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Hope within Trauma for Refugee Women:
Whispers and Echoes through Shadows and Reflections

Susannah Tobin

A thesis submitted to the University of Sydney in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education and Social Work
The University of Sydney
2014
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

This is to certify that:

I. this dissertation comprises only my original work towards the Doctoral of Philosophy Degree.

II. due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

III. the dissertation does not exceed the word length for this course.

IV. no part of this work has been used for the award of another course or degree.

V. this dissertation meets the University of Sydney’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) requirements for the conduct of research.

Name(s): ............................................................................................................................................

Signature(s): ....................................................................................................................................

Date: ...............................................................................................................................................
DEDICATION

Within my own adversity, my husband has walked with me. He continued on, despite not understanding fully, uncertain of the direction to follow and experiencing exhaustion. He was the holder of hope for me and so became my source of perseverance when I had little. We have journeyed together, sometimes stumbling and sometimes flying. We continue on in the realisation that the fullest meaning of life is attained along and through the journey, rather than at our ultimate destination. So, this thesis is dedicated to my husband Gregory. Without him, it would not be.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

No research is penned by a single hand. Numerous authors have contributed to this thesis; academic research, research participants and family. Some of their words are here inscribed in black and white, whilst others have coloured my thoughts with their wisdom, challenge and encouragement. Whilst all dissertations are dependent upon supervisors for direction and final expression, Prof Barbara Fawcett has excelled in this role. At the outset of this thesis journey, she indicated with wisdom and grace potential pathways for exploration, she gently redirected my myriad excursions and has ceaselessly offered encouragement and suggestions for the destination of its overall framework and themes. These have all assisted in producing light for the, at times, quivering flame of hope for this thesis. Moreover, this was generously given during her own time of trauma. Thank you.

To the eight women from refugee backgrounds, who are known as Charuni, Fazilah, Jasmina, Mariam, Shankari, Sora, Vasikari and Yaya in this thesis. If you read this, you will know who you are. It is my hope that I have reflected your lives faithfully. Your perseverance to live, and to live meaningfully, in the midst of adversity founded on hope, is a source of inspiration. You can be proud of your extraordinary lives. Without your willingness to share the deep anguish and shining joys of your lives, this thesis would not be. I am very grateful to Ms Melissa Monteiro, the Executive Director of the Community Migrant Resource Centre in Parramatta, for facilitating contact with refugee communities. Thank you.

To other academics, Dr Rosalie Pockett, Ms Louise Morley, Prof Patrick Bracken and Prof Richard Bryant, who willingly gave of their time and expertise to refine my thoughts and all of whom have had lasting input in my life because of the people you are. Thank you.

To my family. Thank you to my husband Gregory, my sons (Matthew, Joshua, Peter, Luke, Jonathan, Michael, and David), daughter (Elise) and their partners (Eliza, Claire, Davina, Tania, Muoi, Liz, and Chris) and my grandchildren (Angela and Phoebe, Tolya and
Anastasia, and James) for their encouragement, love of life and providing me with wonderful times of re-creation; to my medical sons for their challenges to clarify my non-biomedical framework; to Elise for her assistance with transcription; to Matthew, who inspired my respect for history and to all those who engaged in lively discussions. Yes David, who questioned whether they would be recognised as ‘co-authors’ of this thesis. You are indeed. Family discussions with conflicting perspectives encouraged me to re-evaluate my assumptions and conclusions. These are embedded within this thesis although you all may not be in agreement. My grandchildren, who shower me with love and joy, have encouraged me to persevere in this thesis-making task, as you are the representatives of hope for our future. Thank you.

To all the researchers, philosophers and writers, who have directly and indirectly influenced my thinking and in particular, Gabriel Marcel, Paulo Freire, Martin Buber, Emmanuel Lévinas, Ignatio Martín-Baró and Thomas Sterne Eliot. Thank you.
ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to explore understandings about hope within the experience of trauma for women from refugee communities. In spite of intense focus on the three discourses of hope, trauma and refugees, no consensus exists within any of them. All are fractured by tension, conflict and incongruity that reflect historical, present and perceived future imperatives. Any endeavour to coalesce understanding about the significance of hope within trauma for refugees will be characterised by this complexity. Consequently, secondary research was undertaken within each discourse, and a constructive framework for the facilitation of hope for refugee communities is proposed. A Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework for trauma is developed that facilitates the understanding of the interdependent relationships between individuals and the multifaceted social ecological environments in which they exist. As interpretations of hope are diverse within the disciplines of philosophy, religion, psychiatry, psychology, the health sciences and social work, these are outlined to reveal perspectives of hope that range from overt optimism, to acknowledgement of its fundamental significance, to ambivalence and to a negative assessment. The biomedical model of trauma encompassing definitions of trauma, resilience, posttraumatic stress and posttraumatic growth is also critically discussed. Historically, refugees have been viewed with concern, indifference and animosity. This research provided an opportunity for the voices of eight refugee women from Bosnia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka now living in Australia to be heard. In depth interviews were undertaken with the women and their narratives were analysed using hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. The findings indicated that hope can underlie and transform experiences of trauma. For these refugee women, hope can constructively be understood as differentiating between hopefulness and hope objectives that were both facilitated by perseverance through reciprocal relationships. However, trauma casts dark shadows across life that is interpreted through reflections of
reality, rather than as a direct representation. Whispers and echoes can be comprehended but all understandings will be inchoate with some remaining enigmatic. This intensifies the necessity for respect of diversity within individual and collective human rights, so that hope can be facilitated for refugee communities.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>American Psychiatric Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNA</td>
<td>Deoxyribonucleic Acid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSM</td>
<td>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HPA</td>
<td>Hermeneutic Phenomenological Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSEF</td>
<td>Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTG</td>
<td>Posttraumatic Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Posttraumatic Stress Disorder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<td>WWI</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The primary aim and objectives will be contextualised within an overview of the thesis. An introduction to understandings about hope within the experience of trauma will be followed by a discussion of the limitations to such understanding. This will be conveyed through the representation of whispers and echoes as interpretations that exist within the shadows and reflections of reality.

1.1 Aim of Thesis

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore understandings about hope within the experience of trauma for women from refugee communities.

1.2 Objectives of Thesis

In order to facilitate the aim of the thesis, a number of objectives have been formulated.

1.2.1 Discussion of Hope, Trauma and Refugee Discourses

Hope, trauma and refugees are significant as all are inherent within life. As the discourses of hope, trauma and refugees are each characterised by diversity and tension, this thesis has the objective to explore and discuss secondary research across multi-disciplinary perspectives for each of their historical, philosophical and empirical foundations, their implications and their beneficial application to contemporary life experiences. This discussion will provide a constructive framework for understanding hope within the experience of trauma for women from refugee communities.

1.2.2 Understandings about Hope for Refugee Communities

Although much scholarship has focused separately on hope and trauma, the application of hope to the research of trauma has not been commensurate with this
abundance. This is surprising considering the ubiquity of trauma and the significance that has been conferred on hope. Specifically, little quantitative or qualitative research has examined directly understandings about hope for refugees. Thus, this research endeavours to rectify this anomaly through primary research that analysed narratives from eight women from refugee communities, who were invited to share their stories. It is anticipated that this will provide innovative and beneficial understandings about hope and trauma, as well as the role of hope in enabling these women to survive, cope and thrive after trauma.

1.2.3 Provision of Voice for Refugee Women

It is envisaged that sharing their narratives will grant the refugee women the opportunity to be given a voice that speaks about their interpretations of hope within trauma in their homeland, flight, places of refuge and resettlement in Australia. Women from refugee communities endure compounded discrimination because of their gender. The status of women and the right of women to share their narratives has been subject to historical challenge, with subjugation representing the dominant theme (Duby & Perrot, 2002, pp.ix-x). Expressions of equality and opportunities to have a voice have been gained through vigorous campaign, although with ongoing debate.¹

1.2.4 Expansion of Hope, Trauma and Refugee Discourses

Through the discussion of the discourses of hope, trauma and refugees from secondary research, and the analysis of the narratives from primary research, the aim is to broaden contemporary debates and to augment knowledge in each of these areas with the

¹ The discourse about women, and in particular within their experiences of trauma, is of great significance and in need of further research and debate. However, there has not been a detailed discussion due to constraints on the thesis length.
addition of innovative and beneficial understanding. In turn, this may have the potential to inform policy, practice, education and further research. Opportunities for growth in understanding exist within each discourse but these are entwined with challenges and limitations. Just as each discourse has been subject to alteration throughout history, there is potential for further revision that may beneficially enhance understandings of hope for communities, who are experiencing trauma.

1.3 Overview of Thesis

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, ... it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us.

The English novelist, Charles Dickens (1859/1998, p.1) penned these haunting words in relation to a specific era, exultant with the cries of “liberté, égalité, fraternité” that reverberated relentlessly and paradoxically with the thud of the guillotine. Simultaneously hope and fear were bestowed on a people yearning for freedom but now bound by other ropes. However, these words reflect the experience of life throughout history. Life represents a rich tapestry of opportunity and challenge that is woven together to create beauty and joy but also ugliness and agony. The stitches of experience may slip easily into the canvas but inevitably the thread becomes twisted and tangled and may even break. Cruelty replaces love. Confusion replaces understanding. Chaos replaces harmony. Surviving replaces flourishing. Suffering is an inevitable concomitant to life. It may reduce life to a knotted existence abounding with loss, pain and defeat.

Nonetheless, the capacity to disentangle the threads of life and then to re-create a living masterpiece is testament to the indomitable spirit of humanity. Life may bear scant
resemblance to the one previously cherished but it is profoundly precious, as its accomplishment was woven at a great price. But the question remains. How is the restoration of this masterpiece of life to be accomplished? The aim of this thesis is to explore and discuss the role of hope, both as a sense of hopefulness and hope objectives, that empowers and guides through the snarled and confusing labyrinth of trauma in life.

As hope and trauma are both intrinsic to life, refugees will continue to be ubiquitous, as inspired by hope they flee from trauma. The focus of this thesis will be on refugee communities, albeit characterised by considerable diversity, but in which both trauma and hope are endemic. However, refugees have received both positive and negative scrutiny that may facilitate or compromise their experiences of hope. As the discourses of hope, trauma and refugees are each represented by multiplicity and conflict, their historical, philosophical and empirical foundations, their implications and applications to life experiences will be discussed.

1.3.1 Chapter One: Introduction

The aim and objectives of this thesis with its focus on understandings about hope within the experience of trauma for refugee women will be introduced. The significance of hope for life that will inevitably encompass trauma will be explored. However, the limitations to such understandings will be elucidated.

1.3.2 Chapter Two: Hope

Hope will be explored within a historical overview, its differentiation from everyday understandings that conflate hope with wishing and optimism, and within philosophy, religion, psychiatry, psychology, health sciences and social work. As a multiplicity of interpretations of hope exists within and across these disciplines, each will be discussed with particular reference to experiences of trauma.
1.3.3 Chapter Three: Trauma

As interpretations about trauma have been subject to alteration throughout history, the continuing role of social and political forces in this transformation will be outlined. The dominant trauma discourse, the biomedical model, will be discussed with reference to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) definitions and its limitations, particularly its incompatibility with cultural and collective conceptualisations of trauma. As it is argued that trauma can be subjected to silence, this will be discussed through understandings about silence, the contributions of ‘hauntology’ and the roles of power that all contribute to the ‘conspiracy of silence’. Conversely, ways that facilitate the hearing of trauma will be explored, although it is acknowledged that ultimately a silence of suffering prevents complete comprehension.

1.3.4 Chapter Four: Experiences of Trauma

An outline of experiences that occur following trauma will encompass suffering, resilience and growth. This will be presented through a discussion of the biomedical model and a Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework (HSEF) of trauma. Each category of trauma experience will be analysed through a historical synopsis, implications for the present day discourses, and relationship to the facilitation of hope. The limitations of the biomedical model will be outlined and in particular, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A HSEF will be described that addresses these limitations.

1.3.5 Chapter Five: Refugee Communities

Historically, refugee communities have been the object of concern, indifference and animosity. As this discourse continues to be dominated by controversy, a discussion will highlight human rights within a social justice framework. Research with refugees will outline
experiences within their homelands, camps, seeking asylum, exile and resettlement, including quantitative and qualitative research with asylum seekers and refugees in Australia. A synopsis of the homelands of the participants in this research project will be presented (Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Sudan and Sri Lanka), so that their narratives can be meaningfully contextualised.

1.3.6 Chapter Six: Research Methodology

An ethical framework will be outlined that facilitates the research aim and objectives for the enunciation of understandings about hope for participants, who have experienced severe trauma and are from non-Australian backgrounds. The rationale for the use of narratives within qualitative methodology and the means, by which they were shared, will be presented. The hermeneutic phenomenological analysis undertaken for the analysis of the narratives will be described.

1.3.7 Chapter Seven: Analysis and Discussion of Research Narratives

The analysis of the narratives was in accord with hermeneutic phenomenological analysis. Consequently, a synopsis of the participants’ narratives will be included to enable each to be represented as an individual entity. In order that the parts of the narratives can be elucidated, the separate themes of hope within trauma in participants’ homelands, flight, places of refuge and resettlement will be analysed. The focal themes that emerged from an integrative analysis will be enunciated. To complete a comprehensive analysis of hope for the participants, the importance of understanding within a multi-stranded helix will be discussed.
1.3.8 Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The ways, in which the aim and objectives of this thesis have been fulfilled, will be outlined. A synopsis of the discourses of hope, trauma and refugees from the secondary research will highlight the diversity within each, as well as implications for today. A summation of understandings of hope within trauma for the women from refugee communities, who shared their narratives for the primary research, will be outlined. The implications of these contributions will be discussed for refugee communities and for the countries in which they reside, with particular relevance to the discipline of social work.

1.4 Whispers and Echoes through Shadows and Reflections

1.4.1 Shadows and Reflections

Shadows are characterised by a deficiency, rather than an absence of light. Light within life promises opportunity, whilst trauma darkens and diminishes this illumination. Thus, trauma may cast long shadows over life for individuals and cultures (Edwards, 2008; Humphries, 2010; Koepnik, 2012). Just as at sunrise and sunset, the paucity of light enables shadows to lengthen, so too can shadows threaten to dominate life that is clouded with the darkness of trauma. The light of life may shine weakly, illuminating enduring unfamiliarity, devastation and chaos in the shadows of a world forever changed. Nonetheless, a shadow presupposes some element of light, even if it is only a glimmer. It is this spark that empowers and guides through the darkness. Allied with this conceptualisation of the shadows of trauma, are shades or spectres, as explicated in the ‘hauntology’ of the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida (Davis, 2005; Edwards, 2008). They do not necessitate the clothing of an incorporeal being, such as the ghost of Banquo in William Shakespeare’s Macbeth (Cook, 2007, p.138), but can nonetheless exert profound influences. Refugee women have referred to living in ‘shadows’, rather than in the light of freedom, as they negotiated their way to new life
through danger (Gerard & Pickering, 2013; IRIN, 2012). This thesis will discuss the applicability of hope as the means by which life can be lived through the shadows of trauma.

Research is subject to a double reflection, as the reality that is reflected by the research process is then reflected upon by the researcher (Ihde, 1998, p.28). Indeed, research could be said to be a triple reflection, as the type of methodology utilised constitutes a further reflection. Reflections utilise the light that creates their being, so that light can be shed onto understanding. Thus, any interpretation of the experiences of trauma will be inchoate, as it reflects an understanding about these experiences, rather than a direct representation (Bruner, 1986, pp.6-7; Kleinman, 1988, p.240). Moreover, this incipient understanding will be obscured by the mists of a complex, ambiguous and paradoxical reality. In the words of the British polymath, Raymond Tallis, (1998, p.20), “Reality has always been a huge panorama of realities and that panorama has always been stupendous, complex, magnificent, vast and cruel.”

1.4.2 Whispers and Echoes

Any representation of hope within trauma focuses on intrinsic experience that is fraught with a diversity of interpretation and significance, as it occurs within multiple, ever-changing contextualisations (Rechtman, 2000). Multitudinous and multifaceted emotions and cognitions are engendered and embedded into such experiences that echo with ambiguity, paradox and complexity (Foster, 2012; Phillips, 2007). Indeed, some aspects of reality remain unknowable (Achino-Loeb, 2006, p.12; Tallis, 1998, p.11). The limitations of rationality were expounded by Pascal (as cited in Copleston, 2003, p.164), who emphasised that “The heart has its reasons which the reason does not know.” Experience cannot be reduced to understandings of cognition, as this ignores the essential social nature that defines humanity (Tallis, 2004, pp.25-26, 94). The foundation for communality is narratives, both collective
and individual, that interact with life synergistically. Narratives reproduce life, whilst life reproduces narratives (Bruner, 2004; Murray, 1999, p.49). Thought is more than inductive or logical reason in the creation of these narratives (Bruner, 2004).

Language as interpretation is the lens through which narratives are created, maintained and revised. Although the definition of a human by Aristotle as one who has ‘logos’, has been interpreted as thought or reason, Gadamer (2008a, p.59) specified that this more appropriately refers to language. All experiences are “epistemologically & ontologically² composed and understood through language” (Leggo, 2008, p.166). It enables that which is not visible to be made visible (Gadamer, 2008a, p.60; Rath, 2012), although it also has the power to conceal (Socrates, as cited in Hoy, 1982, p.1). To be in the world is to have been and to be, inseparably immersed within etymological interpretation. Although necessitating consciousness, this transcends individual awareness, as language is more than the summation of all individuals (Gadamer, 2008a, p.64). However, comprehension will always be limited, as language cannot completely convey experience with all its nuances, complexities and ambiguities (Gadamer, 2008b, p.100). Similarly, T. S. Eliot (1963, p.180) contends that words themselves can be indefinite and transitory,

Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place.

The complexity of language in elucidating understanding about hope has been compounded by the differentiation in English between hope as a noun and the wider range of

² Ontology in this thesis will refer to the nature of being, whilst epistemology will refer to the nature of knowledge (Crotty, 2005, p.10; Pascal, 2010).
meanings for hope as a verb. Hope as a noun typically represents significance; for example, hope within religions or hope for a community or nation. In contrast, the verb hope is utilised with reference to wishes, expectation, desires and imperatives (Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008; Olver, 2005, p.244; Walker, 2006). In addition, whispers and glimpses can only be heard and seen if effort is expended to hear and see. The search for understanding must be premised on a yearning for understanding, however painful or contrary to much lauded preconceptions that may be. Gadamer (2008b, p.101) stated this simply as “We cannot understand without wanting to understand, that is, without wanting to let something be said.” If instead the decision is to close our eyes and ears to comprehension beyond our customary security, we will be the poorer.

Thus, it is whispers of understanding that will be heard, embraced and appreciated, rather than the revelation of dogmatic canons of truth (Vattimo, 2013, pp.xiii, xvi, xxi, xxvii, xxxi). This is especially pertinent for issues of deep significance, where applicability and acceptance by diverse communities is unattainable and undesirable (Vattimo, 2013, p.xxxvi). Truths are created through the language of interpretation (Vattimo, 2013, pp.viii, xxxiv-xxxvi). Truth represents a lonely and windswept mountain, surrounded by the mists of indeterminate generalisations and imprisoning understandings within its cold and inflexibly hard stone. Rather, for the Italian philosopher Vattimo (2013, p.xxii), humanity can only be free, if truth is set free.

The experience of trauma with its intertwining of pain, loneliness and growth has been described as a deep mystery that will obscure full understanding and so will ultimately remain silent (Frank, 2001; Wilkinson, 2005, p.10). Whilst this is further complicated by the construction of divergent interpretations about similar life experiences, such a multiplicity speaks of the bounteous and rich diversity of human experience (Darlington & Scott, 2002, p.10). Paradoxically, the acceptance of partial understanding of suffering may facilitate
greater awareness and empathy (Wilkinson, 2005, p.44). Consequently, the obstacles in researching the experience of suffering in a valid manner have been raised. Frank (2001, p.355) postulated that suffering represents that which cannot be spoken, ascertained, or described as it is a ‘non-entity’. Consequently, an examination of suffering must recognise that this understanding can only be partial. The challenge is to utilise approaches that will facilitate understanding of trauma experiences, including the experience of suffering.

Language facilitates collective understanding (Gadamer, 2008a, p.60). Through this sense of shared humanity, as we are “all bound together by the mystery of our mortality and by midnight shadows” (Caputo, 1988, p.288), whispers and echoes may be heard and even comprehended, although never known in full. If this is not so, why does humanity “rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep” (Romans 12:15, English Standard Version) in shared empathy with those unknown? This is not a common humanity, whereby all are reduced to uniformity but a shared humanity, bound together by respect of diversity (Gyekye, 2004, p.99; Nussbaum, 2006, p.6). As difference will preclude complete comprehension, respect that invokes responsibility is crucial (Lévinas, 1986, pp.10-14, 24-28). However, similarity can overcome dissimilarity. The photographer Giles Duley, who lost three limbs in Afghanistan, returned to record suffering in that country. He concluded that, “At the end of the day, across the world, I have always found people are just the same; the same dreams, the same hopes and the same desire for their loved ones to live in safety” (Duley, 2013).

Thus, although the destination of definitive truth about human experience is a mirage that can never be reached, “passing shadows” will reveal wondrous truths (Galeano, 2009, p.110). The challenge is to pave a way for understanding this reality. This will be facilitated by congruence between epistemology and ontology (Hanna, 2003, p.5; Hoskins, 2001; Ricoeur, 1998, p.40). However, neither positivism nor qualitative research will suffice for
totality of comprehension (Bryman, 2004, p.278). Narrative research has been chosen for this research as it employs narratives, the building blocks of human experience, to attend to the whispers and echoes articulated within the context of life stories to provide understanding of hope within the experience of trauma for women from refugee communities.

In contrast to the positivism of quantitative research, poetry represents ambiguity and paradox that resists full comprehension and speech but allows whispers and echoes to be heard through the shadows (Foster, 2012; Conquergood, 2002, p.146). Paradoxically, truths may resonate freely and deeply within one’s Being, unfettered by language but resplendent with meaning and significance. Additionally, marginalised communities, such as refugees, can be given voice to challenge dominant discourses, as poetry elicits and necessitates focussed listening (Foster, 2012; Homan, 2010; Leggo, 2008, p.166; McEwen, n.d.). Poetry has been increasingly utilised in qualitative research to represent the unspeakable brutality, horror and unpredictability of trauma, along with concomitant endeavours for survival and transformation through hope (Bowden, 2010; Goodall, 2012; Hanauer, 2012; Leavy, 2009; Rath, 2012; Sethi, 2011). Bharati Sethi (2011, pp.500-501) expressed trauma as the denial of love and hope as she;

at every sunrise
would search the eyes of her parents
for love
for hope
for the innocence of childhood.
And at every sunset
she lay cold and abandoned
in her cradle
and whispered
“some day my papa and mummy will love me.”
Despite the non-realisation of her heartfelt hope, Sethi (2011, p.501) longed for a life transfused by hope,

I hope my soul will be lighter
to journey on
and find hope in the moment,
unbound by the embers of the past or future
and experience the joy of being truly alive.

This was realised through Sethi’s (2011, p.502) courage and perseverance,

An unseen power unleashed her soul
And thundering and the roaring of the heavens
Frightened the spirits away.
In the stillest hour of the night
She sat and watched the night sow the seeds of tomorrow.
And after a long silence she heard the morning hymns of birds
Announce joyfully the birth of another day.
.... And with her soul in every breath, she said,
Here I am.

Quotations from poetry, literature and the participants’ narratives have been employed to resound with the spirit of humanity and to present a sampling of the multiplicity of its voices (Slee, 2010; Szto, Furman, & Langer, 2005). Quotations from the narratives of the participants represent the raw data of this research. They have been utilised extensively in this thesis as this bears witness to their stories and allows them to speak clearly and contextually. The participants’ words speak of their Being within their world (Patton, 1990, p.21). Furthermore, these quotations exemplify important issues, provide evidence, and paint colour into the black and white text.
Stories have the power to challenge dominant discourses, as they question assumptions, prejudices, stereotypes and worldviews (Finley, 2008, p.77). The specific can unsettle generalisations. If the experiences of one can penetrate the experiences of others, understanding, empathy and respect can transform social relationships and further social justice (Denzin, 2000). Nonetheless, their use is not unproblematic (Taylor, 2012). Quotations can imply a straightforward collective applicability but it is important to ensure awareness of generalisations and exceptions to understandings about hope in the experience of trauma for refugee communities.

Utilisation of quotations is congruent with hermeneutic phenomenology, whose philosophy and method inform this thesis. Indeed, this has been equated with poetry, as both seek to be evocative and transformative (van Manen, 1990, p.13; van Manen, 2007). Consequently, at times transcripts are rewritten in a poetic form to fulfil this aim (Gee, 1991; Glesne, 1997; Willig & Billin, 2012). The transcripts in this thesis were not so reworked, as it was deemed significant for the voices of participants to speak with clarity and transparency through their narratives; moreover they are evocative and transformative in their own right. However, the summaries of the narratives have been written creatively, so that the strength of their overall perseverance and courage within their journey of trauma resounds boldly.

It is hoped that the literature review, the narratives of the participants, the analysis and discussion, and the quotations sourced from a wide diversity will together evoke more than words can speak, as they ignite the spark of understanding and significance, rather than offering understanding in a hermetically sealed bag (Murphy, 2007, p.204; Ricoeur, 1981, p.142). This is particularly relevant to the research of suffering, as this has been characterised as unspeakable (Frank, 2001). May they infuse, challenge and transform our Being, so we may hear and be in the words of the American poet, T. S. Eliot (1963, p.199),
Music heard so deeply
That it is not heard at all, but you are the music
While the music lasts.
CHAPTER TWO: HOPE

The significance for constructive understandings of hope within experiences of trauma will be discussed. The distinction between hope, wishing and optimism will be outlined. As the conceptualisation of hope is represented by a diversity of ideas within and across differing disciplines throughout history, hope will be examined through the perspectives of philosophy, religion, psychiatry, psychology, health sciences and social work. This will include an overview of hope within ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, and within Christianity and Buddhism. The discussion of philosophy will include Ernst Bloch, John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Gabriel Marcel, Richard Rorty and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Hope within psychiatry, psychology, health sciences and social work will examine hope within cognitive psychology, psychoanalysis, an integrative model of hope, strengths perspective and contributions by nursing researchers and social workers. The relationship of hope to fear, uncertainty, trust, community and culture will be discussed, whilst research of hope within refugee communities will be outlined.

2.1 Introduction

“The tender leaves of hope promising tomorrow’s blossoms are blighted by frost but bloom with new beauty” (Adapted from Shakespeare, 1613/1998, p.595).

It is unsurprising that popular and academic literature overflows with antidotes for the alleviation and transformation of suffering. As hope has positive connotations in everyday understanding, it is frequently employed as a remedy for this pain. This is exemplified by the American poet, Emily Dickinson (1890/2003, pp.22-23), whose poem brims with optimism in cadence and meaning;

Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all,
And sweetest in the gale is heard;
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm.

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land,
And on the strangest sea;
Yet, never, in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.

Dickinson offers encouragement that in the fury of the tumult, hope continues to abide and will not take wing. However, the gales, chill and unfamiliarity of trauma can prompt hopefulness and hopes to take flight, especially ephemeral objectives that may be exposed to the full brunt of the storm.

A review of philosophical literature from diverse perspectives revealed the significance of hope, albeit encompassing a multiplicity of interpretation. Accordingly, a substantial number of philosophers commend an awareness of hope that can audaciously withstand tempests. Dewey (1920/2012, 1929), Freire (1970, 1998a, 1998b, 2004), Godfrey (1987), Marcel (1962, 1965) and Rorty (1999, 2002) all extolled the intrinsic importance of hope and constructively differentiate between hopefulness (being-in-hope) and objectives (having hope) with an emphasis on the creation of a sense of hopefulness. Some philosophers caution that there is a cost to be borne, ‘crumbs’, as the assumption of hope is inextricably interwoven with fear (Marcel, 1965, p.74; Spinoza (as cited in Jabs & Deckert, 2009; Nadler, 2001, p.239; Steinberg, 2009); Seneca (as cited in Daadler, 1985, p.333). Trauma will
transpire but hope can sustain, although fear will be an adjunct. The relationship of hope to trauma, suffering, resilience and growth is the focus of this thesis.

2.2 Hope, Wishing and Optimism

Wishing is characterised by desire, longing or strong inclination (Cutcliffe, 1997). In popular parlance, wishing has been conflated with hoping, so that “a futile calculus of possibility” is imbued with considerable significance (Green, 2008, p.5). The interdependence of wishing and hope has been asserted, as hoping presupposes wishing (Lynch, 1974, pp.130-131, 148). However, the equation of hope with wishing transforms reality into a fantasyland (Schudson, 1999) or creates a sense of ‘magical palliation’ (Shade, 2006, p.193). Such counterfeit hope can easily fall prey to disillusionment and even despair, if wishes do not eventuate. When life disintegrates into chaos and pain, it is unhelpful at best and cruel at worst to proffer fairy floss instead of life reviving water. The Burmese politician, Aung San Suu Kyi (as cited in Clements, 2008, p.186) allied wishing with insipidness, as it lacked the energy of action. Hope requires a firmer foundation if it is to become a source of meaning and direction within trauma.

Although hope and optimism are sometimes viewed as synonymous, they represent distinct concepts. However, no consensus exists about either. Optimism has been evaluated positively, reservedly and negatively. The British philosopher, John Stuart Mill (1874/1998, pp.245-247) championed hope as optimism, as long as it was firmly based on his much vaunted reason. “Severe reason” calmly evaluates the evidence pertaining to a situation and decides in favour of the most assuring and beneficial possibilities, as long as the expectation for their fulfillment are not compromised by opposing evidence. Thus, reason and optimism function in tandem, without either appropriating the entitlements of the other. Within such a framework, hope as optimism “gives a spur to the faculties and keeps all the active energies
in good working order” (Mill, 1870/1998, p.104). It can be questioned whether humanity is governed so tightly by the power of ‘reason’, as the role of emotions, social imperatives, past experience and future aspirations are all inextricably implicated in decision making that arise from the confluence of individuals within culturally specific social ecological environments.

The importance of optimism in creating a fulfilling life has been emphasised by positive psychology (Seligman, 2010). This has been in response to the perceived prevalence of pessimism in Western culture, although there is recognition that limitations exist to life transformation. Hope has been equated with optimism within psychology and psychiatry; for example Nunn (1996, 1999), who perceived hope as the propensity to view and respond to the future with positivity. This encompassed two themes of hope that were significant in qualitative research (Averill, Catlin, & Chon, 1990). Within social work, the strengths based perspective is in accord with positive psychology, as it interprets hope as the expectation of positives within optimism, that “the odds can be beaten” (Saleebey, 2000, p.133), so that “better times are inevitable” (de Jong & Berg, 2013, p.136; also Saleebey, 2001).

Conversely, optimism has been perceived negatively. For the Czech writer, Vaclav Havel (1990, p.181), optimism was characterised by the certainty of a positive result, whilst hope focuses on the significance of the task, irrespective of outcome. Indeed, Marcel (1962, p.34) argued that optimism refutes hope. Whilst optimism involves confidence in improvement for the future, certainty negates the idea of hope. Rather, hope imbues life as participation in an innovative process that possesses the opportunity for enhancement. Buddhism also questions the utility of optimism, as the positivity that endeavours will lead to accomplishment may usher in despair if failure eventuates (Wheatley, 2009).

Somewhat cynically, but at the same time bearing truth, optimism has been defined as belief in the improvement of life following an assessment of evidence that contradicts this belief (West, 2004, p.296). As such, it can be compared to ‘pixie dust’ hope that dwells
within fantasyland rather than reality (Pruyser, 1986; Walker, 2006). Hope as optimism is bought cheaply, rather than being earned at a price (West, 2008, p.185). Hope is costly as it issues forth from an enduring struggle with despair that reflects concern for the continual suffering in the world and willingness to oppose these forces (West, 2004, pp.296-297; 2008, p.185). Such hope “stares down the painful path; and despite the overwhelming odds against us making it down that path to change, we make the journey again and again” (Duncan-Andrade, 2009, p.10). Thus, if hope is granted equivalence with optimism, it is diminished and weakened, as it is not indicative of hope attained through perseverance with the traumas of life and that in turn, facilitates perseverance (Tinder, 2001, p.22).

2.3 Hope within Philosophy

2.3.1 Historical Overview of Hope

Hope has been subject to diverse evaluations throughout history. This divergence continues to permeate perspectives today, ranging from an overtly optimistic stance where nothing is unattainable (The Secret, 2012), to acknowledgement of its intrinsic significance, to a more cautious, ambivalent and even negative assessment. Hope was viewed with negativity or scepticism by many philosophers in the past. One of the earliest stories about hope occurs in classical Greek mythology, with hope being interpreted as a “beautiful evil” (Post, 2009, p.230). In his desire to punish mankind, the god Zeus sent suffering into the world. To accomplish this, he created the first woman, the beautiful Pandora, whose mission was to convey all of the afflictions into the world. She bore these within a sealed storage jar, usually referred to somewhat inappropriately as ‘Pandora’s box’. Unfortunately, curiosity overcame her, as opening the jar to peer inside, she released a host of torments into the world. Hope alone remained sealed in Pandora’s jar (Hesiod, as cited in Post, 2009). Ironically, whilst Pandora was the first woman to be gifted with a voice, its purpose was to facilitate
disorder at the behest of male divinity, rather than to express her own story (Loraux, 2002, p.20).

The retention of hope is frequently interpreted as a source of strength and comfort in the midst of suffering (West, 1990, pp.169-170). However, ambiguities in the story have given rise to alternate understandings. Hope has been viewed as one of the evils sent as retribution (Cornford, 1969, pp.224-225; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010). Thus, the German philosopher, Frederick Nietzsche (2004, p.45) argued that Zeus’s gift of hope represented his desire that human beings remain in torment as hope will prolong their suffering. This assumed that as hope promises that which cannot be delivered, it cannot be beneficial. Consequently, he proclaimed that hope was “the worst of all evils” (Nietzsche, 2004, p.45).

Plato (429-347 BCE, as cited in Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010) was in agreement with the association of negativity with hope, as he equated hope with wishful thinking. Such thought, enticing though it may be, did not offer wisdom, as it was not conceived in knowledge gained through reality.

Hope within the Pandora myth has also been interpreted as beneficial but unobtainable, as it remains sealed away, condemning humanity to despair (Knox, 1990, p.10). Interestingly, a sequel to this story relates the release of hope into the world for its betterment (Athanassakis, 1983). However, hope was also viewed as possessing the potential to have positive or negative consequences, depending on the manner in which it is used. This duality was exemplified by Sophocles (496-406 BCE, as cited in Post, 2008, pp.230-231), when contemplating the mysteries of human suffering in ‘Antigone’, with the assertion that, “For far reaching hope is a boon to many men, but to many a delusion born of thoughtless desires.” In a similar way, Aristotle (384-322 BCE, as cited in Scott, 2000) formulated hope as neutral expectation that could be either beneficial or harmful. Similarly, hopefulness, which he equated with optimism, could sometimes be advantageous. However, Aristotle’s (as
cited in Chang, 2006, p.280) famous maxim that hope represents the dream of a man awake, is clothed in ambiguity. Negatively, dreams of the night may be founded on life during the day but are not transposed back into reality, or positively, the dreams of promise of the night bring sustenance and delight during the day.

The Roman philosophers echoed the ambiguity of the Greeks. For Cicero (106-3BCE/2010, p.221), hope is reflected in life itself. In contrast, Seneca (ca.3BCE- 65AD, as cited in Daadler, 1985, p.333) characterised hope as fear producing and wasteful of present opportunities and energy, as hope resides in “a mind that is in suspense, a mind that is fretted by looking forward to the future.” Consequently, he encouraged abandonment of hope to enable a peaceful and productive life in the present. It has been suggested that these ancient philosophies did not extol hope as their worldview was grounded in the power of fate for the determination of the future (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010). Humanity possessed little agency in the regulation of their lives. In addition, the prevalent negativity and ambiguity may be associated with the focus of hope as objectives, rather than hope as hopefulness.

The Dutch philosopher, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677 as cited in Nunn, 2005, p.65) was in accord with the negativity of the ancients towards hope. Having conceptualised hope and reason in juxtaposition with each other, reason was elevated to a superior status, as it alone assured certainty. Spinoza (as cited in Schumacher, 2003, p.71) encouraged a life, in which,

The more we endeavour to live in accordance with the guidance of reason, the more we endeavour to depend less on hope and to free ourselves from fear, to control fortune as much as we can, and to direct our actions by the sure counsel of reason.
Centuries later, the criticality of reason was again reiterated by another philosopher, Bloch (1986, p.1367) but this time, it was allied with the equal criticality of hope, “Reason cannot blossom without hope, hope cannot speak without reason.”

2.3.2 Hope within Negativity

Hope has been judged and found wanting by more recent philosophers and writers. The English poet, Lord Bryon (1815, as cited in Ashton, 1972, p.158), condemned hope as, “Nothing but the paint on the face of Existence; the least touch of Truth rubs it off and then we see what a hollow-cheeked harlot we have got hold of.” For the French existentialist, Sartre (1975, pp.357-359), the foundation for life was not hope but reality. This alone provides dependability, “as dreams, expectations and hopes serve to define a man (sic) only as deceptive dreams, abortive hopes, expectations unfulfilled” (Sartre, 1975, p.359). However, as discussed previously, hope can encompass much more than dreams, wishes and expectations. In his deeply pessimistic play, ‘The condemned of Altona’, Sartre (as cited in Howells, 1988, p.91) proposed that the sole illumination for hope in intolerable situations is suicide, as the one who loses, wins.

Sartre (1975, p.360) delineated action to be the only hope for life, as this creates meaning. For philosophers such as Marcel (1962, 1965) and Freire (1998a, 1998b, 2004), meaningfulness provided a secure framework, in which hope can operate productively. On the one hand, Sartre (1992, p.612) conveyed the wonder that action can conjure with, “These extraordinary and marvellous moments when the previous project collapses into the past in the light of a new project which emerges from its ruins, … in which humiliation, anxiety, joy, hope are delicately blended.” Thus, each individual becomes the force for their own destiny, although freedom is found along a path littered with ambiguity, contradiction and uncertainty.
On the other hand, limiting hope solely to action, removes hopefulness based on meaning from a framework of hope.

