Dersso 2014; Hovil 2014; Musa & Yusha'u 2013; Nyabola 2014). Recent articles published online lament the mainstream Western media's coverage of these conflicts, drawing attention to the media's focus on 'ethnic' antagonism instead of key areas of poor governance (Hovil 2014; Nyabola 2014). For example, Nanjala Nyabola notes how the Western media describes the violence in South Sudan as ethnic - Nuer against Dinka - ignoring the multiple complex factors driving violence in such countries and giving the wrong message about the conflict (2014).

Journalists who are aware of the history and politics of a region are much more likely to understand the political context and the complex local issues and produce detailed

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7 See Bella Mody's (2010) work on the constructed nature of 'news' and the ways in which news organisations strategically construct and report foreign events.
analysis, uncovering deeper stories than those Western media practitioners who 'drop' in
to cover the conflict and leave thereafter. According to Johan Pottier, fly-in/fly-out
journalists engaging in what is known as 'parachute journalism' have less time and more
pressure, are more likely to 'uncritically accept' the 'easy-to-grasp' narratives fed to
them by 'elite-oriented sources' who have particular agendas (2002, 4). Having to make
impulsive news judgements, journalists ‘inevitably resort to existing frameworks’ (Bird
& Dardenne 1988, 81) using existing narrative conventions and ‘maps of meaning’
(Hall 1977, 330). Pottier's study of the Western media's coverage of the 1994 genocide
in Rwanda led him to conclude that ‘instant’ journalism led to misleading images and
messages during and after the genocide. It was a situation where ‘some easy-to-grasp
narratives’ regarding the crisis were uncritically accepted:

…narratives so seductively simple that no one new to the region
thought of asking about their ideological underpinnings. Within the
international community these narratives were embraced, actively
constructed, sometimes elaborated on and spread. Most striking about
these narratives was that they had little historical depth (2002, 4).

A more recent study on the coverage of the Boko Haram insurgency in the international
media also has similar insights regarding the consequences of parachute journalism
(Musa & Yusha'u 2013). The authors of the study examined the coverage of CNN and
Al Jazeera English and their use of parachute reporting and the effect this had on
reportage. They found that there was a 'continuous peddling of misinformation, veiled
stereotyping, presupposition, polarization and clear demonstration of poor knowledge of
underlying issues in the conflict' (ibid, 260).

One of the effects of such simplistic and one-dimensional reportage is mediated
constructions of 'otherness' (Hall 1997; Morley & Robbins 1995; Said 1997). Another recent study examining U.S. press coverage of Africa from 2000 to 2012 found that the 'element of otherness' is persistent, leaving sub-Saharan Africa as 'the ultimate “other”' (Ibelema 2014, 173). While Ibelema's study demonstrates that there is a more nuanced coverage of Africa emerging with media coverage of Africa's conflicts less likely to be 'unduly fixated on the ethnic and primordial tendencies', the study shows that the 'dimension of otherness' is still strongly evident and that 'Africa and Africans largely remain a remote “other”' (Ibelema 2014, 198-200).

Mukoma Wa Ngugi (2013) contrasts how Western journalists cover extraordinary violence in their own countries compared to when they report tragedies or suffering in Africa. Ngugi compares such coverage and concludes that humanity is depicted in all its forms when the media cover Western tragedies: 'In the west, tragedy after tragedy, the journalist does not forget the agency of the victims, and their humanity' (2013). He illustrates how during the coverage of the 2010 London riots there was focus on the violence but also stories on 'the heroic street sweepers', and in the 2012 Colorado cinema shootings, there was not only focus on the killer but also on 'brave boyfriends who shielded their girlfriends and died protecting them' (ibid). He concludes that what is missing from media coverage of Africa's tragedies is agency of the victims and their humanity.

In response to the accusations of the failings of Western media\(^8\) in covering Africa,

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\(^8\) When I use the term ‘Western journalism’ I am referring to the Anglo-American model that operates within the paradigm of objective journalism, or what is otherwise often referred to as the liberal democratic model of the media. Having said that it should be noted that there are important and distinct differences in Western journalism practice. Studies have found that journalism practices vary across cultures, even between countries located within the Global North. Some European journalism traditions have more stringent ethical standards compared to those of their Anglo-American counterparts (Hanusch 2009; 2008). There are also different forms of Western journalism that do not necessarily comply with the ‘practice of facticity and balance, as well as normative ideals of detachment and nonpartisanship’ (Wahl-Jorgensen 2013, 306). For example, New Journalism and Public Journalism disregard objectivity and use subjectivity to connect more to audiences (ibid, 308). The more conventional journalistic values
journalists defend themselves and their work arguing that they lack resources, time, and space in which to contextualise and elaborate on the issues at hand (Wrong 2014). But there are some journalists who concede that the coverage is less than adequate because of inconsistent ethical practice. Journalist and media scholar Laura Seay has worked as a correspondent in various African countries, and she is critical of the lower ethical standards applied by Western journalists when covering Africa. She notes that ‘there is a clear double standard for journalistic quality, integrity, and ethics when it comes to reporting on the continent’ (Seay 2012a). Seay draws attention to these double standards citing as an example the occasion when journalist Nicholas Kristoff, writing for the New York Times, identified a 9-year-old Congolese girl who had been gang-raped. Not only did the Times print her real name, but it ran a photograph and a video of her online, even though its policy is to not identify rape victims (ibid).

**Role of new media**

Non-traditional forms of media offer different perspectives on Africa and alternative narratives. The digital media has in many ways democratised the global media space creating multiple filters through which media audiences see one another. Indeed, the enormous information affluence that was once solely enjoyed by Western industrialised countries has spread across the globe bringing many Third World countries out of a state of 'information poverty' (Yadava 1984, xx). However, Ibelema argues that ‘for the most part, news is still what is covered by the major news media outlets such as Associated Press, The New York Times, CNN, the British Broadcasting Corporation and other traditional news media giants' (2014, 204).
Despite the revolution in communication technologies, the global North continues to dominate the worldwide flow of communications, influencing to a large extent what stories are told and how they are told (Wasserman 2014, 54). As Roger Silverstone argues, it has become a ‘taken-for-granted nature of media representation in which we in the West do the defining, and in which you are, and I am not, the other’ (Silverstone 2007, 3). Furthermore, a growth in media outlets does not necessarily equate to narratives that subvert particular stereotypes. Recent studies have shown that new media tend to draw on existing value systems or the same value systems (Soffer 2013). Ibelema predicts that in the short to medium term, the new media 'will not substantially change Africa's image as the other' which points to the critical role journalists continue to play in the creation of specific narratives and images (2014, 205).

Studies on citizen journalism and bloggers reveal that these new journalists also use the same value systems as mainstream journalists. Gada Mahrouse’s study of ‘White/Western activists’ who go into war zones as citizen journalists found that the activists adopt similar reporting/representational practices that ‘reinstate racialized power relations’ and reinforce the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy (2009, 666). Melissa Wall’s analysis of Iraq war weblogs found that the bloggers’ representations of the war were similar to those in mainstream media (2006). Citizen journalism is often equated with ‘interactivity’ and democracy (Barnhurst 2013, 216), but according to Chris Atton, ‘uncritical celebrations’ of new forms of media such as citizen journalism ignore those incidences where its practitioners ‘merely reproduce’ professional journalism’s ‘discursive techniques’ that are problematic (Atton 2013, 137). While there are newly emerging practices and discourses that offer alternative representations, Brunt and Cere argue that the dominant representations in global media continue to draw on ‘repertoires
of restrictive and racially oppressive discourse’ (Brunt and Cere 2011, preface).

The focus of this study

This PhD study homes in on the journalist's mission to document 'human lifeworlds' (Jackson 2002, 84), exploring the challenges, responsibilities, relationships, and processes involved in representing the lives of distant others (Jansen 2011, 3). With the 'dimension of otherness' still strongly evident in Western reportage of Africa, as has been demonstrated above, this PhD study investigates what is required of Western journalists to 'lessen Africa's otherness and perceptual remoteness' in their reportage (Ibelema 2014, 203), and what is required to reduce the potential for harm during the journalistic production process. Thus, it deals specifically with the ethical concepts such as duty of care and the problem of representation.

The debate about Western media representation of Africa has persisted for a long time. Therefore, the problem may benefit from being looked at in a different way. It is often taken for granted that Western media practitioners will use a Western-informed style of journalism when constructing stories about distant others and Western ethical ideologies during these journalistic encounters. This study responds to a call by media ethicists Shakuntala Rao and Herman Wasserman who propose that non-Western Indigenous theories find a theoretical space among Western media professionals:

Aside from using non-Western indigenous theories in non-Western contexts, theories such as ubuntu and ahimsa need to find a theoretical space among Western media professionals, just as integrating elements of social responsibility theory can benefit non-Western media professionals. Such efforts would result in true theoretical syncretism and engagement (2007, 46-47).
Media ethicists often cite Western philosophers and Enlightenment theories when coming up with theories to address media harm. For example, Nick Couldry's approach draws on the work of Paul Ricoeur whose work brings together Aristotelian ethics and Kantian deontology (2013, 51). Likewise, Roger Silverstone (2007) drew heavily on Emmanuel Kant's philosophy on virtue and Jacques Derrida's theory on hospitality to come up with his theory of hospitality as a media obligation. In this study I show how local social practices identified in this study can play an important role in upholding the human dignity of far-away others in media representations. In their forthcoming book, Shelton Gunaratne, Mark Pearson and Sugath Senarath propose borrowing core ethical principles from Buddhist teachings to inform an ethics model for the practice of a 'mindful journalism', which they argue 'offer a moral compass to journalists facing ethical dilemmas in their work' (2015). While this approach has merit and offers a way forward for a more careful, considered and responsible journalism, I suggest that journalists meaningfully engage with the communities they report from and co-construct a practice that is more culturally responsive and less invasive.

This study goes in search of a more inclusive and diverse approach to journalism; a practice that looks to other worldviews and invites an intercultural approach to overcoming the shortfalls of a Western journalism based on Eurocentric or Westcentric thought and practice (Herbert 2005, 34). It presents a case for the Western media professional to combine the ‘universal and the particular’ to stories that are constructed in non-Western contexts (Christians et al 2008).

This PhD study does not endeavour to find a way to give a 'true' or more 'accurate', or even 'authentic' representation of Africa. Used in this context, these words are
problematic. Rather, the study sets out to locate a 'less distanced and more authentic form of journalism' to tell Africa's stories (Harbers 2014, quoted in Broersma & Peters 2014, xiv).

The problem that has been identified situates this PhD study in the area of international or foreign reporting. While it explores the media representations of distant others using the genre of documentary, specifically radio documentary, the study draws on literature that relates to journalism more broadly. This encompasses photo-journalism, news, human interest and travel journalism. It does this because all of these genres mentioned have the 'potential to influence audiences' views of other cultures' (Hanusch 2009, 624), and all involve the media practitioner encountering distant others.

It is also important to note that this author views all journalists as 'storytellers' \(^9\); some draw on literary techniques to tell stories, others rely on the conventional journalistic norms of objectivity, neutrality and detachment. Regardless of what aesthetic techniques or rhetorical strategies they use, journalists who write about distant others have the task of 'decoding' socio-cultural situations (Santos 2004, 394) and play a role as 'cultural intermediators' (Hanusch 2009, 631; see also Orgad 2012), therefore how they go about doing this warrants ongoing critical examination.

**Research aims**

The study has two aims. The first is to identify the problematic elements in the

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\(^9\) This view is not only mine. The Nieman Foundation defines narrative journalism as the combination of the rigour of journalism and the craft of storytelling, but the lines between hard news and soft news are becoming more blurred where narrative journalism or storytelling is 'increasingly embedded in daily journalism' (Thinking About 2004). Mary Lawrence rejects the notion that journalism is simply reporting 'information': 'We’re fooling ourselves if we think we communicate primarily by bursts of information. We live for stories—whether they’re movies or TV shows or plays or poems or even newspaper pieces. We want stories told to us over and over. … They comfort us, they arouse us, they excite us and educate us, and when they touch our hearts we embrace them and keep them with us' (ibid). Likewise, Robert Cole argues that effective journalism is 'journalism that tells stories' (ibid). Peters and Broersma also insist that 'storytelling is ubiquitous at all levels of journalism' (2014, vii).
discursive norms pertaining to Western journalism that lead to hegemonic representations about Africa. The second aim is to explore storytelling methods/techniques that lessen Africa’s 'otherness' and demonstrate greater consideration for the story subjects.

A good deal of attention has been given to the kinds of stories the Western media tells about Africa and the reasons why, but less attention has been given to the 'how'. Taking into consideration the above concerns and challenges regarding the portrayal of Africa in the Western media this thesis borrows the question posed by Breyten Breytenbach, ‘How to write about Africa? Can it be done?’ (Breytenbach 2011, quoted in Alessandrini 2012). It is on this basis that this study seeks to address the following questions:

1. What lessons can be drawn from African local social practices for reducing the potential for media harm and avoiding constructions of 'otherness'?

2. What effect does applying local social practices and respecting ‘Indigenous ways’ have on stories on Africa told by Western journalists (Mudimbe 1988, 169)?

Johan Pottier argues that ‘representation is always a matter of ethics’ (2002, 203), while Tessa Perkins insists that ‘representations are always political’ (2000, 76). This study addresses both the ethics and politics of representing distant others. It attends to, and analyses, the political and ethical dilemmas of Western journalists telling Africa's stories in order to examine what is required of them in order for them to adequately and
ethically tell stories about distant others (Couldry 2013) and 'distant suffering'\(^{10}\) (Boltanski 1999; Chouliaraki 2008, 2010). In particular, the study addresses ethical issues such as the dignity of the media's suffering subject, bearing in mind Wallace Bacon and Dwight Conquergood’s sentiment that ‘Good will and an open heart are not enough when one “seeks to express cultural experiences which are clearly separate from his or her lived world”’ (Bacon 1984, quoted in Conquergood 2013, 70).

Research approach

To address the concerns that have been outlined and to answer the research questions, the PhD study was divided into two parallel and interdependent action research studies, each with its own distinct methodology. The first study focused on research question one: What lessons can be drawn from African local social practices for reducing the potential for media harm and avoiding constructions of ‘otherness’? This involved setting up a participatory media project in Rwanda which had two aims: 1. to create local content from the 'ground up' by giving individuals (with no prior formal training in journalism) the tools and some basic skills to tell their own stories; 2. to observe how the participants in the project approached journalistic storytelling and the localised/culturally informed methods and techniques they employed in their practice.

The second action research study aimed to address research question two: What effect does applying local social practices and respecting ‘Indigenous ways’ have on stories on Africa told by Western journalists (Mudimbe 1988, 169)? This involved an autoethnographic scrutiny of my own practice as I undertook a Western journalism assignment telling the story of serial killing of eighteen Rwandan women sex workers in 2012 and two murders in 2013. This would entail applying the insights from the first

\(^{10}\) Brand and Pinchevski define 'distant suffering' as the 'mediated suffering of individuals and collectives from Third World countries as represented to television audiences in the West' (2013, 117-118).
study to my approach to the story in order to examine the impact on my practice of using locally-based methods and techniques. The first action research study involved participation and collaboration while the second was a self-study in action. The first involved group fieldwork and the second practice-related fieldwork.

The first action research study was dealt with at the level of agency – giving individuals the tools and basic skills to tell their own stories ('ground up' documentary-making through radio). There is immense value in projects that invite and encourage self-representation. Such projects focus on strengthening the capabilities of individuals to tell their stories on their own terms, although Nancy Thumin argues there is always some level of mediation that influences the inspiration, construction, and reading of self-representations, calling into question the democratic ideals of such projects (2012). But the aim of this particular study was not to pass on a fixed journalistic storytelling formula to the participants, along the lines of journalism training programs that 'assume a certain universality of journalism ideology and practice' (Wasserman & de Beer 2009, 433). The aim instead was to absorb the individualised methods and styles that the participants brought to the process, based on their personal, cultural and historical backgrounds (ibid).

The media project was set up in an inner-city slum, a highly populated low-income community area of Rwanda's capital, Kigali to create local content using radio documentary production. Participants were equipped with the tools and basic skills necessary for the production of radio journalism content. The members combined their own knowledge and skills, along with basic journalistic skills, to facilitate their own storytelling. The significance of the study lay in how it

11 In the Kinyarwanda language highly populated low-income communities with many small houses intermingled together are called akajagari (the word literally translated means disorder). A single community housing area is called umudugudu (meaning village) and there is an umudugudu called Akajagari.
engaged marginalised voices in the research process in order to incorporate the insights gleaned from engagement at the grassroots level into a theory of practice.

The second study dealt with the rules, norms and beliefs that enable or constrain my own practice when telling stories from Rwanda (Pettit 2012, 2). Rather than explore these elements from an institutional perspective (as in ownership, control and policy), I examine these factors from the perspective of an individual media practitioner and how they shape the way I portray distant others in my reportage. It looks at the problem 'from the ground up' and examines the role the individual journalist plays in representation (Thompson 2007, 440). This does not mean I rule out or downplay the influence of the institution which commissions my work on this process, for instance, through its priorities and definitions of newsworthiness (Herman & Chomsky 2002). As will be noted later in the thesis, it was suggested that I alter my original story proposal in order to be successful in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's (ABC) story commissioning round.

The reason I apply or favour the individual perspective in this instance is because it presents an opportunity to lay my own practice open to scrutiny, reflection and critique, and ultimately, potential improvement, which is the overall aim of action research (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher 2007, 414). As a practising journalist, and more specifically, a radio documentary-maker working in Rwanda, it allows me to deal specifically with the 'important ethical issues that arise in the process of media production', in particular the interactions between myself as the media producer and the story subjects (Ong 2014, 180. His emphasis). Through my own practice I track this media process and reflect on the interactions during production, the textual strategies used to tell the story, and finally audience responses.
As highlighted earlier, there are scholars who have critically explored representations of Africa in the news media and through other genres. The second study goes beyond the exploration of texts and examines the dynamics between production, representation and reception in a 'real-world' situation (Ahmed 2009, 21). It is for this reason I used a mediation template to examine my own practice (how I portray Rwandans and their stories) and do so within a paradigm of Praxis\(^\text{12}\) (ibid, 27). Often in journalism practice, it is the product (story) that is privileged over process (story gathering). However, this part of the study privileged the processes of news gathering and storytelling by exposing and revealing what goes on behind-the-scenes of reporting and representing the lived experiences of distant others.

By developing two parallel and interdependent action research studies I was able to examine the problem with and alongside others and then apply those insights to my own practice and account for the ways in which I practice as a journalist in a culturally different context. It is a process that reflects the typical action research process, that is 'a 'spiral' of recycling, acting, and evaluating' (Hopkins 1985, quoted in Ahmed 2009, 23).

To put it succinctly, the two action research studies were:

- a grassroots participatory media project to study how Rwandans tell their own stories. This was a two-way education process whereby I passed on basic radio production skills and they educated me in ways that led to adjustments in my own practice.

- a self-study in action where I reflected on my own practice during the production of \(A\)

\(^{12}\) According to Ahmed, Praxis was a term used by Aristotle (384 BV-322 BC) who referred to it as 'the art of acting upon conditions one faces in order to change them' (2009, 27).
According to Reason, collaborative inquiry involves the 'individual practitioner in continually reflecting on their own behaviour-in-action while simultaneously behaving in a fashion which invites other members of one's community to do the same' (1994, 20). As a practitioner-researcher I reflected and engaged with the process and outcome of establishing a grassroots journalism project as well as with the process of making my own radio documentary, thereby deriving new theory in the area of media representation through collaborative community interaction as well as from my own practice in the field.

Methodology

I have outlined the research aims, questions and approach first in order to give an overview of the problem and how I envisage responding to or tackling the problem (that is, through the two action research studies). Each of the studies has its own methodology and these are discussed individually in Part I and Part II of the thesis. It is the overarching methodology of the entire PhD project that I discuss here.

Shawn Wilson's understanding of methodology is that, 'when we talk about methodology, we are talking about how you are going to use your ways of thinking (epistemology) to gain more knowledge about your reality' (2001, 175). This next

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13 Ziyah Santi is a pseudonym I gave myself to protect the identity of the story subjects who were granted anonymity in the radio documentary.
section presents a pathway for this response; a plan which enables the response to proceed.

In many ways, this research is an extension of my practice as a journalist, albeit in a much more intense and scrutinised way. It involved returning to Rwanda as both a journalist and as a researcher. As a result, there was a whole stream of requirements, considerations and processes to grapple with, the most important being the methodology, arguably the most important or 'foundational' element in any piece of academic research (Neuman 1997).

For this study, methodology is broadly defined as the 'planning process' that not only guides the choice of methods but the issues to be studied, who the participants will be, the role of the research in relation to the research participants, and how the research is presented and written (Creswell 2003). In some research, the methodology simply entails the methods of research. The methodology for this study incorporates both theory and method.

According to Ladson-Billings methodologies are based on the researcher's world view (ontology) and what they determine is worth knowing (epistemology):

How one views the world is influenced by what knowledge one possesses, and what knowledge one is capable of possessing is influenced deeply by one’s world view. The conditions under which people live and learn shape both their knowledge and their world views' (2000, 258).

My privileged positionality as a White, middle-class, able-bodied, heterosexual
researcher needs itself to be reflected on and critiqued since it has in so many ways shaped who I am and how I see the world. For this study I situate myself in a part of Africa not only as a researcher but also as a journalist. Both roles carry with them the baggage of the injustices of colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy, and more dangerously, the potential for further dominance in the name of freedom and individualism. Tuhiwai Smith addresses the political aspects of research:

> research is one of the ways in which the underlying code of imperialism and colonialism is both regulated and realized. It is regulated through the formal rules of individual scholarly disciplines and scientific paradigms, and the institutions that support them (including the state) (2001, 8).

There is the danger that my conducting research in Africa could result in another 'conquest' made possible with epistemic privilege (Grosfoguel 2013). However, it is in light of past conquests and 'epistemicides' (the killing of the epistemology-cosmology of the Other) that this research is being undertaken (ibid).

I have borne witness to my own culpability to enact the imperialist forces that like a 'sleeping volcano' can lie dormant until environmental conditions are right for their exposure or activation. I talked about this earlier as being part of the trigger or motivation for this research. The priority then for this research was to use a theoretical framework that addressed these concerns and would ensure that the research was undertaken in a manner that was not only sensitive and responsive to the locale but of benefit, as well as helpful, to those involved in the study. It also had to ensure, more broadly, that the outcomes and the enduring consequences of this research would have

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14 I borrow this metaphor from its use in a radio documentary I produced in 2009 which tells the story of Nyiragongo volcano, an active volcano in Central Africa's Great Rift Valley which sits along the rift with neighbouring 'sleeping' or dormant volcanoes (Thomas 2010).
positive benefits for others, not just for the researcher and the academic community that the researcher represents. In other words, it needed to break with hegemonic research practices that privilege prestige and grand theory and impose barriers between researcher and research 'subjects' (Reason & Rowan 1981, 118-121).

Theoretical framework

To counter the epistemic privilege of the dominant research paradigm and to avoid the exploitative nature of research, an emancipatory framework was set up to guide this research process, thereby challenging the 'gold standard for social science research' which is based on objectivity, neutrality, and distance (Brown & Strega 2005, 8). To challenge the relations of dominance and subordination, this research centres processes of reflexivity, to show rather than hide how the researcher's location 'permeates their inquiry at every level' (ibid, 10). Sandelowski and Barroso explain that reflexivity is the 'ability to reflect inward toward oneself as an inquirer; outward to the cultural, historical, linguistic, political, and other forces that shape everything about inquiry; and, in between researcher and participant to the social interaction they share' (2002, 216). Or put another way, self-reflexivity is 'having an ongoing conversation with your whole self about what you are experiencing as you are experiencing it' (Nagata 2004, 139).

For this reason a self-reflexive personal narrative therefore provides its own thread running through this research, exemplified by the autobiographical narrative above and including excerpts taken from my own fieldwork diary entries (Lincoln 1997). I use this narrative approach to show how research and research writing 'is a practice that is inevitably informed by who we are and how we live our lives' (Kimpson 2005, 74). In this sense it is breaking the scholarly conventions that 'militate against personal and passionate writing' (Ellis and Bochner 2000, 734).
Recent developments in educational theory have legitimatised subjectivity and demonstrated its importance in the learning process within a doctorate (Hanrahan 1999, 402). The boundaries between the personal and the academic have become less rigid in the past decade or more, and it is becoming more common for PhDs to veer away from the traditional scientific model.

A critical, self-reflexive position within the academic space has emerged from the epistemological belief that knowledge is influenced by the researcher’s beliefs, attitudes and language. In other words, the researcher is a part of the context of knowledge construction. This position lends itself to personal narrative as a way of reporting the research process and research journey. Writing in first person posits that knowledge is not separable from the researcher, and the “I” becomes an enabler for the researcher to analyse her personal relationship to the situation and expose influences on the research that would otherwise be excluded or hidden (ibid, 414).

Personally reflective accounts within research make transparent the influence of the researcher’s philosophies and biases; points of view that are based on the personal and cultural background of the researcher. If meaning making is a personal and social experience that depends on cultural narratives for sense-making, as Bruner (1990) argues, then it is difficult to separate the personal and academic. Writing in a personal narrative style makes the research process more transparent as it exposes the researcher’s preconceptions and theories that filter the interpretation process.

Including the personal context within my research meant reporting on the factors that framed the project, such as historical events and my philosophical outlook. According
to Hanrahan this inclusion in a PhD enables a coherent reading of why the research was done and how it came to the stated conclusions (1999, 406).

The learning that occurred through this doctoral/doctorate experience was not linear, or impersonal. In this respect the traditional scientific model was ill suited to this particular project. The structure of the thesis however, conforms to the rules of the genre of a scientific report whereby it shows the ‘logical progression from literature to research question to research design’ (ibid). Where it deviates in structure is through the insertion of the production component (the radio documentary).

One of the many sources of inspiration for adopting a personal narrative style and analysing my own practice reflexively was Bonita Mason’s work (2012) on critical reflexivity in reporting deaths in custody. Mason employs what she describes as unorthodox practices to her journalism when she tells the story of an Aboriginal woman who died in a Sydney prison. One of the so-called unorthodox practices she employs is journalist-source collaboration. In other words, the conventional distance between a journalist and source is reduced as Mason extends a different kind of relationship with her source, one she describes as more akin to solidarity (2012, 58).

Mason's experience of finding, researching and writing this story is presented as part of a practice-led research PhD. She applies critical reflexivity to her analysis of her own journalism practice, and sees it as a valid and important method within journalism studies. The conclusions she comes to through her own journalism practice and through observing and reflecting on her own practice is that, ‘we are all implicated in the worlds we research and report on’, and she therefore advocates ‘extending the recognition of the range of values that underpin journalism practice beyond objectivity to publicity,
accountability and solidarity’ (Mason 2012, i).

There are some important correlations between Mason's findings and my own, and proximity is one of them. Other correlations are made with the kind of journalism advocated by former BBC correspondent Martin Bell, who promotes a 'journalism of attachment': a journalism that 'cares as well as knows' and is 'aware of its responsibilities' (cited in Campbell 2004, 175).

The value of these kinds of studies is that they offer journalism studies a unique and rare insight into the individual journalist and what they bring to the experience and practice of reporting. And it is through using methodologies such as practice-led research and action research along with complementary approaches such as critical reflexivity or narrative inquiry that motivations and feelings of the journalist practitioner can be explored in great detail and depth. Especially for freelance journalists, like myself, where there has been an identified lack in research (Machin and Niblock 2006, 136; Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, 12), these kinds of methodologies are extremely useful and valuable to fill this gap on research on individual journalists.

As an Anglo-Australian researcher I cannot claim to conduct this research from an Afrocentric\textsuperscript{15} perspective, however using an emancipatory methodology means making alliances with previous subjugated knowledge (Brown & Strega 2005, 8) so that 'multiple ways of knowing and knowledge' can bear fruit (Moosa-Mitha 2005, 66).

Therefore, the 'epistemological ground' upon which the methodology of this study was

\textsuperscript{15} Afrocentrism is a movement in Africa that 'creates a frame of reference wherein phenomena are viewed from the perspective of the African' (Asante 1991, cited in Omojola 2008, 176). The alternative to Afrocentrism is what Omojola calls the Afrocomplementary perspective. This approach invites integration from different cultural areas of the world cognisant of a globalising world and the journalist's role to reflect the diversity of world cultures (Omojola 2008, 176). It is the Afrocomplementarist approach that sits more comfortably with the objectives of this PhD study.
based incorporated the perspective and 'truths' of the society where this study was carried out (Ladson-Billings 2003, 12). This required my view of the world to transition from individualisation\textsuperscript{16} to self-in-relation (Lipari 2009, 45); from a Westcentric world view to an Afrocentric world view that can be neatly summarised in a few short words: 'I am because we are' (Ladson-Billings 2000, 257; Mbiti 1989, 141). Therefore, the methodology for the study emerged from valuing the local context and the rich intellectual heritage and the potentialities of the people and the place (Denzin & Lincoln 2008, xiv).

While there is still, perhaps even largely, an individualistic orientation to this research, the influence of the cultural value of relationship and community were significant to the research process, to the methods chosen and in particular, to the outcomes of the research. The research connects African epistemologies with emancipatory methodologies such as participatory and critical research (Freire 2000; McLaren & Kincheloe 2007). Being a non-African undertaking this research, I incorporated a set of criteria into the methodology, which helped to ensure the research stayed true to its promise of being emancipatory and empowering (Kovach 2005, 26). These criteria are explained in more detail in Part I Chapter Two and I demonstrate their application throughout the thesis.

This participatory/self-study practice-informed research combines critical and emancipatory theory within the action research paradigm (Carr & Kemmis, 1986). The critical emancipatory action research approach subverts the traditional power hierarchy

\textsuperscript{16} While there are multiple worldviews, this study draws on two dominant and widely studied concepts of self: the interdependent (Eastern/traditional/collectivist) and the independent (Western/liberal/individualist) (Kristjánsson 2010, 168). Both influence ways of feeling, seeing, acting, and being in the world. These concepts have been studied widely and set up juxtapositions of the 'Western bounded, unique, self-contained and segregated liberal' self with the 'Eastern fluid, connected, holistic and less-differentiated traditional' self (ibid). However, Kristjánsson argues that the two concepts should be seen as commensurable and reconcilable despite their explicit differences (ibid, 234).
between professional researcher and research subjects by privileging the collaboration aspect, with an overall aim to produce relevant research that is sensitive to the locale, and that is empowering to both the researcher and participants. The action research paradigm allows for the methods to be refined to suit the situation/context.

The following statement by Linda Tuhiwai Smith about the nature of critical research echoes the core principles of an action research project:

> So it is really about focusing, about thinking critically, about reflecting on things, about being strategic. It is not simply about thinking yourself into a stationary position which often happens in the academy (2002, 184).

Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher summarise action research as 'progressive (and public) learning by doing and making mistakes in a “self-reflective spiral” of planning, acting, observing, reflective planning, etc' (2007, 416). This spiral is played out for the duration of this project as one study moves into the next, and one stage of the research process moves into the next stage. But rather than make this spiral explicit or a core feature within the dissertation, the spiral is embedded, entwined into the flow of the study, entangled if you will, to the point that it is difficult to separate it out from the actual process that is always in flow, despite the will to control or contain it.

As a journalistic storyteller my preference is to see action research as a story unfolding, chapter by chapter, scene by scene, illustrated through dialogue with others and self rather than graphics inserted into documents, or headings pointing to the specific stages of the cycle.
In real life, in the midst of research, all or some of those stages are intermeshed so that reflection, acting, planning and observing happen simultaneously. Drummond and Themessl-Huber speak of the challenge for researchers to apply the cycle in practice (2007, 433). Nevertheless, this thesis does demonstrate the use of critical reflection and the role it plays in contributing to transforming knowledge and practice (Zuber-Skerrit and Fletcher 2007, 433). It does this by embedding diary entries throughout the thesis to illustrate the reflective spiral at work. These diary entries are taken from my own fieldwork journals, which record my reactions to what was happening at various stages of the project.

Research methods

Some of the methods I used for this practice-based action research project are drawn from the qualitative research paradigm such as participant and non-participant observation and unstructured interviews. Other methods such as self-observation, self-reflection and self-evaluation are drawn from the action research paradigm.

As an action researcher I reflect on practice (Schön 1987); I become a '(self)-reflective practitioner' (Zuber-Skerrit and Fletcher 2007, 416). But the goals of this project required going a step further into critical reflection because it required an awareness of the wider environment in which I practised. Through critical reflection I was able to identify taken-for-granted practices that lead to unethical journalism and examine and develop new perspectives about practice (Finlay 2008, 5; Fook 2006, 4).

Reflexivity is defined as self-awareness in the moment of action (Rennie 2007, 53). Practitioners who practice reflexivity 'engage in critical self-reflection: reflecting critically on the impact of their own background, assumptions, positioning, feelings,
behaviour while also attending to the impact of the wider organisational, discursive, ideological and political context' (Finlay 2008, 6. Her emphasis).

To be reflexive is to break with objectivism as it uses introspection, intuition, and personal memories:

Through a constant mirroring of the self, one eventually becomes reflexive about the situated, socially constructed nature of the self, and by extension, the other. In this formulation, the self is a multiple, constructed self that is always becoming and never quite fixed, and the ethnographic productions of such a self and the ‘cultural other’ are always historically and culturally contingent (Foley 2002, 473).

Reflection, critical reflection and reflexivity in this project go hand in hand. My modus operandi throughout involves thinking about, or the reflecting after, the event or situations as well as a continuous self-awareness (Finlay 2008, 6). As I outlined earlier, I use introspection techniques to examine various interactions, to improve them, and to study myself: my thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviour (including motivations) as my research unfolds (Ryan 2005).

Dewey's understanding of reflection is that it stems from doubt, hesitation or perplexity related to a directly experienced situation (1933, cited in Finlay 2008, 3). As someone who experiences and struggles almost constantly with self-doubt, and who hesitates and perplexes over just about all aspects of life, reflecting on self and situations is already a major part of my nature. With these tendencies, the danger for me was that of falling into the trap of over-reflecting which could lead to self-obsession. This was particularly heightened by incorporating self-reflexivity into my practice as it required a constant reviewing – more than usual - of one's thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviour.
Furthermore, there was the potential to develop 'an unduly negative frame of mind' in the context of which the word 'critical' can be taken to mean 'negative' (Finlay 2008, 11). As Finlay explains, reflection often involves a 'constant striving for self-improvement' and when individuals feel they are not improving, it can lead to feelings of self-disapproval and self-rejection (ibid). There is a danger therefore that the process of reflection can overwhelm actual practice, and in a research project this can be detrimental to the desired goals and outcomes (ibid, 12).

To stop myself from spiralling into narcissism or 'self-absorbed naval gazing' (ibid), listening was placed front and centre in the research project. Listening intently and acutely to others took me out of myself and into the lives of others: self-reviewing and introspection became less self-absorbed and more self-aware, enabling mutual collaboration and 'reflective conversation' (Ghaye 2000). Listening itself was therefore a research method.

It was through this mutual collaboration that other non-academic methods were incorporated into the research project. These included culturally appropriate methods facilitated by local social practices, for example 'public deliberation' (explained in detail in Part I), storytelling\(^{17}\) and a locally practised evaluation method called *Kwinegura* (meaning to judge oneself). *Kwinegura* is akin to models of reflection that have been developed in different fields of professional practice. When people take part in *Kwinegura* they evaluate what was good and bad about the experience, why it was so, and what can be done next time to improve the actual event or situation and people's roles. It is an evaluation method that is a mutual, reciprocal and shared process in that it relies on dialogue, feedback and mentoring amongst all participants (Finlay 2008, 7).

\(^{17}\) As I will illustrate in Part I, oral storytelling became embedded into the workshops without any prompting. Participants would simply recall stories from long ago and tell them to the rest of the group.
**Location: Rwanda**

I chose this small central-eastern African nation because of my previous work there as a journalist and the connections I had established with local people. This meant that I was not an outsider coming in to conduct research. I had already begun the process of immersion. This provided a unique research opportunity to 'engage with minds that think differently' from my own (Fletcher et al 2010, 488). As a practitioner I could reflect on my own practice in collaboration with others, with the anticipation that this engagement would lead to a potential transformation of my practice (ibid).

In total I spent 22 weeks in Rwanda, which incorporated four separate field trips (I had been to Rwanda four times prior to the start of the PhD project).

From the outset, the study demanded a heightened awareness to 'self-other field relationships' (Foley 2002, 474). I was conscious that using only traditional ethnographic methods (such as participant observation and ethnographic interviewing) may not create and nurture such awareness. The socio-cultural context, as well as the dynamics of a White, Western researcher-practitioner carrying out research in a post-colonial/post-genocide location, demanded ethical and political questions to be asked on the colonial nature of such research. After all, the study had set out to address problematic representations and the 'discursive practices' that reinforce colonising and stigmatising processes in the Western media (Foucault 1971). This issue is examined more closely in Chapter 1. It is for this reason I veered away from using a formal realist

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18 This adheres to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research guideline 4.8.7 which states that 'Researchers should have enough experience or access to expertise to enable them to engage with participants in ways that accord them due respect and protection', and guideline 4.8.15: 'Researchers need to know enough about the communities, and how to engage with them, to be able to assess the burdens and benefits of their research to the communities' (NHMRC 2007).
ethnographic approach for the study and took inspiration from the 'new ethnographers' who call their work critical, evocative and creative, hence the centering of processes of critical reflection and self-reflexivity. The aim of the study was not to 'know, map, and explain the lived reality of cultural others' (Foley 2002, 487), it was to un-know and un-map in order to bring about transformations in how stories about Africa are told, therefore inviting 'an other thinking' (Mignolo 1999, 74).

**Research design**

A five-stage research design emerged from the process of setting up the two parallel and interdependent action research studies. As the study moves from one phase of research to another, the action research cycle is enacted.

**Stage one** involved the initial field trip in mid-2012. During this stage I interacted with local people about the study inviting feedback from a variety of people including journalists, editors, film makers, academics and ordinary people. The main purpose of these discussions was to get a sense of the relevance of the study to Rwandan people. The methods I used to facilitate these discussions drew on local social practices (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, 2). The grassroots media project grew out of one of these practices and the storytelling group was established.

**Stage two** was a collaborative participant observational study of the project. A vision for the group was decided on and workshops began. The participants went into the field collecting stories and I observed and recorded the outcomes of these approaches and behaviour. Reflection took place at various workshops and during post-fieldwork situations. This included my own critical self-reflection on my role of facilitator as the project evolved.
Stage three was drawing together reflections from the previous stages. This process involved identifying new strategies and methods to tell African-related stories, or more specifically Rwandan-related stories, and synthesising findings about storytelling practices that could be developed into a theory and used in my own practice, and more broadly, in Western-told stories about distant others.

Stage four involved drawing together the insights from the first study and applying these to my own practice, melding local social practices with conventional Western reporting methods. This happened on a third field trip after ABC Radio National confirmed it would commission the story about the serial killings of women sex workers in Rwanda.

Stage five, the final stage, involved a critical evaluation of this independent practice. The final field trip was made to gather feedback on the radio documentary, which I had made on the previous field trip. Feedback was sought from some of the story subjects and local journalists, as well as listeners in Australia. This stage incorporates the critical evaluation of this independent practice.

Ethics approval

Ethics approval for this project was a multi-step process. The two major steps involved seeking approval through the formal assessment process via Murdoch University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) and research approval from the relevant authorities in Rwanda (this process is discussed in more detail in Part I, Chapter 2). I was also required to attain a press card from the Rwanda Media High Council, which grants foreign journalists permission to carry out media interviews within the country.
Over the course of this research project I attained two press cards on two separate occasions to cover the two action research studies.

An amendment to the project (No. 2012/003) was submitted via HREC at a later date when the topic of the radio documentary was chosen. While the original application included mention of a radio documentary as an outcome of the research project at that stage the topic was not known. Now the topic was known and it involved a group of sex workers who were engaged in what was an illegal activity in Rwanda. Ethics committees impose a whole other layer of precautions when research involves recording people who are involved in potentially illegal activities because it can expose them to unknown risks. To gain research approval in this case required proving to the committee that I was taking all the necessary precautions to protect both those who were engaged in an illegal activity, namely, the women sex workers, as well as myself.

It is worth noting that seeking further ethics clearance from Murdoch University may\(^\text{19}\) not have been a requirement at this stage because I was undertaking the documentary in my role as a commissioned journalist for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The reason I opted for ethics clearance was because the commissioning process at the ABC had been delayed and I was not informed that the documentary would be commissioned until the day of my departure to Rwanda. The HREC ethics clearance

\(^{19}\) I use the word 'may' because there are conflicting opinions as to whether or not the research I conducted in my role as a journalist which led to a publication both in the news media as well as in this PhD would require institutional ethics approval. According to ethics scholar Ian Richards the NHMRC’s amended and more broad definition of ‘research’ has meant that ‘much academic output formerly located beyond the boundaries of traditional “research” now appears to fall within those boundaries’, thereby making it ‘increasingly difficult to argue that any journalism research published outside academic journals should be exempt from institutional ethics requirements’ (2009a, 41). Practice-related research projects such as this one present some difficulties in recognising what aspects of a project require ethics approval by institutional ethics committees. According to advice given to me by the HREC at Murdoch University, further ethics approval (the amendment) was not a requirement if the purpose for collecting data was first and foremost for the ABC. Following the ABC’s ethical protocols would have been sufficient in this case. This arrangement would be possible because I would be using the published version of the ABC documentary (that is, publicly available material) as part of the reflection for the PhD.
ensured that should the ABC decide not to commission the radio program I could still incorporate the documentary into this research project.

It is not uncommon for humanities and social science researchers, and indeed journalism researchers, to view the ethics review process as a burden to their research or a hurdle to jump over prior to carrying out their research project (Richards 2009a, 37). Some of these researchers are strongly critical of ethics committees for the simple fact that such committees have been set up to follow a scientific biomedical model and therefore are not always sensitive to the characteristics of qualitative research that set it apart from quantitative research (ibid). As Ian Richards points out, journalism research and ethics committees are seen as 'uneasy bedfellows' for a whole variety of reasons, not least because the ethics approval requires journalism researchers to engage in processes that are anathema to accepted journalism practice (2009a), for instance, preparing interview questions prior to the interview and having them subject to the approval of the interviewee, and obtaining informed consent for all interviews that are carried out. The ethical focus on minimising harm may frequently clash with the journalistic principle of truth-telling (ibid, 39).

Prioritising concern for others was one of the key tenets of the university's ethics review process and it was through applying what I would call stringent human research ethical protocols to this research project that led to my engagement with a critically reflexive practice. I had no choice but to reflect on the impact of my actions, as well as my assumptions and values as a journalist. I was able to be reflexive about a range of journalistic and research practices ranging from the relationship with participants, subjects and informants to the interpretive practices, and on to the production process itself (Foley 2002, 473).
A critical element throughout this entire project was developing and engaging in ethical relationships with both research participants and story subjects. This led to developing what Arthur Bochner calls an 'ethical self-consciousness', which involves respect for others and the moral dimensions of the story (2000, 271). For example, in the second study I had set out to tell a story of human suffering without doing further harm or rendering it into a spectacle and it was the national guidelines on ethical conduct in human research that paved the way for pursuing alternative possibilities as a journalist.

In this respect, the HREC approval process for this research project proved to be more than simply meeting an institutional obligation in relation to carrying out research that involves human subjects. In this particular case, it was through seeking approval from the ethics committee at Murdoch University and the process this involved that created a space for engagement with local social practices and respecting Indigenous ways. These were not only incorporated into the project but had a significant impact on the outcomes of both studies.

According to the guidelines set out in the NHMRC, Australian researchers who conduct research in other countries are to acknowledge local cultural values in the design and conduct of the research (NHMRC 2007, 4.8.2). I outline in Part I how the first action research study was informed by local beliefs and practices from recruitment processes to evaluation practices. But the project went further than merely acknowledging local cultural values.

As I have explained above, the aim of the first study was to identify and isolate local cultural beliefs and values that could benefit journalistic storytelling on the African
continent by Western media practitioners. Some of these values were tested in the second action research study when I applied them to my own journalism practice, the anticipated outcome being an ethical and culturally responsive journalism practice that tells stories about distant others. This practice was enabled by the university ethics approval process because of the guidelines relating to research in other countries and their focus on reducing potential for further harm to research participants.

Presentation of thesis

The group-related and practice-related action research methodologies allowed me to investigate the research questions in 'two languages' and consequently the results are presented in two formats – through creative artefacts with an accompanying critical reflective analysis, and through a conventional written dissertation (Milech and Schilo 2004). There were two types of fieldwork – one involving my mentoring work with a group of storytellers in Kigali and the other involving my journalistic work as a radio documentary-maker (the former group-related fieldwork and the latter practice-related fieldwork).

The thesis is divided into two parts, each dealing with a project and each with its own audio artefact. The produced works and the dissertation are to be heard and read respectively as an expression of the two distinct pathways in which I set out to address the concerns of this study.

Following the overview of the study in this chapter, Chapter One provides the context

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20 It is worth noting that the research approval process in Rwanda does not stipulate that foreign researchers acknowledge local cultural values in the design and conduct of their research. This is why I have pointed specifically to the NHMRC and its guidelines on researching in other countries and the impact these have had on the outcomes of this project. The research approval process in Rwanda is discussed in Part I, Chapter Two.
for the research, examining the research that has a bearing on this study. This review focuses on a range of works that address the role of the Western media in the construction, representation, and portrayal of Africa, and more generally distant others.