Such intention is consistent with the ‘absurdism’ that emanated from the French writer, Albert Camus (1970, pp.37, 98). Meaning is created exclusively within this world. All endeavours to discover significance from the universe are destined to cause only anguish when the “empty sky” is silent (Flynn, 2009, p.60) and the “vast, deep blackness” consumes all hope with its indifference (Camus, 1970, pp.21, 39). Hope and contentment resides solely in the acceptance of this silence and darkness, and thus in the rejection of the delusion of definitive hope (Camus, 1970, p.74; Flynn, 2009, p.61). Life can then commence in its fullness, in the striving for life, rather than acquiescence to an externally imposed hope. Life replaces hope (Bronner, 2009, pp.45-46, 85; Camus, 1970, pp.90-98). As stressed by Camus (1970, p.92), “For hope, contrary to popular opinion, is tantamount to resignation and to live is not to be resigned.” When facing death, Mersault in ‘The Stranger’ by Camus (1989, pp.122-123), embodied this in his fierce refusal of Christian hope;

> It was as if that great rush of anger had washed me clean, rid me of hope; for the first time in that night alive with its signs and stars, I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world. Finding it so much like myself – so like a brother, really – I felt that I had been happy and that I was happy again.

### 2.3.3 Hope within Positivity

Contrary to the negativity or ambivalence of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, and the rejection of hope by some philosophers, it has also been extolled as being fundamental to life by a plethora of other philosophers, including Bloch (1986), Dewey (1929), Freire (1970; 1998a, p.69; 1998b, p.45; 2004, p.2), Godfrey (1987), Marcel (1962, 1965) and Rorty (1999, 2002). The assertion that “Hope breathes life into the human spirit”
expresses a deeply held belief (Koenig & Spano, 2007, p.46). So hope sustains life and in
turn, life sustains hope. This is reflected in the maxim, “Where there is life, there is hope”
(Cicero, 106-43BCE/2010, p.221) that has sources both in the Roman thought of Cicero and
the 13th century Chinese parable of Qing Shan and Hong Shan (Rohsenow, 2003, p.86). This
is powerfully exemplified by many Jews within their suffering of the Shoah. For Anne Frank
(1993, p.245), hope imbued her life with courage in her confrontation with trauma and death.
The Schag-Ashkenazy family was incarcerated on a train in a cattle truck bound for the Nazi
deathcamp of Belzec. In the midst of imminent death, hope was alive. Klara and Izak pushed
their teenage daughter, Tanya, through a hole in the cattle truck in the desperate hope that she
would live. Tanya did survive and is the great grandmother of my grandson, James (C. Creek,
Tanya’s mother, personal communication, 2014).

Hope can be compared to light illuminating the path of life. This may be a candle
flicker in deep darkness or the brilliance of the noonday sun. Even within the torture of the
subterranean existence of twenty five years of solitary imprisonment, the American prisoner,
William Blake (2013) embraced hope for his physical and emotional survival; “My hopes and
dreams are still alive and well inside me.” From within a theistic and individual framework,
the French philosopher Marcel (1962, 1965; as cited in Blackham, 1961, p.82) asserted that
hope creates reason for life, as life exists within a captivity wrought by the limitations of
humanity. For Marcel (1962, pp.10-11), “hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living
organism. Where hope is missing the soul dries up and withers.”

Bloch (1986, pp.7, 21; 1996, pp.16-17) emphasised the importance of hope from a
social perspective. As hope is an inherent component of human consciousness, it is intrinsic

3 The term ‘Shoah’ will be used, rather than the more encompassing term ‘Holocaust’, as references in this
thesis focus on the annihilation of Jews, rather than the additional victims of Nazi mass murder. ‘Shoah’ is
preferred by the majority of Jews, as it has religious and historical significance (Yad Vashem, n.d.).
to daily life. It is present in a wealth of cultural and creative phenomena, such as fairy tales, art, music, and the theatre (Bloch, 1996, pp.44-45, 77, 162). The potency of hope lies in relationship, rather than the individual; “the power of an I and a We” (Bloch, 1996, p.108). Hope is represented by imperative drives, existing in a multiplicity of potentialities that focus on the desire for a better world in the “furthest and brightest horizon” (Bloch, 1986, p.75). Paradise may be lost but there is a kingdom to come. The necessity for a utopia⁴ was enunciated by the Irish writer, Oscar Wilde (1891/2003),

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing. And when Humanity lands there, it looks out, and, seeing a better country, sets sail. Progress is the realisation of Utopias.

Similarly, Bloch’s (as cited in Levitas, 1987) emphasis remained not on the realisation of utopia, albeit important as it may be, but on the striving from the imperfections of the present towards this ideal in the future. Further, there is not a single utopia but a multiplicity awaiting discovery in diverse areas (Bloch, 1986, pp.13-15).

Furthermore, for the Brazilian philosopher, Freire (1998a, p.58), as hope is “an ontological dimension of our human condition”, it is not only an essential component of life but emanates from life. Thus, it is not bestowed from an external source but is derived from living life with its continual quandaries and rewards. Hope provides the incentive and energy to strive forward in life for life, or in the words of Freire (1998a, p.69), for “our unfinishedness” and the “flowering of joy.” This ‘unfinishedness’ finds echo in other writers, albeit from diverse frameworks. For both the Marxist Bloch (1986, p.285; 1996, p.17) and the Christian Moltmann (1993, p.92), hope is based on the assumption of ‘unfinishedness’, as

⁴ It is ironic that the originator of the term ‘utopia’, Sir Thomas More, had his experience of this tragically cut short by the king, Henry VIII, who demanded that all submit to his own conceptualisation of an ideal world.
hope can only thrive within the soil of uncertainty and opportunity to bloom into new life. In Bloch’s (1996, p.17) words, “Hope still nails a flag on the mast even in decline.” Uncertainty is fundamental, as the juxtaposition between the awareness of vulnerability with resistance is productive of hope. The alternative is stultifying determinism rather than the historical experience of challenges requiring transformation. Consequently, life provides hope that enables life.

Within pragmatic philosophy Dewey (1920) and Rorty (1999, 2002) were proponents of ‘meliorism’, or philosophical hopefulness allied with endeavour. Similarly to Freire, Rorty (1999, p.88) advocated hope as critical for the future but cautioned about the espousal of pervasive positivity. However, neither did he embrace pessimism. His sense of hopefulness was founded on a rejection of claims to ultimate truth that was replaced by a “willingness to substitute imagination for certainty, and curiosity for pride” (Rorty, 1999, p.88). The quest for definitive knowledge is substituted by a journey within the uncertainty of hope (Koopman, 2006; Rorty, 1999, p.34).

A comprehensive framework for hope can be formulated that encompasses hope within the individual to hope that can be realised for social justice in the world, if one views the contributions of Marcel and Godfrey on the one hand, and Bloch, Dewey, Freire and Rorty on the other (Green, 2008). A caution is expressed by Freire (2004, p.2); hope requires action but action requires hope to advance social justice;

The idea that hope alone will transform the world, and action undertaken in that kind of naïveté, is an excellent route to hopelessness, pessimism, and fatalism. But the attempt to do without hope, in the struggle to improve the world, as if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or a purely scientific approach, is a frivolous illusion.

The alignment of hope with action was previously outlined by Sartre (1975, 1992). However, Freire’s (2004, p.2) exhortation is founded on the criticality of both hope and
action working together in an interdependent relationship. As hope is an “ontological need”, hope is necessary before change can commence, as it provides reason, strength and direction for the struggle. Action “anchors” hope within historical situations becoming a bulwark against despair. Within such a paradigm, opportunities for transformation will be available, even in the midst of adversity (Freire, 2004, p.3). This coalescing of hope with action defined hope for Aung San Suu Kyi (as cited in Clements, 2008, p.186) and is the focus of her message to the Burmese people. They will have hope, if they are willing to act. As a Buddhist, Kyi’s (as cited in Clements, 2008, p.186) hope is grounded within ‘karma’ that is created by the individual. For Marcel (1965, p.79) and Freire (2004, pp.3-4), hope originates in love; love wanting good for others and love that is outraged by injustice, as it denies good. Whilst Marcel (1962, pp.65-68) based this in the love of a divinity that enables love for one another, hope was not restricted to the spiritual realm. Indeed, love for another creates the foundation for hope, rather than a sole individual focus (Marcel, 1962, p.10). 

Hope has been conceptualised as differentiating between a sense of hopefulness (being-in-hope) that provides a foundation for ontological security and the possibility of worthwhile objectives (having hope) (Dewey, 1929, p.27; Freire, 1970, 2004; Godfrey, 1987, p.3; Marcel, 1962, 1965). These two strands of hope can co-exist or exist independently, although hopefulness has been emphasised, as this inevitably transcends the attainment of objectives and so becomes a bulwark against despair (Marcel, 1965, p.74). However, Dewey (1929, p.27) emphasised that both hope and hopefulness were interwoven with each other within reciprocity. Thus, hope becomes identified with trusting in the creative process of being that endows life with meaning, rather than solely embracing specific goals (Dewey & Freire, as cited in Fishman, 2007, p.4). Indeed, the process of working towards goals in relationship with others is critical, rather than the achievement of outcomes (Merton, 1985, p.294). Objectives without reference to hopefulness can be ephemeral, being subject to
alteration and demise. In the words of the English poet, William Wordsworth (as cited in Shelley, 2008, p.79),

HOPES what are they?--Beads of morning
Strung on slender blades of grass;
Or a spider's web adorning
In a strait and treacherous pass.

Hopefulness is derived from the meaning ascribed to life. Without meaning, there can be no hope and without hope there can be no meaning. Thus, when hope is understood as dependent upon ontological security, hope can abide and provide sustenance even when the end of life is in sight (Nuland, 1994, p.242). This delineation between hope as hopefulness and objectives was apparent using qualitative research by Benzein, Norberg, and Saveman (2001), Duggleby, Holtslander, Kylmä, Duncan, Hammond, & Williams (2010), Kylmä, Duggleby, Cooper, and Molander (2009); and Lohne (2008).

2.3.4 Hope within Temporality

In general, hope is placed within the temporality of the future (Nunn, 1999, p.155). Freire (1998b, p.45) emphasised that the power of hope originates from a focus on the future, rather than the past; “Without a vision for tomorrow, hope is impossible.” Remembrance of past struggles may profer encouragement but a yearning for a return to the past as ‘nostalgia’\(^5\), “nullifies tomorrow” and abolishes hope (Freire, 1998b, p.45). Formulating hope within an unknown future imbues hope with meaning, although hope can enrich the present (Walker, 2006). If the future is conceptualised as being integrated with the present, hope can

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\(^5\) This association of ‘nostalgia’ with hopelessness has been acknowledged since the 17th century when it was used to explain potentially fatal depression amongst settlers in countries far from their homelands (Clarke, 2007).
impact within the present, rather than relegation to a sole future orientation (Benjamin, 1997, pp.9-10). The importance of the past for hope was emphasised by the French Christian philosopher Simone Weil (as cited in Howe, 2008), for whom hope was better understood as emanating from the past for elucidation of the present.

However, other philosophers, including Martin Heidegger\(^6\) (2008, pp.39-42, 430-433; as cited in Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.129; Schürmann, 2008, p.107) and Paul Ricoeur (1990, p.60), emphasised that temporality was appropriately conceptualised as the inseparable intertwining of the past, present and the future. Ricoeur (1990, p.60) utilised the concept of the ‘present as past, the present as present and the present as future’ that together impact upon an individual’s experience. The interdependence between all three dimensions of temporality has congruence with the painful sense of timelessness in suffering described by Marcel (as cited in Scioli & Biller, 2009, p.71), in which all temporalities unite together, so that the past haunts the present and hides a future, except as an extension of pain.

Bloch (1996, p.51) extended the interdependence of temporality to hope, in that all three dimensions are integral for hope. The past and future are inextricably united through hope that comprehends and finishes the past, thus opening up “the long common highway” of the future as imagined for the present (Bloch, 1996, p.51). Only then can there be “illumination, comparison, direction and sense of possibility, required for a full experience of hope” (Scioli & Biller, 2009, p.391). However, the past cannot be viewed as an archaeological dig of events to be unearthed and exhibited. Rather, it is formulated through continually changing interpretations of the past in the present (Marcel, 1965, p.143).

As these interpretations construct a pathway of hope, hope for the future is a living edifice, not bound by the past although influenced by it (Ricoeur, 1990, p.144). This profess

\(^6\) As Heidegger’s writings are notoriously difficult to comprehend, his concepts can be subject to alternative interpretation. Hence, several references will be given in the thesis.
promise but also caution. Assessments and judgments of the present formulated within a critical engagement with the past can be of detriment or benefit for hope in the future. Indeed, this is at the heart of Foucault’s (1984, pp.33-38) characterisation of ‘Enlightenment’ that is represented both as a collective process and an individual “act of courage”. Of course, both of these will interact and influence the other. Thus, hope can be understood to embrace the past, present and the future in a web of intersecting and interrelating relationships that continually influence, interpret and modify each other.

2.4 Hope within Religion

2.4.1 Hope within Christianity

In contrast to the pessimistic or neutral view of hope evident in Greek and Roman philosophy, hope became synonymous with life in Judaeo-Christian thought (Marcel, 1965, pp.73-93; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010; Packer & Howard, 1985; Moltmann, 1993, pp.16, 33; Stone, 1998; Tinder, 2001, p.13). The deeply wrought association between hope with life is illustrated by the words, “Hope is deeply woven into our humanity. Our spirits were made for hope the way our hearts were made to love and our brains were made to think and our hands were made to make things” (Smedes, 1998, p.7); and by the concept that life within hope expresses life as fully human (Tinder, 2001, p.xiv). Indeed, the German theologian Jürgen Moltmann (1993, p.33) proposed that,

Totally without hope one cannot live. To live without hope is to cease to live. Hell is hopelessness. It is no accident that above the entrance to Dante’s hell is the inscription: “Leave behind all hope, you who enter here.”

As hope is fundamental for life, it is firmly grounded on faith in an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, trustworthy and loving divinity (Marcel, 1965, pp.73-93; Merton, 2002; Moltmann, 1993, p.20; Stone, 1998). There is the expectation that God will faithfully
provide for the past, present and future in this world and the next. This characterisation of expectation within Christianity extends the usual definition of it as anticipation to encompass assurance to become an expectation of confidence, as it incorporates beliefs into its framework (Jordan, 2006, pp.197-198; Moltmann, 1993, p.20).

As a consequence of the situated historicity of individuals, the Swiss theologian, Emil Brunner (1889-1966, as cited in Jordan, 2006, p.197) emphasised the inherent unity of the three principal spiritual virtues of hope, faith and love, through the journey of religious experience with the divine. In Brunner’s words (as cited in Jordan, 2006, p.197), “Faith is a relation of faith to God’s act of revelation and redemption in the past…. Hope is the expectation of what God will do in the future…. Love is the way by which God changes our present.” Moltmann (1993, p.20) also strongly bound hope and faith together, with faith providing the basis for hope, whilst hope nurtures and maintains this faith in life. Hope without faith becomes nebulous; “a utopia and remains hanging in the air.”

The primary objective of hope within Christianity was designated by the early church theologian, Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD, as cited in Nunn, 2005, p.64) as the good that was in accord with the will of God. Self-interest was contrary to this, so was banished from hope. Accordingly, objectives encompass more than individual redemption, as at the end of history, the universe will enjoy eternity free from sorrow and suffering (Brunner, as cited in Jordan, 2006, p.198). The past was summoned for the betterment of the future with the utilisation of ‘hope-in-memory’ that was founded on the knowledge of eternal truth, rather than regret (MacKendrick, 2001, p.72). This contrasts with the commonly held view that memory can nurture hope but adversity and loss may diminish or annihilate hope into a distant memory. Bryon (1788-1824, as cited in Braithwaite, 1909) described this poignantly in his poem;
They say that Hope is happiness;

But genuine Love must prize the past,

And Memory wakes the thoughts that bless:

They rose the first – they set the last;

And all that Memory loves the most

Was once our only Hope to be,

And all that Hope adored and lost

Hath melted into Memory.

Alas it is delusion all:

The future cheats us from afar,

Nor can we be what we recall,

Nor dare we think on what we are.

Hope conveys happiness through memory but such happiness dissolves into painful illusion if hope vanishes. This is particularly pertinent to those who experience adversity. It may be too painful to think upon the loss.

The objective of hope was further narrowed to being through God to God himself by the Italian theologian, Thomas Aquinas (1265-1273, as cited in Doyle, 2011; Eliott, 2005, p.5; Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010). However, he did acknowledge the human dimension of hope when it is directed towards a worthy objective that will necessitate effort for accomplishment, as the outcome is problematic (Miceli & Castelfranchi, 2010). Hope is bestowed on the faithful as a spiritual gift by a benevolent God (Aquinas, as cited in Doyle, 2011; Eliott, 2005, p.6; Stump, 2003, p.25). This has been a popular belief, finding expression in much literature. Dickens (1839/2010, p.197) in ‘Nicholas Nickleby’, encouraged with, “Such is hope, Heaven’s own gift to struggling mortals; pervading, like some subtle essence from the skies, all things, both good and bad; as universal as death, and
more infectious than disease!” This contrasts with pragmatic philosophy, in which hope is not derived externally but issues forth from within reality.

2.4.2 Hope within Buddhism

Other religions have developed divergent conceptualisations about hope. Whilst much of Buddhism is in agreement with Christianity that hope is essential for life, its ideas are markedly dissimilar, as it does not exist within a theistic framework. Within Buddhism, the Dalai Lama (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998) interpreted hope as confidence in the ability of individuals to improve, so that the advancement of humanity can continue, rather than the fulfilment of individual expectations. As desire creates suffering, the elimination of expectations is encouraged, as these can only become hindrances in life. Acceptance of life as it unfolds, the good with the bad, is promoted, as both are inherent in the nature of the world (Dalai Lama & Cutler, 1998; Shikpo, 2007, pp.12-13). Buddhism has been characterised as portraying neither optimism nor pessimism, but a reality that suffering exists with the hope of freedom from its clutches through the eight-fold path (Cohen, 2006, pp.7, 118, 153, 173-175; Thatcher, 2006).

Buddhists, who align hope with the desire for objectives, stress the need for the elimination of hope (Chodron, 2005, p.18; Wheatley, 2009). For Chodron (2005, p.18), life is perseverance without hope,

The spiritual journey involves going beyond hope and fear, stepping into unknown territory, continually moving forward. The most important aspect of being on the spiritual path may be to just keep moving.

In contrast to the establishment of goals for the future that dissipate into nothingness with concomitant despair, freedom from hope unleashes energy and lucidity (Wheatley, 2009). Buddhists, such as Fairchild (2013) and Wheatley (2009) emphasised that the transcendence
of hope, along with love and thought, will usher in enlightenment. This was expressed by T. S. Eliot (1963, p.186) as,

I said to my soul, be still and wait without hope,
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing: wait without love,
For love would be love of the wrong thing: there is yet faith,
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

However, Christians have also used these words to signify that faith without understanding surpasses the requirement for hope and love (Bottum, 1995; Johnston, 2000, p.175). The elasticity of interpretation is evidenced, as these words could also emphasise the importance of waiting within the involvement of life undertakings, rather than running headlong after the accomplishment of transient goals.

Qualitative research has identified the significance of religious beliefs that influence the framework of hope for individuals at the end of their life (Reynolds, 2008). Such beliefs were also powerful for Dominican villagers, who believed that faith was inextricably entwined with hope (Holt, 2000). For refugees in camps, faith was the foundation for hope (Hardgrove, 2009; Tete, 2005). In the midst of deprivation, one Liberian woman (Hardgrove, 2009, p.493) spoke of hope through divine succour and love,

I see the sun then I give God the glory. Because He the one who woke me up. He protect me through all that, me and my children. So every day I give Him thanks, for his protection and love.

2.5 Hope within Psychiatry, Psychology, Health Sciences and Social Work

Although researchers within psychiatry, psychology, the health sciences and social work have become increasingly interested in hope, there is no consensus concerning its
conceptualisation (Lopez, Snyder, & Teramoto-Pedrotti, 2003; Roth & Hammelstein, 2007; Schrank, Stanghellini, & Slade, 2008; Wein, 2004). Researchers have proposed more than forty-nine distinctive definitions and thirty-two measurement scales of hope (Schrank et al., 2008).

2.5.1 Psychoanalytic Theory

Hope has received limited consideration in psychoanalytic theory, as there is an emphasis on pathology and the role of unconscious desires (Babits, 2001). However, psychoanalysis has defined hope within both negativity and positivity. From a negative perspective, hope has been delineated as evidence of regression, as it is associated with chimera or “magical thinking” (Babits, 2001; Boris, 1976). It issues forth from an intrinsic capacity to evaluate present circumstances with predetermined standards. If the goal of hope does not transpire, hope can become a catalyst for despair (Boris, 1976).

However, hope is understood as a constructive concept amongst other psychoanalysts, who emphasised its essential contribution to life, as it accentuates the propensity for coping to facilitate survival (Fromm, 1970; Menninger, 1959, 1977). For Fromm (1970, pp.25, 34), hope is intrinsic to life for both individuals and communities throughout life. Specifically, Menninger (1977, p.385) represented hope as an “aspect of the life instinct, the creative drive which wars against dissolution and destructiveness.” Hope enables productivity, as it is formulated as a faint awareness of unconscious desires that may transpire (Menninger, 1959, 1977, p.386). Similarly, within developmental psychoanalysis, the inevitability of environmental disappointments engenders the hope for their resolution at an affirmative time in the future (Bollas, 1989, p.151; Winnicott, 2007, p.281).

Influenced by psychoanalytic theory and within developmental psychology, Erik Erikson (1964, pp.116-118; Erikson, Erikson, & Kivnick, 1994, pp.33-42) formulated
conceptualisations about hope as an integral part of his theory of psychosocial development. Hope progresses in children during Erikson’s proposed first stage of development, trust versus mistrust (Erikson, 1963, p.80). Relationships with beneficial caregivers create hope as the first fundamental strength to facilitate psychosocial survival and continual adaptation and evolution. Without the establishment of hope, consequent development within Erikson’s stages is compromised (Erikson, 1994, pp.116-117). Reciprocal social support maintains hope that grows within the individual and creates the basis for morality. In accord with Erikson’s developmental paradigm, the character of hope is subject to alteration, becoming less reliant on rationality and more influenced by faith. Similarly to the philosophers, who differentiate between hopefulness and hopes, hopefulness becomes a foundation that is independent of the confirmation by hope objectives (Erikson, 1994, pp.117-118). Whilst his fixed stage theory of development has been challenged, Erikson’s (Erikson et al., 1994, pp.33-42) emphasis on the fundamental requirement for hope and trust, and the critical role of social constructions in its development, are positive and significant elements for understanding hope.

2.5.2 Cognitive Psychology

For cognitive psychology, hope is interpreted within the framework of goal attainment. The early definition by Stotland (1969) restrictively defined hope as the expectation of the achievement of significant goals. However, this can be equated with optimism that intertwines the two concepts, rather than understanding their distinctiveness (Alexander, 2008, p.21). Stotland’s (1969) theory provided the foundation for Snyder’s (2000) ‘theory of hope’ that encompasses the interaction between goals, emotions, stressors and outcome values. However, the two measurement scales, the Dispositional and State Hope
Scale based on this theory, only equate hope with the realisation of goals attained through pathways by agency (Snyder, 1996, 2000, 2002; Snyder et al., 1991; Snyder et al., 1996).

As this conceptualisation focuses on goal achievement that enables coping, it is unsurprising that increased hope within this perspective has been associated with improved adjustment to trauma (Creamer et al., 2009; L. Irving, Telfer & Blake, 1997; L. Irving, Snyder, & Crowson, 1998; Stanton, Danoff-Burg, & Huggins, 2002). Interestingly, increased hope was also associated with social support, although this model of hope excludes an interpersonal component (A. Irving et al., 1997). Qualitative research has also indicated that planning objectives constituted one way for the promotion of significance in life and motivation to endure difficulties (Goodman, 2004).

Hope within the strengths based perspective within social work has congruence with Snyder’s (2000) ‘theory of hope’, as the individual is viewed as the agent of hope using pathways in the achievement of goals (Saleebey, 2000, p.133). Whilst empowerment is integral to social work, this does not necessitate the equivalence of hope within this psychological framework. Rather, it could be argued that empowerment may be facilitated by an emphasis on hope as hope objectives emanating from hopefulness, as meaning imbues objectives with significance.

Similarly, Dewey (as cited in Fishman, 2007, p.98) maintained that goals are not the ultimate objective for hope, as achievements may not result in high levels of hope, if these do not contribute to fulfilment. Additionally, hopefulness can prevail following the collapse of goals. Indeed, hope and failure are connected, as lessons may be learnt that ensure later success (Fishman, 2007, p.11). Instead, hopefulness derives from embracing life that pulsates with both harmony and discord (Fishman, 2007, p.161). The cognitive theory of hope does not directly encompass trust, interpersonal relationships or a sense of hopefulness. Whilst these may be inherent in assumptions upon which goals, agency or pathways are constructed,
the lack of explicitness renders them unavailable for direct discussion, approbation and inclusion.

2.5.3 Hope as Emotion

Within philosophy, hope has been defined as “joyful expectation” (Pieper, 1994, p.21). Some psychologists have also characterised hope as an emotion. Quantitatively, joy has been correlated with hope, although hope was designated as a subtype of joy, the most fundamental positive emotion (Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O’Connor, 1987). As discussed previously, this contrasts with hope as being inextricably interwoven with fear due to the uncertainty of outcomes (Marcel, 1965, p.74). Additionally, emotions are embodied within historical, social and cultural contexts, rather than resulting from individual psychobiology (Foucault, 1980, as cited in Tully, 1995; as cited in Zembylas, 2007, p.267). The relationship of hope with fear has been acknowledged by Lazarus (1999) within his analysis of hope as an emotion, as hope exists as a concomitant with uncertainty. His framework of emotion encompasses cognition, motivation and relationships. Significantly, the interrelationship of social processes with individuals is recognised. However, hope is primarily allied with the consequence of goals that restrict understanding about hope. Qualitative research by Averill et al. (1990) revealed that hope was perceived as an emotion determined by and influencing cognitive imperatives. Socialisation and cultural diversity were instrumental in the characterisation of hope, although the emphasis remained on goal objectives.

2.5.4 Integrative Theory of Hope

The psychologists, Scioli and Biller (2009) formulated an integrated theory of hope that is not only dependent upon a psychological framework, but also includes understanding from philosophy, anthropology and theology. Hope is comprised of four emotional
dimensions; attachment that emphasises trust, mastery that focuses on goals, survival that is concerned with coping in life and spirituality that provides meaning. All of these constitute an interconnected network that is dependent upon biological, psychological and social resources. This helpfully broadens the framework for hope, in particular by acknowledgment of the importance of trust, relationship and meaningfulness. However, the attempts to characterise cultures in terms of these motives for hope, forces complexity into ordered simplicity that diminishes the richness of culture. For example, the spirituality of Aboriginal Australians is deemed to be attachment based; Buddhism is characterised as survival based, whilst Protestant Christianity encompasses all motives (Scioli & Biller, 2009, p.77). It is difficult to envisage that any culture can flourish without the inclusion of hope as mastery, attachment, survival and spirituality, as all are critical components that are interwoven and dependent upon each other.

2.5.5 Hope within Health Sciences

Hope within the health sciences has been founded on the premise that hope is integral to life, as inherent within life is change (Cutcliffe, 2004; Layoun, 1995, p.75). This change is exemplified by the maxim, “The only constant is change” (Heraclitus, 535-475BCE, as cited in Cottrell & Harvey, 2004, p.19). This is particularly pertinent to the experience of illness, as this can transform the nature and direction of life. As Herth (n.d.) asserted, “Every time life asks us to give up a desire, to change our direction, or redefine our goals, we are invited to widen our perspective and to touch the deeper current of hope.” This is also applicable to refugees, whose communities are subject to radical, severe and enduring changes necessitating drastic adaptations and transformations of their life (Layoun, 1995, pp.75-77).

One of the earliest theories within the health sciences was by Dufault and Martocchio (1985, p.380), who defined hope as a multifaceted “life force” fuelled by confidence but that
simultaneously was characterised by tentative expectations of the accomplishment of realistic and important objectives. Hope was not defined as a trait but rather as a process. This is consistent with their differentiation between generalised and particularised hope. Generalised hope, as the term implies, denotes indeterminate good in the future that maintains or renews a sense of meaningfulness in life. Particularised hope refers to specific hope objectives and effective strategies for their achievement. Together they enhance life quality and coping strategies (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, p.380).

Six dimensions of hope were proposed; cognitive, affective, behavioural, affiliative, temporal and contextual (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985, pp.382-387). Whilst they offered a comprehensive framework for hope by including both hopefulness and hope objectives, it could be argued that rather than generalised hope contributing to a sense of meaningfulness, the reverse is more accurate and helpful. Additionally, whilst their dimensionality is extensive, they are viewed as separate entities, rather than as being inseparably interrelated. Furthermore, cultural influences are not taken into account.

Hope has been represented as the foundation for life, as it offers a “present alive with possibilities” that can create the motivation to live for a positive future, rather than despair (Herth, n.d.). As a nursing researcher, Herth (1991) emphasised hope’s contribution to coping with illness as a motivating force that can positively impact on overall wellbeing. Herth (1992; Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995) further developed a framework of hope that focussed on goal orientation, in accord with the cognitive psychological theory of hope (Snyder, 2000, 2002), but also on more global orientations of positive readiness and expectancy, as well as interconnectedness in interpersonal relationships. Thus, affective and behavioural dimensions, in addition to cognition, are included in this concept of hope (Farran et al., 1995, p.31).
There has been considerable quantitative research that indicates the importance of hope in the experience of serious illness (for example, Breitbart et al., 2000; Herth, 1990, 1993; Stanton et al., 2002; Utne et al., 2008; Wonghongkul, Moore, Musil, Schneider, & Deimling, 2000). Even at the end of life, research has indicated that hope was essential (Cutcliffe, 2004; Hawthorne & Yurkovich, 2004; Herth, 1995; Holtslander & Duggleby, 2009; Rodin, Mikulincer, Donner, Gagliese, & Zimmermann, 2009).

Extensive qualitative research has indicated the critical role of hope in shaping responses to the trauma in a diversity of serious physical illnesses (for example, cancer (Arman & Rehnsfeldt, 2003; Eliott & Olver, 2002); HIV/AIDS (Barroso & Powell-Cope, 2000; Ezzy, 2000); cardiac arrest (Bremer et al., 2009); chronic illness within family (Duggleby, Holtslander, Kylmä, Duncan, Hammond, & Williams, 2010); grief (Holtslander & Duggleby, 2009; Stepanek, 2008); parents of critically ill children (Kylmä & Juvakka, 2007; Scrimin, Axia, Tremolda, Pillon, Capello, & Zanesco, 2005); amputation (Liu, Williams, Liu, & Chien, 2010); spinal cord injury (Lohne, 2008; Smith & Sparkes, 2005); and family of coma patients (Verhaeghe, van Zuuren, Defloor, Duijnste, & Grypdonck, 2007; Verhaeghe, van Zuuren, Grypdonck, Duijnste, & Defloor, 2010a, 2010b). Once again, hope assumed critical significance at the end of life (Benzein et al., 2001; Kylmä, Duggleby, Cooper, & Molander, 2009; Reynolds, 2008). Imminent death does not annihilate hope.

2.5.6 Hope within Social Work

As social work concentrates on the empowerment of individuals and communities, it is surprising that the concept of hope has received limited attention within social work. Nonetheless, hope remains an implicit, if not an explicit, assumption of empowerment. If there is no hope, there is no impetus and potency for this quest. One reason for this reticence
may be social work’s commitment to lived experience, rather than magical reality. Mental health patients were one group, who expressed concern that hope has been inadequately addressed (Houghton, 2007). However, the importance of hope has received acknowledgement from Koenig and Spano (2007, p.46) as they affirm that, “Hope breathes life into the human spirit. With hope, human beings strive for and strengthen their capacities for growth and change.” This is consistent with Saleebey’s (1997) strengths perspective wherein hope is epitomised as fortifying the potential for progress and the power of human beings to overcome trauma.

Hope is significant for social work practice, as it has been frequently employed by individuals, albeit with a diversity of interpretations (Holloway & Moss, 2010). Social work research has highlighted the significance of hope (Briton, 2000 [palliative care]; Cournoyer, 2014, pp.17, 209; Darlington & Bland, 1999l [mental health]; Dorsett, 2010 [severe acquired disability]; Holloway & Moss, 2010; Houghton, 2007 [mental health]; Woods & Robinson, 1996, p.567 [therapeutic relationship]), although the efficacy of some research was limited by the omission of a definition of hope (for example, Cournoyer, 2014; Ellem, O’Connor, Wilson & Williams, 2013; Woods & Robinson, 1996).

Two of the foundations of the strengths perspective within social work are Snyder’s hope theory (2000) and Seligmans’s positive psychology (2010). Consequently, it has been stated that hope is guaranteed, as awareness of strengths acknowledges past resilience and future dreams (Houghton, 2007). Such a perspective restricts hope within a goal dominated theory of hope, minimises the importance of meaning for hopefulness and emphasises coping behaviours. Consequently, Darlington and Bland (1999) accentuated the acknowledgement of strengths within mental health patients with hope as possibility, rather than hope as optimism advocated by Saleebey (2000).
Although hope attained from a sense of meaning was considered significant immediately following the trauma of a severe acquired disability, ‘generalised hope’ (Dufault & Martocchio, 1985), the establishment of hope objectives was accorded greater significance (Dorsett, 2010). A positive consequence of objectives as hope was that the impact of social, political and cultural barriers for the achievement of objectives extended the individual psychological focus to understanding within a social ecological framework (Dorsett, 2010). This is particularly pertinent to the strengths perspective with its emphasis on the individual within social environments as critical to the process of transformation (Koenig & Spano, 2007). Hope contextualised within a social ecological framework facilitates acknowledgement of the assets for and the hindrances against the realisation of hope.

However, objectives are formulated within frameworks of meaning. Both hope as meaningfulness and action towards objectives were incorporated into concepts of hope for mental health patients (Darlington & Bland, 1999). As Briton’s (2000) research was with palliative care, it is understandable that hope encompassed acceptance of the present rather than hope of the future, and emphasis upon meaningfulness rather than objectives.

The relational, as opposed to individual, nature of hope has been emphasised, as relationships that engender interconnectedness are significant in the formulation of hope (Bland and Darlington, 2002; Briton, 2000; Darlington & Bland, 1999; Koenig & Spano, 2007). Professional relationships within the strengths perspective are delineated as endeavours of collaboration, wherein attention is concentrated on the empowerment of individuals and communities for the achievement of their objectives (Koenig & Spano, 2007). Such a focus facilitates the creation and maintenance of hope, rather than dependency and inadequacy.
2.5.7 Quantitative Measurements of Hope

Thirty-two differing measurements of hope have been identified within psychiatry, psychology, and the health sciences encompassing a diversity of conceptualisations (Schrank et al., 2008). A number of scales have been designed for use in the health sciences, including the Herth Hope Index (Herth, 1992, 1994), the Miller Hope Scale (Miller & Powers, 1988), Gottschalk Hope Scale (Gottschalk & Calif, 1974) and the HOPE [Hunter Opinions and Personal Expectations] scale (Nunn, Lewin, Walton, & Carr, 1996). All have been widely utilised, as it has been maintained that they have good validity and reliability (Schrank et al., 2008). The majority include both individual aspects (for example, self-worth, inner strength) and relational aspects (for example, interpersonal relationships, spirituality, meaningfulness), that contrasts with the hope scales based on Snyder’s (2000) theory of hope with its focus on goal achievement. The Miller Hope Scale (Miller & Powers, 1988) and the Herth Hope Index (Herth, 1992; 1994) both encompass individual, relational, meaning and goal components, which reflect many of the philosophical aspects that are considered important.

The numerous diverse measurements of hope are indicative of little consensus concerning the nature and function of hope. Consequently, it is not possible for them to be measuring the same constructs, even though they claim excellent statistical evaluation (Schrank et al., 2008). In addition, quantification blurs diversity by disregarding subtle but critical disparity, as well as the multiplicity, alteration and dynamism inherent within hope (Elliott & Olver, 2002; Nekolaichuk, Jevne, & Maguire, 1999). Thus, measurement restricts understandings about hope, particularly the meaning of hope and the ways, in which it is functioning for specific individuals (Averill et al., 1990; Elliott & Olver, 2002).
2.6 Hope within Trauma

2.6.1 Introduction

Trauma is both the destroyer and creator of hope. Whilst trauma has been designated as the enemy of hope, it may be defeated to become the catalyst for hope (Allen, 2007; Fromm, 1970, p.34; Pruyser, 1986). For the Scottish novelist, Walter Scott (1810, p.143), “Hope is brightest when it dawns from fears.” Hope can be born and nurtured from the soil of hopelessness and even despair (Havel, 1997, p.54; Herth, n.d.). The possibility for the transformation of life creates the basis for hope, overcoming despair fuelled by the uncertainty of painful circumstances (Herth, 1992; Kline & Mone, 2003; Shrank, Stanghellini, & Slade, 2008). Such an enterprise is fraught with obstacles and complications, requiring courage and perseverance.

The Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855, as cited in Stone, 1998) offered further encouragement, as the future possesses potential for transformation, even following trauma, as freedom is intrinsic to humanity within the constraints of circumstance and context. This propensity has been frequently highlighted by qualitative researchers in a diversity of situations. Australians diagnosed with HIV/AIDS (Ezzy, 2000), Liberian refugees in a Ghanaian refugee camp (Hardgrove, 2009; Tate, 2005) and South Sudanese refugees in Egypt (Adam, 2012), all demonstrated that individual agency was achievable, although limited by uncontrollable influences. The challenge is to “learn hope”, even in the midst of adversity, so that life becomes more than mere survival but rather is transformed into meaningfulness and joy (Bloch, 1986, as cited in Schumacher, 2003, p.94). Albeit from alternative perspectives, Marcel (1962, p.36), Dewey and Freire (as cited in Fishman, 2007, p.5) all maintain that response to adversity may be one of either hope or despair, with hope being the victorious overcoming of despair. However, qualitative research with those, who
continued to suffer from spinal cord injuries, indicated that hope and despair occurred simultaneously in the struggle to find hope in the midst of suffering (Lohne, 2008).

### 2.6.2 Hope within Uncertainty and Fear

Uncertainty is inherent within life. Trauma compounds this uncertainty (Mischel, Padilla, Grant, & Sorenson, 1991; Wonghongkul, Moore, Musil, Schneider, & Deimling, 2000). Similarly, as many interpretations of hope exist within a future orientation, uncertainty is inherent, as the future is unknown (Dewey, 1929, p.27). Consequently, hope with its corollary of uncertainty, may be especially tenuous following trauma with its intrinsic uncertainty.

As individual fear (Forbes et al., 2010; Kilpatrick, Resnick, & Acierno, 2009; Somasundaram, 1996) and collective fear (Nickerson, R. Bryant, Brooks, Steel, & Silove, 2009) are one of the most frequent emotions associated with trauma, the association of fear with hope is particularly relevant to the experience of trauma (Allen, 2005, pp.282-283).

Although hope and fear are frequently perceived as the antithesis of the other, some philosophers emphasise that hope is inextricably interwoven with fear due to the uncertainty of outcomes (Marcel, 1965, p.74; Nadler, 2001, p.239; Seneca, as cited in Daadler, 1985, p.333; Spinoza, as cited in Jabs & Deckert, 2009; Steinberg, 2009). Indeed, fear, rather than despair, has been deemed to be the opposite of hope by some philosophers (Bloch, Hume, and Spinoza, as cited in Schumacher, 2003, p.108).

This association between hope and fear is pronounced when hope is solely defined as hope objectives. Within such a framework, it is not surprising that admonitions from the past and present encourage abstinence from hope, as this will act as an antidote for fear. Seneca (as cited in Daadler, 1985) cites hope as a failure for adaptation to the present, as thoughts imbued with apprehension are focussed on an unknown future. For Spinoza, both hope and
fear arise from the innate human determination for perseverance. Hope is striving for benefit whose realisation is uncertain, which in turn invokes fear (Spinoza, as cited in Jabs & Deckert, 2009; Nadler, 2001). Recently, these sentiments have been echoed by Buddhist writers, who suggest that, “Hope never enters a room without fear at its side. If I hope to accomplish something, I’m also afraid I’ll fail. You can’t have one without the other” Wheatley (2009, p.80). Instead, if hope and fear are banished, freedom will transpire. This is expressively inscribed on the tombstone of the Modern Greek writer, Kazantzakis (as cited in Calian, 1992, p.80) with his words, “I hope for nothing, I fear nothing, I am free.”

Notwithstanding, the inherent intertwining of hope and fear need not be resolved by the abandonment of both. It is true that the association between hope and fear is pronounced when hope is defined solely as hope objectives, with failure for goal achievement ushering in possible despair. However, a sense of hopefulness derived from the meaning ascribed to life, may alleviate this dilemma. This will reflect the framework, in which it is forged. It may be the acceptance of life within Buddhism; or the acceptance of divine fiat within many religions such as Hinduism, Islam or Christianity; or individual interpretation. Within a diversity of frameworks, hope can constructively be viewed within an acknowledgement that life will necessitate responding to challenges that profer opportunity, whilst simultaneously entailing peril and threat. Hope can provide strength and direction but as certainty cannot be ensured, an uneasy fear must be a part of this journey.

2.6.3 Hope within Trust

Both hope and trust are foundational to life (Muecke, 1995, p.36). Trust is integral to hope (Erikson, 1994, pp.33, 38, 42, 218-219; Erikson, as cited in Allen, 2005, pp.291-292; Scioli & Biller, 2009, pp.27, 32, 64, 94; Nunn, 1996; Pruyser, 1963; Marcel, 1962, p.60). Just as trauma presents a challenge to hope, this is also applicable to trust, as trauma disrupts,
distorts, obliterates and enhances trust. Trauma threatens trust in ontological and cosmological security, the sense of self and interpersonal relationships (Allen, 2005, pp.1, 288; Allen, 2007; Herman, 1997, pp.51, 205; Kline & Mone, 2003; Neiman, 2002, p.9; Suleiman, 2008; Zapata-Sepúlveda, 2012). As there is no consensus about the definition of trust, it is regularly equated with confidence, reliability or faith (Khodyakov, 2007). In contrast to understanding trust as a variable providing the ‘glue’ for relationships and societies, it has been proposed that trust be characterised as a dynamic agentic process, with an interdependent multidimensionality having individual, relational and social applications (Khodyakov, 2007). Thus, trust has been defined as the process by which the leap is made by acceptance of uncertainty across “the gorge of the unknowable from the land of interpretation into the land of expectation” (Möllering, 2001, p.412). This allies trust to hope, as hope also emanates from interpretation that becomes characterised by both belief and anticipation within uncertainty. Indeed, Erikson (1986, pp.38, 218-219) emphasised that hope is the product of the catalyst between trust and mistrust.

In the same way that hope and fear are interdependent, trust is characterised by the juxtaposition between hope and fear (Deutsch, 1973, p.148). Thus, willingness for vulnerability is a hallmark of trust (Scott, Scott, Miller, Stange, & Crabtree, 2009; Khodyakov, 2007; Poortinga & Pidgeon, 2003). Such a process is deeply influenced by temporal considerations, as trust occurs, standing within the present, on a foundation of the past, looking towards the future (Solomon & Flores, 2001, p.15). This quest for trust is reliant on more than rationality, as it evokes “imaginative anticipation” (Khodyakov, 2007, p.126).

From this perspective, trust will be integral to the creation and maintenance of hope assailed by trauma. If trauma jeopardises hope and trust, the restoration of trust may facilitate hope (Garrett, 2001; Marcel, 1965, p.207). Interpersonal trust was critical for adolescent Sierra Leonean refugees, as it facilitated hope, “Without trust you cannot work together to
build unity, hope, peace” (Kline & Mone, 2003, p.325). However, this was unattainable for some, “I do not trust anyone, not even myself” (Kline & Mone, 2003, p.325). Indeed, trust, rather than goals or expectations, is the basis of hope in some cultures (Scioli & Biller, 2009, p.65). In addition, theistic trust is the foundational principle for Marcel’s (1962, p.60; 1965, p.91) understanding of hope. This was evidenced in hope for Liberian refugees in a Ghanaian refugee camp (Tete, 2005); South Sudanese refugees (Baird & Boyle, 2012) and for parents with adolescents with a life threatening illness (Kylmä & Juvakka, 2007).

The refugee experience is intimately allied with issues of trust; “From its inception the experience of a refugee puts trust on trial. The refugee mistrusts and is mistrusted” (Daniel & Knudson, 1995, p.1). All events that encapsulate the refugee experience challenge trust; the crisis initiating escape, flight, places of refuge, application for refugee status and resettlement. This occurs within a framework wherein refugees themselves are the object of severe mistrust. It is imperative to ascertain cultural disparity in understandings about trust, as it is a social construction (Muecke, 1995, p.36). This is particularly relevant to refugee communities with their cultural diversity. Trust varies in cultural significance, wherein some cultures encompass caution towards trust. In Buddhism, trust is inherent within attachment to the world and thus a cause of suffering (Muecke, 1995, pp.36-39). This is embedded within conceptualisations of everyday life. However, trust is no less pertinent to refugees from such cultures, when abuses of trust occur that are extrinsic to everyday life, as this presents a challenge to accepted frameworks (Daniel & Knudson, 1995, p.2).
2.6.4 Hope within Community

The importance of roots growing within the soil of community was emphasised by Weil. Life within community preserves past riches and future expectations as living creations that provide sustenance for the growth of hope (Weil, 2003, p.43). In such a way, the foundation for a just society will be laid (Howe, 2008). However, the destruction or impairment to community with its attendant loss of history, knowledge, beliefs and tradition renders individuals, such as refugees, living within unfamiliar or less meaningful environments. If emphasis is given to acknowledgement and support of the culture of refugees, this can provide a background that can replenish their sense of hopefulness and hope objectives for the future (Goveas, 2002). Further, this possibility is strengthened by the element of ‘mystery’ within uncertainty in collectives, as this can interact with opportunities within social and cultural contexts to create more than personally possible (Garrett, 2001; Cooke, 2004). Thus, hope may be facilitated by a collective orientation (Rorty, as cited in Deneen, 1999), although in many Western cultures prominence is given to individual resolve for the maintenance of hope (Garrett, 2001).

If hope requires renewal, relationships that encourage the growth of hope may be crucial. Acceptance, understanding and forbearance within relationships all facilitate hope (Cutcliffe, 1997; Marcel, 1962, p.62). Although an interpersonal dimension is not included in the cognitive theory of hope (Snyder, 2000; 2002), qualitative research revealed that interconnectedness was an important theme within experiences of hope during illness (Benzein et al., 2001; Ezzy, 2000; Kylmä & Juvakka, 2007; Reynolds, 2008; Verhaegenhe, van Zuuren, Defloor, Duijnstee, & Grypdonck, 2007) and bereavement (Cutcliffe, 2004; Holtslander & Duggleby, 2009). Social support from family, friends and the community has

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7 Community in this thesis is defined as a “network of relations that contribute to a sense of belonging and connection” (Westoby, 2008, p.484).
been found to be of crucial importance for refugees from diverse backgrounds and ages, as they strive to keep hope alive (Kline & Mone, 2003 [Sierra Leonean children and adolescents]; Tilbury & Rapley, 2004 [African women]; and Yohani, 2005 [African children and adolescents]). The importance of emotional and relational aspects has been acknowledged by inclusion in the cognitive-affective-affiliative model that has been utilised extensively with researching hope during illness (Farran, Herth, & Popovich, 1995; Herth, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1995).

Indeed, hope has been characterised within a collective orientation, as well as an individual one. Refugees from cultures with a strong emphasis on the family, conceptualise hope in terms of beneficial futures for their children that would, in turn, restore hopefulness for themselves (Weine et al., 2004). This was evidenced by South Sudanese refugees in the United States (USA) (Baird & Boyle, 2012), Liberian refugees in Ghana (Tete, 2005) and Bosnian refugees in the USA (Weine et al., 2004), who formulated their own individual hope within the framework of hope for their children, their community and their homeland.

2.6.5 Hope within Culture

Humanity may be bound together through common threads but historical, cultural, social and religious influences will create diverse perspectives for the expression, interpretation, and function of hope through distinct ontologies and cosmologies (Bloch, 1986; Callahan, 2000; Lopez et al., 2000; Mashunkashey-Shadlow, 2007). For example, the Navajo nation’s conceptualisation of hope is founded on their belief in the unified relationship between family and creation (Scioli & Biller, 2009, p.65). Cultural influences can also be observed by a comparison of the interpretation of hope by Chinese and Euro-Americans at the end of their lives (Chan, Mok, Lam, Lau, Ng, & Chan, 2009). Whilst Westerners desired to retain control in their lives, this was surrendered by Chinese. This
relinquishment differentiated between an active surrender characterised by acceptance of
death and passive submission that produced a sense of helplessness. Chinese formulated hope
within a present time frame but Euro-Americans envisaged hope to be in the future.

Hope can be beneficially represented as a dynamic, multi-faceted concept, whose
characterisations reflect historical, social and cultural imperatives situated within specific
temporal contexts (Dufault & Mastocchio, 1995; Eliott & Olver, 2002; Holt, 2000; Kylmä &
Juvakka, 2007; Lopez et al., 2003). Thus, a diversity of conceptualisations of hope will be
represented in different communities, as they reflect divergent foundations for a sense of
hopefulness and a range of objectives. A significant cultural distinctive can be whether these
characterisations of hope reflect an individual or collective orientation (Goodman, 2004;
Weine et al., 2004).

However, culture can never be a static entity but continually creates understanding
between groups through dialogic, in which symbolic worlds engage in communicative
collaboration with one another. Culture influences ways of living that in turn impact upon
culture. Innovation, ambiguity and uncertainty are all hallmarks of this process that
productively result in confirmation and divergence (Daniel & Knudson, 1995, pp.2-3;
Spencer et al., 2006, p.633). Hope within culture will be subject to this same process; a
process for refugees that will be buffeted by trauma, irrevocable change, uncertainty and
strident unfamiliarity. Thus, cultural expressions of hope may be rendered frozen in an
attempt to preserve the past and stultify life in the present and future. Alternatively,
expressions of hope may be modified during striving for adaptation that ushers in the promise
for the enhancement of new life. Simultaneously, this will be affected advantageously or
detrimentally by cultural attitudes towards refugees. These can remain trapped in the detritus
of past prejudice or have the integrity to honour international law, respect diversity and
acknowledge the benefits refugee communities can endow to the wider communities (Hugo, 2011).

2.6.6 Hope within Refugee Communities

Little quantitative or qualitative research could be found that has examined directly understandings about hope within trauma for refugee communities. Quantitative research used the restrictive cognitive theory of hope (Snyder, 2000) that limits hope to agency through pathways towards goals. The principal objectives for West African refugees in Sweden were plans for education in early resettlement and family reunion in later resettlement (Anjum, Nordquist, & Timpka, 2012). There was a positive association between hope and posttraumatic growth (PTG) for refugees from Kosovar, although this could be conceptualised as a correlation between cognitive coping strategies and PTG, rather than a more inclusive understanding of hope (Ai, Tice, Whitsett, Ishisaka, & Chim, 2007).

Qualitative research with refugee communities in Australia revealed attributions of hopefulness and hopelessness, as well as having or not having specific hopes. Hopefulness was characterised by Sudanese refugees as a light for the future, because stability and peace creates opportunities and rights (Murray, 2009; Pittaway & Muli, 2010). Refugees emphasised the importance of inner strength to enable working towards a more promising future (Brough, Gorman, Ramirez, & Westoby, 2003). The strategies that facilitated coping with trauma for South Sudanese refugees were religious faith, dependence on inner strength, cognition, social support, and a future orientation (Khawaja et al., 2008; Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007)). Thus, within the hope paradigm of this thesis, hope could be interpreted as a sense of hopefulness based on religion that was reinforced by social support with a future framework for hope objectives enabled by perseverance through inner strength. This focus on hope for potential objectives has contributed to advantageous adaptation to life.
in Australia (Khawaja et al., 2008), although expressions of despair were also evidenced (Kokanovic, Dowrick, Butler, Herman, & Gunn, 2008; Mares, Newman, Dudley, & Gale, 2002).

Hope objectives for further education and employment opportunities received the most significance by South Sudanese refugees (Murray, 2009). Hope for South Sudanese refugee women was interpreted both through the lens of individuality and communality (Baird & Boyle, 2012). Individually, this was centred on independence in resettlement. Hope for individuals and the community were orientated towards the future, although this was viewed within a framework informed by the past.

A number of qualitative projects have demonstrated the importance of hope for refugee communities in other countries. Tete’s (2005) aim was to understand whether the coping strategies of Liberian refugees in a Ghanaian refugee camp were indicative of hope. Whilst the concept of hope was not directly addressed but assumed to be hope for a brighter future, the narratives were indicative of resourcefulness and perseverance in their endeavours for survival and to ascribe meaning to their lives.

Goodman (2004) focussed on coping strategies with trauma by unaccompanied adolescent male refugees in the US. They were part of the so-called ‘Lost Boys of Sudan’. ‘Lost’ is an apt designation physically, as only 5,000 survived from the initial 17,000, who fled from South Sudan. It does not appropriately characterise their notable resilience that was more conspicuous than for other adolescents (Zutt, 1994, pp.44–45). The boys’ narratives revealed the importance of collectivity as the lens through which they interpreted their experiences. This is not surprising, as communality is the foundation, on which their culture is built. Significantly, mutual social support facilitated survival. However, collective courage and perseverance buoyed by hope was overpowered by bullets, disease, crocodiles and raging waters. The endless adversity within flight compounded by the boredom of their prison-like
refugee camp culminated in hopelessness, as no escape appeared possible. ‘Benedict’ (Goodman, 2004, p.1118) conveyed this as,

There’s no way that you can even hope. When my half-brother died we hoped that maybe another guy would not die. And then it happened again: He died, and then another died. There’s no way that you can even prevent it. So it becomes a situation where you just know that you will probably die also. You just think that maybe tomorrow it will be your turn to die.

Meaningfulness in their lives was formed within the framework of religion. Their narratives progressed from the theme of hopelessness to hopefulness, as resettlement offered them opportunities for the future.

Hope within uncertainty for South Sudanese refugees in Cairo was researched by Adam (2012). Again, attention was not directed to the concept of hope but was assumed to be the assurance that the future would hold positive outcomes. This assurance enabled and was enabled by resilience that was demonstrated in creative and adaptive solutions to the many challenges of marginalisation and discrimination confronting the refugees in a hostile environment. Communal financial sharing facilitated the needs of many in the community that was an expected consequence from a collective culture, although traditional gender roles were reversed.

The family, culture and religion represented the frameworks for interpretation of hope for refugees from Bosnia in the USA (Weine et al., 2004). Hopefulness was kindled through appreciation of culture and a renewed respect and reliance on religion, whilst hope objectives for the future focussed on children; “Young people bring hope for us” (Weine et al., 2004, p.152). The emphasis on children is doubly a two-edged sword, as such expectations create pressure and failure ushers in despair for the family. Hope within the framework of repatriation to homelands was the focus of research with Afghan and Somali refugees by Zimmermann (2012). Perspectives were the result of inter-related variables forged from the
juxtaposition of concerns about security and opportunities to create a new life through re-integration in their homelands.

Sierra Leonean adolescents in a refugee camp conveyed both hope and hopelessness (Kline & Mone, 2003). Trust was the foundation for meaning that created hopefulness and hope for the future. In contrast, internally displaced children in Uganda only reported experiences of hopelessness, rather than hope (Betancourt, Speelman, Onyango, & Bolton, 2009). However, the question used in the latter research focussed on eliciting problems, (“What are the problems of children in this camp?”), rather than focussing on experiences of resilience, strength or coping (Betancourt et al., 2009, p.242).

One-dimensional or restrictive paradigms can only be a partial representation of the multiplicity and diversity of hope that may be even less significant in some communities (Eliott & Olver, 2002). Consequently, this project will not utilise a pre-determined definition of hope, so that the interpretation of participants’ perspectives about hope are not restricted, particularly as the communities are from non-Western cultures (Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). Hopefulness and objectives both need to be considered in understanding hope in the experience of trauma for refugees that will be significantly influenced by cultural determinants of trauma, meaningfulness, trust and community.
CHAPTER THREE: TRAUMA

A historical outline of understandings about trauma as secondary research will be described, so that convergence and divergence can be observed over time. This overview will reveal the transformation of understandings about trauma in response to varying social, cultural, political and religious imperatives that has provided the background for the present day discourse of trauma. The dominant trauma discourse of the present time, the biomedical model, will be discussed with reference to the DSM definitions and its limitations, particularly its incompatibility with cultural and collective conceptualisations of trauma.

3.1 History of Trauma

3.1.1 Introduction

The promise of life abounding with love, joy and hope awaits humanity from birth. However, no one solely lives within this utopian dream, as the trauma that is intrinsic to life can transform dreams into nightmares (Herbert & Sageman, 2004, p.213; Stein, Seedat, Iversen, & Wessely, 2007). Trauma may creep insidiously into life, or may burst without warning, as eloquently portrayed by the English poet, John Donne (1624/2008, p.33), “in a minute a cannon batters all, overthrows all, demolishes all.” History has been invaded by trauma from its beginning. Within any discussion of historical events, it needs to be acknowledged that there is no evidence that the experience of reality in the past is analogous to experience today. Equating comparable ideas throughout history does not correspond to equivalence of experience (Heidegger, as cited in Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.129; Tallis, 1998, p.15). However, whispers of understanding can be heard and appreciated. Historical awareness is critical, as all understanding is historically situated (Gadamer, 2006, pp.xxix, 21,
Thus, the past informs the present that informs the future.

3.1.2 Historical Records of Trauma

The earliest recorded evidence of suffering after trauma are inscribed upon 4,000 year old cuneiform tablets that document the traumatic experiences of Sumerians following the death of their King Urnamma in battle; “They weep bitter tears in their broad squares where merriment had reigned”, and the destruction of their city of Ur; “the storm’s cyclone like destruction - verily its terror has filled me full” (Ben-Ezra, 2010, p.225, 2004, p.123). Whilst these and later historical accounts of trauma have been used as evidence that experiences of trauma have equivalence throughout history (Ben-Ezra, 2001, 2004, 2010; Birmes et al., 2010; Boehnlein & Kinzie, 1992; Friedman, Resick, & Keane, 2010, p.11), this disregards the role of social and cultural forces in transforming interpretations of experience in general and trauma specifically.

Whilst present day medical literature is replete with information pertaining to the experience of trauma, this is absent in the medical texts of antiquity (Birmes et al., 2010). The description and interpretation of trauma and its concomitant suffering was the province of historians, theologians and authors (Ben-Ezra, 2010; Bennet, 2011; Birmes et al., 2010; Boase, 2008; Daly, 1983). Trauma responses have been depicted by the historians, Herodotus in his account of the battle of Marathon (Ben-Ezra, 2010), Tacitus’s description of the Great Fire of Rome (Birmes et al., 2010), Pliny the Younger’s report of the destruction of Pompeii (Ben-Ezra, 2010), and Pepys’s writings about the Great Fire of London (Daly, 1983). Similar descriptions can be found in the writings of Homer (Ben-Ezra, 2010), the author of Beowulf (Ben-Ezra, 2010; Brink, 2002, pp.8-9), the Old Testament writer of Lamentations (Boase, 2008) and in Shakespeare’s plays, such as Titus Andronicus (Ben-Ezra, 2010; Bennet, 2011;
Silverstone, 2009; Willis, 2002). Shakespeare (1998, p.678) in his bloodiest tragedy, Titus Andronicus, laments that unexpressed grief may issue forth in the death of the spirit,

Sorrow concealed, like an oven stopped,

Doth burn the heart to cinders where it is.

3.1.3 Historical and Cultural Definitions of Trauma

The conceptualisation of trauma has been transformed throughout history by fluctuating social, cultural, political and religious imperatives (Kirmayer, 2007, p.4; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). Events considered to be traumatic in the past may no longer be so defined and vice versa. Public executions represented entertainment several hundred years ago but this spectacle has lost its attraction, with witnessing death nowadays being frequently defined as trauma. However, the family of murder victims continue to attend executions in the USA (Domino & Boccaccini, 2000), and crowds participated in public stoning ordered by the Taliban in Northern Afghanistan (Telegraph UK, 2011). Some experiences of suffering have been time limited. This is illustrated by the presence of the psychiatric condition, ‘automatisme ambulatoire’ that was characterised by compulsive walking whilst in a fugue-like state with subsequent amnesia. This was frequently evidenced in France from 1887 to 1909, but has not been observed in other countries or at other times (Kendler & Zachar, 2008, p.379).

Cultural imperatives will influence the interpretation of trauma and associated severity (Joyce & Berger, 2007; Rechtman, 2000). The concept of trauma encompasses myriad circumstances. Natural and manmade disasters; war and terrorism; physical, sexual and emotional assault; bereavement loss; accidents; and life threatening and disabling medical conditions all fall beneath its generally accepted canopy. However, in Tibet, the
experience characterised as most traumatic is witnessing the destruction of religious icons, rather than imprisonment and torture (Sachs et al., 2008; Terheggen et al., 2001). Similarly, the enforced consumption of beef constitutes torture for Hindus, as it flouts religious prohibitions (McNally, 2004, p.5).

### 3.1.4 Trauma in 19th Century

Contemporary understandings about trauma are based on perspectives that have been constructed to explain and cope with historical contingencies, particularly since the 19th century. A review of significant historical events reveals that this understanding has been shaped by social, cultural, economic, political and military forces. The term ‘trauma’ evokes representations of physical and psychological suffering. As its etymology is derived from the ancient Greek word ‘τραύμα’, meaning ‘a wound’, medicalised applications to physical trauma have been of longstanding (Levy & Snzaider, 2006, p.289; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011).

However, the disparate historical episodes of the invention of the steam locomotive, the interest in ‘hysteria’ in women, and warfare all contributed to the growing medicalisation of suffering, although there was no consensus about its aetiology or treatment. Both organic and psychological causation have been postulated (van der Kolk, 2010, p.20). Psychological difficulties following railway accidents in the early 19th century became known as ‘railway spine’. Whilst the surgeon John Erichsen, proposed that neurological dysfunction was the cause of psychological distress, Herbert Page, another surgeon, maintained that the reverse was true; that is, psychological difficulties resulted in neurological dysfunction (Dornstein, 1998, pp.210-214; Harrington, 2003; Kienzler, 2008; van der Kolk, 2010, p.20). This appears to be the first codification of a psychological trauma syndrome.
In the late 19th century, interest in psychological difficulties following trauma by the French neurologist, Jean-Martin Charcot, focussed attention on the mechanism of ‘hysteria’ occurring within individual vulnerability (Jones & Wessely, 2007; Kienzler, 2008). The Austrian physiologist, Josef Breuer, and Austrian neurologist, Sigmund Freud, concurred with this explanation in their further work on traumatic neurosis within the psychoanalytic tradition (Breuer & Freud, 1893, p.56; Launer, 2005). Whilst there was agreement that ‘hysteria’ was derived from incompletely processed memories constituting a traumatic memory, the French neurologist and psychologist, Pierre Janet, interpreted the process as dissociation from awareness into sub consciousness that contrasted with Freud’s understanding of repression into unconsciousness (Kienzler, 2008). This heralded the advent of positioning suffering within the paradigm of psychological abnormality.

3.1.5 Trauma and War

At about the same time, medicine acknowledged that combat can result in not only physical but also emotional wounds; in the words of a Scottish soldier at Gallipoli “I might not have been wounded in body but I was wounded in my mind” (Hay, as cited in van der Hart, van Dijke, van Son, & Steele, 2000, p.52). Those that ascribed to organic aetiology, referred to these as ‘soldier’s heart’ reflecting cardiovascular symptomatology in the American Civil War in the 1860s and ‘shell shock’ indicative of neurological damage during World War I (WWI) (Joyce & Berger, 2007; Kaplan & Sadock, 2007, pp.612-613; van der Kolk, 2010, p.20; Monson, Friedman & La Bash, 2010, p.38). From a psychological causation perspective, emotional difficulties were termed ‘war neurosis’ during WWI and ‘battle fatigue’, ‘combat neurosis’ or ‘combat exhaustion’ in World War II (WWII) (French, 1998; Kaplan & Sadock, 2007, p.213; Jones & Wessely, 2007; van der Hart et al., 2000; van der Kolk, 2010, p.20). However, both biological and psychological factors had been
implicated in aetiology by Janet in the 19th century (van der Hart, Brown, & Graafland, 1999) and by the psychiatrist, Abram Kardiner, in the 1940s (Monson et al., 2010, p.39).

Just as with ‘hysteria’, individual vulnerability to mental illness or the consequences of a damaging childhood was considered to predict psychological difficulties in both wars, although the role of social factors had been previously recognised by Janet (Jones & Wessely, 2007; van der Hart et al., 1999). The role of the interpretation of the trauma experience per se was not explored. Thus, it is unsurprising that military authorities in WWI had little understanding and sympathy for those unable to participate in their battle plans. Nearly 4,000 British soldiers were sentenced to death for ‘desertion’ and ‘cowardice’, of which 284 were executed (Corns, 1998; French, 1998; Peifer, 2007). The records indicate that many were suffering psychological wounds (Hughes-Wilson & Corns, 2005). They were in need of care, rather than a bullet sacrificing them as exemplars. Justification was even advanced by medical authorities. The physician Esler (as cited in Corns, 1998, p.55) declared that, “It was absolutely essential. It was setting a bad example to the other men.”

The criticality of the role of interpretation of trauma is clearly illustrated by the varying interpretations attached to Dunkirk. Soldiers, who had perceived their retreat from France as a great defeat, were overwhelmed upon their arrival in England to be greeted by banners welcoming them home as heroes; “Christ!” said someone in an awed voice, “They mean us!” (Dugain, 2000, p.182). Even increasing awareness of psychological injuries did not attenuate military pragmatism following WWI. The Earl of Cavan (as cited in French, 1998, p.534) declared that the lives of soldiers with severe emotional difficulties could be forfeited for the sake of their nation. However, no British servicemen were executed for ‘desertion’ in WWII, as the death penalty for military crimes (except for mutiny) had been abolished prior to the onset of the war (Watson, 2008). This may reflect increasing
acceptance of individual vulnerability or just military pragmatism. No such awareness of vulnerability was evidenced in Germany or Russia (Watson, 2008).

WWII saw renewed interest in trauma with posttraumatic stress responses, as there was concern by military and government authorities that the chronicity of these symptoms evidenced in WWI may be repeated (French, 1998; Jones & Wessely, 2007; Kaplan & Sadock, 2007, p.213; van der Hart et al., 2000; van der Kolk, 2010, p.20). The use of the term ‘battle fatigue’ implied that this condition was not severe, so that recovery would be ensured through rest. However, there was gradual acknowledgement that no one was immune to the effects of severe stress, although a failure to evince a quick recovery was indicative of individual vulnerability (Jones & Wessely, 2007).

3.1.6 Trauma in Late 20th Century

By 1970, it was recognised that survivors of the Shoah and sexual abuse were also experiencing long-term adverse reactions to trauma. The Vietnam-American war promoted increasing attention to trauma, especially intense advocacy for diagnosis and treatment for American veterans (Young, 1995, p.5). This culminated in 1980 with the introduction of a new psychiatric disorder, PTSD, in DSM-III (American Psychiatric Association (APA), 1980). This emphasised the universality of trauma responses and so diminished subjective appraisal (Joseph & Williams, 2005). Whilst it is claimed that a major imperative for the introduction of a diagnosis for trauma difficulties was that chronic and delayed reactions had not been acknowledged (McNally, 2003), chronicity had been recognised following both

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8 Whilst only 18 German soldiers were executed in WWI, military and political expediency reversed this in WWII, when between 22,000 (Watson, 2008) and over 30,000 (Weinberg as cited in Shephard, 1999) German servicemen were executed by the Nazis. Undoubtedly, many ‘deserters’ were suffering from posttraumatic stress, although mere ‘defeatism’ was a capital offence in Nazi Germany. Even this inordinate figure is eclipsed by the 158,000 Russian soldiers executed by their military authorities (Watson, 2008).
World Wars (French, 1998; Jones & Wessely, 2007; Kaplan & Sadock, 2007, p.213; van der Hart et al., 2000; van der Kolk, 2010, p.20). It is ironic that the rates of PTSD amongst veterans were lower in the war that provided a major impetus for its acceptance into ‘psychiatric canon’ than for veterans involved in WWII or the Korean War (McNally, 2003). It is also incongruous that whilst social and political influences were critical in gaining recognition for PTSD, its inclusion within a biomedical model would deny the role of these same influences in the determination of trauma responses (Lembcke, 1998, pp.103-104).

### 3.2 Present Day Trauma Discourse

The decreased reliance on religious and political meta-narratives has resulted in the diminution of extensive and widely accepted systems of meaning making (Lyotard, 1984, pp.15, 37, 41). This void has provided opportunities for the expansion of research to explain trauma and suffering (Bracken & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Bracken, 2004). Although the trauma discourse has expanded greatly in the last forty years, there remains no consensus about its characterisation. This discourse has increasingly encompassed tragedy and suffering in its many manifestations within individual and collective frameworks (Levy & Sznaider, 2006, p.289). It has sought to differentiate between catastrophe, adversity, misfortune, injury and stress; to delineate attribution for individual or social responsibility and to define the sense of self and inter-subjectivity (McKinney, 2007). In accomplishing this, trauma has become a metaphor for the present age, as it wrestles to extract comprehension from suffering wrought by chaos, violence and silence (Lerner & Micale, 2001, p.1).

Increasingly, trauma prescribes acknowledgement and respect from both sufferer and witness, as legitimacy and validity have been conferred on trauma (Douglass & Vogler, 2003, p.11; Roth, 2007, p.239). This has enabled individuals to incorporate changes in identity shaped through personal trauma and facilitated the response of communities to collective
trauma (Douglass & Vogler, 2003, pp.10-12; Fassin & Rechtman, 2009, p.xi; Furedi, 2004; Pupavac, 2004; Roth, 2007, p.239; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). Indeed, Western culture has been characterised as a post-traumatic narrative (Douglass & Vogler, 2003, p.11). This does not necessitate the conclusion that this current age is characterised by more horror, chaos and injustice than in the past (Furedi, 2004, p.6; Tallis, 1998, p.11), as has been maintained (Adam, 2012; Wilkinson, 2005, p.3), but certainly imperatives exist for the focus and explication of trauma.

The current trauma discourse continues to transform our perceptions about trauma (Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). Growth within the trauma discourse has produced a diversity of representations about the definition, symptomatology, aetiology and treatment of trauma that has been particularly evidenced in psychiatry and psychology within a biomedical framework since the introduction of PTSD into DSM-III (APA, 1980). However, the ever expanding utilisation of trauma as the lens for the interpretation of any painful incident risks the diminution of agency and resilience through the emphasis of vulnerability and fragility (Furedi, 2004, pp.29, 128, 135). Additionally, this may lead to the devaluing of significant trauma that dishonours and invalidates these experiences, as well as the abrogation of responsibility.

3.3 Biomedical Model of Trauma

3.3.1 WHO and DSM-III Trauma Definitions

Within the biomedical model, trauma definitions are contingent on a correlation with a prescribed classification of posttraumatic stress. The World Health Organization (WHO) characterises trauma as an event “of an exceptionally threatening or catastrophic nature, which is likely to cause pervasive distress in almost anyone” (WHO, 2007). This is comparable to the initial definition of trauma by the APA in DSM-III (1980, p.238), although
trauma was also identified as experiences beyond usual experience. However, the definition of ‘usual experience’ will vary between societies and communities due to the influence of diverse historical, social, cultural, economic and political factors.

3.3.2 DSM-IV Trauma Definition

As there was acceptance that DSM-III trauma definition was too restrictive (S. Solomon & Canino, 1990), it was expanded in DSM-IV (APA, 1994) to encompass experienced or witnessed events that involved a threat to one’s own or another’s life or physical integrity (criterion-A1) and that involved the response of intense fear, horror or helplessness (criterion-A2). Consequently, direct and indirect exposure to threat was now accepted as trauma and the subjective response to a threat was accentuated (McNally, 2003). Even within this framework, it was recognised that it was unfeasible to designate specific events as traumatic, as stressors vary widely in severity and frequency, with the critical concern being the emotional response to such events (Boals & Schuettler, 2009; Dohrenwend, 2006; Weathers & Keane, 2007). This resulted in a more rigid definition of trauma by APA (1994) than by the WHO (2007).

Considerable debate existed over the validity of the criteria for trauma in DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) during the formulation of a new version for DSM-5 (APA, 2012). A central assumption of the PTSD diagnosis in DSM-IV and DSM-5 was that there are quantitative and qualitative differences between trauma as defined in DSM-IV and other stressful life events (Lindy et al., 1987; Van Hoof et al., 2009). However, moderate PTSD has been associated with stressful events that do not fulfil the required criteria for trauma in DSM-IV and it can be assumed DSM-5, as its trauma definition has become more restrictive although the following research predated its formulation. These include sexual harassment (Avina & O’Donohue, 2002); relationship difficulties including divorce (Burstein, 1985; Helzer et al.,
1987); miscarriage (Helzer et al., 1987); foot and mouth disease crisis (Olff et al., 2005); employment and financial stressors (Scott & Stradling, 1994); non-life threatening physical assault (Seidler & Wagner, 2006); and diverse stressful events (Bodkin, Pope, Detke, & Hudson, 2007; Gold, Marx, Soler-Baillo, & Sloan, 2005; Kilpatrick, Resnick, Freedy, Pelcovitz, Resick, & Roth, 1998; Lancaster, Melka, & Rodriguez, 2009; Long, Elhai, Schweinle, Gray, Grubaugh, & Frueh, 2008; Mol, Arntz, Metsemakers, Dinant, Bilters-Van Montfort, & Knottnerus, 2005).

In Australia and the USA, epidemiological research utilising the DSM-IV-TR trauma definition indicated that 61% to 65% of men and 50% of women experience trauma during their life (Creamer, Burgess, & McFarlane, 2001), although prevalence was increased in Mexico to 76% (Norris, Murphy, Baker, Perilla, Gutiérrez-Rodriguez, & Gutiérrez-Rodriguez, 2003). However, the validity of this research can be questioned, if it is accepted that trauma is intrinsic to life (Stein et al., 2007). The new DSM-5 trauma definition has resulted in a decreased incidence of trauma, although trauma continues to be pervasive (Kilpatrick, 2013).

### 3.3.3 DSM-5 Trauma Definition

Concerns about the previous definition created agitation for the re-definition of trauma in DSM-5. Whilst ongoing reformulation can incorporate the contribution of new evidence and reflect changing social imperatives, there was no consensus concerning this characterisation, as retention (Weathers & Keane, 2007), restriction (McNally, 2003; O’Donnell, Creamer, McFarlane, Silove, & R. Bryant, 2010; Rosen & Lilienfeld, 2008; Rosen, Lilienfield, Frueh, McHugh, & Spitzer, 2010; Spitzer, First, & Wakefield, 2007), expansion (Boals & Schuettler, 2009; Kilpatrick, Resnick, & Acierno, 2009) and elimination (Brewin, Lanius, Novac, Schnyder, & Galea, 2009) were all proposed.
It was asserted that as the definition of trauma in DSM-IV-TR was too imprecise, it encompassed too wide a range of experiences that resulted in inappropriate designation of events as trauma in real life and in research, thus creating the need for a more restrictive definition (McNally, 2003, 2004; Rosen & Lilienfeld, 2008; Rosen et al., 2010; Spitzer et al., 2007). Alternatively, it was argued that both criterion-A1 and criterion-A2 necessitate expansion, so that the trauma definition incorporates events and emotions commonly associated with PTSD (Kilpatrick et al., 2009). On the other hand, the removal of a trauma definition completely was also advocated, as it was asserted that the presence of trauma will be revealed in the symptom criteria of PTSD (Brewin et al., 2009). The definition of trauma for DSM-5 that was decided upon eliminated criterion-A2, expanded criterion-A1 and placed subjective responses within the symptom criteria of PTSD (APA, 2012). Notwithstanding the considerable research undertaken, any attempt to connect a rigid definition of trauma with a prescribed classification of posttraumatic stress symptomatology creates a tightly based construct that will have inadequate utility in increasingly culturally diverse Western cultures and even less in non-Western ones. Rather, trauma is individually and collectively defined through the lens of interpretation of events based on lived experience that will reflect temporal, social and cultural imperatives.

As criterion-A1 of the trauma definition was formulated to provide an objective perspective, whilst criterion-A2 was to contribute a subjective response (Creamer et al., 2005; Weathers & Keane, 2007), the removal of this criterion was proposed (Rosen et al., 2010). However, it has also been maintained that the determination of both criteria involves subjectivity by survivors and assessors (van Hooff et al., 2009). As it was deemed that criterion-A2 fulfilled the critical role in the definition of DSM-IV trauma, the expansion of this criterion has been emphasised together with the abolition of criterion-A1 (Boals & Schuettler, 2009; van Hooff et al., 2009).
3.4 Collective Trauma

Trauma encompasses myriad circumstances; natural and manmade disasters, war and terrorism, physical, sexual and emotional assault, bereavement loss, accidents, and life threatening and disabling medical conditions all fall beneath its canopy. Consequently, the tentacles of trauma entrap more than an individual within its grasp. Whilst trauma can directly impact communities and entire societies, these may be affected by trauma directed towards one individual (Kasiram & Khosa, 2008). The murder of Veronica Guerin, the Irish journalist in 1996, had profound impacts on attitudes towards the powerful drug distributors with subsequent constitutional and legal amendments to their prosecution (O’Gorman, 1998).