Part I, The True Storytellers, comprises Chapters Two and Three and describes the radio journalism project, detailing how it was set up, its objectives, ideals and outcomes. Chapter Two describes the fieldwork methodology and methods and grounds the work theoretically and methodologically. Chapter Three presents the fieldwork and the findings and concludes with a critical reflection.

The audio component for this part of the thesis is included as track 1 on the companion CD. It is a 4-minute audio montage derived from one of the meetings of the storytelling group. The montage has been adapted, with permission, from one of the participant's radio features on storytelling, which came out of the group work. The montage is included in the thesis because it captures the authentic and open dialogue between the storytellers, and reflects their sense of identity and belonging to the concept of being a born-storyteller. It also draws attention to the important role of storytelling in Rwandan society. It is therefore presented in this thesis as an audio illustration of the group at work and as an artefact of personal identity and pride. This approach deals with the problem of representation of the Other by 'moving toward the presentational' (Denzin 2003, xi). In this respect it places voice and participation at the centre, and signals to the importance that both of these play in this project.

Part II, The Journalist Tells the Story of a People, comprises Chapters Four and Five and illustrates how the insights from the collaboration informed my own practice when I told the story of a serial killing of sex workers in Rwanda in the format of a radio
documentary. The audio component for this part is the radio documentary itself, *A Silent Tragedy* (50-minutes and 53-seconds) on the CD - track 2. The presenter's introduction and website introduction are included in Appendix 3. I have also included excerpts from the documentary which have been selected to highlight particular points for analysis (these are tracks 3-7 on the CD).

Chapter Four provides the background of *A Silent Tragedy* and describes the methodology and analytical framework used to analyse, critique and reflect on the process of this media production. Chapter Five addresses the media process, dealing specifically with text, production, and reception (Ong 2014). Also discussed are the ethical challenges that this story presented. It is here that I reflexively examine and critique my own practice as a Western journalist, interrogating my methods and techniques and recounting how insights from the first study informed the story-telling process in the second.

The concluding chapter explores the significance of the study as a whole, in particular, how this culturally responsive approach to practice can benefit journalism practitioners who work in different cultural settings. It summarises the outputs and their impact on participants including myself.

Conclusion

The resulting dissertation privileges the journey over the destination; the process over the product (Ellis and Bochner 2000, 744). It tells a story of a 'personal, collaborative, and interactive relationship', bringing to light the 'moral and ethical choices we face as human beings who live in an uncertain and changing world' (ibid).
My personal mission was to find a way to avoid exploitation, humiliation, 'othering' and de-humanisation in my journalism practice. This mission took me deep into the lives of distant others. What follows is the story of my encounters with them and the transformations that occurred within my own journalism practice.

Peter Reason argues that when we inquire into the things we care about, 'carefully and critically', it provokes anxieties within us (Reason 1994, 327). I have at times experienced becoming 'paralyzed' from guilt as I contemplate the questions raised by both feminist scholars and critical race theorists about who speaks for whom, how, when and where (Shohat 1995; Spivak 1988), particularly in light of my non-marginal, non-native, non-oppressed status. But these anxieties spurred me to investigate if there is a way for Western journalists to 'speak with or alongside others' (Shohat & Stam 1994, 346), where there is an interweaving of voices, 'whether in chorus, in antiphony, in call and response, or in polyphony' (ibid, 346).
The global journalist's responsibility to far-away others

Introduction

In his seminal work on representation, Stuart Hall asks, ‘have the repertoires of representation around “difference” and “otherness” changed or do earlier traces remain intact in contemporary society?’ (1997, 225). This chapter provides an overview of this broad and vital area of scholarship and focuses in particular on the aspects that are most relevant to this study. For example, it takes the ethic of responsibility which is at the heart of current discussions within global media ethics (Christians et al 2008; Couldry et al 2013; Omojola 2008; Ward 2013, 2008; Ward & Wasserman 2010), and narrows it down specifically to the individual journalist's responsibility towards the Other, a responsibility that has become more onerous and important owing to journalism's global reach and impact:

News media are global in reach because they have the technology to gather information from around the world with incredible speed, and to use this information to create stories for a global public. News media are global in impact because the production of stories has impact across borders, sparking riots in distant lands or prompting global responses to natural disasters (Ward 2013, 1).

Nick Couldry reiterates this view of the media having global reach and impact. He notes that, 'Increasingly, global media present us with unfamiliar Others on a global scale, giving any discussion of the ethics of media an irreducibly global dimension' (2013, 50).
In many instances, audiences’ only encounter with ‘otherness’ is through the media, and the meanings portrayed in the media narratives shape these encounters, influencing personal perceptions (Meadows 2005, 39). For Edward Said it is the way the media perpetuates particular stereotypes that contribute to the process of entrenching racism at an institutional level (2003, 26). While audiences actively respond to these meanings within the products of media communication (demonstrating an interactive rather than passive relationship), there are 'dominant and deeply entrenched meanings that the media provide' (Silverstone 2002, 762). To peruse these questions further, later in this chapter I analyse the content, style, approach and outcome of one particular representation of suffering in the Western media (Ong 2014, 181). This close reading of a *Time* online magazine story identifies the process of ‘other-ing’ and examines in particular how certain portrayals reinscribe colonial discourse in their representations of Africa (ibid). The reading allows me to draw on some of the literature relating to media representations in a global context, as well as to draw attention to the perils journalists face in portraying distant others.

**Journalists as meaning-makers**

Journalists are powerful meaning-makers in their societies. A journalist interacts with and across multiple levels and sectors of society with the ultimate aim of making sense of the information he or she has gained privileged access to for the public’s deliberation (Graham 2013, 115). Through its various modes of storytelling, journalism opens windows for people to peer into and get a sense of other lives; an invitation for audiences to recognise the world's Others. On one hand, journalism through the content it produces has the power to expose injustices, and at times provoke positive change. It has the potential to evoke empathy and build bridges between different people and
contrasting ideas (Cottle 2005). On the other hand, journalistic interpretations of the various social realities can burn those bridges and devalue and dehumanise those who are represented.

In Rwanda’s so-called ‘hate media’ (Thompson 2007, 2), the Hutu extremists dehumanised their enemy and described Tutsis as *inyenzi* (cockroaches) and *inzoka* (snakes). Christopher Mirzoeff reveals how one of the presenters of Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), Valerie Bemerki, went as far as commanding the extremist factions of the Hutu population to kill the “*inyenzi*” (cited in Mirzoeff 2005, 39). In one of the broadcasts she was reported as saying, ‘Do not kill these *inyenzi* (cockroaches) with a bullet, cut them into pieces with a machete’ (ibid). But the media does not have to be so overt in its promotion of violence. The American media’s ‘complicity with U.S. propaganda’ during the second Iraq war demonstrates how the media can play a more surreptitious role in propagating a certain message to the public (Lee Artz 2004, 80).

Considering this power the journalist has in defining and explaining reality and interpreting its meaning, there are expectations that journalists make fair and justified interpretations (Brants 2013, 21). Broersma and Peters write that it is the meanings portrayed in the media's narratives about the Other that shape the way audience perceive countries and other cultures (2014, xviii). Branson and Stafford elaborate on this point reaffirming the power and influence of such narratives:

The media give us ways of imagining particular identities and groups which can have material effects on how people experience the world, and how they get understood, or legislated for or perhaps beaten up in the street by others… this is partly because the mass media have the
power to re-present, over and over, some identities, some imaginings, and to exclude others, and thereby make them seem unfamiliar or even threatening (1999, 15).

In Kees Brants’ words, ‘As signifiers they have the power to define and explain reality and interpret its meaning, a power entrusted to them in the expectation that they will perform well and in all honesty’ (2013, 21). To a large extent, journalists determine which subjects are discussed and how:

They are the gatekeepers of the public sphere. Furthermore, they determine how subjects are discussed and with which goal and effect. By making choices about the form and style of news, journalists affect how reality is experienced. Journalistic texts then should not primarily be understood as attempts to mimetically describe events, but as strategic interpretations of them, that offer journalists the possibility of asserting moral authority and, as a result, obtain power (Broersma 2010, 30).

In relation to the genocide in Rwanda, both the Western media and the local Rwandan media failed miserably in their role to ‘perform well and in all honesty’:

Confronted by Rwanda’s horrors, Western news media for the most part turned away, then muddled the story when they did pay attention. And hate media organs in Rwanda – through their journalists, broadcasters and media executives – played an instrumental role in laying the groundwork for genocide, then actively participated in the extermination campaign (Thompson 2007, xi).

Through various newspapers and a radio station, the extremist factions of the former Rwandan Government printed and broadcast propaganda to deepen division between the Hutu and Tutsi peoples, and in some cases used particular language to incite ordinary
citizens to take part in the killings. At the same time, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a Tutsi-led military army fighting the Rwandan Government, used Radio Muhabura to transmit the RPF line (US Department of State 1994). In this instance, the media proved to be a powerful weapon of manipulation from the early 1990s right up to the days when the mass killings began in 1994.

Understanding Rwanda's journalism practice requires taking into consideration a number of factors, not least its political conditions both past and present. Rwanda is controlled by a small elite group who occupy ‘strategic command posts of the social structure’ (Mills 1956, 4). According to Will Jones this small elite drives policy, and the military is their 'organisational weapon' for implementing policy (2012, 238).

Within this regime, the media is largely compliant because it is controlled constitutionally, just as is any opposition to government (ibid, 241). For example, Jones cites the case when the opposition were marginalised in the 2010 election using constitutional repression. The statutes of the Media High Council were used to suspend two independent Kinyarwanda daily newspapers, Umuvigizi and Umuseso, and genocide ideology laws were used to silence 'potential counter elites' (ibid, 239).

The use of constitutional repression by the state leads to journalists censoring themselves because they know very well the ramifications of oppositional speech. And even though recent media reforms have given the media industry some self-regulating powers and lifted some restrictions, criminal defamation and insult laws as well as the 2008 Genocidal Ideology Law and other related laws on 'divisionism' continue to restrict journalists from reporting freely and critically (Harber 2014, 31-32).
The reporting styles and the journalism culture in the country are also influenced heavily by the events of the past. The current government often cites the complicity of the media in the genocide to defend the laws that censor and control the media, so as to 'avoid a return to the ethnic battles that tore the country apart in the early 1990s' (ibid, 3; Waldorf 2007, 404). This echoes a comment posted by a local reader of Rwanda's The New Times in 2013 who argues that self-censorship is vital to prevent 'fanning hatred based on ethnicity and regionalism, which consequently culminated into the three consecutive Genocides, starting from 1959' (9 August 2013).

Some journalists agree that control and censorship is vital for peace in the country (Harber 2014, 5). Other journalists are obliged to use self-censorship for the topics they know to be 'taboo' or off-limits in order to avoid threats, harassment and arrest by authorities (ibid). A 2008 Reporters Without Borders report describes the relations between the Rwandan Government and the independent media as 'appalling’, claiming that Rwanda’s independent press is 'forced to live under relentless harassment from the highest levels of the state' (cited in Myers 2008, 4).

The media reforms in 2013, according to a special report of the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), have improved conditions for journalists to a certain extent (Harber 2014, 13). The self-regulated Rwanda Media Commission (RMC) was set up and has given some level of independence to journalists and the media. The RMC's mandate includes 'enforcing media ethics, advocating for media freedom, and speaking on behalf of the media' (ibid, 15). The RMC's tagline is promoting free, responsible and accountable media. The RMC also acts on behalf of journalists who are arrested for doing their work. There have been a number of journalist's arrested since the commission was established, some for broadcasting material the authorities believed
was offensive. The commission intervened to protect the journalists and negotiated for their release (ibid, 19). These arrests show that despite the reforms the news is still vulnerable to the government’s and other authorities’ aversion to certain kinds of critical reporting that may include accountability and transparency. This is despite the change to the Access to Information Law that allows journalist's access to all sources of information (Republic of Rwanda 2013).

The current government has been openly critical of the Rwandan media for lacking 'professionalism' and yet it appears that key authority figures do not take well to journalism being a counterweight to power, or scrutinizing alleged abuses, which is what some would argue is the key role of 'professional' journalism. Monitoring the actions of governments is what a democratic professional free press does but it is still unclear as to whether the Rwandan Government truly favours this.

In an attempt to build the professionalism of Rwandan journalism, or to lift professional journalistic performance in the country, North American journalism programs have been offered to working Rwandan journalists. Such programs promote the ideals of a modern, Anglo-American journalism such as objectivity, fairness and public interest, ideals that journalism educators believe should guide press performance in a democracy. To these journalism educators, ‘professional’ means a kind of journalistic practice guided by specific ethical principles to serve the public good.

The problem with these Western ‘missions’ to spread journalistic ideals is that they make an assumption that there is one single ‘universal’ understanding of ‘good journalism’, which is problematic because it does not take into account ‘different journalistic cultures and occupational ethics pulled in different directions by political,
economic, and social forces’ (Waisbord 2013, 9). The political, economic and social forces in Rwanda, and the specific historical and political context, determine the kind of journalism that is practiced today. The journalistic ethics under which Rwandan journalists operate are heavily influenced by the philosophical viewpoint and political landscape. There are 34 articles within the Code of Ethics, which were amended in 2013 following the media reforms. Articles 2, 4 and 7 deal with defamation, incitement to racial, tribal, ethnic or religious hatred. It appears that the Code of Ethics for Rwandan journalists and other media practitioners is premised on a liberal democratic model of the media. The preamble cites concepts such as public enlightenment, justice, liberty, enjoyment of freedom and the foundation of democracy, and their necessity for sustainable peace, development, and security (RMC 2013). The code's number one article is defence of universal values in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but as Anton Harber warns in the CPJ report, legal reforms 'to open up the media will exist on paper only' if security authorities are allowed to continue harassing and making threats to journalists and if the remaining restrictions are not removed (2014, 31).

While it is debatable that even the free press in so-called Western democracies provide a completely open platform for freedom of expression (in some cases serving the power elite more than the civil society), Rwanda's press has a lot more issues to contend with, not least, the danger to individual lives should they speak ill of certain authority figures and policies, or what authorities determine to be unwanted rhetoric within civil society. The CPJ report cites cases of journalists who have been murdered and who have had to go into exile, although there is no hard evidence that the government or authorities are responsible for these cases.
Regardless of the media reforms and the self-regulated RMC, the CPJ report reveals that there is still a climate of fear among journalists of repercussions from the authorities. The fact that many of the journalists who participated in interviews for the report chose anonymity is demonstrative of this ongoing fear. However, such fear has not stifled debate for a desirable model of journalism in Rwanda. In the last two years meetings have been held to discuss press freedom but there seems to be conflicting ideas as to what the occupational role and ideal of a journalist is or should be among journalists. Some journalists have different views about media freedom compared to their Western counterparts. Some argue that Rwanda needs a 'responsive journalism' more than a free press (Kanuma, cited in Kuya 2011). However, a gathering in 2014 on World Press Freedom Day organised by the RMC and the Rwanda Journalists Association discussed the idea of a free and professional media being a driver for development and good governance.

The warrant for a responsible and ethical journalism from a global perspective hardly needs justifying because it is clearly shown that both global and local media have considerable power over how issues or events are reported and channelled throughout the world (Flew 2007). Where an irresponsible and unethical global or local media can incite violence, disempowerment, marginalisation, and a deeply divided world, a responsible media can lead to deeper understanding of complex global issues and problems (Ward 2013, 2).

However, not everyone agrees that collective ethical standards are viable or even preferable (Zelizer 2013, 282). Barbie Zelizer's concern is that codes of ethics in journalism concern themselves too much with what is seen and ignore what is not seen. On this point she asks, 'How often are pictures of vital public events – war, terrorism,
corruption – pushed from public display? What this does to the ethics of a shared global space and the health of our body politic is worrisome.' (ibid, 283). Zelizer's view is that rather than being preoccupied with a 'workable journalism ethics' media scholars should be considering 'more fully what we want from journalism?' (ibid, 283). Zelizer puts more faith in the individual journalist being ethical, which for her means 'doing the right thing' (ibid, 281). But for global media ethicists the new global landscape imposes a certain kind of responsibility for practitioners that requires that journalists reconceive their role and position in society (Christians et al 2008, 167). For Ward, pursuing the project of a global media ethics is justified in simple terms, 'Global power entails global responsibilities' (Ward 2013, 2).

Ward believes that existing principles of media ethics are not sufficient because 'traditional media ethics was, and is, parochial, not global' (2013, 2). This argument extends further to the individual journalist and other media practitioners, with global media ethicists insisting that a shift in self-consciousness is required; a kind of revolutionising in thinking and in practice. In other words, there is a need for them to be oriented globally and to develop a global mind. This, they argue, will address the problems of parochialism, and potentially reduce the distance between the interests of 'people like us' and distant others. Ward calls this attitude an 'ethical cosmopolitanism' (2008, 145). For his definition of cosmopolitanism, Ward draws on Western philosophical theory - Roman Law, Christianity and Kant:

It is an ancient ethical theory which began with the idea that people outside my tribe or city—foreigners—were human like me. Therefore, I owe them certain decencies, such as hospitality or perhaps the basic privileges of citizenship (Ward 2008, 145).
Here, Ward fails to make mention of non-Western Indigenous ideas about this concept. He refers to the Christian notion of a brotherhood of man but does not mention the notion of brotherhood in Indigenous cultures which also relate to a universal human brotherhood or unity, and ultimately, a 'common membership of one universal human family' (Gyekye 2010). According to Kwame Gyekye, a practical translation of the idea of brotherhood in African societies leads to such social and moral virtues as hospitality, generosity, concern for others, and communal feeling (ibid). This African normative ethic of brotherhood is often referred to as a communitarian or a communalistic ethics (Imafidon et al 2013, x). The idea of universal brotherhood is one of the basic concepts within the ubuntu philosophy, a distinctly African view of life (discussed in more detail on p. 94). Other concepts within the ubuntu worldview include reciprocation, respect, patience, hospitality, responsibility, empathy, sympathy, consideration, sharing and cooperation (Chikanda 1990; Makhudu 1993; Shutte 1994). Later, in Part II of the thesis, I reveal how the participants in the first action research study manifested some of these values in their encounters with their story subjects. Applying these values to my own practice I demonstrate how the human dignity of the far-away other is upheld by adopting a practice that is more culturally responsive and that engages with local social practices.

As global media ethicists were developing a theoretical framework for a universal media ethics it was Rao and Wasserman who drew attention to the fact that the framework was 'distinctly Western in origin' (2007, 30). It was not sufficient, they argued, for alternative ethical concepts or Indigenous theories to be 'forced into a framework that is supposedly universal but has been, in fact, developed from specific Enlightenment philosophies' (ibid, 34). To address this shortfall, Rao and Wasserman offered postcolonial theory as a framework in which non-Western practices, values and
concepts may be explored and given the status of theory in the discussions about global media ethics (2007, 30). They drew on two ethical theories, *ubuntu* from South Africa and *ahisma* from India, to show there are distinct and local differences in moral theories and how they play out across different cultures. Postcolonialism, they argue, offers a tool to analyse such theories within the specific historical and cultural conditions in which they function (2007, 38), and to integrate them into the discussion of global media ethics (2007, 46). Furthermore, postcolonialism presents a challenge to the universalisation of ethical theories 'which are not cognizant of colonial history and unequal power relations between peoples and nations' (ibid, 39).

Omojola describes Rao and Wasserman's culturally inclusive approach as 'complementarist' whereby 'Contributions from different cultural areas of the world are harmonized to produce an acceptable, broad-based system' (2008, 176). Noting the attributes that postcolonial theory brings to the debate about a transnational media ethics, he explains:

> The emphasis of this complementarist approach is that these three vital elements – the history of colonialism, indigenous values, and power differentials among nations and peoples – exert influence on the ethical conduct of professional communicators and journalists (Omojola 2008, 177).

Ward asserts that his foundation for a global media ethics is fundamentally a cross-cultural approach whereby due weight is given to African, Indian, and Eastern ethical systems when discussing the principles of media ethics (2010a, 182). In a joint paper, Christians, Ward, Rao, and Wasserman develop a theory of ethics that 'speaks to all humans' and integrates human diversity, diversity of ethical values and ethical
experiences, as well as an ethical theory that allows for variability (2008, 151-152).

According to Ward, the kind of influence postcolonial theory has on a journalist's ethical conduct directly correlates to issues of representation. He argues that one of the implications of critical and postcolonial theory for journalism ethics is that:

... journalism ethics should place more emphasis on the representation of others since misrepresentation can spark wars, demean other cultures, and support unjust social structures. Such issues go beyond factual accuracy and fairness. They require journalists to have a deeper cultural knowledge and a deeper appreciation of how language can distort “the other” (2010, 182).

The political and ethical dilemmas in the act of representing are especially daunting when viewed in the context of historically marginalised others and the master narratives that deny them 'agency, political will, or “textured subjectivity’” (Shohat 1992, quoted in Christians et al 2008, 162). One example will be analysed here to illustrate this point. This particular media narrative brings to light the textual politics of the representation of distant others, and in this instance, distant suffering. It also gives rise to the deficiencies in an ethics for news media that are insensitive to cultural differences, and tend towards universalising Western values and principles.

‘A “spectacle” of otherness’

In 2010 the Time online magazine featured a five-minute video clip and a series of photographs recounting the dying moments of an 18-year-old Sierra Leone woman as she was giving birth to her second twin (Addario 2010a). Produced by freelance photographer Lynsey Addario the images capture Mamma Sessay's 'slow and painful
death' during her birth to twins in a rural clinic in Sierra Leone (Warah 2010).

The story’s title 'Dying to Give Birth: One Woman's Tale of Maternal Mortality' suggests that Mamma Sessay will speak and tell her own tale, but it is the photographer who speaks on her behalf. Denied her own voice, Mamma Sessay is rendered a 'speechless subaltern stereotype[s]' (Christians et al 2008, 163).

The video begins with a warning that it 'contains graphic images of childbirth and death'. Addario explains that she met Mamma Sessay as she was about to deliver her second twin baby. The clip is a combination of live video footage and still photographs and Addario's voice-over. One nurse is given a few seconds to speak during the birth where she briefly explains the complications that have arisen. She is the only other person to speak aside from Addario.

After the birth of the baby, Addario focuses her camera on a large pool of blood beneath the delivery bed. As the nurse is cleaning up the blood Addario asks her, 'What is this? What is this from? The placenta?' At this point, Addario reveals her concern for Mamma Sessay's condition and explains that she did not know what to think about the bleeding. She claims that the nurses 'weren't really nervous' about Mamma Sessay's condition. Mamma Sessay's condition worsens and she is shown being carried out on a stretcher to the surgical ward. The next scene shows Mamma Sessay's sister in distress. Carrying her own baby on her back, she is crying, 'Who will take care of the twins? Who will take care of them'? The video cuts to the doctor pronouncing Mamma Sessay dead. Addario films the emotional outpouring from women at the hospital.

Addario joins the family who are escorting Mamma Sessay's body back to their village.
It is at this point she uses the collective 'we': 'We took the body back the village that night and when we arrived it was pitch black and all you could hear were screams from the villagers and weeping...'. There is a still shot of Mamma Sessay's body inside her husband's house. In one shot she is completely covered by a sheet and in another shot her face is shown. Addario continues to film at dawn when many women have gathered for the mourning of Mamma Sessay. At one point the photographer is positioned just outside of the door to the house and her camera is aimed at a woman kneeling and crying over Mamma Sessay's body. Addario then films the funeral procession as Mamma Sessay's body is taken to the burial site. Still shots show her body being placed in the ground.

Addario concludes the video explaining that Mamma Sessay is one of thousands of women who die giving birth in Sierra Leone. As she explains the barriers women face making it to a hospital to give birth another photograph shows a woman in the process of giving birth. She is nameless.

_Time_ online magazine offers another option to view Mamma Sessay's birthing ordeal and her death. This is presented as a slideshow (12 images in total). This is called, 'Maternal Mortality in Sierra Leone: The Story of Mamma' (Addario 2010b). A smaller sub-heading reads, 'One woman's journey from pregnancy to death'. The photographs are more graphic than the video because the images depict more vividly Mamma Sessay in the midst of giving birth. One image shows Mamma Sessay's face contorted and her body writhing in pain. The young woman's private nakedness is made public by another image which shows her sitting up on the birthing bed supported by a nurse, unclothed, staring into the distance with a large pool of blood beneath the bed. Each photograph has a caption offering an explanation of the image.
The story has attracted considerable critical attention. Warah questions whether the photographs would have been published if Mamma Sessay had been White and Western (Warah 2010). While it is clear that Mamma Sessay is engaged in a natural and universal human (female) experience, she is symbolically fixed as Other because hers is a birthing practice that, according to Western values, is not 'acceptable' or 'normal'. Hers is 'different', inhumane and undignified; something to fear, to be repelled by.

The media operate within a culture that, according to Hall, depends on giving things meaning and establishing social and symbolic order. It does this by marking 'difference' (1997, 237). According to this theory, the order relies on a symbolic frontier between the 'normal' and the 'deviant', the 'normal' and the 'pathological', the 'acceptable' and the 'unacceptable' (ibid, 258). There are those who belong and those who do not, and the latter are deemed as Other. In the representation of Mamma Sessay she is symbolically fixed in the category of the 'abnormal':

It facilitates the 'binding' or bonding together of all of Us who are 'normal' into one 'imagined community'; and it sends into symbolic exile all of Them – 'the Others' – who are in some way different – 'beyond the pale' (Hall 1997, 258).

Daniel Waweru, commenting on the images, argues that the young woman captured by the photographer in 'her moment of deadly suffering, is a thing, not a person' (2010). What is depicted, he declares, is a moment of 'hideous dehumanisation' (ibid). Scholars of textual ethics argue that portrayals of sufferers without agency reduce the capacity for audiences to identify with the sufferers and reduce their humanity and dignity (Chouliaraki 2006). According to discourse analysis, rhetorical strategies such as giving
a name to the sufferer and applying visual techniques of both long shots and close-ups are assumed to confer agency and humanise the sufferer (Ong 2014, 182). Both this strategy and technique were used in this case, so why does Wareru's reading of the text lead to him to claim that the photographs dehumanise Mamma Sessay?

According to Brand and Pinchevski, when the face of the Other is used and reduced to 'a marker of pain and suffering' it is dehumanising because it strips the person of the 'possibility of an autonomous address' (2013, 118). Mamma Sessay's ordeal is therefore rendered into 'a “spectacle” of otherness' (Hall 1997, 231-232). For Härting, this 'full frontal view' of pain and death is typical of 'hegemonic journalistic practices of representing African suffering' (2008, 63), and 'typical of the reportage of postcolonial Africa that has the effect of dramatising 'the African corpse as a sublime spectacle of empathy' (2008, 63 & 71). The 'too real, too shocking or too mesmerizing' images are both captivating and crippling (Brand and Pinchevski 2013, 118). Mamma Sessay is both reduced and magnified into the equivalent of misery and abjection: 'visualized as the picture of suffering’ (ibid).

Addario's images defile Mamma Sessay's body, setting hers apart from the viewer's 'clean and proper' body, characterising Sessay's as monstrous and inhuman (Spurr 1993, 81). This rhetorical debasement of the cultural Other is part of the repertoire for colonial discourse, according to David Spurr (1993), a repertoire that infiltrates representations of the non-Western world. For example, debasement or images such as disease, famine, superstition, and savage custom, were constantly reproduced in colonial discourse 'both as a justification for European intervention and as the necessary iteration of a fundamental difference between colonizer and colonized' (ibid, 78).
A postcolonial reading of the images in *Time* shows how such representations can be 'ideological tools that can serve to reinforce systems of inequality and subordination and sustain colonialist or neocolonialist projects' (Baldonado 1996). According to Grosfoguel, these constructions occur because there is a ‘legacy of the imperial and racialized structures of perception that remain repressed’ in both the humanitarianism and media discourses (2008, 62). Such constructions have the effect of alienating and marginalising non-Western cultures, and in some instances, demonising, or in this case, dehumanising the subject.

A semiotic reading of the images reveals a familiar binary in media representation of Africa, that is, primitive/civilised. The myth used and repeated here is that Africa is primitive or uncivilised (Siapera 2010, 121). In his analysis of such colonial narratives, Spurr refers to a primitive-civilised continuum whereby distant others are portrayed more favourably if they are closer to 'civilized (i.e. Western) norms' (1993, quoted in Ibelema 2014, 169). This 'perceptual yardstick' helps to explain why the right to privacy of a woman giving birth in a place such as Sierra Leone is assumed not to carry as much weight as a woman giving birth from a 'civilised' country; or that her death can be unquestionably photographed, filmed and broadcast for global consumption; and that her family/community mourning her can be given unquestionable exposure.

Constructing a 'coherent representation' out of 'incomprehensible realities' is one of the greatest challenges for journalists (Spurr 1993, 3), a challenge that becomes even more difficult when the Western journalist confronts such realities in the non-Western world. The cultural, ideological and even literary presuppositions that construct such representations inevitably position the Other in specific and often troubling ways (ibid).
A way forward

Subverting dominant discourses that lead to constructions of 'otherness' is a difficult challenge for Western journalism to overcome. Richard Terdiman's investigation of dominant discourses emphasises this challenge (quoted in Thieme 2001). For Terdiman, dominant discourses may be internally fragmented like any social discourse, but the fact that they operate as a system 'naturalizes our blindness concerning the alternative discourses which would contest the stability of its stabilizing norms' (ibid, 4).

According to Arturo Escobar, Western modernity has systematically organised and transformed non-Western regions (Asia, Africa, and Latin America) into European constructs, i.e 'Third World and underdeveloped' (1995, 7). For Escobar the problem stems from the fact that the media interpret 'Third World' situations and people in terms of 'development' which is a discourse that was constructed in the early post-World War II period by the 'advanced societies of the time' whose mission was to push economic progress onto the 'less economically accomplished countries of the world' (1995, 4). He argues that the 'regimes of representation' have been brought about by this development discourse (ibid, 10):

These terms – such as overpopulation, the permanent threat of famine, poverty, illiteracy, and the like – operate as the most common signifiers, already stereotyped and burdened with development signifieds. Media images of the Third World are the clearest example of developmentalist representations. These images just do not seem to go away (ibid, 12).

In other words, development and modernity are the basis on which Western media narratives about Africa are constructed. Other cultural worlds which fail to measure up
against the markers of development and modernity, are ranked as inferior, backward and undeveloped. For Africa, this has led to labels such as 'The hopeless continent' (2000), or when there are signs of economic growth, 'Africa rising' (2011). Other constructions include the nameless 'Dying African'; the 'White saviour' narrative; the prominence of Euro-American experts\(^\text{21}\); a West-centric narrative structure; and a one-dimensional subject portrayal, each perpetuating the 'hegemonic idea of the West's superiority' (Escobar 1995, 8).

According to the theory of global ethics, becoming ethically responsive towards the Other requires journalists to pay attention to issues of representation and to 'reconceive their role as major players in cross-cultural discourse' (Christians et al 2008, 167). In this respect journalists see themselves as 'active inquirers who should seek to provide nuanced and informed interpretations of their world, while being fully aware of the difficulties of representing others' (ibid, 167).

Media scholars have suggested a number of approaches that journalists can use to de-magnify, de-centre and disrupt dominant narratives; to legitimate different voices and worldviews and bring them into the mainstream arena. In the age where there are vast resources from which a journalist can draw to collate stories — a phenomenon that Michael Schudson describes as ‘an absolutely earthshaking transformation’ — journalists can more easily produce heterogeneous, polysemic journalism (2013, 198). Applying a broad interpretive framework for thinking about and understanding the world would mean journalists could explore more deeply ‘the systemic nature of human

\(^{21}\) Nanjala Nyabola commented on a tweet by The Guardian on 24 December 2013 which was used to draw attention to the conflict in South Sudan at the time. The tweet read: 'the first western journalist into South Sudan...' Nyabola argued that the 'casual descriptor' created a 'hierarchy of knowledge that appears to be largely based on race' and 'inadvertently disregarded the lived experiences of the thousands of literate, experienced South Sudanese writers, journalists and informants' (2014 ).
relations’ and ‘the cultural fabric in which human relations are imbedded or woven’ (Fillmore 1995). But to do so, the ‘universal, standard voice’ would need to give way to multiple voices (Matheson 2000, 564).

For Maria Balinska it is by seeking out the grassroots perspectives of ordinary people that mainstream Western journalism can become more insightful and empathic (2010). Christians suggests that journalists' interpretations take 'seriously lives that are loaded with multiple interpretations and grounded in cultural complexity' (2011, 71). In other words, they should seek to provide 'thick' analysis with stories that have 'depth, detail, emotionality, nuance, and coherence' (ibid). This would require that journalists develop a 'concomitant drive to understand' why people or countries have faults or experience suffering, and 'what the context is, and how they link up with their strengths and virtues' (Midgley 1998, quoted in Richards 2009a, 16). For Said, all representations are situational and based on interpretation that is ‘affiliative’, therefore no representation can be objective (1981, 155). However, when portrayals are more nuanced and take nothing for granted, and are 'answerable to an uncoercive contact with the culture and the people being studied', then they are less likely to cause complex forms of harm (ibid).

Conclusion

The representation of Mamma Sessay in *Time* is an example of how the annihilation and erasure of the subaltern's voice continues into the 21st Century. It shows that the situation has not altered much since Hall posed the question: 'have the repertoires of representation around “difference” and “otherness” changed or do earlier traces remain intact in contemporary society?' (1997, 225). This prompts perhaps yet another question
posed this time by journalist Jacki Lyden: 'are we human enough in our storytelling?' (Lyden 2009).

Journalists like Lynsey Addario are no doubt driven by a profound sense of social and ethical responsibility. In Addario's case it is to highlight the injustice of Sierra Leone's high rate of maternal mortality, but it begs the question: if the subaltern could speak, what would she say?

In this chapter I have pointed to the pitfalls Western journalists face in portraying distant others. I also drew attention to the disturbing role the local Rwandan media played in the lead up to and during the genocide in 1994, and the initial lack of interest from the Western media in what was happening in Rwanda at that time. The review emphasised the critical role journalism plays in imagining and framing far-away others and explored the power of media narratives, and how they 'create and reinforce assumptions, and structures of subjugation and domination; ‘them’ and ‘us” (Mahadeo and McKinney 2007). In the Western media this binary is played out as 'Us', who represent the ‘global racial/ethnic hierarchy of Europeans’, and 'Them', the non-Europeans (Grosfoguel 2008, 4).

The review drew on some key theories of representation and summarised some of the current discussions regarding global media ethics, particularly those that suggest looking outside traditional and dominant paradigms for constructing stories in non-Western contexts. Scholarly investigations of media texts have revealed many cases of problematic representations of distant others that have resulted in stereotypical portrayals, lack of mutual recognition and decontextualisation of the issues.
Having exposed dominant news discourses that lead to constructions of ‘otherness’ in reporting the realities of Africa, the study now goes on to explore a way forward for an ethical cross-cultural reportage that represents African subjects in a dignified and responsible manner.
As mentioned in the introduction, there are two parallel and interdependent action research studies as part of this PhD. This first study focused on the first research question: What lessons can be drawn from African local social practices for reducing the potential for media harm and avoiding constructions of 'otherness'? Its aim was to examine how a group of Rwandans applied their own knowledge and skills, as well as borrowed journalistic tools and resources, to facilitate their own storytelling. The significance of this first study was how it engaged marginalised voices in the research process and incorporated the 'local know-how' and the insights gleaned from engagement at the grassroots level into a theory of practice (Conquergood 2002, 146). In this way it engaged with what Foucault called 'subjugated knowledges' (1980, 81-84); that is, knowledges neglected, excluded and repressed by dominant culture because they are 'rooted in embodied experience, orality, and local contingencies' (Conquergood 2002, 146).

The media project was set up in an inner-city slum area of Rwanda's capital, Kigali, not only to stimulate local content creation using radio documentary production, but also to examine individualised methods and styles brought to the practice of journalistic storytelling by the participants. Therefore, as the facilitator of this project I avoided teaching the formulaic principles of journalistic storytelling.
The framework used for this project was community or citizens' media, with a particular focus on allowing the methods and techniques in which to tell stories to be shaped by the local context, rather than by imposing Western modes of practice. The method used for facilitating this project was critical pedagogy. The project developed into a two-way education process whereby I passed on radio production skills to a group of participants and the participants educated me in ways that led to adjustments in my own practice. These insights were used in my own practice in Part II.

There are two chapters in this part of the thesis. Chapter Two explains the fieldwork methodology and methods of the grassroots media project. The research took place in three stages. Stage one involved the interaction with local people prior to setting up the media project and stage two involved the implementation of the project. These two stages are dealt with in Chapter Three, which explains what happened and presents the data. It also covers the third stage of the project, which involves reflecting on the outcomes in order to identify and analyse new theory about telling Rwandan stories. The insights gained will inform the second action research study which is dealt with in Part II.
Introduction

In this chapter I discuss the epistemology, theory, methods, and ethical protocols that are integral to the methodology of the grassroots media project. The chapter gives a detailed account of the theory that influenced the methods used and then explains what these methods were. Some of the methods used for this action research project were drawn from the qualitative research paradigm such as participant and non-participant observation, unstructured interviews, and a fieldwork diary. Methods such as self-observation, self-reflection and self-evaluation are drawn from the action research paradigm, while other methods have been drawn from local social practices.

The chapter addresses the ethical concerns with the study, in particular the practical and ethical considerations of doing collaborative research with people on the margins, and the challenges of working in Rwanda. It presents a case for why a traditional research paradigm was unsuitable and inappropriate to carry out this project. It then gives an overview of the form of action research that was used to carry out this study, outlining the principles, values, and ways of researching that reflect a commitment to critical and emancipatory action research, as well as participatory action research.\(^\text{22}\)

\(^{22}\) While participatory action research can be defined as critical emancipatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart 2007, 272), I separate them here for the purposes of isolating their individual characteristics to explain how they have shaped the methodology of this project.
Traditional research paradigm

Renegade humanities and social science researchers, otherwise known as 'postpositivist' researchers, have come up with an alternative research practice (Lather 1991). They call it anti-oppressive research (Brown & Strega 2005) in reaction against an assumed research paradigm that is 'oppressive' by nature.

Marginalised feminist and native/subaltern ethnographers, in particular, have been instrumental not only in drawing attention to oppressive research practices but also in bringing a heightened awareness to 'self-other field relationships' and unmasking the limitations of modern knowledges and their link to coloniality by raising ethical and political questions on the colonial and masculine nature of anthropological scholarship (Foley 2002, 474). Theirs has been part of the challenge to traditional modes of representation and to the legitimacy of formal scientific realist ethnography.

It was, after all, ethnography’s 'will to know' or 'will to dominate' (De Certeau 1984, quoted in Kanneh 1998, 20) that led to a 'conventional visual/spacial fixing of the Other' (Pratt 1984, quoted in Kanneh 1998, 121). This emerged from the colonial 'voyeuristic White searches' that exotified and vilified the Other when scientists carried out their duties to describe, inform and imagine human life-worlds. Hall called this kind of science 'ethnographic voyeurism' (1997, 268). This was a kind of persistent scientific curiosity not just to explore, but to come to know the 'strange, different, exotic', and to 'classify and dissect every detail... in the pursuit of Truth' (ibid).

Such traditional research practices have resulted in suspicion, lack of trust and a feeling of contempt towards outside researchers (Tuhiwai Smith 2002). Despite what are often good intentions, research has led to the reproduction of colonial and imperial practices
(Salmon 2007, 983). The lack of acknowledgement, let alone understanding, of non-Western world views in positivist methodologies has led to this reproduction of colonial and imperial practices and neocolonialism in various research relations (ibid, 982). This is evidenced in the paternalism in research that brings in outsiders to teach or empower people in marginal locations, and positions the researcher as the 'ideal knower' or 'expert' (Potts & Brown 2005, 263); or in the promise of 'emancipatory research' that is based on the 'enlightened Westerner and omnipotent saviour' bringing tools of emancipation to the 'unenlightened other...' (Mohan 2006, 162). It is a kind of patronising attitude of: "they” need to be empowered according to our agenda' (ibid, 164). This is a kind of research that reproduces the 'altruistic missionary/explorer position' (Mohanty, quoted in herising 2005, 134), and ultimately and implicitly devalues the knowledge that is always being produced within marginal locations.

Positivist research or humanistic approaches position the researcher as the expert, and 'the primary and often only, person with the power and ability to create knowledge, to act on that knowledge, and to profit from this creation' (Potts & Brown 2005, 262). Practising within a positivist research paradigm puts the researcher in the position of speaking 'for others' (Alcoff 1991; Denzin 2003, 272), thus ignoring or denying 'the agency' of research participants (Liamputtong 2010, 23). Within this paradigm, those who are being researched are constructed as the researcher’s 'object of knowledge' whereby they are researched 'on' (Mohanty, quoted in herising 2005, 135). It is this asymmetrical kind of research that has allowed the privileged knower or the 'ideal knower' to appropriate knowledge from 'below' and advance the classes above (ibid, 132).
As has been outlined, the objective of this project was to value the knowledge that is produced in marginal locations, therefore a break from the dominant world view was required.

Action research

As explained in the introduction, the aim of this study was to investigate how to improve Western journalistic practices in Africa and the representations resulting from this practice. As a practitioner/researcher engaged in telling Africa's stories, action research was the ideal approach because its focus is on improving practice. According to Carr and Kemmis, action research is a form of 'self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out' (1986, 162).

The process of action research involves 'action, evaluation and critical reflection and - based on the evidence gathered - changes in practice are then implemented' (Koshy 2010, 1). While action research is participative and collaborative and undertaken by individuals with a common purpose (ibid), in some cases it is a 'solitary process of systematic self-reflection' (Kemmis & McTaggart 2007, 277).

For this this particular study, the process involved a combination of participation and collaboration as well as self-focus and self-study. Admittedly, the motivation to conduct the research was to improve my own practice, which points to a very liberal, individualistic ideological orientation to the research (Jordan 2009, 17). However, the objectives of the study are much broader, and the effects of an improved practice are
likely to reverberate throughout the whole media process, potentially improving the experience and encounters distant others have with Western media practitioners, and resulting in a representation that is less alienating. Then of course, there are the empowering effects for the participants of the grassroots media project who were able to tell their stories on their own terms (Stonebanks 2008).

Considering the nature of the research topic and the location, it was critical to use methods that are locally specific and responsive to the social situation (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, 2; Serres 1995, 91, quoted in Zembylas 2002). Therefore, the research process itself needed to be 'fluid' and open to change to respond to different situations and the needs of participants (Manzo and Brightbill 2007, 38). The evaluation and critical reflection components of the action research approach allow for flexibility and adaptation, and ultimately, an improved practice, or a change in practice (Parkin 2009). In this sense action research works as a 'dynamic' methodology and invites 'invention' (Brown and Strega 2005, 267; Dadds and Hart 2001). This kind of research allows researcher/practitioners to move continually between theory and practice and to reflect on how innovative and critical research theories might be applied, and then modified as a result of their practice experience with those on the margins (Brown and Strega 2005, 9).

Rather than use action research as a fixed method or procedure, McTaggart insists that it be seen as 'a series of commitments to observe and problematise through practice a

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23 This aspect of empowerment is based on agency: the capability to act and the ability to speak about, and to speak for oneself. But as Jethro Pettit argues, empowerment is a multidimensional process that requires 'changes in the economic, political and social conditions that reproduce poverty and exclusion' (2012, 4). This project did not have the capacity to examine all spheres of power - politics, economics, society and culture, as well as the actors, institutions, spaces and levels where it operates – in order to support all the processes of empowerment in media representation (ibid, 5). The project did aim however to identify and address the power relations between myself and the participants and subvert the traditional power hierarchy between professional researcher and research subjects. In this way, the project supported the positive expressions of power influencing self-worth, encouraging the ability to do something, and building collective understanding and action (Rowlands 1997).
series of principles for conducting social enquiry’ (1996, 248). Koshy et al note that it is the 'emerging nature and flexibility that are the hallmarks of action research', therefore it is a process that cannot be pre-determined (2010, 8). The different stages of the research can overlap and initial ideas and plans can become irrelevant in the light of learning through interaction and experience (ibid, 6).

There are a whole range of approaches within the action research model, and each has a different orientation; yet they carry with them the same ideals that seek to 'involve, empower and improve aspects of participants' social world' (Koshy et al 2010, 9). The approach used varies according to the context of the study, the researcher's beliefs, the strategies they employ and the methods they use.

As a White, female non-African researcher/practitioner it was necessary to become critically aware of my positionality and to decolonise my 'local and contextual understandings', so that I could embrace multiple realities (Gautam & Luitel 2013, 105 & 111). The most important goal was that of not perpetuating systems of oppression. Kovach lists a set of critical questions that can be used to guide research and avoid paternalism in research that is initiated by outsiders (2005, 26. His emphasis):

- Is the research goal manipulative or helpful for the community?
- Are the methods culturally appropriate?
- What are the collectivist ethical considerations?
- Who is driving the research and what is the purpose?
- Am I creating space or taking space?
These critical questions were used to build the methodology of this action research study and are addressed in the following sections. In order to avoid domination and cultural inappropriateness I chose an anti-oppressive theoretical framework in which to set up the project. This entailed a genuine commitment to inclusiveness and epistemological pluralism. Integrating other ways of knowing within the research process was critical for the project to achieve its outcomes.