The pervasiveness of trauma’s purview necessitates individual and collective responses. However, within the biomedical paradigm, these are frequently viewed only from individualistic perspectives, as this orientation does not adequately account for community and societal responses to trauma. Consequently, such omission provides an inadequate understanding of the experiences of trauma. This is exemplified by the tragedy of the Shoah that galvanised Zionist impetus for the creation of a state, where justice and safety would prevail for the Jewish people, although tragically this has been at the expense of Palestinians (Chehata, 2012; Lopez et al., 2000).

The term ‘collective trauma’ was formulated by Kai Erikson (1976a, 1976b) to refer to the Buffalo Creek disaster in 1971. He recognised that trauma’s adverse effects could not be adequately conceptualised within an individual framework, as social environments are critical for survival. Thus, he defined collective trauma as the inability of communality to provide nurture, as it has suffered fragmentation (K. Erikson, 1976, p.302). Consequently, disconnection occurred in relationships and the sense of self. Whilst pervasive community distress has been frequently observed, growth in collective identity and strength also occurs that may ameliorate distress (Kaniasty, 2005; Landau, Mittel, & Wieling, 2008; Norris &
A sole individualistic focus fails to account for the multiplicity of outcomes associated with the disturbance to collective meanings that organise accepted values, beliefs, and behaviours (Ajdukovic, 2004).

Consideration of collective outcomes after trauma has been observed in Western and non-Western cultures. After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack in New York, many Americans believed that there were both adverse and constructive consequences for their nation (Poulin, Silver, Gil-Rivas, Holman, & McIntosh, 2001). In Northern Ireland, suffering as a consequence of the longstanding conflict between nationalists and unionists is more appropriately understood within a socio-cultural framework, than as individual distress (Zenker, 2010). Furthermore, individual responses to collective trauma may emphasise connotations for family, community and society, rather than personal concerns (Kokanovic et al., 2008; Weine et al., 2004; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). Rather than interpreting depression through the lens of individuality, Somali and Ethiopian refugees expressed distress collectively with a greater emphasis on family and wider social, economic and political concerns, including inequities, poverty, isolation and fear for family in their homelands (Kokanovic et al., 2008). For refugees from South Sudan, trauma was interpreted collectively (Bishop, 2011; Goodman, 2004). Trauma may also be conceptualised within the framework of the family, as this is the basis of ontological security for some cultures. For example, the significance of the Bosnian war requires consideration of its impact upon family and community relationships (Ajdukovic, 2004; Weine et al., 2004).

Thus, there is increasing acknowledgement that it is essential to conceptualise trauma within a social ecological framework, rather than as an isolated event, as external socio-cultural factors interact with personal characteristics to shape responses to trauma (Fournier, 2002; Landau et al., 2008; Miller et al., 2006; Murray, 2009; Murray, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2008; Murray, Richardson, & Schweitzer, 2010; Ungar, 2004, 2006; Westoby &
Ingamells, 2010). For refugees, subsequent stressors during resettlement, including social, cultural and economic loss, may compound the impact of the initial trauma, especially those involving continued threat (Crescenzi et al., 2001; de Jong et al., 2001; Murray et al., 2008; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Schweitzer et al., 2006; Silove, Sinnerbrink, & Field, 1997; Steel, Silove, Phan, & Bauman, 2002; Steel et al., 2006; Steel, Bateman Steel, & Silove, 2009).

The depiction of trauma in individual or collective idioms reflects the endeavours throughout history to interpret experience. From a social constructionist perspective, trauma is delineated through this quest, in order to wrest meaning from the tangled web of life. There can be no absolute demarcation of traumatic events as this will be moulded by constantly changing historical, social and cultural influences.

### 3.5 Silence and Hearing of Trauma

Contemporaneously with the trauma discourse, individual and collective silences may permeate, and even dominate, the experiences of trauma that are given voice (Morris, 1997, pp.27-28). This propensity for silence becomes intertwined within the unspeakability of trauma by those, who have experienced it. Doubled silence creates few voices of trauma as that which cannot be spoken intersects with established silences (Rorty, 1989, p.94).

#### 3.5.1 Understandings of Silence

Silence is not in itself destructive or restrictive. Silence is foundational for speaking and hearing, as it creates a space wherein voices can speak and be heard (Fiumara, 1996, pp.99-102; Gilligan, 1993, p.xvi; Heidegger, 2008, pp.208, 315; Wong, 2004). Indeed, it is only when a silence is employed for hearing that existence is transformed. In the words of Bourgeois (1975, p.131).
Our existence as effort to exist and desire to be is at its depth most fundamentally related to a hearing of the word and a silence which changes us by allowing us to comprehend ourselves in this process of coming to comprehend from hearing.

Hearing is the dynamic foundation for transformation, as understanding promotes evaluation for the affirmation, modification or rejection of alternative perspectives. Thus, change is created by “listening that understands”, rather than the imposition of one will against another (Ricoeur, 2004, p.449). As life is dependent on growth, it is hereby enriched by change that additionally reinforces the propensity for further dynamic alteration. The alternative is barrenness within a sedimented existence (Bourgeois, 1975, p.131).

Not only is listening fundamental to the potentiality for one’s own Being, it is the primary way that ‘Being-in-the-World’ (Dasein)\(^{11}\) becomes open to ‘Being-with’ (Mitsein) for others (Heidegger, 2008, p.206). However, the refusal to allow voices a voice, exploits and corrupts the potency of silence, in its attempt to rend particular issues invisible (Fiumara, 1996, p.101), and indeed to deny their very existence (Achino-Loeb, 2006, p.11).

Fortuitously, reality cannot be murdered by silence. The ontological status of silence is debated. For Foucault (2002, pp.27-28), silence is not an ontological entity, but an “incorporeal discourse” representing that which is silenced; for Derrida (as cited in Carrette, 2000, pp.28-29) ambiguity marked such delineation and for Fiumara (1996, pp.101, 104) it is the opposite of absence, as it is pregnant with meaning and productivity.

### 3.5.2 Silence of Trauma

Whilst suffering may create empathy and compassion, this is not a universal response, as exposure to pain awakens fears of vulnerability and threatens ontological and cosmological

\(^{11}\)Heidegger (2008, p.157) represented human existence, Being, as Dasein that is synonymous with 'Being-in-the-World’. Being-with (Mitsein) refers to encounter with the Dasein of others.
security. In Western cultures, emotional pain is often contrasted with physical pain that is accorded a higher significance. Suffering is either scrutinised with suspicion, so that it is subject to continual evaluations for justification or ignored completely, rendering it an invisible experience, so that it is secreted away (Phillips, 2007).

Present reality is never ahistorical, as its foundation always rests on the past (Martín-Baró, 1994, p.30). Without this, trauma lacks a contextual imperative for an ethical response (des Pres, 1973). Nelson Mandela (as cited in Dawes, 2013) declared that memory is paramount, as it creates the fabric of identity, upon which the present is woven. It has been postulated that traumatic memory imprints its presence on the present, moulding it into values, beliefs and behaviours imposed by the imperatives of the past. If these demands are too brutal and raw for collective ownership, they are set aside and silenced, creating a culture of denial, rejection, misunderstanding, minimisation, and even contempt (Edelman, Kersner, Kordon, & Lagos, 2003, pp. 144-145; Eissler, 1967; Fournier, 2002; Mollica, 2006, p.19). Thus, silence about trauma cannot be a neutral process, as though it is a mere remnant. It has been compared to a parasite creating further suffering (Ribot, 1883, as cited in Young, 1995, p.29) that echoes within the present day lyrics of Simon and Garfunkel (2012), “Silence like a cancer grows.”

Within this perspective, collective dissociation traps trauma memory in a nether world until necessity or willingness scrutinises this memory and acts to reconcile it with the contingencies of the present, whilst delivering justice to the past. Imprisonment of the past thwarts appropriation of prior truths, acknowledgement of injustice and understanding of the ancestry for present identity. On the other hand, allowing the past to speak holds the promise for freedom and fulfilment for the present and into the future (Martín-Baró, 1994, p.30). Indeed, the past has been said to hold the “key to the future” (Eruesto, 2002, p.20).
However, a trauma residue may linger, slowly sliding into acceptance and respect or its shoots may burst forth creating more trauma. In fact, Derrida (as cited in Borrodori, 2003, pp.146-147) emphasised that traces of that which is overtly rejected will always remain, albeit silently. Deconstruction aims to name such traces and to allow them to speak, as there is the very real danger that these will be lost, if these are judged in the present time to be inconsequential and silenced (Chambon, 1999, p.11).

3.5.3 Silence of Hauntology

Allied with the concept of silent traces, Derrida (1993) employed the metaphor of past spectres that haunt the present, together with the spirit of the future. These, too, produce an imbalance, dominated by unrest and fear. Derrida (1994, p.18) uses Shakespeare’s words in Hamlet, “the time is out of joint”, to most accurately proffer a description, as this emphasises the dislocature of temporalities. Thus, Derrida’s (1994, pp.6, 161; Derrida, 2004) ‘hauntology’ is distinct to ontology, as it is neither alive nor dead, and so fragments its totalising aspects. However, whilst hauntology allows ontology to be, because of it we are more than we imagine ourselves to be.

Increasing awareness of spectres that dislocate present understanding advances the achievement of justice, if responsibility is accepted for those who have come, those yet to come, as well as those living in the present. Such acceptance provides the only firm foundation for hope in the future (Derrida, 1994, p.xix; Derrida, 2004). However, the question remains; what are the appropriate and productive representations of traumatic spectres, as they inhabit both the past and present as “something that is and yet is not” (Trouillot, 1995, p.147). Silence is not one of them. Challenging dominant discourses that seek to hide or diminish the past offers a way forward.
3.5.4 Silence of Power

Power is exercised through the disciplinary practices inherent in the prevailing discourse, as well as by the self in response to these practices. Thus power shapes understanding about experience through continual interactions between the technologies of power with individual agency. This is productive of some expressions of experience but restrictive or silencing of others (Foucault, 1978, pp.100-101). The dominant discourses give rise to the interpretation of suffering and in so doing the subject is objectified, whilst at the same time shaping the subjectivity of individual’s experience of suffering (Phillips, 2007).

Whilst discourse is the consequence of and mechanism for power, it provides the basis for confrontation and alternatives (Foucault, 1978, p.101). Thus, Foucault (1978, p.27) questioned the binary distinction between silence (that which is chosen not to be uttered or is forbidden to say), and the discourse of that which is spoken. Rather than a rigid demarcation between the two, both are interrelated within a framework of overall strategies (rules and justifications) for the construction of discourses. Consequently, as many silences constitute the foundation of and are pervasive within discourses, silence can become a refuge for the operation of power (Foucault, 1978, p.101).

The refusal to attend to suffering is in accord with Foucault’s proposition that knowledge and power are inextricably inter-related, constraining that which can be spoken, by whom, and in what manner (Cunneen, 2008; Gaita, 2000; Rawlinson, 1987). The silence of the repressed may be positive and indicative of freedom if giving voice results in oppression. Silence was the saviour of Jewish children secreted away in France from Nazi slaughter, ensuring the survival of 80% of these children, compared with less than 10% in the rest of Europe (Feldman, Taïeb, & Moro, 2010).

On the other hand, the act of challenging narratives can reveal that which has been concealed or silenced. This is in concert with Kurt Lewin’s (as cited in Walker, 2006)
proposition that it is only in the attempt to enact change that understanding can be attained. Questioning the dominant discourse of trauma can disrupt the exercise of power and thus expand the accepted discourse on what is permissible, what is valued, what necessitates renewed attention or what is in need of correction to account for the experience of suffering that transcends objectification and so embraces the lived experience of individual and collective suffering. The productive nature of power enables this, as it is characterised by fluidity and instability between autonomous individuals. Just as power is dynamic, so too silence can in time give voice to the value that was hidden by loosening the bonds of power (Fiumara, 1996, p.104; Foucault, 1978, p.101). However, some past voices or future opportunities will remain unspeakable, as spectres strain the limitations of language, rather than representing that which cannot be spoken due to proscription (Davis, 2005; Sells, 1998, p.11).

3.5.5 Conspiracy of Silence

The propensity for the silence of trauma narratives has been termed the ‘conspiracy of silence’, and was first applied to the significant collective and individual refusal to acknowledge and respect the pain of survivors of the Shoah for over thirty years (Danieli, 2009, p.351). Their representation as ‘helpless sheep being led meekly to their slaughter’ could not be reconciled with Israel as iconic victors wresting nationhood from their enemies (Schklorov, 2009; Witztum & Malkinson, 2009). The Jewish children saved through silence in war were enslaved through silence in peace, due to the refusal of France to acknowledge the extent of Jewish persecution in their country (Feldman et al., 2010). This failure to allow survivors a voice has hindered their healing and adaptation to a new reality by exacerbating their existing distrust and alienation from others. This is exemplified by Elie Wiesel (as cited in Danieli, 1984, p.23), a Nazi extermination camp survivor, who lamented that it was the
silence of friends that “broke his heart”, rather than the enemy’s malevolence. Thus, it is not surprising that the conspiracy of silence has been designated as the “second wound” (Symonds, 1980, as cited in Danieli, 2004, p.284). The conspiracy of silence has been evidenced within the refugee discourse. Few opportunities exist to give voice to their many voices (Sachs, 2005, p.x). It could be argued that the Australian government’s media blackout on the arrival, sinking or towing from Australian waters of asylum seeker boats in 2013 and 2014 represented an example of such a conspiracy (MacCallum, 2013; Mather, 2013).

A conspiracy of silence towards refugees, and particularly female refugees, will be exacerbated by the multiplicity of intersecting silences from the strands of the discourses that constitute the refugee discourse. These include the silence towards refugees specifically (Sachs, 2005, p.x), women (Gilligan, 1993), and racial prejudice (Lago & Smith, 2010, p.31). Silence for refugees can be intensified by an unacknowledgement of the diversity inherent within refugee experiences, as they are relegated to a “mute and faceless physical mass” (Rajaram, 2002, p.247). Humanitarian organisations and Western professionals may contribute to this muteness, if they assume to speak as the sole refugee voice with validity (Sigona, 2014, p.372).

Throughout history, women have been subject to silence with this oppression continuing to strangle voices across many borders. This muteness has been implicated in the exercise of cultural, political and religious power over women (Achino-Loeb, 2006, p.3; Ford, 2013). Thus, it is unsurprising that this transpires for women with experiences of trauma (Duncan, 2004, pp.5, 127, 131, 151). Indeed, women from refugee communities have been defined as the “silent majority” (Gozdziak & Long, 2005, as cited in Baird, 2012, p.15).

Lack of opportunities and fear within male dominated refugee camps created a silence around violence against women (Pittaway, Bartolomei, & Rees, 2007), whilst cultural proscription silenced Bosnian women, who endured rape during the Yugoslav war from 1991
to 1995 (Arcel, 1999, p.192; Seifert, 1994, p.66). These represent the widespread and entrenched silence about rape that has reinforced male domination through the ages (Seifert, 1994, pp.66-68). Although the reluctance for women to share stories about sexual abuse has been used as one reason for this silence, the reverse has also been found if safety and trust can be established (Horn, 2010; Mackenzie, McDowell, & Pittaway, 2007).

The application of the conspiracy of silence to representations of suffering in the media is applicable to refugees. This is revealed, if the response is denial or minimisation due to compassion fatigue or experiential detachment as spectators, rather than direct involvement (Wilkinson, 2005, p.6). Even in politically stable societies there is ‘structural violence’ that has become so entrenched and familiar that it has been rendered invisible and silent (Habermas, as cited in Borrodori, 2003, p.35). The disjunction between people fleeing for their lives and the interpretation of refugees as invaders of Australia that has coloured popular refugee discourse and Commonwealth legislation, is one example of structural violence. The refugee discourse in Australia is flooded with references to the illegality of their arrival, failures of assimilation, suspicion of terrorism and economic cost (Amnesty International, 2013a; Refugee Council of Australia, 2012; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). The Australian government designates asylum seekers as ‘illegal’ on their Department of Immigration and Border Protection website (Australian Government, 2014a). Further, government public servants have been ordered to refer to asylum seekers as ‘illegals’ (The Guardian, 2013a). This is based on the dubious distinction between classifying the entry of asylum seekers as illegal but not their application for asylum seeker status. Such references threaten to overwhelm the voices of refugees that speak of their suffering, perseverance and positive contributions to Australia.
3.5.6 Silencing Silence: Hearing of Trauma

The Jewish existential philosopher, Martin Buber (1947/2002), affirmed that the capacity for voice is integral to life, as it facilitated ‘I-Thou relationships’ that constitute the bedrock for a humanity bound together through the reciprocity of belonging. Such relationships are characterised by respect for the autonomy of the Other, rather than the instrumentality, objectification and desire for mastery of ‘I-It relationships’. A voice, whether joy-filled or pain-filled or an amalgam of both, cries out into the silence. A response follows, not as an echo but as a “true rejoinder, tone for tone not repeating mine, not even in a weakened form, but corresponding to mine, answering its tones” (Buber, 1947/2002, p.2). Thus, an ‘I-Thou relationship’ is founded upon conversation that occurs in the ‘between’ of participants, as both strive to formulate a meaningful reality that fulfils the desires and needs of both together through an enduring and living relationship (Buber, 1947/2002, p.22). Such relationships constitute the “ontological reality in which the self comes into being and through which it fulfils and authenticates itself” (Friedman, as cited in Buber, 1947/2002, p.xv). This represents the deepest experience of humanity (Buber, 1947/2002). This was exemplified by the life of the South African statesman, Nelson Mandela. He did not deny the past injustices perpetrated by the evil of apartheid. However, he listened to the fears of the Afrikaans minority, responding with forgiveness and a willingness to embrace a new future for South Africa founded on justice for all. Mandela wore t-shirts emblazoned with his prisoner number, a Springbok rugby jersey, rainbow hued shirts and colourful ‘Madiba shirts’, thus uniting black and white aspirations for a journey together into the future.

Silence about trauma compounds injury as unheard voices empty into a void. Conversely, allowing voices to be proclaimed can create acknowledgement, understanding and thoughtful response. The Ancient Mariner (Coleridge, 1996, p.99) expressed it as,
Since then, at an uncertain hour,
that agony returns:
and till my ghastly tale is told,
this heart within me burns.

To do less is to deny full expression of trauma experiences that ultimately annihilates the essence of being (Cavell, 1997, p. 97). Voice can be given to that which has been hidden through lack of acknowledgement, shame, guilt, or fear of rejection, disbelief or misunderstanding (Eastmond, 2005). Indeed, the willingness of another to listen has been cited as the critical element (Primo Levi, as cited in Giuliani, 2003, p.74). This stems from the pen of a man, who endured the maelstrom of Oświęcim. Sharing of trauma experiences has facilitated healing for many survivors of the Shoah (Kahana, Harel & Kahana, 1988, p.189). Having another person listen, really listen, can be a balm for suffering within empathetic community and so effect restoration and transformation.

Nonetheless, the right to decide if, when or with whom narratives will be shared, must be respected, as this sharing can create extreme pain, even if undertaken by choice and with positive effect (Lifton, 1988, p.8; Mollica, 2006, p.21; Zapata-Sepúlveda, 2012). For the Ancient Mariner (Coleridge, 1996, p.99) this was articulated as,

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woeful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

Iby Knill (2010) and Eva Schloss (2013), the stepsister of Anne Frank, needed to wait 60 years and 40 years respectively, before they were able to share their narratives of survival as a young girls in Oświęcim. An early release of the voice of cruelty upon cruelty would have ushered in their demise (Harding, 2010). For Schloss (Pukas, 2013), it was as if a dam
had burst and she could not stem the surge of her survival story. Sharing this ushered in the beginning of healing. Knill (Czernick, 2013; Harding, 2010) frequently gave voice to these horrors, albeit at the cost of recollection of that which she wanted to forget. Notwithstanding, she ponders whether this is her purpose in life, “Perhaps I survived to bear witness, to talk to you, to build bridges between people. What have I learned? What do I know? I know that human cruelty knows no bounds” (Krill, as cited in Czernik, 2013).

Nonetheless, the universal value of sharing trauma narratives has been challenged (Malkki, 2007). Some narratives will remain unspoken, only living within an individual. However, the recognition of silent suffering can provide legitimacy for such concealed narratives. This is exemplified by Inuit, who convey understanding through shared, albeit silent, comradeship (Fletcher & Denham, 2008). Once again, the criticality for the acknowledgement of contextualisation within culture is highlighted. The essential determinant is whether individuals and communities yearn to share their narratives openly. The domain of the conspiracy of silence operates to mute this aspiration, rather than its application to those who do not share this longing. It would be tragic if this conspiracy that has been the cause of suffering became another source of distress by refuting the yearning for silence.

### 3.5.7 Silence of Suffering

Whilst no research can be an absolute representation of reality, it has been recognised that particular difficulties exist for the communication and understanding of experience following trauma (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.5). This is particularly pertinent for suffering, both in its narration and hearing. Suffering has been depicted as “unspeakable”, as it is “not a concept but a lived reality that resists articulation” (Frank, 2001, pp.353, 355). It is unspeakable because suffering is so removed from everyday experience that it strains the
contingencies of language (Sells, 1998, p.11). Thus, it has been questioned whether it is possible to “find the language, which sits beyond trauma, to describe what cannot be spoken?” (Lago & Smith, 2010, p.27). Indeed, Rorty (1989, p.94) asserts that the “nonlinguistic” character of suffering negates the existence of a “voice of the oppressed.”

That which is unspeakable encompasses diverse meaning, too horrendous for utterance, too difficult for expression and that which is proscribed. All of these are applicable to suffering within trauma. Trauma can induce silence, as “silence in its primal aspect, is a consequence of terror, of a dissolution of self and the world that, once known, can never be fully dispersed” (des Pres, 1980, p.36). As trauma once known is always known, survivors are wrenched between concern for the living to be not burdened with this knowledge or fealty to the dead. Silence reigns in the kingdom of the dead and the world that has been vanquished. It is when the survivor speaks that the scream of the dead is given voice. The silence is heard (des Pres, 1980, p.36). However, the struggle to speak is compounded by the collective conspiracy of silence within the trauma discourse. Thus, those that strive to give voice to their experiences can be doubly silenced, by their own muteness and by the enforced muteness from the collective silencing, both of which may compound the other.

The ontological status of suffering has been debated. As suffering has been depicted as secreted within darkness evading the light, it “resists definition because it is the reality of what is not”, is a “no thing” (Frank, 2001, p.355) and is the “wordless nothing” (Agger, 1994, p.126). Whilst it cannot be debated that sharing suffering is fraught with difficulties, this does not necessitate denying its ontological reality (Arman & Rehnsfeldt, 2003). For those, who plummet the depths of suffering, its pain is all too real. Its tentacles can reach into every aspect of life, threatening to strangle its very existence. It may not be a representation of reality as previously experienced, but it is reality nevertheless. As suffering can be represented experientially, it can be described as an entity.
The basis for Frank’s (2001, p.355) assertion of suffering as a “no thing” is his emphasis on suffering as loss.

_Suffering is loss, present or anticipated, and loss is another instance of no thing, an absence_. We suffer the absence of what was missed and now is no longer recoverable and the absence of what we fear will never be.

The emphasis on loss highlights an often significant component of suffering. However, this is not the sole defining characteristic of suffering, as it can comprise traumatic experiences of life beyond prior imagination or experience. It is inadequately described as even a loss of innocence.

The chaos inherent in such narratives has been referred to as “the hole in the telling”, as stories circumnavigate the ‘wound’ (Frank, 1995, pp.101-102; Frank, 2001). This complexity is not surprising considering the disruption trauma renders to the accepted foundations and hopes of everyday life (G. Becker, 1997, pp.4-5; Janoff-Bulmann, 1992; Larrabee, Weine, & Woollcott, 2002). Additionally, the experience of suffering complicates its narration, as enveloping pain can restrict cognition and emotion, as well as the language that gives these expression (Morse, 2002; Rorty, 1989, p.94). Thus, attention must be given to that which is spoken and that which is unspoken, so that the silence is ‘heard’ and can illuminate the pain (Frank, 1995, pp.101-102; Laub, 1992, p.58; Smith & Sparkes, 2011). It has been questioned whether the biomedical model of trauma can give voice to trauma or whether it silences through its integral nosology that categorises, pathologises and excludes (Wong, 2004). Additionally, classification cannot hear that which is ‘unspeakable’, as it cannot attend to silence (Frank, 2001; Sells, 1998, p.11). Whispers may be heard from within the confines of classification but experiential understanding will need to be assumed.

Suffering can never be described or understood in full. The assertion, “I know how you feel” displays arrogance and indeed, a lack of understanding. Further, this diminishes the
integrity of the Other (Lévinas, as cited in Frank, 2001). However, suffering can be partially communicated and understood, as another’s pain can be experienced through shared bonds of humanity. As language can be annihilated by suffering, this signifies that some aspects cannot be spoken and for some, suffering will be silent (Eastmond, 2007; Scarry, 1987, p.54). Consequently, research into the experience of suffering can only reveal a partial representation, as ultimately full understanding will remain unfathomable. The challenge is to utilise approaches that will facilitate understanding of trauma experiences, including the experience of suffering.
CHAPTER FOUR: EXPERIENCES OF TRAUMA

Two perspectives for the conceptualisation of experiences of trauma will be discussed; the biomedical and Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework (HSEF). The divergence between these paradigms will be outlined, as both perceive and understand the experiences of trauma from frequently conflicting perspectives. The implications for posttraumatic stress will be described, especially its relevance for non-Western cultures. The diverse interpretations of the concept of resilience and posttraumatic growth will also be discussed. A historical synopsis will outline endeavours to wrest meaning from trauma as such attempts can foster growth in hopefulness and hope objectives.

4.1 Introduction

The advent of humanity gave birth to trauma that has continued to be a catalyst for pain and renewal throughout history. The inevitability of change and the consequent imperative for willingness to change was acknowledged by the classical Roman poet, Ovid (as cited in Hunter, 2009, p.445), “The heavens and all below them, Earth and her creatures, All change, And we, part of creation, Must also suffer change.” When the myth of utopia and the bridges across the abyss of life are vanquished by the brutal reality of trauma, we are compelled to confront this violent shattering of our world (Kaniasty & Norris, 1999, p.41; Tolstoy, 2002, p.143). The interpretation of trauma is frequently dichotomised as either challenge or threat (Olff, Langeland, Berthold, & Gersons, 2005). However, an alternative perspective would be to view it as a challenge to a threat of one’s experience of life within ontology and cosmology (Fournier, 2002). Thus, responses are characterised not as a dichotomy but rather as a complex interaction between a diversity of destructive, conflicting, ambiguous and beneficial experiences wherein differing ones dominate at certain times within that challenge.
4.1.1 Suffering through Trauma

Desperate and tenacious survival may initially be the sole criticality after trauma with life as near comatose existence. Adversity hammers and pounds into our world and even our very Being, that can render our past as betrayal, divorce us from everyday realities and shatter our future. Suffering can infiltrate every fibre of our Being, so that our world, others and our very self can appear alien and threatening. The English poet, Gerard Manly Hopkins (as cited in Harmon, 1992, p.795) expressed the hopelessness that trauma may engender as,

O the mind, mind has mountains; cliffs of fall
Frightful, sheer, no-man-fathomed. Hold them cheap
May who ne’er hung there. Nor does long our small
Durance deal with that steep or deep. Here! Creep,
Wretch, under a comfort serves in a whirlwind: all
Life death does end and each day dies with sleep.

The physical world as a metaphor for hopelessness engulfs the despair of an individual within the tumult of life devoid of hope. The short ‘durance’ of life inadequately enables endurance. Even trauma marked by brevity may linger on with agonising life. In the words of the American poet, Heather McHugh (1994, p.5),

I can never
dream this storm away.
It was over for maybe minutes
then it was never over.

The pessimistic poem by another American poet, Carl Sandburg (as cited in Guinness, 2005, p.21), “Born, troubled, died”, renowned for its extreme brevity, may encompass the experience of life. Thus, conceptualisations about hope as hopefulness will be jeopardised if
conceptions about ontology and cosmology are cleaved asunder, and hope as objectives may
be annihilated or require serious transformation.

4.1.2 Resilience through Trauma

Nonetheless, the capacity for tenacious resilience following adversity has long been
acknowledged. The Chinese philosopher, Confucius (551BCE-479BCE, as cited in
Nemeroff, Bremner, Foa, Maysberg, North, & Stein, 2006, p.4) observed that, “Our greatest
glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.” In spite of apparent
overwhelming adversity, individuals struggle with life for the continuance of life. This will
be enabled by understandings about hope, that both provide a framework for hopefulness, in
which resilience can thrive, as well as signifying objectives that offer direction in life for
resilience.

4.1.3 Growth through Trauma

In the words of Helen Keller (as cited in Benor, 2006, p.265), who overcame darkness
and silence to shine and to speak, “Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the
overcoming of it.” Indeed, the catalyst of trauma can become a “crucible of transformation”
(S. K. Levine, 2009, p.12). Diverse philosophical and religious traditions have interpreted
suffering as possessing the potential to transform individual lives and communities, as well as
the advancement of wisdom (Linley, 2003). Such transformations may be founded on
frameworks for hopefulness and hopes that in turn may be subject to re-interpretation by the
transformations they have facilitated.
4.2 Biomedical Model of Trauma

4.2.1. Physical Consequences of Trauma

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the experience of trauma has been strongly constructed within the biomedical model that constitutes the dominant trauma discourse (Hanna, 2003, p.20; Summerfield, 2000; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). This has focused on the causation and alleviation of the adverse consequences of trauma. Indeed, trauma impacts severely upon the physicality of life in a myriad of ways. Mortality rates increase after war and disasters due to inadequate access to medical facilities, housing, clean water and food (Siddique et al., 1995). The prevalence of medical conditions is increased, including cancer, diabetes, and cardiovascular, gastrointestinal and autoimmune diseases (Boscarino, 2004; Kendall-Tackett, 2007; Kendall-Tackett, 2009). This may result from interactions between alterations in physiological homeostasis with disruption to the former way of life, such as difficulty for self-care (McFarlane & Raphael, 2001, p.155).

4.2.2. Convergence of Trauma Experiences

Whilst the dominant biomedical trauma discourse attempts to separate experiences of trauma into ordered categories of suffering, resilience and growth, this does not reflect the multilayered and continuously mutable nature of experience, wherein all or some may occur simultaneously, consecutively, intermittently or not at all. Life after trauma is doubly fragmented, as fragmented experiences occur within a fragmented world. Such dislocations strain the limits of rationality rendering such experiences ultimately unknowable in the fullest sense (Becker, 1997; Becker, Beyene, & Ken, 2000; S. K. Levine, 2009, p.17; Morris, 1997, p.27).
4.2.3 Posttraumatic stress

The chaos, complexity, contradiction and ambiguity inherent in suffering can appear so overwhelming and incomprehensible that it is not surprising that attempts have been made to codify the ‘unspeakable’ into an ordered, speakable nosology. Psychological difficulties are most frequently described within a positivist framework of trauma. This describes the majority of survivors (90%) as experiencing significant distress in the aftermath of trauma (Norris, Friedman, & Watson, 2002b), with the rates of posttraumatic stress and recovery dependent on the type, severity and duration of the stressor (Bonanno & Mancini, 2008; Joseph & Williams, 2005). The most common adverse psychological responses following trauma are delineated as PTSD and depression (R. Bryant et al., 2010). A diagnosis of PTSD within DSM-IV-TR required the presence of re-experiencing, avoidance and physical reactivity symptomatology that creates experiential dysfunction (APA, 2000), although the recently released DSM-5 prescribes the additional diagnosis of depression (APA, 2012).

The voluminous research on PTSD since 1980 attests to its wide endorsement with many asserting that the construct’s validity and reliability are excellent (Keane, 2009; Brewin et al., 2009). Proponents claim that PTSD is a universal response to trauma that may be ameliorated by Western approaches. Research on PTSD has assisted in facilitating beneficial outcomes for many trauma survivors, as it has increased awareness and acceptance of the deleterious impact of trauma for many people. Although PTSD abates significantly in the first year following trauma, its prevalence represents a significant source of suffering (R. Bryant, 2004, p.188; Kessler, Sonnega, Bromet, Hughes, & Nelson, 1995; Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005; Shalev, 2002). This is exacerbated by the increased risk for PTSD to reappear (Macleod, 1994; Solomon & Mikulincer, 2006). Additionally, approximately 40% of individuals, who are diagnosed with initial PTSD, continue to experience long term and severe distress that requires a number of years for recovery (Creamer et al., 2001; Ehlers,
Mayou, & B. Bryant, 1998; Kessler et al., 1995; Norris & Slone, 2010, pp.89-90; Norris & Stevens, 2007; Yehuda & Bierer, 2009). The resultant functional impairment may have significant impacts, including relationship difficulties, loss of income and decreased educational achievement (Kessler, 2000). As depression frequently occurs after trauma (N. Breslau, 2002; R. Bryant et al., 2010; McNally, R. Bryant, & Ehlers, 2003; Shalev et al., 1998), PTSD and depression may independently or in combination contribute to increased thoughts and behaviours associated with suicide that is particularly related to pervasive hopelessness and loss of hope objectives (Drescher, Rosen, Burling, & Foy, 2003; Jakupcak, Cook, Imel, Fontana, Rosenheck, & McFall, 2009; Somasundaram & Jamunanantha, 2002, p.215). Thus, a diagnosis of PTSD may identify distress and intervention opportunities.

Advocates of PTSD maintain that a neurobiological foundation exists for PTSD (de Jong, 2005). This postulates that intensified activation of the amygdala is one of the primary mechanisms in the development and maintenance of PTSD, as it fundamentally influences inhibition of conditioned fear responses. This leads to dysfunctional inhibition by the medial prefrontal cortex that is necessary for regulation of these fear responses (Rauch, Shin, & Phelps, 2006). However, there is reduced medial prefrontal cortex activation during fear processing in those with PTSD (Lanius, Bluhm, Lanius, & Pain, 2006).

Additionally, it has been argued that functional neuroimaging research indicates the presence of distinct neural activation patterns in patients with PTSD compared with those with PTSD and comorbid depression (Kemp et al., 2007; Lanius et al., 2007) and with social anxiety disorder and specific phobia (Etkin & Wager, 2007). The reported differences between PTSD and depression may not support the inclusion of affective criteria for PTSD in DSM-5. Further, it is stated that distinct cortisol negative feedback inhibition is evidenced in PTSD and other psychiatric disorders (Yehuda et al. 2004). Thus, it is claimed that universal biological mechanisms for PTSD exist (Brewin et al., 2009; Falconer et al., 2008). However,
this does not signify that PTSD, or other conceptualisations of adverse trauma responses, are experienced and interpreted in the same way in diverse cultures, as they occur within distinct milieus.

There has been increasing debate within psychiatric and psychological circles about the current form given to PTSD in DSM-IV-TR (McHugh & Treisman, 2007). The critical role of past psychiatric vulnerability in the aetiology of PTSD has been emphasised by some, rather than ascribing a role to the experience of trauma (Bowman, 1999). Consequently, PTSD has been characterised as a fashionable hypothesis that has been a retrograde step for understanding trauma responses (McHugh & Treisman, 2007). Whilst a diagnosis of PTSD may result in identification for the advisability of treatment, other responses may be easily overlooked, if adverse responses to trauma are restricted to PTSD (North & Pfefferbaum, 2002; Yeomans, Herbert, & Forman, 2008).

4.3 Resilience through Trauma

4.3.1 Introduction

The propensity for resilience is so widespread that it has been referred to as “ordinary magic” (Masten, 2001, p.227). This enigmatic phrase encapsulates pervasiveness entwined with mystery. The strength of individuals and communities to weather the storms of adversity speaks of unfathomable potential. However, the capacity for resilience is not boundless, as limitations pertain to all (Rutter, 1993, p.626). This occurs as resilience diminishes with the severity of the trauma/s and environmental deprivation (Roisman, 2005). It is unsurprising that those, who are stretched for too long in a world that turns the ‘rack’ relentlessly with no balm of healing or restoration, will eventually succumb.
4.3.2 Background of Resilience Research

Recent research on adult resilience has been built on the foundation of extensive research on childhood resilience (Luthar, 1993; Luthar, Cicchetti, & B. Becker, 2000; Luthar & Brown, 2007; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1993, 2001, 2006; Werner & Smith, 2001). The fundamental assumption has been that resilience reflects the attainment of positive adaptation following adversity with competencies being transferred to alternative circumstances (Luthar, 1993; Masten, 2001; Rutter, 1993). This assumption has continued with adult resilience, which has witnessed increasing interest in recent years, although this area remains inadequately researched (Atkinson, Martin, & Rankin, 2009; Bonanno, 2005b; Campbell-Sills, Cohan, & Stein, 2006; Luthar & Brown, 2007).

4.3.3 Understandings about Resilience

There is no agreement as to the characterisation of resilience, which has led to a lack of clarity and confusion (Atkinson et al., 2009; Lemay & Ghazal, 2001; Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Brown, 2007). It has been variously characterised as a trait, outcome and process (Helgason, 2008). Resilience has been frequently defined in terms of individual physiognomies or traits that predispose to a specific outcome of resilience (Bonanno, 2005b; Bonanno et al., 2005b; Campbell-Sills et al., 2006; Connor & Davidson, 2003; Leitch, Vanslyke, & Allen, 2009; Waysman, Schwarzwald, & Solomon, 2001).

Although it was assumed for many years within psychology that the outcome of adult resilience after trauma was exceptional, it has been increasingly recognised that following trauma, habitual functioning is frequently not significantly impaired and the experience of distress is only brief (Bonanno, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Bonanno, Rennicke, & Dekel, 2005b; Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli, & Vlahov, 2007; Bonanno & Mancini, 2008; Bonanno et al., 2012; Schnurr, 2009). Indeed, resilience has been represented as the default experience
following trauma (Shalev & Errera, 2008, pp.149-172). However, estimates and evaluations of resilience are dependent on the outcome measures that are utilised (Litz, 2005). Importantly, it needs to be acknowledged that suffering may continue that does not impinge upon functioning, being visible only to close confidantes or may remain unspoken. Living productively and suffering are not mutually exclusive.

This psychological perspective defines resilience as the outcome of stable functioning with temporary distress and the capacity for innovative experiences following trauma (Bonanno, 2004, 2005a, 2005b). This has congruence with the definition of resilience within physics that refers to capacity for objects to return to their former configuration following exposure to potentially deforming external stress (James & Wooten, 2012, p.896). Thus, resilience is differentiated from recovery, which is characterized by distress causing dysfunction before resumption of pre-trauma function (Bonanno et al., 2002; Bonanno, Moskowitz, Papa, & Folkman, 2005a; Bonanno et al., 2005b; Bonanno et al., 2007).

An alternative conceptualisation equates this categorisation of resilience with resistance, with trajectories for resilience and recovery that encompasses comparable initial responses but have divergent time periods for a return to pre-trauma functioning, that are both indicative of adaptation (Norris, Tracy, & Galea, 2009). However, whilst trajectories may diverge quantitatively, this does not signify that there are qualitative differences. For construct validity to be established, separate predictors or outcomes need to be identified (Luthar & Brown, 2007). Consequently, recovery can be equated with a form of resilience, as both are identified with adaptation following adversity (Montgomery, 2010; Roisman, 2005). Such a conceptualisation highlights resilience as inherent in survival that will be displayed through a diversity of processes and outcomes, as life is experienced through the challenge of trauma (Van Breda, 2001).
4.3.4 Resilience as Social Ecological Relationship

In contrast to perspectives that understand resilience as traits that facilitate a swift return to stable functioning, it has also been emphasised that such traits need to be understood within synergistic interactions with social and physical ecological factors (Garmezy, 1991; Garmezy, Masten, & Tellegen, 1984; Rutter, 1993, 2001, p.14; Roisman, 2005; Ungar, 2006; Werner & Smith, 2001). Additionally, these interrelationships need to be examined within a temporal context, so that antecedents and consequences are considered (Rutter, 1993; Rutter, 2001, pp.26-28). Indeed, the construct of resilience has been criticized as tautological, if characteristics of resilience attributed to individuals are then associated with resilience (Luthar, et al., 2000; Ungar, 2004).

Research with those who have experienced severe adversity has demonstrated a diversity of outcomes (Norris et al., 2009; Rutter, 1993, 2001, p.15). As appropriate or inappropriate outcomes after trauma are socially and culturally defined, the construct of resilience, including risk and protective factors, needs to reflect this contextualisation (Bender & Losel, 1997; Ungar, 2003, 2008). Critical factors have been characterised as keystone concerns, as whilst they are important they remain embedded within an interdependent configuration, in the same way that the keystone constitutes part of an archway (Ungar, 2003).

Resilience can constructively be viewed as the interaction between dynamic adaptive and negative influences that are reflected in individual ability to access resources for wellbeing and their provision by the social environment with resultant diversity in outcomes (Seccombe, 2002; Ungar, 2003, 2008). Diverse characterisations of outcomes evidencing resilience need not be a difficulty if resilience is perceived contextually (Ungar, 2006). Thus, there is a need for understanding and measurements of resilience to reflect this diversity, as much of the research is framed within Western frameworks (Gilgun, 1999; Ungar, 2005,
However, insufficient research has examined the interrelationships between individual, familial, community and societal responses to trauma that impact upon resilience. The critical need is to discover and enhance the resilience that empowers within culturally specific social ecological frameworks, so that in the words of the English writer, Rudyard Kipling (1910/1994, p.605),

You can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: ‘Hold on!’

The ‘will’ must have foundations that have been firmly established. Might not hope with its twin fundamentals of a sense of hopefulness and hope objectives provide such a basis?

4.4 Critique of the Biomedical Model of Trauma

4.4.1 Positivism

Psychiatry and psychology primarily rely on the positivism of scientific methodology used in the natural sciences to understand trauma, as this assumes that these experiences can be adequately researched within this methodology. However, it has been debated whether knowledge about human experience is “an objective reality patiently awaiting the articulate voice of science” (Rawlinson, 1987, p.373). The world is there but truth is nowhere (Burr & Butt, 2000, p.196). In relation to psychiatry, the objective existence of psychiatric disorders has been questioned (Summerfield, 2001). The richness, complexity and ambiguity of human experience defy the required rigidity for positivism (Ingleby, 1980; Thomas & Bracken, 2004). Thus, the application of methodology used for the objects of natural science to human experience can be questioned (Hanna, 2003, p.51).
Positivism maintains that research can produce objective results that meet the various standards for validity and reliability, as well as constituting theories of causal determinism (Bryman, 2004, pp.11-13). However, the objectivity of any discourse that attempts to describe and explain human experience has been questioned. All such enterprise will rest on value laden assumptions that will influence that which is studied and that which is silenced, as well as the ways that this is achieved (Ingelby, 1980). Additionally, the intricately interwoven relationships between historical, social, cultural, economic, and political systems defy complete unravelling by positivism to produce comprehensive and meaningful phenomenology or causal explanations. The reduction of social and psychological features to independent variables isolates them from their contextual intelligibility (Thomas & Bracken, 2004). Consequently, positivism cannot fully account for the intricacies of social and cultural contexts that exist within specific historical milieus (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995; Ingleby, 1980, p.32; Ussher, 2000, p.221). If this is replaced by interpretations of these contexts, explanations for behaviour may be illuminated, rather than the provision of causality. A focus on causation can become circumscribed to accusation, the emphasis of biological factors and the exclusion of individual and community interpretation. It further darkens, obscures and restricts the experiences of trauma in an already dark, obscure and restricted world.

4.4.2 Medicalisation of Trauma

Increasingly, the experience of trauma, particularly suffering, has been medicalised, wherein non-medical concerns are subject to definition within a medical framework (van Praag, 2000). This rests on the assumption that these experiences can be studied in the same way as medical concerns and the appropriateness of medical expertise and intervention (Zola, 1972). The biomedical model offers order for trauma where there is no order; safety (at least
for researchers and clinicians) where there is threat of vulnerability; trust in constructs where there is suspicion of the world and oneself; and rationality instead of ambiguity, contradiction and incomprehensibility. Further, the medicalisation of difficulties, including suffering, transfers responsibility from the individual to medical professionals, who then by default become “surrogate frontal lobes” (Kaniasty & Norris, 1999, p.40). Critique of this dominant discourse of trauma may identify inconsistencies, omissions and inadequacies concerning the experience of trauma (Rossitor, 2005). This will focus on the restriction, objectification, individualisation, pathologisation, and diagnosis as stasis and labelling that are evident within the biomedical model.

4.4.3 Restriction and Objectification of Trauma

Deference to nosologies derived from positivism provides structure but restricts the lens of awareness and analysis (Phillips, 2007; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). The ability of the ‘listening silence’ to promote dialogue and understanding can be thwarted by the presence of any model that aims for objectification, conceptualisation, categorisation and normalisation, as many voices will not be heard or will be excluded (Wong, 2004). Objectification diminishes humanity, as individuals are interpreted as objects. Limiting the potency and right of autonomy, self-determination, agency, individuality, and subjectivity are all negative consequences of this approach (Nussbaum, 1995). Experiences of trauma become objectified within the biomedical model, as abstract concepts are viewed as possessing a concrete and static reality (Hanna, 2003, p.102). This view of reality will be compromised by the limited purview of trauma permitted by understanding through a nosological framework.

One of the hallmarks of trauma is fear. The fear of fear may be alleviated by a feeling of mastery over trauma by objectification (Hanna, 2003, pp.8, 12). Although quantitative accounts of responses to trauma present disturbing scenarios, objectified descriptions fail to
capture the complexity and ambiguity of trauma experiences within dynamic relationships (Geras, 2001, p.164; Hanna, 2003, p.22; Kleinman, 1995, p.181; Kokanovic et al., 2008). These become objectified within discourses that are shaped by specific disciplinary and regulatory regimes. Indeed, objectification has been defined as a “discursive mechanism by which existing power arrangements obscure reality to maintain the given arrangements” (Hanna, 2003, p.102).

4.4.4 Individualisation of Trauma

Increasingly, suffering is individualised within a psychological paradigm (Bracken, 2001; Pupavac, 2004). Such an orientation is inadequate as individuals do not exist in isolation but live within an interwoven web of relationships (Hanna, 2003, p.22; Martín-Baró, 1999, pp.68-69). These relationships operate within ‘lifeworlds’ constructed through socio-cultural processes, within which the trauma occurred and within which endeavours for adaptation occur following trauma (Kleinman, 1997, p.180). Indeed, Martín-Baró (1999, pp.68-69) suggested dialectically that,

Neither the society nor the individual is real in itself, but rather, both exist to the extent that they mutually give each other existence. If the individual is a human individual, it is because he or she is shaped by society; if a human society exists it is because there are individuals who make it up.

This is clearly evidenced within non-Western cultures with their focus on collectivity, rather than individuality as in Western cultures (Bracken et al., 1995). Within Western cultures, the individual is represented as a unique and distinct entity that is contrasted with other entities, the social milieu, the natural environment and the supernatural (Geertz, 1993, p.59). However, in many non-Western cultures, the individual is interpreted within the cohesion of these elements (Kleinman, 1988, p.11). For example, Indigenous Australian cosmology maintains the integration of nature, spirits and humanity within the unification of
all life, past, present and future. This life is re-created and preserved within a dynamic, rhythmic framework through the ‘Dreaming’ from the past by the present for the future (Swain, 1995, p.79). Further, the interpretation of the experience of individual wellbeing is primarily undertaken through a socio-centric lens in many non-Western cultures (Lewis-Fernandez & Kleinman, 1994; Bourne, 1991, pp.149-153). One example can be found in Indian society, where wellbeing is enhanced by the concept of unification between individual and the social world, as this imparts a sense of purpose greater than the individual (Paranjpe, 1998, pp.115, 181).

Nevertheless, discussion of differences between Western versus non-Western cultures needs to be undertaken with appreciation that this dichotomy ignores the complexity of contemporary cultures (Bracken, 2001). Cultures can be broadly categorised as individualistic or collectivist, with Western cultures reflecting differing degrees of an individualistic orientation, with the focus on the importance on individual identity, whilst non-Western are characterised more by an emphasis on collective relationships (Hofstede, 1980, p.780). Thus, flexibility is required in such a categorisation, as a dichotomous classification will hide shared values and the importance of context for the relevance of specific values (McInerney, 2006, p.808).

Not only does trauma inflict harm upon individuals within their web of social organisation but when trauma is a collective experience, it creates havoc to the structures that comprise this web (Martín-Baró, 2004, p.569). This has been described as injurious to the “tissues of social life that damages the bonds linking people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality” (K. Erikson, 1976b, p.302). This may encompass alterations to the ethics, morality, norms and institutions of a community. Examples abound. Israel is defined fundamentally by the Shoah (Michaeli, 2012). Indigenous Australia continues to bear the wounds inflicted by colonial and postcolonial trauma (Atkinson, 2002).
El Salvador became a land where deceit was paraded as reality, whilst truth was imprisoned during its long running civil war (Aron & Corne, 1994, p.8). On the other hand, failure to understand trauma as a social experience discourages acceptance and utilisation of community strengths and values to conceptualise and respond to the trauma (Kaniasty & Norris, 1999, p.40). It is these strengths that will ultimately provide salvation from trauma.

4.4.5 Pathologisation of Trauma

There has been an increasing pathologisation of suffering (Burr & Butt, 2000, pp.186-187). This can be observed in the predictions of an epidemic of psychological disorders, specifically depression, by the WHO (Summerfield, 2008). Social and emotional difficulties within trauma may then be delineated as ‘mental illness’, if they fulfil criteria for specific disorders. Such disorders rest on the demarcation created between normal and abnormal behaviour. Whilst much research focuses on formalising frequent symptoms into an accepted nosology, no objective measure exists for their external validation. As “psychiatric diagnoses are not robust entities” (Gangdev, 2007, p.189; Baca-Garcia et al., 2007), the differentiation between abnormality and normality remains fluid (Moncrieff, Hopker, & Thomas, 2005). For example, it was not until 1973 that homosexuality was removed as a mental disorder from DSM-II (Spitzer, 1981).

Normality has been ascribed diverse definitions by psychiatry and psychology (Bartlett, 2008; Faul & Gross, 2006, p.3; Hacker, 1945). It has been conceptualised within the fulfilment of the ideal in many manifestations; a balance of psychic forces, self-actualisation, resistance to stress, autonomy, competence and reality perception (Jahoda, 1958, as cited in Rogers & Pilgrim, 2006, p.8); adjustment (Wile, 1940, as cited in Bartlett, 2008); optimal functioning (Hacker, 1945); social value and conformity (Reider, 1950, as cited in Bartlett, 2008; Szasz, 1970/1997; Bolton, 2008); personality integration (Hacker, 1945) and reflecting
evolutionary stages (Wakefield, 1992). Significantly, the role of culture in shaping the
diverse expressions of these standards is generally ignored, although Hacker (1945)
enshadowed personality integration within cultural diversity.

Although there is no consensus concerning the standard against which normality is to
be evaluated, the differentiation between normality and abnormality has been frequently
formulated within the frameworks of statistical significance, and by the presence of specific
behaviours and distorted cognitions (Buss, 1966, p.1). The use of statistics has achieved an
authoritative status that delivers accuracy and therefore ‘truth’. However, this needs to be
balanced by an acknowledgement that statistical pronouncements are only as valid as the
facts and measures that are utilised. In addition, statistical statements may have mathematical
validity within a model representative of normality, but the application to human experience
is an abstraction that may not be justifiable.

Statistically, normality has been associated with the behaviours and cognitions that
constitute the statistical mean in a population. However, this does not constitute a definition
of normality but only that which is normal in a statistical context. As the delineation of the
mean requires generalisation, individual differences are disregarded (Bartlett, 2008). Further,
some infrequent occurrences, such as altruism and intellectual genius are categorised as
productive normality, rather than aberrations. Specific behaviours and cognitions are
evaluated to reflect abnormality by the application of value judgements that define them as
maladaptive or unacceptable (Rogers & Pilgrim, 2006, p.8). However, as such judgements
may not have cross-cultural applicability, definitions of normality will be culturally specific
(Rogers & Pilgrim, 2006, p.5). Thus, behaviour interpreted as pathological by the Western
medical model may not be so defined in alternative cultures (Bracken et al., 1995;
Summerfield, 1999).
This can be illustrated by the role of spiritual and religious interpretation in countries, such as Bhutan, Burma and Cambodia, that attributes some behaviours to spirit possession, rather than defining them within abnormality (Arnold, 1990, p.100; R. Becker et al., 1990, p.151; de Jong, 2005; Tint Way, 1996). In contrast to the subsuming of individual difference within the mean, Bartlett (2008) argues for the acceptance of diversity inherent in reality, so that individual distinctiveness can be encompassed and appreciated. Thus, there can be no single and definitive definition of wellbeing after trauma, as this needs to be delineated within specific frameworks.

The application of abnormality to PTSD is decided by the duration of symptomatology, rather than by their nature. Thus, PTSD reveals maladaptation (Brewin & Holmes, 2003; Brewin et al., 2009; Shalev, 2003), although PTSD has been described as representing normal distress (Summerfield, 2001). Advocates of PTSD as pathological argue that critics should delineate the length of time that can be considered normal (Brewin et al., 2009). However, it may be unreasonable to expect resolution in situations where stressors continue to exist or become exacerbated. Furthermore, value judgements are being made with reference to arbitrary standards delineating appropriate recovery or adaptation times.

An alternative perspective views the processes fundamental to the development of PTSD as normal but that this processing becomes obstructed resulting in distress and dysfunction (Joseph & Williams, 2005). This is reflected in Joseph & William’s (2005) use of the term posttraumatic stress, rather than PTSD. Additionally, diagnosis of PTSD necessitates the judgement that functional impairment has occurred that rests on differential value assumptions (Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.14).
4.4.6 Diagnosis of Trauma

Symptomatology describes form but not content. It describes that which may occur but not the experience or interpretation of those symptoms. Much of the biomedical model rests on the Jasperian assumption that the form and content of responses can be differentiated to permit empirical investigation. However, such an assumption has been questioned (Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.14; Stanghellini, 2004, p.28). Viewing an individual as a collection of symptoms within a disorder that is isolated from his life story, risks dehumanisation (Kleinman, 1988b, p.237).

The quest for knowledge of the essential form, for example PTSD, and its application to suffering is doubly plagued by stasis. Understanding is restricted, as lived experience cannot be reduced to static, causal components (Bracken, 2003, p.4). This in turn is transposed as a diagnosis onto individuals that may itself be characterised by stasis and deprivation of agency (Nussbaum, 1995). The way that labels are ascribed to distress plays a significant role in the construction of the experience by shaping ascription, expectation, emotion and behaviour. Diagnosis of a psychiatric disorder following trauma may provide assurance of an accepted medical reason for distress, reduce feelings of isolation and facilitate treatment options (Fee, 2000, p.93). However, internalisation of labels may result in identity becoming increasingly defined by the disorder (Burr & Butt, 2000, p.188). There is a very real danger that the individual appears to become the pathology itself (Amering & Schmolke, 2009, p.72; Saleebey, 1997, p.5). This then presents a radically different view of reality wherein the focus is on the diagnosis, rather than on the individual (Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, & Kisthardt, 1989). Diagnosis represents “a simplification of a complex reality” within a framework of pathology that can both stigmatise and disempower, whilst omitting the strengths that contribute to empowerment (Bracken, 2003, p.4; Weick et al., 1989). Historically, psychiatric labels were applied to those, who had already experienced rejection,
so that stigma has become implicated in diagnosis (Bracken, 2003, p.20). Labelling of the Other has long been implicated in separation, exclusion, loss and diminution of worth (Atkinson, 2002, p.257).

Internalisation of feelings of deviance and inferiority associated with the ascription of abnormality to a disorder may hinder positive adaptation through the exacerbation of distress due to a sense of alienation and abandonment (Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve, & Pescosolido, 1999). Disempowerment is compounded by the muffling of the voice of the individual through ascription of diagnosis. The application of a stereotype consumes individuality that may facilitate clinical management but may create a profound loss of worth as an unique person.

Labelling reveals more about its inherent processes than about the intrinsic characteristics of that which is being labelled. Scheff’s (1966) labelling theory originally postulated that deviance from customary role fulfilment is initially refused (primary deviance) with subsequent ascription of labelling resulting in the interpretation of behaviour in accord with this label (secondary deviance). Specific behaviours and cognitions can only be evaluated to reflect abnormality by the application of value judgements to render them undesirable, maladaptive or unacceptable (Rogers & Pilgrim, 2006, p.8). Whilst such attribution contributes to the generation of symptoms to fulfil societal expectations, it minimises the role of individual agency in shaping behaviour (Fee, 2000, p.11). Additionally, there is a feedback loop between discourse about the self and local contexts that continuously accommodates new understanding, as represented in ‘institutional reflexivity’ (Giddens, 1991, pp.20-21). Thus, thoughts, emotions and behaviours are shaped by discourse but reflexivity permits individual agency to effect change within this same discourse.
4.4.7 Decontextualisation of Trauma

As subjectivity is created and transformed through a multiplicity of historical, social and cultural narratives, comprehensive understanding of trauma experience necessitates viewing the individual within their specific contextual reality (Bracken et al., 1995; Bracken, 2001; Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.14; Eisenbruch, 1991; Kleinman, 1997; Silove, 1999). Hence, acceptance of biomedical investigation, judgement and verdict isolated from an experiential framework comes at the expense of valid and meaningful interpretation of trauma experiences.

Whilst the biomedical model has contributed a great amount of knowledge about the symptomatology of trauma responses, it has also resulted in the marginalisation of historical, social, cultural, spiritual, economic and political understandings about experiences of trauma, so that these are excluded, or at most, subject to limited interpretation within this restrictive model (Bracken et al., 1995; Thomas & Bracken, 2004; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). There has been an inadequate acknowledgement of the critical role these processes play in defining trauma, interpreting experience, shaping responses and determining adaptation. Culture can be defined as embodying the processes, by which a group constructs and passes on its reality that can be represented by symbolic systems consisting of beliefs and practices, which create shared cultural meanings and significance (Faulkner, Baldwin, Lindsley, & Hecht, 2006, p.40; Geertz, 1973, pp.52, 89, 250). However, individuals retain a degree of agency in the appropriation of culture, rather than remaining mere passive recipients (de Certeau, 1988, pp.xii, 58).

As Derrida (1978, as cited in Brown, 2001, p.201) emphasised that viewpoints are inevitably formulated within culturally derived frameworks, it is impossible to isolate oneself from this orientation. As culture and experience are inextricably united, the construction, expression and interpretation of experience will be contextually specific, rather than only the
consequence of an individual psychobiological response. Indeed, psychobiological processes may be more appropriately viewed as the consequence of cognitive and emotional experiences, rather than its cause.

Historical, social, cultural and religious discourses establish acceptable emotions, appropriate expressions and valid interpretations (Foucault, 1980, as cited in Tully, 1995; as cited in Zembylas, 2007, p.297). Consequently, whilst traumatic loss may result in universal distress, this will be expressed and interpreted in diverse ways across cultures. Expressions of distress may exist only within a single culture. This is illustrated by the sensation reported solely by Nigerians that describes ants crawling inside their heads (Kleinman, 1988a, p.15). Qualitative research indicated that the expression of grief in war-torn and economically disadvantaged Tigray contrasted with customary Western practices. Here, public demonstrations of grief are culturally and religiously proscribed, as a consequence of the imperatives resulting from the intersection between socio-economic and psychosocial factors (Nordanger, 2007). In a land where survival is a continual challenge, the mandatory involvement of all to facilitate such survival leaves little time for prolonged grief.

The Mien from Laos is another example of a culture that significantly interprets emotional distress through the lens of religious traditions. Their syncretistic cosmology is composed of interrelated animistic, Buddhist, Taoist and Confucius beliefs that understand distress to be the result of spirit possession, bad luck or failure of ritual observance. Consequently, shamans and herbalists are utilised to affect recovery (Moore, Sager, Keopraseuth, Chao, Riley, & Robinson, 2001). Similarly, Latinos interpret symptoms of posttraumatic stress through the lens of the supernatural (Williams, 2007).
4.4.8 Conclusion

As interpretation situated within specific temporal, social and cultural contexts shapes experiences after trauma, an awareness and analysis of this as lived experience must be developed. Objectification, pathologisation and individualisation have resulted in a loss of appreciation of the lived experience of trauma for individuals and communities. This can be promoted by contextualised interpretations, as these shape trauma responses. Here is a challenge to the dominant field of trauma to venture forth from the classification of symptoms into their pigeonholes of ordered disorders. However, such willingness necessitates casting aside this familiar nosological cloak to see and to listen to the person crouched mutely in the darkness. Looking and hearing in research will suffice for classification; but without seeing and listening there can be scant valid interpretation.

4.5 Critique Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

4.5.1 Introduction

There have been calls by proponents of the universal applicability of PTSD, for the debate about the validity of PTSD in non-Western cultures to cease (Friedman, 2010, p.13). At the very least this is an unproductive request from academics in search of further understanding and at worst hints at disturbing scholastic censorship. Notwithstanding, the validity of such classifications in non-Western countries has been challenged (Bracken, 2001, 2002; Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995; Kleinman, 1988; Summerfield, 1999, 2004) or caution in its application has been expressed (Joyce & Berger, 2007; Stein et al., 2007).

There is intense debate about the applicability of PTSD as a universal construct of dysfunction following trauma due to a biological basis or whether it is the product of Western historical, social and cultural conceptualisation (Bracken, 2001, 2002; Bracken et al., 1995; J. Breslau, 2005; Bruner, 1990; Herbert & Sageman, 2004, p.213; Kagee & Garcia Del Soto,
2003; Kleinman, 1987, 1988; Shephard, 1999; Summerfield, 1999, 2004; Witmer & Culver, 2001; Young, 1995, p.5). The assumption that the Western trauma discourse is applicable in other cultures has been referred to as ‘cultural imperialism’ (Pupavac, 2002; Summerfield, 1999; Wessells, 1999, p.276). Humanitarianism may be coloured with paternalism if Western concepts are accorded a higher value than indigenous interpretations. Indeed, harm may ensue, as understanding about local experiences may suffer distortion (Summerfield, 1999; Yeomans et al., 2008).

Thus, it will reflect values and ontology that may be incongruent in divergent cultures and so exclude alternate cultural expressions and interpretations of distress, as well as culturally endorsed processes of healing, coping and adaptation (Bracken et al., 1995; Kleinman, 1995, p.181; Miller, Kulkarni, & Kushner, 2006). As Young (1995, p.5) aptly concluded that,

**PTSD is not timeless nor does it possess an intrinsic unity. Rather, it is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these interests and resources.**

### 4.5.2 Psychiatric epidemiology

Extensive epidemiological research has assessed the prevalence of Western psychiatric disorders (particularly PTSD) following trauma in non-Western cultures (de Jong & van Ommeren, 2002; Somasundaram, 1996). It has proposed that the rates of PTSD are increased within specific groups, including asylum seekers and refugees (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Hollifield et al., 2002; Kienzler, 2008; Mollica, Sarajlic, Chernoff, Lavelle, Vukovic, & Massagli, 2001; Mollica, Caridad, & Massagli, 2007; Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2003; Silove, Steel, & Watters, 2000). A meta-analysis of over 180 refugee studies (Steel et al., 2009) found variation in the prevalence of PTSD from 0% in Iran
(Hashemian et al., 2006) to 99% in Sierra Leone (de Jong, Mulhern, Ford, van der Kam, & Kleber, 2000) and in depression from 3% in Vietnamese refugees (Steel et al., 2005) to 86% in Sierra Leonean refugees (Fox & Tang, 2000). Such discrepancies were attributed to methodological problems related to diagnosis and sampling (Steel et al., 2009). Recent research by Murray (2009) found that 25% of Sudanese refugees in Australia demonstrated symptoms of post-traumatic stress that compares with the estimated 12-month incidence of PTSD of the general Australian population of 1.3% (Creamer et al., 2001).

Although de Jong (n.d.) maintained that the de Jong et al. (2000) research is valid, as it found that 99% of people recorded a high score on the Impact of Events Scale, this does not necessarily translate into a 99% rate of distress as defined by Sierra Leonean standards. Whilst the utilisation of non-validated measures for non-Western populations has been acknowledged to be problematic (Hollifield et al., 2002, Yeomans et al., 2008), this was not considered in this meta-analysis or in individual research projects. High rates of distress according to Western criteria do not necessarily equate with diverse cultural expressions of distress. Accordingly, focus on Western defined distress may be inapplicable or inappropriately interpreted in other cultures, as well as missing additional culturally defined distress. Consequently, the claim of a 99% prevalence of PTSD amongst those exposed to war in Sierra Leone (de Jong, et al., 2000) not only raises concerns about the methodology utilised for the collection of data but also the validity, reliability and utility of the diagnosis of PTSD in non-Western cultures.

Thus, it is unsurprising that the value of Western psychiatric epidemiological research for non-Western cultures has been questioned. All epidemiological studies may amplify the prevalence of PTSD, as the utilisation of symptom checklists may not assess the duration and intensity of symptoms and accompanying ‘dysfunction’ (Nemeroff et al., 2006). Significantly, the presence of PTSD does not inevitably diminish daily functioning for
refugees (Momartin, Silove, Manicavasagar, & Steel, 2004; Tempany, 2000). If PTSD does not result in ‘dysfunction’, the application of the DSM-5 criteria itself should rule out a diagnosis of PTSD (APA, 2000, 2012; European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, 2013). Divergent results can be obtained within the same community through different research methodologies. Quantitative research by Yeomans et al. (2008) found that distress amongst Burundians was frequently expressed as somatisation, anxiety and depression (rather than as PTSD). However, their qualitative research revealed much more emphasis on material concerns.

Whilst it is claimed that such research indicates those in need of assistance, the foundation of such methodology fails to consider the impact and interpretation of trauma within social and cultural contexts (Jacob, 2006; Summerfield, 2006). The concern is that indigenous understanding is superseded by the supposed superiority of Western paradigms (Summerfield, 1999). Consequently, it is imperative to be cognisant of cultural expressions and interpretations of distress, as well as culturally endorsed processes of coping and adaptation (Baron, 2002, p.159; Miller, Kulkarni, & Kushner, 2006; Yeomans et al., 2008).

4.5.3 Universality of PTSD

McCall & Resick’s (2003) research with Ju/'hoansi (formerly known as the Kalahari Bushmen) has been used as evidence that if PTSD occurs in cultures with limited contact with the West, then it can be assumed that PTSD is a universal construct. However, even McCall & Resick (2003) accept that the Ju/'hoansi did not meet the avoidance criteria for PTSD, which has been accepted as an essential component of PTSD (APA, 2000, 2012). Avoidance has been postulated as the mechanism that powers the continuance of PTSD (Dunmore, Clark & Ehlers, 1999; Foa, Steketee, & Rothbaum, 1989; Resick, 2001, p.67; Steil & Ehlers, 2000). However, avoidance that was considered ‘pathological’ represented
beneficial behaviour that facilitated safety. It is difficult to construe escape to a neighbouring village for protection from violence as evidence of disorder. This would appear to be more indicative of resilience and strength, rather than pathology. Indeed, moving to a more secure location was considered to represent recovery from PTSD for South Sudanese refugees (Neuner, Schauer, Klaschik, Karunakara, & Elbert, 2004).

Similarly, the cultural proscription against prolonged discussion of inappropriate behaviour may encourage community accord, an essential requirement for survival in a harsh environment. Avoidance of emotional expression as a culturally accepted and encouraged norm is also evidenced in Tigray. Rather than being indicative of dysfunction, it possesses political, socio-economic and religious advantages (Nordanger, 2007). In an environmentally challenged and war torn land where existence is continually problematic, avoidance enhances physical and state survival, whilst religious approbation is attained instead of religious proscription. Further, whilst the presence of PTSD has been ascertained in non-Western cultures, its absence as an indicator of distress has also been noted (Uehara, Morelli, & Abe-Kim, 2001; Yeomans et al., 2008).

4.5.4 Distortion of Trauma Experience

Although it has been claimed that the universality of PTSD has been supported by the incidence of its symptomatology in diverse cultures (De Jong, 2005; McCall & Resick, 2001), Western psychiatric categories can be applied inappropriately in non-Western cultures if local idioms of distress are not taken into consideration (Eastmond, 2000, p.73; Yeomans et al., 2008). The failure to accept that comparable symptoms do not necessarily indicate equivalent interpretations for diverse cultural groups has been termed a ‘category fallacy’ (Kleinman, 1995, p.13). Thus, quantitative methodological checklists cannot account for the significance of symptoms for individuals in diverse cultures that may inflate rates of
disorders or fail to document indices of distress (Paardekooper, de Jong, & Hermanns, 1999; Summerfield, 2006, 2008; Yeomans et al., 2008). These rates may be further distorted, as the validity of some trauma questionnaires have been queried by quantitative researchers, especially for minority communities (Litz, Penk, Geradi, & Keane, 1988, p.63) and non-Western cultures (Terheggen, Stroebe, & Kleber, 2001; Yeomans et al., 2008). Additionally, rates of psychopathology may increase when questionnaires are used, rather than interviews (Baron, 2002; Coyne & Kagee, 2000) or when participants are interviewed in English, rather than their native language (Cañive & Castillo, 1997).

Examples of category fallacies abound. Nightmares are frequently associated with trauma symptomatology in general and PTSD in particular (Calohan, Peterson, Peskind, & Raskind, 2010; de Jong, 2005; Norris et al., 2002a). Following the 2003 tsunami and the 30 year old conflict, many Acehnese have experienced nightmares. However, these are rarely reported, as nightmares are not associated with the experience of trauma. Rather, they are understood as emanating from mischievous spirits termed ‘jin’, that convey special messages, which are seldom shared (Grayman, Good, & Good, 2009). Whilst dreams frequently included those who had died, this represented positive communication with loved ones; “I’ve never had nightmares, but I have had dreams about my relative who passed away and I invited him out to sea to go fishing just like we used to do” (Grayman et al., 2009, p.301).

4.5.5 Restriction of Trauma Experience

Whilst trauma exacts a psychological toll in suffering, this is shaped significantly by social and cultural influences, such as poverty, discrimination, displacement, violence and isolation that may exist prior to, as well as subsequent to trauma (Bracken et al., 1995; de Jong, 2002; Englund, 1998; Miller, Muzurovic, Worthington, Tipping, & Goldman, 2002; Miller, Kulkarni, & Kushner, 2006; Murray, 2009; Rees, Silove, & Kareth, 2009;
Summerfield, 1999). This wide spectrum of urgent psychosocial concerns is not assessed by psychiatric epidemiological studies. Thus, understanding the experience of trauma solely in terms of PTSD or other psychiatric disorders will depict an inadequate description of lived experience in a diversity of non-Western and Western cultures; Bosnia (Weine et al., 2004), Burundi (Yeomans et al., 2008), Ethiopia (Nordanger, 2007), Ireland (Zenker, 2010), and South Africa (Kagee, 2004).

PTSD was not a good representation for the experience of trauma in Burundi, ten years after the civil war (Yeomans et al., 2008). Rather, quantitative research revealed that symptoms of depression, anxiety and somatisation were more adequate descriptions, with high levels of each regularly present. Moreover, qualitative research found that significant concerns about their economic circumstances were more expressed than the above symptomatology. For South African survivors of torture, both somatic and economic concerns were more common than PTSD symptoms (Kagee, 2004). Socio-economic considerations were of prime importance for both Tigrayans (Nordanger, 2007) and Tamils (Somasundaram, 1996) following their experiences of war.

The inadequacy of an approach that solely addresses psychological responses after trauma has been recognised by some researchers within a generally positivist framework (de Jong, 2002, p.1; Silove et al., 2009). There has been increasing acknowledgement of the interrelationships between diverse sources of adversity that may compound the experience of trauma. This in turn will interact with the interwoven relationships from diverse resources that enable understanding, interpretation and adaptation to the challenges faced following trauma. Rees et al. (2009) have formulated a broad psychosocial model, the Adaptation and Development after Persecution and Trauma (ADAPT), that concentrates on five pivotal areas for social stability; physical and social security, interpersonal relationships; justice for violation of human rights; roles and systems of meaning. The assumption is that the
successful functioning in these ‘pillars’ will enhance the activation of resources that will facilitate recovery. Whilst this model was developed within refugee contexts, it could easily be adapted for use in alternate situations.

4.6 Hermeneutics of Trauma

4.6.1 Bridges of Life for Life

The fragility of life is the defining characteristic of humanity that unites all within a common bond (Guinness, 2005, pp.20-21). All are born to die, as the “dark shadow” of death is our constant companion throughout life (Yalom, 2009, p.11). This prompts acceptance, containment (albeit illusionary), and active opposition to threats by others, that ironically results in greater fragility. Awareness of vulnerability initiates and compels quests for meaningfulness in life. Indeed, individual and collective interpretation of trauma is paramount in the search for meaning and significance (Weisæth & Eitinger, 1993, p.70)

Life can be characterised as a chasm filled with beauty and adversity, over which bridges of significance are created to construct scaffolding for the understanding and interpretation of life. Life is intrinsically interwoven with trauma, suffering and adaptation that may threaten, challenge and transform these interpretations. As understandings of hope, are foundational within these frameworks, they in turn will be subject to threat, challenge and transformation. The Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy (1918/2002, p.143) characterised life as an abyss of trauma that reveals its perilousness when the frameworks formulated to traverse its depths are rendered obsolete or are destroyed. Thus conceived, ‘bridge’ experiences that may be universally deemed to be traumatic may be the imminent threat to life; that is, the death of life when all ‘bridges’ have collapsed.

This is reflected in the delineation of trauma as survival following an encounter with death (Lifton, 1988, p.19). It could be questioned whether death is a trauma for those, who
seek to end their own life. For them, life has become a trauma more dreaded than death.

Encounters with death, described as the ‘death imprint’ by Lifton (1988, p.19), inexorably challenge ontological security and demolish invulnerability. However, this realisation can herald in a newly born awareness of life enlightened with an acceptance of mortality.

Similarly, Saint Augustine (as cited in Yalom, 2009, p.32) asserted that an individual is only truly born when confronted with the prospect of death. This affirmation has been more recently expressed by McHugh (1994, p.xvii) as,

The roses will lose themselves tonight,
   too full of petalling, in gentle agonies.
My child, my friend, do not refuse the sight:
   For death gives life its clarity.

This bore truth with lucidity at the end of life for a qualitative researcher, Bud Goodall (2012, p.726), who recorded this experience as poetry; “Where a new profound darkness greets an older eternal light.”

The analogy of life as possessing potentiality for trauma if ‘bridges’ are threatened or annihilated, emphasises the role of individual and collective constructions for meaning and significance. Thus, the interpretation of trauma experiences, or ‘bridge collapses’, assumes paramount importance. This will be dependent on ontological and cosmological security that creates a framework for the interpretation of experience. Their assumptions may be threatened by trauma, although trauma occurs that defies prior assumptions or expectations (Boehnlein, 2006). How does one prepare for, “When I get to Auschwitz (Oświęcim)12...?” (Langer, 2001, pp.103-104) or the annihilation of one’s world by earthquake or fire or war or vicious assault or the death of a child? Prior experience may provide some understanding but

12 Auschwitz will be referred to by its Polish name, Oświęcim, rather than the Germanised form, as a mark of respect for its place in Polish history.
for many, trauma descends with a powerful, unexpected ferocity. Consequently, the reformulation of foundational principles is a significant challenge for many individuals and communities following trauma (Allen, 2005, p.286; Crossley, 2003).

4.6.2 Cognitive Schemata of Trauma

The disruption by trauma of established interpretations of the world has been expressed as “an experience of a world unmade and undone” (Philipose, 2007, p.62). However, debate remains concerning the conceptual processes underlying the unmaking of our world and hopefully, the remaking of our world. The appraisal of trauma within cognitive psychology is based on research on stress and coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980, 1988). This conceptualisation has been widely accepted in psychology (Horowitz, 1986) and sociology (Hutchinson & Bleiker, 2008). Cognitive psychology emphasises that fundamental assumptions about the world and self are integrated within cognitive schemata to interpret experience that are disrupted by trauma (Horowitz, 1986). Janoff-Bulmann (1992) formulated a cognitive framework, in which trauma shatters the assumptions of the world as meaningful and just with inhabitants, who are good and invincible. These require re-structuring to develop alternative frameworks if posttraumatic stress is not to ensue.

However, the model of shattered assumptions is itself based on the assumption that traumas are experienced from within a positive world view. As a consequence of the pervasiveness of trauma, many traumas are experienced from within a world tainted by the negativity of prior trauma. No optimistic assumptions may remain to be torn asunder. Thus, no incongruity between present and former world views will occur, that leads to a lower incidence of posttraumatic stress. However, the reverse has frequently found to be true (Foa & Rothbaum, 1998, p.72). Moreover, this theory encompasses limited worldviews that are
not represented in some cultures. For example, Buddhism encompasses an acceptance of the inevitability of suffering in life that may not be shattered by trauma (Gross, 1993, p.131).