Participatory action research

This action research study required an analysis and investigation that was both reflective and critical, as well as collaborative and participatory. It was for this reason that I used a collaborative form of action research that relied on shared experience, dialogue, feedback, and exchange with others. A collaborative form of inquiry is one where all involved in the research 'engage together in democratic dialogue as coresearchers and cosubjects' (Heron 1996; Reason & Heron 1995). Kemmis and McTaggart describe participatory action research as:

a social process of collaborative learning realized by groups of people who join together in changing the practices through which they interact in a shared social world in which, for better or worse, we live with the consequences of one another's actions (2007, 277).

In this study the participants became co-researchers to the extent that they contributed significantly to generating ideas and theories towards developing a more culturally and socially responsive form of journalism to tell Rwanda's stories. Their role as co-researchers and co-subjects meant that they were participating in journalism practice as we examined it collaboratively. In terms of the spiral of self-reflective cycles of action
research, the participants engaged in planning a change, acting and observing the
process and consequences of the change (stages one and two of the project), then as the
one who initiated the inquiry I continued the next steps of the cycle of reflecting on the
processes and consequences (stage three of the project), replanning, acting and
observing again (stages four and five) (Kemmis & McTaggart 2007, 276). Therefore,
part of the process was carried out collaboratively and the final stages involved a
'solitary process of systematic self-reflection' (ibid, 277. See below, Part II). The real
measure of this process was the mutual learning that took place.

Critical emancipatory action research

Critical action research has a strong focus on emancipation and overcoming power
imbalance (Ahmed 2009, 28). This kind of research subverts the traditional power
hierarchy between professional researcher and research subjects by privileging the
collaboration aspect, with an overall aim to produce relevant research that is sensitive to
the locale, and that is empowering to both the researcher and participants. Rather than
an implied hierarchy between researcher and subjects it is a collaboration involving a
participatory partnership (Kemmis & McTaggart 2005), where all who are involved
became 'coparticipants in a common moral project' (Denzin 2003, 113).

To challenge the 'status quo relations of power and inequities' in research practices
(Ladson-Billings 2000, 263), it requires more than engaging in methods that are
'respectful, sensitive and responsive' (Salmon 2007, 983). According to Ladson-Billings
it involves interrogating and attempting to weed out our own 'epistemological biases'
(Ladson-Billings 2003, 8). To do this, researchers, in particular outside researchers,
must be willing, or at least open to 'change their view of reality and their thinking and
valuing' (Muwanga-Zake 2010, 71). This willingness to be open to other world views, and acknowledge that there are multiple perspectives and multiple truths, can prevent invalid and inappropriate research paradigms being imported into non-Western contexts, because underpinning the methodology will be the conceptual systems that reflect the point of view of those participating in the research (Gilchrist 1997, 80). Denzin et al (2008) and Gay et al (2006) insist that the 'local contexts, including participants' Indigenous Knowledge Systems, priorities, and culture, as well as the local environment' be considered when cultivating the 'politically ethical grounds' out of which methodologies emerge from (quoted in Muwanga-Zake 2010, 70; herising 2005, 131).

Enacting this kind of research attitude can be particularly challenging because a Western researcher's conception of the person tends to be 'substantialistic' or 'individualistic', implying autonomy and independence, whereas Indigenous/African people's conception of the person is relationalistic, implying interdependence, solidarity and responsibility (Schmid 2001, 218-219). As Schmid notes, these are 'contrary, even conflicting' understandings of the human being, but despite this, he believes it is possible to have a conception of the human being from both perspectives, where the individual is 'embedded in the interconnectedness, the social nature of the person' (ibid, 219). Schmid calls this approach the 'We-perspective', which stresses the importance of the group: 'It is in groups where we learn to be authentic and where it really is the task to be authentic' (ibid, 229). And so the paradigm shift in this specific context is that the researcher adopts a 'truly social approach' to her research (ibid, 230).

This kind of research is not 'about a topic or about people'; it is 'research with oneself and with others' (Milan 2010, 858). It is aligned with the participatory and participant
perspective approach outlined by Russell Bishop (1998). There are several characteristics to this approach: firstly, the researcher connects with the members of the community with whom he or she is working through an embodied and moral commitment towards the community; secondly, the researcher relinquishes control; and thirdly, the researcher develops a compassionate understanding (Bishop 1998, 203). Such research upholds particular research principles which more resemble the 'collective humanism in Africa (collectivist), and less so the individualist democratic ideals of the West' (de Beer 2003, 108).

Local Social Practices

While there is certainly diversity within Rwandan society which is reflected in differences in beliefs, morals, customs and attitudes, there are some identified common cultural values and practices that more broadly reflect the communitarian ethos of many African societies. The social structures of African, and likewise Rwandan societies have distinctive communitarian features such as a sense of community, mutual support, collective good and shared ends (Gyekye 1995; Hiruy & Mwanri 2014). There is a Kinyarwanda proverb that speaks to this: *Umugabo umwe agerwa kuri nyina*, which indicates that 'no man is an island' (NURC/Itorero Ry'Igihugu n.d., 19). This sense of solidarity is often commented upon by outsiders, particularly those who come from societies which prioritise the needs of the individual over the group needs of a community.

In Rwanda, there is perhaps no other time when this solidarity is more apparent than during the mourning period of someone's death. Regardless of Western influences on societies such as Rwanda, people still come together at this time assisting and
supporting their neighbours and fellow community members for the days and nights that the mourning period lasts\textsuperscript{24}. This community solidarity and interdependence is evident in many other African communities, particularly when someone dies in a community or village (Ezenweke and Nwadialor 2013, 65). It is common for people to set aside their own personal business to mourn with the bereaved and assist in the burial process; an act that is done 'not by sanction' but 'in solidarity' (ibid).

There is an activity in Rwanda that illustrates very clearly this spirit of collectivism or sense of community, and emphasises the importance of solidarity over and above the activity and needs of the individual\textsuperscript{25}. It is called \textit{umuganda} and it means 'coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome' (Rwanda Governance Board 2014). \textit{Umuganda} is a form of community work and has its roots in traditional Rwandan culture where it was common practice for people to call upon those around to help them complete various tasks. Metaphorically, \textit{umuganda} can be interpreted as carrying the meaning that a community working together holds up a nation because the actual word '\textit{umuganda}' refers to a pole used in the construction of a house where the pole supports the roof (rwandapedia 2014). \textit{Umuganda} is also related to the word \textit{umubyizi} which means 'a day set aside by friends and family to help each other' (ibid). This sense of cooperation is found in other Kinyarwanda words such as \textit{ubudehe}. Such an action involves neighbours helping neighbours in tilling land (NURC/Itorero Ry'Igihugu n.d., 20).

\textsuperscript{24} The obligation to assist neighbours during mourning periods was demonstrated to me when one of the storytellers received a knock at his gate at 2am following the death in the neighbour's family. Simply by being a neighbour he was called on to assist with the mourning process.

\textsuperscript{25} Leopold Senghor's analysis on African communitarianism shows that Africans view the community as more important than the individuals who make up the community, thus, community-led decisions and activities take precedence over those of the individual (1964, 49). However, it is worth noting that more recently, scholars of communitarian ethical and political theory have addressed the tension between the individual and the community. See Kwame Gyekye's work on a moderate or restricted version of communitarianism which 'gives accommodation...to communal values as well as to values of individuality, to social commitments as well as to duties of self-attention' (1992).
Past and current governments of Rwanda, since independence, have used this Indigenous practice of neighbourliness as a way to achieve development goals. Since 2007 umuganda has been enshrined in law and takes place the last Saturday of every month and involves Rwandan citizens spending the morning working on particular community projects determined by the government. The Rwandan Government claims that 'the concept is related to the idea of solidarity and a communal sense of living' (Republic of Rwanda 2014).

Tragically, the concept of umuganda was used sinisterly when it was borrowed by the genocidaires during the mass killings of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 1994. In this context, 'clearing out the weeds' meant killing the Tutsis and Tutsi sympathisers (Uwimbabazi 2012, 48). People were told that participating in the attacks was their responsibility to uphold their umuganda duty (ibid, 49). Tools used for umuganda (machetes and hoes) were used to kill fellow neighbours and community folk (ibid).

The practice of umuganda today is questionably hierarchical. A number of scholars have examined the hierarchical nature of contemporary umuganda where the immediate needs of the people, especially the poor, are neglected and ignored, thus thwarting the principles of real participation (Uwimbabazi 2012, i). Although hierarchy existed in pre-colonial times in Rwanda within the centralised kingdom, it was not until colonial rule that umuganda became mandatory and less centred on community and individual gain. As Penine Uwimbabazi shows, accountability was to the colonial master, not the...
community, as it had been before colonialism (2012, 50). This continued post-independence where *umuganda* was used to control the people and mobilise communities for political gain (ibid). In effect, the 'centuries-old practice and the socio-economic basis of *umuganda*', used to 'improve social well-being by mutual interdependency' was destroyed by the colonial state (ibid).

*Umuganda*, in its traditional sense of the word, reflected 'mutual assistance, mutual social responsibility, social obligation, self-help and traditional strategies for development', demonstrating broader African cultural practices of collaboration and reciprocity among communities (ibid, 22). It is in this context that *umuganda* is referenced here, to highlight a commitment to community-solidarity within Rwandan society.

The conception of community in traditional African societies is expressed in the following proverb: *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* - a person depends on persons to be a person (Shutte 1994, 8). Similarly, a quote from Mbiti reveals the communion of persons in African culture, 'I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore I am' (1989, 141). The African philosophy, *ubuntu*, is often referenced to illustrate relationality and the general African communitarian principles. Mbigi and Maree explain *ubuntu* as

a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity, on survival issues, that is so central to the survival of African communities, who as a result of the poverty and deprivation have to survive through brotherly group care and not individual self-reliance... (1995, 1).
It is on this basis that Mbigi and Maree attribute five basic principles to *ubuntu*: respect, dignity, solidarity, compassion and survival (ibid, 111).

The interpretations of *ubuntu* differ only slightly in meaning according to ethnic groupings. For example, the *ubuntu/obuntu* concept in Uganda means ‘an inner feeling of a person, which involves the feeling of oneness, love, tenderness in one’s 'heart' and care for other humans’ (Batuuka & Nkanda 2006, 65). It is said that a person can ‘possess’ *obuntu*, which would mean they are ‘a generous person who cares for others with a rational sense of belonging to a society’ (ibid). This is similar to the meaning of *ubuntu* in the Kinyarwanda language of Rwanda. The opposite to *ubuntu* is an individualistic/self-seeking view of the world, which when considered within the concept of *ubuntu* can be viewed as leading to selfish actions (ibid).

It is no small matter that Rwandans, and Africans more widely, call one other 'brother' and 'sister' when there is no blood relation. Calling a person 'brother' or 'sister' implies there is a universal human brotherhood or unity, and ultimately, a 'common membership of one universal human family' (Gyekye 2010). As mentioned earlier in Chapter One, the idea of brotherhood translates into social and moral virtues such as hospitality, generosity, concern for others, and communal feeling (ibid). Kenneth Kaunda explains that even amongst strangers there is an inherent bond which comes from the belief that *we are wrapped up together in this bundle of life* and therefore a bond already exists between myself and a stranger before we open our mouths to talk' (Kaunda, 1966, 32).

This belief in brother- and sister-hood, as well as the inherent bond that exists between humans, denotes a natural sociality or relationality of human beings in African societies, and this is clearly demonstrated in Rwanda. Many African maxims or proverbs speak to
values of mutual helpfulness (humanistic), collective responsibility (communitarian), cooperation, interdependence (interconnectedness), and reciprocal obligations. These values and practices were often spoken about during meetings and workshops when the participants would spontaneously recite proverbs or folktales (in Kinyarwanda these are called umugani which means 'once upon a time'). These stories would often emphasise the cultural values of Rwandan society mentioned above.

I understand that there is a real danger here of conceptualising what Nyamnjoh argues is a 'romantic reconstruction of the precolonial situation and a frozen view' of traditional African values (2002, 65). There are, as Nyamnjoh explains, cultural influences that have 'reshaped (and continue to shape) African identity', thus challenging the view that African societies are strictly communalistic with no emphasis on opposing values such as personal freedom (ibid). But rather than see African societies as static and unchanging, the point of identifying particular values that have been described by some scholars as inherently African is to see if and how they are applied by contemporary Rwandans and how they might be transferred into journalism practice.

The location and socio-cultural context were central factors when determining the methodology for this research project. Given the location of the research and the nature of the research problem, it was especially critical to choose a research process that complemented the environment, culture and people. Action research allowed for refining methods to suit the situation/context; the process made room for local social practices and customs to become methods for reflection and evaluation. And as I mentioned in the introduction, the guidelines set out in Australia's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research relating to research in other countries ensured that regard for the beliefs, customs and cultural heritage of those participating were
acknowledged and considered in the design and conduct of the research.

The grassroots media project: the methodology

Part of the social problem being addressed in this part of the study is the lack of control distant others have over how they are represented in the mainstream Western media. With this in mind, the grassroots media project was set up to give people who may be marginalised or disenfranchised in media terms control over how they and their communities are represented. It was also an observational study whereby I would examine the individualised methods and styles brought to the practice of journalistic storytelling that reflected the cultural values of those involved in the study.

The concept

The media project involved a small group of people in marginal locations in Rwanda's capital, Kigali. The focus was on the margins because it is here where there is a ‘transformative potential’ that offers those who are located there their own agency (herising 2005, 144; hooks 1989, 206). The participants were given audio recorders and accessories (USB cable, windsock and mini-tripod), and additional skills to facilitate their own storytelling. The word 'additional' here is particularly important as it implies that human beings have inherent storytelling abilities and qualities. However, within economically and socially marginalised locations, often what is lacking is the technology and a certain range of skills specific to the technology that allow voices to be heard amidst the masses. In speaking about the poor, Arjun Appadurai regards 'resources with which to give "voice"' as 'one of their gravest lacks' (2004, 63). The project's focus on empowerment and change is aligned with the principles and values of action research (Carr and Kemmis 1986; Lewin 1951).
One of the project's goals was to re-balance the 'unevenness of cross-cultural exchange' (Adinoyi-Ojo 2002, 49), and create a space for the 'spoken about' to speak (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, 29). This was done by shifting the professionals' power to shape media representations and hand over to people at the grassroots level the opportunity and the resources to tell the stories they want to tell, on their own terms, using methods that are situation-specific. As Nancy Thumin explains, it is about shifting the 'balance of who has the opportunity to represent themselves' (2012, 88), with the aim of engendering pluralism in what has been described as a predominantly 'one-way conversation in which the West speaks and the Rest listen' (Morley & Robins 1995, 126). But rather than adopt Western journalism methods entirely, the project made way for the participants to draw on local methods and practices during the storytelling process.

Upon recognising the inequalities of the global media sphere - including what Jenkins (2006) calls the 'participation gap' or what is more commonly known as the 'digital divide' - the aim of the project was not only to find ways of opening up 'spaces for new voices to speak' within the various media spaces (Couldry 2006, 97), but to challenge existing and dominant ways of representing the world (Denzin 2003, 7-8).

Transnational feminist and postcolonial theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty argued almost three decades ago: 'It is time to move beyond the Marx who found it possible to say: They cannot represent themselves: they must be represented' (1984, 354). Twenty two years later, Homi Bhaba expressed a similar sentiment:

Freedom of expression is an individual right; the right to narrate, if you will permit me poetic license, is an enunciative right rather than an expressive right - the dialogue, communal or group right to address
and be addressed, to signify and be interpreted, to speak and be heard, to make a sign and to know that it will receive respectful attention (quoted in Huddart 2006, 98).

The grassroots media project aligned itself with critical media scholarship and the field of social justice studies precisely because the driving force was the notion that 'the right to communicate' is a 'fundamental human right' (Jansen 2011, 1). The project was also set up to recognise other forms of expertise ‘outside the walls of academia’ that could make a meaningful and lasting contribution to journalism theory (Ang 2006, 194). In doing so, it was anticipated that the research process and outcomes would challenge 'dominant, oppressive ideologies and discourses’ and learn instead ‘oppositional, liberatory ones' (Foley 1999, 4).

There are a diverse range of media projects that have engaged people at the grassroots/community level in participatory co-production media ventures. Such projects have aimed to shift the balance of who it is that has the opportunity to speak and represent themselves while widening the existing range and types of representation that are in circulation (Thumin 2012, 88). They are about balancing who has the authority to tell stories, enhancing the voices of those excluded from 'naming the world' (Tufte 2005, 173), and undoing restrictions on the Other to speak for him or herself (Langton 1993). They also have the potential and capacity to create counter-narratives that challenge the 'simplified versions of reality' in the mainstream media (Pottier 2002, 203), as well as disrupt the colonising and stigmatising representations (Jackson 2002, 134-135). This media project joins this 'long-standing tradition of participatory, community-based, grassroots, alternative media' that are centred on action and change (Higgins 2011, 4), and like these media, this project was also organised around goals of “voice” and inclusion' (Spurgeon et al 2009, 276). Sharing the same ideals as citizens'
media it sought to democrtise communication by being participatory, and giving agency to the media's voiceless (Rodriguez 2002, 86).

Why radio production?

Storytelling plays a significant role in all human life regardless of culture, race or nationality, and throughout Africa, as Michael Traber observes, '...storytelling is fundamental to human life and at the heart of communication...' (Traber 1991, 1). Radio storytelling, it could be said, mimics the tradition of African ‘orature’ (Thiong’o 1986). With its own distinct power to illustrate the oral story through mental pictures, radio documentary is a medium that uses audio to evoke the other senses, much like oral storytelling.

John Biewen explains how 'stories told for the ear have a special power' and, he suggests, more of 'an ethical sensitivity than any other medium' (Biewen 2010, 14). Biewen calls them 'imageless stories' that more closely resemble the oldest form of storytelling, the stories told around a fire, 'From the mouth to the ear, with the pictures formed in the imagination of the listener. Of the modern media, radio comes the closest to that primordial form of storytelling' (ibid).

While radio documentary or radio storytelling is often seen as the second cousin, or even inferior to film, its advantage over the latter is that it is less intrusive, less expensive and relatively easy to learn. Like film, radio is among the mediums of information and communications technology brought to Africa from the West, but since its inception it has become ubiquitous throughout the whole of the continent. Radio stations and radio programs are abundant and popular among both urban and rural dwellers.
One of the most popular radio programs in Rwanda is a soap opera series called *Musekeweya*, translated as *New Dawn*, hosted by Radio La Benevolencija (La Benevolencija 2013). It is estimated that 85 per cent of radio listeners across the country tune in each week to listen (Oxfam International 2013). The Radio La Benevolencija initiative uses soap opera to help towards healing community and ethnic tensions and spread messages of reconciliation. Scientific evaluations have shown that the radio program has had an enormous peace-building impact on the population of Rwanda (La Benevolencija 2013). This particular radio program could be seen as an antidote to the Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), a Rwandan radio station that played a significant role during the 1994 Rwandan genocide fuelling racial hostilities between the Hutu and Tutsi, as mentioned earlier.

The uptake of radio production and listening among Rwandans, in particular to radio shows such as *Musekeweya*, shows that radio is a valued medium and one that perhaps resonates with traditional storytelling methods. Another reason for radio's popularity in this context could also be because radio programs tend to use Indigenous African languages as well as European languages.

Short format media productions such as news and current affairs are more common on Rwandan radio stations than long-format radio documentaries. Whether this is due to lack of resources and skills is unclear, but judging from the success of *Musekeweya*, radio - whether it be news, music or commentary - is clearly an appreciated and well-received medium among the general population. Like radio drama, the radio documentary has the possibility to create new connections and a shared experience between the listener and the subjects of the story. This is because its longer format
allows more detail, more in-depth encounters with particular individuals and groups.

Furthermore, story topics for radio documentaries are usually not chosen on the basis of 'traditional conceptions of newsworthiness' such as extraordinary events and actions; instead they often feature stories that fall outside the templates of usual reportage, and give voice to those who are rarely heard (Cramer & McDevitt 2004, 135).

Selecting participants

The method used to select participants for the grassroots media project was snowball sampling as the most appropriate method to use in this context given the nature of this research study, and the need of identifying people with particular knowledge and skills (Patton 1990). This strategy takes advantage of the social networks in the locale which can be difficult for outside researchers to tap into.

The first three members were drawn from an existing grassroots group called The Good Guys. The group meet regularly in someone’s home in the slums to discuss ideas for films, with topics usually inspired by community issues. Given my frequent and extensive stays in Rwanda, I had come to know about The Good Guys and understood that the group was an ideal starting point to recruit participants for the media project. I attended an informal gathering and three of the members were particularly interested in the conversation I raised regarding Africa’s representation in the Western media. When I suggested we meet again at a convenient time, they offered to approach other members of the community to join the discussion.

The members of The Good Guys recruited four other members who joined the next meeting. They chose people who they knew had an interest in media and storytelling.
The three young women were university graduates and the other male member was known to The Good Guys. There were eight people included in the initial discussion group, including myself: four women and four men, with ages range from 21 to 37. The education levels varied: some were university graduates while others were currently studying at university, some had studied up to year 12 and one did not complete secondary school. They all lived in the vicinity of the slums of Nyamirambo in Rwanda's capital city, Kigali.

This was not a quantitative research project but one that experimented with a collaborative model for engaging people at the grassroots level with Rwandan stories. It was important in this instance to have a small number of participants to encourage engagement, discussion, and involvement in the production work, and more importantly, to establish trust.

Role of facilitator

Particular and careful scrutiny was given to the dynamics between myself and the participants as I played the role of facilitator/trainer/educator, and to the interplay of knowledge, authority and power between us (Giroux 2012, 22). The potential for West-centric notions of storytelling to take over and shape the project rather than valorise local knowledges and empower the participants was closely monitored (Mohan 2006, 160). Critical and reflexive attention was given to the complex power relations enacted in the project and the contradictory elements that can be found within the concept of empowerment. Concepts such as 'participation and empowerment' are assumed to be emancipatory and democratic but researchers such as Cooke and Kothari have shown otherwise (2006). Therefore, it was necessary to develop a counterhegemonic methodology that addressed questions of power and control and their entanglement with
participatory methods (Cooke 2008, quoted in Jordan 2009, 22). It required me to examine my own identity and authority and how it influenced social relations (Giroux 2010), prompting questions such as:

- How are my motives and intentions (or expectations) shaping 'content, purpose and outcomes' and thus impinging on other creative possibilities (Spurgeon et al 2009, 277)?
- How do I ‘act as intermediary’ (Serres quoted in Zournazi 2002, 205)?

This particular focus placed me, the researcher-facilitator, firmly inside of and connected to the research study and to the people participating and researching with me. In other words it was a 'self-reflexive critical awareness-in-action' (Reason 1994, 327). My part in the study varied throughout: sometimes facilitator but also, and critically, as learner, subject and co-participant.

**Method of 'teaching’**

It was for these reasons I adopted a critical pedagogy as a ‘teaching method’. I chose not to teach a certain 'method, technique, or the practice of a craft' (Giroux 2012, 21). Instead I adopted a non-conservative notion of teaching. The kind of pedagogy I adopted entailed questioning my own knowledge, authority and power, and drawing on the participants' knowledge, skills and diverse experiences. In this sense, the roles of 'teacher' and 'learner' are not fixed in the conventional sense, as Paulo Freire explains: 'Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning' (2000, 31). In this situation, the researcher takes the position and 'the attitude of a learner, of one who is a “not-knower”' (Moosa-Mitha 2005, 67).
While replicating some elements of the participatory media form 'digital storytelling' (Hartley & McWilliam 2009), this particular project did not fully embrace the media production techniques of this method because of the latter’s reliance on orthodox teacher-learner roles and sole emphasis on learning, which inevitably excludes important concepts such as 'relearning' and 'unlearning' (Wink 2005).

Critical pedagogy is based on the idea that learning should be culturally relevant, socially empowering, and participant driven (Freire 1970; Giroux 2003). In other words, the one that comes in to 'teach' is not coercive but collaborative, and reconfigures the traditional student/teacher relationship in which the student is the passive recipient of knowledge and the teacher is the active agent (the one who 'knows'). In this case, the traditional or orthodox teaching method was replaced with a situation where new knowledge, grounded in the experiences of the people involved in the project, was produced through meaningful and 'active' dialogue, which for Brazilian critical educator Paulo Freire, required mutual respect and a willingness to collaborate (Freire 1970, 67).

In Wink's words:

> Critical pedagogy gives voice to the voice-less; gives power to the powerless. Change is often difficult, and critical pedagogy is all about change from coercive to collaborative; from transmission to transformative; from inert to catalytic; from passive to active (2005, 165).

While the participants were taught audio recording and editing skills as well as basic journalism skills such as the story gathering process, workshops were set up in such a

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27 Digital storytelling emerged from the idea that non-professional people can produce powerful personal stories using digital technologies. The tools for digital storytelling developed from emerging new technologies in the 1990s. It is a multimedia approach to personalised storytelling, not for the purpose of broadcast but for 'conversational media' (Lambert 2006, 17). Digital storytelling practitioners teach the skills to ordinary people, mainly through workshops.
way as to encourage an open dialogue about journalism and storytelling more generally and the methods and techniques related to these. This is where critical pedagogy played an important role in the media project, in that it entailed questioning dominant methods of journalistic practice. In this sense it defied the notion of 'skill training' and did not impose a particular 'practice of a craft' in which to tell stories (Giroux 2012, 21). It drew attention to the values and skills that are embedded in Western mainstream journalism and made them problematic. As Giroux explains:

As a political project, critical pedagogy illuminates the relationships among knowledge, authority, and power. It draws attention to questions concerning who has control over the conditions for the production of knowledge, values, and skills, and it illuminates how knowledge, identities, and authority are constructed within particular sets of social relations (ibid).

Thus, as the instigator of this project and as the educator or trainer of journalism methods, it was critical that I also question how I influenced what knowledge and subjectivities were being produced within the group. This was the main point of difference between this project and other digital storytelling projects (and the fact that this project did not include skill-sets such as photography and video editing).

Location of workshops/meetings

It was important to choose appropriate environments in which to conduct the meetings and workshops. Most of the formal and informal meetings took place in spaces that were considered natural gathering places for the participants. Sometimes we used each other's homes and we also utilised a make-shift office space which was attached to a music studio. The doors of the studio opened onto a busy side street which was a
popular gathering place for a variety of people, mostly young people. It was a place where 'public deliberations' occurred regularly and spontaneously. Public deliberations are a social practice and a form of communication that is 'rooted in African history and culture' (Mwangi 2010, 2 & 23). Public deliberations occur amongst people in public spaces, such as marketplaces or in the streets (I describe public deliberation in more detail below under the heading 'methods of data collection'). This was particularly useful when participants were delayed on their way to meetings. Instead of waiting idly, there was the opportunity to engage in these deliberations and bring these 'public talks' into the meeting space.

Workshops - course content

Participants were taught audio recording and editing skills as well as basic journalism skills. The first two workshops were structured around how to use the digital audio recorders. During these sessions participants discussed potential story ideas and were encouraged to go into the field and start recording stories. My role during these field excursions was as non-participant observer. The interviews from the field were used in subsequent workshops to create discussion around interviewing techniques and overall performance of the interviewer. Ethical concerns were discussed as they arose in the field. These evolved into open discussions about ethics and journalism. In the final stages of the project technical lessons were given on how to use the audio editing software Wavelab, and it was during these workshops that the stories were assembled.

The workshop objectives were to encourage open dialogue about journalism and storytelling and the methods and techniques related to these, the main goal being to 'create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge' rather than to 'transfer knowledge' (Freire 1998, 30). As explained above this involved subverting the
traditional roles of teacher-student and using the co-learner/co-teacher approach. Workshops were centred on equal dialogue exchange rather than a lecturing style. Topics were mainly focused on the experiences of the participants. For example, as they went about gathering content for their stories their experiences were brought into the workshop space and discussed. The aim was to 'legitimise their voices' and 'mesh their lived experiences' with my own expertise (Fobes & Kaufman 2008, 29).

The idea was not to 'teach' specific skills related to storytelling. For example, in digital storytelling workshops participants are taught how to be economical and succinct in their communication which is a Western-imposed storytelling method. I was conscious of not imposing Western styles and methods of journalistic storytelling. The participants were enthusiastic storytellers and each had their own style of narrating a story and their own methods for interviewing and setting up encounters in the field. The aim was to draw on their existing knowledge and skills and reflect on what impact this had on the story subjects and how the stories were told.

Methods of data collection

In this study, there are two distinct strands of data collection: data via dialogue with others (the participant storytellers); as well as data derived from my own experiences, 'the self as data' (Holt 2003, 9). Some of the methods I used are drawn from the qualitative research paradigm such as participant and non-participant observation, focus groups, and unstructured interviews, field notes and a research diary. Other methods such as self-observation, self-reflection and self-evaluation are drawn from the action research paradigm.
Using methods that are 'local', according to Michel Serres, is more likely to capture the 'actuality of the world' (quoted in Zembylas 2002). Serres argues that the best solutions or methods are 'local, singular, specific, adapted, original, regional' (ibid). Likewise, Denzin and Lincoln argue that methods need to draw on the cultural values, beliefs, paradigms, social practices, ethical protocols and pedagogies of the researched community in order to reduce being problematic and restrictive (2008, 2). In other words, the process needs to be responsive to the social situation. Lynne Manzo and Nathan Brightbill emphasise the importance of an 'ethic of social responsiveness', which 'produces a research process that is fluid and which changes in response to different situations and the needs of participants' (2007, 38).

The data-gathering methodology for this research project tapped into a local social practice that is 'rooted in African history and culture' (Mwangi 2010, 2), a social practice that Sam Mwangi calls 'public deliberations' (2010, 23). Public deliberations occur amongst people in public spaces, such as marketplaces or in the streets. When people engage in public deliberations, they exchange information and ideas, and by doing so have their own ideas tested or confirmed by listening to people’s insights and opinions, and are able to make their own analysis based on the discussions. Public deliberations therefore is not only a form of 'human social interaction' but it is entwined with the idea that knowing or knowledge is 'socially constructed', both of which are two key aspects of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (African IKS), according to Muwanga-Zaka (2010, 69).

In this project public deliberations took the form of group members articulating their ideas based on their own priorities and concerns, as opposed to an ‘agenda-setting model’ of communication whereby the researcher chooses and defines the discussion.
points and decides what action to take (Mwangi 2010, 20). The workshops and meetings were akin to a forum for deliberation on particular issues that were important to the members. This approach stimulated similar dialogue practices that take place in public spaces in Rwanda.

Focus groups

The structuring of the focus groups was also influenced by local practice. Instead of the conventional focus group, two pseudo focus groups were set up using local social practices that mimicked this qualitative research method for gathering data. The groups were a radio forum broadcast live on local Rwandan radio and an existing group made up of aspiring storytellers.

In the original research design one of the focus groups was to be made up of a group of local Rwandan journalists. It was during my first field trip when I was arranging research approval from the authorities that I heard about a radio program called 'Crossfire'. The show involved the presenter, two to three regular panelists (local journalists) and invited guests to discuss a topical issue. I spoke with the presenter about my research topic of the representation of Africa in the Western mainstream media and he was keen to include it as a topic for one of his weekly shows. He asked me to invite a guest or two. I invited a local film maker and a journalist who had just graduated from the national university. The presenter had lined up the regular panellists to participate. In total there were six people including myself. The radio show went live to air and was broadcast on a popular radio station in Kigali.

The show was highly structured with the presenter facilitating the discussion. He based his questions on a summary of my research topic as well as posing his own questions.
Given that all the panellists were media practitioners they all had something to say about the topic and felt comfortable expressing their views with each other. The discussion was engaging and productive because the views that were expressed were wide-ranging and opinionated. Even though the radio forum was highly structured it was a form of exploratory research because I was not moderating the discussion but rather took part as a participant-observer. The presenter, who was clearly interested in the topic at hand, came up with many questions I had not even anticipated or thought of asking in the interview protocol list of indicative questions.

The research goal at this stage was to gauge how important this particular research topic was to Rwandan people and to get a sense of how receptive they were to the research study, rather than to record data for later analysis. In this sense, this radio forum as a pseudo focus group was ideal because it not only saved time by tapping into something that was already under way, but also showed the panellists that I was willing to come and engage in a local social practice and take something from it that helped me to better understand people's perspectives on the issue.

The Good Guys was another ready-made focus group. This group was an homogeneous group of young males who lived in the same slum neighbourhood. Some were employed and others were unemployed. They all shared an interest in storytelling. Compared to the radio forum this group was far less structured. There was not a high level of moderator involvement. I simply explained the research topic and invited discussion. Again, the research goal was to gauge interest in the topic. After I gave a summary of the topic the discussion lasted two hours without my intervention. After the discussion three members showed enthusiasm to be involved in the next stage of the project.
The group that emerged out of the discussion with The Good Guys was a formally set up research focus group using the snowball sampling method as mentioned above. I had anticipated that the first meeting of this group would involve a more structured approach and a high level of moderator involvement. However, the first question I asked the group (out of 12 pre-planned questions) elicited a discussion that lasted one and a half hours. I chose not to intervene because I did not want to disturb the free flow of ideas being expressed. David Morgan comments on the advantages of less structured focus groups:

> What makes less structured focus groups such a strong tool for exploratory research is the fact that a group of interested participants can spark a lively discussion among themselves without much guidance from either the researcher's questions or the moderator's direction. In other words, if the goal is to learn something new from the participants, then it is best to let them speak for themselves (Morgan 1997, 13).

I also noticed how without my intervention the participants took on the role of moderators, particularly when there was heated debate and people talked over one another. They would ask that people take their turn in giving their point of view. This less structured approach paved the way for participants to express what matters to them and interests them, rather than focus on my own interests (Morgan 1997, 12). This 'exploratory approach' continued throughout the next ten weeks when this group met on a regular basis (ibid). Given that this first action research study was about learning about the participants' perspectives and their own way of doing things, this less structured approach was particularly useful and valuable.
**Research Interviewing**

There is a wide variety of interviewing approaches for the purpose of collecting qualitative data. For this study I used unstructured interviews because it was important for the interviews to be more like guided conversations. I combined interviews with participant and non-participant observation (discussed below). The interviews ranged from 10-30 minutes and were recorded in MP3 format using a digital audio recorder. The participants were given information letters and consent forms prior to the beginning of the workshops which described the aims and process of the group work and what was required of them as co-researchers and co-participants.

The interviews occurred spontaneously (unscheduled), usually following group members’ activities in the field, which meant that the questions were based on observed behaviours, interactions and experiences and were not predetermined (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, 315). The questions were exploratory in nature and open-ended.

In their discussion on different formats of qualitative interviews DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree emphasise the importance of developing rapport with interviewees in order to build trust and create a safe and comfortable environment for conducting interviews (2006, 316). In the case of unstructured interviews rapport is developed over a period of time so by the time the interview takes place the interviewee is usually feeling comfortable and shares information ‘unselfconsciously’ (ibid 317). For in-depth semi-structured interviews DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree outline four stages of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee: apprehension, exploration, co-operation and participation (2006, 317). The interviews undertaken for this study moved straight into the 'exploration phase' where the interviewee was immediately engaged and willing to share what they knew with me, the interviewer (ibid). This led to the 'co-operative
phase' of the interview where I clarified certain points and the interviewee would correct me as we would make sense together of what had just happened in the field (ibid).

**Participant observation and non-participant observation**

Observation is a widely used method used in studying groups and the interaction between people. I used non-participant observation to observe how the group members engaged in journalistic storytelling and the methods and styles they applied to their practice in the field. I used participant observation during the workshops and in general day-to-day activities.

For the non-participant observation, I used a semi-structured procedure based on Hopkins’ three-phase observation cycle: planning meeting; observation; feedback discussion (2002, quoted in Koshy 2005, 93). During the workshops group members would discuss going into the field to conduct interviews. It was agreed that I would observe the interview process. During the observation stage I would take mental notes on the methods and styles the group members used before, during and after their interviews with their story subjects. This was instead of taking notes myself as they conducted their interviews as it may have made their interviewees feel uncomfortable and concerned about what I was writing and potentially have an adverse impact on the outcome of the interviews (the group member facilitating the interview would explain to the story subjects that my presence was a part of a collaborative storytelling project). Immediately after the interview, I recorded a de-briefing style interview with the group members involved. Questions were based on my mental notes from the interview session.
The feedback session occurred during the next workshop where the field interviews conducted by the participants would be played to other group members. It is here where the members discuss the interview that had taken place and decide on the next action.

There are two objectives to be derived from the observation method: the first is for me to identify the differences in methods and styles of engaging with story subjects and what impact this has on the outcome of the story and the encounter itself; and the second is for the group members to assess if their methods and styles work and assess the appropriateness, effectiveness and ethics of their approach. As Koshy notes, this observation process works well with the action research model because it 'involves selecting a topic, planning, collecting data, and taking action based on the findings' (2005, 101).

For the participant observation I used an unstructured approach. I used a fieldwork diary to record my observations. For example, I took notes either during or after workshops depending on what the focus of the workshop was. Some workshops were audio recorded by myself or by group members. I recorded general observations at the end of the day or during those rare moments where I would take myself away and out of the fieldwork space (for example, leaving the slums to sit in a café in the city centre28).

Participant observation requires spending long periods of time in the field. I spent significant amounts of time in direct contact with the participants in varied contexts and immersing myself in the environment in which the project was located. Whyte comments on this kind of observation and immersion when getting to know 'street

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28 The main reason for taking myself out of the fieldwork space to do this work was because most of the cafes and restaurants located in the slum areas are not conducive for sitting without distractions for long periods of time with a notebook and pen. People are inclined to come and sit beside you and engage in conversation (whether they know you or not). At a Western-style café in the city, hours can pass by without a single person approaching or engaging in conversation (unless of course they know you), thus providing a suitable working environment with minimal distractions.
culture': 'you can just hang around, and you'll learn the answers in the long run without
even having to ask the questions (1993, 303). In between meetings and workshops I
would ‘hang around’ the field site immersing myself into the usual rituals of daily life
and developing relationships with people around me. Like the group participants I
involved myself in street talk and spontaneous conversation (public deliberations) on
my way to places, or when waiting for the workshops to begin.

Reflective practice

The reflective practice used for this study involves a 'continuous cycle of self-
observation and self-evaluation' which contributes towards an understanding of my own
actions and the effects these have both on myself and on my research collaborators
(Thiel 1999, 45). In this action research study I use dialogic reflection to engage in self-
observation and self-evaluation (Brockbank & McGill 2000). The dialogic reflection
process involves 'discourse with self' to explore the research project as it is unfolding,
which requires becoming conscious of not only what I am doing but how I am doing it
(Rolfe et al 2001, 128).

These reflections are noted in field diary entries. Excerpts from these reflective diaries
will be placed throughout the next chapter describing the fieldwork experience in order
to highlight particular issues and concerns, as well as epiphanies that occurred during
this period. Some of my diary entries reflect a three-part structure featuring what
happened, followed by how it can be explained and concluding with what I learned
from the incident. However, for the most part, my reflective writing style was
unstructured, although sometimes I would write using a prose poetry genre.
Local evaluation method - Kwinegura

Muwanga-Zake argues that it is important that the validity of research projects are 'achieved in authentic circumstances' (2010, 72). To evaluate whether the objectives of the project were accomplished a cultural custom commonly practised in Rwanda was adopted. The custom is called Kwinegura and it means to judge oneself. It is customary for Kwinegura to take place at the end of events such as weddings and funerals. Participants usually include the key organisers of an event or project. During Kwinegura each person is given time to review the event or project, determine its effectiveness, and suggests possible changes for future events. An important aspect of this custom is for participants to critique themselves. This involves participants reflecting on individual strengths and weaknesses in regards to their role and involvement in an event or project.

Kwinegura was incorporated into this project as an 'ecologically' sensitive method and proved useful in evaluating and reviewing the research project. Kwinegura was incorporated into the project as the reflective stage of the action research process whereby the group discussed the outcomes of the project and reflected on all aspects of the project.

Data analysis

To analyse and present the data I use three types of representation: extracts from my written observations (this includes excerpts from my fieldwork diary), excerpts from the transcribed interviews with participants, and from our meetings. In selecting the excerpts I used a hermeneutic approach whereby segments of the text are identified and used to elucidate a particular point (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, 318). The aim was to create a coherent and descriptive story based on quotations from the group.
members and my reflective diary entries (Koshy 2005, 109).

It is at the end of Chapter Three where I link the information and insights gained from the study to my own journalistic practice and continue the reflective cycle of planning, observing and reflecting in making the documentary which will be the subject of Part II of this thesis.

Ethical considerations
I discussed in the introduction the ethical processes that were required for this project, from the university ethics committee to the relevant institutions in Rwanda. It is here that I discuss in detail how I gained entry into the field and draw attention to some of the challenges of doing research in Rwanda.

Gaining entry into the field
There have been some recent and fervent discussions regarding foreign researchers gaining approval to conduct research in Rwanda. The debate is somewhat polarised. On one side there are the researchers who, while acknowledging the 'inevitable tensions, divisions and trauma', claim that despite the challenges it is possible to conduct critical research in Rwanda without being expelled or it impacting on future research practices inside the country (Clark 2013). On the other side there are researchers who claim Rwanda is a 'truly hostile environment' and that it is impossible to conduct research in the country that is not self-censored29 or approving of the current Government (Truly

29 The relationship between self-censorship and the overall political climate in Rwanda is both significant and complex. Self-censorship occurs on a number of levels throughout society: there is self-censorship in the media as mentioned earlier in Chapter Two (Freedom House 2013; Myers 2008; Waldorf 2007), but there is also self-censorship carried out by ordinary citizens (I have experienced this anecdotally). A common saying in Rwanda is: 'even the walls have ears'. This signals to the level of caution people apply to speaking about certain topics when in
Drawing on his own experience of encountering obstacles during fieldwork in Rwanda, Bert Ingelaere concluded that it is difficult gaining access to the 'field'; by field he means Rwanda’s rural life and such topics as ethnicity, justice and poverty (2009, 6). Ingelaere mentions four research initiatives backed by large organisations such as the UN, the World Bank and others, which were forced to discontinue when the Government of Rwanda disapproved of the research findings (ibid, 17-19). Other researchers have revealed similar experiences of pressure from the Government and have been forced to stop their research (Thomson 2009, xxvii-xxix).

In regards to Ingelaere's argument that there is difficulty gaining access to the field for the purposes of undertaking research about Rwanda’s rural life and such topics as ethnicity, justice and poverty, it needs to be noted that there have been several studies conducted in Rwanda that challenge this view: a study about sex work in Rwanda which involved interviews with former sex workers and examines issues of poverty (Binagwaho et al 2011); and a series of studies carried out by the one author who has extensively examined rural poverty in Rwanda, with a focus on ethnicity, inequality and land issues (Ansoms 2010, 2008, 2007a, 2007b, 2005). In one of the reports, the author An Ansoms, is openly critical of the 'Tutsi-dominated political elite in Kigali' which she accuses of appropriating the benefits of economic growth at the expense of 'Rwanda's peasant and rural world' (2008, 16). Her interviews with the rural poor also elicited dissenting point-of-views (2010, 49).
It is difficult to draw concrete conclusions regarding the degree of censorship of certain research topics in Rwanda and the repercussions of damning results which are published. As it was made clear by the conversation that took place in the Times Higher Education, between November 2013 and January 2014, not even seasoned academics who have spent decades researching in Rwanda can agree on self-censorship and the ethics and safety of doing research in the country (Clark 2013). But given the 'highly politicised context of post-genocide Rwanda', there is little doubt that the Government and other authorities play a watchdog role over research practices in the country (Ansoms 2010, 44; Jessee 2013; Thomson 2009, xxxi).

Some researchers describe the process of gaining research approval in Rwanda as 'arduous'. Researcher and journalist Laura Seay notes that her politically sensitive project attracted 'extra scrutiny' (2012b). Clark argues that the 'claimed impossibility of researching sensitive topics in Rwanda overlooks the important ways in which many academics succeed in voicing critical views on the country while retaining access to their field subjects' (2013). From his own research experience in Rwanda and that of others who have conducted sustained research in the country, Clark stresses that the key is 'to be discreet, patient and respectful in the field and to build close relationships with local respondents, researchers and (where possible) government officials' (ibid). He notes it is easier to blame the host country for research stumbling blocks than it is to question one's own ethical stance or ethical position in relation to adopting certain research paradigms in highly-sensitive contexts:

Difficult environments require difficult, and savvy, research. It is possible to publish controversial findings and continue discussions with officials, provided one adopts a fair and considered tone. In many cases, researchers who have met closed doors in Rwanda have
been bombastic or hectoring during their research, belligerently ‘speaking truth to power’. Such activist scholarship – which favours a certain political agenda over exploring complexities and contradictions – tends to make government officials in any country, not just Rwanda, defensive. Some foreign researchers adopt an all-knowing attitude in developing countries that they wouldn’t dare attempt at home and then wonder why local officials don’t assist them (Clark 2013).

Several scholars responded critically to Clark’s comments on conducting field research in Rwanda, arguing that he fails to ‘see the many dark sides of the supposed Rwandan success story apparent since the 1994 genocide’ (Truly hostile, 2013). These scholars (ten academics and one journalist) dispute Clark’s main premise that politically sensitive research relies on the researcher to be ‘discreet, patient and respectful in the field’; instead they argue that regardless of the foreign researcher's skill, political affiliations, or government connections, the current climate in Rwanda means that in most instances sensitive research is impossible, and dangerous for the researchers and those who work with them (ibid).