4.6.3 Being-in-the-World

Significantly, the model of shattered assumptions focuses on trauma cognitions that inadequately describe trauma’s impact on lived experience (Bracken, 2003, p.88). Heidegger\(^{13}\) (2008, pp.27-34, 78-79), the controversial German philosopher, used the German word ‘Dasein’ (literally ‘being there’) to refer to the existence of human beings, Being, in contrast to the existence of other entities, being. Dasein is always ‘Being-in-the-World’, as experience is more than a separate entity in the world but is always being created by the life of individuals. As Bracken (2003, p.88) explained, “We construct our world as we live in it. We are simply not ‘in’ a world that is separate from ourselves. Rather, we allow a world to be by our very presence.” Thus, ‘Being-in-the-World’ may perhaps be more accurately described as ‘Being-of-the-World’, as we construct our world and are constructed by it in a web of reciprocal relationships. This is much more than understanding experience as a result of individual cognition. We are more than rats in one of Skinner’s boxes (Skinner, as cited in Naour, 2009, p.7). Even Dewey (1929, p.11), the proponent of pragmatism, allied Being with existence, so that “Life denotes a function, a comprehensive activity, in which organism and environment are included.”

\(^{13}\)Complicity in Nazism does not necessarily negate productive philosophical constructs, abhorrent as this may be for those, who condemn totalitarianism. Heidegger’s understanding about ‘Dasein’ can be interpreted as being applicable to both fascists and non-fascists (Odysseos, 2009). However, Heidegger’s non-repentant embrace of Nazism divorced his politics from his philosophy, in contradiction with his own philosophy (Shalin, 2010).
4.6.4 History of Hermeneutics of Trauma

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the study of trauma has centred on the reasons for subsequent adverse consequences and ways to alleviate these. However, throughout history, there have been significant endeavours to find meaning in adversity, so that lives can be transformed and wisdom can be advanced (Linley, 2003). Such a quest is crucial, as “the only world we have” is characterised by the paradoxical incongruity between beauty and goodness, and cruelty and injustice (Kushner, 2002, p.174). However, there are diverse interpretations about the meaning of suffering by philosophical and religious perspectives. Greek and Shakespearean tragedy both emphasised the requirement to ascertain the reason for suffering (Hall, 2010, p.6), although the Old Testament persona of Job concluded that such comprehension existed only within the providence of the divine (Manser, 2009, pp.172-174).

Suffering has been extolled as creating good from the bad. From the ancient Greek dramatist Aeschylus (as cited in Brueck, 1995, p.63), “Wisdom comes only through suffering”; to the Hebrew psalmist, “They that sow in tears will reap with joy” (Psalms 126:5, King James Version); to the Christian Paul of Tarsus, “We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us” (Romans 5:3-5, English Standard Version); to the American transcendentalist Ralph Waldo Emerson (1987, p.68), “When a man is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something”; to the Lebanese-American mystic Khalil Kibran (2009, p.155), “Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls; the most massive characters are seared with scars”; and to the English atheist Bertrand Russell (2006, p.47), “Extreme hopes are born of extreme misery.”
4.6.5 Meaningfulness of Suffering

Existential theory postulates that suffering may be imbued with meaningfulness and transformed into achievement. Within this perspective, confrontation with the inevitability of death may facilitate personal growth (Frankl, 1962; Linley, 2003; Yalom, 1980). Viktor Frankl’s (1962, p.115) experiences in Nazi concentration camps motivated him to write of the necessity to ascertain meaning in suffering so that, “Suffering ceases to be suffering in some way at the moment when meaning is found.” This was echoed by Friedrich Nietzsche (as cited in Levine, 2007, p.61), who although writing from a very different perspective, similarly asserted that, “He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.” Frankl’s (1962) basic premise was that the primary motivation for life is the will to determine significance in life, as all life is meaningful. This meaning can be ascertained through experience, the beliefs held about suffering and the behaviours exhibited. His concept of ‘tragic optimism’ refers to the fundamental freedom to decide on one’s attitude towards suffering, so that this is transformed into achievement and self-improvement. He emphasised that if suffering is interpreted as a challenge for understanding, this can result in triumph over horror and pain.

The necessity of formulating a framework for the interpretation of significance within the experience of trauma has been frequently judged to be critical (Allen, 2005, p.288; Neiman, 2002, p.8). This imperative can be complicated by the diminished confidence in the meta-narratives of meaning making, with local frameworks increasingly filling this void (A. Irving, 1999, p.46; Graham, 2009, p.121; Lyotard, 1984, pp.15, 37, 41). Indeed, the threats posed by this loss, especially life within uncertainty, have intensified the search for meaning (Gadamer, 1983, p.100). Such a quest is challenging, as this occurs through altered reflexive relationships between individuals and social-cultural conceptual frameworks that are in a constant state of flux (Giddens, 1991, p.195). In addition, the wealth of diverse worldviews has created not only a smorgasbord of understandings but also tensions and conflicts.
Recognition and respect of fundamental difference remains a continuing critical imperative (A. Irving, 1999, p.46). This has particular relevance to acceptance and support of refugees, who represent a multiplicity of cultural and religious frameworks.

There is debate as to whether understanding about suffering can be achieved. It has been asserted that as ‘Oświęcims’ reveal the dichotomy between suffering and all theodicies or standpoints, it ultimately defies reason or justification (Lévinas, as cited in Wilkinson, 2005, p.101; Clendinnen, 1998, p.49). At times, suffering is suffering; nothing more and nothing less. Its purview can darken all of life, so that no glimmer of light can illuminate meaning. For Heidegger (2008, pp.188-192) and Gadamer (2006, pp.332, 390), such understanding would constitute its interpretation.

Thus, caution must accompany this quest for meaning, so that the elevation of suffering does not descend into banality or arrogance by the simplification of the experience of trauma; this journey is through misty sacred ground ‘where angels should fear to tread’. Similarly, care must be taken to not eulogise the perseverance and fortitude of the human spirit, at the expense of the disregard or minimisation of the experience of trauma (Langer, 2001). To do less is to denigrate survival, suffering and transformation. For not all may have bestowed upon them “beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness” (Isaiah 61:3, King James Version). Adversity may ambiguously create growth but unfamiliarity of life may prevail. In D. H. Lawrence’s words (as cited in Guest, 1993, p.105),

Only the leavings of a life
... odd wintry flowers upon the withered stem,
yet new, strange flowers such as my life has not brought forth before,
new blossoms of me.
4.6.6 Posttraumatic Growth within Psychology

Since the 1980’s, there has been increasing recognition within psychology that the experience of trauma may facilitate constructive outcomes, even when this entails a threat to life (Z. Solomon & Dekel, 2007; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Tedeschi, Park, & Calhoun, 1998). Proponents of PTG maintain that these benefits are qualitatively distinct from resilience or recovery, although this will be dependent on the definitions employed. Such growth is born of the struggle for adaptation following trauma (Bonanno, 2005a; Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006; McMillen, 1999). Additionally, PTG has been correlated with improved psychosocial adaptation (Shaw, Joseph, & Linley, 2005), although this has been disputed by others (Maercker & Zoellner, 2004). A meta-analysis of 77 studies found that PTG was associated with greater distress, including increased symptoms of PTSD and decreased subjective physical health, although lower levels of depression (Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006).

Several theoretical paradigms have been developed to encompass positivity following adversity, including PTG (Tedeschi et al., 1998; Calhoun & Tedeschi, 2006); adversarial growth (Joseph & Linley, 2005) and perceived benefits (McMillen, 1999, 2004; McMillen & Cook, 2003). Whilst the existence of multiple dimensions that constitute PTG has been postulated, there is continuing controversy over the forms that this may assume. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) proposed a five factor model encompassing new opportunities, personal strength, spirituality, relationships and appreciation of life. On the other hand, S. Z. Levine, Laufer, Stein, Hamama-Raz, and Solomon (2008) and Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, and Calhoun (2003) maintained that philosophy of life, relationships and self-perception comprises a more appropriate representation, whilst Park, Cohen, and Murch (1996) added goals to these factors. However, it can be questioned whether it is appropriate or
advantageous to limit areas of growth in a standardised paradigm, as this restricts understanding, especially cultural interpretation.

Debate also exists about the nature of the relationship between posttraumatic stress and growth. Growth has been contingent upon a diagnosis of PTSD or adverse consequences of trauma, with positivity resulting from the catalyst of negativity (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1998, 2006; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004; S. Z. Levine, Laufer, Stein, Hamama-Raz, & Solomon, 2009; McMillen, 1999). There has been disagreement regarding the quantitative relationship between PTSD and PTG. The relationship has been stated as following an inverted-U curve with moderate PTSD associated with the most growth (Solomon & Dekel, 2007; S. Z. Levine et al., 2008). However, others argue for a curvilinear relationship that results in lower PTSD being associated with no or higher PTG and a correlation between moderate PTSD and moderate PTG (Kleim & Ehlers, 2009). Alternatively, growth and PTSD have been delineated as independent outcomes that may co-exist (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

The validity of PTG has been questioned by some researchers. It has been claimed that PTG has been confounded with social desirability; that is, the tendency to give accounts that will be accepted by others (Tomich & Helgeson, 2004). PTG has been equated with the propensity for some individuals to perceive their traumatic experiences in an unrealistically positive manner (McFarlane & Alvaro, 2000). This is due to the survival mechanism of self-enhancement illusions activated by the perception of threat. Such positive illusions act as a coping mechanism, by which individuals ameliorate distress and protect self-worth (Taylor & Armor, 1996; Taylor, Kemeny, Reed, Bower, & Gruenewald, 2000).

It has also been proposed that many acknowledgements of PTG are assumptions produced by the painful process of recovery, as illustrated by the statement ‘I am better now, so I must have grown’ (Bonanno, 2005, p.267). Bonanno (2005) argued for the need for prospective research with external validation of participants’ evaluations to provide more
objective data. However, the significance given to trauma by individuals provides understanding about their own perceptions of this experience. This does not necessitate equation with the opinions of others, as both will reflect distinct perspectives. In addition, Bonanno (2005a) conflated PTG with ‘optimal functioning’ that does not equate with the construct of PTG as outlined by some of its proponents. This is a value laden term. Who sets the standard for ‘optimal functioning’? Which parameters will be used in the determination of functioning? Such a concept minimises distinct individual and community definitions of functioning. It has been suggested that limited growth will be evidenced following trauma when the response was one of resilience (Bonanno, 2005a; S. Z. Levine et al., 2009). However, this will be dependent on definitions of resilience.

A further source of criticism of PTG comes from advocates of the theory of conservation of resources, as growth is viewed as being contraindicated due to the toll taken on functioning and life quality by the demands of posttraumatic stress (Johnson et al., 2007). PTG is associated with greater distress, unless benefits are evidenced in behavioural change (Hopfoll et al., 2007). However, this is not considered a difficulty for some researchers (Wagner et al., 2007).

Other perspectives advocate partial acceptance of PTG with a Janus Face model that is in agreement with the concerns about the illusory nature of some PTG but postulates that it may be constructive in other respects (Zoellner & Maercker, 2006; Zoellner et al., 2008). Whilst this duality has been characterised as possessing two faces, the Janus face originally referred to the propensity for those in the present to look simultaneously to the past and the future (Roberts, 1997, p.13). Within this perspective, illusionary PTG is equated with optimism, as positive outcomes are as feasible as ones that are negative, whilst constructive PTG is represented by openness to new experience (Zoellner et al., 2008.) It has been suggested that initial PTG is illusory, as emotional distress is still in evidence. Thus, this
aspect of PTG may not be associated with improved adaptation in the long term. However, long term constructive adaptation with elimination of distress may reflect ‘authentic’ PTG (Zoellner et al., 2008). However, growth and distress are not mutually exclusive. This was demonstrated by qualitative research by Harms & Talbot (2007), who found that the vast majority (99%) of motor vehicle accident survivors experienced growth four years later, although 84% continued to experience distress. Most of this growth (56%) was in the small to moderate range and a further 19% in the very small range, although nearly a quarter (24%) equated to high levels of growth (Harms & Talbot, 2007).

Concern has been expressed that as individuals may interpret their trauma experiences more favourably due to cognitive distortions, there is a need for external corroboration (Park & Helgeson, 2006). Such corroboration was established in a qualitative longitudinal study with individuals with multiple sclerosis, as well as the fact that some growth may remain private and so be unacknowledged by others (Pakenham & Cox, 2009). The utilisation of quantitative scales fails to consider that the nature of PTG may fluctuate with diverse traumas (Pakenham & Cox, 2009). Additionally, the concentration on cognition for the measurement of PTG inadequately describes experience, environmental influences are minimised and cultural diversity are not taken into account (McMillen, 2004).

Qualitative research found that a number of PTG themes not included in these scales were reported by individuals with HIV/AIDS (Siegel & Schrimshaw, 2000) and multiple sclerosis (Pakenham, 2007). As much of the research on PTG has been cross-sectional, stability in experience is assumed. However, this does not reflect the experience of many individuals following trauma, and indeed life is dynamic for all. Some longitudinal qualitative research has indicated that while PTG continues following trauma, this does not exclude the presence of posttraumatic stress (Harms & Talbot, 2007).
Although there has been considerable research on the factors that may protect against adverse outcomes following trauma, there has been insufficient identification of the processes and factors that facilitate beneficial outcomes (Waysman, Schwarzwald, & Solomon, 2001). Whilst PTG refers to both an outcome of growth and the process by which this is attained (McMillen, 1999; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004), research has concentrated on outcomes, rather than the inherent processes. Most research has focussed on individual acknowledgement of beneficial changes for themselves, although few traumas impact upon just one person. Families, communities and societies may all be affected (Norris et al., 1994; Poulin et al., 2009). Research in the USA following the September 11 terrorist attack in 2001 found that more than 50% perceived social benefits (Poulin et al., 2009).

It has been asserted by quantitative research using PTG scales that posttraumatic growth is evident in non-Western cultures, including Hong Kong (Ho, Chan, & Ho, 2004) and Malaysia (Schroevers & Teo, 2008) within the framework proposed by the PTG Inventory (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). However, the interpretation of similar benefits in differing cultures may not be equivalent. A focus on positive outcomes after trauma needs to be cognisant of the minimisation or denial of distress after trauma that can contribute to community, societal or international apathy (Almedom, Tesfamichael, Mohammed, Muller, Mascie-Taylor, & Alemu, 2005). Additionally, expectation of growth as a usual or inevitable consequence of trauma may place unrealistic pressure upon individuals, who are struggling to come to terms with loss. A balance needs to be present between encouragement and anticipation that honours individual experience.

4.7 Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework

The biomedical model strives to impose order upon the dis-order of the reality of trauma. However, it is beyond the scope of any model based on positivism to reflect the
complexity and constant change of chaos within this dis-order. Categorisation into nosologies of disorders acknowledges the dis-order that may occur in individual lives as ‘disorders’ but fails to capture the intricately interwoven and interdependent relationships of the individual within multi-layered social ecological contexts. This reciprocity both creates the world for an individual and is created by individuals in a continuous tandem of transformation. Scrutiny of an individual in isolation not only risks oversimplification but distortion of the experience of trauma for that individual. In contrast, a non-positivist model that mirrors the dis-order of the experience of trauma and in fact, embraces this may become a conduit, by which some of these intricacies may enrich understanding (Hoskins, 2001). In Western cultures, particularly North America and Australia, the emphasis resides with symptomatic relief that disregards the processes of adaptation within a social ecological framework (Hanna, 2003, p.5; Fournier, 2002; Ungar, 2004). Such adaptation incorporates the interactions between the responses of those affected and wider socio-cultural responses.

There is increasing acknowledgement even within the biomedical model of psychiatry that it is imperative to conceptualise the experiences of trauma, such as PTSD, within a social ecological framework, rather than an isolated event, as external factors interact with personal characteristics to shape responses to trauma (Miller et al., 2006; Silove, 1999). PTSD rates were higher for displaced refugees than for those in resettlement (Porter & Haslam, 2005). Additionally, subsequent stressors during resettlement, including social, cultural and economic loss, may compound the impact of the initial trauma, especially those involving continuing threat and uncertainty (Crescenzi et al., 2001; de Jong et al., 2001; Porter & Haslam, 2005; Silove et al., 1997; Steel et al., 2002, 2006, 2009). If this is not acknowledged, the prevalence of distress associated with initial traumas may be overestimated (Sachs, Rosenfeld, Lhewa, Rasmussen, & Keller, 2008).
An alternative paradigm for understanding the influences of trauma focuses primarily on the impacts on the lived experience within historical, social, cultural, political, and economic contexts. Consequently, this emphasises interpretation of the content of responses, rather than their form alone (Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.14). This may be reflected within a Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework (HSEF) that strives for interpretation of the experience of trauma within complexity, chaos, uncertainty and nonlinearity (Scoones, 1999; Ungar, 2004). Such a framework will be informed by the Heideggerian (2008, pp.78-79) understanding of ‘Being-in-the-World’, Bookchin’s (1994) social ecology, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 1986) ecological systems theory, Engel’s (1977) biopsychosocial theory, identity-focussed cultural-ecological perspective (Spencer et al., 2006), social ecological model of trauma (Harvey, 1996, 2007), and Martín-Baró’s (2004) framework of trauma.

The expression ‘social ecology’ was first used by Bookchin (1982, pp.22, 59-60), to refer to the web of mutual continuing interdependence between the social and the natural world. Within his dialectical naturalism,14 apparently paradoxical influences will result in progress, although subject to continual modification. Social ecology relies on biological ecological theories concerning the adaptation of organisms to their environment. Similarly, individuals adapt to changes in their environments, whilst simultaneously modifying these same environments (Greif & Lynch, 1983, p.38; Scoones, 1999). Such accommodation is inexorably influenced by the contexts, in which the direct environments are embedded (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p.21). One framework of social environments views these as nesting within each other in the form of a Russian matryoshka doll. An alternative paradigm is to conceptualise these as overlapping circles of influence (McKenzie, 2004). Social ecology

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14 Dialectical naturalism can be defined as the framework, in which reality is constituted by nature through opposing processes (Bookchin as cited in Biehl, 1999, pp.197-198).
embraces holistic understanding of diverse social environments, as it includes their interdependence, so that the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts (Bookchin, 2005, p.87; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986).

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) outlined four social environments within his ecological systems theory. The foundation is the individual or ontogenetic level that is comprised of experience, personality and psychobiological conditions. The mesosystem represents the interactions between the individual and the microsystems within proximal experience. Although this is often deemed to be the family, there are other interrelated spheres of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). The exosystem encompasses more distal environmental influences that in turn are encompassed within the macrosystem constituted by social institutions. Whilst this offers a description of multiple levels of context and the interactions between these, it does not facilitate understanding about the interpretation of contextual lived experience (Spencer et al., 2006, p.640).

The biopsychosocial paradigm that originated with Engel (1977) is an application of social systems to illness and health. This proposed that suffering and healing cannot be understood in isolation, as they exist within relationships of social, cultural and economic beliefs and practices. Suffering harms subjectivity that will be interpreted within these relationships, as well as creating disconnections within inter-subjectivity for these relationships (Kleinman, 1988a; Kleinman, Das, & Lock, 1998; Priya, 2010). Consequently, a phenomenological variant of ecological systems has been proposed within developmental psychology that encompasses an identity-focussed cultural-ecological perspective (Spencer et al., 2006, pp.640-643). Contextual perception was examined to facilitate understanding about resilience and vulnerability. The strengths of this framework are its focus on social, historical and cultural contextual analysis, although this is limited by its emphasis on individual
cognitive processes. Nonetheless, its contextual analysis can be helpfully applied to experiences of trauma.

An ecological model of psychological trauma and recovery within community psychology has also been formulated (Harvey, 1996, 2007). This proposes that individual responses to trauma are understood as the result of interrelationships between the individual, trauma and social, cultural and political environments. A distinction can be made between the “diversity of contexts” that refers to the multiplicity of cultural contexts, and the “contexts of diversity”, referring to the adjustments that cultural phenomena undergo within different contexts of significance (Trickett, 1996). Interpretations of experiences of trauma are dependent upon the multifaceted interactions between past history, present situation and future objectives.

The application of the consequences of trauma beyond an individual context to encompass community and social repercussions has been proposed by Martín-Baró (2004). The focus of trauma is embedded within a psychosocial framework that includes social and political consequences for individuals and communities with temporal effects that transcends specific historical events. Trauma in individuals causes adverse relationships across communities and across time. Consequently, trauma viewed within this social-political-ecological framework incorporates trauma as not merely residing in an individual but permeating the matrix of relationships constituting the world of an individual. Within a HSEF of trauma, the focus will be directed to those functions that once enabled life and have now been lost, as well as the resources available and those required to rebuild life (Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.131). Life will not be experienced in an identical manner but can possess meaningfulness and security by adaptation within a new world.

Whilst there may be philosophical and conceptual challenges to re-align biomedical constructs of trauma with alternative understandings that are more inclusive and
interpretative of individuals within their world (‘Being-in-the-World’), this will widen the
lens of interpretation from a sole individual focus to the consideration of compounding
influences that are both beneficial and prejudicial. If individuals and communities are viewed
within a relational web of social, cultural, economic, political and religious influences, the
strengths and sources of resilience that have existed in the past can be identified and
resurrected to enhance recovery (Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). Appraisals of abnormality are
not conducive to enhancing hope. On the other hand, support of assets, strengths and
potentialities within the multifaceted relationships of HSEF fosters hopefulness and facilitates
the identification and realisation of hope objectives. Social justice and human rights can be
furthered as individuals and communities can be examined within contexts that can be
supplemented, reinforced and challenged. However, advancement requires an
acknowledgement of the worth of all as a celebration of unity within diversity.
CHAPTER FIVE: REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

An historical overview of refugees will be outlined that provides a foundation for the present day refugee discourse. The recurrent tension and conflict between the quest for freedom interposed with incompatible political, social and economic imperatives will be discussed, particularly when this is juxtaposed within the framework of universal human rights and social justice (Stevenson, 2005). The implications of the UN Refugee Convention will be discussed, especially for Australia. A summary of refugee experiences will be presented that focus on trauma in the homelands, flight, places of refuge and resettlement. So that the experiences of the research participants can be contextualised, a brief account of each of the countries represented by the participants will be presented; Bosnia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka.

5.1 History of Refugees

The yearning for freedom has provided the impetus for flight from tyranny since humans first sought domination over others (Foster, 2001). The right of individuals escaping persecution to seek asylum has been acknowledged for over 4,000 years, with references in the texts of the ancient civilisations of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Hebrews, Hittites and Sumerians (Burnside, 2010; Marfleet, 2011; Schuster, 2002; Westbrook, 2008; Woodward, 2009). The history of granting asylum is represented by interplay between this principle and fluctuations in the exercise of political power. In ancient Greece, this was based on the concept of ‘sanctuary’ with its emphasis on a sacred place of protection (Marfleet, 2011; Schuster, 2002). Ancient Rome diminished its applicability in concert with the rise in the domination by a sole political power.

Christianity assumed this role with its foundations in the Hebrew institution of cities of refuge, within limitations mandated by the state and its determination to destroy heresy
(Exodus, 21: 12, 13, New International Version; La Caze, 2004; Schuster, 2002). This reflected Derrida’s (2000, p.77) proposition of ‘conditional hospitality’, as it was dependent upon obligations incumbent upon the receiver. By the 18th century, territorial asylum had superseded church asylum, although the principle remained strong in Great Britain (Marfleet, 2011; Schuster, 2002). Within Islamic cultures, the tradition of granting asylum was deemed a serious responsibility for states and individuals, as this reflected the importance bestowed upon all peoples by Allah (Friese, 2010). This can be exemplified by the offering of protection by Muslim countries to Jews expelled from Spain in the 15th century and to Bosnian refugees in the 20th century (Al-Rahim, 2008).

The first half of the 20th century witnessed multitudes of refugees, particularly Russians, Armenians and Jews escaping persecution (Al-Rahim, 2008; Schuster, 2002). However, negativity towards refugees was pervasive. The Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt (1976, p.149) concluded that, “Those whom the persecutor had singled out as scum of the earth … were received as scum of the earth everywhere.” Following the atrocities perpetrated against so many peoples in WWII, concerted efforts were made to implement conventions to protect human rights (Darcy & Collinson, 2009; Derrida, 2004; Haddad, 2003; Steel et al., 2009; Twiss, 2004). In the aftermath of the Shoah, the focus was upon Jewish refugees that in turn, galvanised concern for other refugees (Boehnlein & Kinzie, 1995). This has resulted in an increase in refugee research since the 1980s (Ellis, Kia-Keating, Yusuf, Lincoln, & Nur, 2007).

5.2 Human Rights and Social Justice

5.2.1 United Nations Refugee Convention

A refugee has been defined by the UN Refugee Convention (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2013a) of 1951 as an individual, who has fled from
their country of nationality as a result of fear of persecution because of their race, nationality, religion, politics, or membership of specific social groups. This does not include internally displaced people (IDP), who may reside in their country of nationality but are unable to return to their traditional homeland. Refugees have also been subject to differing definitions. The Organisation of African Unity has extended the UN definition to encompass those forced to flee because of conflict (Shacknove, 1985). However, Shacknove (1985) advocated an interpretation based on the absence of protection for basic needs within an individual’s country of origin that compels flight, as this more precisely defines a refugee, rather than the tyranny or chaos of the above definitions.

Forced displacement and fear of persecution differentiates refugees from migrant groups (Ellis et al., 2007). In 2013, there were 43.7 million individuals, who were forcibly displaced worldwide, including 10.5 million refugees, 17.7 million IDPs and 928,230 asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2013b). In 1951 Australia accepted responsibility to provide protection for refugees, as it is a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention (Palmer, 2009). There are approximately 50,000 asylum seekers and refugees residing in Australia (Refugee Council of Australia, 2013). The primary reasons for displacement are a consequence of regional conflicts that frequently target civilians (UNHCR, 2000). This is clearly evidenced from a review of the countries from which refugees fled to Australia in different decades. From 1950 to 1960 the majority of refugees came from ‘Eastern bloc’ countries, whilst from 1980 to 1990 this changed to primarily Vietnam, Cambodia, Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and more recently this has been the war torn countries of Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Sri Lanka (Hugo, 2011).
5.2.2 Refugees and Human Rights

The concept of human rights is founded on the principle that all humanity possesses inherent worth. These rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent, and when respected, establish the foundation for freedom, justice and peace in the world (United Nations (UN), 2012). Consequently, it behoves states to accept responsibility for the protection of such rights; only then can they become a reality (Haddad, 2003; Steel et al., 2009). It is not the prerogative of any nation to decide which human rights they will uphold, whilst relegating others to a position of less importance. In the words of the South African Desmond Tutu (1985), “I am not interested in picking up crumbs of compassion thrown from the table of someone who considers himself my master. I want the full menu of human rights.”

Moreover, for refugees, this is jeopardised by the dichotomy between the rights protected by international law for human rights and those specifically for refugees (Haddad, 2003). Consequently, refugees and human rights are no longer concomitant, as increasingly nations seek to deny rights to refugees. Human rights for refugees are on trial. Will they be judged as unattainable idealism, or honoured by struggle, or torn between the two by hypocrisy (Arendt, 1976, p.149)? If refugees are stripped of fundamental human rights, humanity will have been redefined (Arendt, 2007, p.265).

Whilst the reluctance to assist refugees due to concerns about the economic, political, social and cultural costs has been long-standing, from the 1980s, these concerns were increasingly utilised for the justification of restrictive policies against asylum seekers. This has been exacerbated since the early 1990s by the representation of refugees as threats to international, state and regional security (Chimni, 2000; Devetak, 2004; Eastmond, 2007; Mogire, 2009; Shacknove, 1985; Zimmerman, 1995, p.107). Consequently, some countries, including Australia, have enacted policies to deter the arrival of refugees and to severely
restrict their civil, political, social and economic rights (Silove et al., 2000). Such limitations violate international law and jeopardise hope for refugees for a beneficial future (Hall, 2006; Steel et al., 2009; UNHCR, 2013c).

Refugees are increasingly defined through a political lens of interpretation. This simultaneously exacerbates their dependence on the see-saw of political expediency and justification, whilst diminishing their right and agency for individual determination of their own future (Pupavac, 2006). In contrast, Derrida’s (2000, p.29) concept of ‘absolute hospitality’ proposes that strangers have the unconditional right for welcome and provision, rather than hostility. This is differentiated from ‘tolerance’ as tension exists within the latter with its strains between integration and rejection (Borrodori, 1993, p.16). Moreover, tolerance breathes paternalism, as the Other is subordinated and misrepresented. However, due to the current structure of nation-state sovereignty with its demarcation of citizenship rights, absolute hospitality is unattainable (Derrida, 2004). Thus, the challenge is to enact limited hospitality most consistent with the upholding of universal human rights. This is complicated by the irreconcilable juxtaposition of nation-state sovereignty and universal human rights that assume the sovereignty of the individual human being as “equal, free and self-determined” (Derrida, 2004, p.333).

Social work is one of many disciplines that strive to uphold human rights for individuals and communities. Indeed, Calma (2008) defines social workers as “human rights workers”. Such advocacy requires partnerships founded on respect, so that recognition, attainment and protection of human rights becomes a process and a goal. Paternalism is incompatible with this framework, as it produces dependency rather than autonomy, and disempowerment rather empowerment.

Whilst the concept of human rights is integral to a multiplicity of philosophical and religious frameworks (including Arabic, Indian, Greek philosophies, and Islam, Buddhism,
Hinduism and Christianity), the domination by the West necessitates critical analysis (Ife, 2012, pp.96-97). Human rights are universal but their application within dissimilar cultures requires contextualisation to avoid Western imperialism (Ife, 2012, pp.5-7, 95). If this is not taken into account, the risk is present that Western ideals may be inflicted inappropriately and insensitively upon communities (Dominelli, 2002, p.70). In particular, there needs to be acknowledgement of the importance of the collective as opposed to the individual in many cultures (Fernando, 2010, p.140).

5.2.3 Refugees and Social Justice

Although there is no consensus concerning the conceptualisation of social justice, it remains a foundational principle for the research and practice of social work (Finn & Jacobsen, 2003; Reamer, 1993, as cited in Lacasse & Gomory, 2003; Rountree & Pomeroy, 2010). This is highly significant to the experience of trauma, as many entail social justice violations. Two core elements interweave and inform each other; the challenge of power structures that perpetuate injustice and the empowerment of individuals, who have experienced trauma. Both require the application of “critical consciousness” (Freire, 1970, pp.35-36) in the interpretation of experience within a contextualised framework that incorporates understanding of historical and power structures, and thus can promote empowerment of diversity (Finn & Jacobsen, 2003; Sakamoto & Pitner, 2005). The quest for social justice need not be confined to political movement or academic rhetoric but can be facilitated by individuals joining together. As Robert Kennedy (1966) encouraged,

> It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.
Tension exists between a social justice paradigm and the dominant biomedical discourse of trauma and restrictive theories of hope. Together these latter frameworks intersect with conflicting strands within the refugee discourse to represent limited understanding about the refugee trauma experience that narrows the boundaries of engagement. Collective interpretation and facilitation of cultural and social strengths are minimised by emphasis on stereotypical individual pathology (Watters, 2001; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). Critical consciousness can challenge established assumptions, especially the exercise of power in dominant discourses (Chambon, 1999, pp.51-81). Together with the recognition of the limitations of present understanding that encourages “openness to the Other” (Caputo, 1997, p.73), new spaces may be opened for reflectivity, deconstruction and dialogue that inspires innovative ways of thought and engagement (Ingamells & Westoby, 2008; Westoby, 2008).

Such a framework paves the way for theory, policy and practice that facilitates social justice for refugees through the re-establishment of a meaningful social world (Westoby, 2009). Hope will play a role as it makes visible, motivates and utilises that which gives reason for Being and for that which has not yet occurred. This focuses on agency to respond, rather than assumption of the effects of victimhood and vulnerability (Adam, 2012; Robinson, 2013; Westoby, 2008; Yuen, 2009).

5.3 Refugees: Benefactors or Threats to Humanity?

Asylum seekers and refugees have been the subject of intense public scrutiny in Australia (Casimiro et al., 2007; Fraser, 2012; Palmer, 2009; Pederson et al., 2006; Refugee Council of Australia, 2012; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008; Triggs, 2013) and internationally (Gross, 2004; Hall, 2006). This discourse is replete with concern, contradictions and misinformation within the paradigm of human rights that is itself fissured by contesting
social, political and economic imperatives (Devetak, 2004; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). Political pragmatism, rather than a passion for human rights, was evidenced by the former prime minister, John Howard (Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC), 2001), who pronounced with authoritarian fervour and uncertain legality, “We will decide who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come.” More recently, this has been exemplified by the detention of asylum seekers arriving by sea, who are being interned with dubious legality and ethics. It is problematic to reconcile no felony, no criminal charge and no judicial trial with indefinite detention. Moreover, approximately ninety per cent of prior claimants have been granted refugee status (Refugee Council of Australia, 2013; Triggs, 2013). Such a policy can only heighten uncertainty and hopelessness, with its concomitant denial of security and opportunity.

Asylum seeker policy has been further restricted by ‘Operation Sovereign Borders’, popularly referred to as ‘Stop the Boats’ (Nationals, 2013). This states that no asylum seeker arriving by sea will be permitted to apply for asylum in Australia. They will be transferred to detention centres on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea or Nauru, where they may apply for resettlement (Amnesty International, 2013b; Australian Government, 2014). Asylum seekers are to be defined as ‘illegals’, a dubious adjectival that demeans both the giver and receiver (The Guardian, 2013a). There have been reports of the serious abuse of human rights on Manus Island (Amnesty International, 2013c; Corlett, 2014; UN, 2014c; UNHCR, 2013d), Nauru (Barlow, 2013; Corlett, 2014; UNHCR, 2013c), and Christmas Island (Marr, 2013). Non-refoulement is a core principle of the UN Refugee Convention (Rodger, 2001).

However, a report from Manus Island detention centre suggested this may not be accorded

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15 Arendt (2007, p.265) observed that refugees are redefinitions of humanity, as they are banished to concentration camps by their enemies and internment camps by friends.
due respect (Laughland, 2014). An asylum seeker considered the offer of repatriation to Syria, even though he stated this would result in his death. His rationale was that he preferred a martyr’s death, rather than a slow death in detention. Australian asylum seeker policy is now founded on political expediency justified by pseudo military and legal imperatives. Consequently, international conventions validated by Australia, such as the UN Refugee Convention, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment are in legal jeopardy and in danger of being compromised by a weakened reputation (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013a).

Opposition to asylum seekers and refugees is reinforced by a hypothetical correlation between ‘boat people’ and terrorism. The characterisation of asylum seekers on perilous sea voyages as potential terrorists can be based on fear that is allied to the hope for peace and security. Rather than the stigmatisation of asylum seekers, it would be more productive to consider ways to build understanding between groups as a way to safeguard peace for all. For thousands of years, Australia has been a utopia for the multitudes of boat arrivals that have reached its shores. However, for asylum seekers, it represents dystopia, a forbidding country that rejects requests for life and indeed, defines the applicants as criminals. Such a country is in danger of creating a national trauma for its citizens as well that will haunt them into the future (Marr, 2014).

Whilst multiculturalism has been judged by some commentators to have failed (Barry, 2002, pp.3-18, 305-309), this will depend on the criteria employed for this verdict. Inherent within this argument (as well as the counter-argument) are those imperatives for the present and aspirations for the future that are deemed essential. The juxtaposition of diverse cultural

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16 The term ‘dystopia’ was created by John Stuart Mill in 1868 (as cited in Roth, 2012, p.87) to describe truly horrendous government, so that dystopia represents utopia for which one cannot hope.
beliefs, values and behaviours within the same social context has the potential for cultural enrichment and economic growth, although misunderstanding, mistrust, disbelief, prejudice, discrimination and racism are also possible concomitants. However, such negatives may be ameliorated if recognition is given to the individual and collective benefits that refugees can bring to their new country. A number of reports have outlined the diverse significant social, civic and economic contributions made by refugee communities to Australia (Hugo, 2011; Parsons, 2013; Refugee Council of Australia, 2010; Stevenson, 2005). These encompass contributions to research, science, culture, sport, politics, population growth, regional development, financial connections with their homelands, innovative business enterprises and volunteering.

In the midst of injustice from an Alabama jail, Martin Luther King (as cited in Jacobus, 1983, p.184) realised that, “We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” Africans refer to this as ‘Ubuntu’; an invisible but powerful unity of humanity achieved through sharing and working together (Swanson, 2009, pp.9-12). For Desmond Tutu (1999, p.31), ‘Ubuntu’ defines humanity, as it refers to those who are committed to each other. “You are, therefore I am” transforms Descartes’ individualistic cognitive definition of humankind, “I think, therefore I am”, to one founded on life within respectful relationship (Sharra, 2009, pp.26-27).

The crucial importance for the facilitation of human interdependence based on respect for all is a message that we dismiss at our peril (de Jong, 2002, pp.1-6). For Edmund Hillary (as cited in Savage & Torgler, 2013), the “brotherhood of the rope” bound mountaineers together through necessity and care. We, too, will ascend or plummet together. The choice is ours. Thus, bound by interwoven threads and ropes, the suffering, triumph and transformation of trauma of one permeates the hope for all. The warning and challenge of King, Tutu and
Hillary is pertinent to the current debates within the refugee discourse, as some elements seek to demonise the refugee as a threat to national security, economic prosperity, social stability and national identity. ‘Paranoid nationalism’ diminishes hope for all, as fear imprisons the fearful and eliminates hope for those, who are feared (Hage, 2003).

As humanity’s future is dependent on our inter-relatedness, threat can be constructively replaced by acceptance of the challenge to confront the many complex, ambiguous and conflicting issues within this discourse. This can be advanced by acceptance and respect for the multiplicity of valuable worldviews, rather than recognition of a sole paradigm, as this facilitates greater understanding and appreciation of the world’s diversity (Caputo, 2004, pp.73, 107; Hansen, 2010; Ivison, 2005, 2011; Williams & Graham, 2010).

Uncertainty can be beneficial, as it encourages appreciation of the Other through an expansion of the lens of awareness (Caputo, 2004, p.73). This is achieved by “Fostering a healthy scepticism, a realisation that the world might not be quite as our own worldview suggests, enables us to bring more of the world into view than our blinkers normally allow” (Westoby & Ingamells, 2007, p.54).

Compassion and respect need not die. It breathes life into the lives of not only recipients but also benefactors. As Portia, a proto-feminist, in William Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice (Shakespeare, 2000, p.140) famously remarked,

The quality of mercy is not strain’d,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.

The marriage of compassion with justice illuminates and rejuvenates life. Dismissal of this criticality has resulted in policies towards refugees becoming more restrictive, reflecting and
reinforcing increasing scepticism concerning the veracity of the refugee experience (Eastmond, 2007; Fraser, 2012; Limbu, 2009).