My own personal experience is that I encountered no difficulties in being granted access to the field both as a researcher and as a journalist (the role I played for the second action research study). From the time I began the process in country, it took five weeks to be granted approval, a process that usually takes a number of months (Thomson 2009, xxviii). I had spent quite a few weeks preparing documents prior to arriving in Rwanda to begin the process. Once arriving in the country, the first step was submitting an application to the Rwanda National Ethics Committee (RNEC) followed by a submission (attached with RNECs approval) to the Ministry of Education.
I admit that I had held unrealistic expectations that it would be a faster process. In one incident where there was a delay I had made the assumption that one particular government ministry was inconveniently holding up my application, but I later found out that it was simply because the Minister who needed to sign my letter had been out of his office for one week. The personnel of that particular ministry spoke only French and Kinyarwanda, and my ignorance of both those languages caused a communication break-down between us, as well as unnecessary frustration on my behalf.

Researcher Erin Jessee draws attention to the Rwandan government’s use of bureaucratic measures, in particular the Rwanda National Ethics Committee, which she claims tries to block research (2013). However, this bureaucratic 'red tape' can be experienced in other areas of the Government system; it is not specific to approval processes for foreign research practices. As Phil Clark observes, the 'red tape' is common in many East African countries, but despite this it is still possible to research in Rwanda (2013).

The main difficulty I experienced was in trying to get the necessary information from officials regarding the research approval procedures while I was still in Australia. Jessee, having gone through a similar experience, published an article aimed at foreign researchers which gives a step-by-step outline of the procedures required for the approval process (2012). Unfortunately this had not been published at the time I was making my application. It was when I was in-country in Rwanda and speaking with officials face-to-face that I could gain a better understanding of what steps were necessary in order to gain research approval. The coordinators/administrators of the relevant institutions were helpful and guided me through the process.
There is no doubt that the approval process to conduct research in Rwanda is time consuming, and the Rwandan Government closely scrutinises research proposals, just as institutional ethics committees scrutinise research projects by Australian researchers. The Rwandan institutions in charge of approving research practices demand comprehensive and high quality applications. For example, the two separate applications I was required to submit to different government institutions were over 30 pages in total.

Every research project is unique and is expected to fulfil different requirements that may not be outlined by the Ministry of Education. As Jessee advises, depending on the research question being investigated, researchers may also be required to apply for additional letters of support from other Rwanda-based agencies, such as the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, or in my case, the Ministry of Culture and the Media High Council (Jessee 2012, 270).

Given Rwanda's tumultuous past and current politically sensitive environment I recognised that my research project could have been classified as 'sensitive'. The fact that I would be working in lower-socio-economic areas of Kigali, mainly akajagari communities, inviting people to tell their stories could have been seen by officials as potentially concerning. To allay any concerns about my project I felt it was necessary to place a caveat in my research application relating to the opportunity that would be given to 'ordinary' Rwandans to tell their own stories. The caveat was placed under a sub-heading 'Cultural Considerations':

- Political culture: no questions in interviews or focus groups will relate directly to participants views about political parties or holders of political office.
• Ethnicity: no questions in interviews or focus groups will relate directly to participants’ views about ethnicity. This research adheres to Rwanda’s policy of social harmony and reconciliation.

This caveat was also included in the HREC application to demonstrate how the project would minimise the potential for harm to research participants. This could be interpreted as a form of 'self-censorship' but it also demonstrates that there is an acknowledgement of and respect for the political and socio-cultural realities of post-genocide Rwanda.

Possible risk or harm to participants

Given Rwanda’s painful past and the high number of people affected by the genocide in 1994, there was the potential for participants to draw on their memories from this tragedy, and tell stories that might be politically or socially sensitive as well as having the potential to revive past trauma. The information letter which was given out to all participants therefore included a list of contacts for medical and counselling support available via local counselling support groups including those provided by religious organisations.

The participants were well aware of the story topics that would be considered 'too sensitive' (Jessee 2013), or risky to cover and avoided these (i.e. topics that focused on ethnicity or overtly political issues that could be unpopular with the Government of Rwanda). The stories that interested them were current social issues within their communities (e.g. heroin addiction among young people; the music industry's lack of support for new and emerging artists; and a recovering alcoholic who became locally
famous for a letter he wrote on President Paul Kagame's Facebook page).

Consent and identification of group members and their interviewees

The identities of all the participants in the study have been protected, including the participants’ interview subjects. Participation during all aspects of the study was voluntary. An information letter about the study was distributed and the group members signed the consent form. The information sheet and consent forms were in English and Kinyarwanda. The group members were all fluent in English so a translator was not required.

The group members were required to obtain recorded consent/verbal agreement from their interviewees for all interviews carried out by them. The group members and their interviewees could opt for their material and stories to be excluded or withdrawn at any stage.

As mentioned above, the project avoided stories relating to ethnicity or politics to ensure further protection of research participants and interview subjects.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodology and the approach for the first of the two action research studies. The grassroots media project was set up to achieve two objectives: to facilitate 'ground up' radio documentary-making and at the same time examine the personalised and culturally informed methods and styles brought to the practice of journalistic storytelling of these grassroots storytellers.
The conceptual framework used for the study required that I not only question my place of privilege and integrate other ways of knowing within the research process, but that I create a horizontal relationship with research participants and view them as experts of their own local knowledge (Berryman et al 2013, 5). The researcher’s stance as expert was reframed. I came to learn ‘with the people, about the people’s world (Freire 1998, 180). Moreover, it was a situation where knowledge and skills were exchanged between us. Both sides brought their collective resources together to build a process that was relevant and significant for all involved.

Local social practices such as public deliberation (genuine dialogue) were integrated into the research design to avoid oppressive, invasive and culturally inappropriate research practices. In this respect ongoing dialogue and relationship building were at the core of this project, influencing all aspects of the research design, as well as the outcomes. The sense of connectedness and the responsibilities borne from working within an African context required a ‘relational interaction’ (Berryman et al 2013, 12). Thus, the experiences of all participants, including myself, are intertwined in the following evaluation of what happened in the field. I chose a writing method that reflects this connectedness, doing away with objectivity, distance, detachment, and separation. The findings are expressed through a personal narrative.

In the next chapter, the data derived from the project is used to identify new theory about telling African stories or more specifically, Rwandan stories. These new insights into practice are then applied in the second action research study which is outlined in Part II, a critical self-reflection of my own practice.
Introduction

This chapter deals with the first two stages of the five-stage research design (as described above, p. 48-49). It deals specifically with the first of the two action research studies, the grassroots media project. It begins with an account of Stage one (consultation and discussion) and the interactions that took place during the initial field trip in mid-2012. It tells the story of how the grassroots media project was developed. Stage two deals with what happened when the participants went into the field to collect stories. It incorporates my observations of how the participants facilitated their own storytelling using the basic journalistic skills and resources that I had passed on. It also includes a critical reflection on my role as a facilitator.

Also featured in this chapter is an audio component (track 1 on the companion CD), a 4-minute audio montage which is a relatively unmediated presentation of the group’s performance as they connect to the project and bring to it their own interpretation and concept of what being a storyteller means to them, as well as what it means to have the resources to tell their own stories. It is included in this format because it uses the voices of the participants to underscore the value of voice and participation, core objectives of

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30 The participants of the grassroots media project gave themselves the title, 'the true storytellers'. It is for this reason I sometimes refer to the participants as the storytellers throughout the thesis.
this action research study. I edited this montage using excerpts from a longer piece produced by one of the group members. I will provide instructions on how to access this audio piece in the relevant section below.

Stage one – consultation and discussion

Having a research plan or research design does not always guarantee a straightforward research process. There are the 'untidy realities' of research to contend with (Mellor 2001, 465), such as the research not going as planned (McAteer 2013, 96). For this research project, the 'untidy' part was at the beginning, just as the process was about to unfold.

It was at the end of April 2012. I had embarked on my first field trip. I arrived in Rwanda full of enthusiasm. I was eager to start the project having just made it through the arduous process of getting the PhD study approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at Murdoch University. The next step was to take the research proposal to the relevant Rwandan authorities and begin the in-country approval process.

It was a two-step process involving first, gaining approval from the Rwanda National Ethics Committee, and then applying for a research permit from the Ministry of Education. However there were hidden conditions that I was unaware of, such as the need for letters of support from a country partner and the Ministry of Culture, given the nature of the research topic. This was when I became aware of my first slip-up. I had significantly underestimated the time it would take to acquire the research permit to go ahead with the project. I had allowed two weeks but the process took five weeks which left me with a little over a week to conduct fieldwork. Of course this led to feelings of
deep frustration and regret on my part that I had not adequately informed myself of the actual in-country research approval procedures.

Fortunately, there was a silver lining. What I discovered was that the time spent waiting allowed time for reflection: I was able to review the research project in its current form from the perspective gained from now being in residence in the country.

*Fieldwork diary entry
30th April 2012
The more time I spend re-reading over my project synopsis while here in Rwanda the more I critique it, noticing aspects that make less sense or parts that are less relevant to the real-life situation...

I had begun to feel uncomfortable carrying around the tightly bound research plan which I had designed outside the country. It made it appear as though I was imposing my ideas onto others. Perhaps on some level I was. Although I had adhered to the national guidelines on ethical research, I had arrived with a seemingly inflexible research plan which did not include initial consultation with the local community. I became conscious that my actions could be mistaken for the 'altruistic missionary/explorer position' that Mohanty draws attention to in her critique of 'hegemonic White feminists' (Mohanty in herising 2005, 134). My actions reflected neither the values underlying the theory of practice of anti-oppressive inquiry, nor those of participative inquiry. There was a 'mismatch' between my actions and the theory of practice, as well as the values I claimed to have (McAteer 2013, 96).

I began to question my epistemological stance and opened the project to critique. As Potts and Brown admit, 'Becoming anti-oppressive is not a comfortable place to be', as it 'means constantly reflecting on how one is being constructed and how one is
constructing one's world' (2005, 283). The command paradigm no longer made sense because while I was an 'outsider', I was not an outsider looking in, nor was I a 'disembodied subject handling an object'; I was 'immersed in an experience' that was 'already under way', therefore it required navigating rather than commanding, and becoming 'bodily attuned to opportunities in the movement' or 'going with the flow' (Massumi, quoted in Zournazi 2002, 220).

Initially, it felt 'disruptive and awkward' but eventually altering my approach transformed my way of being in Rwanda: I began to look, see and understand in a new light (O'Donohue 1997, 38).

Fieldwork diary entry
13th May 2012
It begins with listening, then grows an understanding of your separateness. You begin to see the Other as an extension of you; as an aspect of yourself that you have yet to discover but wish to know; and in seeking to know, you realise it is your differences that set you both apart and together at the same time. You allow yourself to become immersed so that you may settle in the space of difference.

The research approval process in Rwanda took five of the six weeks I had allocated for the first field trip. It was this period of waiting and enforced reflection that allowed the foundation of the action research study to be laid. The actions and interventions were able to be developed with people on the ground (Zuber-Skerrit and Fletcher 2007, 424). I engaged in as many conversations as possible. I met with local journalists, other media practitioners, academics, as well as the local community where I was living. These conversations were profoundly productive. The time spent in nurturing relationships built up a whole new level of trust and depth of engagement that would otherwise not have occurred had I launched immediately into the research project without this
extensive engagement with community members.

Another journal entry reflects the process:

Fieldwork diary entry
7th May 2012
I still haven’t received the research permit but it’s okay because I’m just spending the time meeting with people and listening. I can feel I’m letting go of control and it feels good.

I gave an editor of a major newspaper a copy of the research project to read and make comments, suggestions etc, and the editor was surprised and commented on how unusual it was for a researcher to actually invite feedback and input on the methodology and research methods from the community where the research will take place.

This time spent waiting allowed me to check if the social problem I had identified (that is, the Western media's misrepresentation, oversimplification and decontextualising of Africa's stories) was important to others and to explore the ideas people had about the problem. This was a critical step missing in the initial research design – consultation and collaboration on the social problem itself.

It was a talk I had with one radio journalist that inspired an idea to cast the net wider and garner more engagement with the broader topic of Africa's image in the Western media. The journalist had told me about a local radio station that hosted a weekly program called 'Crossfire'. It was a current-affairs style program that involved the presenter and five guests discussing various topics live on air for one hour. I approached the presenter and told him about the PhD project. He said it would make a good discussion topic for the show. He asked me to suggest people to participate in the forum. I suggested a well-known local film-maker and a journalist who had recently graduated from the Rwanda National University. The presenter chose two local
journalists who were regular guests on the program, and invited me to participate. The presenter asked his own questions throughout the forum which was broadcast live on radio throughout Rwanda for almost an hour.

In the original research design, I had planned to organise a focus group with journalists/media practitioners. The radio forum fulfilled a similar purpose, but because it was an existing 'social practice' and the people who participated were familiar with the show and the presenter's persona, it was a more authentic method of engaging in discussion and gauging people's interest in the topic and their different points-of-view (Denzin 2008, 2). It also broadened and deepened my knowledge as it revealed local perspectives on the topic.

There was another local social practice that formed part of the initial consultation. This particular practice occurred on the margins and the participants were mainly residents of slum – akajagari - communities. It involved a group of young men who meet on a regular basis in an area of the slum neighbourhood where I was staying for the duration of my time in Rwanda. The group called themselves The Good Guys. Their meetings are held in someone’s home and the group discussions usually centre around creative endeavours, mainly film-making, and the subject matter is usually inspired by community issues.

I attended one of the meetings and explained to the members present my purpose for being there. The topic of my PhD study stimulated quite a discussion. The points and concerns raised by the members reflected some of the views of the professional Rwandan journalists and local film-maker who participated in the radio forum. Their main concern was the Western media's dominance in telling Africa's stories on its terms.
Their views also echoed arguments within anti-colonial and postcolonial discourse, pointing in particular to colonialist and imperialist ideologies that influence their own knowledge and social practices.

While their views were in some ways similar to those of the media professionals, the critical difference was that The Good Guys represented the viewpoints of the poor, oppressed, and marginalised. They had been denied access not only to resources, but also to opportunities with which to make their voices heard, particularly in their own society. However, their organised meetings were a sign of their resistance to further marginalisation and oppression. It was for this reason I persisted with this particular group.

The Good Guys group is a good example of how the 'social ethic' is played out in many African societies (Gyekye 2010). Community members come together of their own accord and cooperate to combine capacities and talents so that everyone's potential can be realised and thereby increasing the likelihood of the goals of members being fulfilled. Their willingness to hear me out at the group meeting was possibly due to this sociality and the fact that members know first-hand the real value of mutual help, particularly in communities where there is a lack of resources.

Three members of The Good Guys were keen to engage in further discussions. It is important to mention that these men were the only members of The Good Guys who were proficient in speaking and understanding English, which meant that the rest of The Good Guys were to some extent excluded from ongoing discussions and collaboration. This was one of the limitations of this project.
Although not included in the initial research design, these two forums were instrumental in shaping the next stage of the research process. By immersing myself in experiences that were already under way I became a 'participant' in these forums, rather than the 'facilitator' (conventional research method involves the researcher organising, setting up and facilitating focus groups). This is when I began to question my role as nominal leader and experiment with stepping back and allowing others to take control and lead the process. This initial engagement inspired an ongoing dialogue and revealed that the social problem was perceived as important by others, not only me. This was the recognition I needed to be able to move forward and confirmed that the study was worthwhile.

The formation of the grassroots media project

The three English-speaking members of The Good Guys recruited four other people who joined the follow-up discussion. They chose people who they knew had an interest in media. I was later informed of an incident where one of the participant gatherers had tried to exclude someone from joining the discussion. There was one man who heard about the project through word-of-mouth and wanted to be involved, but this particular participant gatherer had tried to exclude him by telling the other members that the man would not take the project seriously. The one who was excluded approached one of the other participant gatherers and finally he was brought into the project. In this situation it worked well to have more than one field participant who gathered other participants to avoid exclusionary practices by individuals.

There were eight people in the discussion group, including myself. There were four women and four men, with ages ranging from 21 to 38. The education levels varied, some were university graduates, and others were currently studying at university. One
participant had studied up to year 12 and one had not completed secondary school. They all lived in the vicinity of the slums of Nyamirambo, an inner-city suburb of Rwanda's capital city, Kigali.

The group resembled what Nicos Papastergiadis calls 'clusters'. Unlike a 'focus group' which has a formal structure with the researcher as facilitator and the participants as subjects, clusters are informal, in that there are no leaders, facilitators, presidents or vice-presidents, as Papastergiadis explains:

… the cluster was the term for thinking about how you arrange a meeting or grouping of people without imposing a structure and common identity on that group, because the moment you try to do that you have created a hierarchy or you have already defined the identity rather than allowing the identity to be created out of the experience. So what I think is interesting about clusters is the way they lead towards identification and projection in dynamic forms of expression, rather than towards some identity in the clear, fixed, and political sense of the word... these political formations do not require a common origin but require perhaps common tendencies, and in a sense they are more ephemeral, more specific, fragmentary and complex, because they might have in their membership people from a diverse range of backgrounds, class positions and affiliations, and what drives them forward is certain beliefs or goals (quoted in Zournazi 2002, 94).

The group's modus operandi was similar to the traditions of cooperative group action in African societies where action is initiated by the people in the grassroots communities or on the periphery (Ansu-Kyeremeh 2005). There is great enthusiasm for such participatory projects because the motivation is solving everyday problems as an all-inclusive group.
After a dynamic group discussion about the role of the Western media and the representation of Africa it became clear that the group shared what Giroux calls 'militant democratic visions' that resisted colonialist ways of knowing, as well as a desire to explore and reclaim African ways of knowing (quoted in Denzin 2003, 273). The participants had spoken about the oppression and subjugation of Africa by former colonial powers and regimes and three of the participants in particular felt that this subjugation continued to be played out today. While some spoke about feeling powerless and voiceless, one woman argued that Africans had themselves allowed this dependent relationship with their former colonial occupiers to continue and she insisted that each of them could resist this dependency and become free if they had the courage to make a stand:

Speaker 6 - Let me raise some issue. You know, if you want people to know who you are you have to tell them who you are okay, we doesn’t tell European people, Western people who we are.

Speaker 5 - Because we didn’t know.

Speaker 6 - No. Because we don’t want to face the truth. We don’t want to face the consequences of being independent, we doesn’t want wars. If I say that that will be the consequences, let me shut up my mouth so the consequences will not come to me or my family. You don’t want to say the truth because you fear, we are surviving.

Speaker 4 - No we are depending so if we say the truth...

Speaker 6 - We are creating the dependence. We are the one who are creating the dependence....we are just like little babies, we don’t have a way to tell our mother to say that we need something. We are just like children that doesn’t want to grow up. Okay we fear the responsibility of growing up. If I grow up I have to buy my own shoes, I have to go to work, I will depend on myself...so you just stay there to your Mum’s home, and what can she give you...I mean you want to grow
up, you want to be independent, but unconsciously you doesn’t want cos you know you will have to do things for me, for yourself...I mean if you really want European people, the Western media to see us as we are, we have to grow up, we have to tell them...

The passion of the discussion led to people talking over one another at times. This led to one participant suggesting that they allow one person to speak at a time to argue their point. I had only asked the one question at the beginning and made a clarifying point towards the end. The participants’ engagement in the topic was sustained for one and a half hours. The sustained engagement and the willingness to engage in this particular discussion could be attributed to the fact that four of the participants were already members of an existing group in which similar discussions took place on a regular basis in someone's sitting room (The Good Guys' place).

This gathering took place in my sitting room, a house I rented for the duration of the field trip which was not dissimilar to the meeting place of The Good Guys. It was a modest concrete house located in the slums. We borrowed chairs from the neighbours to seat everyone. Even after formally ending the session where I switched off the audio recorder, the participants were reluctant to leave, and spent time talking about other related matters. Gordon Wells argues that 'the motivation to engage and persevere with a problem is rooted in commitment to values and purposes that are strongly affective in origin' (2001, 183). The group discussion reflected what communication scholars in Africa define as good communication, which is less about the effects on the individual or the expression of one's personal identity and more about the capacity to build bonds of solidarity and the integration of the individual into the group (Faniran 2008; White 2008, 16). This is reflective of communalistic societies (Moemeka 1997).
After the discussion, everyone expressed a desire to meet the following weekend prior to my departure from Rwanda. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a future collaboration for the next field trip and to officially form the grassroots media group.

Trust had built quickly between us and I attribute this to having spent much time immersing myself in the community from which the group members were drawn. This was the fifth time I had spent time in Rwanda since first visiting in 2008-2009. During the last three visits I had spent a significant amount of time in the Nyamirambo community where the participants live. During my last two visits, I lived in a house in the centre of one of Nyamirambo's slum communities. It was this trust that led to a communicative space being established and facilitated sufficient openness where participants felt they could talk frankly and openly, almost from the beginning.

It was this first stage that was critical to laying down the foundations for the research project. The fact that it was not included in the research design showed a lack of foresight on my part. It also exposed the inconsistency between my actions, the theory of practice, as well as the values I claimed to have. However, it was through reflecting on this omission that I was impelled to forge a different pathway, one that involved consultation and participation, and navigating rather than controlling the situation.

Stage two – the evolution of 'The true storytellers'

The second field trip saw the formal implementation of the grassroots media project based on the groundwork during the first field trip. While I had been back in Australia, the group members had continued to meet at each other’s homes.
It was in Nyamirambo, an inner-city slum of Kigali, where this research project was located, and it is in this context where knowledge, or knowing, was gained and exchanged in various ways. The issue under study was local social practices and how these might contribute to avoiding constructions of 'otherness' and media harm. To examine this issue, the project shifted power from myself to those with epistemic privilege or lived experience of these practices (Potts & Brown 2005, 263).

Over a period of ten weeks the 'cluster' or 'action' group engaged with one another in sharing and exchanging skills required for radio storytelling. As mentioned earlier, the group included eight members but owing to work and study commitments and one misunderstanding between two group members, the size of the group reduced to five (myself included). The remaining participants (three males and two females) decided not to recruit more members because of the trust that had already been established between us.

Initially, a casual gathering took place where we talked about our ideas and expectations for the next ten weeks. The group members expressed a desire to have the resources and skills to tell stories about themselves or stories from their own communities. Their views were consistent with those aired during the radio forum, where one of the panellists had said:

...It's high time for us to encourage our own people, to encourage people to take their pens, go to Nyamirambo, go to Kimisagara, write as many stories as possible, negative or positive, but they should really reflect you know the tapestry of who we are and where we are going... at the end of the day, if once it is told from within, it actually comes with stronger authenticity and a strong voice and a strong message.
It was agreed that I would provide the basic training in the journalistic processes of story gathering and reportage, focusing in particular on story selection; selecting interviewees and story subjects; the interview; editing; and what to do with the product. However, rather than being instructive, the methods of teaching would be 'experiential, participative and action-oriented', inviting and encouraging other interpretations of these processes (Reason 1998, 147-148).

Bergold and Thomas argue that 'the fundamental decision not to treat the research partners as objects of research, but rather as co-researchers and knowing subjects with the same rights as the professional researchers, gives rise to a number of questions about the material resources needed for participation' (Bergold & Thomas 2012, 10). Their emphasis). Personally, I felt it was important for the members to be given their own tools, not as a condition of participation, but in order for them to feel an equal partner in the storytelling journey. Owning their own audio recorder enabled the group members to take their role more seriously as storytellers within their community.

Each participant was given a Zoom H2 audio recorder with an accessory pack and a version of the audio editing suite software program Wavelab. After distributing the recorders I demonstrated how to use them. The group members began recording one another and it was at this point when they gave themselves the title ‘the true storytellers’.

Muwanga-Zake claims that, 'The feeling of ownership improves the self-worth, and can lead to self-actualisation, through the possibilities of ultimate development of participants and their circumstances' (2010, 72). This self-worth and self-actualisation was evident when one of the participants recorded everyone's reaction immediately after
being given their recording devices. The participant storytellers will be referred to as 'Storyteller 1', 'Storyteller 2', and so on:

Storyteller 3: I’m so happy that I’m going to become a true storyteller with my first equipment ever. I’ll be catching only true stories...

Storyteller 2: I’m so happy cos now we’re going to be true storytellers, we’re going to be able to gain stories... from both many sides without recording with our phones which have poor quality...

Storyteller 4: This will be giving a voice to the voiceless.

Storyteller 1: Now I’m receiving a digital gift and it will help me to prove to the society that a storytelling is a story inside a story. I say thanks to Helene for remembering us, for teaching us and pushing us on the way we can perform better and keep the memory for the people who are suffering, the people who are happy, we are going to record those events and I think it will challenge the society where we live.

Meetings and Workshops

In total there were ten formal meetings and there were few absences. Meetings were held when participants were available. We scheduled these as a group, negotiating times that suited all of us. Attendance was voluntary. The duration of the meetings was usually two hours but sometimes entire evenings were spent in discussion. There were no rules to the meeting and no restraints placed on the duration. During the meetings, members were totally present, involved, engaged and were never in a rush to leave. Their preferred time for meeting was during the evenings.
Discussion was engaging and stimulating and a whole range of aspects to journalism and storytelling were discussed, mainly initiated by the participants. Ethical issues often made their way into conversations as participants came back from the field sharing their recordings and experiences with the group and these would also be discussed. Most of the workshop sessions had no formal structure for the purpose of allowing the group to decide what aspects of journalism and storytelling they felt were important and relevant to their needs and to encourage each participant to realise their natural storytelling abilities and styles.

In addition to the meetings, I worked from our makeshift office space two or three times a week. I would let the group members know I was available for one-to-one tuition on learning how to use the audio editing software Wavelab. This approach worked well because it meant the members could come in their own time and work on their story productions.

Establishing authentic dialogue

Gordon Wells, the founder of the dialogic inquiry approach, believes that knowledge is constructed and reconstructed between participants in specific situations, using the cultural resources at their disposal, as they work toward the collaborative achievement of goals that emerge in the course of their activity (2001, 9).

One of the cultural resources we used as a group was a social practice which Sam Mwangi calls 'public deliberations' (2010, 23). As mentioned previously, it is a form of communication that is 'rooted in African history and culture' (ibid, 2), and reflects the principles of 'genuine dialogue', one of the tenets of critical pedagogy (Freire 1970).
For many African societies public deliberations are a 'way of life' and have been 'from time immemorial' (Mwangi 2010, 23). This exchange of knowing and ideas happens in 'traditional African public spaces, such as marketplaces', or in the streets, usually in the form of spontaneous public talks where ideas flow across any subject and at any level (ibid, 2). These deliberations also occur privately where ordinary people gather in private places to experiment with, and think up their own solutions, sometimes to oppressive structures, both local and global (for example, The Good Guys group). Public deliberations therefore are not only a form of 'human social interaction' but are entwined with the idea that knowing or knowledge is 'socially constructed', both of which are two key aspects of African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, according to Muwanga-Zake (2010, 69).

Mwangi argues that this aspect of African culture as a source of gathering information, or as a way to 'capture public voices', has been overlooked (2010, 2). Despite technological advancements throughout Africa 'public deliberation is still a way of life in African societies', and just as it can provide a rich source of information for the local and foreign media, it is interesting for academic researchers to consider how they can draw from this method of communication for gathering data (ibid).

As the storytelling group met face-to-face, and experienced small-group interactions, public deliberations or ongoing genuine dialogue occurred naturally and effortlessly. This communication method, being ‘'ecologically’ sensitive to the context in which it is used', allowed the participants to deliberate over the topics and issues that they felt were important, in a way that was familiar to them (Bradbury and Reason 2001, 452).

Noticing how public deliberations play out on a daily basis in various areas of Rwanda's
capital city, Kigali, helped to establish an authentic style of communication between the participants and myself because the communication evolved from locally-situated social practices and cultural values that were 'open' and 'authentic' (Reason 1994, 328).

This authentic dialogue led to the participants engaging in judging and negotiating the objectives and procedures of the research project, and by doing so, they quickly developed a sense of belonging to and ownership of the project. For example, it was the participants who decided that at the end of the ten weeks they would present their work in a public forum and use a cultural custom called *Kwinegura* to evaluate the project. *Kwinegura*, which means to judge oneself, involves people sitting together and reflecting on an event or project after it has happened. It often takes place following weddings and funerals.

**Method of facilitating and imparting skills**

An important aspect of this grassroots media project was the emphasis on pedagogy. My role was to teach or impart radio documentary-making skills to the participants. It was a situation of instruction but it was also to be a situation or a space where new knowledge and new understandings would emerge. Therefore, I found myself asking, how would I instruct and encourage invention simultaneously? How would I ‘act as intermediary’? (Serres, quoted in Zournazi 2002, 205).

Tierno Bokar, the Sage of Bandiagara advises (quoted in Thackway 2003, 16):

If you wish to know who I am
If you wish me to teach you what I know
Cease for a while to be what you are
And forget what you know
I had begun to question the idea of structured workshops in the early stages of the project after one of my highly organised and pre-planned workshops did not go to plan owing to unforeseen circumstances. My plan at this workshop had been to demonstrate to the group members a range of professional storytelling practices and styles by playing some Western-produced radio documentaries and engaging in a discussion afterward. But this plan was thwarted by a sudden downpour of torrential rain:

Fieldwork diary entry
30th October

Just as I’d hit play rain lashed on the tin roof completely drowning out the audio. I noticed myself becoming agitated. I wished for the rain to stop so I could get on with the workshop. We had to shout to hear each other. I became anxious because I didn’t know how we’d fill in our time together. No one could leave as everyone except one had arrived on foot. The other on motorbike. But as it happened I was the only one feeling lost. One of the guys picked up a guitar and began to play. Another grabbed me by the hand and started teaching me Rwandan traditional dancing. The next few hours was filled by spontaneity. After a couple of hours the rain eased and the group members ventured back out into the night.

The level of annoyance and anxiety I felt at this workshop revealed how attached I was to having things 'go to plan'. I had carefully chosen highly polished radio stories that I thought would inspire the group members in their radio storytelling, hopeful, perhaps, that they would want to create similar radio stories. But the heavy rain which drowned out the audio forced me to abandon my workshop plan.

Although I had hesitated at first, the act of letting go had created a space that was not filled by plans or intentions. It was an empty space full of possibilities, a space imbued
with the 'qualities of patience and hospitality' (Romanyshyn and Goodchild 2003, 30). I discovered that there was an element of surprise in abandoning structure and rigidity. Upon reflection I saw that in separating myself ‘from the familiar and determined’ I was able to be open to other ways of doing things (Serres, quoted in Zembylas 2002).

At the next workshop, I negotiated my entry into the group by waiting for the participants to tell me what they wanted from me, what they expected, what they felt was needed. I facilitated the process but stepped back and allowed them to take the lead. McNiff and Whitehead note that, 'As well as being exciting, this way of working is also risky. Action researchers constantly stand on the edge. The next moment is unknown. They commit to the risk of creating a new future' (2006, 31).

My facilitation became more like a ‘channel’, whereby the power I held as an intermediary was interspersed into the space in which we worked together as a group (Serres, quoted in Zembylas 2002). Boundaries were blurred. I resisted commanding or programming the workshops. Instead I followed the momentum of the group, in Brian Massumi’s words, 'going with the flow', 'surfing the situation', becoming 'bodily attuned to opportunities in the movement' (Massumi in Zournazi 2002, 219).

The workshops were established on the grounds that participants were in control of what they learn, in other words, they made 'self-determined choices' (Rautins & Ibrahim 2011, 7; Denzin & Lincoln 2008, 2). They were encouraged to draw on their own 'moral understanding' and share this with the group (8). Wells argues that it is through individual's participation in activities with particular others, involving different modes of knowing and acting, as well as the use of the appropriate mediational means, that individuals develop their unique
identities and their potential to contribute to the wider society (2001, 11).

When it came to passing on journalism skills I was wary of teaching a certain 'method, technique, or the practice of a craft' so as not to impinge on the participants' own style and ideas of storytelling, therefore I adopted a non-conservative notion of teaching (Giroux 2012, 21). As a media practitioner, the way I usually engage in my work is through taking control and being instructive in my approach to storytelling: I choose the story topic, the people who I will interview, who will feature in the program, what questions I will ask, what elements of the story are included and excluded. This approach to storytelling is controlled, mediated and often rigid and inflexible. The kind of pedagogy I adopted entailed relinquishing control, questioning my own knowledge, authority and power, and allowing myself to draw on the participants' knowledge, skills and diverse experiences. But letting go of my individualistic ideas of efficiency, deadlines and productivity challenged me in so many ways because I could no longer measure what I perceived as 'success' or 'achievement'.

I passed on certain practical skills: technical aspects such as how to use the audio recorder, basic interviewing skills, and editing with the audio editing suite Wavelab. But I encouraged deliberations on aspects of journalism and storytelling rather than explaining and instructing a certain method or technique. In this sense, the roles of 'teacher' and 'learner' were not fixed in the conventional sense. As Paulo Freire explains, 'Whoever teaches learns in the act of teaching, and whoever learns teaches in the act of learning' (2000, 31). It was a matter of blurring the distinction between teacher and learner and reinventing the roles.

In terms of facilitating the workshops and sessions, I was hesitant to enact authoritative
facilitation where I was the one to determine the meeting times, place and activities. I approached my role as facilitator with great care, but at times a crippling self-doubt led to self-sabotage, and I realised that my aversion to being authoritative was, at times, about feeling overly anxious about coming across as authoritarian. The anxiety made me feel unsure, uncertain of how to act and what role to play.

Fieldwork diary entry
24th October 2012
My words come out self-consciously as I speak to the group. I don’t want to sound like I’m taking control or have some kind of authority over the project. I feel nervous when I speak as though I’m unsure of my place.

In striving to find the 'appropriate leadership and facilitation in the service of participation', the challenge was to find the right balance of 'authentic authority, participation and autonomy' (Reason 1998, 154-155). Finding this balance qualifies as what Peter Reason calls 'liberating leadership' (ibid).

Storyteller 1 commented on my 'leadership style' during Kwinegura (the evaluation process we used to reflect on the project):

...so what I learned from you is the way you organise people...there are some who are competitive, there are some who are authoritarian, there are some who are passing behind the rules, while they know, they are dictators, but I found yours as comparative, you don’t want even to take a decision, you want to influence people so that they are the one to take the decision which is not different like yours, but you guide them to reach a certain level of understanding like yours so that they can decide themselves, yeah, that what I learned.

There was a period of time in the initial stages of the project that certain group members would refer to me as 'boss' or their 'manager'. These kinds of titles made me feel even
more self-conscious about my role in the group and possibly contributed to my adoption of a more passive leadership approach, as alluded to in the comment above, 'you don’t want even to take a decision'.

Cultural clashes: Western ideals vs local context/local realities

There were times when I felt unsure of the direction of the project because as much as I tried to let go, my ideas of efficiency, deadlines and productivity still seemed to influence how I behaved and how I judged other people's behaviour. This diary entry illustrates the differences between our working styles and how misjudgements can be made based on differing value systems:

*Fieldwork diary entry*

13 November 2012

I have been trying to put into words how I’ve been feeling lately but it is so very hard. I have been feeling somehow disorientated, disconnected, kind of stuck, not sure how to move forward. My expectations, my sense of urgency for this project, seems to block or disrespect the process, like I’m constantly fighting these internal feelings that I can’t seem to make any sense of. But the storm is happening inside of myself, not out there, or amongst the group members. They are calm and taking it easy, taking everything in their stride, having the approach that whatever will be will be.

It kind of works against my agenda-setting, goal-orientated, programmed way of working, robotic you could say. The group members have a way of taking things as they come. I’m not sure if in other African countries it’s like this, but people here seem to have a pace that is much calmer and slower than what I’m used to. It’s hard to describe because I don’t want to sound as though I am disrespecting how people are. It is just such a different way of being in this world. It is a stark contrast between how I would work with people back home when doing workshops etc. As I re-read what I’m writing I can hear myself say ’Arrrrghhh!’ How do I manage myself in all of this.
One of the members yesterday was delayed by a few hours after we set up a workshop. I had felt let down and questioned his interest in the project. But later he rang to apologise and explain that a friend of his had problems and he felt he needed to spend time with him and listen to him. He said he wanted to assure me that he didn’t disrespect me or the group. Perhaps he would have rung us to tell us but the electricity had been off for days and people’s phones were flat.

I wondered why I took his being delayed as a lack of respect and why I felt let down. When I reflect on my own reactions later I question myself and whether I am really in touch with people here. Can I ever truly understand the way of being here? How do I reconcile with myself and with the differences that cause disharmony inside of me?

People here are forced not only to deal with past trauma, but present hardships of being jobless, not knowing how they’ll pay the rent or get food for the day; sickness; making business. And yet I place these unrealistic expectations on people as though this is the only thing that should matter.

I understand and experience myself that the days are full of spontaneous interruptions. Today a 2-year-old girl visits us and wants to hang out with me. As I had expected to work on some writing I say to myself just give her your time so I do. Then after an hour or so I take her back to her grandmother and she says ‘Karibu’ and invites me in to her home and we chat for 20 minutes, then I come home and there are chores to be done - hand washing, cleaning the floors, things that would take less than an hour at home but here they take half the day...

As well as highlighting the challenges of cross-cultural work, this diary entry demonstrates the importance of participant observation in research projects. Immersing myself into daily life, particularly in akajagari (slum) communities, helped me to understand the daily demands placed on the group members and to be more careful not to place unrealistic expectations on them. It was only through immersion that I could eventually comprehend the daily demands placed on my co-researchers. This immersion forced me to 're-see the world', and examine my taken-for-granted assumptions about
productivity and what I thought should become the priorities, such as being on time (Bradbury & Reason 2001, 451).

It was during Kwinegura, the evaluation method we used to examine ourselves and the project, that Storyteller 3 reflected on the issue of time-keeping. He often turned up an hour or two after the meetings were scheduled to take place:

...I look [at] myself, I find because I was respecting this I didn’t get it on time so, cos of being patient then I lost this opportunity which asks to be on time, maybe a plane or a bus to travel, so now what I’m doing trying to resolve those small problems which happens every day which makes me have that behaving as trying to be a time-keeper. To be a time-keeper you must have a serious, be organised, very serious...for us it’s not easy, but for your culture you can be disorganised but you keep time because it’s your, you were born in that way, everyone is keeping, it’s a common thing, yeah.

It is interesting to note Storyteller 3's use of the phrases 'I was respecting this' and 'cos of being patient' to explain his habit of not turning up at the time the meeting was scheduled to begin. This illustrates how interpreting 'being late' as a sign of disrespect is a misinformed Western assumption. For Storyteller 3, his lateness to a meeting was usually when he was 'respecting' someone else's time, or when he was 'being patient' to finish another task prior to one of our meetings. Potts and Brown argue that anti-oppressive research requires acquiring the skills to think critically and listen carefully, 'so that we can identify and unpack assumptions, unearth patterns of thinking and acting, and recognize their effects' (2005, 263).

Storyteller 3's concept of time stands in stark contrast to the 'stop-watch culture' that epitomises the concept of time-keeping in Western countries (Schlesinger 1987, 83).
His is a less rigorous and more relaxed attitude to time. It reflects John S. Mbiti’s distinction between 'Western mechanical and African emotional time consciousness' (1969). The dominant features of the Western world-view such as assertiveness, self-promotion, goal-setting, achievement, competitiveness, plans, objectives, and the need to be busy, run counter to African emotional time, where for Storyteller 3 it was just as important for him to give others his time as it was to give time to the project. Western mechanical time consciousness disregards other time-keeping concepts and the qualities that allowing things their time can offer a project such as this one, as well as a journalist’s reportage.

Building trust and developing rapport

Quite often during our sessions, the days would turn to nights, and it was during these times that stories out of nowhere would rise to the surface. Stories of long ago, stories of yesteryear, bedtime stories passed on from mothers, stories of pain and loss, and stories of hope:

Fieldwork diary entry
7 November 2012
Stories, a part of everyday life
A story may be told to you when you least expect it. A tale from long ago may weave its way into a conversation reinvigorating life into what seemed like a very ordinary day. The tale changes the way you see things, the way you plan the rest of your day, it infiltrates into your thinking and inspires your imagination. Colours become more vivid, people’s ways of being in the world become a source of inspiration. You lose how to be with yourself because you reinvent yourself within the tales, within the stories, within the lives of people around you.

Their ways are different, unique to yours, and it’s in trying to discover your sense of place within the difference that you
rediscover your sense of being, your sense of difference and sameness. Time is swallowed up into the comings and goings of the day as stories ebb and flow in and around us.

The varied emotions and insights gleaned from the sharing of these stories facilitated trust between all of us and instilled a sense of feeling protected and safe. As time went on I noticed that I was coming to understand my self through others (Ellis and Bochner 2000, 738). Ultimately it was a growing together; a sense of connectedness, and trust in the process.

The group developed what Coryat describes as 'deeper kinds of collaborations... constructed in solidarity and not out of charity' (2008, 16). There was 'quality' in the dialogue and an 'active listening to others'; a kind of 'personal discipline and responsibility for the collective good' (Higgins 2011, 3). If I can summarise what the group achieved in one word, it would be 'flow'. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2004) describes flow as being in a state of complete immersion. According to his theory, people are in flow when they experience undivided focus and concentration; a sense of ecstasy – of being outside everyday reality; great inner clarity – knowing what needs to be done and how well we are doing; a sense of serenity – no worries about oneself, and a feeling of growing beyond the boundaries of the ego; and timelessness – thoroughly focused on the present, hours seem to pass by in minutes (ibid).

As a group we achieved being in flow together. We managed to create a space where alternative possibilities and forms of agency could be discovered, where there was worthiness, and a sense of being valued. I would often walk away from our sessions feeling a sense of euphoria. I could see that everyone was being lifted to explore their potential. There was full engagement with one another. Participants became empowered
to tell their own stories on their own terms; to ‘speak about themselves’ and for
themselves (Teno, quoted in Thackway 2003, 3).

We explored through our planned and impromptu discussions local knowledge systems
and customs and the place of storytelling in Rwandan society, as well as Western media
representation of Africa. Most critically, there was a reciprocal exchange of skills
between us. I passed on skills in radio documentary making and they passed on to me
intimate cultural knowledge that helped me to gain a deeper understanding of the varied
and diverse existences within this small African nation.

Degrees of Participation

Once the storytellers had received their audio recorders the members used them in
different ways and for different purposes. Storyteller 3 took it with him to music
concerts and it gave him notoriety within the local music scene whereby he sought out
interviews with artists ‘backstage’. He would come to the workshops and ask me to
listen to what he had recorded and I would give him feedback on technique/sound
quality to help him improve on these particular elements. Storyteller 3 came to be the
most prolific user of this audio recorder. He would record conversations he had with his
friends on various social issues.

Initially, Storyteller 2 focused her attention on stories in her home environment. She
recorded her mother’s story about converting from Catholicism to Islam. It was during
our time together that Storyteller 2 revealed how she was struggling with her mother's
conversion, particularly as she herself had not converted. She would share with me how
she felt pressured and judged by her family because of the way she dressed, and the fact
that she drank alcohol. This member also saw her strengths more in writing stories so
she used the audio device to record herself reading her own stories. Storyteller 2 later initiated a story about a young man who had recently overcome alcoholism.

Storyteller 1 had experience in small business and enterprise and saw the audio recorder as a tool to start his own business. He registered his business idea with the Rwandan Development Board (RDB). The business entailed offering media and communication services to the general public, which he said would be like a 'bridge' connecting people and groups.

For Storyteller 4 the audio recorder allowed him to become the journalist he had always dreamed of becoming. Prior to being involved in the group, this participant had developed story ideas concerning social justice issues, and he had wanted to tell the stories from his community that he felt were not being told in the local media, such as the increasing problem of heroin addiction in his community. As a group we discussed how he might go about gathering the information for the story, who he could interview and what kind of questions to ask. By the end of the meeting he had developed a story plan and was ready to start. In between meetings, he would go out into the field and record interviews. This field experience is explained in detail below.

It was important not to direct the participants away from what their initial interests were, or to make ‘them’ to be more like ‘me’ - a trap for outsiders who work to benefit others (McIntosh 1988, 4). Bergold and Thomas explain that ‘A key task in this regard is to design training units and choose methodological approaches in such a way that they build on the initial state of knowledge of the participants and develop it further’ (Bergold & Thomas 2012, 13). Despite having their own projects, I noticed that the members were not motivated to become individual roving reporters. They always talked
about what they could achieve as a group: as a group of storytellers. They discussed
organising live storytelling events in their community and forming a media production
company to generate income as a group.

During one of our meetings the topic of discussion evolved into what storytelling means
to all of us. One of the storytellers took the initiative of recording these sessions. After a
general discussion, he began asking each member specific questions relating to
storytelling. Once all of us had spoken he handed his recorder to another group member
so he could interview him about the same subject matter. This group member chose to
work on this topic for his chosen individual project.

With his permission, I put together an audio montage that included excerpts from his
longer audio piece. The testimonies in the montage reflect each member's sense of
identity and belonging to the concept of being a born-storyteller. This group reflection
improved their confidence and gave them the self-assurance needed to pursue a more
active role in storytelling within their communities. As one participant said during his
interview:

Storyteller 4: ...but since Helene came, since I knew that I can produce my own stories, since when I know that I have a talent
I became a professional storyteller, like now I can use a device
to get stories and transmit to the whole society so I can call
myself a professional storyteller, but even before becoming a
professional storyteller I was a storyteller.
The recording demonstrates my research method of creating and nurturing an environment where the storytelling participants could initiate and conduct their own reporting. The fact that one of the storytellers chose to report on the subject of storytelling shows how self-reflexivity was part of the process for them as well as myself. The recorded comments reveal the impact of the method on the participants in terms of what they took away from the project.

It was clear that the four storytellers developed more self-confidence and self-assurance as they developed more competencies. One storyteller commented during *Kwinegura* about what he had gained:

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**BOX 1**

The reader is now invited to listen to the audio montage on the CD – track 1 'the true storytellers'.

I present the audio piece as an illustration of the experiential and participative approach that was used for this project (that is, the fieldwork method for the group work). It is included in the thesis because it captures the authentic and open dialogue between us. The group members are presented here as equal partners in the storytelling journey. Each member offering a clear explanation of what storytelling means to them. They each point to their innate storytelling qualities.

Two members in particular talk about how having the tools to record stories will make a difference to their communities and to their own self-development. When Storyteller 3 explains how he can use his additional skills in storytelling to enhance his life, he uses the word *agaciro* (meaning to give oneself value) to describe this process. This is similar to the Western concept of 'self-actualisation' where a human being realises all of one's potentialities (Goldstein 1939).

The duration of the original radio program created by Storyteller 1 was 14 minutes. For this piece I chose excerpts from the longer piece and added a piece of music. It is to be heard for the voices of the storytellers and not for the aesthetic qualities.

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The recording demonstrates my research method of creating and nurturing an environment where the storytelling participants could initiate and conduct their own reporting. The fact that one of the storytellers chose to report on the subject of storytelling shows how self-reflexivity was part of the process for them as well as myself. The recorded comments reveal the impact of the method on the participants in terms of what they took away from the project.
Storyteller 1: But you know there is what we call physical luggage and spiritual luggage... you didn’t give me physical luggage, okay you give me physical luggage as a digital gift but I appreciate on spiritual luggage you give me, because it can feed me in the future, because you give me more skills, you give me more skills, I’m someone who learn by looking, or by doing, so I learned a lot from you.

Having gained the skills to put together short radio features, using the Wavelab editing suite, the group members each felt they had developed important skills that could benefit themselves and the wider community. The pinnacle of the storytelling experience was having the opportunity to attend an international conference in Zanzibar where three of the participants presented to the delegates their own journey towards becoming 'true storytellers'. I have included two of the presentations in the appendices as they articulate the group members’ passion for storytelling and the vital role it plays in their lives (see Appendix 1).

As discussed above, a sense of belonging to the group developed quickly. The group had created a communicative space where members could talk frankly and openly. This was achieved through establishing trust: trust in the space, and with each other. For Storyteller 2, participation led not only to acquiring further skills in storytelling but to a significant shift in her self-esteem. In a personal email to me she wrote:

October 26 2013

Storyteller 2: And I couldn’t write it up there but thank you for everything, I’ve always had matters with myself esteem and for once I find people who can listen to me and take me seriously

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The Postgraduate Research In Screen Production Conference was held during the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) in 2013. The group members and myself were invited to give a presentation on collaborative radio practice at the conference. The storytellers also had the opportunity to take part in workshop on film production, script writing and critical journalism.
and given the difference of ages I should probably be the last to be taken seriously but it amazing how I feel at my place when am with you and the boys, so thank you.

Radio Productions

There were a number of radio productions resulting from the workshops:

- a radio documentary on heroin addiction (in Kinyarwanda language)
- a testimony of a reformed drug addict and alcoholic who works to educate young people on the dangers of drug abuse (an audio interview in English)
- an audio montage on being true storytellers (in English)
- a radio interview about the challenges for grassroots music artists in the local music industry (in Kinyarwanda)

At the end of the ten weeks, the group members arranged a public listening event where their radio productions were presented to a small audience. Each person introduced their radio program and there was time for questions at the end. In this way the storytellers engaged in dialogue with the listeners, enacting a kind of analysis of the participants' radio stories. The audience were friends and colleagues of the members. The listening event even roused interest in the project from other community members, with some expressing a desire to participate. Unfortunately, the project was nearing completion by this time.

I will now draw on two of the radio productions and identify the localised/culturally informed methods and techniques the storytellers employed in their practice. It is here that I present them as lessons for Western journalism practice.
Radio production 1: Heroin addiction

As part of the media project, Storyteller 4 chose to do a story about heroin addiction. He chose this topic because he was concerned about the rising number of young people in his community who were becoming addicted to the drug. During one of our workshops when participants shared their story ideas, Storyteller 4 told us he had witnessed many of his friends fall victim to heroin and he was deeply concerned about the problem which he believes is becoming an epidemic in his community. After one of our workshops, this group member tracked down some of the heroin addicts and set up a group interview. Myself and another group member (Storyteller 3) joined Storyteller 4 in the field. I recorded the event as a narrative in my fieldwork notes (see Appendix 2. I have included this narrative because it illustrates my role as describer and interpreter to the process. It also demonstrates the privileged position I was in to learn from the group members as they worked in the field gathering stories).

Storyteller 4 had set up the interview by phone, but prior to this he had met with one of the heroin addicts face to face and explained that he wanted to do a story on heroin addiction and the impact it was having on people's lives. The interview was to take place at a location determined by the addicts. Storyteller 4 had asked his first source to invite others to participate in the interview. His decision to conduct the interviews in a group situation rather than one-on-one was based purely on intuition, knowing that the men would feel more comfortable and at ease in the presence of each other.

When we arrived Storyteller 4 sat himself on the floor where most of the interviewees were seated. He moved around the interviewees one by one. Prior to the interview he told them they did not need to be identified and could use alias names to protect their
identity. Storyteller 4 had prepared a list of interview questions to ask. For the first couple of interviews he only asked pre-planned questions but as he became more comfortable and at ease he began to ask spontaneous ones in response to the answers from the men. The men were open and responsive to the questions. The duration of each interview was approximately 15-20 minutes.

As we were preparing to leave Storyteller 4 asked if I could join him and the other group member outside for a moment. He explained that the men had asked for 'something', meaning money. I hesitated but both storytellers explained that imparting a small amount of money as we left their premises would show them respect. Storyteller 4 decided to give the men the equivalent of $8 to share between them. There had been no discussion of money prior to the interviews.

After the interview the three of us shared a cup of tea and chapati at a local restaurant and it was here I conducted an unstructured interview with them both. This was a kind of de-briefing and reflection on what had just happened. It was during this discussion that Storyteller 4 revealed that it could have been because of my presence that the men had asked for money after the interview:

...when they see someone like you, when they see a mzungu, that’s not the case for only them, but it’s the case for the whole society, when they see a white people they thought about money, they thought about things, material.

Storyteller 4 explained that prior to my arrival in Rwanda he had gained the trust of another heroin addict who allowed him to photograph and film him before, during and after a smoking session. The only condition was that his face be kept out of the frame. He explained that there had been no expectation of payment after the recording. He put
this down to the fact that he was an insider; he had lived in the same slum community as the addict for around two decades; and he, like the addict, endured economic hardship.

At the next group meeting I suggested to Storyteller 4 that he play his interview so the other group members could listen and offer feedback. This listening session ignited a long discussion about how open the men were during the interviews. The other members attributed this to the fact they trusted Storyteller 4 and that there was a rapport between them. They also commented that conducting the interview as a group and in a location where the men felt comfortable contributed to them being so open and candid. One of the members said the interview session sounded like it was a therapy session for the addicts.

Regarding the monetary exchange that had taken place after the interviews, the group members explained that in poor communities it was common for people to interpret journalistic interviews, or similar scenarios, as business propositions where the interviewer gains financially by selling the story. This was especially the case when it involved a foreign journalist:

Storyteller 4: ... so if once they see you coming and you have your recorder questioning him, first of all he thought you are doing a business from him...

Storyteller 3: he's knows that it will be public. He can be free telling you a story without anything, without a recorder cos he knows it’s not public, it's private but if once he knows that this is going to pass on radio, [the] public will get to know ‘who I am and what I'm up to now’, and he [the addict] thinks this guy [the interviewer] is going to use me to accomplish his job, for me, I'm just giving my life out.

Storyteller 4: they expect things from us even without talking to them, ‘can you please give me 500’ just passing by.
Me: I understand what you’re saying it’s just that I don’t know how to deal with this, because ethically it’s wrong but the situation here is different.

Storyteller 3: that’s why I told you the other time the rules of a job in a Western country it goes with the situation of the population...heroin addicts there in Sydney may give their story without expecting anything... Here, I think in my opinion, it cannot work with the drug addicted to speak about their true story and then you record them and you put it out in public; unless you did it like paparazzi, then later if you found you published it’s a problem.

Storyteller 4 asked the group members for advice on the direction of the story. This started a brainstorming session on other potential interviewees such as police, psychiatrists, rehabilitation experts, and families of drug addicts. There was some discussion regarding what role the story could play in educating young people about the dangers of drugs. There was a very clear consensus by all the participants that the documentary could be used in schools as well as be broadcast on local radio. The two group members who were absent from the interviews with the addicts told Storyteller 4 they would join him for the interview at the rehabilitation centre.

Storyteller 4's ongoing relationship with the addicts was a complex one. As an insider he could not disappear from the story scene. One of the addicts who was a good friend of his prior to becoming addicted latched onto him after the interviews. He visited Storyteller 4 three times at his home. Storyteller 4 gave him some of his own shoes and clothes. It was clear Storyteller 4 felt a sense of responsibility towards the men and their life situation. In speaking about the problem of heroin addiction and what it was doing to his community, he described it as 'another kind of genocide' that was being ignored by the local media.
Lessons for Western journalism practice

In addition to the observations noted above, there are other observations that revealed a particular way of interacting between Storyteller 4 and his story subjects. The significance of these interactions is that they offer lessons for Western journalism practice, particularly in relation to journalistic encounters with distant others. It was during the interaction that African traditional human relations were played out in terms of how the interviewer approached and obtained information from his story subjects. Core values such as reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness and hospitality were demonstrated through this journalistic interaction. As discussed in Chapter 1 these values are characteristic of the ethics of African brotherhood, a communitarian or communalistic ethic.

Hospitality

The African sense of hospitality involves more than the host welcoming guests into their community or home and offering food or refreshments. Onwubiko illustrates this point clearly when he articulates what hospitality means to the Nigerian Igbo: ‘Among the Igbo, the basis of hospitality is the general accepted principle that a guest must not harm his host…’ (1991, 23). Applying this sense of do no harm to the journalistic encounter would mean then that the journalist as the guest must not bring harm to the interview subject who is her host. Such an encounter demands a significant level of trust between the two parties.

From the outset, Storyteller 4 viewed the heroin problem as a community problem rather than as separate individual problems between the addicts. Therefore, the problem was to be shared. When he approached them for the interview he made it clear that his
intention was to give them a voice and put a human face to a problem that had remained invisible in the local Rwandan media. He agreed to interview them on their terms, in a group situation, and in a hang-out space where they felt comfortable and at ease, where they were able to feel in control. They accepted him into this space because they trusted him; they were assured that he would do them no harm. Between them there was a certain degree of cooperation and trust. He was not an addict but he was one of them; embedded in the same culture and the same socio-economic class. The relationship was horizontal rather than vertical.

Respectfulness, reciprocity and responsibility

According to the African worldview the way a person relates with others is considered to be a critical aspect to personal maturity (Chuwa 2014, 37). This maturity is reached through the process of ‘fulfilling one’s obligations and duties towards others’ (ibid). This sense of responsibility is intertwined with the idea of community solidarity. As Ezenweke and Nwadialor point out, ‘the concept of man as a person who co-exists with others gives rise to collective responsibility…’ (2013, 64). African human relations entails having empathy, consideration, respect and compassion for others, in particular elders and the less privileged (ibid). Unah argues that the underlying basis of ethics in African traditions is ‘the welfare of the individual, who has responsibility for ensuring the welfare of the community’ (quoted in Imafidon et al 2013, xv). According to Chuwa, ‘All beings exist in reciprocal relationship with one another’ (2014, 39). Individual and societal survival and progress relies on reciprocation; in short, ‘reciprocity is a sacred duty’ and exploitation is ‘unethical and immoral’ (ibid).

Storyteller 4 approached the heroin addicts respectfully and placed no demands on them as he moved around the room to speak to each of them individually. He adopted a
journalistic persona, but at the same time did not position himself as an 'outsider', nor was he perceived by them as an interloper. Rather, he treated them as his 'brothers' and vice versa. The decision to give them money after the interview (5000 francs, equivalent to $8AUD) can be interpreted as an extension of this 'brotherhood', of looking out for each other in times of need; so too the gifts of shoes and clothes days after the interview.

Paying for information does demonstrate a professional contradiction within journalistic practice. The ethical challenges of this practice, which is better known as 'chequebook journalism', have been noted in scholarly research (Goldstein 2007; Schlesinger 2006). The Society of Professional Journalists has a position paper on the practice. The paper states that ‘Checkbook [sic] journalism undermines journalistic independence and integrity and threatens the accuracy of the information that is purchased’ (Society of Professional Journalists 2014a). The main objection: that the information may be embellished or exaggerated because of the payment.

However, chequebook journalism is often associated with 'exclusives' and the monetary arrangement can be based on a contract between the media institution and the source. This practice is somewhat different to the scenario between Storyteller 4 and the heroin addicts. It is more akin to the following account by Michael Wines, a journalist with *The New York Times*. Wines admitted to buying $75 worth of food for several families in Zambia after interviewing poor labourers, mostly women and children. He explains that working in poorer countries is an ethical dilemma for journalists:

> Reputable journalists are indoctrinated with the notion that they are observers — that their job is to tell a story, not to influence it. So what to do when an anguished girl tells a compelling story about her young
brother, lying emaciated on a reed mat, dying for lack of money to buy anti-AIDS drugs? Is it moral to take the story and leave when a comparatively small gift of money would keep him alive? If morality compels a gift, what about the dying mother in the hut next door who missed out on an interview by pure chance? Or the three huts down the dirt path where, a nurse says, residents are dying for lack of drugs? Why are they less deserving?

In reputable journalism, paying for information is a cardinal sin, the notion being that a source who will talk only for money is likely to say anything to earn his payment. So what to do when a penniless father asks why he should open his life free to an outsider when he needs money for food? How to react to the headmistress who says that white people come to her school only to satisfy their own needs, and refuses to talk without a contribution toward new classrooms? Is that so different from interviewing a Washington political consultant over a restaurant lunch on my expense account?

If it is, which is more ethical? (Wines 2006)

Wines goes on to explain that his rule of payment is that he never offers the money in advance of an interview. South African journalists who were interviewed as part of one of the few academic studies on the practice of chequebook journalism in Africa agreed that working as a journalist in impoverished areas calls for a different perspective on the practice. All of the journalists spoke of buying groceries or lunch or giving a small gift of money after a 'shoot' or an interview. Some justified it as 'good manners' and a reciprocal gesture, 'as they are helping us out and we should make a gesture of thanks', while another commented that, 'I think it's reasonable to acknowledge your environment if you're in a very very poor place...' (Stos 2009, 50).
It would appear that Storyteller 4 gave the heroin addicts money as a reciprocal gesture and sign of respect, similar to the justification offered by the South African journalists. Storyteller 3's comment during the group discussion that the socio-economic conditions as well as the location call for different interpretations of the practice echoes the comment by a South African journalist in the afore-mentioned study that Third World countries cannot be judged by Western standards (Stos 2009, 87).

Storyteller 4 approached his story subjects emphasising the social character of morality whereby due consideration was given to their interests and welfare. As Gyekye explains:

...Necessarily embedded in a human community, the individual person has a dual moral responsibility: for him or herself as an individual and for others as co-members of the community with whom she shares certain basic needs and interests (Gyekye 2010).

In the encounter between Storyteller 4 and his story subjects there was a great amount of consideration shown towards the heroin addicts. This interconnectedness required more than empathy, it required embodying 'the spirit of responsibility for the Other' (Tischner, quoted in Kapuscinski 2008, 72). Along with empathy, Storyteller 4 felt a degree of responsibility for those lives he had 'entered as a guest'. For Trautman Banks it is empathy and responsibility that make up the 'ethical component of narrative' (2002, 221). In this encounter, the journalist moves away from self-as-individual to self-in-relation (Lipari 2009, 45); towards the We-perspective (Schmid 2001); towards ubuntu (Mbiti 1989, see above p. 85).
Radio production 2: A testimony of a reformed drug addict and alcoholic

Storyteller 2 had heard about “Jacques’” story on Facebook and shared it with us during one of our workshop meetings. The story about his recovery from alcoholism had come up in light of the heroin addiction story. At that same meeting Storyteller 2 sent a message to Jacques on Facebook and requested an interview with him. He replied almost immediately accepting to meet with her and the group spent an hour or so planning interview questions.

Storyteller 2, Storyteller 4 and myself went along to the interview. I had anticipated that my role would be as a non-participant observer, as it had been in the previous interview, but I ended up playing a more active role in the interview process. I noticed that Storyteller 2 was reluctant to take the lead as Storyteller 4 had done in his interview.

When we arrived at Jacques’ house Storyteller 2 sat the furthest from him which meant she was not in a position to get a good quality recording. I was reluctant to offer instructions or verbal guidance in front of her interviewee so I decided I would demonstrate some good techniques through positioning myself near to the story subject and placing my recorder close to him, modelling a good position to record someone while interviewing. She noticed what I had done and came closer and put her recorder next to mine.

Storyteller 2 then explained to the story subject why she was interested in his story, and without any prompting Jacques began to tell his story. He proceeded to speak for nearly an hour and a half before Storyteller 2 asked any questions.

I noticed myself becoming agitated that Jacques was controlling the interview and
Storyteller 2 was not taking control. However, within a quarter of an hour we all had become completely absorbed in Jacques’ story to the point where none of us wanted to intervene. The other group members were listening intently, maintaining eye-contact, making head-nodding gestures and displaying empathy at appropriate times. They were allowing Jacques the time to tell his story on his own terms.

When Jacques had finished telling his story, Storyteller 2 noted that just about all the pre-planned questions had been answered. There were just a few that remained unanswered and she proceeded to complete the interview with two or three questions. Jacques' mother arrived and a general discussion took place after the interview.

As we made our way back to Nyamirambo we talked about Jacques' story and the impression it had made on each of us. The three of us had been completely transfixed; none of us wanted to break the spell under which he had held us for over an hour. I certainly had never experienced an interview quite like it in all my 20 years of being a journalist.

Lessons for Western journalism practice

In this particular encounter the core values that were demonstrated were patience and hospitality. There was a great deal of politeness and respectfulness between the two group members and Jacques. I wondered whether, if it had been my interview, I would I have interjected and taken back control of the interview, adhering to Western journalism practice, and if so, what difference would it have made to the way he told the story.

Storyteller 2's impressions of the interview in her written reflections afterwards emphasise the transformative effect Jacques’ story had on her:
Once in a lifetime you meet that person who makes you change the vision you had for the world.

"Is he the guy who’s letter attracted me?" that what I thought the first time I saw Jacques, he seems to be a normal guy not really inspiring, but life is full of surprises. Kind and polite which was not only an impression but his whole Being was shouting it. Everything seems to be normal only one could sense and see the artist behind the normal guy maybe that is why at the moment he begins to tell us his story I didn’t realize that I was experiencing the most beautiful experience a storyteller would live. The moment I realized it I ask myself “Do I have the ability of telling this story, will I be able to make feel my audience such emotions?” May be or maybe not.

As the story goes on emotions flew. We had a paper on which they were questions for the interview but he seems to anticipate our questions. We could feel the transformation as if we were with him back in the time it happen. For almost an hour and a half everything was quiet. He had all our attention. We went with him step by step until he finishes the story. In the last minutes I feel relieved because it was a happy ending.

On my way back home I told myself that if destiny doesn’t exist then why this meeting with Jacques.

I feel that it was going to change my life making me want to be a better storyteller so that through me story like Jacques’ reach a thousands of people.

In this reflective piece of writing it is the empowerment discourse that is invoked. The opportunity provided by being a ‘storyteller’ is understood by Storyteller 2 as life-changing and something higher than the self (referring to her meeting with Jacques as ‘destiny’). The ‘event’ or interview marks a personal transformation, an epiphany, for her and she recognises her powerful position as intermediary.

On reflecting about retelling Jacques story, Storyteller 2 makes it clear that she wants to
do his story justice and how she wants to make the audience, 'my audience' feel the emotions, and even have the experience that she had.

After the story was edited we shared the final production with Jacques and he replied via email:

February 8, 2013

I need to thank you very, very much for the astonishing work you did with the interview... I was so touched though it was my own story especially because of the background instrumental... so moving... I cried like a baby... but it was more tears of some kind of an edifying emotion than sadness or something!...

I'm sorry I gave you a hard time editing the too long story of mine... that's how it comes out when I start to talk about it! I was so glad you managed to stick to the essence of my life story... It's amazing how you summarized 32 years in 30 minutes! Chapeau! (as we say in French)

Well, I realized I could use the interview in my campaign against drugs around here and I've started to make a slide show with some pictures that fit the story board to make it visual also which I think will make it even more effective.

In Jacques' email it is the therapeutic discourse of telling his own story that is invoked because upon hearing his story played back to him, Jacques expressed that he had experienced strong emotions that brought him to tears. He made it clear that it was not sadness but of being spiritually or intellectually uplifted. There is also a sense of empowerment expressed in that he shows his appreciation for being able to tell his story in his own time, and that despite it being edited down to 30 minutes it still reflected ‘the essence’ of his life story. Furthermore, Jacques explains how he will go on to use the story in his education awareness campaign against drugs.
Observing this interview with Jacques revealed some important elements regarding the encounter between the journalist and story subject. While the controlled method of interviewing was turned on its head as Storyteller 2 and Storyteller 4 granted Jacques the time and space to tell his story, on his own terms, the respectfulness demonstrated through the encounter was similar to Storyteller 4’s encounter with his story subjects. Using this less-controlled approach the journalist surrenders and listens intently to her story subject. This approach echoes Francis Nyamnjoh's sentiments on the journalistic interview:

...the quality of journalism should be: if you really want to understand the story, let me not rush. Let me sit down so I can tell you the story with all its nuances...Journalism should be storytelling, but not in a hurry...’ (Nyamnjoh, quoted in Wasserman 2009, 292).

Likewise, Uzodinma Iweala explains that allowing his interviewees to speak for ‘long periods of time’ and to effectively ‘narrate and construct their own stories’ had a positive experience on those he interviewed:

...just allow them to construct a story I think, allows you deeper into the way they see themselves, the way they see their country, the way they see the continent in the midst of this epidemic and I think then is more fundamentally humanizing. When someone is allowed to construct their own story they become a real person as opposed to just a face that you map to a statistic…I think with non-fiction writing especially with big issues like HIV/AIDS, we forget that there are multiple characters with multiple and deep and complex personalities that need space to speak (Iweala 2008).
Approaching the interview in this way, the journalist lets go of control of the situation so that the interview process can unfold more authentically. It is not done 'in a hurry', as Nyamnjoh writes. But slowing down and taking time is a somewhat daunting idea in light of the media blitz so acutely focused on fast and furious news and endless streams of up-to-the-minute headlines and sound bites which attempt to capture the world’s events as they are unfolding. Slowing down means bucking the current media system. In many ways, it is an anti-capitalist idea because it refuses to 'grab' and 'react', instead it wants to 'feel the possibility of new creations, new connections', as Isabelle Stengers explains (Zournazi 2002, 250).

According to Homi Bhabha, Edward Said vehemently opposed the rapidity of the media culture because it rendered the world 'one-dimensional and homogeneous' (2005, 375). Said preferred narrative forms that are longer and slower: 'longer essays, longer periods of reflection' (ibid). Stengers describes slowing down as being about 'giving chance to the event, to the encounters which have you feeling and thinking' (quoted in Zournazi 2002, 252).

The impact of the slow, evolving interview can be, as Jacques explained, 'edifying' for the story subject, and 'life-changing' for the journalist, as experienced by Storyteller 2. In this sense the interview is mutually beneficial for both parties. In other words, it is collaborative, and not exploitative. It empowers both the story subject and the journalist, thus it is reciprocal.
Conclusion

Through a commitment to deep engagement and immersion I became privy to local cultural practices in Rwanda and their significance in day-to-day interactions. This helped me to develop an awareness of how people approach a variety of situations, including and especially their encounter with others for the purposes of telling their stories. This deep engagement led to a much stronger and historically informed sense of place, and was critical in establishing a trusting relationship between the storytellers and myself. This was achieved by integrating local practices into my methodology at every step of the way influencing how I prepared for it, how it was set up, how it was conducted, and how it was evaluated.

There was a reciprocal engagement and interplay between myself and the storytellers. I was seeking to gain knowledge through the interaction with them and vice versa. As Moosa-Mitha explains, through a 'critical self-consciousness' and 'self-reflexivity' the researcher comes to gain a sense of what her co-researchers and co-participants know (2005, 67). In order to avoid becoming the 'arrogant researcher who brings the tools of emancipation to the unenlightened “other”', I accepted to be emancipated; to be set free from a rigid journalism method and style; to be shown how to be more sensitive and culturally considered in my reportage of distant others (Navarro & Zeni 2004). I had not come to the group with an 'emancipatory cheerleader' attitude or to enlighten and empower the participants with Western journalism methods (ibid). This is illustrated in the following prose piece from my fieldwork diary:
Fieldwork diary entry
November 2012

I came sailing in a life-boat
hoping I may be rescued
from having no place

They respond
by setting aside a place for me
trusting that I may have the navigation skills
to charter them into new territories

My arrival and my presence
changes the currents

I try to locate myself within their space
and relegate myself to be a kind of compass
to assist rather than give orders

The captain-ship belongs to them

The group don’t see my vulnerabilities
they see me as a stable guide
here to provide them with skills

But I sense that they are my guide
offering me a sense of place
through them I come to terms with my
in betweenness
my floating between two places

This personal reflection presents a ‘way of knowing that is grounded in active, hands-on participation and personal connection’ as opposed to ‘a view from above the object of inquiry’ (Conquergood 2013, 33). This ground level view enabled an active collaboration between the group members and myself where there was an emphasis on co-learning and reciprocal interplay (Gilmore et al 1986, quoted in Ahmed 2009, 21). There grew between us a ‘common understanding’, and there was ‘a common basis for such an understanding, where the concerns, interests, and agendas of the researcher
become the concerns, interests, and agendas of the researched and vice versa' (Elbow 1986, quoted in Bishop 2011, 11).

An important outcome of the grassroots media project was the combination of the participants' own experiences, skills and knowledge, with the tools and additional storytelling skills gained in the workshops, to engage in the practice of storytelling within their own communities. The storytellers used methods informed by their own cultural values, beliefs, paradigms, social practices and ethical protocols, and that are more compatible with local contexts and social fabrics (Muwanga-Zake 2010, 69-70).

During their encounter with the heroin addicts, Storyteller 3 and Storyteller 4 extended the normative African ethic of brotherhood, which incorporates social and moral virtues such as hospitality and responsibility (Gyekye 2010). Likewise, the willingness of Storyteller 2 and Storyteller 4 to listen to Jacques' story 'with all its nuances' was imbued with respectfulness, patience and hospitality; qualities that reflect a slowly evolving storytelling practice.

It is based on these observations that I identified a set of salient values which were imbued in the storytellers' own practice in the field. These are: reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality. Some African scholars view these concepts as some of the cardinal values of human relations in the African cultural context, and as I mentioned earlier on pages 58 & 85, they are considered to be characteristic of the ubuntu worldview. The description I provide below for each concept is informed by how each was applied during the encounters between the storytellers and their story subjects.
• Reciprocity – mutually beneficial; the journalistic encounter is empowering and transformative to both story subject and journalist

• Responsibility – due consideration given to story subjects; collective responsibility (responsibility to oneself and to others)

• Respectfulness – respectful relationships with story subjects

• Patience – a slowly, evolving storytelling practice; allowing interviewees to speak for long periods of time; letting go of control; creating or allowing space for the other to be and for the story to unfold.

• Hospitality – concern for others (attending to the stranger as an equal); communal feeling; acknowledge another as one’s neighbour, a potential brother or sister (‘brotherhood’); hospitality toward the stranger, the different, the Other.

Taken together, these values have the capacity to nourish the encounter between the journalist and the story subject, precisely because they help to set up a horizontal relationship (as was the case in the two encounters described in the two examples given). The encounter is mutually respectful, presuming the worth and dignity of the story subject. The encounter unfolds more authentically, leaving less room for exploitation.

Although these concepts have been developed through the research project itself, and are in this sense particular to the locale, further examination reveals that important connections can be made between these local/regional values and other ethical theories and professional practices. When considered together, as a whole, the concepts identified in this project could be easily summarised into three words: respecting human life. According to Christians and Nordenstreng this particular ethic is ‘irrevocable’, and owes its status to one overarching universal principle, that of human sacredness (2004,
25). For these authors, the sacredness of life or reverence for life is a protonorm because various societies around the world articulate it in different terms and illustrate it locally (2004, 31). Embedded in this universal human solidarity are three basic ethical principles: human dignity, truth telling, and nonmaleficence. And it is these 'master norms', according to Christians and Nordenstreng, which 'provide a frame of reference internationally for assessing local news media practices and formulating codes of ethics' (2004, 3).

Another correlation can be made between the concepts developed through this research and the care perspective developed by Carol Gilligan (1982). Gilligan explains that an ethics of care 'starts from the premise that as humans we are inherently relational, responsive beings and the human condition is one of connectedness or interdependence' (2011). This definition aligns itself with the idea of 'brotherhood' discussed earlier in this thesis.

Gilligan makes a distinction between an ethics of care within a patriarchal framework as opposed to a democratic framework, and it is within the latter framework where all of the five concepts - reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience, and hospitality - form an alliance with her perspective of care. Within a democratic framework, Gilligan explains, ethics of care is 'a human ethic, grounded in core democratic values; the importance of everyone having a voice and being listened to carefully (in their own right and on their own terms) and heard with respect'. She goes on, 'An ethics of care directs our attention to the need for responsiveness in relationships (paying attention, listening, responding) and to the costs of losing connection with oneself or with others' (ibid).
While on the one hand this study shows that there are diverging values between Western journalism practice and the cultural peculiarities in Rwanda, these cited studies support the argument that there are also converging values that ‘are shared by human beings across cultures...’ (Ayish & Rao 2011, 724). The connections made then have significant implications for the much wider debate that has been gaining momentum amongst media ethics scholars and journalism practitioners, which has been prompted by the question, ‘Is it possible to agree on ethical conduct for journalists around the globe?’ (Wasserman 2008, 92).

These commonalities suggest that the relationship between the local and the global, and the universal and the particular is a legitimate one and worth further exploration. It shows how the global and the local engage in a ‘reflexive, relational, and critical dialectic’, and so makes an important contribution to the discussion of ethics for the global media (Ayish & Rao 2011, 721). These alliances and connections between ethical concepts developed within a non-Western locale and a range of ethical principles identified within Western scholarship enliven the vision for a global journalism ethics.

Turning for a moment away from ethics to practice, there is another interesting correlation between one of the ethical concepts identified here (patience) and an alternative Western journalism practice, which has arisen out of dissatisfaction with the warped speed of the 'fast and instantaneous' journalism of the 21st Century (Le Masurier 2014, 1-2). The ethic of patience has similar undertones to this emerging journalism practice called Slow Journalism.

The term first came into use by Susan Greenberg when she referred to long-form nonfiction as a form of ‘slow journalism’ which she described as taking ‘time to find
things out’, picking up ‘stories that others miss’, and communicating ‘it all to the highest standards’ (Greenberg 2007). Expanding on this definition, Megan Le Masurier explains that a slow journalism 'requires the time for deeper reflection and/or investigation about an original subject’ and ‘is ethical in treatment of subjects and of producers’ (2014, 6). However, it is Frances Nyamnjoh’s observation on journalism that strikes the closest chord to the ethic of patience identified in this study. As quoted earlier on page 173, Nyamnjoh tells Herman Wasserman in an interview that ‘…Journalism should be storytelling, but not in a hurry...’ (2009, 292). For Nyamnjoh, a journalism that is not done in a hurry requires the journalist to give the story subject time to tell their story, ‘if you really want to understand the story, let me not rush. Let me sit down so I can tell you the story with all its nuances…’ (ibid).

In the next action research study, which is the focus of Part II, I apply this set of values to my own practice and observe their effect on telling the story of a serial killing of sex workers in Rwanda that happened in 2012 and two additional murders in 2013. Self-reflexivity is used to reveal the process “from the inside” of producing the 51-minute radio documentary *A Silent Tragedy* (Lindgren & Phillips 2011, 77). Additionally, I use the concept of mediation as a means of methodological exploration, which allows me to look at the entire media process, which incorporates all three perspectives: the represented (subjects/objects), the representing (producers/writers), and the witnesses to the representation (receivers/audiences) (Silverstone 2002, 775). The documentary is examined and analysed in the light of the theory derived from the grassroots media project.

The real test is in how these set of values can be used in my own practice and whether using them lessens the construction of 'otherness'; demonstrates greater consideration
for the story subjects; reduces the potential for harm; and results in a reportage that
gives agency and humanity to the story subjects, in line with the aims and objectives of
this PhD study.
Part II

The Journalist Tells a Story of a People

It is in this second action research study that I draw together the insights from the first study and apply the core values - reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality - to my own journalism practice, melding local social practices with conventional Western reporting methods. It is here I connect theory and practice, in a 'live action context' (Reason 1994, 341), through the investigation of my own practice when I tell the story of the serial killings of 18 Rwandan women sex workers in 2012 and another two murders in 2013. This radio documentary was commissioned by ABC's Radio National and broadcast on 30 March 2014 (Santi 2014).

I examine the effect of applying localised methods and techniques to my practice, paying particular attention to the effect this has on the interactions between the story subjects and journalist. These final stages of the PhD study involve a critical evaluation of this independent practice, opening up the practice to scrutiny, reflection and critique, with the goal of potential improvement (Zuber-Skerrit & Fletcher 2007, 414).

I track the media process from story conception to broadcast to reception. I reflect on the interactions during production with both interviewees and commissioning editor, the textual strategies used to tell the story, and finally audience responses, all of which are used to formulate an analysis of the process. Each section is discussed in the light of the

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32 As the producer of this documentary I used a pseudonym (Ziyah Santi) to further protect the women's anonymity.
knowledge derived from the grassroots media project and the impact it had on the production and outcome of the documentary.

Research question two is considered in this analysis: What effect does applying local social practices and respecting Indigenous ways (Mudimbe 1988, 169) have on stories on Africa told by Western journalists? The sub-set research question that is addressed is:

Did applying local social practices lessen the construction of otherness, reduce the potential for media harm and give greater consideration for the story subjects?

There are two chapters in this section. Chapter Four provides the background of A Silent Tragedy and describes the methodology and analytical framework used to analyse, critique and reflect on the process of this media production. Chapter Five addresses the media process, dealing specifically with text, production, and reception (Ong 2014). Also discussed are the ethical challenges that this story presented.

There will be a pause in between Chapters Four and Five where the reader of this thesis will be asked to listen to the whole documentary A Silent Tragedy on the CD. Throughout Chapter Five the reader will be directed to listen to short excerpts from the documentary to illustrate particular points.
A Silent Tragedy

The need to lend a voice to suffering is a condition of all truth.

Adorno 1973, 17-18

Background

I was told a disturbing story from one of the group members around one month after returning to Australia from a field trip to Rwanda. A young Rwandan woman who worked as a sex worker was brutally murdered not far from the place where I had stayed during my time in Rwanda, and her murder followed a string of other killings of women who worked as sex workers. Upon further investigation I discovered that up to 18 women had been killed within a few short weeks in mid-2012. Some of the killings had taken place in the same neighbourhood where I had been living and working with the storytelling group. Most of the women, many of them mothers to young children, had been strangled to death. What struck me in particular was the lack of media coverage the story received: the murders were reported widely but superficially in local Rwandan media and international coverage was minimal.

I wondered whether the women's deaths were neglected in the Western media because the women were seen as 'the far away “other” outside our horizon of care and
responsibility'; or because 'they do not share our own humanity' and are not 'like us' (Chouliaraki 2008, 4 & 14). Whether this was the case or not, the neglect draws attention to the global inequality in the Western media (ibid, 16). The minimal coverage of the serial killings reflect the findings of J. C. Adams in relation to the United States 'that the U.S. press implicitly assigns a wide range of values to lives, depending on region or country', with African lives 'the least valued' (quoted in Ibelema 2014, 199). This, according to Ibelema, denotes one of the patterns of coverage of Africa, which he describes as 'continued perceptual marginalization and diminution of Africa' (ibid).

In comparing the domestic news coverage in Australia of the separate murder cases of Jill Meagher and Tracy Connelly in Melbourne, media commentators point to social status and class as having an impact on the different levels of media attention (Smith 2013, online; Gilmore 2013, online). Jill Meagher was an employee of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Tracy Connelly worked as a sex worker. Both women were killed late at night on the streets of Melbourne. Lizzie Smith notes the difference in media coverage:

In comparison to the media coverage after fellow Melbourne woman Jill Meagher was murdered last year, the media silence surrounding Tracy Connelly was deafening for those interested in not only violence against women, but violence against sex workers (2013, online).

Various studies\(^\text{33}\) have shown that both race and class\(^\text{34}\) determine 'who and what is

\(^{33}\) The hierarchies of worth in news coverage have been highlighted in a number of academic studies and research by journalists. The research shows that both race and class-status determine the disparities in the level of news coverage between women. For example, Warren Goulding's (2001) *Just another Indian: A Serial Killer and Canada’s Indifference*, Kristen Gilchrist’s (2010) study 'Newsworthy’ Victims? Exploring differences in Canadian local press coverage of missing/murdered Aboriginal and White Women', and Yasmin Jiwani and Mary Lynn Young's (2006) study 'Missing and Murdered Women: Reproducing Marginality in News Discourse', show that darker-skinned women receive less news coverage than White women. According to a study by John Lowman (2000) 'Violence and the outlaw status of (street) Prostitution in Canada', women who are at higher risk of violence such as sex trade
worthy of coverage’ (Lester & Ross 2003, 3). Had the Rwandan women been White and belonging to the middle or upper classes, or like Jill Meagher, not prostitutes, the story may have been more prominent in the international media and may have received in-depth and on-going coverage. As it was, the women who were murdered in Rwanda, and their families, were denied media access, voice and visibility in the global media space.

According to Lilie Chouliaraki journalists are in a privileged and powerful position to 'stretch the concerns of various publics beyond their local perspectives and to re-configure the imagined contours of these publics beyond their existing affiliations' (2008, 14). Chouliaraki calls this the 'performative value' of the media whereby ‘through their routine choices of image and word, [the media] help us imagine what we cannot experience: the reality of other people’s suffering and where we stand in relation to them’ (ibid, 4). Drawing on this idea that the media have a 'performative' as well as informational value, I deemed the murders of these women as worthy of attention, and pitched a story proposal to ABC Radio National.

The original proposal submitted to the ABC (included in Appendix 3) was titled, 'Who is newsworthy? Western media’s “hierarchies of worth”'. The angle of the story was the lack of media coverage by the Western media of the 16 women who were murdered in July and August 2012 (I later discovered that the known number of women murdered was 18 along with an additional two murders in 2013). After pitching this proposal to my producer, prior to the commissioning meeting, she advised me to shift the focus of workers, women living in poverty and those with drug addictions also receive less coverage. Goulding suggests that the extent of coverage is also determined by the status and race of the journalist, with middle-class White reporters empathising with victims who are like them – this could be the reason why the murder of Jill Meagher, an ABC journalist, received so much international media attention compared to the limited coverage of Melbourne sex worker Tracy Connelly who was murdered some months afterwards.

34 Shakuntala Rao reveals that in India victims who are poor receive less media coverage than victims who are wealthy (2013).
the story from the Western media coverage (or lack thereof) to the serial killings themselves, and centre the story around one or two of the murder victims. This advice led to a modified story proposal (included in Appendix 4) with the title, 'A Silent Tragedy'. It was on this basis that the second amended story proposal was commissioned by 360 Documentaries, ABC Radio National's flagship documentary program (now known as Earshot). The 'who is newsworthy' angle was not abandoned altogether, but my original intention to critique Western media's hierarchy of victims and racial bias was thwarted by the kinds of stories 360 Documentaries deems newsworthy, or rather, story-worthy. The challenge, therefore, was how to represent this particular case of distant suffering without rendering it into a 'spectacle'.

A Silent Tragedy: an analysis of practice

The commissioning of the story presented an opportunity to incorporate the documentary as part of this PhD study and reflectively and reflexively examine how I managed the process of making this invisible story of suffering visible, and address Chouliaraki's question: 'what is or is not ethically right in managing this visibility' (2008, 16)? With ethical practice being the focus of the study, the reflective analysis of how A Silent Tragedy was made makes an important contribution to the current literature in media ethics, in particular to the discussion about the representation of both the distant other and distant suffering (Ashuri and Pinchevski 2009; Chouliaraki 2006; Couldry 2008; Frosh 2007; Hoijer 2004; Moeller 1999; Orgad 2008; Peters 2001; Silverstone 2007). More generally, the study contributes to recent journalism ethics research, the most recent being Couldry et al (2013); Christians (2010); Christians et al (2008); Fourie (2008); Mfumbusa (2008); Omojola (2008); Ward (2008); and White (2010). It also fills a gap that has been identified between ethical theory and practice in
the field, and makes a much needed contribution to cross-cultural perspectives in journalism ethics research (Starck 2001).

But beyond this, and pertinent to the aims and objectives of this study, the commissioning of the story provided an opportunity to draw on the insights gleaned from the first action research study and apply them to my own practice; once again, reiterating the action research cycle. It presented an opportunity to heed the call by Rao and Wasserman to allow non-Western Indigenous theories to inform my practice as a Western media professional (2007). Thus, the set of values identified in the first study - reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality - were applied and tested in this second study.

**Theoretical framework for analysis**

The analysis is primarily concerned with the ethical principles of the representations of the far-away other, in this case the African subject. It deals with the 'important ethical issues that arise in the process of media production', in particular the interactions between myself as the media producer and the story subjects, who are in this specific instance distant sufferers (Ong 2014, 180. His emphasis). This means that the analysis is not solely interested in the 'intentional object of representation (the “moment” of the text)' but also 'with the experiences of those involved in the process of representation (the “moment” of production)', in this case, the experiences of the women who were interviewed as part of the documentary and who featured as the main story subjects (ibid, 191). Furthermore, it considers the engagement that audiences (listeners, viewers, readers) have with products that are produced by the media (Silverstone 2002, 762). Therefore, the analysis also addresses audience responses to the documentary.
It was through the making of the radio documentary that I could track this entire media process and reflect on the interactions during production, the textual strategies used to tell the story, and finally, audience responses. An analysis of this process captures the 'actual consequences' of the work every step of the way (Ong 2014, 188. His emphasis).

The concept that has been used to understand how this process works is mediation. According to Silverstone mediation is 'a transformative process in which the meaningfulness and value of things are constructed' (Silverstone 2002, 761). Ong's understanding of mediation theory is particularly useful to this study, where he refers to it as 'a “circulation of meaning” across moments of text/production/reception' (2014, 180). Ong proposes that mediation theory be used to examine the study of the consequences of media to the experience of suffering because it offers a different and perhaps unexplored perspective for studying media ethics and audiences' responsibility to vulnerable others (ibid).

Although this study is not a sociological or cultural analysis of media representations of suffering - though it does draw on literature pertaining to this topic - the application of mediation theory offers a framework for examining and reflecting on the full spectrum of the media process. Using this approach allows me to examine the ways in which representation of suffering is (or is not) transformed by processes of media production and reception, in light of the new theory I bring to tell the story. It also provides a way to account for the 'distinct ethical questions' and ethical dilemmas that 'arise from the specific “moments” of mediation' (Ong 2014, 179). The end result is an 'holistic approach' to examine this particular portrayal of distant suffering (ibid, 180). It is an approach that addresses the represented (subjects/objects), the representing (producers/writers), and the witnesses to the representation (receivers/audiences).
(Silverstone 2002, 775). By dealing with each of these moments of the mediation process separately it is possible to consider both the effect of this particular narrative on audiences, taking into account social factors that may shape responses to certain representations of distant suffering, as well as the ethical practice of journalists in the process of representing the distant other, by observing oneself in practice and by including people's 'direct experiences with media' (Couldry 2000).

Methodology

In journalism practice, it is the product (story) that is privileged over process (production). However, this practice-informed action research study privileges the processes of news gathering and storytelling by exposing and revealing what goes on behind the scenes of reporting and representing the lived experiences of distant others. As a practitioner researcher I reflect and engage with the process of making my own radio documentary. By following the process from conception to broadcast to reception, new knowledge and understanding about dealing with and exposing the ‘complexity of “ordinary” people’s lives’ through nuanced stories is discovered (Pottier 2002, 202).