5.4 Refugees and Trauma

5.4.1 Introduction

Whilst the refugee experience is frequently expressed within a quantitative framework, statistics can only hint at the quality of life experiences, especially those that espouse human dignity and worth (Martone, 2006, pp.138, 143). Moreover, the enormity of statistics may overwhelm comprehension. Policies, practices and attitudes that result in humiliation may be particularly onerous, as this may strip one of oneself (Baron, 2002, p.164; Lago & Smith, 2010, p.27). One is unmade within a world that has been unmade. Doubly unmade. Paradise becomes hell. One South Sudanese refugee (Coker, 2004, p.32) in Cairo, lamented, “I am in hell. I was in Paradise and now I am in hell … a human being cannot continue to live in this situation.” Survival without dignity equates with mere existence, rather than life that creates life. In such a world, hope struggles to survive, as the oxygen of humanity is in short supply. Thus, striving to uphold human dignity is an ethical necessity that is non-negotiable (Freire, 1998, p.59).

Millions of refugees continue to face dire predicaments worldwide. This is exemplified by the hope and despair simultaneously expressed by one Darfuri refugee mother in Chad, who pleaded, “‘If I deliver the baby now, I want to give it to you to take to America” (Piwowarczyk, 2009, p.760). However, the refugee experience is not homogenous but is portrayed in immense diversity, as there is not a sole refugee culture or even a few (Bishop, 2011; Braakman & Schlenkhoff, 2007; Eastmond, 2007; Sigona, 2014, pp.379-380). Additionally, this is not static but is transformed over time and in different contexts through new experiences, both positive and negative. Thus, Soguk (1999, p.4) concluded that,
“There are a thousand multifarious refugee experiences and a thousand refugee figures whose meanings and identities are negotiated in the process of displacement in time and place.” If this diversity is not acknowledged, the danger exists that the richness emanating from the plurality of refugee voices will be silenced into a monolith of homogeneity (Malkki, 1996).

However, the pivotal point around which this multiplicity emerges is the agonising loss of homeland exemplified in the choral lament in the Greek tragedy, The Medea, (Euripides, as cited in Gorman, 1994, p.402),

O country and home,

Never, may I be without you,

Living a hopeless life,

... There is no sorrow above,

The loss of a native land.

This lament echoes down through the ages. South Sudanese refugees “try to hold onto the memories of the touch of their soil yet when they close their eyes home becomes harder to recall” (Baron, 2002, p.157).

5.4.2 Homeland and Flight

That refugees experience significant difficulties is unsurprising when one considers the multiple traumas experienced in their home country and on their way to Australia (including threat to life, loss of family and community), as well as ongoing stressors facing them in the present. A multiplicity of traumas, injustice, displacement and loss are regularly experienced by refugees prior to resettlement (Bishop, 2011; Brough, Gorman, Ramirez, & Westoby, 2003; Khawaja et al., 2008; Nickerson et al., 2011; Pittaway & Muli, 2010; Silove, 1999; Schweitzer, Brough, Vromans, & Asic-Kobe, 2011; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). The precipitating traumas may include threat to life through physical and sexual violence, loss of
family and community members, and lack of survival necessities, as well as political, cultural and religious persecution (Ellis et al., 2007; Leaning, 2001; Mollica, 2001). The flight from trauma involves further trauma; for example, West Papuans were hunted like fugitives as they fled in dugout canoes (Rees, et al., 2009), whilst South Sudanese were forced into crocodile infested raging torrents (Goodman, 2004).

5.4.3 Refugee Camps

Places of refuge present both sanctuary and trauma. In 1994, over 12,000 Rwandan refugees died from cholera in a three week period in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo, as water was scarce and sanitation non-existent (Siddique et al., 1995). Whilst these horrendous mortality rates represent the “singular, monolithic, non-negotiable index of human suffering”, suffering is characterised by many more representations (Martone, 2006, p.138). Examples abound. Many of the survivors of the Cambodian killing fields under Pol Pot were incarcerated for ten years in Thai prison camps prior to resettlement (Mollica, 2001). Violence and arms trafficking were rampant amongst Somali refugees in the Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya (Helton, 2002, pp.154-162). Refugees from Mali have endured horrendous living conditions at the remote Mbera camp in Mauritania, with inadequate life necessities endangering life (British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), 2013).

Women have frequently been the target of violence. This has manifested itself in the prevalence of physical, sexual and emotional assault in many refugee camps (Hamood, 2006; Helton, 2002, pp.154-162; Horn, 2010; Pittaway, Bartolomei, & Rees, 2007; Women’s Refugee Commission, 2009). Even without these compounding traumas, the struggle to eke out an existence over many years in a camp may erode hopefulness and identity (Baron, 2002, pp.157-170). Once independent and proud people come to believe themselves to be ‘no-body’. Hope gives way to despair. This was expressed by a Sri Lankan mother (Tribe &
de Silva, 1999) as, “I am not living now, I am just existing. It is all hopeless.” Thus, it is unsurprising that for some refugees the denial of human dignity becomes so unbearable that they return to a perilous future in their homeland (Al-Makhadhi, 2012; Martone, 2006, p.132). As one Syrian refugee (Al-Makhadhi, 2012) in the Jordanian refugee camp of Zaatari explained, “We face a slow death here or a quick death over there.”

5.4.4 Asylum

Seeking asylum may result in the denial of refugee rights, exploitation, maltreatment and ongoing social and emotional problems (ABC, 2013b; Mares, Newman, Dudley, & Gale, 2002; Robjant, Hassan, & Katona, 2009; Steel et al., 2006; Sultan & O’Sullivan, 2001). In the face of appalling conditions, an asylum seeker in an Australian detention camp concluded, “We are treated as less than human” (Mares et al., 2002, p. 95). Whilst there was improvement in the care for asylum seekers between 2008 to 2011 (Cameron, Frydenberg, & Jackson, 2011), the opening of detention centres on Nauru and Manus Island, New Guinea in 2012 has ushered in a new era of the denial of human rights for asylum seekers, based on political expediency. A sense of hopelessness pervades the Manus Island detention centre for both inmates and carers, fuelled by endemic uncertainty and an insufficiency of basic life requirements, especially medical supplies. Harm has already transpired with predictions of further serious consequences, particularly for children (ABC, 2013b; UNHCR, 2013d). Tragically, this became reality in 2014 that culminated in the death of one asylum seeker and injury to 77 others during serious violence at the centre (UN, 2014c; UNHCR, 2014a; Whyte, 2014). In Australia, asylum seekers in the community experience social and economic disadvantage that has resulted in the exacerbation of physical and emotional problems (McNevin & Correa-Velez, 2006; UNHCR, 2013f).
5.4.5 Exile and Resettlement

Exile, from a Buddhist perspective, is the universal experience of humanity’s quest for certainty, as ‘home’ resides in uncertainty (Sutherland, 2013). Nonetheless, the experience of exile has been represented as an “unhealable rift between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home; its essential sadness can never be surmounted” that issues forth as discontinuity within Being (Said, 2001, p.173). Coupling both understandings together creates doubled exile for refugees; uncertainty within deep sorrow. Exile brings multiple losses that include loss of homeland, community and family (Ellis et al., 2007; Mollica, 2001). Refugees are faced with living with the traumas from the past whilst facing the challenges of adaptation to unfamiliar social and cultural environments in their new country (Ellis et al., 2007; Keyes, 2000). Language acquisition, access to education, employment, housing and medical care, as well as intra and inter-community tensions (including discrimination and uncertainty), may all exacerbate the consequences of past trauma (Mollica, 2001).

Although it has been asserted that refugees are at increased risk of adverse psychological experiences, in particular PTSD (Fazel, Wheeler, & Danesh, 2005; Kienzler, 2008), resilience has also been found amongst refugee groups, in the same way that resilience is frequently observed in other populations following trauma (Clark, 2006; Ellis et al., 2007; Tempany, 2009). Whilst many refugees display remarkable resilience, particularly if opportunities and supports are provided, others struggle with emotional and social distress. However, even resilience requires nurture for its continual growth (Pittaway & Muli, 2010).

The social ecological environment in the countries of resettlement for refugees has been shown to be critical in facilitating beneficial adaptation. Whilst it has been claimed that the role of past trauma prior to displacement is less significant for the psychological wellbeing of young people than the stressors facing them in their country of re-settlement.
(Montgomery, 2010), it is not possible to extricate the interwoven influences from both traumatic experiences. Past experience is irrevocably embedded within present experience, as it this that allows everyday living. However, refugees often reported more concern with current stressors, such as family problems, than with past trauma (Tempany, 2009).

The increasing political and community concern in Australia about the arrival of refugee immigration has intensified insecurity amongst these communities, especially Muslim adherents (Casimiro, Hancock, & Northcote, 2007). Whilst present worldwide apprehension about terrorism has exacerbated prejudice against adherents of Islam, the terrorist attack against Norwegian youth in 2011 was instigated and undertaken by a militant Christian, Anders Breivik. As the lyrics of ‘Europa’ by Globus (Lyricsmania, n.d.) remind us, “There’s hate for life, and death in hate. Emerging from the new caliphate” based on nationalistic and religious bigotry that is not confined to a single perspective. Fear will create a commitment to the bullet and the bomb, if it is not questioned whether intolerance and hatred of diversity in life promises death or life. Racism based on fear and arrogance can only be overcome by communication, in which speaking and listening occur within respect (Gold & Shanks, 2002, pp.197-198).

However, in spite of these challenges, the majority of refugees have resettled productively, providing beneficially for their communities in Australia and overseas, as well as contributing beneficially to the wider Australian society (Hugo, 2011; Pittaway & Muli, 2010). Consequently, it would be advantageous for research to facilitate further understanding of ways to enhance adaptation and to minimise adverse experiences of marginalisation and discrimination. Research with those from refugee backgrounds can provide understanding of their perceptions of trauma and hope and the ways that these mediate their experience of the past, present and future. This may assist in the provision of efficacious services and resettlement policies for specific communities and may have wider
application to other refugee groups (Ellis et al., 2007). Additionally, it may provide testimony to the courage and strength displayed by refugees, as they construct a new life. Qualitative research can provide deep understanding of the interactions of the multi-dimensional factors that constitute the complex matrix of lived experience.

5.5 Research with Refugee Communities

5.5.1 Quantitative Research

The majority of research on the experience of trauma amongst refugees has been carried out utilising quantitative methodologies within the Western biomedical model (Baird & Boyle, 2012; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008; Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007). This has focussed on the quantification of responses, the creation of generalisations and the establishment of causation. Thus, this research has concentrated on the ‘what’, less on the ‘how’ and much less on the ‘why’ of trauma experiences. Whilst this may facilitate understanding about the multifaceted physical and psychological challenges encountered by many refugees, a representation of maladjustment and instability may promote additional discrimination and marginalisation (Baird & Boyle, 2012; Muecke, 1992). Such an inadequate representation of the lived experience of refugees denies, or at the very least, diminishes their voices of survival, perseverance and transformation. Difficulty needs to be viewed within the framework of suffering, resilience and growth, as when intersecting and interrelating threads are viewed in isolation, there is the risk of inadequate and skewed understanding. Some quantitative researchers acknowledge the need for contextual understanding. Momartin et al., (2004) questioned the efficacy of a sole focus on PTSD symptomatology amongst Bosnian refugees, as the presence of PTSD was not associated with psychosocial dysfunction.
5.5.2 Qualitative Research with Refugees in Australia

Whilst considerable quantitative research has examined refugees from within Western frameworks, insufficient research has examined their lived experience (Ellis, Kia-Keating, Yusuf, Lincoln, & Nur, 2007; Schweitzer et al., 2007). Qualitative research aims to provide understanding about the content of responses, rather than only the form, and importantly, the meaning ascribed to these experiences. The plight of asylum seekers in Australia has been graphically illustrated by qualitative research (Dudley, 2003; Mares et al., 2002; Rees, 2003). A denial of human rights has resulted not only in adverse psychological consequences but in placing lives in jeopardy through the denial of hope. A teenage girl in detention explained her drawing of an encaged bird in deep lament thus, “This is not how I feel, it is how I am” (Mares et al., 2002, p.94). The suffering of families in immigration detention has been compounded by parental hopelessness, as they are unable to give their children sufficient care that in turn increases parental despair (Mares et al., 2002). A father surveyed his deeply distressed family and agonised that, “I am a dead man. Every day I am dying slowly. What have I brought my family to?” (Mares et al., 2002, p.93). Hope struggles to live when hope is denied.

Similarly, qualitative projects have increased understanding of the experiences of refugees in Australia. These have highlighted the impact of past traumatic experiences on the lives of refugees in Australia (Cassity & Gow, 2005; de Anstiss & Zaiain, 2010; A. Joyce, Earnest, De Mori, & Silvagni, 2010; Khawaja, White, Schweitzer, & Greenslade, 2008). It is more appropriate to understand refugees’ experiences in a more comprehensive framework than the biomedical model, as the impact of past traumas occurs within the social, cultural, political and economic context of significant ongoing stressors (Brough, Gorman, Ramirez, & Westoby, 2003; Cassity & Gow, nd; Khawaja et al., 2008; Onsando & Billett, 2009; Schweitzer et al., 2007; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). Additionally, the biomedical model fails
to provide an appropriate explanatory paradigm for distress amongst many refugees, for
whom cultural interpretations are more significant (Kokanovic et al., 2008; Tempany, 2009)
or for the resilience and adaptation evidenced in refugee communities (Brough et al., 2003;
Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012; Pittaway & Muli, 2010; Schweitzer et al., 2007; Tempany,
2009).

Considerable concern has been expressed, particularly by women, for the wellbeing of
family remaining in their homelands and their inability to provide adequately for them
(Kokanovic et al., 2008). Cultural imperatives can lead to family concern and tension
amongst refugees (Anstiss & Zaiain, 2010; Brough et al., 2003; Cassity & Gow, 2005; A.
Joyce et al., 2010; Kokanovic et al., 2008; Pittaway & Muli, 2010) and difficulties within
their own communities and the larger Australian community (Brough et al., 2003; Cassity &
Gow, nd; Kokanovic et al., 2008; Onsando & Billett, 2009). Additionally, there were
significant obstacles to the creation of beneficial connections and the attainment of goals in
the wider Australian community, including racial discrimination (de Anstiss & Zaiain, 2010;
A. Joyce et al., 2010; Kokanovic et al., 2008; Murray, 2009; Onsando & Billett, 2009;
Pittaway & Muli, 2010); inadequate educational, employment and housing opportunities
(Cassity & Gow, nd; A. Joyce et al., 2010; Kokanovic et al., 2008; Onsando & Billett, 2009;
Pittaway & Muli, 2010) and insufficient awareness of health and socio-economic resources
(Anstiss & Zaiain, 2010; A. Joyce et al., 2010; Pittaway & Muli, 2010).

However, remarkable resilience was observed within refugee communities (Clark,
2006; Brough et al., 2003; Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012; Pittaway & Muli, 2010). A Somalian
refugee explained that, “The trauma I have now is about that experience but I was determined
to survive. I can survive anything because of my refugee experience” (Pittaway & Muli,
2010, p.31). Appreciation was expressed for the opportunities available in Australia, such as
health, education, employment and an enhanced sense of identity (Pittaway & Muli, 2010).
Policies, opportunities and interventions were identified that would improve the wellbeing of refugees (Broadbent, Cacciattolo, & Carpenter, 2007; Onsando & Billett, 2009; Pittaway & Muli, 2010), including the importance of constructing new relationships to enhance a sense of belonging (Brough et al., 2003).

5.6 Background for Refugee Participants

As it is essential that narratives are analysed within contextualised understanding, relevant statements about the three cultures represented by participants will be outlined; Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Sudan and Sri Lanka.

5.6.1 Bosnia-Herzegovina

Preceding the Yugoslav Wars (1991-1995), Bosnia-Herzegovina was one of six republics that comprised Yugoslavia. Whilst they shared a common South Slavic background, ethnic and cultural diversity was present. This multiplicity was most evident in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where in 1992 the population of 41 million was comprised of 44% Muslim, 31% Serbian and 17% Croatian (Ching, 2009, pp.8-10). Prior to the conflict that tore Bosnia-Herzegovina apart from 1992 to 1995, it was inconceivable to most Bosnians that their citizens would seek to exterminate each other and their culture. Bosnian Muslims, Serbians and Croatians lived together in the same towns, in contrast to Croatia, where they inhabited distinct areas of the country (Ching, 2009, p.10). As a culturally diverse but assimilated society, they had prospered together for five centuries, notwithstanding dissimilar religious beliefs (Sells, 1998, pp.xxii-xxiii, 1-5). However, the words of the psychiatrist and poet, Radovan Karadzic (as cited in Sells, 1998, p.9) were harbingers of doom, when he prophesised the annihilation of Bosniaks if Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence. More recently, Karadzic has denied charges of genocide and war crimes, insisting he alleviated suffering during the war, for which he should be rewarded (Little, 2012). It could
be questioned whether this represented arrogance, belligerence, denial, self-delusion or cowardice?

The primary objectives of the war were the creation of an independent Serbian republic on one side, and an equally determined opposition to such a state on the other side (Sossou, Craig, Ogren, & Schnak, 2008). The failure to establish state sovereignty following the collapse of communism provided impetus for ancient ethnic and religious beliefs to be used in this quest (Burg & Shoub, 2000, p.4). The unimaginable became reality although in concert with all atrocities, they became unimaginable, and so ‘unspeakable’ (Sells, 1998, p.11). Although there is discrepancy concerning the casualties of this “mutual savagery”, it would appear that between 100,000 to 150,000 were killed, the majority being civilians (Burg & Shoup, 2000, pp.169-170, 179; Dervišbegovic, 2005). However, within the savagery, echoes from the respectful co-existence of the past were realised in acts of mutual mercy (Burg & Shoup, 2000, p.178).

Cities, such as Sarajevo, Mostar and Bihać, were subject to protracted sieges, resulting in the deaths of over 12,000 and inflicting unremitting suffering upon the inhabitants (Durakovic´-Belko, Kulenovic´, & Đapic´, 2003; Locke, 2009; Powell et al., 2003; Rosner, Powell, & Butollo, 2003). The past lives on. The wounds of Sarajevo were reopened by the trial and 45 year prison sentence in 2013 of Veselin Vlahovic, the ‘Monster of Grbavica’. He was convicted of sixty counts of murder, rape, enslavement and torture, primarily in the Sarajevon neighbourhood of Grbavica (ABC, 2013a).

Large scale massacres were perpetrated against Bosniaks (Muslim Bosnians) that included Srebrenica and Višegrad (Ching, 2009, pp.37-42; Pollack, 2003). Tragically, both towns had endured massacres just fifty years previously in WWII (Hoare, 2006, pp. 143–147). The Srebrenica massacre has been defined as genocide, as its objective was to annihilate Bosniaks in that area (Ching, 2009, p.42). The war resulted in 1.3 million IDPs and
500,000 refugees (UNHCR, 1998). Approximately 20,000 Bosnian refugees resettled in Australia that represented the largest group assisted under the Australian humanitarian immigration program during the 1990’s (Colic-Peisker, 2003).

The creation of two states (one Bosniak-Croatian and the other Serbian) united under one government, has exacerbated ethnic divisions that are now more pronounced than before the war (Borger, 2012). The trauma of the war haunts Bosnia-Herzegovina like a troubled spectre, as frustration, anger, distrust and violence fuelled by bureaucratic dysfunction and serious economic difficulties, stalk this troubled land (BBC, 2014; Locke, 2009; C. Solomon, 2006). However, life and hope flourish in the midst of chaos, as Bosnians struggle to create a new life, at home and abroad, amidst the “ruins of memory” (Langer, 1991) to honour that memory for the future (Locke, 2009). The Bosnian poet and scholar, Marko Vešović (2012) expressed this love of life for life, encapsulated within one moment of darkness and light,

I’m running home with my little daughter –
again, shells have surprised us on the street.
.... I’m hurrying her on with angry words:
transferring my rage from the Serb gunners
to a child awaited ten years.
Let me write my name, she tells me, as we pass
a patch of virgin snow in the park.
Instead of scolding her,
I—God knows why—let her forefinger
break the delicate whiteness,
and then, around the Cyrillic IVANA VEŠOVIC
my forefinger describes a circle,
impenetrable.
Like in fairy-tales.
5.6.2 South Sudan

Sudan was a British colony from 1859 to 1956 with an Anglo-Egyptian administration. It was divided between North and South Sudan with economic, social and political development occurring predominantly in the North (Bubenzer & Stern, 2012, p.xv; Deng, 1995, p.11). Sudan was granted independence in 1956. However, for South Sudan, the external colonialism of Britain was replaced by the internal colonialism of Arab hegemony, as the Arab-Muslim North strove to dominate the Christian and animist ethnic groups of South Sudan (Bubenzer & Stern, 2012, p.xv; Coker, 2004; Deng, 1995, p.12). From 1955 until independence from the North was declared in 2011, South Sudan experienced nearly continual civil war with Sudan. This was fuelled by the discovery of oil in the 1970s and the imposition of Shari’a law in southern Sudan in 1983 (Bubenzer & Stern, 2012, p.xvii; Deng, 1995, pp. 12-13; Johnson, 2003; Lesch, 1998). It is estimated that there were 2 million casualties from the last twenty years of hostilities that ended in 2005 (Coker, 2004). Conflict, disease and famine (from natural disasters and as a tool of war) additionally forced the internal displacement of 4 million South Sudanese and 600,000 refugees, who fled to other countries (Deng, 1995, p.13; United States Department of State (USDS, 2010). This bears witness to an enduring and tragic loss.

Even with the cessation of the war, insecurity and instability continue to be widespread. Over two million displaced people have returned to South Sudan (USDS, 2010), and 200,000 Sudanese refugees have fled violence in South Kordofan (UNHCR, 2012a). Ongoing disputes continue between South Sudan and Sudan, including the status of the Abyei region and administration of the immense oil reserves in South Sudan that are transported through Sudan (USDS, 2012). Whilst the first remains an enduring problem, advances have been made in securing an equitable system for transportation of the oil resources of South Sudan (Aljazeera, 2012; Copnall, 2012).
The composition of South Sudan’s population presents a serious challenge to the new nation. South Sudan comprises over 60 distinct ethnic groups (including Dinka, Nuer, and Murle), which exert more power in identity formation than the citizenship of a unified nation (Jok, 2011). Whilst this diversity possessed a unity in their fight for freedom from Sudan, grave tensions remain amongst differing groups with the potential to erupt into conflict, as evidenced by the deaths of between 1,000 to 2,000 in Jonglei province in 2011, with fears of escalating inter-ethnic violence in 2013 (Ferrie, 2012; The Guardian, 2013b; UN, 2011; UN, 2013a). Tragically, such fears became reality in late 2013 continuing into 2014 that resulted in thousands of deaths, the internal displacement of 355,000, 80,000 refugees and widespread destruction (UN, 2014; UNHCR, 2014b).

Whilst each ethnic group of South Sudan has its own cultural distinctives, commonalities occur. Social structures are firmly organised, whose foundation is a strong sense of communality that focuses on integration and support for everyone, with particular respect for elders (Baird & Boyle, 2012; Jeppson & Hjern, 2005, pp.68-69). The family is held in high regard, bestowing significance and meaning. Indeed, it is widely believed that a family enjoys eternal life through procreation (Ingleby, 1980, p.69). Traditional South Sudanese families are patriarchal, with husbands deemed to have headship within the family (Baird & Boyle, 2012). Their roles are the provision of necessities for the family, including a sense of order. This extends to the children of brothers, as the majority of the South Sudan ethnic groups have a patrilineal tradition (Duany & Duany, 2001). The responsibility for wives is the welfare of children and home duties within a framework of submission to men (Bishop, 2011). However, obligations have been altered as a consequence of the civil war, as the loss of many men has resulted in women now being the head of many families and so assuming further responsibilities (Bubenzer & Stern, 2011, pp.6, 157; Duany & Duany, 2001).
Hope for South Sudan emerges from a past abyss, dark with loss but bright with promise. The past cannot be changed but the future can. This has been exemplified by a Henry Jada (2008, p.19), a South Sudanese poet,

I watch, now, the sunset of my life,
Every fleeting moment of it float through an hour glass
Located somewhere in my being,
Somehow time ceased to exist for me;
And I was hurled head and foot into an abyss
Located somewhere in the bosom of nowhere.
I recall, now, the sunrise of my life,
Every fleeting moment of it,
And wondered at which o’clock,
Did I engage a devils’ advocate.
I remember now the rise and fall
Of hope in my breast,
Every fleeting moment of it
Stuffed with dreams
Of changing everything and nothing.

5.6.3 Sri Lanka

More than ten ethnic groups exist within Sri Lanka, with the Sinhalese comprising the largest community, 74%, followed by the Tamils with 18% of the total population of 18 million. Tamils are primarily Hindu, whilst Sinhalese are predominantly Buddhist, with significant numbers Christian and Muslim (De Zoysa, 2001). Independence from Great Britain in 1948 offered the hope of a united Sri Lanka for both Tamil and Sinhalese. This aspiration was thwarted as increasingly the minority Tamils were subjected to Sinhalese oppression and discrimination (Spencer, 1990, pp.1-2). Such persecution provided impetus
for the Tamils to be regarded as a distinct ethnic group, with their own territory, culture and language (Wilson, 2000, pp.1, 25).

However, minority ethnic groups also define themselves within a wider nationalist identity, although the majority ethnicity may view themselves as representing authenticity (Wilson, 2000, p.7). This resulted in increasing oppression and discrimination in Sri Lanka by the Sinhalese towards the Tamils, so that the creation of an independent Tamil state was adopted as policy by the major Tamil political party in 1977. Simultaneously, Tamil militant groups were established, of which the Tamil Tigers are the most well-known (Spencer, 1990, p.2). Terrorist attacks on both sides erupted into civil war from 1983 that was the result of present day political agendas, rather than the culmination of long standing ethnic feuds (Somasundram, 2007; Spencer, 1990, p.5). This can be evidenced by the fact that not all Sri Lankans supported the conflict (de Zoysa, 2001).

More than 60,000 people lost their lives as a result of the war that engulfed the whole country with bombings against civilian populations generating widespread fear and economic disruption for many years (de Zoysa, 2001; Fardanesh & Walker, 2002). At the climax of the conflict, a million Tamils and Sinhalese became displaced people with 156,000, who remain internally displaced (Sachs, 1999; UNHCR, 2012b). Whilst the civil war ceased in 2009, oppression against Tamils continues with increasing ferocity fuelled by a sense of ‘triumphalism’. This has resulted in a diminishing of democracy concomitant with a denial of justice, including reports of the killing of 40,000 Tamils and sexual violence against Tamil prisoners by the Sri Lankan military (Brewster, 2012; Haggerson, 2012; Human Rights Watch, 2013; UN, 2013b). There are fears that this too closely echoes the pogroms of the past
that issued in the bitter civil war (BBC, 2013; Doherty, 2012; Gouverneur, 2010).\(^\text{17}\)

Orientation towards the family unit is more significant than a focus on the individual in Sri Lanka (Wickrama & Wickrama, 2008). A basic tenet of traditional Tamil culture is the strict separation between gender roles that invokes an amalgamation of patriarchal and matriarchal traditions (Multicultural Canada, n.d.; Seizer, 2008, p.255). Whilst males are deemed to have authority over females, especially in the public domain, role division endows females with significant power within the home. The family and extended family possess special significance within Tamil culture, as they are invested with roles frequently performed by the individual or state, such as the arrangement of marriages and care of the aged. This is reflective of the respect accorded to age that is exhibited within the family and wider society (Multicultural Canada, n.d.).

Pireeni Sundaralingam (2002), the Tamil poet and scholar, appreciated keenly the imperative for the past in Sri Lanka to be brought to light so that it can be given voice,

My country is a white blindness,
an absence of newsprint, a vacuum of words,
… But where is there left
for me to pour out my secrets?
I will dig graves deep in the earth for them.
I will tear holes in the white silence of the page
and bury the words of witness deep in the tomb of the text.
Let them bear fruit there,
let the sprouting grasses shout out their secrets,
let the blade-cut reeds blare out their names.

\(^{17}\) Such reports question the justice of ‘enhanced screening’ of Tamils arriving by boat in Australia, whereby they are considered to be suspect asylum seekers. This process is unjust at best and at worst, risks ‘refoulement’, contrary to the UN Refugee Convention, if Tamils are persecuted upon their return to Sri Lanka (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2013b; Pearson & Laurie, 2013).
CHAPTER SIX: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research objectives will be outlined within an ethical framework that has congruence with the requirements of participants, who have experienced severe trauma and are from non-Australian backgrounds. The rationale for the utilisation of narratives within qualitative methodology will be discussed. The interview protocol congruent with this methodology will be described. The hermeneutic phenomenological analysis (HPA) undertaken for the explication of themes within the narratives will be explained.

6.1 Narrative Research Objective

The objective of the primary research was to collect and analyse narratives that will facilitate understanding about the characterisation of hope within the experience of trauma for women from refugee communities. This was undertaken by inviting refugees to share their narratives in loosely structured interviews. These stories were analysed with particular emphasis on the participant’s interpretation of trauma, their perspectives concerning hope prior and subsequent to their experiences of trauma, and the interrelationships between hope and trauma within their lived experience.

6.2 Ethical Framework

6.2.1 Ethical Concerns for Refugees

Research with cultural groups whose beliefs, values and behaviours differ from those of Western cultures requires that ethical considerations be carefully scrutinised. However, insufficient attention has addressed these concerns with refugees, who have frequently experienced multiple traumas at different stages of their displacement and resettlement (Ellis et al., 2007; Leaning, 2001; Lustig et al., 2004; Pittaway, Bartomolei, & Hugman, 2010; Schweitzer et al., 2006; Tempany, 2009). Research with refugees necessitates high ethical
standards, as many have experienced serious ethical violations in the past (Good et al., 1994; Hollifield et al., 2002; Keyes, 2000; Leaning, 2001; Mackenzie et al., 2007; Rees et al., 2009). Additionally, it is critical to remember that the sharing of painful narratives is not painless (Alty & Rodham, 1998; Frank, 1995, p.xii; Frank, 2000, 2001; Priya, 2010). Consequently, research must ensure that significant efforts are made to minimise further harm, alleviate distress and promote beneficial outcomes.

6.2.2 Non-maleficence

The paramount principle for biomedical ethics is “first, do no harm”. Non-maleficence refers to the avoidance of causing harm to others (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001, p.12). This is a critical concern for all research and particularly for vulnerable and marginalised communities (Hugman, Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2011; Leaning, 2001). Research participation may be detrimental for individuals who have experienced trauma, as the narration of trauma may re-awaken past suffering (Goodman, 2004; Griffin et al., 2003; Newman & Kaloupek, 2004, 2009; Uehara et al., 2001). Although it has been questioned whether this distress will usually necessitate counselling (Corbin & Morse, 2003), this must be considered a possibility. Whilst research with refugees may be undertaken with good intentions, at times this has caused harm for participants. Refugees have faced exploitation when used solely as a data generating subject, as well as danger through breaches of confidentiality. In Thailand, refugees (Pittaway, Bartolomei & Hugman, 2010, p.236) objected that,

Women were so upset after the interviews, we did not know what to do. We never heard from them [researchers] again – we decided then that we would never work with researchers again. They stole our stories. We can gather the stories ourselves from our own people.
A fundamental paradox of trauma will be revealed in trauma research. There is a striving to avoid painful memories compounded by the restraints created by the collective silence of trauma that is in juxtaposition by the longing and need for the pain to be heard and acknowledged (Herman, 1997, pp.174-176). This paradox may also permeate narrative research. Sharing trauma narratives has the potential to be beneficial, although this may be painful at the same time. This distress was insufficient to diminish the decision for, or advantages from, research involvement for those with trauma experiences (Dyregrov, Dyregrov, & Raundalen, 2000; Ferrier-Auerbach, Erbes, & Polusny, 2009; Priya, 2010; Rosenthal, 2003; Newman & Kaloupek, 2009).

As by definition, refugees have experienced trauma, the narration of painful experiences may cause distress. Thus, it is critical that participants have the right to terminate interviews and withdraw from the project. No participant chose to do this. I suspended two interviews when the participants became distressed. Although they were given the option of concluding the interview, both expressed a desire to finish their narrative. At the conclusion of each interview, participants were given the opportunity to debrief about their experience of research participation, especially the narration of traumatic events. All of the participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share their stories.

Participants were provided with information about two trauma specialist counselling services, both of whom had previously expressed willingness to see participants free of charge. One participant was particularly encouraged to consider accessing this support, as not only had she become visibly distressed during the interview but there were recent experiences of trauma in her life. Several months after the interviews, she had not availed herself of this opportunity but was coping with her difficulties. Whilst extensive efforts were made to minimise potential harm, some risk will remain. However, attempting to completely protect participants by not undertaking research is also unethical, as this may result in the potential
loss of benefits for participants and valuable understanding may be lost (Dyregrov et al., 2000; Kilpatrick, 2004).

6.2.3 Beneficence

The principle of beneficence refers to the promotion of wellbeing for participants (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001, pp.167-168). Participants may be empowered by the willingness of others to listen and acknowledge the significance of these stories without judgement (Appelbaum, 2008; Boehnlein, 1987; Boehnlein & Kinzie, 1995; McCoyd & Shdaimah, 2007; Summerfield & Toser, 1991; Zarowsky, 2004). This may facilitate the consolidation of participants’ narratives for themselves, alleviate distress and promote hope (Goodman, 2004; Lohne, 2008; Padgett, 2009; Pollack, 2003; Mollica, 2006, p.24). Bearing witness to the story of another obliges the interviewer to accept dual roles that may be fraught with risk and tension (Appelbaum, 2008). However, to do less is to become complicit in the conspiracy of silence.

For participation to be beneficial and to yield significant results, research needs to be effected within a milieu of trust that is problematic for many trauma survivors, as this was tested or destroyed during trauma (Boenhlein, 1987; Bright & Bowland, 2008; Herman, 1997, pp.51, 205; Kleinman, 1995, p.234; Langer, 2001; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008; Zapata-Sepúlveda, 2012). Consequently, it was imperative to consider strategies for the development of trust between the researcher and the community and individual participants (Ellis et al., 2007; Havercamp, 2005; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008). Trust was encouraged by the establishment of a safe research environment that respects community needs and values; involvement of community contacts; recognising subjects as participants rather than subjects; acceptance of participants’ experiences without disbelief or minimisation, and displaying
interest and respect for participants during the entire research (Mackenzie et al., 2007; Schweitzer & Steel, 2008; Uehara et al., 2001).

6.2.4 Autonomy

Following the torture inflicted upon subjects in the name of ‘research’ by the Nazis in WWII, the principle of autonomy for participants has been justly highlighted (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001, p.77). Intensive efforts were undertaken to promote research participation based on the encouragement of autonomy, rather than only voluntary informed consent (Mackenzie et al., 2007). Although it has been argued that the vulnerability of many refugees may result in diminished ability for completely voluntary participation, due to educational limitations, past discrimination or compromised decision-making capacity (Levine, 2004; Rosenstein, 2004), these factors may also encourage rejection of participation. Thus, vulnerability may or may not play a role in the determination of autonomy (Hugman, Pittaway, & Bartomolei, 2011). Further, considerable time had elapsed since dislocation for the participants in this research and all have been resettled in Australia for a number of years. The concept of ‘relational autonomy’ strives to facilitate autonomy (Hugman et al., 2011). Emphasis is given to relationship between participant and researcher, as social context can positively or adversely influence autonomy.

At the first contact with each participant, the purposes of the project, the requirements for participation and assurance of confidentiality were all discussed. Participants were encouraged to ask questions concerning this project. At the beginning of the first interview, the consent form was explained in detail to the participants, emphasising that they could withdraw consent at any time during their involvement with the research. They were informed that there would be opportunity for them to confirm that the research narrative accurately reflected their experience.
## 6.3 Rationale for Narratives

### 6.3.1 Narratives as Intrinsic to Life

If poets’ verses be but stories
So be food and raiment stories;
So is all the world a story
So is man of dust a story.

St Columba (as cited in Murray, 1999, p.47).

Qualitative research using the narratives of participants has been chosen as an appropriate means by which knowledge about experience is produced and understood, as narratives are intrinsic to life (Bruner, 2002, pp.1-2; Hunt, 2010, pp.3-6; Mehl-Madrona, 2010, p.178; Mishler, 1986, pp.67-68; Murray, 1999, p.49; Neimeyer, 2004; Sacks, 1998, p.110; Spence, 1983). Indeed, for Janet (as cited in de Certeau, 1988, p.115) “narration created humanity.” However, the construction and lived experience of narratives does not produce uniformity but individuality within shared communality (Sacks, 1996, pp.110-111).

Experience is naturally storied into narratives as part of everyday life to communicate, symbolise, negotiate and understand experience (Bruner, 1990, p.45; Burr & Butt, 2000, p.200; Eastmond, 2007; Ochs & Capps, 1996; Seidman, 2006, p.20). Importantly, narratives have been found to be fundamental across cultures, as participants in this research project came from three diverse cultural groups (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Even Sartre (2007, p.39), with his emphasis on individual freedom and responsibility, acknowledged the ubiquity of narratives, although he lamented such reliance (Strawson, 2004; Warburton, 1996);

This is what fools people: a man is always a teller of tales, he lives surrounded by his stories and the stories of others, he sees everything that happens to him through them; and he tries to live his own life as if he were telling a story. But you have to choose: live or tell.
Such a choice is unnecessary and impossible. We live to tell and tell to live. Not only are narratives inherent within humanity but they are expressed within a world created by narratives (Murray, 1999, p.47). Further, it has been asserted that “stories live us not the other way round”, as narratives reflect socialisation and enculturation (Bruner as cited in Mehl-Madrona, 2010, p.47). Thus, narratives are dependent upon life to represent a world in all its richness, whilst contemporaneously life is dependent upon narratives to interpret ourselves, others and our world (Hunt, 2010, pp.3-6; Mehl-Madrona, 2010, p.178; Mischler, 1984, pp.67-68; Neimeyer, 2004). Both are entwined within reciprocal relationships so that they create each other (Bruner, 2004; Murray, 1999, p.49). Life is characterised by complexity, nuance, interrelationships, paradox and ambiguity. As narratives reflect the experience within which and from which they are told, they themselves will be inherently fraught with this same uncertainty and intricacy. The implications for hermeneutic research within this framework are the imperatives for a holistic perspective and acceptance of nonlinearity that defines organisation (Hoskins, 2001).

6.3.2 Narratives as Expression of Experience

Understanding about the experience of others arises from their expressions of these experiences (Schutz, 1972, pp.99-100). In addition, narratives are not simply descriptions of experience but encompass interpretation, as significance is attributed by the experience and through expression (Eastmond, 2007; Douglass & Vogler, 2003, p.16; Hoskins, 2001). Reciprocal interrelationships exist between experience and expression, as experience generates narratives, whilst narratives imbue the experience with meaning (Ochs & Capps, 1996). Experience is derived from perception and ascription of meaning within historical, social and cultural frameworks (Murray et al., 2010). These are integrated so that

Thus, narratives by refugees confer some understanding about the ways, in which they themselves understand life when it is transformed by turmoil and the hope for a better future (Eastmond, 2007). However, they do not represent objective statements about reality, as they are produced through a dynamic interaction between life, experience, story, and in research, text. This differentiates between life events, the experience and interpretation of these events, and the way these experiences are narrated within specific situations; or simply, “life as lived”, “life as experienced”, and “life as told” (Bruner, 1986, p.6; Eastmond, 2007, p.249). Relating a life story is a part of life as lived, as it is lived and experienced during the telling (Lamb, 2001).