My primary motivation was to improve and develop a personal understanding of my practice as a foreign journalist in Rwanda (McKernan 1996, 4; Carr and Kemmis 1986, 162). This is based on a premise borrowed from Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner, 'when we come to understand ourselves in deeper ways, we come to understand others' (2000, 738). If I come to understand my work in deeper ways, I can come to understand more deeply its impact. Hence it is through self-inquiry that I am pushed to ask about the values that I hold and the value of the work with which I engage (Bradbury and Reason 2001, 452). My immediate concern regarding journalistic practice is the
potential to generate 'complex forms of harm' when representing distant others (Couldry et al 2013, 8). Thus it is here that I revisit conventional journalism methods and techniques that have the potential to cause harm and explore alternative possibilities using the insights from the first action research study.

Having in the first project worked through the cyclical process of planning, taking action, observing the action, reflecting, and then further planning, I begin the process again in this part of the study, incorporating the insights from the grassroots media project into my own practice, applying them (acting), and then observing and evaluating how they worked (Zuber-Skerritt & Fletcher 2007, 422). One of the outcomes of this kind of research is an explanation of how and where evaluation of action led to new insights about practice. The inclusion of the radio documentary, A Silent Tragedy, in this section and the accompanying critical reflection is illustrative of this explanation. It is through the documentary and the analysis that new understandings are formed and shared about the practice of Western journalism and non-Western Indigenous theories being applied to that practice. The reflections on the process of creating this artefact incorporate insights, practices, problems and revelations. It is the nature of this process that allows practitioner-researchers to capture and define theory in the field (Phillips 2014) as a way to improve practice (Parkin 2009).

The ‘routine nature’ of journalism has led critics to argue that it is non-reflexive and therefore not suitable for research practice. However, journalist research scholars such as Mia Lindgren (2011), Sharon Mascall-Dare (2013) and Bonita Mason (2012) have proved otherwise and it has become widely accepted among universities that journalism can constitute research (Bacon 2012, 157; Lindgren & Phillips 2011). There is great potential within 'lived' journalism practice for the development of theory, particularly as
journalists become 'reflective practitioners' in the field (Schön, 1983). Peace journalism scholars Lynch and McGoldrick also support reflexivity in journalism practice:

We ourselves argue: ‘Journalism needs some workable form of reflexivity, analysing and addressing its own role in shaping discussions and creating realities. Without this, it is fated to collude and conceal’ (2005, xvi).

Lindgren and Phillips, proponents for the model of journalism as research, argue that it has 'great potential for journalism practitioners to deepen their understanding of theory and practice within their genre' (2011, 75). It is through self-reflexivity that journalists are able not only to transform their own practice but also to contribute to the development of a growing body of journalism scholarship. There are a variety of models that bring together practice and research but ultimately the idea is that they 'co-exist as fruitful ways of knowing within the academic discourse about methodology and theory...' (Arnold 2012, 10).

Practice-related research expands the academic discourse of journalism by including the voices of practising journalists. It allowed me as a practitioner-researcher to fulfil two meaningful tasks: firstly, to take part in the intellectual activity of theorising journalism, and secondly, to put forward my own perspectives and experiences that are often confined to a newsroom, production suite or in the field where journalists gather material for their stories. Extracting the knowledge from these sites is an exciting process for it not only brings out privileged knowledge into an arena of reflection and critique, but also furthers the cause of understanding and improving practice for practitioners themselves, as well as students and scholars of journalism.
Methods of data collection

In this action research study, practice is used as the dominant method to advance knowledge and improve understanding about media representation of distant others. Data therefore includes the documentary and the data arising from the reflective analysis. Data from the pre-production period (already discussed at the beginning of this section) included the story proposals for the commissioning process. During the six weeks in the field gathering information to tell this story, the main data collection methods were self-observation and self-reflection and fieldwork notes which themselves included some reflective journaling. These methods allowed me to capture the experiences of the documentary-making process. Post-production data included draft scripts and reflective journaling during this process. All of this data is analysed within the narrative itself.

Focus groups

Once the documentary had been broadcast I followed this up with ethnographic interviews with the story subjects and different sets of audiences. I took the documentary back to Rwanda to get feedback from the women story subjects on how they regarded their own representations and their experience of interacting with me as the media producer. Taking the documentary back to the women was also part of the emancipatory framework that guided this entire PhD study (I discuss this below on p. 218). The draft script was read to the women for their feedback. This feedback loop meant that control of the project was shared to some degree, and not completely controlled by one designated researcher.

I also set up listening sessions to gather listener responses. These included a group of Rwandan journalists and the group of Australian female voice actors who read the
English transcripts of the Rwandan women who featured in the documentary. I also examined the listener responses following the broadcast on ABC Radio National on 30 March 2014. These responses included comments on the website and a hand-written letter.

Selection of focus group participants for feedback

It was during the final field trip when I took the documentary back to the story subjects that I made a decision to include feedback from another Rwandan cohort. I took advantage of my existing connections with journalists in Rwanda and organised a listening session. I was keen to hear from my Rwandan colleagues their views on my role in telling this particular story and how I had represented the women. I called on one of the panellists from the radio forum, which took place in stage one of the study (see above, p. 110) to arrange the listening group. His familiarity with the PhD topic helped to contextualise the documentary for the purpose of inviting feedback from the group. The journalists were selected by this panellist. I had invited one other journalist but he failed to attend on the day. The journalists present included two senior Rwandan journalists and two mid-career journalists. It was not a deliberate choice to have all male journalists.

The Australian women voice actors were chosen as a listening group because of their initial involvement in the documentary. Having only heard excerpts of the story during the production of the documentary, they expressed a desire to hear the whole documentary as a group. I arranged a listening session with the women and recorded their feedback. This group consisted of three women aged 35+. Two of the voice actors were absent.
It was useful to have two different listener groups from different socio-cultural backgrounds. In retrospect, had I had the time I would have scheduled in more listening sessions in the overall design plan of the PhD study and included groups across different ages, classes, religion, and ethnicity. This would have '[sharpened] the experience of witnessing' this particular representation of suffering (Ong 2014, 185). Nevertheless, the results signalled to different responses based on gender, culture, professional expertise and individual experience (ibid, 188).

*Ethical considerations*

One of the concerns with making this story visible in the wider global context was the potential reaction by the Rwandan Government, given its sensitivity to certain stories being publicised. There is a tendency for a 'preferred image of Rwanda' to make its way into local and international media (Ingelaere 2009, 20), the preferred image being one of progress, development, economic recovery, visionary leadership and a smooth reconciliation process. Local journalists call this 'sunshine journalism'35. Johan Pottier also argues that 'reality is what Rwanda’s political leaders, as moral guardians, tell the world what it is' (2002, 207). On the surface, Rwanda is touted as a 'beacon of hope' owing to its economic growth, progress and stability (Blair 2014). But Ingelaere argues:

> ...there is a second world lying beyond political control or correctness, beyond ‘rehearsed consensus’ and the ‘mise-en-scene’. There is a need to carry through a ‘copernican turn’ in the knowledge construction of Rwanda by replacing a focus on the centre with insights from the periphery (2009, 20).

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35 During the radio forum mentioned earlier in Part I, the presenter asked the panellists: 'To you what is the African story, I know many times we have said that nothing goes wrong in Rwanda, the impression when you look at the newspaper every story is as good as a clean piece of linen, but what is the African story if you had to put it at force? The reply was, 'Every story is a good story in Rwanda, call it sunshine journalism' (12 May 2012).
As I mentioned earlier, some researchers have commented on the difficulty of exploring certain research topics in Rwanda, particularly politically sensitive issues such as ethnicity, governance, justice, poverty, inequality and democracy (discussed above, p. 119). I had no obstacles gaining access to the lower-socio economic areas or in gaining a media accreditation permit from the government-controlled Media High Council, the body that grants permission to conduct interviews for media purposes. However, it was an off-the-cuff comment that the official who authorised my press card made to my translator that alerted me to be all the more cautious with how I approached the story. Although the comment was delivered in a humorous manner, it was along the lines of, if we reported anything troubling they would know who to come looking for. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what subject matters the authorities deem 'troubling'. However, research conducted by organisations such as Freedom House clearly shows that the government of Rwanda reacts with swift measure to media content that is critical of the ruling party and that airs contentious views about the 1994 genocide and/or ethnicity (Freedom House 2013). And while there have been amendments to media laws expanding the rights of journalists and signs that Rwandan internet users are becoming more active and vocal in criticising the government, the Committee to Protect Journalists ranks Rwanda among the top ten countries from which journalists seek exile (Salazar-Ferro & Rhodes 2012).

Thus, to further ensure the women's safety (having granted anonymity by using false names and distorting their voices), I chose to hide my true identity and opted to use a pseudonym when the documentary was broadcast. When I sought advice about this matter – whether the story I was investigating would in fact be of concern to the government - I received conflicting opinions. One of the journalists I usually confide in when I am in Rwanda told me that it was not a sensitive story topic, while another
revealed that he had stopped investigating the murders of the women because he had the sense that there may be serious consequences if he did not. Both journalists encouraged me to pursue the story as they both deemed it important and a story that had lacked a thorough investigation locally.

During her numerous field trips in Rwanda, researcher An Ansoms talks about how she took 'great care to adopt research strategies' that allowed her to “stay under the radar” of direct government surveillance' (2012, 45). I concur with her point that the most important action to undertake is to gather the right permissions and to let local authorities know of your presence and the permits you have acquired to carry out research or media interviews. In doing so, and especially in a manner that is courteous and respectful, the local authorities are usually only too willing to help. I was open with the local leaders of relevant authorities about the topic of the documentary. During the research process and interview stages, I never experienced being under surveillance or authorities wanting to interfere. However, as I explained earlier, I took due precautions, given the circumstances, to reduce the potential for harm to the story subjects and those who worked with me.

It is within the ethical framework of this action research study that the set of values identified in the first study were applied. In Chapter Five I outline how reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality were integrated into my own practice and I evaluate their impact.
Conclusion

This chapter has provided the background and context of *A Silent Tragedy*. It has described the methodology and theoretical framework used to analyse, critique and reflect on the process of this media production. It also discussed the ethical issue of telling a story of human suffering and working in Rwanda's highly-politicised post-genocide environment.

The following chapter is organised into three sections which together track the entire media process. I reflect on the interactions during production, the textual strategies used to tell the story, and finally listener responses, all of which are used to formulate the analysis of the process.

**BOX 2**

I invite the reader of this dissertation to now pause from reading and listen to the radio documentary production *A Silent Tragedy*, track 2 on CD.

The listener should take particular note of the role of the journalist, the placing of the voices, and the aesthetic qualities of the documentary. There will be an opportunity throughout the next chapter to hear excerpts which have been selected to highlight particular points for analysis.

The prominent story subjects in the program are the women who describe their life working as sex workers. They have all used pseudonyms. Their alias names are Chantal, Cynthia, Vanessa, Sabrina, Shadia, Jeanette and Clementine; and finally there is Asia, the neighbour of Julienne Gahongirye, one of the murdered women. Some of these women are referred to in the analysis below.
Moments of mediation: Text, Production, and Reception

Organisation of chapter

Exploring the making and production of *A Silent Tragedy* from the perspective of mediation, and using ethnographic methods, enables a broad analysis that encompasses the text, the encounter between the text and audience, and 'people's direct experiences with the media frame' (Ong 2014, 191). Given the objectives of this study it is particularly useful to do as Ong suggests, to link the object of representation, which he calls the ‘moment’ of the text, with the experiences of those involved in the process of representation, this is what he refers to as the ‘moment’ of production (ibid). It is the concept of mediation that invites reflection on the ethics of this media process and provides a theoretical framework for this following analysis to unfold.

The first section of this chapter deals with the 'represented', the story subjects. It is in this section I examine the ethics of media process, particularly the interactions between myself and the main story subjects who are the women sex workers. It is here where the women's direct experiences with being represented are included, especially how the women regarded their own representations and their personal interactions with myself and the translator. This is where the issue of harm is dealt with, addressing the question posed earlier, that is, whether the media process demonstrated greater consideration for the story subjects and reduced potential for harm.
The next section deals with the 'representing'. As the maker/producer of the documentary I discuss the textual strategies and rhetorical techniques I used to tell this story of suffering. It is here I discuss the challenges I faced regarding the agency and humanity of the victims and the suffering and how I dealt with these challenges. Whether the documentary succeeded in portraying the women with humanity and dignity is measured by the women's feedback and the audience responses.

The final section reveals listener responses (the witnesses to the representation). By engaging with two distinct sets of listeners as well as the listener comments on the program's website, I examine how the techniques of representing suffering elicited different responses and how these responses may be attributed to categories of gender, culture and individual experience. Furthermore, the responses engage with questions of representation such as whether the story subjects are portrayed with humanity and agency (Chouliaraki 2006; Orgad 2008), whether the documentary is truthful and believable (Peters 2001), in addition to the sub-set question introduced earlier: whether applying local social practices resulted in a practice that lessened the construction of otherness, reduced the potential for media harm and gave greater consideration for the story subjects.

Each section is discussed in light of the theory derived from the grassroots media project and the impact the set of core values had on the production and outcome of the documentary and on the encounter with distant others.
The represented

A critical element in this storytelling process was developing and engaging in ethical relationships with the story subjects, particularly in light of the ethical tensions discussed earlier. This relationship was influenced by two key factors: firstly, the requirements of the university ethics approval process; and secondly, incorporating into the ethical framework the set of values which were identified in the previous action research study, namely: reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality. The first qualifies as 'procedural ethics' (approval from an ethics committee) while the second qualifies as 'ethics-in-practice' (the day-to-day ethical issues that researchers deal with in the field) (Guillemin & Gillam 2004, quoted in Richards 2009a, 41). Combined, these two factors played a major role in the interactions that occurred between myself and the women during the media process.

While some journalism academics resist and remain cynical about ethic review committees, as Ian Richards (2009a) explains in his aptly titled article, 'Uneasy bedfellows: ethics committees and journalism research', the following section illustrates how the ethics process that this project followed was in fact complementary and helped to draw out the local social practices which were identified in the first action research study.

Ethics approval process

Ethical evaluations prior to story assignments are not common practice in journalism, and certainly ensuring the safety of story subjects or local personnel is not considered as the primary obligation\(^\text{36}\). The risk factors involved in interviewing people about topics

\(^{36}\) For example, very little attention was paid to the driver of the four *New York Times* journalists who were kidnapped
and events that involve sensitive or traumatic experiences are often not evaluated in any formal way by journalists, even though the potential for 'sensationalism, invasion of personal privacy, harassment and insensitivity in dealing with survivors of a traumatic experience' is significant (Richards 2009b, 17). It is usually at the journalist's discretion as to how he or she deals with these kinds of ethical dilemmas. In this respect the industry codes of ethics are more like a guide for how journalists should behave when seeking or conducting interviews, as well as how the material they gather is subsequently treated and published. While industry codes of ethics stipulate that journalists should treat their subjects as 'human beings deserving of respect', that they be 'sensitive' and minimise harm (Society of Professional Journalists 2014b)\(^3\), the codes fall short of any 'promise' to protect those who have shared their stories. According to Richards this is because the principles of minimising harm 'often clashes [sic] head-on with the principle of truth-telling' (2009a, 39). It is the story that is prioritised. For example, my story pitch, a six-page document seeking commissioning from ABC Radio National for the story of the murders of the women in Rwanda, did not address, nor was it a requirement to address, the potential risks to the story subjects or anyone else involved in the story (see Appendix 4).

in Libya in 2011 when the international media covered their release. Headlines and stories focused on their ordeal while being held captive but the missing driver, whose name was Mohammed, was hardly mentioned. A joint story written by the journalists following their release noted that Mohammed had likely been killed: 'From the pickup, Lynsey saw a body outstretched next to our car, one arm outstretched. We still don’t know whether that was Mohammed. We fear it was, though his body has yet to be found. If he died, we will have to bear the burden for the rest of our lives that an innocent man died because of us, because of wrong choices that we made, for an article that was never worth dying for. No article is, but we were too blind to admit that' (Shadid et al 2011). One of the kidnapped journalists was Stephen Farrell who had also been kidnapped in Afghanistan in 2009. According to a story in the Los Angeles Times his local Afghan translator, Sultan Munadi, died during his rescue at that time, as did a local woman, a child, and one of the paratroopers who had flown to his rescue (Rainey 2011).

\(^3\) Within its code of ethics, under the heading 'Seek Truth and Report It', the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) states that journalists should be cautious when making promises, but keep them if they are made; and to reserve anonymity for sources who may face danger, retribution or other harm. Under 'Minimize Harm', it states that, 'Ethical journalism treats sources, subjects, colleagues and member of the public as human beings deserving of respect'; and 'to consider cultural differences in approach and treatment' (Society of Professional Journalists 2014b). Similar values are found in other codes of ethics such as the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA). However, a goal such as 'minimising harm' requires a well thought out process, predicting and pre-empting potential for harm. It is a process that does not play a significant part in the journalist's working repertoire of reporting which primarily consists of 'seek truth and report it'.
It was the formal assessment process via Murdoch University's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) which helped to establish a clear ethical base for this project. This process places quite different demands on the journalist/researcher compared to the industry ethical guidelines for journalists. The protocols set out, and in many ways enforced, by human research ethical review committees are essentially designed to assess and address the risks of research interventions. They cover issues including harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of data. In most consent agreements research participants are given the option of pulling out of the research entirely, even after they have shared and divulged information that may be highly valuable to the research itself. Participants are fully informed of any risks that their participation in the research may have, and in some cases, they are given compensation for their time. In order to gain approval to conduct research, researchers must justify and demonstrate how they will deal with these risks.

The interviews I conducted with the women for my documentary were covered by the rules of the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (NHMRC 2007), and in this particular case minimising harm to the women became the main consideration. How safe was it for the women to talk to a journalist in light of the recent murders? Would talking to a foreign journalist put their lives at risk? The fact that these questions had no definitive answer made it important to proceed on the basis that there was a very real danger and risk to their lives. To satisfy the HREC requirements (research permit number 2012/003) I put in place an assurance of anonymity, the option of altering the women's voices in the final documentary, and conducting interviews in a place that was considered to be low risk. There was also an option for the women to change their minds about being involved, provided it was done within two weeks of the interview taking place. Journalists would very rarely give their
interview subjects such a reprieve.

Being obliged to seek approval through HREC in order to carry out interviews with the women in Rwanda meant that as a journalist I had to shift my focus and my obligation, from the story to the subjects of the story, to the women and their safety, and to the safety of others who were involved in the project. This approach required that I establish more collaborative and stronger connections and that I respect those who were hosting me. In this case I considered the women sex workers my host. This process of risk assessment influenced my journalism practice in the field, and essentially determined how I approached and related to the story subjects.

Norman K. Denzin eloquently captures the obligation of responsibility in the act of sharing stories:

The lives and stories that we hear and study are given to us under a promise, that promise being that we protect those who have shared with us. And, in return, this sharing will allow us to write life documents that speak to the human dignity, the suffering, the hopes, the dreams, the lives gained, and the lives lost by the people we study (1989, 83).

Telling their stories in a way that respected the women – and protected them – became my primary obligation.

As I have demonstrated, the human research ethics review process prioritises the well-being of research/story subjects more than the industry code of ethics for journalists. Moreover, this review process mimics some of the core values identified in the first

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38 Ian Richards clearly illustrates the critical difference between the rigour of human research ethics committees and journalism industry codes of ethics when he points out that, 'In many countries, including Australia, it is possible to practise as a journalist for years and never so much look at an ethics code' (2009a, 42).
action research study, in particular reciprocity, responsibility and respectfulness. However, there were particular situations and moments throughout this research process where even the human research ethical protocols were insufficient, and it was local knowledge and practices that, beyond providing guidance and giving authenticity to the storytelling process, also addressed ethical concerns that had not been considered in the formal ethical review process. I shall now address these.

Weaving in local knowledge and practices

The ethical framework that I had developed based on the human research ethics approval process was sufficient to put in place mechanisms to protect the women and reduce the potential for further harm. This also worked well to give the women 'value', particularly as they were feeling devalued by the wider society. It showed the women that my concern, first and foremost, was their safety. However, there were particular nuances throughout the story process that the ethical framework could not address. This was when more was required of me, as the journalist and researcher, than making assurances through consent forms and passing on information sheets.

As mentioned previously (see above p. 95), in African societies more emphasis is placed on the community than on the individual. African humanism or communitarianism involves 'reciprocal personhood': the self and other 'always interlocked with one another' (Schutte 1993, quoted in Christians 2004, 243). In order to reach the women, and by 'reach' I mean earn their trust, I had to shift my ontological perspective from self-as-individual to self-in-relation; I needed to change my view of

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39 Chantal, a sex worker in Rwanda (not her real name), emphasised this lack of value: 'We don't have a voice, even if someone is trying to strangle me all through the night I can't tell the leader, I've got no one to call. Even if I have been strangled, I don't feel safe to say it, because I feel I have no value and they will say I'm just a prostitute... we are treated like a rat in the ceiling...' (from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, 29 July 2013. As noted above the women gave themselves pseudonyms to preserve their anonymity).
reality and my way of thinking and valuing (Muwanga-Zake 2010, 71). The fact that the human research ethical protocols impel researchers to take responsibility for the research subjects is reflected to some degree in this perspective. However, there remains an ideological clash in relation to the still very dominant ideal of the researcher as a value-neutral and detached observer. The epistemological foundations of action research challenge this approach to research, since it is, as Bradbury and Reason state, 'grounded in a participatory worldview' (2001, 1). But even then, as herising warns, inclusion can be a superficial gesture (2005, 139) if the research process is not attentive to or informed by other conceptual systems of other human orders (Gilchrist 1997, 80). Thus, it was the set of core values identified in the first study that presented a rare opportunity to incorporate non-Western practices, values and concepts into my own journalism practice and examine what effect they had on my encounters with story subjects and the media text itself.

The grassroots media project, discussed in the previous chapter, had already accustomed me to acknowledging and accommodating a worldview different to my individualist Western libertarian perspective, using an approach that valued the local context and the rich intellectual heritage and potentialities of those involved (Denzin and Lincoln 2008, xiv). The ethical framework in which to carry out the interviews for the documentary required a similar approach, one that centred values such as reciprocity and interdependence. In practice this meant thinking about ways to make the encounters that I had with my story subjects mutually beneficial; to acknowledge a certain degree of responsibility towards story subjects as I had come into their lives as a guest; to respect their ways of expressing themselves and conduct the interview on their terms; to allow time and space for conversations and interviews; and embrace the ethic of universal human brother-sisterhood.
Both traditional research and conventional journalism practice tend to conduct their inquiries from the basis of communicating 'about' rather than 'with' (although anti-oppressive research practices such as decolonial inquiries and action research insist on the latter). The quest for authenticity and the establishment of a genuine dialogue depend on communicating 'with', which means that all encounters require negotiation (Schmid 2001, 221). This ontological perspective opens up the possibility of a 'relational world' that embraces contemplation and pluralism; in other words, it represents a post-Western perspective (Tsekeris and Katrivesis 2009, 29): a 'We-perspective' rather than a 'Me-perspective' (Schmid 2001, 229).

The paradigm shift, or the 'epistemological break', in this specific context was adopting a 'truly social approach' to the storytelling process. It involved making the 'step from the individual to the person, from relationship to encounter', in order to make the framework for the inquiry ethically responsive to the local situation and to people's needs, and to protect the story subjects in a more holistic way (Schmid 2001, 230). Respecting the sense of community and spirit of collectivism meant changing the way I would normally approach people for interviews, the methods I would use for interviewing, and for following up after interviews (for instance, making an effort to 'be seen' again and to engage on some level with the story subjects outside of organised interviews).

It required acting from the epistemological standpoint that 'we are wrapped up together in this bundle of life...' (Kaunda, 1966, 32. His emphasis). The ethical base therefore was built on the notion that there is a collective good, not an individual gain (Gyekye 1995); that there is 'hospitality and connection' (Murithi 2006, quoted in Jovanovic
2012, 51); and that there is a departure from 'me first' thinking to prioritising 'concern for others' (Jovanovic 2012, 51).

Where the conventional journalist and traditional researcher is neutral and detached, this approach required becoming a member of the community; to no longer be a 'spectator of the process', but to have 'a personal stake' in the process (Blankenberg 1999, 49-50). It is a kind of journalistic practice that aligns itself with 'the interpretations and epistemologies of the 'common people' in order to tell the stories that accurately reflect, and reflect on, their concrete experiences and spiritualities' (ibid, 59). This approach to journalism makes space for the 'common people' to articulate their own needs and possible solutions to their own problems (Christians 2004, 250). It is a kind of journalism that embraces the framing of 'humanity'.

The 'professional distance' that reporters are supposed to have with their subjects is to some extent antithetical to the core values of many African societies. As Kaunda argues, 'even amongst strangers there is an inherent bond' (1996, 32). Incorporating these African cultural values into the ethical framework influenced the subsequent encounters that I shared with the women. In embracing the African notion of brotherhood and sisterhood, I subverted the detached and distanced approach and revealed human emotions such as empathy and compassion towards the women as they shared their stories with me. This allowed a bond to develop between us over the time we were together.

Just as they had been hospitable towards me – allowing me inside their homes, privy to their private inner worlds – I reciprocated their hospitality by a promise to protect them and to produce a story that would speak to their human dignity (see p. 232 where I
discuss the textual strategies used to tell the story). There was no longer a sense of being separate or autonomous. I had become fully immersed and interconnected.

_Approaching the women_

The first step in the story-gathering process was to initiate contact. My plan was simply to show up to their homes, introduce myself and explain what I wanted. Seeing this approach as rather brash, my translator explained that showing up together at the women's compounds where they live without any warning may discourage them and/or create unrealistic expectations. He suggested that he go alone to meet with the women first to inform them of the project and my role. He would then relay back to me whether the women were agreeable to meet and we would take the next step together.

The fact that the translator knew the women was essential in establishing that initial connection. But more than that, the translator's relationship with the women was one based on equality. He too had been living in _akajagari_ communities for about 20 years. The women knew him as someone who would offer a friendly greeting and engage in conversation with them in passing.

This was important because the translator's existing relationship with the women was the foundation upon which my relationship with the women was built. The translator's role was critical because he mediated between the women and myself, and he was the conduit through which I would hear (relayed by him in my language) about the women's experiences. Woodson argues that 'there is a distinct body of facts that one can only impart as a result of having shared experiences' (quoted in Dunbar 2008, 89). The translator was positioned alongside the women on the margins of society and this provided him with an 'entrance into a situation that might be otherwise misunderstood,
viewed as insignificant or completely missed...' and it meant there was 'a common experience/understanding' between them: between 'those who ask and those who are being asked' (ibid, 90).

My translator had also asked me to put the letter and consent form into 'plain English' because he felt that the wording was 'too academic' (this involved simplifying a few words and sentences). He wanted to explain the formal procedures in a way that made the women feel comfortable and in control. The reading of the information letter and oral consent form took around 15 to 20 minutes. Initially, I was dubious about how the consent process would play out. The journalistic part of me was concerned that it may discourage the women from agreeing to the interview. However, the women responded positively to the consent process. Some engaged by asking questions in relation to the risks and in having access to the final story. As illustrated by their comments later (see below, p. 211), the women appreciated being told exactly who I was, what I wanted from them and for what purpose.

While the women were already well aware of the risks of speaking to a journalist about their negative experiences with police and local authorities, it was the formal consent process that firmly placed the women's well-being at the centre of the inquiry. With the consent process reflecting the values such as mutual recognition, respect and reciprocity, the women were able to feel in control of the situation: they could choose to participate or not; choose which questions to answer or avoid; and should they change their minds about being included in the story they had two weeks to think about it. This level of agency possibly made the women feel safe to speak about their lives as sex workers. With my primary obligation being to the women, and not the story, and having given them my promise to protect them, they perceived the act of speaking out as
emancipatory, as opposed to threatening and intimidating (this is reflected in their comments below).

There were times where I would relinquish some of my journalistic powers and invite those with local knowledge to guide certain aspects of the process. For example, I would often check in with my translator about potential risks. One day after we had spoken to a woman who had shared with us her view on who she believed was responsible for the murders, my translator told me that he, along with the women, are the ones who must go on living in the country after I leave and he advised me about the kind of information which could lead to serious consequences for each of them.

The fact that several sex workers had told us that they believed the murders to be a 'government plot', to allegedly reduce the number of women working as prostitutes, was cause for concern. As this information was being revealed their voices would reduce in volume, almost to a whisper. My heart would skip a couple of beats and I would look over my shoulder or through the opened doorways, usually covered by a curtain, to see if anyone was close by and in hearing distance. A local journalist had also expressed the same viewpoint to me. With the women's safety placed as the priority, it was deemed too risky to explore such allegations any further than the walls within which this information was revealed.

It was the ongoing dialogical process of assessing risks, of weighing up benefits over risks, and focusing my attention on the care of the women and my translator, and others

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40 It is important to note that the women offered this information during the interviews without any question prompting them. This is unusual. Ansoms notes that it is not tolerated within the Rwandan culture to openly criticise power holders, particularly in the current political context (2012, 45). The women may have offered this information because they looked upon the translator as 'one of them', someone who they knew and trusted. This can be both a blessing and a curse. Certainly, in this context, their openness added to my awareness and concern about the women's safety.
involved in the story gathering process, that led me to question my own assumptions and values of what it means to conduct journalistic investigations in culturally different contexts. This particular incident vividly illustrates the real and urgent need to involve those with local knowledge when making 'crucial decisions in the midst of practice' (Richards 2005, 155). In other words, any assessment of risk needs to be done in collaboration with those who are most likely to bear the brunt of the consequences of unfavourable journalistic practice (by ‘unfavourable’ I mean that which is likely to be met with disapproval by relevant authorities).

While this illustrates an ethical tension between the journalist's role to seek truth and report it and the need to protect story subjects from further harm (the promise to 'protect those who share with us'), such scenarios benefit from examining the tension reflexively (Richards 2009a, 43). According to Guillemin and Gillam a reflexive researcher is 'sensitised to the micro-ethical dimensions of research practice' to the point where they are 'alert to, and prepared for, ways of dealing with ethical tensions that arise' (2004, quoted in Richards 2009a, 43). Richards argues that journalists can use the process of reflecting upon ethical dilemmas to developing 'genuine reflexivity' (2009a, 43), whereby they are 'better placed to be aware of ethically important moments as they arise and will have a basis for responding in a way that is likely to be ethically appropriate, even with unforeseen situations (Guillemin and Gillam 2004, quoted in Richards 2009a, 43). Reflexivity in this context involves being reflexive about what impact the journalist's presence has on distant others, not just the story subjects, but also those working alongside her.

Zelizer argues there is an 'inherent unpredictability' involved in the news gathering process that is 'largely beyond the control of the journalist' and some situations require
improvisatory responses (Zelizer 2013, 264). In these circumstances, developing reflexivity in journalism practice would avoid sudden, rash decisions that place other people's lives at risk, including those of the journalists themselves. Rao and Wasserman argue that concepts such as responsibility, accountability and truth are 'culturally mediated and constructed' and therefore need to be understood in the context of the society where the journalism is being practised (2007, 38). Ward reminds us that, '...Rules are applied to situations according to the circumstances...', and that journalists need to evaluate principles 'according to whether they continue to be useful guides amid changing social conditions' (quoted in Center for Journalism Ethics 2014).

In my case when the women revealed sensitive information during interviews I had to make impromptu decisions about whether to pursue that line of questioning or divert their attention to avoid potential harm to them. There is a danger here of being 'paternalistic and condescending' with journalists and researchers 'assuming they know best' (Plaisance 2009, quoted in Richards 2009b, 19). The following situation illustrates the dilemma well.

Chantal had just finished telling me about how sexual abuse, exploitation and extortion by police and local authorities were common problems for female sex workers in Rwanda, and she also recounted her own reasons for why she believed the murders were a government plot. At the end of our two-and-a-half hour discussion, she explained why she wanted to speak out:

A long time ago we were not able to talk but now we can talk and you can go and speak for us. I can ask you to go and speak for us because some of us would like to stop prostitution and some would like to continue so they can support people who want to get out and support those who want to stay. I want you
to go and speak for us here and outside of this country... I'm not talking for myself, I'm talking for every prostitute... I would like you to speak for us because no one asks that favour from someone unless they want to be heard. People don’t like to hear us, didn’t you hear that we were scared to talk before, thinking if they hear us we will not know where we will be sleeping tonight. There is a saying in Rwanda if you want to be healed from your sickness you talk about your sickness, so I’m asking you to go and talk about us because we are talking about it too because we want to be healed.

... I'm sending you both out there, if I had the chance to use media in Rwanda I would be able to speak. ...I spoke to media one day... and it was really nice and I would like the media to come and talk to each person and then air it on radio and then everyone in Rwanda will know the problems we are facing but we don't see them. We are always scared to talk because the landlords will kick us out. The prostitute is like a rat being chased around the house, we have no say. You know when you have a rat in the house you do all your best to kill the rat, you bring a cat or a rat trap, you do everything possible to catch the rat and that’s how prostitutes are treated so you are scared to talk because the leaders may find out... ...We don’t have a voice, even if someone is trying to strangle me all through the night I can’t tell the leader, I've got no one to call. Even if I have been strangled, I don’t feel safe to say it, because I feel I have no value and they will say I'm just a prostitute... we are treated like a rat in the ceiling... (from interview in Kigali, Rwanda, July 29 2013)

Chantal's plea to be heard was very clear and she was the one woman who initially refused the offer of anonymity during the consent process. The rest of the women chose to be anonymous and have their voices altered in the documentary. Chantal defended her right, saying she had no fear of the authorities and she had no hesitation repeating to anyone else what she had revealed in her interview. I explained to Chantal that while I respected her desire for her real name to be used, there were risks that with her being identified, her colleagues might also be identified. She understood the concern and agreed to use a pseudonym.
Two of the initial interviews with the women sex workers were conducted one-on-one where I asked a series of prepared questions. This approach was formal and placed me in control of the situation. This method of interviewing has the potential to come across as interrogative as the journalist's goal is to draw out answers to particular questions. In this particular context I found this approach reduced the capacity for engagement or mutual understanding between myself and the interviewee. The two women I interviewed in this way seemed self-conscious and timid, and not forthcoming with answers to my questions. It was highly likely that it was their first time to be interviewed by a foreign journalist, or indeed, any journalist.

Upon reflection, I remembered the group interview approach that Storyteller 4 had used in his practice. I decided to borrow his interview method. Through my translator I asked one of the women sex workers if it was possible to arrange a group of women for an interview in a location where they all felt comfortable. Prior to the interview starting and the consent forms being read, the women spent time talking amongst themselves with the translator. I waited patiently until they were ready to start the interview. By the time I began recording they were feeling relaxed about the interview. I continued to ask questions that I had prepared, but the informality of the interview allowed the exchange to be more collaborative and less controlled. I ended up sitting on the floor in the middle of the room so I could access all the women with my voice recorder. The women were sitting on couches. This meant I was seated at their knees.

This approach worked at capturing the 'human warmth' between the women, the translator and myself (Keeble 2014, 551). In this respect the interview became an
informal conversation even though there was, to a certain degree, the question and answer format. It challenged the 'hierarchical conventions' of the conventional interview, where, as Keeble notes, there is 'the unspoken power-play' where 'the journalist normally attempts (however subtly) to 'control' the dialogue' (2014, 552).

This interview approach may have been one of the reasons why the women spoke openly and candidly, just as the heroin addicts did in the group member's interview, drawing out more revealing insights and experiences. This method of interviewing also replicated the practice of 'public deliberation' – the distinctly African form of communication mentioned in Part I - an ongoing genuine dialogue that occurs naturally and effortlessly (see above, p. 107).

While the journalistic interview is usually highly structured and formal, Agnieszka Piotrowska explains that the interview evokes 'older traditions such as the human need to share one's feelings with the other, the time-honoured tradition of confession, an autobiographical statement that is enunciated for the listening other' (2012, 16). The Rwandan saying that Chantal referred to above - 'if you want to be healed from your sickness you talk about your sickness' - reflects this tradition. In this particular case the rigid protocol for interviewing appeared to inhibit a natural flow from developing, whereas adopting an interview approach that embodied 'public deliberation' or genuine dialogue led to the women talking openly and candidly. I did not set a time limit on the group interview with the women, nor did I hurry the process. The interview lasted two and a half hours. The location where the interview was conducted became a regular meeting place. The women and children who lived in neighbouring houses and compounds became familiar with my presence.
Remuneration

The women were given economic compensation as a result of taking part in the documentary. Although this was a decision that was made based primarily on the documentary being attached to an academic research study, this compensation ensured the exchange between us was mutually beneficial and demonstrated to the women that I was respectful of the time they spent with me.

In relation to research practices, Bergold and Thomas question the ‘taken-for-grantedness’ of participants being ‘expected to make their knowledge available free of charge’ (2012, 10). They argue that compensation ‘signalizes social recognition of the value of the individual’s contribution to research’ (ibid). Compensation in research is given to participants to respect a reciprocal research relationship, giving value to their time and knowledge. This justification is consistent with Storyteller 4's reasoning for giving the heroin addicts a token payment following his interviews with them. The women sex workers were given 5000 francs each, equivalent to $8AUD. This was offered to them after the interview took place.

Feedback loop with story subjects

In discussing the work of journalists Janet Malcolm notoriously described the amorality inherent in their endeavour:

Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people’s vanity, ignorance or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse...Journalists justify their treachery in various ways according to their temperaments. The more pompous talk about freedom of
speech and the ‘public’s right to know’; the least talented talk about Art; the seemliest murmur about making a living...On reading the article or book in question, he has to face the fact that the journalist – who seemed so friendly and sympathetic, so keen to understand him fully, so remarkably tuned to his vision of things – never had the intention of collaborating with him but always intended to write a story of his own (1989, 38).

Allowing the women some level of control over their involvement in the interview contributed to the women feeling valued and addressed the potential of exploitation and potential misrepresentation. In conventional Western journalism it is not common practice, nor is it encouraged, to allow interview subjects to preview and review the planned story. It is argued that this can skew the report in favour of the source and reduce the veracity of the work. However, some journalists opt to share just the passages that relate to the source, rather than share the entire story. In this project sections of the draft script were read to the women prior to the production of the documentary itself. I requested that the translator also explain the context in which their quotes were placed. This practice of sharing the story with the participants prior to broadcast is common amongst some documentary filmmakers. In her study on observational documentary filmmakers, Kate Nash notes that consultation during the editing stages of production and allowing participants to veto is an 'important aspect of ethical conduct for many filmmakers' (2011).

Giving the women more latitude than what is usually offered to story sources helped to earn their trust and to show them I was being true to my word. The fact that their stories were highly personal and sensitive was a contributing factor to justifying the practice of reading them the script prior to the documentary being produced. Furthermore, allowing the women a two-week window in which to change their minds about being 'on the
record’ also prevented them from feeling as though they had no control over their stories from the moment I left the interview. There were no changes or suggestions made by the women during this stage.

The feedback loop also involved taking the completed documentary back to the women after it had been broadcast in Australia to see how they regarded their own representation and to get feedback from them about their direct experiences with me. For this, I arranged to meet the women in the same location as where the interview had taken place, and Chantal, who had organised the group interview, invited the rest of the women to be present for the listening session. Prior to playing the documentary I explained that a group of women in Australia had acted on their behalf doing the English voice-overs and I showed them a photo of these women.

Overall the women said they were satisfied with their representation. Their only concern with the story was how the leader from their district had portrayed himself in the program. They felt that his point of view in the documentary invalidated their experiences and they questioned his place in the documentary:

Chantal: He talked as though there was nothing, that there is no violence towards us. If we were feeling enough security why would we think of leaving the country and going outside, why that? What the leader does is portray himself well, showing that there is no problem with us.

But then Chantal commented on how the documentary might help them if it were broadcast locally:
Playing the documentary will help us because if the leaders or whoever in charge hears it, any time will understand our situation and maybe make them change their views towards us and treat us as all Rwandese, as we deserve to be treated because if once you hold my arm you cut here and you cut anyone else, we have the same blood.

When asked how they felt about the experience with the media process the women said that it had given them the courage to speak out, and they no longer felt 'hidden away':

Shadia: Talking about our problems was like a release and we felt settled after we expressed our problems. It helped us release something that was giving us a hard time inside and we hope it will have an impact on how we are viewed in society.

I then asked them what they thought about my approach as a journalist:

Chantal: Before having an interview with us you first explained who you are, what you wanted and why and we sat knowing what we are going to do, but others have come to us forcing us to talk. They came with policemen, we didn’t even know that they were journalists recording us. For example, they took me just behind this house and they were asking me questions, I didn’t know what reason they were asking me, so everything that I said was under fear...

Shadia: We heard our voices on the radio but we didn’t know that we had been recorded by journalists.

The women in agreeing to tell their story could be seen as engaging in an act of resistance to stigmatisation and marginalisation. Through their own actions they are bringing the distant other into full view, and preparing a space in which they can appear and speak (Onbelet 2013). The listeners are being invited and asked to ‘see’ the women for who they “really” are, or who they could become’, rather than being presented with
a construct that has been prepared for them by their own society, or society at large (ibid).

Talking about the literary and aesthetic criteria of new ethnographic writing, Carolyn Ellis asks a number of questions about the treatment of the subject that may be pertinent to this journalism production, particularly the portrayal of the women:

Can the author legitimately make these claims for his story? Did the author learn anything new about himself?...Will this story help others cope with or better understand their worlds? Is it useful, and if so, for whom? Does it encourage compassion for the characters? Does it promote dialogue? Does it have the potential to stimulate social action? (2000, 275)

The practice established and described in the following sections on the documentary process and audience reception can be seen in the context of these questions.

The representing

As the maker/producer of the documentary I turn now to discuss the textual strategies and rhetorical techniques I used to tell this story of distant suffering and how the set of values identified in the first study were incorporated into this process. First though, I describe what it required, above and beyond the usual duties of the foreign journalist, to allow stories such as this one to emerge and develop.

*Time spent immersing myself in the place*

An important part of the field experience was my own immersion into the field setting. Dwight Conquergood notes that the field experience is essential to 'encounter the
context – the smells, sounds, sights, emotional tensions, feel-of-the culture...' (2013, 11). Likewise, Nyamnjoh notes the benefits to storytelling when journalists stay 'long enough so as to create a relationship that brings out the issues with the necessary nuances and contradictions' (quoted in Wasserman 2009, 292).

As I mentioned earlier, I have visited Rwanda several times, and more critically, I have become familiar with living in the akajagari communities. It had become a familiar place, one that I called a home away from home. Living in this neighbourhood helped to 'inhabit the felt-sensing context' of the participants’ familiar environment (Conquergood 2013, 11). Borrowing from reflexive ethnography I try to understand through my own body the situation I am describing and incorporate this feeling into the radio programs that I make.

This following extract is from one of my fieldwork diaries and demonstrates the connection to place and the sense of belonging I developed during my time living in one particular umudugudu (village/community):

Fieldwork diary
January 2011

I’ve become used to the constant hum of life in the slums, I’m used to taking showers in a bucket, hand-washing my clothes and bed-sheets, to frequent electricity black-outs, and running out of water. Haj no longer comes every morning to share tea and bread, his family moved to a bigger house. My small house has no kitchen or bathroom, just my three plastic buckets, a table and chair, a cupboard and a bed. It’s become a home where I feel connected to my neighbours and those in my street.

41 Haj was my 2-year-old neighbour. We lived in the same compound and he would visit me every morning.
This particular experience of living in the slums occurred three months prior to my starting date of this PhD project and three years prior to starting the radio documentary. By the time I started to make the documentary I had spent a significant amount of time living in this particular community. This meant that when it came to the PhD fieldwork, including the radio documentary, I was no stranger to the neighbourhood. I would in fact encounter Haj walking with his mother on subsequent field trips.

It is during these field experiences that I personally encounter the African notion of neighbourliness. I remember on one field trip arriving home one evening finding my clothes, which I had hung on the clothesline earlier that day, neatly pressed on clothes hangers by one of my neighbours. This same neighbour and his sister would come to share their home-made hot lunch with me on the days I was home. We would share from one plate in the middle of the table.

Immersing myself fully in the topic as well as the place was critical in reducing the distance between myself and the individuals who I would be interviewing. Such an immersion meant I could gain an understanding of local social practices and pay due respect to certain cultural values and human relations. This led to more authentic and respectful journalistic encounters.

*Time spent getting to know people*

My meeting with the women required creating and maintaining an ethical shared space. To create this space required first of all earning and building trust which came from spending time together. I was no stranger to the women when we met. As I explained above I had spent a significant amount of time living in the area. The women had
become familiar with my presence over the years and my coming and going between Rwanda and Australia. I had visited the compounds of other women sex workers as part of social visits as well as previous journalism assignments. I had frequented the same food boutiques and was a regular customer of some of their friends and colleagues who sold cooked beans and a small selection of vegetables.

Unbeknown to me I had become more deeply embedded into the social fabric of the place than I had thought. One afternoon, after a long morning of tracking my research approval application between different Ministries (government departments), I was walking back to my house laden with a heavy laptop bag and a pile of documents. I had a habit of tripping or slipping as I had not quite grown accustomed to the precarious paths that weave around the compounds, but this time when I tripped on a stone I completely lost my balance and fell onto my hands and knees. Two teenage boys came to my rescue and picked up my bags and helped me dust myself off. I only lived a short distance away from where I fell and as I entered the gate of my compound my neighbours immediately came to me and asked if I was alright. It was then I realised how efficiently and quickly news travelled in these neighbourhoods, and how without realising I had come to be of interest to those who lived within the vicinity of my home. This scenario illustrates the intricate web of communication within akajagari communities and the inclusion of everyone in this communalistic space.

Slow and evolving storytelling

The pace of life in Rwanda, particularly in akajagari communities, is somewhat slower than in Western countries. In order to capture the true essence of a situation or event requires dancing to a slower tune. Referring again to Nyamnjob's advice regarding journalism, '...if you really want to understand the story, let me not rush...Journalism
should be storytelling, but not in a hurry...' (Nyamnjoh, quoted in Wasserman 2009, 292).

Isabelle Stengers believes that slowing down gives way to feeling the possibility of ‘new creations, new connections’ (quoted in Zournazi 2002, 252). The radio documentary format requires in-depth, slowly evolving storytelling. Slow and steady journalism is of course the opposite of contemporary fast-paced reporting, or an 'instant' journalism (Pottier 2002, 7). It is a kind of journalism that requires spending the time that is needed to become immersed and to establish trust. Establishing rapport and togetherness requires time and patience, which quite often leads to some kind of emotional investment. Seen in this light, the radio documentary process is complementary to the local social values spoken of earlier, that of patience and hospitality.

Through my own practice I spent time immersing myself in the place, getting to know people, and adhering to local social practices. It became a slowly evolving journalism when days were spent engaging in everyday routine activities and talking to people about anything and everything. Interviews naturally evolved from spending time hanging out. Interviews were unstructured and had no time-frame. I spent a significant amount of time in the field gaining an understanding of how people in akajagari communities think, how they live, and why they do what they do so that I could then take listeners to this place and take them inside the lives and the minds of these people. Furthermore, I spent time nurturing a reflexive self-consciousness so that I could understand and report on myself, alongside those I reported on. This required deliberating over various encounters and observing my own reactions to these encounters. I set aside time and space to do this during my time in the field.
Emotional investment

When journalists partake in an experience, or put another way, when they take the time to feel into another culture, the stories they tell become imbued with human qualities so that audiences partake in the experiences also (Couldry 2006, 6). They are not just events 'devoid of shared experience' but intimate accounts of a meaningful cross-cultural interaction that takes place between human beings (Carpignano 1990, quoted in Morley & Robins 1995, 144).

John Biewen speaks about this interaction as an emotional investment, and believes that radio documentary makers are particularly equipped for developing these connections between themselves and their story subjects: 'These radio people, you see, do not simply hold microphones in front of people and ask questions. They get tangled up with their subjects in all kinds of ways' (2010, 12).

My encounter with the women went above and beyond simply retrieving their stories. Seeing them let their guard down, I reciprocated and let down mine, and during moments of emotional outpouring, I did not hold back from showing concern by reaching out and offering reassurance. The time spent engaging in conversation and hearing their testimonies moved me and the translator deeply. I walked away from the experience changed in some way (just as Storyteller 3 was during her encounter with Jacques). The encounter was empowering and transformative to both story subject and journalist.

For the purposes of this particular story – given the sensitive nature of the topic - radio was the ideal medium, not only because it allowed time for critical reflection, but it is a
relatively unobtrusive medium, and was therefore amenable to the situation. The audio recorder that was placed between the women and myself transformed from being merely an instrument to a powerful intermediary. It became a therapeutic tool into which unspoken and previously ignored stories were recorded without inhibition. To use Biewen's words, layers were being peeled back and intimate, close-up portraits of the women's lives were delivered (Biewen 2010, 5 & 7). A film camera, Virginia Madsen argues, cannot 'take us so close or be so unobtrusive whilst so implicated (2005, 194).

According to radio producer Berit Hedemann, listeners of radio documentaries more easily identify with interviewees (quoted in Lindgren 2011, 39-40). For Biewen, the reason is because radio has the 'power to foster human connection' (Biewen 2010, 10), and furthermore, documentarians are 'intent on making their listeners feel something' (ibid, 8). They do not simply 'convey facts', but rather, 'gather words and sound and music, assembling them, painstakingly, into an experience' (ibid). In this sense the documentarian is more than a journalist, he or she is 'composer, a producer, a feature maker' (ibid).

Achieving the full potential of radio intimacy, however, involves a careful and delicate act of weaving people's voices around sound, music and the narrator's voice. It requires being respectful and being attuned to the nuances in voices, so as not to speak over, drown out\footnote{I talk later about the challenge of translation and the place of voice actors and how it has the potential to drown out the real voices. See below, p. 233.}, or betray the story subjects. For my part, I wanted the listeners to enter a deeper, more reflective space as they listened; just as I had not skimmed over the surface of the women's lives, so too I wanted the listeners to enter into that intimate space:
Production work diary entry
2 November 2013
When I’m in the room with the women, I’m bodily attuned to what they are saying, their words enter inside me, I experience a feeling, an emotion, unconsciously or consciously I register this feeling, and as I write the script this emotion is once again revisited, it’s not something that leaves me when I walk out their door or shake their hand and say thank you for spending time with me. I walk with their stories, their voices echo in my mind …

Songwriter Rickie Lee Jones describes the writing of a song as 'a spirit being born' (Zollo 2003, 480). In a similar way, a radio documentary is a 'living spirit' because it is revealing of people's experiences and tales which are told through the 'narrative power of the spoken word'. When the documentary is true to those voices that 'spirit' enters the listener. On this, Lisa Onbelet notes, narrative is empowering when not just the voice of 'the other' is heard, but the presence of 'the other’ is felt and seen (2013). This is when the voice, as Jay Allison, puts it, bypasses the brain, and touches the heart (2010, 184).

It could be argued that this level of intimacy and emotional investment in stories has the capacity to lead audiences towards humanitarian action. I illustrate below on p. 241 how a number of listeners were moved to active charity following the broadcast of A Silent Tragedy. For Chouliaraki, it is the combination of emotion for the sufferer with the demand for justice that enable the spectator to consider some form of action on distant suffering as possible or effective (2008b, 372).

Reflexive narrative

Being avant-garde is not what matters, what is important is to let your heart govern your work (Mortley 2002).
Although radio practitioner Kaye Mortley is speaking here about the 'radio feature', which is in some ways distinct from the radio documentary⁴³, her comment brings to mind Ruth Behar's call for an 'anthropology that breaks your heart' (1996). Behar's argument echoes those of the 'new ethnographers' who have adopted a reflexive realist narrative style, drawing on literary journalism techniques as a method of presentation (Foley 2002, 469). New ethnographers took this trajectory to undermine the objective, universalising voice which they argued, '[reproduced] inequality' and had the potential to "steal" people's subjectivity and humanity...' (ibid, 471). They saw it as overcoming the problem of voyeurism and the asymmetrical relationship between researcher and subject and resolving issues concerning representational truth-telling and scientific reasoning and rationalising (Goodall 2000, 12).

In a similar vein, the founders of the New Journalism used subjective first person accounts in reaction to the failings of the so-called objective journalism. Using literary techniques, these new journalists refined the use of 'aesthetics and ethics; beauty and truth', striving for an equilibrium between 'art and life' (Greenberg & Wheelwright 2014, 512). Western conventional journalism, like formal realist ethnographic approaches, is heavily influenced by the causal worldview of explaining, fixing external reality, ordering, controlling and privileging facts and rigour. Loyal to modernist scientific concepts such as objectivity, neutrality and detachment, these practices attempt to defy reality's slipperiness (or multidimensionality) by claiming to capture and depict 'truth' and 'reality'. Bochner argues that it is this 'bombastic crusade for truth' that incites intolerance rather than creating an atmosphere for 'harmonious tolerance'.

⁴³ In her PhD thesis Mia Lindgren describes the differences between the radio documentary and the radio feature. She points out that while some academics and professionals use the terms interchangeably, others see the two as having important differences. For example, the documentary is a factual account of 'real life', marking a clear demarcation between fact and fiction, whereas a radio feature can wander into the fictional world without 'the same formal constraints of having to tell the truth' (2011, 38). To put it simply, Lindgren explains that the radio documentary is closer to journalism and the radio feature more to art (ibid).
New ethnography has been described as insightful, intellectually stimulating and beautifully crafted (Foley 2002). The practitioners adopt a subjective conversational style of prose and they place intimacy at the heart of their work by revealing aspects of their own lives\textsuperscript{44}. Some radio documentary makers – and journalists leaning towards literary journalism - approach their work in a similar way. Helmet Krupesky argues that radio makers should make their work personal (quoted in Mortley 2002). Mortley refers to Orson Wells and his call for program makers to 'talk to the listeners as directly as possible' (ibid). Just as new ethnographers aim to present work in a way that is evocative and emotionally honest, as well as professional, interesting and intelligently written, radio program makers are also interested in 'new ways of listening to the world', 'seeing reality in a different way' and in sharing this in new and compelling ways:

Radio is about finding a voice, one’s own voice, in which to speak, to write on tape, speaking from the heart and finding the right level on which to do this (Mortley 2002).

Much of the radio documentary and radio feature genre has evolved from experimenting and being innovative, as Madsen points out in her article that tracks radio and the documentary over the past thirty years. She describes the effect of radio documentary as being 'transported to another world as a sonic window opens' onto a time and place, often elsewhere (2005, 194). She describes the new field of documentary expression as 'radio film in the sense that it gives us an acoustic scene to enter' (ibid). She goes on:

There is the chance here then to encounter something of an interior

\textsuperscript{44} See for example Arthur P. Bochner's article Bird on the Wire: Freeing the Father Within Me (2012).
world, to enter the vibrational and emotional landscape as if one were almost present 'in' the scene. As the film director Robert Bresson has observed, 'The ear works inwards; the eye, outwards (Madsen 2005, 194).

There are a whole range of post-production methods used by radio practitioners to create this interior world and I shall now discuss those that I used to produce *A Silent Tragedy*.

Textual strategies

Radio documentary lends itself to experimenting with different storytelling techniques and narrative styles. It is common for radio producers to use creative production techniques in these long-format in-depth radio stories. In this section I address the key production elements: the scenes, the soundscapes, the narration, voice actors, and music. Interviews are also one of the vital production elements but I have already addressed this element in the section above.

*The narration*

In conventional journalistic practice, there is a certain professional distancing from the story subjects/sources. This kind of stand-offish persona, or aloofness, is anathema to the personable, hospitable, brother/sisterhood relationality that is inherent in the Rwandan cultural context. Using 'intimacy' as part of my approach, the documentary *A Silent Tragedy* confounds the ethics of conventional journalism, but instead draws on the cultural values, beliefs, paradigms, social practices and ethical protocols of the locale.
Timothy Mitchell explains the origins of the belief in an 'objective reality' which led to the excesses of anthropological objectification of Indigenous and non-Western groups and a rigid scientific orthodox standard that ruled the science:

In the middle of the nineteenth century, a new term came into vogue for characterising this combination of detachment and close attentiveness – the word 'objective'. 'Just now we are an objective people', The Times wrote in the summer of 1851, on the occasion of the Great Exhibition. 'We want to place everything we can lay out hands on under glass cases, and to stare our fill.' The word denoted the modern sense of detachment, both physical and conceptual, of the self from an object-world – the detachment epitomised, as I have been suggesting, in the visitor to an exhibition. At the same time, the word suggested a passive curiosity, of the kind the organisers of exhibitions hoped to evoke in those who visited them (Mitchell 1988, 20).

Such excesses led contemporary anthropologists and ethnographers to radically reform their practice in such a way as to 'counter the objectifying discourses of patriarchy and colonialism' (Shohat & Stam 1994, 180). It is a remarkable turn-around for a field of science which bred a kind of 'unregulated voyeurism' in the 19th Century to become ethically responsive towards the Other and develop a more self-conscious value-centred ethnography (Hall 1997, 268; Bochner 1994, 21).

Broersma and Peters observe that such an approach is reflected in the current shift in journalism practice towards 'personal and involved narratives' which are 'changing the way that stories are told'; an alternative approach that conveys 'the appearance of truth' but not the journalistic truth or sense of truth that is 'firmly grounded in the objectivity regime' (2014, xiv). As recent studies have shown literary elements are being incorporated into news coverage in order to compete effectively in the contemporary
digital age. Frank Harbers, in his study of a Dutch quality newspaper and the reportage by literary author Arnon Grunberg, considers storytelling techniques such as placing the individual in the centre of the story and auto-referencing, and he concludes that such techniques 'potentially [result] in less distanced and more 'authentic' forms of journalism' (Harbers, quoted in Broersma & Peters 2014, xiv).

Journalists who have defied the precepts of journalistic objectivity have done so when they have seen that mainstream reporting has failed. For example, journalists covering the Vietnam War felt they had a 'moral obligation to report [their] views as much as the facts' (Laurence, quoted in Cunningham 2003). More recently veteran journalist Jon Snow through a YouTube video from the BBC Channel 4 studio called on viewers to help him make a difference in Gaza after sharing the emotional effect visiting that part of the Middle-East had on him (2014). Controversy always surrounds such cases as traditionalists hold steadfastly to and defend the journalistic conventions and professional routines of objectivity, detachment and neutrality.

Providing audiences with the context or intention of why the journalist is focusing on a particular story can make it less voyeuristic and present it as more than a manifestation of a dubious curiosity about distant others. For example, documentary film maker Liz Jackson reveals her own experience of being gang-raped in her home city, Washington D.C., in her documentary The Greatest Silence: Rape in the Congo, to connect herself with the women rape victims she interviews (2007).

In the narration for A Silent Tragedy I present the 'facts' but I also present the way I experienced and interpreted the event or situation. It is a form of journalism that combines characteristics of journalism and literature. I use traditional reporting
techniques such as interviewing, background research, and observation, but I also use a first-person perspective which is committed and engaged, rather than impartial and detached. The effect of this narrative is that it diminishes the distance between myself and the story subjects (Harbers 2014, 149).

I make subjective interpretations such as, 'then as though she could no longer keep what was inside her she said what was on her mind...' (*A Silent Tragedy* 11'49"-11'55"). This subjective interpretation attempts to make the story 'as true-to-life as possible' (Harbers 2014, 151). It is a reflection not usually used in journalistic discourse because it is an assumption made on behalf of the journalist about things that may have been unseen or unspoken but nevertheless felt.

This approach defies the discursive norms in journalism such as neutrality, balancing all sides to a story, and the detachment of the journalist. I consciously deviate from some journalistic norms, particularly the dominant attitudes towards the journalistic subject, so as to create a shared experience, and by doing so, the documentary becomes more than 'a cognitive operation of “facts” and “information”' (Roeh 1989, 166). For example, during the interview with Cynthia\(^\text{45}\), I include in my narration how she rested her head on my knee. I then gesture to the listeners that the time spent with her went beyond the interview by mentioning the fact that we went to sit under a big tree together. Including this display of empathy in the program signals to the 'brotherhood' or 'sisterhood' discussed earlier, reiterating Kaunda's point that 'we are wrapped up together in this bundle of life...' (1966, 32. His emphasis). According to Richard Keeble, Janet Malcolm’s version of an ethical journalist 'would be friendly and sympathetic to their sources, keen to understand them - and be 'remarkably tuned to their vision of

\(^{45}\) Not her real name. As stated earlier, all names have been changed to ensure the anonymity of the story subjects.
things’ - in both the interview and the resultant copy’ (1989, quoted in Keeble 2014, 550).

I also incorporate my own private life into the documentary which heightens the sense of intimacy in the program. Here I include an excerpt (track 3 on CD) from the documentary where I reveal a personal experience as a frame of reference for why it is I am drawn to this particular story. I briefly point to my own experience of being raped. In doing so I leave journalistic norms such as objectivity, neutrality and detachment aside, undermining the conventional way of making a journalistic truth claim (Harbers 2014, 152).

_Listen to excerpt 1, track 3 on CD_

There were a few reasons for referring to my own experience of sexual violence in the documentary. The main one was that I wanted to situate brutality such as rape and sexual violence as universally situational rather than inherent to Africa. In his study of the US media portrayal of Africa, Ibelema notes primordial framing of certain conflicts (2014, 195). Stories of atrocities bring with them the danger of casting 'aspersion on the people' or in this case Africanising a certain atrocity, depending on their narrative structure and rhetorical strategies used by the journalist (ibid). By including my own experience it was a statement that such crimes happen anywhere in the world, thus, I was creating a 'perception of shared experience and, therefore, alikeness' (ibid, 173). Another reason was to avoid the story coming across as voyeuristic, so I too exposed my own vulnerability. A third person narrator remains fully clothed as his or her subjects 'undress' and expose personal experiences of suffering. If I expected my interviewees to expose themselves, I accepted that I too should be prepared to expose
myself.

As the one who was presenting the suffering and the one who initiated the communication, I used these kinds of strategies to make the story less distanced; reducing the distance between the listener and the 'distant sufferers' as well as between the listener and myself. According to Luc Boltanski, conditions of trust are broadly dependent upon an effect of presence, and it was by revealing my 'presence' in the documentary that I hoped to reduce this distance (1999, 151). Telling the story in first person, as opposed to the third person narrator, and drawing on my own experience allowed the listener to 'know about, or interrogate, the context or the intention' of the one who initiated the communication, which in this instance was me (Silverstone 2002, 770).

Scenes

*Silent Tragedy* is like a non-fiction drama in that it has various scenes, characters, a narrative arc and dramatic tension (Mazzeo 2012, 12-15). For example, the first scene recounts how Asia, Julienne's neighbour, retold the story of Julienne and the morning of her fateful day, in vivid detail, as though she were reliving that day. A threatening sounding music is used to build tension leading up to the discovery of Julienne’s murder.

*Listen to excerpt 2, track 4 on CD*

Both my narration and Asia's words convey the neighbourliness noted earlier in the thesis. Julienne, though not a blood relation to Asia, is seen through her eyes as a family member. It is Julienne's story that bookends the documentary. This is the beginning of a
narrative arc that creates a sense of continuity by following Julienne's story through until the end. But in spite of the narrative 'performance' at the beginning it is the women's voices that, as Sandy Tolan admits, 'convey the deepest emotional truth' (quoted in Biewen 2010, 148). Biewen notes that as storytellers, documentarians 'draw mainly on the narrative power of the spoken word' (2010, 4). Lindgren also emphasises the power of the voice when she says, 'We cannot protect ourselves emotionally from the impact of a close voice-recording of someone sharing their story of love or suffering' (2011, 43). Like them, I believe that it is the voice that gives radio its power and emotional impact. But descriptions are also essential in radio documentary. They paint a picture for the listener and invite them into another dimension. I draw attention to one particular scene of the documentary where I give a description of the akajagari communities to create a sense of place.

*Listen to excerpt 3, track 5 on CD*

There is potential for the description of the slum to retain 'the element of the quaint' in that it describes a particular place that is 'most consistent with Africa's enduring stereotypes and otherness' (Ibelema 2014, 201), but I subvert this by saying that Asia is the 'matriarch' of the inner-city slum, which carries the inference that women hold a powerful position in this community, and play an important role in Rwandan society. Matriarchal figures are highly respected so it complicates the idea of the male as the dominant figure in Rwandan society. Asia's role and positioning in the documentary is particularly important because of the other prevailing narrative of women as victims of violence. Asia's place in the documentary lessens the likelihood of the program perpetuating the "Third World” woman as “victim” narrative.
The slum scene in the documentary is sunnier and more vibrant than typical descriptions of slums. For example, compare the description you just heard to the following description of an urban slum near Nairobi in *The New York Times* (25 December 2007):

...one million people squeezed into a warren of rusted roof shacks, linked by muddy footpaths and streams of greenish-grayish sewage trickling alongside... Half-naked children play in 10-foot-high piles of garbage. Drunken men stumble down the dirt boulevards, begging for work.

In Asia's neighbourhood, the children are doing their chores and then they play. I emphasise the sunny nature of this with the soundscape of children's laughter. In fact the slum picture is painted in such a way as to connote hard work and discipline (sounds of sweeping, food cooking) as opposed to unproductivity. Such descriptions illustrate that nuanced reportage is achieved by 'candid, on-the-scene, visual reporting' of events and people, rather than drawing on 'pre-existing, staged, or symbolic representations' (Ibelema 2014, 201), the latter reinforcing the frame of otherness.

These beginning scenes also connote the notion of neighbourliness and relationality which becomes a felt-experience for the journalist who stays long enough and engages deeply and honestly.

*Soundscapes and music*

The soundscapes used in the program are largely made up of 'wild' sounds. In other words, they are recorded on site in Rwanda and are specific to the exact location of the story. Given it was my eighth time visiting Rwanda, and fourth time living in the slums, I drew on past recordings I had done. However, these recordings were all done in the
same neighbourhood as the women's homes and the location of the murders. There were minimal special effects (SFX) used in this program. I avoided this because I wanted the program to be as authentic as possible. The only special effect was a piece of music from freesound.org and I used this under the voice of Asia describing the murder scene (as heard in excerpt 2).

Collecting soundscapes requires a certain degree of discretion, similar to approaching people for interviews. I developed a small library of soundscapes from the slums of Kigali from simply sitting outside my house and recording the day going by. Children will often come and sit beside me, inquisitive about the recorder and the microphone with the fluffy wind-sock. In two instances I placed the headphones over their ears and they were able to record themselves and each other, often instigating a lot of giggling and singing. These recordings could be described as being partially staged, although I could never direct them to do anything in particular owing to the language barrier.

The narration and voices in *A Silent Tragedy* were underlaid with a rich and varied soundscape, and music was just as important in evoking a particular mood and fulfilling a particular purpose as the wild sounds. The use of music in a radio documentary is like the starter that is required to make bread rise. Not enough or the wrong kind of music can make the documentary fall flat and become lifeless; the right amount of well-chosen music makes it grow in all the right proportions. However, taste in music is subjective which makes it difficult to assess what kind is suitable to use, particularly for productions that reflect a particular culture.

For example, the song that was placed at the end of the documentary received mixed reactions from Rwandan listeners. Admittedly, I had chosen this song for its sound. At
the time of placing it I did not inquire about the lyrics. It was during post-production editing that one of the Rwandan translators I had working on the documentary heard the song and explained that it was a traditional mourning song often played during genocide commemorations. Although the song was mourning genocide victims, she felt that it matched perfectly with the stories of the women, especially the murder victims. Another translator agreed with her. However, during the feedback sessions, the choice of the song, used in this particular context, provoked a different reaction. One of the journalists argued that a song paying tribute to victims of the genocide was not appropriate to be placed in a documentary about prostitution (see p. 261).

While I felt that it was important to use as much Rwandan music as possible in this program, I had naïvely chosen the music based on the sound alone and how the sound fitted into the context, not considering the meaning of the words. Such an approach was presumptuous and showed a lack of cultural sensitivity on my part, something I had been trying to avoid throughout the whole making of the program. Using a mourning song composed specifically for the genocide was contentious, and not surprisingly, drew different reactions. In this case, it is highly unlikely a consensus could be reached on whether the song was suitable or not. However, a sensitive program maker understands that the effect of music is nuanced by different cultural and social situations and would ensure that informed decisions are made during post-production editing.

Voice actors and translation

The challenge of handling non-English voices in radio stories is common to many radio practitioners. Steve Wadhams explains that if it were possible he would prefer to let the foreign language play in its entirety with a complete translation following (quoted in Miller 2014). Likewise, radio documentary maker Jon Miller argues that the real
speaker's voice, even if in a language not understood by the target audience, has a 'music and arc' that adds to the feel of the story:

Radio is as much about voices as it is about words. Arguably more. A voice conveys attitude, personality, and mood. It provides information about age, education, ethnicity, and social class. It has timbre, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, and pitch. Most importantly, it connects speakers and listeners in ways that words on a page — or words read later by someone else — rarely can (2014).

In relation to the voicing of a translation Miller makes the point that using native-English speaking voices 'can be more honest than trying to imitate the original' (2014). Like soundscapes and music, choosing voice actors and determining the place they have in the story are important decisions that either enhance the documentary or overpower other elements in the narrative. However, there is the challenge of finding a voice that matches the real voice and has enough animation without sounding overly dramatic.

Given that most of the interviews were done in Kinyarwanda it was necessary to use voice actors who would read the English transcripts. In previous documentaries that I have produced from Rwanda I have tried where possible to use Rwandans reading the English transcripts, or people who speak English with an appropriate accent to stand in for the real voices. For this program, I chose to use native English-speaking women. I did this because, to paraphrase Chouliaraki, I wanted to bring the 'far away 'other'...' inside the 'horizon of care and responsibility' of listeners (2008, 3 & 4), and I thought that by having familiar sounding voices that a mostly Western middle-class audience would hear may reduce the distance between the audience and the story subjects and facilitate their empathic identification with the Rwandan women.
Choosing the right voices to match the women was a difficult task which my producer facilitated owing to her experience with translations and voice acting. One native English-speaker whom we auditioned was not chosen because her voice was too flat, while another who had initially been chosen was at the last minute cut because of her speaking style. My producer filled in for this voice.

The placement of the translations in relation to the real voices is another important technical and stylistic consideration. Often practitioners' choices are governed by time restraints. In this piece efforts were made to place the English translations in a way that did not drown out the real voices, although because of the required duration of the documentary the Rwandan women's voices were faded under the voice-overs sometimes prematurely, whereby they were not given enough space before the English voice-over came in. However, some of their voice grabs were shortened to allow more space to accommodate both voices.

Interestingly, a comment by the Rwandan journalists, discussed in the next section, was that there was too much of the women speaking in Kinyarwanda, and that they felt the English voice-overs should have come in much sooner than they did.

There were two instances where on-site translation was included in the program. This happened mainly because of the interview circumstances. For example, when Cynthia was telling us her story the translator's voice and Cynthia's voice crossed over one another so often that her voice was not in the clear for a smooth voice-over in post-production. This was because Cynthia was manifestly very emotional and during the moments when her words were being translated she could be heard sobbing and there were times when she would add to her story during the translation. On-site translation
also featured when Chantal told us of the murder that had taken place the night before we spoke with her. Both the translator and I were not expecting this news from Chantal and I made the decision to keep the on-site interpretation because it conveyed an 'in-the-moment' feeling, a sense that 'this is how it was': we turn up for an interview only to discover that another sex worker was murdered the night before. The advantage of using real-time translation is that it sounds less scripted.

The use of experts

Michael Schudson, in summarising Walter Lippmann, argued that 'If journalists had experts to rely on, they could inform the citizenry responsibly' (2006, 492). This argument is based on the premise that there is truth in expert opinion (or that expert opinion leads to the truth). Journalism that enthrones expert opinion is understood to be objective, accurate and reliable.

However, there is a widely held perception that the media represent too one-sidedly the powerful, the rich and influential, excluding significant portions of the population. A people's journalism, or civic journalism, aims to tell stories from the ground up, from the grassroots perspective (Merrill et al 2001). Public journalists seek out voices of common people (Mazzocco 1994).

My preference for public journalism, or a journalism for the people, was influenced by my early training in the field. I began my career as a journalist in a rural, regional, lowly populated part of Australia. The newspaper I worked for was family-owned and run, renowned for being representative of local voices. As a cadet journalist, I was taught that ordinary people were the lifeblood of good storytelling. When I moved to the capital city and started the political round I began to rely more on so-called experts to
tell my stories and less on the common people. I also noticed how my role in society shifted from being representative of the people to being a mouthpiece for the people. I became less engaged at the grassroots level and noticed that I had become elevated in the societal hierarchy.

My choice to become a freelance journalist was based on the distinct difference between journalists who see themselves as one of the people and those who behave as one of the elite. Resulting from my early training I produce radio documentaries with the intention of telling stories from the perspective of ordinary people because I see myself as one of them.

One of the criticisms from the Rwandan journalists during the feedback session was the lack of expert speakers in the program, *A Silent Tragedy*. I elaborate on their comments regarding this in the next section but I will briefly explain my position on this matter.

I interviewed the spokesperson of Rwanda's National Public Prosecution Authority who was attending to the case of the murdered women, but his comments are not included in the documentary. In one of the draft scripts grabs from the interview were included but were later cut owing to time constraints. In the final version I paraphrase him to save time and avoid cutting into the women's testimonies any more than I had to. I had also requested an interview with the police spokesperson but he declined to go on the record. The Rwandan journalists felt that I should have mentioned this fact which would have demonstrated that I was adhering to the journalistic norms of balance, accuracy and fairness.

The one voice of authority included in the program was the leader of the sector who
speaks in the second half of the documentary. I chose a lower-ranked leader to speak about prostitution because my intention was to tell the story from the 'ground up'. The locals refer to the sector and cellular leaders as the 'grassroots leaders' because of the active role they play in the communities. It was on this basis that I made the decision to include the interview I did with one of these leaders and allocate him a significant amount of time in the program (approximately 5-minutes). The Rwandan journalists felt that more expert voices were needed above and beyond the grassroots leader.

Critical reflection

Arthurs asks can ‘a narrative emotion... do more than reinforce the victim’s powerlessness’ (2012, 145)? Furthermore, can such stories with a ‘strong moral’ compass ‘offer more than the emotional catharsis of voyeurism and instead help to bring about genuine social and political change’ (ibid; also see Brown et al 2010, 46)?

While I attempted to capture 'human warmth' (Keeble 2014, 551), build empathy and reduce distance between the 'distant sufferers' and the listeners using particular aesthetic strategies and the medium of radio, the portrayal of the women is still arguably problematic. My deliberate positioning of the women as prominent was to create a generous space for their voices and testimonies to be heard - to reveal something 'of their sense of injustice and denied humanity' (Cottle 2005, 117).

In Rwandan society, prostitution is represented as an 'undesired otherness' (Freire 2009, 25), and efforts are made to remove sex workers from the streets. Many young women come to Kigali city from villages in search of better financial conditions. For the women I spoke to it was the socioeconomic disadvantage that was the cause of them
engaging in sex work. Moralist and religious discourses in Rwanda tell these women they have no value and that they are worthless. They are constantly denied a space by the police, the media, and sometimes by landlords. The radio documentary draws attention to the dilemma of the women, that they are 'trapped by social and economic expectations to act and behave in specific ways' (ibid, 29). Through their own testimonies, and by bringing to light the murders, the program reveals how the women are marginalised 'unwanted Others' within their own society, as well as in the global village, but strives to show how they are most of all women, who like many others, 'search the streets for a way to survive in the capitalist economy' (ibid, 33).

There is no doubt that compassionate narratives can, as Arthur notes, ‘move us beyond private emotion to generate support and act on ‘distant suffering”, but she warns, if those narratives deny individuals ‘their capacity as subjects who have agency’ as well as reinforce cultural stereotypes and myths then those representation are problematic (ibid, 155).

In excerpt 4, track 6 we hear Vanessa talking about how their lives have no value. Her words and the sound she makes when she presses her tongue against the roof of her mouth emphasises her own powerlessness and hopelessness.

*Listen to excerpt 4, track 6 on CD*

It could be argued that the frame used here is lack of agency and self-determination. Arthur argues that this kind of framing is typical in media discourses about prostitution:
But the idea that sex work could be a choice that women make to improve their economic circumstances applies only to those marked by class or ethnic privilege. They are portrayed as having the ethical capacity to make decisions for themselves. Ethnic others, by contrast, are shown to be devoid of meaningful agency whether through coercion or abject poverty (ibid, 154).

While the documentary's aim was to bring to light the 'multiple life stories of ambiguous, risky journeys of hope, hardship and survival' (Arthurs 2012, 153), the frame through which these stories are told is abject poverty and lack of choice. As I discuss later, there were responses from listeners who wanted to help the women in the documentary, but these responses emphasise the powerlessness of the women and the privilege of those who want to help, or as Arthurs may argue, try to 'save them' (2012, 153).

The question is whether distant others, in this case the women sex workers, can be redeemed or given value simply by being listened to and being heard. The women explained that they did feel valued by the act of speaking. However, the story could still be read as a 'miserabilist account of Third-World women victimization' (Shohat and Stam 1994, 181) or 'Third World Woman' subject as victim of poverty, lacking agency and oppressed by their own societal customs and traditions, an image that has universalised and homogenised the female African experience (Mohanty 1984).

The fact that I am a White, Western woman representing 'Third World' women minorities gives rise to the question of authenticity. The production, script and montage are established by a privileged perspective. The difference between the documentary-maker's discourse, and the voice of the women sex workers consists of what Spivak
calls '[an] asymmetry in the relationship between authority and explanation' (quoted in Freire 2009, 29). Thus, my voice and the media text (compiled and produced by me, not the women) becomes part of the hegemonic discourse (ibid).

These elements contributed to the apprehensions I had as the creator of this documentary. As Paul Farmer argues, ‘Sparking such emotions with testimony and photographs is one thing; linking them effectively, endurably, to the broader project of promoting basic rights, including social and economic rights, is quite another’ (2005, 185). In light of the critique of the portrayal of Mamma Sessay, (see above, p. 69) as well as other media portrayals of distant sufferers outlined in this dissertation, the following question is asked: Did the documentary only appeal to 'the politics of pity' or was the story held together by a much more humanising framework of social justice and human rights? In the next section I examine listener feedback to see the extent to which Rwandan and Australian listeners had similar qualms.

Witnesses to the representation

This section considers the effect *A Silent Tragedy* had on listeners, and the social factors that may have shaped these responses. Firstly, I examine the listener responses following the broadcast of *A Silent Tragedy* on ABC Radio National on 30 March 2014. The responses included comments on the website, a phone message left on the station's feedback line, and one hand-written letter addressed to myself.

Secondly, I examine the responses from the listening sessions which were set up to gather feedback from specific audiences. There were two groups set up for this purpose. One group consisted of three females (35+, middle-class, European Australian). The
next group was made up of five Rwandan male journalists (30+, middle-class). The method I used for these groups was to play the documentary and invite feedback afterwards. I did not use a question-answer format. This feedback was recorded and transcribed.

While this part of the study was limited to quite a small sample of audience responses, the results indicate a range of different responses according to class, race, age, ethnicity, culture and individual experience (Ong 2012, 188). The audience responses help to understand the story and its relationship with listeners and what factors shape and influence audience responses (ibid, 183). Through analysing the responses it can reveal how different audiences evaluate media practice and the conventions used in representing distant others and suffering (ibid, 192).

The responses engage with questions of representation such as whether the story subjects are portrayed with humanity and agency and whether the documentary is truthful and believable. The responses also address the question posed in the introduction to this section of the thesis:

Did applying local social practices lessen the construction of otherness, reduce the potential for media harm and give greater consideration for the story subjects?

Listener responses following broadcast

After hearing the documentary four female listeners contacted the station. Two of these women felt compelled to 'do something'. A woman from Adelaide (Listener 1) phoned ABC Radio National and left a message with her contact details. My supervising producer passed her details on to me. During our conversation the woman told me that
she had connected to the program particularly because I had shared my own personal experience. She told me that she too had experienced sexual violence. She was moved by the program and was particularly concerned by Julienne's story and the fate of her surviving children. In the end, this listener donated a cow to Julienne's mother and brother who were looking after Julienne's two children. The decision to buy a cow was made by Julienne's family. Below is the comment 'listener 1' posted on the program website (I refer to the listeners as 'Listener 1'; 'Listener 2'; 'Listener 3'; and 'Listener 4'):

Listener 1:
19 May 2014 7:05:27am
Hi Ziyah, congratulations on a powerful, moving program which was so respectful of the women and their families and explored the utter helplessness of their situations with such clarity. I would like to do something to assist Julienne's family if possible. With the view of then doing something for the bereaved families of other murdered women, and the women currently working in such a dangerous occupation. I would welcome your thoughts on the best way to provide assistance. Keep up the great work.

Another woman also said the documentary moved her deeply. She posted a comment on the program website:

Listener 2:
04 Apr 2014 3:15:15pm
This is a beginning, to speak the truth. Now.
What can we do to help these women?
Seriously, what can I do to help? Can I petition someone?
Can a fund be started for the children of these murdered women? Is there a charity that is seeking to empower these women like Opportunity Australia?
Can you post what we can do from here?
Thank you
The moderator left a reply on the website with details on how and to whom to make a donation but instead this listener followed up by posting a hand-written letter to me via the station. The letter read:

Dear Ziyah,
You have produced a deeply moving documentary called 'A Silent Tragedy' in March. It was deeply moving...
Please can you tell me how I might get some money safely to those women specifically spoken with and about in the documentary? How to help them?
Thank you for your help and your excellent work.
With best wishes

Another listener expressed a similar response:

Listener 3:
31 March
I was very moved by this story and wondered what I could do to give these women and their children hope, dignity and an escape from their situation...I would happily lend these ladies some money to start their own business to get a new start on life.

Another comment emphasised the 'dignity and courage' portrayed in the documentary:

Listener 4:
06 Apr 2014 3:18:30pm
In my 60’s now and this has got to be one of the best documentaries I've ever heard! Story is terrible, wonderful to hear, extremely sensitive. It's about dignity and courage in the extreme. One’s quality of life is deepened immeasurably by being edified by this one! Thank you ABC!

The first three of these responses suggest that the women felt a sense of responsibility to the women and those who had suffered and who were still suffering, which led to a
desire to take action (Listener 1 continued fundraising for six months post-broadcast and raised over $10,000AUD). Their comments and actions suggest that the use of intimacy, particularly for Listener 1, may have resulted in their intense connection to the story. The listeners expressed discourses of compassion. These women were able to locate the 'distant sufferers' inside their own community of belonging and deemed the suffering relevant; they were able to empathise with the women and their situations (Chouliaraki 2008, 7).

The listeners commented on the sensitivity of the program, the respectfulness shown towards the women, and one listener summed up the story as one of 'dignity and courage'. These responses illustrate that these listeners were able to approach the 'distant sufferers' with a 'degree of comprehension and sensibility' (Silverstone 2002, 770). Their difference was acknowledged at the same time as their common humanity. This is what Silverstone refers to as 'proper distance':

> This refers to the importance of understanding the more or less precise degree of proximity required in our mediated interrelationships if we are to create and sustain a sense of the other sufficient not just for reciprocity but for a duty of care, obligation and responsibility. Proper distance would preserve the other through difference as well as through shared identity (Silverstone 2002, 770).

It is clear from the listener comments that the portrayal of the suffering was not a spectacle, nor was it sensationalised (Chouliaraki 2008, 2). The placing of the murder victims and the women sufferers enabled these particular listeners to engage with the situation and brought them 'closer to human pain', confronting them with the 'responsibility of 'what to do' to improve' the life of the those who expressed their vulnerability (ibid, 15).
As the producer of this program, I used rhetorical techniques and textual strategies to invite listeners into the lives of these Rwandan women, a request of sorts, to see this particular community as relevant, one deserving of attention. As explained earlier, the motivation to cover the story came from the realisation that the serial killings had been largely ignored by the Western media. My motive was to challenge the hierarchy of news that determines what places and which human lives deserve more news time. Chouliaraki calls this kind of project 'social solidarity': 'It is also about the power of the media to stretch the concerns of various publics beyond their local perspectives and to re-configure the imagined contours of these publics beyond their existing affiliations' (2008, 14).

Feedback sessions

Including in the analysis the responses and interpretations of those who listened to the documentary was helpful to draw linkages between the textual strategies and rhetorical techniques used in *A Silent Tragedy* and the subsequent audience responses (Ong 2014, 188). The following feedback sessions were also useful in qualifying how particular techniques and strategies used to represent the suffering evoked different responses based on age, gender, culture, race and individual experience (ibid).

I refer to the four male Rwandan journalists as ‘Journalist 1’; 'Journalist 2'; 'Journalist 3'; 'Journalist 4'. They are print journalists with a range of professional expertise. Journalist 1 has been in the industry for more than a decade and was heavily involved in starting up Rwanda's first independent association for journalists. Journalist 2 is a university graduate who has been in the journalism industry less than a decade. Journalist 3 and Journalist 4 are both senior journalists. Journalist 3 is also a former
lecturer in journalism at one of Rwanda's University's.

I refer to the three women in the second listening group as 'Voice actor 1'; 'Voice actor 2'; ‘Voice actor 3'. These women represent three of the five voice actors who spoke the English translations in the documentary. Voice actor 1 is a former journalist and is currently self-employed. Voice actor 2 co-ordinates a community garden and is a yoga teacher. Voice actor 3 is a part-time musician and stay-at-home mother.

For the Rwandan journalists their comments were mainly directed at my role as a journalist in this representation. Based on their own individual experience as professional journalists they measured my performance against the journalistic norms of objectivity, neutrality and fairness. It was the younger journalist who was open to the subjective and attached style of journalism that I had used, more so than the other senior and more experienced journalists who clearly felt that I had demonstrated, to a certain degree, unprofessionalism.

Journalist 3 commented that the statistics reported in the documentary were not backed up by experts. He wanted to hear from the sources of the reports where the figures came from. He also wanted to hear from spokespeople from either the Ministry of Gender or the Genocide Commission regarding the statistics about genocide orphans turning to prostitution to survive. Journalist 1 was also of the view that the documentary showed bias, telling the story from the point of view of the women sex workers with the social message supportive of their rights:

Journalist 1: You structured the whole documentary on the side of the prostitutes. In a culture that is conservative like Rwanda there are other voices who would not agree that prostitution is something to be accepted. They may recognise that it is there,
but they would make an effort to challenge why it exists so throughout the whole documentary I waited for that voice that would reflect the conservative thinking that even though somebody may sympathise with the murders that are taking place they would still not accept that prostitution should at all be in Rwandan society. If you ask many people they would say, 'so ideologically you are very liberal'.

Journalist 2, the most junior of the journalists, saw the documentary as an example of 'activist' journalism. He said if he were to judge it from that perspective it was successful as it told the plight of the women very convincingly. However, measuring it against the standards of conventional journalism he said its fault was its lack of objectivity and balance and its bias. However, he commended the power of the documentary which he believed was enhanced by embedding my own personal story into the documentary:

Journalist 2: First of all I commend the hard work, it is interesting... If this story is for advocacy this story is perfectly good for me, that's okay. If it is for news you will need to edit it, specifically including experts...

To me, your documentary is good, it is actually very good because for instance I also have the same view that if you bring in other perspectives the real story might die in the way... To me I endorse it.

My point though is what was your reason for the documentary, was it for broadcast only or is it about activism, and I think I would have to agree that it is for activism, now people are responding positively and to me I have no problem with that.

The women's responses accepted that the documentary was partial to the women sex workers but explained that it was this one-sidedness that helped them relate to the women more deeply:
Voice actor 1: And listening to it, I thought it is was so led by their voices, it's like you sit more deeply in the story as well, it changes the way that you take it in, very much so. Because it felt to me, hearing the whole thing through for the first time, that it was quite strongly led by the voices of the women and the people telling the stories and so that somehow invited me to sit more deeply with their stories to relate to them more deeply than I would have done if it had been packaged up in some way. I'm surprised at how that changes the way you relate to the material actually.

Voice actor 2: But what you did which is so different to Western media in my perspective, is Western media, if I can be this generalised, would do like I said before the sensationalised version of it but it would do a journalist interpretation of an event whereas this wasn't a journalist's interpretation of an event, this was a concerned person wanting to give these people a voice and to help them find a solution to their problem, that's not common journalism in my perspective.

The female listeners viewed the use of first-person and referring to my own experience as a powerful connecting factor between the women and myself as well as between the audience and myself:

Voice actor 3: And to have heard your voice in it, like not literally your voice, although that too, but when you bought in the I, speaking in the 'I' tense, I felt that was really powerful, it was a really strong change because it started off with the story and then it was just sort of bringing yourself into that and I thought that was somehow a really beautiful way of presenting the stories. Like you were saying G... [referring to Voice actor 2] it's the stories that are powerful and presented through it and that's what you want to get across with ethical journalism I suppose rather than the headline.

Voice actor 1 – well to me it was an important disclosure, not because you were disclosing your story but it was, I think that's going to be an important part of people connecting to their stories, it's like a bridge or something, it's like, it's part of what's motivating your desire to tell their stories...
The idea of 'activist journalism', referred to by Journalist 2, is confirmed again here by the following response:

Voice actor 2: ...you can tell that through that piece you've taken on that moral responsibility of, 'I'm going to tell this story but I'm going to make sure that I help you guys in the process of doing this', which is not what you hear in general media stories, which is why we want to hear the stage two of you taking that back to Rwanda... the result of you then taking this back to the women, how they responded, whether or not, you know it's almost like it's setting up to be a campaign for women's rights in Rwanda, it kinda feels like there's stages involved, this is the first and then there will be another one.

The activist element in the story stimulates the female listeners to question their response, how to act and 'what to do' (Chouliaraki 2008, 3). Their conversation here supports the claim by Chouliaraki that the visibility of suffering in the media has 'ambiguous and controversial power' (ibid, 2):

Voice actor 1: I did feel at the end, because you do have quite a strong, or I should own this rather than giving it to everyone else, I have quite a strong feeling response to the stories and so on, it's almost like I was wanting some sort of call to action at the end, I wanted some guidance around how I, you know you do tap into their powerlessness and so on and then at the end it's like, is there any way I can respond to this in a constructive way, I mean we know you're taking it back and you're sharing it, and ...

Voice actor 2: and so you are giving them a voice and how powerful that can be... yeah but I felt similar, I just want to know the end of the story, it felt like, and because you told us you're taking it back to them, and for me it's like where is it going to go from here, you've opened up this amazing can of worms and now what will happen...

Voice actor 1: which is perhaps not a bad thing to leave us a bit uncomfortable in that regard...
Voice actor 2: ...and I guess because knowing us, we are I guess humanitarian souls who hear something like that and go, we want to help fix it, or that sense of what can we do to you know, but obviously what you've done is incredible and so you've given us...

Voice actor 1: yeah it's partly what I'm grappling with actually, some of it now is intellectual having come out of the space, it's like and well this is about the way that minds work in the Western world probably, where we are looking at the next step, what happens after that, but actually it's an entire piece that has completely fulfilled its function at the end when you finish listening to it because it's a vehicle for carrying a really vital story out into the world and it doesn't need to do any more than that, on the biggest level, it's like bringing their voices out of the shadows and into the light and enabling us to have a heart connection with them and to feel empathy and a whole range of other emotions, is all that's required of it, and we don't know what that will change for any of us as individuals or any of the people that will listen or for the women who have told the stories, we don't know any of that.

Voice actor 2: yeah you are right, and it is such a western thing to want to fix, or change or make better isn't it, when it's enough to tell the story.

These responses point to Chouliaraki's discussion on what she calls 'conditional cosmopolitanism' which she argues is about the 'subtle balance between feeling for and reflecting on each individual case suffering that journalists have already deemed worthy of our attention' (2008, 13-14). By being given a portrayal of suffering that neither blocks emotions altogether nor elicits the 'weirdly sterile' image, the female listeners demonstrate here the option they have: to do something or not, but at least, Chouliaraki stresses, 'there is a choice' (ibid, 14).

In terms of the dominant 'weirdly sterile' Africa portrayed in the Western media (Sellars 2008), Journalist 1 commented that the documentary had not reduced the humanity or
dignity of the women and had instead portrayed the women in a 'positive' way:

Journalist 1: In terms of how you have portrayed an African story, I think for that, you are very successful in that you don’t portray any condescending attitude towards Africans. Your story gives the subjects the equal human dignity you would give an Australian citizen if they were facing a similar problem which is a credit to you. For me as a Rwandan I don’t have any complaint with that portrayal, even for the listeners in Australia they would connect with the women as equal people who facing a problem, some of who are being murdered but it does not portray Africans as wretched, that attitude does not appear there...

Journalist 1 commended the amount of research and work put into the documentary, noting that Rwandan journalists could not put such a large amount of resources and time as media houses would not allow it and freelancers would not survive doing such work.

Journalist 3 would have preferred a different 'framing' of the story, one that presented a certain moral message for current sex workers, that it is possible to leave the industry and live a better life:

Journalist 3: I would have preferred an ex-sex worker who said I left, now I am here... you see the final message, although you are a journalist and you are right to expose what happened but you could have also said, without saying it, here is a case of one who was [a prostitute] who is no longer but because it's a way of balancing the story, that is the option.

Journalist 3 also commented that the radio documentary was too long and he was unable to connect to the story:
Journalist 3: When it becomes too long you can’t find the actors in this drama. You cannot connect...even though it was punctuated by small interludes, music and there are also a lot of voices so that can help people to stay listening.

Opinions about the use of music in the documentary differed not only between the journalists and the female listeners but amongst the journalists themselves. Journalist 4 commented that the choice of music was inappropriate. Some of the lyrics of the songs referred to survival and courage and had been written in the context of the 1994 genocide. They are songs of mourning. Journalist 4 and Journalist 1 discussed the appropriateness of incorporating such songs into a story about sex workers:

Journalist 4: The background music does not really fit to be in a prostitution documentary. Some of that music is sung during the genocide period so I think that music – the background music – doesn’t fit. It’s better to find maybe some either horror music that goes with prostitution or something like that because...

Journalist 1: Okay the sorrowful music, I thought it was being used because they were being killed, they are being mourned so it could be relevant to a degree.

Journalist 4: there are such classical music that goes with such crimes, that can go with it.

The female respondents, not having the capacity to understand the lyrics of the songs, commented on the aesthetic role the music played in the program. One respondent felt the music provided a reprieve from the intensity of the program:

Voice actor 1: yes that really added a great deal, because you actually needed it, the music was almost the breathing spaces where you take a big deep breath in, I needed it... it would be too rich otherwise I think it would be hard to get the chance to empathise and to respond at a feeling level and to intellectually hear and understand what was going on and to do all of that with that degree of intensity for 50 minutes
without any music, would have been well for me, it would have been probably impossible so it was, kind of brought a little bit of light and shade to the tempo of it.

Voice actor 2: I loved all the music in it.

The choice of music presents some difficulty, because as I noted above, music taste is subjective. The two Rwandan translators who worked on translations in the documentary both commented that the music suited the storyline. They felt that the words of the songs complemented the women's stories.

The female respondents touched on the quality of the storytelling in the documentary. Their comments reflect Broersma and Peter's view that 'storytelling is at the core of journalism practice' (2014, vii):

Voice actor 1: I really liked the way you crafted it..., I think that there's a lot, I'm not talking so much about the weaving so much now as range of stories and so on, that had to be crafted together to make sense, that have a really strong impact and that had that sort of change in tone that was needed because you couldn't have just listened to all of the stories about the harm that was done to women one after the other and I liked the way you handled that, it was more digestible.

Voice actor 2: You told such a depressing story with such beauty and dignity and such, you know you really gave that story, you gave a depressing story a real sense of power or something, it's beautiful.

Voice actor 1: Yes, that's interesting G...[referring to Voice actor 2], because you are left with a sense of life or lifed-ness, not life, but lifed-ness, there's got to be a better noun there somewhere; it's not a story of death in the end, it's a story of life isn't it? It's very much infused with a sense of life which is really interesting.
Voice actor 2: And it feels like the story has so beautifully given us an experience into their life, and it's through having the empathy or that connection with these women that we can take that into our hearts and then we can feel we have that connection, that kind of sense of ... you gave us a real insight into their lives and their experiences...


Voice actor 2: That's the difference between empowering stories and news.

Voice actor 1: It doesn't feel at all when you listening to it, like what I would call a consumption piece that's put out there just for consumption, no it doesn't at all, you feel a sense that there's a reverence for their stories, is the kind of tone of it.

Voice actor 2: ...it's definitely not a consumption piece or you get the sense through listening to your narration that you're there with them, there's an equality in the way you're narrating it, there's no power imbalance there, I definitely don't think it's about your spruiking this story, aren't I lucky I've got this grab, definitely not. More so the other way, where it's like you're going that extra mile...

These final comments show the extent to which the radio documentary grants the Rwandan women humanity and agency. Comments such as 'there's no power imbalance'; 'there's an equality'; 'there's a reverence for their stories', 'you told such a depressing story with such beauty and dignity...you gave a depressing story a real sense of power', and 'your story gives the subjects the equal human dignity you would give an Australian citizen if they were facing a similar problem', demonstrate that for these listeners the documentary succeeded in transcending ‘conventional visual/spacial fixing of the Other’ and told a story that did not dehumanise or humiliate, or cause complex forms of harm.
A number of factors may be at play for the difference in how the two groups judged the 'authenticity' of the documentary (Ong 2014, 187). Some of the Rwandan male journalists found the portrayal less authentic and less truthful and believable because it lacked 'experts' or voices of authority and it was told from the perspective of the women sex workers and was therefore biased. The Australian female listening group on the other hand identified with the women, despite cultural differences and the physical distance between them. These women, along with the women who left comments on the website recognised an 'alikeness' (Ibelema 2014, 173) or 'shared identity' (Silverstone 2002, 770).

Three of the female listeners are victims of sexual abuse and this may have contributed to their self-identifying with the women sex workers and their abuse, as well as mine. This 'witnessing position' is an important addition to current discussion of representation of distant suffering which according to Ong is often absent from such discussions (2014, 190). That some people acquire a greater moral imagination for the suffering of others is an under-studied area of media representations of suffering and effects on audiences (Wilkinson 2005).

What this holistic analysis does is demonstrate the value in examining textual elements of media texts as well as audience responses. The responses show that despite my efforts to adopt a more culturally sensitive and responsive approach to my practice audiences will interpret and respond to media representations differently based on their socio-cultural backgrounds, individual experience, age and gender (Curran et al 1996). Some considered it tendentious and biased while another considered it 'ethical journalism'. But despite individuals interpreting and responding to the documentary in different ways, the responses demonstrate the potential of media content to cultivate the
capacity for audiences to feel compassion for others, and 'care for the needs of strangers in distant lands' (Wilkinson 2005, 140).

Conclusion

Incorporating the documentary *A Silent Tragedy* into this thesis provided an opportunity to draw on the insights from the first action research study and analyse their effect on practice and the subsequent representation of the story, thereby addressing the second research question: what effect does applying local social practices and respecting Indigenous ways have on stories on Africa told by Western journalists (Mudimbe 1988, 169)?

The individualised methods and styles that the participants in the first study brought to the storytelling process were based on their personal, cultural and historical backgrounds, and were imbued with a set of core values which I identified as reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality. The university ethics review process mirrored some of these values (namely, reciprocity, responsibility and respectfulness) reaffirming the significant role they play in minimising harm and ensuring research is ethical and culturally sensitive. Moreover, the nature of radio documentary making - slowly evolving, intimate and un-intimidating – was able to accommodate these values perhaps more easily than other media genres such as news and television media which are more instant and fleeting.

Integrating these values into my own practice in varying ways had an important impact on how the story about the murders and the life situation of sex workers in Rwanda was produced, presented, and how it was received. Testament to the impact of these values
on my practice was the documentary’s nomination as a finalist in the 2014 Amnesty International Media Awards. The following comments by two of the judges who are highly acclaimed in their fields clearly illustrate the effect that applying and embedding these values had on the documentary:

Judge 1:
In my opinion the most sensitive piece in a very impressive list of entrants. It was exquisitely well-crafted, using natsot, music and empathetic voice-over to describe a world of despair. There are many different forms of journalism and it's so energising to know that in a world of rolling headlines and shouting social media we still have a place for telling stories quietly and gently. More than with any other entry, I found with these people of Rwanda that I was drawn in, immersed in their sad stories, rather than standing on the outside peering in. I couldn't imagine a better accolade than that.

Judge 2:
From the beginning, I was enthralled by a horror I’d been ignorant of until that point. Combining tight, sensitive writing with effects and music, this demonstrates perfectly the power of radio to capture the imagination. It will be hard to ever forget the sounds and voices in this disturbing and highly moving piece.

As these comments show, drawing on the insights and values from the first action research study resulted in a practice that was socially committed and motivated rather than detached and uninvolved. Applying the ethic of brother-sisterhood evoked a kind of storytelling that imbued the distant other with human qualities, and therefore lessened the construction of otherness.

It was not an event 'devoid of shared experience' but an intimate account of a meaningful cross-cultural interaction that took place between human beings (Carpignano, quoted in Morley & Robins 1995, 144). It was an invitation for the
listener to enter a 'lived felt experience' (Holman Jones 2008, quoted in Mason 2012, 139); one imbued with the sense that 'we are wrapped up together in this bundle of life' (Kaunda, 1966, 32).

This kind of journalism is more responsive to the 'complicated patterns of belonging’ in Africa' (Nyamnjoh 2005; and quoted in Wasserman 2009, 282). In many ways it conflicts with the norms of Western journalism such as independence and detachment but it is more in tune with the 'specificities of the locale' (Nyamnjoh, quoted in Wasserman 2009, 281). I developed sympathies with the women I was reporting on, a no-no for both liberal social science and liberal journalism which are both dedicated to objectivity and impartiality. I developed empathy and solidarity, and an awareness that this issue was far more complex and full of contradictions than I had first thought. To use Nyamnjoh's words, doing journalism that is 'not in a hurry', and that 'dig[s] at the roots of issues', means that a story can never be summarised, and can never produce any straightforward answers (quoted in Wasserman 2009, 292-293).

While it is beyond the scope of this study to explore at a deeper level 'public sentiments of compassion' influenced by mediatised experiences of human suffering⁴⁶, recording the story subjects and audience responses here has served the purpose of demonstrating the value of studies that combine text, production and reception and the contribution such studies can make to understanding the impact of the media process from the practitioner's perspective (the representing), those represented, and the witnesses of the represented. Having talked about their experiences with the media process and their interactions with me during this process, the women sex workers declared that they felt valued throughout this process. The listener responses, in spite of the charge of bias,

⁴⁶ Media scholars such as Birgitta Höijer has done extensive work on the media and meaning creation in the audience (2004).
indicate the documentary created an empathic response that suggests it fulfilled the brief of lessening Africa's 'otherness', or even worked as an 'antidote to Otherness' (Mazrui 2005, 80).
Conclusion: Towards a culturally responsive journalism

The application of Western journalism values to the African context in order to tell its stories to the world has had an enormous impact on Africa's global media image. Interpretations have tended to be made through Western lenses, rather than on local, cultural terms. At times this kind of reportage has resulted in problematic representations of distant others leading to complex forms of harm, as outlined earlier in the introduction. Having identified this problem in my own practice, this thesis took the position that the issue of how Western journalists interact with distant others, how they balance their professional needs, desires, and obligations with their story subjects, poses an ethical conundrum that requires critical examination.

As a practising journalist, frequently travelling to east central Africa, I was motivated to undertake this project to improve my own practice. Specifically, I wanted to improve on aspects of practice that I had identified as problematic, such as unequal dynamics in my interactions and encounters with distant others in the process of telling their stories, and the subsequent representations. Therefore, the study set out to explore ways to subvert hegemonic relations between the journalist and her story subjects, and to find a less Westcentric, more inclusive and diverse journalism. To do this, other worldviews were explored and embraced, and an intercultural approach was used to overcome the shortfalls of Western journalism and to address the political and ethical dilemmas of Western journalists telling Africa's stories.
To examine the problem, this study looked towards non-Western Indigenous theories for attending to Western journalism practices that lead to constructions of 'otherness' and cause media harm; grounding an ethical journalism practice in the lived experiences of distant others. It presents a case for the Western media professional to combine the 'universal and the particular' to stories that are constructed in non-Western contexts (Christians et al 2008). This thesis demonstrates through an action research process that African cultural values have something to offer Western journalism practice, or in Francis Kasoma's words, 'Africa can teach the world some journalistic manners...' (1996, 95).

While this project identified and borrowed some of the principles and values that continue to inform the ways people communicate and interact with each other in contemporary African societies, the thesis does not take the position that African culture is static and unchanging (Nyamnjoh 1999, 66); nor does it revere one culture over another. The intention of the project was not to reject outright Western journalism and its values in favour of a more 'authentic' journalism that is informed by African ethical values. African media scholars have expressed how problematic such a project is given Africa's 'dynamic and hybrid' reality (ibid, 76). Rather than seeing this as Africanising or Indigenising journalism practice, it is to be seen as an attempt to de-Westernise international reporting practices.

The study set out to produce relevant research that is sensitive to the locale, and empowering to both the participants and the researcher. An action research paradigm informed by critical and emancipatory theory helped to achieve this. This methodology created the space for local social practices to guide and inform the process that in the end led to new knowledge and understanding about how journalists can be more
culturally responsive in their practice. The location of the study - on the margins - illustrates a resistance to top-down, expert-oriented, and oppressive practice of any kind. It looks to ways of knowing from the 'bottom of the hierarchy' and recognises these as having epistemic value (Conquergood 2002, 146).

Studies on media representation, in particular those that address the portrayal of distant others, are varied and plentiful and there is a vast array of theoretical perspectives that have developed from these studies. But few studies have dealt with the challenges of representing distant others using a reflection on practice approach and developed theory from practice. As a practice-informed action research project, this study was concerned 'with the nature of practice' (Candy 2006). The new knowledge gleaned from the study had ‘operational significance’ for the radio documentary that is included as a creative artefact in the thesis (ibid).

The study sought to answer one very fundamental research question, How to write about Africa? Can it be done? And two subsequent questions, which were in response to Rao and Wasserman's call for non-Western Indigenous theories to find a theoretical space among Western media practitioners:

1. What lessons can be drawn from African local social practices for reducing the potential for media harm and avoiding constructions of 'otherness'?
2. What effect does applying local social practices and respecting 'Indigenous ways' have on stories on Africa told by Western journalists (Mudimbe 1988, 169)?

These questions were answered using two distinctly different languages – through a creative artefact with an accompanying critical reflective analysis, and through this
dissertation (Milech and Schilo 2004). The study applied action research methodology as the framework to extract theory from practice. Within this framework two parallel and interdependent action research studies were undertaken.

The two parts of the study worked synergistically. By adopting a two-pronged approach, that is, participatory/self-study action research, I was able to examine the problem with and alongside others and apply those insights to my own practice and account for the ways in which I practice as a journalist in a culturally different context. The first study involved a grassroots participatory media project to experiment with 'ground-up' documentary making through radio. The aim was to work with a group of local residents who had an interest in the media and the role of storytelling and examine their individualised methods and styles brought to the practice of journalistic storytelling in the Rwandan cultural setting.

The method of facilitating this project was an important aspect to achieving its goals. Critical pedagogy was used to create a mutual learning and exchange project based on respectful dialogue and an openness to learning (with the researcher becoming a co-participant and co-learner). Valuable lessons were learned through the establishment of this group that challenged the orthodox teacher-learner roles as well as the traditional power hierarchy between researcher and research subjects, thereby achieving 'deeper kinds of collaboration' with an emphasis on co-learning and reciprocal interplay (Coryat 2008, 16). This approach can also be seen as a resistance to the uncritical transference of Western media knowledge to the African continent through Western-led training programs.

The first study provided the opportunity for me to watch and learn from those with local
know-how. The storytellers used methods informed by their own cultural values, beliefs, paradigms, social practices and ethical protocols; methods that are more compatible with their local contexts and social fabrics. Through them I gained new insights about practice. I became witness to a more culturally responsive journalism practice. Applying these insights to my own practice I was able to develop new knowledge and understanding about ethical encounters with far-away others and the media process.

This new understanding incorporates a set of values based on reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality, and promotes a journalism practice that prioritises respectful relationships with story subjects. Such a practice requires the journalist to intimately come to know the Other on whom they seek to report. Thus, the importance of immersion and slowing down is emphasised in this theory, a slowing down that allows the story to emerge and develop; relationships to deepen, and trust to build. This theory therefore is informed not only by the core values identified in the first action research study but also by the work and scholarship of new ethnography, literary journalism, Slow Journalism, radio documentary theory and anti-oppressive research practices.

The effect of using local social practices to tell the story about the murders of 20 sex workers in Rwanda in 2012 and 2013 was the creation of a nurturing space for the voices to be heard, or as Ong puts it, 'an ethical and democratic “space” that upholds equality of voice' (2014, 191). Moreover, the theory of a culturally responsive journalism gives rise to the potential of the human condition to find sustenance in solidarity during the media process. Applying this theory led to deeper immersion, stronger rapport with story subjects, and adherence to local social values such as being
respectful, responsible, patient and hospitable.

Incorporating listener feedback as well as the women's personal experiences with the media process affirmed that the documentary succeeded in giving greater consideration to the story subjects, reduced the potential for harm, and humanised the story subjects. An additional confirmation that the new insights about practice led to a more ethical and humanising journalism was the documentary’s inclusion as a finalist in the 2014 Amnesty International Media Awards where the judges emphasised its sensitivity towards the topic and those it represented.

The findings indicate that a less distanced reportage and a more culturally responsive practice result in lessening the construction of otherness and therefore reduce media harm, but this closeness, attachment, and even intimacy in developing a sense of place can lead to the media text being labelled as a kind of tendentious or advocacy journalism, as was the case with *A Silent Tragedy*.

Furthermore, in the age of rationalisation of resources where journalists have less time for developing rapport with story subjects and allowing trust to develop, merely suggesting a slowly evolving, patient journalism that requires spending long periods of time immersing in the place and getting to know the people can easily be scoffed at by time-poor journalists as well as harried editors and producers.

The study was confined to one locale and one media text. In this respect it is an in-depth study into a small facet of the field of foreign reportage. The transferability of the study findings could be further strengthened by setting up a similar project in multiple non-Western locations and applying the findings to a range of media genres. The insights
from this study however, may be particularly useful to both Western and African journalists telling Africa's stories. The main lesson emerging from this experience is that in the African context drawing on values such as reciprocity, responsibility, respectfulness, patience and hospitality has the potential to lead to ethical encounters between journalists and their subjects and produce narratives without diminishing the Others' worthiness or dignity. Furthermore, the anti-oppressive methodology used throughout the study has illustrated that genuine and sustained cross-cultural alliances are invaluable for researchers and journalists working in non-Western contexts as they contribute to developing a deeper understanding of local issues.

Future research in this area might include applying non-Western Indigenous theories to more practice-based journalism research and setting up collaborative cross-cultural journalism assignments that experiment with melding local social practices with Western methods of reportage. A particular focus on how news media or instant journalism can incorporate more culturally responsive approaches into their reportage could lead to a much wider shift away from simplistic and one-dimensional reportage and towards a more inclusive, less alienating practice.

The first action research study generated a positive response from local people towards self-representation and a kind of citizen journalism. The passion for storytelling was loud and clear. The feedback from the participant storytellers was revealing, and demonstrated a huge potential for more collaborative journalism ventures to be established between Western journalists and local people. Thus, a final, and worthwhile, direction for future research would be a case-study approach to explore cross-cultural collaborations for foreign reportage where stories are co-constructed and co-authored. Such research would provide a more thorough understanding about how intercultural
approaches to international journalistic practice can be managed, and whether they lead to a practice that is more culturally responsive, less invasive and less othering.
Appendices

Appendix 1: Conference presentations by Storyteller 1 and Storyteller 4

Appendix 2: My fieldwork notes - interview with heroin addicts by Storyteller 4

Appendix 3: Original story proposal for ABC Radio National

Working title: Who is newsworthy? Western media’s “hierarchies of worth”

Appendix 4: Modified Story Proposal for ABC Radio National

Working title: A Silent Tragedy
Appendix 1: Conference presentations by Storyteller 1 & Storyteller 4

In July 2013 the group members and myself were invited to give a presentation on collaborative radio practice at an international conference in Zanzibar. The conference was called The Postgraduate Research in Screen Production. It was held during the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF). The following presentations articulate the group members’ passion for storytelling and the vital role it plays in their lives.

Presentation by Storyteller 1

Nigerian author Adichie... said:

"Stories matter, many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign but story can be used also to empower and humanize. Stories can break the dignity of the people but stories can also repair that broken dignity."

When I was a kid I used to hear people calling myself, my family members and other people, “snakes”. I didn't know at that time they were creating hatred in the society so that one day they could reach a point where they can kill us, kill many people. Making up stories which created in people's minds the images of snakes meant that it wasn't hard for people to kill 'those snakes'. This is the power that stories had leading up to the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. In this case, stories were used to dispossess and malign and break the dignity of people.

The power of story can also push someone to take responsibility, even if he's a kid, to go to the frontline, to try to liberate and create change for his people. That is how I found myself, as a kid soldier, at the age of 14.

After genocide, we realised we don't have to copy the past. The old people were teaching us about where the discrimination ideology came from and based on that we decided that we need to be united, and that we need to build our nation. We said, 'let us resolve our matters in a proper way, let us tolerate our differences', and from there, people asked for forgiveness.

We reached a time to create new stories, stories that 'empower and humanize', stories that 'repair the broken dignity'.

... 

Today in Rwanda, we are creating our own stories.

I am proud to be telling stories because stories can make a difference, a positive
difference.
For me, I don't want someone else telling my story because if I allow someone to tell
my story, he may not tell that story like the way I would tell it, how it happened the way
it did and what I saw.

Why do we allow ourselves to read the African story in a book that has been written by
Western people?

Why do we allow ourselves to watch a movie of Africa which comes from Hollywood?

Why do we allow the Western media to represent Africa?

Why can't we tell our own stories to our children, instead of waiting for someone else to
teach them our story?

Why are we waiting for someone to write down our 'once upon a time' stories? Why
aren't we recording them ourselves?

Through digital storytelling we can take time to collect all those untold stories for
ourselves and the future generations.

We haven't been in the habit of writing things down. We come from an oral-based
storytelling society but now, with technology, it is easy for us to tell our stories to
ourselves and to the world.

Through digital storytelling we can even translate it into another language so it can
reach far.

We can even collect one history from many different people so that the way that story is
told reflects the true reality.

Stories allow us to see our similarities and our differences.

I tell stories because I have more to say. I have more untold stories that I want to share
with people.

I'm telling stories for the voiceless.

I'm telling stories because it's from my roots.

I tell stories to open people's minds, to get them to reach far into their imagination.

The kind of stories I tell reveal who I am. They allow me to reach my potential and they
allow me to have a relationship with the world.

I tell stories to define my existence.

Stories guide us.

Stories teach us.

In Rwanda, storytelling is the roots of our culture - storytelling is in our dances, our
music, our oral tradition. Today, artists can collect those stories and make films, theatre and visual arts so they can be remembered.

I will finish with a quote from Chinua Achebe:

"It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drummers and the exploits of brave fighters. The story is our escort; without it, we are blind. Does a blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that owns us and directs us."

**Presentation by Storyteller 4**

When I was a very young child I admired listening to the news every day. At that time televisions were rare in my community, only the very rich people had them. Some people in my community had radios so I used to be hearing news all the time. The people used to call me "politician" because I was always telling them news and stories. When I wasn't listening to the radio I was reading books because that was also my passion.

At that time I wasn't thinking that I will one day be a professional storyteller. I started to think about it when I read a book which talked about an American storyteller by the name of Linda Goss. It was from there I knew that being a professional storyteller could be a job.

I was realising that there were many untold stories in my community and so I chose to tell them to the people around me. Even sometimes when the people of my community were having arguments about a particular story they used to come and ask me if I knew the story that they were discussing. That still happens today. But the poverty at that time and the genocide consequences limited my capacity to make a job from being a storyteller.

I got the big chance when I started working as a translator for Ms Helene Thomas. She was coming to Rwanda to make radio documentaries and we stumbled across each other and it was there she asked me to join her in the stories she was doing. By then I started to feel that my dream was being resurrected. We were making many stories together. We did a story about religions in Rwanda, then a story about the slums of Kigali, Rwanda's capital in which I'm the citizen of. And then we made a story about the Indigenous People of Rwanda, the ba-Twa, who are the marginalised people of my country. All that made me feel proud and confident that I was starting to become a professional storyteller.

From there, we formed a group of storytellers. I wanted to do a story about heroin addicts because I've been witnessing more and more of my people becoming addicted to drugs, in particular heroin. Heroin is not known by everyone in my community. Most of the people know about marijuana and so when they see an addict, they just think he's addicted to marijuana but the impact that heroin has on people is very different and
But no one is talking about that, especially not the local media. That's why I decided to talk about heroin because I can see that it’s reducing the hope of a brighter tomorrow for many of my people.

I thought that as long as these stories remain untold, many of my community will be excluded from Rwanda's vision for the future. But I need others to help me to spread this to the wider community because I believe that union is strength. I think if we make a good collaboration we will make a big change and we'll be building our nation, building Africa and building a greater future of the world.

Now that myself, and the members of our group have the skills and the materials, we are aiming to go far in revealing stories which are untold and hidden in people's hearts and minds because there are a lot of stories waiting to be told; not only the "once upon a time" stories but also the true and untold stories which are not covered in the mainstream media.

The problem remains that the stories of the marginalised, the stories of those who live in hardship are ignored by the mainstream media because they are busy telling the stories of the high-level people. I know these untold stories because I am a part of them. I know these stories from personal experience.

I think some people call Africa the dark continent because we Africans are ignorant of our own stories and this reduces our capacity to tell them to the rest of the world.

Some are busy focusing on the stories from outside - Hollywood films; Bollywood films; Western books and novels.

But in order to spread wider our African stories we need to work in collaboration with each other - both within our borders and outside our borders. There is a saying that "no man is an island and no man stands alone". We need each other to express what is in our hearts and minds, to become the impassioned storytellers that we are from a very long time ago.
Appendix 2: My fieldwork notes - interview with heroin addicts by Storyteller 4

The following diary entry tells the story of the interview with the heroin addicts. I recorded this field experience as a narrative in my fieldwork notes. I include it here because it is a useful illustration of my role as describer and interpreter to the process.

25th October 2012 – around 4.30pm

We are invited to meet the guys in a small mud house in the Nyamirambo slums. We wind our way through narrow dirt paths passing small children with their mothers. The house sits down below an embankment. Above it are small houses made from mud where some women sit on wooden stools. We knock on the steel door and we are invited to come in. A small window invites light into the room and we meet the men, some sitting on the floor, others on plastic chairs. Straw mats line the earth floor. A leopard skin lay near two men seated on the floor. The leopard’s face lay at the feet of the oldest man, he seems to hold some kind of authority in the room (I later discover that he is the dealer). He holds a beaded stick in his hand and every now and then he dips and stirs it in a clay pot full of water and flicks water over the leopard skin and then onto the younger man sitting next to him. As the water sprays him he shudders and makes a deep rumbling sound. Thick plumes of smoke fill the room as most of the men light up cigarettes.

I am seated next to “Clapton”. He has flawless brown skin that stretches thinly over his cheek bones. His elegant fingers hold onto a tightly bound foil-like cigarette. He carefully unwraps it. Some clear liquid drips down the surface of the silver foil. The man beside him looks on with anticipation.

Outside I can hear the muffled sound of babies crying and the murmurs of women’s voices. Someone quietly knocks on the door. They are hushed away.

I feel scared. If the police come and find us here with people using heroin I wonder what will happen to us. I have left my research permits at home. I have nothing to show the authorities what our purpose is here. But Storyteller 4 appears calm. He holds the recorder close to his mouth as he asks the guys, one by one, the questions he has prepared. He then points the recorder towards their mouth as they answer.

They seem to be relaxed with him and with being interviewed. After settling into his own interviewing style Storyteller 4 starts to ask spontaneous questions and no longer looks down at his book of questions. He allows them to speak their full answers and he keeps silent during their answers, nodding and showing encouragement.
There are six men in the room, including the dealer. As Storyteller 4 makes his way around the room, I take a deep breath and try to relax. By the fourth interview I begin to feel tentatively calm. Even though I don’t understand what they’re talking about I can see that he’s gathering some interesting and important stories. I am surprised that they are so open towards him. I whisper to Storyteller 3 if the answers are interesting and he tells me they are “very interesting”.

Storyteller 3 watches Storyteller 4 intently, nodding when his fellow storyteller asks a certain question or when the guys give a certain answer. I see a look of surprise on Storyteller 3’s face at some of the answers the guys give to the questions.

Storyteller 3 tells me later that Storyteller 4’s interviewing practice impressed him so much. He wondered if he’d had some formal training or experience doing interviews. But it was Storyteller 4’s first time to do such interviews.

The first guy Storyteller 4 interviews is his friend Clapton. I can see there is a connection between them. Years have passed since Storyteller 4 called him in the hope of getting him to stop doing heroin.

Clapton is open. He speaks in a ghostly voice and gives full answers but his face remains expressionless. After the last question Storyteller 4 looks into Clapton’s eyes, “Murakoze cyane Clapton” (thank you very much)."

As Storyteller 4 moves on to the next interview, Clapton strikes a match, and moves the flame back and forth over the foil. He holds the foil at the edge of his bottom lip and inhales the smoke that emanates from the foil. He then takes in three quick deep breaths and closes his mouth, rolls his head backwards and closes his eyes.

The man with the stick sprays water on the leopard skin and as the water reaches the man next to him he makes another deep rumbling sound. I look sideways at Clapton. He holds a cigarette precariously between his fingers and his head rolls down, his eyelids heavy. He murmurs some words to himself. He looks dazed.
Appendix 3: Original story proposal for ABC Radio National

The pitching process for 360documentaries, a documentary program for ABC Radio National (now known as Earshot), requires producers to provide a brief outline of their story idea to the Executive Producer of the program. Based on this initial pitch producers can be asked to provide an official program proposal. These proposals are presented at a commissioning meeting at the ABC. The following is the initial pitch I presented to the EP. The focus of this initial pitch was to investigate the lack of Western media coverage of the murders.

Who is newsworthy? Western media’s “hierarchies of worth”

Between July and August 2012 fifteen women working as prostitutes were murdered in Rwanda’s capital city Kigali.

In February this year, another woman working as a prostitute, believed to be in her early 20s, was also murdered. According to local Rwandan media reports the killer or killers cut out her tongue and removed her eyes and genitals. This woman’s death brings the total number of known murders to 16. All women were strangled to death.

One victim - found dead by her 8-year-old daughter - was believed to have been found with the following words carved into her abdomen with a knife, “I will stop once I have killed 400 prostitutes”. This woman’s death came a day after three women were found murdered in the same house.

According to the media reports, police investigations have led to the arrest of three men, one suspected of involvement in the February murder and two suspected of two of the murders that occurred last year. It is unclear whether anyone has been prosecuted. Police suspect that conflict over money may be one of the motives or revenge following HIV contamination (the Rwanda Biomedical Center estimates that 51 per cent of women working as prostitutes are HIV positive). However, police are still unclear as to whether the cases are linked or separate incidents. The fact that all of the victims were sex workers and all were killed by strangulation has led to suspicions that there is some connection between the murders.
Not surprisingly, women sex workers in Rwanda are feeling insecure and feel they are at risk of becoming another murder victim.

The murders have led to a call for prostitution to be legalised in Rwanda in the hope that legalisation may offer sex workers some protection from violence.

**Media Coverage of the murders**

Audiences who rely on Western media for their news are unlikely to have heard about the deaths of these women. That is because apart from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which published a 14-paragraph story on September 11 2012, the Western media have ignored the murders of the 16 Rwandan women.

How does such a story miss the radar of Western media coverage? Is it because there are “hierarchies of worth” or “hierarchies of human life” in news coverage? Why did this particular story not receive coverage in the Western media?

This program will attempt to address these questions.

In the United States studies have shown that both race and class-status determine the level of news coverage between women. According to such studies, darker-skinned women receive less news coverage than White women, as well as women who are at higher risk for violence such as sex trade workers, women living in poverty and those with drug addictions. Scholars who have studied the issue call this “bias”, which divides victims into stereotypes of “pure women” who are newsworthy victims and “fallen women” who are not.

Research done by Canadian journalists have also revealed that media pays less attention when missing and murdered women are Aboriginal than when they are white (e.g. *Just another Indian: A Serial Killer and Canada’s Indifference* by journalist Warren Goulding; Kristen Gilchrist’s study “‘Newsworthy’ Victims? Exploring differences in Canadian local press coverage of missing/murdered Aboriginal and White Women”; Yasmin Jiwani’s essay ”Symbolic and Discursive Violence in Media Representations of...
Aboriginal Missing and Murdered Women”; and Highway of Tears Revisited by journalist Adriana Rolston).

**Approach to story**

Applying some of this research, the program will examine how the deaths of certain women gain more media coverage than other women using the recent case of the 16 women who were murdered in Rwanda as a case in point.

Interviews with women who work as prostitutes in Rwanda’s capital city will attempt to unsilence the women whose lives may have been deemed “un-newsworthy”. The women interviewed will be acquainted with some of the women who were murdered. The women usually work and live in Kigali’s slums and so the soundscape here will be a rich concoction of sounds from the slum areas. Police investigating the murders of the women will also be interviewed. An interpreter will be used for all of the interviews where local language is spoken.

Local Rwandan journalists and foreign correspondents in the region will be interviewed to discuss the issue of Western media coverage of Africa and the notion of “hierarchies of worth”. The local journalists I will be interviewing speak good English.
Appendix 4: Modified story proposal for ABC Radio National, 360 documentaries.

Based on the initial story proposal (above) the EP suggested I make changes to the pitch making the focus the murders rather than the media angle, in other words to ‘evoke an experience, emotion and place’ rather than ‘the delivery of ‘information’” (see guidelines for 360 documentaries freelancers at http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/360/about/)

Based on the advice from the EP I presented the story in the following way.

Working title: A Silent Tragedy

The Story

Julienne was just 14-years-old and living with her family in a small village in rural Rwanda when poverty drove her into the city to find work. In the capital city Kigali, about two hours drive from her home, she found a job as a house girl. She was earning around $5 a month, a typical wage for house girls in Rwanda. Her food and lodging were provided but she worked six days a week cooking, cleaning and looking after children.

The woman who Julienne worked for was a prostitute. This opened Julienne’s eyes to another world; a world that could potentially allow her the financial freedom she had been seeking. With this income she could not only support herself but help her family back in her village.

Julienne was 18-years-old when she began working as a prostitute. She had been working the job for four years when her life came to a sudden and brutal end.

In February this year her mutilated body was discovered by her neighbours. Her killer(s) had cut out her eyes and her genitals.

According to eyewitnesses, a group of people had allegedly approached Julienne where she was having a beer at a local bar and took her to her home. She was later found dead.

The 22-year-old had two small children who are now living back in her village with her
Julienne’s murder brings the recent death toll of women prostitutes in Rwanda to 20. Between July and August 2012 fifteen women working as prostitutes were murdered in Rwanda’s capital city Kigali. By November the number had risen to 19.

Christine, another victim, had been working as a prostitute for 20 years when she was murdered. She was 43-years-old and a mother to an eight-year-old son. It was her son who found her lifeless body when he woke in the morning, along with a hand-written letter. Written in red pen and signed with a cross, the killer explained that he had killed her because she stole 50,000 Rwandan Francs from him (around $76 Australian dollars). The killer also wrote, let this be an example for others.

It is alleged that one victim had words carved into her abdomen with a knife, “I will stop once I have killed 400 prostitutes” (note - police deny this despite eyewitnesses saying otherwise). This woman’s death came a day after three women were found murdered in the same house.

According to local Rwandan media reports, police investigations have led to the arrest of three men, one suspected of involvement in the February murder and two suspected of two of the murders that occurred last year. It is unclear whether anyone has been prosecuted. Police suspect, based on two letters found at two separate murder scenes, that conflict over money may be one of the motives and revenge following HIV contamination. However, police are still unclear as to whether the cases are linked or separate incidents. The fact that all of the victims were sex workers and the majority were killed by strangulation has led to suspicions that there is some connection between the murders.

Not surprisingly, women sex workers in Rwanda are feeling insecure. It is impossible to say how many women work as prostitutes due to the underground nature of prostitution, but the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC) estimates that there are a total of 15,792 professional prostitutes working in the country.
Violence in Rwanda post-genocide

Rwanda prides itself on having one of the lowest rates of street crime in the world and a relatively low homicide rate compared to other African nations and the Americas. Visitors to Rwanda always remark on how safe the streets are, even at night. However, Rwanda does have a high rate of violence against women, especially domestic violence. A bill was passed in Parliament in 2009 to address gender-based violence and there are now numerous educational programs that focus on reducing violence against women and children and harsh penalties against perpetrators.

On the last Saturday of every month, following mandatory community service (Umuganda), citizens gather together to engage in discussion with their leaders about various issues, especially concerning safety and security in their communities (they are called sectors). The leaders of these sectors explain to the community the measures they and the police are taking to address and prevent crime and violence. It is common for citizens to pay 2000 Rwandese francs ($3) annually which goes towards local citizens doing night street patrols which helps to reduce violence and crime throughout the country. This meeting follows a kind of Rwandese cultural protocol which is called Kwinegura. Kwinegura is similar to a debriefing where everyone in attendance has an opportunity to voice their opinion or concerns.

Why would this make a good radio program?

Audiences who rely on Western media for their news are unlikely to have heard about the deaths of these women. That’s because apart from the Sydney Morning Herald, which published a 14-paragraph story on September 11 2012, the murders of the 19 Rwandan women have only been reported in mostly local Rwandan media (even this coverage was minimal).

This documentary will be revealing a largely unknown tragedy.

Interviews with women who work as prostitutes in Rwanda’s capital city will attempt to unsilence the women whose lives may have been deemed “un-newsworthy”. The women interviewed for the program will be acquainted with some of the women who were the murder victims. They will portray the reality of life as a prostitute in Rwanda and the risks they face. The families of the victims will also be interviewed as a way to understand the role poverty plays in a young woman’s decision to enter prostitution.
This narrative helps to see the women not just as prostitutes, but mothers, wives and daughters who sought to empower themselves.

**Why is this piece suitable for 360documentaries?**
This is an investigative feature with a universal human story, one of tragedy, loss and betrayal. The tragedy of course is the multiple murders of 19 women but another element to the tragedy is the survival factor that drives most Rwandan women into prostitution.

The betrayal, as far as the documentary maker sees it, is that the women who died were deemed “un-newsworthy” and thus the story received minimal coverage (locally but particularly globally). If the women were White, Western and middle-class, it would be a different story, it would be a prominent story (various media studies have proven this).

While the murder victims cannot speak for themselves, the documentary will try to bring two of the victims to life through people talking about them. The victims featured will be Julienne and Christine. Their lives will be re-imagined by those who knew them and live with their loss.

The documentary also delves into the troublesome picture of prostitution in Rwanda and how the women who engage in sex work are severely marginalised and labelled as deviant.

The challenge of the documentary is to move the audience toward seeing and empathising with the prostitutes but at the same time to not portray the women prostitutes as helpless victims. In telling their story, the documentary prepares a space for marginalised women: women who are devalued both by their own society and by the global media. This documentary seeks to redeem them and place value on their lives.

**Background on prostitution**
According to a recent study 80% of sex workers in Rwanda say that survival is the reason they enter prostitution. For most it is a desperate bid to escape abject poverty. The majority start sex work mainly between the ages of 17 and 22. Some young women enter prostitution after being rejected by their families because of falling pregnant when unmarried. In Rwanda premarital sex and pregnancy bring shame to a whole family.
The reality for a woman prostitute in Rwanda is that she experiences social exclusion, high exposure to illegal drugs and a number of health risks that can have fatal consequences. There are alarming rates of HIV infection amongst sex workers. HIV prevalence among sex workers can reach 60 to 90%. According to one local prostitute, unprotected sex earns a higher income than protected sex.

The earning capacity for a sex worker varies significantly. Some earn just 300-500 francs per client (less than a dollar), others up to 3000 francs (just under $5). There are higher paid prostitutes. This journalist found herself in a taxi one day when the taxi driver asked if it was okay to stop on the way to the airport to pick up one of his customer’s children and take her to school. The taxi driver informed the journalist’s Rwandese friend, who escorted her to the airport, that the mother of the child was a highly-paid prostitute whose clients are the government and corporate elite. Given that prostitution is illegal in Rwanda, clearly there are double standards here.

According to the Penal Code of Rwanda anyone who incites, exploits, facilitates or abets prostitution is prosecuted and is liable to at least one year in prison. Most prostitutes who are caught are jailed for a day or two and they are released and told to not return to prostitution. Clients of sex workers are rarely targeted even though they are buying illegal services. It seems that it is only the women who are chased, prosecuted and deemed social outcasts because of their actions.

The homes of most women prostitutes are usually very basic with no electricity.

Many women who become prostitutes left school early due to their families lack of means to pay their school fees (or simply the books and uniform required to attend school). Therefore they find it difficult to find an alternative source of income, especially with Rwanda’s high unemployment rate. This means women stay locked in the cycle of prostitution for economic survival. One sex worker is quoted in a research report saying:

One day, they put me in jail, and my child ended up sleeping outside. He wasn’t able to open the door of our house by himself...so he slept on the doorstep. That’s where they found him the next morning.
jail, I spent the whole night crying. I swore I would quit prostitution. I said, “I’ll look for a job in construction or agriculture”...So when I was released from jail, I was determined to quit. But when I got home, my children and I didn’t have anything to eat. That same evening I got a call from a client. We were hungry, so I had no choice. I accepted and ended up resuming prostitution.

The question of how to address sex work is a topic of explicit policy debate today in Rwanda. Rwanda has received international recognition for its pro-equity public health model and some of the policy measures that are being implemented or proposed in Rwanda to advance a rights-based agenda address sex workers’ health needs and their underlying social vulnerability. However, the debate also incorporates highly charged disputes about morality, with some lawmakers in Rwanda advocating a hard-line approach to tackling sex work, such as reinforcing criminal penalties.

**Whose voices will be heard and why? (interviewees, actors, narrator)**

*Interviewees*

- Julienne’s family in the village and people who knew her from her life in the city
- Christine’s family or those who knew her (the father of her child who is now looking after him)
- Women currently working as prostitutes
- Former prostitutes who have found alternative sources of income (especially those who have accessed government loans to form business cooperatives)
- Local journalists who have worked on the murder stories
- Police investigating the murders
- Leaders of the districts where the women lived and worked

*Actors*

Actors will be needed for those who speak in Kinyarwanda only. I suspect the women prostitutes and the deceased women’s family members will all speak Kinyarwanda during interviews. The journalists, leaders and possibly police will more than likely speak English.
Narrator
Helene Thomas - on location and in studio

What other types of sounds would you use and why? Music, sound effects, location recordings
Soundscape/location recordings - the women prostitutes usually work and live in Kigali’s slums and so the soundscape here will be a rich concoction of sounds from the slum areas; night-time sounds captured of women working the streets and interacting with each other. Village sounds - animals especially cows, goats and chickens/roosters; children playing and working; household chores. Police station - paperwork, official environment; prison cell doors. Discussions following the mandatory community service (umuganda) with leaders and citizens speaking about security and safety in communities.

Music - I would like to ask the women their favourite and most inspiring music and play this - it may be Rwandan pop and French love songs by Rwandese musicians which are also very popular; music to evoke the mood of tragedy and loss.

If appropriate, what is the added online content? (Photos, audio slideshows, feature website, user-generated content, etc)
The identity of the women who work as prostitutes will need to be protected so any photographs used will not identify any person, rather they may be backs of women, or photos that obscure their identity. Photographs will include where the women work from; rural villages; the kinds of houses the prostitutes live in; police cells etc.

An audio slideshow could be incorporated - something worth more consideration.
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