The transmission of experience is inchoate, as complete understanding cannot be conveyed (Bruner, 1986, pp.6-7). This is especially true for the experience of suffering (Frank, 2001). In addition, narration is influenced by the relationship between researcher and participant. Power relationships and practical circumstances will influence the significant experiences chosen for inclusion in a narrative (Crapanzano, 1981; Eastmond, 2007). Narratives are co-constructions, as that they do not represent enduring objective life stories but are products of the ‘biographical illusion’ (Bourdieu as cited in Truc, 2011; Gheorghiu, 2011; Holstein & Gubrium, 2003, pp.15-17; Järvinen, 2000). Thus, reality is not reflected clearly through narratives but understandings can be viewed through a lens of opacity.

Whilst the impacts of the researcher and interview process upon the participant’s meaning making of their narrative cannot be entirely eliminated, attempts can be made for their minimisation. Acknowledgement of the role that interaction will play in this production of meaning alerts the researcher to the need for thoughtful deliberation concerning the
interview procedure, formulation and posing of questions, and constructive relationships with participants (Seidman, 2006, p.22).

6.3.3 Narratives as Interpretation

Experiences that are meaningful are chosen for inclusion within a narrative, whilst the incongruent are cast aside; this has been signified as “narrative smoothing” (Spence, 1983). As this choice will differ within each narration, individual narratives will reflect interpretation (Bruner, 1986, pp.6-7; Eastmond, 2007). The creation of narratives is achieved by emplotment that enables experience to be imbued with meaning through interpretation (Burr & Butt, 2000, p.201; Ricoeur, 1990, p.168). Stories may then be accepted as one’s own and incorporated into an individual’s sense of self, although the complexity and dynamic nature of self may result in the experience of “dissonant consonance”, or dialectical tension (Ricoeur, 1990, p.74, p.168). Whilst emplotment creates unity within narratives, it is dynamic, rather than a static process, investing significance within experiences of time (Ezzy, 1998). Consequently, narratives not only possess individual significance but together with their place in history “form the very source from which meaningfulness springs into and illuminates human existence” (Arendt, 1998, p.254).

Attention is placed on the way that these experiences are woven together to construct a narrative unity, rather than only on the experiences themselves (Burr & Butt, 1990, p.201). Thus, Ricoeur (1990, p.148) explained that, “A list of facts without any ties between them is not a narrative. This is why describing and explaining are not distinguished from each other.” Narratives enable isolated events to be interwoven together within a meaningful unity, so that continuity is generated between the past, present and future (Launer, 2005; Ochs & Capps, 1996; Sparrowe, 2005). This is in accord with the unity of the hermeneutic circle of
interpretation, as the parts of the narrative require explication within the framework of the whole, and vice versa.

### 6.3.4 Contextualisation of Narratives

Although narratives have been critiqued as reflective of individual accounts, rather than of social context (Atkinson, 1997), this does not take account of the integral social influences on the creation and interpretation of narratives. Indeed, individual narratives of refugees reflect the diversity of this experience and so can be a foil to the generalised refugee discourse (Eastmond, 2007). The words used in narratives reflect a microcosm of individual and social consciousness (Vygotsky, 2004, p.110). Consequently, narratives do not constitute discrete entities but reflect the experience of individuals within a specific temporal, cultural and social context and so require interpretation within the intersections of these contexts (Burr & Butt, 2000, p.201; Eastmond, 2007; Gadamer, 2006, pp.189, 305-306; Heidegger cited in Rauch, 1998). For participants, whose first language is not English, the use of narratives can facilitate understanding of the contextualisation of experience (Gerard & Pickering, 2003; Riessman, 1993).

Narratives create the interface between the individual and community and thus inform cultural identities and constitute community (Ochs & Capps, 1996). As narratives are interrelated with others, that together emanate from and interact with cultural scripts, the understanding of cultural mechanisms may be enhanced. Indeed, the intersections between individual and cultural narratives are critical to understanding individual stories embedded within a network of relations and contexts (Hoskins, 2001). This content will be dependent on available discourses that structure beliefs, values and behaviours and so frame experience (Foucault, 2002, pp.53-54). Within these discourses, narratives are created through relationships by individuals for collective narratives (Mehl-Madrona, 2010, pp.69, 178).
Thus, the role of culture is critical in the mediation of narratives (Eastmond, 2007; Goveas, 2002; Rechtman, 2000).

6.3.5 Temporalisation of Narratives

It is important to acknowledge that interpretation of the past as a lived experience is not static but will be changed through the encounter with diverse contexts. Heidegger (2008, pp.424-429; as cited in Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.129) conceptualised history as altering the experience of reality throughout time. Congruent with this, Gadamer (2006, pp.196-200; as cited in Rauch, 1998) delineated history as an experience of the past whose interpretations will alter within diverse contexts. In the same way that the past is progressively transformed, so too are interpretations by individuals of themselves. Consequently, cross-sectional research captures lived experience at a certain juncture in time. All interpretation transpires within temporal contextualisation. Derrida (2001, pp.xvii-xviii, 29) cautioned that interpretation will be ‘deferred’, as difference may occur in the future within different temporal contexts. This reflects his utilisation of the word ‘différance’ to encompass simultaneously the idea of difference and deferral. Thus, interpretation can never be definitive, as this will be subject to revision and alteration in the future. This is unsurprising, as the world is in a continuous state of flux. New interpretations of past interpretations may assist in adaptation to new circumstances. Further interpretation occurs by the readers of the narratives as text, so that narratives are subject to a continuing interpretative process.

6.3.6 Interpretation of Narratives

Research creates “life as text” that encompasses the depiction and analysis of narratives by the researcher. This has been produced through the lens of experience and cultural scripts of the researcher (Eastmond, 2007, p.249). Interpretation always occurs
within cultural determinants, into which everyone is embedded, as understanding issues forth from inherited representations within language. Thus, any interpretation is prefaced upon prior interpretation of that experience through language (Brown, 2001, p.201; Derrida, 2001, pp.278-293). As a consequence, the interpreter inevitably becomes a part of the interpretation, as the self is projected onto the interpretation (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p.26).

**6.3.7 Giving Voice to Narratives**

Narratives require means by which they may be heard, so that collective constructions can combat collective silences (Burr & Butt, 2000, p.201). Narratives bear witness to the circumstances that deprive others of their voice (Frank, 1995, p.xiii). Inmates of death camps chose life, so that they could become witnesses to the loss of life and it was this hope that sustained their own survival (des Pres, 1973). Indeed, Isak Dinesen (as cited in Gaita, 2002, p.77), the Danish writer, maintained that suffering is endurable if incorporated within narrative; “All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story”. Many have found this to be true, the famous and the not so well known. Anne Frank derived strength from her diary (Frank, 1993, pp.2-3), as did Anne-Marie Cockburn (Moorhead, 2013), who began writing immediately after the death of her daughter.

Through the demonstration of what is allowed to be heard and what is proscribed, bonds of understanding can be created. The power of narrative is evidenced by the potential for the “wounded storyteller” to be transformed into the “wounded healer” (Frank, 1995, p.xii). New maps or ‘bridges’ can be constructed through narratives that give direction for life in the world (Frank, 1995, pp.1, 3, 10). For transformation to occur, this hearing must be undertaken within a paradigm that bears true witness and does justice to the lived experience of trauma (Godin, Kishan, Muraskin, & Newhouse, 2006; Steel et al., 2002). Narrative
research may achieve this, as it is predicated on the assumption that narratives are of inherent value in themselves (Seidman, 2006, p.9).

This is of particular relevance to the narratives of refugees, as stories are at times the sole possession that they carry with them into exile to protect and maintain their Being (Johnson, 2008, p.547). It has been suggested that, “What the map cuts up, the story cuts across” (de Certeau, 1988, p.129). This is literally and metaphorically true for refugees. They flee across the borders of nations compelled by their narrative of adversity into this quest for survival. Additionally, their stories cut across boundaries of gender, ethnicity and trauma to proclaim the best that humanity can reveal amidst the worst that humanity can create.

As qualitative research occurs within a historical, social and cultural framework, the lived experience of individuals and communities can be brought to light. Thus understood, research can afford insight into the trauma experience of disruption to one life and adaptation to another, as well as bearing witness to trauma and survival (Eastmond, 2007). Qualitative narrative research can increase understanding about the lived experience of refugees and in particular, the significance of hope in shaping trauma experiences, through the analysis of narratives of women from refugee backgrounds. This can be achieved as narratives are examined within a contextual framework and by the detailed analysis required by a qualitative approach. Additionally, this approach does not require reliance on standardised measures of hope or trauma responses, as the variables examined may not be applicable to contexts outside of their development, particularly within non-Western cultural groups (Ellis et al., 2007; Schweitzer et al., 2007).
6.4 Sampling

Women were chosen to be the participants for this research, as women from refugee backgrounds have endured a doubled silencing of their experiences, as their status as women and refugees has compounded their muteness, as discussed previously. The human rights of refugees are an integral focus of this thesis, so it is pertinent that women refugees have been chosen as participants, as historically they have been denied these rights due to their gender and now because of their refugee status (Ife, 2012, p.74).

A combination of purposive and snowball sampling was used for the recruitment of female refugees (Bryman, 2004, pp.333-334; Patton, 1990, pp.169-183; Silverman, 2010, pp.193-194; Whitehead, 2004). Both of these provided the research with narratives that were characterised by a richness and diversity of understanding pertaining to the characterisation of hope within the experience of trauma for women from refugee backgrounds. Women from refugee backgrounds were given an invitation to participate in this research project through contact with the Community Migrant Resource Centre in Parramatta, Australia. They provided invaluable assistance in facilitating contact with potential participants. Eight women agreed to participate, comprising one from Bosnia, two from Sri Lanka and five from South Sudan. Half of the women were contacted through purposive sampling and the other half through snowball sampling. All of the participants had been granted refugee status and had been settled in Australia for at least five years.

As with most qualitative research, this small sample will necessitate caution in generalising to other refugee communities, even within similar social environments, as cultural distinctives have critical influences on interpretations of hope and trauma (Khan & Manderson, 1992). The concept of transferability has been suggested as an alternative to reliability or validity (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, as cited in Ungar, 2003).
This places responsibility with those, who want to utilise other research, to determine the validity of data transferability to their project. However, the issue of wider applicability may not be critical, as the objective is not the formulation of universal truths.

6.5 Interview Protocol

6.5.1 Interview Location, Duration and Recording

Interviews were undertaken in locations where the participants felt most comfortable. Three interviews took place at the Community Migrant Resource Centre, whilst five occurred at the homes of South Sudanese women. The interviews lasted from one to two hours with the majority continuing for approximately an hour. This disparity was created by allowing participants to speak for as long as they desired (Bishop, 2011). All of the interviews were audio recorded on a small digital recorder. Notes were made following the completion of the interviews, rather than during the interview, so that attention could be focussed on the participants and the process of the interviews.

6.5.2 Interview Structure

The narratives were obtained through loosely structured interviews that are consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology, as narratives are collected without the imposition of predetermined assumptions. A general question was used to initiate the narrative; “Could you please tell me about your experiences as a refugee.” This was followed by open-ended questions, as these permit flexibility within the interview process (Bryman, 2004, p.322; Seidman, 2006, p.23; Willig & Billin, 2012, p.123). This was particularly important as participants were from refugee backgrounds characterised by adversity and cultural diversity, and whose English was not their first language. This format facilitated the idiosyncratic relation of narratives that enhanced the rigour of the data (Seidman, 2006, p.24). Appropriate
responses to participants’ contributions were possible that enabled clarification and the
gathering of further information (Bryman, 2004, p.332). Further, flexibility in asking
appropriate questions and supportive comments in response to specific situations within
different interviews facilitated trust within the interview process (Zinn, 2004). It would
appear that this occurred, as participants openly shared personal and distressing experiences
in their lives.

Open-ended questions provided participants with some control in the interviewing
process. Whilst it has been asserted that power equivalence exists between researcher and
participant in narrative research (Whitley & Crawford, 2005), this inadequately accounts for
the unequal power relationships existing in the research relationship (Eastmond, 2007;
McCoyd & Shdaimah, 2007). This inequity in power relations emphasised the necessity to
ensure that respect was demonstrated to participants throughout the research.

6.5.3 Interview Translation

All of the participants spoke English and were able to narrate their life stories in
detail. However, one Tamil and one South Sudanese woman experienced some difficulty with
several questions. These related to the more nebulous questions about the meaning of hope.
Two translators were used, who came from the same cultural group and were fluent in their
homeland language and English. Whist difficulties in using translators are acknowledged, as
translations will not provide direct equivalence as meaning slips away (Gadamer, 2008a,
p.68; Temple, 2008), the need for them was minimal. Further, their contribution was
appreciated by the participants, as it gave them greater freedom of expression and so enabled
them to participate more fully in the research.
6.5.4 Narrative Transcription

The narratives were transcribed verbatim and varied in length from one thousand to eighteen thousand words. Narratives of participants with English as a second language have been re-written to produce a more flowing story (Goodman, 2004). However, these transcripts were not revised, as they were powerful in their individual idiosyncrasy but still remained very intelligible. This idiosyncratic representation forcefully conveys the participants’ experiences, as their uniqueness catches the attention of the reader with vivid images. Importantly, the narratives reflected the voices of the participants, as they could speak directly, without an extra level of interpretation.

6.6 Research Rigour

The responsibility rests with the researcher to employ rigour in all stages of the research. Thoughtful and conscientious data collection, analysis and writing are critical (Bryman, 2004, p.274; Padgett, 2009). Consequently, effort must be expended to ensure that data collection and analysis represents the lived experience of participants with its complexity, ambiguity and nuances. Thus, respondent validation and consideration of social and cultural contextual factors are important components of research (Dyregrov et al., 2000; Padgett, 2009). The participants were contacted, so that they could verify that the narratives were an accurate representation of their experiences. They not only confirmed their narratives but also reported that this opportunity had enabled them to have pride in their achievements and to become more aware of their perseverance in the face of ongoing adversity.

Accounts of the historical and cultural backgrounds of each of the participants have been included, so that their narratives could be interpreted contextually, rather than from only the cultural perspective of the researcher. However, such understanding can only be partial,
as cultural and historical context can offer illumination but not for issues that remain hidden and unacknowledged; that is, one cannot know of what one is not aware.

6.7 Hermeneutic Phenomenological Analysis

6.7.1 Introduction

No research can faithfully replicate reality but at best can be a partial representation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.5; Gadamer, 2006, p.118; van Manen, 1990, p.16). Furthermore, particular difficulties exist for the communication of experience following trauma, particularly suffering, both in its narration and hearing (Frank, 2001; Rorty, 1989, p.94; Roth, 2007, p.233; 2012, p.91). Qualitative research is limited by analysis and interpretation of the data, so that efforts need to be expended to understand the significant themes within and across narratives. Theories and concepts may inform but should not constrict qualitative research. Thus, they may need to be replaced or abandoned, so that they do not become a hindrance for inductive reasoning that can reveal innovative perspectives (Padgett, 2009).

The framework chosen for the analysis of the narratives was hermeneutic phenomenology that is both a philosophy and research methodology. It encapsulates both phenomenology as it provides descriptions of lived experience together with hermeneutics that offers interpretation of these descriptions (Heidegger, 2008; Laverty, 2003; McConnell-Henry, Chapman, & Francis, 2009; van der Zalm & Burgum, 2000; van Manen, 1990). This combination has been described as an appropriate way to examine human reality (Ricoeur, 1998, p.25). However, Ricoeur (1970, pp.26-27) emphasised that there is no consensus about the theoretical framework for hermeneutics, as there is “no universal canon for exegesis, but only disparate and opposed theories concerning the rules of interpretation.” This was not problematic for Gadamer (2006, p.xxiii; as cited in Regan, 2012), as hermeneutics did not constitute a method in itself but rather provided adaptable informative principles. This
presents both a challenge and an opportunity for flexibility for research employing hermeneutical analysis.

This research was based on hermeneutic phenomenology derived from Heideggerian philosophy (Heidegger, 2008) that is differentiated from transcendental phenomenology derived from Husserlian philosophy (Husserl, 1997, 1999). As he deemed them unachievable, Heidegger rejected the Husserlian objectives for the discovery of the ultimate objective essence of an experience based on the Husserlian assumption of Cartesian duality and the capacity for ‘bracketing’ preconceived assumptions about individual consciousness and the external world (Dreyfus, 1993; Hein & Austin, 2001; Husserl, 1997, pp.11-12, 58-59, 184-185; Koch, 1995; Laverty, 2003). However, an acceptance of the usefulness of ‘Being-in-the-World’ incorporates the inevitability and indeed, necessity of preconceived assumptions for understanding experiences. They exist within the narratives of participants and within the interpretation of the researcher. They cannot be eliminated or ‘bracketed’ prior to or during research. Understanding experiences as objective essences is illusionary but rather remains as whispers of interpretation within reflections of reality. Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology, rather than transcendental phenomenology, constituted the research framework.

Hermeneutic phenomenological research methodology has been used extensively to facilitate understanding of lived experiences, especially within the health sciences (Charalambous, 2010; Dunn, 2009; Fleming, Gaidys, & Robb, 2003; Koch, 1995; McConnell-Henry et al., 2009; McDonald & Brown, 2008; Standing, 2009; Tan, Wilson, & Olver, 2009; Vandermause, 2011; van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000; Whitehead, 2004), and psychology (Langridge & Butt, 2004; Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006; Martin & Thompson, 1997). However, hermeneutic phenomenology has received limited attention within social work (Morley, 2012; Pascal, 2006, 2010; Wilcke, 2006). There are opportunities for its beneficial application within social work, as social work strives to advance understanding of
experience within the richness and nuances of its contextualisations (Newberry, 2012). Although variations exist between these researchers, in their philosophical assumptions and research procedures, the aim of hermeneutics is not to formulate “procedures of understanding, but to clarify the conditions in which understanding takes place” (Gadamer, 2006, p.295).

6.7.2 Interpretation of Narratives

The interpretation of narratives has been defined as, “Interpreting a text means moving beyond understanding what it says to understanding what it talks about” (Ricoeur, 1976, p.88); or more succinctly as “the description of experience mediated by interpretation” (Rapport, 2005, p.131). One of its assumptions is that interpretation is based on its personal significance (Standing, 2009). Consequently, it strives for understanding about the interpretation and significance of lived experience (Annells, 1999; Willig & Billin, 2012).

The phenomenology of Heidegger (2008) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (2006) is hermeneutical, as it entails interpretive understanding of the existence of human beings; that is Being. Heidegger (2008) characterised Being, as ‘Dasein’ (literally ‘being there’). This can be understood as experience of ‘Being-in-the-World’, with the implication that individuals do not exist independently of the world but rather there is an unbreakable unity between a person and the world. There is an indivisible relationship between mind and body (the Cartesian subject-object divide), lived experience and historical and social context. Thus, individuals and the world constitute each other; that is persons are created by the world, whilst creating this world from background and experience (Heidegger, 2008). The dynamic participation of individuals with their world enables understanding of their world.

For both Heidegger (2008) and Gadamer (2004), understanding is interpretation, as any reflection about experience is within a world that was already constituted prior to this
reflection, from prior reflections of experience. The aim is to increase understanding about experience, rather than explanation. Consequently, analysis involves experiential contextualisation and augmentation (Hein & Austin, 2001). The application of prior theoretical perspectives is minimised, so that these do not obscure or distort the reality of the experiences being researched. The focus of analysis on the interpretation and significance of the lived experience aims to elucidate understanding that extends beyond these assumptions and perspectives (van Manen, 1990, p.15).

However, it is inevitable that researchers approach their project with specific preconceptions about the world originating from past experience, as this is applicable to everyone in their experiences of the world. Without preconceptions, everyday life would not be possible, as it enables daily life (Finch, 2004, p.253). This is due to the fundamental interdependence between an individual and experience so that one is always embedded within the historicality of experience and preconceptions (Heidegger, as cited in Laverty, 2003). Thus, it is not possible to stand outside or ‘bracket’ these, as they are within the researcher’s understanding of the world (Laverty, 2003). These preconceptions may be reinforced or need to be revised during the process of analysis. Thus, my own preconceptions about the research have been outlined.

6.7.3 Analysis as Hermeneutic Circle

For Dilthey (as cited in Lessnoff, 2003, p.226; Makkreel, 1992, p.174; Parameshwaran, 2007, p.200), Gadamer (2004, p.291) and Heidegger (2008, 194-195), the hermeneutic circle signifies that the whole can only be understood within the framework of its constituent elements, and that these elements can only be understood within the framework of the whole. Thus, the meaning of the whole narrative and its constituent parts need to be interpreted together. In order to ensure that the integrity of each narrative is
preserved, this analysis will provide a summary of each participant’s narrative as an overview of the entire narrative. This will be followed by an analysis of the components that make up the narrative. The objective is to construct, “a mosaic of embodied experience”, in which all interrelated critical elements constitute the whole (Hoskins, 2001, p.665).

Rather than perceiving growth in knowledge linearly, Heidegger (2008, pp.27, 194-195; as cited in Gadamer, 2006, pp.189, 268-269, 293; as cited in Parameshwaran, 2007, p.200) proposed that understanding achieved greater clarity in a circular manner. Thus, his conception of the hermeneutic circle transformed hermeneutics into a going deeper into the same through continuous interpretation. Such a hermeneutic circle has been designated as one of interpretation revealing understanding that explicates interpretation (Rapport, 2005, p.141). Gadamer (2006, pp.189, 269) advocated that such understanding is not restrained by the restrictions of a vicious circle, as it is continually enlarged by the relativity of the whole. This is assimilated into expanding contexts that influence understanding of the constituent parts. T. S. Eliot (1971, p.47) described the search for understanding thus,

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

Although the hermeneutic circle has been critiqued as representing a vicious cycle, the interaction between interpreter and tradition is not founded on an enduring conceptualisation, as tradition is continuously created through participation and understanding (Gadamer, 2004, pp.293-294, 305; Richardson, 2003, p.41). For both Heidegger and Gadamer, there can be no ultimate revelation of ‘the truth’. Thus, analysis of the narratives is one of continual development, with interpretation always located within a specific temporality (Whitehead, 2004).
For Gadamer (1983, p.111; 2004, p.305), understanding arises from a ‘fusion of horizons’, where a horizon refers to a view from a specific perspective. As no experience can be observed from all perspectives, it cannot be fully elucidated. However, within a specific research project, the objective is understanding arising from a ‘fusion of horizons’ of the researcher and the different perspectives of the research participants. Gadamer (2004) reconceptualised the hermeneutic circle by incorporation of determination of meaning through a continuous dialogical interaction between past and present. As understanding is mediated through language, innovative ideas can be achieved through consensus.

6.7.4 Stages of Analysis

There is flexibility within the methodology of hermeneutic phenomenology for the tasks that need to be undertaken for analysis (Koch, 1995). The following methods were identified as being congruent with the preceding discussion that would facilitate the interpretation of the lived experience of refugees and specifically, understandings about hope within the experience of trauma (Seidman, 2006, p.37).

6.7.4.1 Pseudonyms. Culturally specific first name pseudonyms were assigned to participants to protect anonymity and so that quotations reflected personalisation (rather than the numerical naming of participants), emphasised cultural distinctiveness and were not reductive role representations. Whilst the use of first names has been deemed to be problematic, as they convey informality and ethnicity (Billig, 1999; Taylor, 2012), both of these can facilitate the understanding of narratives.

6.7.4.2 Pre-conceptual framework of researcher. My preconceptions for this thesis encompass the areas of trauma, hope, refugee and the research of human experience. Trauma
is assumed to be the universal experience of humanity. There can be no definitive definition of trauma, as this will be dependent upon individual and collective interpretation of experiences. The assumption of hope as being integral to life is based on the need for a foundation for ontological and cosmological security that provides the reason for the pursuit of specific objectives. As refugees experience life threatening trauma in their homelands, they have a right to seek a life that facilitates survival and growth. A foundational principle for this research is that lived experience can be constructively understood through narrative qualitative research.

Allied with awareness of preconceptions is the encouragement of reflexivity. This has been termed “critical subjectivity” (Etherington, 2004, pp.31-32). This is particularly pertinent to the influence of the researcher’s own experiences to the research and awareness of the overt role of the researcher in the research interaction between researcher and participants (Finlay, 2002; Holloway & Wheeler, 2010, pp.8-9).

6.7.4.3 Multiplicity of readings. Each of the narratives was read multiple times to provide an overall sense of the narratives. This was repeated throughout the analysis and discussion to ensure that these remained consistent with the narratives. This re-reading continued to the final stages of writing the thesis, so that understanding could be ongoing and emanate from prior understanding.

6.7.4.4 Analysis of the narratives as a whole. A summary of each narrative was compiled so that each was represented as a whole that has congruence with the first component of the hermeneutic circle framework. A synopsis preserves the overall narrative integrity and distinctiveness of each one, so that they were all not subsumed into a generalised refugee narrative. Additionally, this provided a testimony for each participant as
it bore witness to their perseverance through their unique journey as an individual with a refugee background. Further, the inclusion of the individual narratives as a distinct entity acknowledges the invaluable contribution of each participant to this thesis.

6.7.4.5 Analysis of the components of the narratives. Significant themes were identified for each period of the refugee journey that is in accord with the second component of the hermeneutic circle. More peripheral themes were noted as well, as less prevalence does not necessarily equate with less significance for individual participants. The words and tenses employed in each narrative were carefully considered, especially those used idiosyncratically.

6.7.4.6 Integrative analysis. An integrative analysis was undertaken wherein the analysis of the narratives as a whole was interpreted together with the analysis of the individual themes within the narratives to identify focal themes.

6.7.4.7 Multi-stranded helix analysis. The metaphor of a multi-stranded helix was employed to reveal the interconnectedness of the identified themes. Any discussion of one theme requires acknowledgement that they do not exist in isolation but are inextricably interwoven with other strands. This has congruence with prior analysis undertaken within interpretivist research to explain the interrelated multidimensional understanding inherent within such research (Lincoln, 2010). The model of the double helix has been explicitly used in hermeneutic phenomenological research (Bednar & Welch, 2007; Whitaker, 2007) and ethnographic narrative research (Elias & Lerner, 2012). This enhances understanding of the numerous components interwoven within the narratives, especially as a multi-stranded helix was envisaged, rather than being limited to a double helix.
Importantly, Dilthey (as cited in Palmer, 1969, p.41; Rapport, 2005, p.126) conceptualised all experience as being contextualised within the past (as a historical text) and future potentialities. Thus, experience is constituted by past, present and future components of historicity in a continuous, collaborative and reciprocal dance of life between all individuals and social frameworks (Conroy, 2003). The interpretation of narratives from within a solely individualistic framework will restrict understanding and distort the inextricably interwoven relationships between individuals and social environments.
CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH NARRATIVES

A synopsis the participants’ narratives will be presented, so that each can be represented as an entity. The separate themes of hope within trauma in participants’ homelands, flight, places of refuge and resettlement will be analysed. From the confluence of both analyses, the focal themes that emerged will be discussed that demonstrate their understandings about hope within their experiences of trauma. The significance of a multi-stranded analysis will be outlined.

7.1 Narrative Synopses

Each participant willingly shared her story of survival and transformation through adversity. A synopsis of each of the participants’ narratives was composed as a form of co-construction of meaning with the participants (Frost et al., 2010). These synopses facilitated an overall understanding of the narratives as a totality and represent testimonies to the participants’ courage and perseverance. They were created thoughtfully and carefully, following multiple readings of the narratives, with the intention to faithfully reflect their experiences. However, reflections through the shadows of cultural distinctives can only be understood as whispers of interpretation. Additionally, it is critical to view their narratives as a whole, rather than solely as components of a story. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. A book is valued in its entirety, as well as appreciation for individual sentences and paragraphs.

7.1.1 Charuni: Perseverance for Life Facilitated Education for Life

Charuni’s narrative emphasised the importance of perseverance to enhance the possibility for a good life. It was this perseverance that fuelled her family’s strength to trek from South Sudan to Ethiopia and Kenya in search of peace and opportunities. It was this perseverance that maintained her hope for refugee status, in spite of living in a refugee camp
for seventeen years and repeated rejections of her applications. Education was consistently esteemed as a life necessity, along with water and food. It was education that provided the motivation for her mother’s hope that her family would be able to prosper in the Western world. It was the lack of education that was a significant negative aspect of Charuni’s life in the refugee camp. Conversely, it is the availability of education that characterised a crucial feature of Australia, as it opens the door to opportunities in the future. Consequently, education is allied to Charuni’s conceptualisation of hope that has its focus in the future within the framework of her family. The availability of health facilities and welfare benefits were also emphasised, as they contributed towards a secure foundation for her family. This occurs within a multicultural and hospitable environment. However, these advantageous resources exist within difficulties, including discrimination in housing and on public transport.

7.1.2 Fazilah: “Walk in my Feet” with Strength in my Heart for my Family

For Fazilah, family provided the framework for the interpretation of journey and life events in South Sudan and Australia. Together, they endured a marathon of struggle from country to country until they crossed the finishing line for a future in Australia founded on security and opportunities. The hardships in overseas countries were related, such as the arduous long treks for survival and the insufficiency of life necessities that threatened this survival. This contrasted with life in Australia, as this was portrayed as a composite of ‘very hard and very good’ with an overall definition of life here as “beautiful.” Many years of arduous perseverance have enabled Fazilah to enjoy this beauty, as she now has the opportunity to fulfil her dreams. This was tinged by sadness, as a part of her heart remains with her mother, who died and with her father, who she would like to bring to Australia, as he is facing hardship in his homeland, particularly as he has undergone an amputation of one
leg. However, Fazilah expressed gratitude for the provision of life’s basic necessities and for opportunities for education and employment for her family and herself. Both will facilitate a more beautiful life for them all than would have been formerly possible, as the strength in Fazilah’s heart enabled survival in the past and prosperity in the present and future.

7.1.3 Jasmina: Paradise as Family Lost and Found

Jasmina’s narrative was centred within the framework of family. Paradise founded within her family was threatened by the outbreak of hostilities in Bosnia. Jasmina clung to her everyday reality, as she fervently wished that the conflict would be a transient interruption to her life of paradise. However, once the war commenced with ferocity, she had to relinquish this expectation. Past normality was attacked, issuing forth a new normality. Community was broken asunder as family was blown apart by shelling, resulting in deaths, the flight and separation of families, as well as by war-initiated discrimination and betrayal. Paradise had become ‘Pandemonium’\(^\text{18}\) with escape the only option to thwart army conscription and so enhance family survival.

Jasmina’s flight from her homeland with her husband and their experiences in her place of refuge were composed of strands of danger, uncertainty, fear, discrimination and hardship that were interwoven with safety, generosity, care, and fortuitous opportunities. Together they transformed her life that whilst family remained its core, was expanded to encompass increased respect for those outside her own community. This grew within the context of betrayal from her own and external communities. Trust triumphed over mistrust even within uncertainty.

Adaptation to the new culture of Australia for Jasmina was both strengthened and jeopardised by family. Jasmina’s husband and child provided encouragement in the midst of

\(^{18}\) Pandemonium was the capital of hell in Milton’s (1674/2012, p.48) epic poem, Paradise Lost.
struggle, but the sudden deaths of half her family, including her mother, were a source of intense grief. Her continual deep attachment to her homeland reflected acknowledgement of her family roots; it is the place that gave birth to her conception of self within family. To deny or minimise this would be to deny herself. In Australia, Jasmina is able to live within her framework of family for family. In the midst of struggle, paradise has been reclaimed.

7.1.4 Mariam: Escape from Home to Prison to ‘Home’ through Hope

Mariam’s narrative unfolded within the framework of family for family. There was a sense of urgency to “run for your life” from South Sudan, as war distorted the security of home into a place of danger. Whilst the hope was for survival, this came at a price. Flight involved leaving behind her father, (who later died in South Sudan), her community, an agricultural way of life with attachment to land, as well as her country that she continues to love. Thus, it is unsurprising that flight was expressed in the plural, “we”, to express this focus on collectiveness. Flight was a perilous marathon from a perilous homeland to a perilous place of refuge. Twelve arduous years in a refugee camp offered partial sanctuary but also imprisonment, as its parameters enhanced survival but at the loss of freedom of movement, adequate food and housing, as well as opportunities for life enhancement, such as education. Initially, Australia unwittingly became another prison, as her house offered sanctuary but also assumed a penal role. Home was known within an unknown unnavigable terrain due to inadequate knowledge of transport networks, communication difficulties, cultural differences and fear of discrimination. However, the confines of the penitentiary have been breached with the gradual overcoming of these barriers. For Mariam, this freedom is a two edged sword, as appreciation for her life in Australia and especially for opportunities available to her young family, co-exist with guilt for family, who remain in their homeland.
7.1.5 Shankari: Single and Multiple Threads Wove Tapestry of Life

For Shankari, her narrative was sharply demarcated between her life as daughter and wife in Sri Lanka and life with no partner in Australia, although family was and continues to provide the larger framework for her life. Her previous life had been woven into the fabric of a meaningful life with her husband with its focus on significant public roles for both. It is a tragic irony that Shankari, who had worked to prevent violence against women, was herself the object of violence when forced to witness the assassination of her husband. This cruelty established the end of one life and the beginning of a very different life in a very different environment. The choice to have no children facilitated the objectives of her life within marriage but has emphasised her life within singleness today. Whilst Shankari was appreciative of the support proffered by family that has become increasingly pertinent, this remains subservient within the dominant focus on the development of her life as an independent being. Indeed, the tapestry woven from the threads of family laid upon the background of her Hindu faith, enables Shankari to take the needle into her own hand and weave her life story upon her family tapestry. This is testament to her perseverance, as such a life runs counter to traditional Tamil culture (Seizer, 2008, p.255).

7.1.6 Sora: Dream for Miracle of Survival through Faith and Perseverance

Sora’s narrative was related within the framework of a torturous journey from South Sudan through numerous countries by foot and by air, spanning more than twenty years. This extended unpredictability and variableness has left her with a legacy of unsettledness, although gradually she is regaining a sense of stability. Sora grew up only knowing life as war, as this commenced when she was a young child. This adversity prompted flight based on the dream for a better life. However, this vision was sorely tested, as Sora with her family battled years of food shortages, frequent life threats from soldiers, wild animals, flood,
appalling conditions for over fourteen years in refugee camps and repeated rejections for visa applications. Education within her school of life was undertaken within continual adversity that necessitated ongoing perseverance to enable survival, family life and training as a war nurse. Australia may be ‘a land of milk and honey’ but briars and nettles cultivate obstacles amidst the panorama of security and prosperity. Differences in the way of life, separation from family, lack of employment opportunities, racism and the tragic death of her husband have all posed challenges. Perseverance is again called into being, receiving support from her faith, friends, and the government. Life may continue to be hard but it offers more beauty and opportunities for the future than in her homeland.

7.1.7 Vasikari: My Family is Me and I am My Family

Vasikari’s narrative relates the indivisibility between herself and her family; thus “My family is me and I am my family” aptly summarises her narrative. Her past, present and future narrative was related with continuous reference to her family. Her life in Sri Lanka and in Australia is interpreted within the lens of family, so that one cannot be understood without the other. Vasikari’s adversity and grief of her homeland was inscribed upon the deaths of her father and brother, as well as the abduction and abuse of two brothers, by the Sri Lankan army. Her salvation is in debt to the intervention of her uncle, who sponsored her mother and herself to Australia. This not only provided deliverance from war but also enabled access to medical care for her serious medical condition. However, the pervasive fear and uncertainty that permeated her life in Sri Lanka, continues to haunt her family in Australia. The children cower with fright at the sound of medical helicopters from the nearby hospital, as they associate helicopters with death, rather than life. Uncertainty within life has been heightened by trauma in the present, including Vasikari’s life threatening illness and her daughter’s death. Today, Vasikari’s life is given life through nourishment from her family, especially
from her focus on her surviving daughter. Concomitantly, her love for family continues to create grief through the death of her baby daughter and her inability to bring her older brother and two of her sisters to Australia. Thus, Vasikari is her family and her family is Vasikari, “I want to live because of them.”

7.1.8 Yaya: Our Heart Supplied Oxygen for Marathon of Survival

Yaya was a refugee from birth, as she was born in another country, in which her South Sudanese family had sought refuge. Her individual narrative is inextricably interwoven with that of her family, binding together her own story with that of her family. Yaya fled with her family for the survival of her family, even travelling from one refugee camp to another one in a different country, so that the family could be together. Consequently, her refugee flight is represented by the use of the plural form of “we”, rather than the singular “I”.

This association with her family continued with her refugee application that was initiated by her uncle and her desire for her father and brothers to be granted refugee status. Tragically, their very best endeavours were insufficient to save the life of Yaya’a mother. Yaya maintains the focus on family in Australia, as her primary objective is the care of her unborn baby and it is this which represents her concept of hope. Her emphasis on motherhood may be partially influenced by the loss of her own mother early in life. Education, employment, health and happiness are Yaya’s hope objectives that are orientated around the wellbeing of her family.

Yaya’s conceptualisation of refugees focussed on running from her home to escape from danger. For her, this was re-enacted many times. Consequently, it is unsurprising that running from war with insufficient sustenance summarised her experience of her homeland. This contrasted starkly with her experience of Australia, where there is no necessity to escape. It is interesting that the word ‘running’ was used, rather than a more generalised form
of travel, such as ‘going’. ‘Running’ in this context depicted a basic form of survival enacted in haste requiring much effort in response to threat; it could be referred to as a survival marathon. The energy for this marathon was fuelled by her inner strength. The heart was designated as the source of strength, rather than cognition of the mind or brain. This provided a steely perseverance emanating in a positive orientation for her whole being. Although there is no further need for running away from danger, Yaya has to keep going, in order to achieve her objectives.

7.2 Trauma in Homeland

7.2.1 War as Loss

Bosnia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka were all caught up in the maelstrom of civil war, that forces citizen against citizen. All participants suffered severe adversity within the context of war and its consequences in their homeland. The toll of war exacted in hardship was simply expressed by Yaya as,

Fighting, the war. Running. So was really hard. So much fighting. 19

However, this trauma for each participant required interpretation within the context of individual, family, cultural and political experience that is in accord with HPA. War creates such disconnect between everyday life and its litany of terrors that it is unsurprising that attempts are enacted to shield oneself and one’s family from this reality of darkness. For Jasmina, this had such an indelible impact upon her that she remembered it with intricate detail even after twenty years.

19 All quotations from the participants were indented, even though some were less than the American Psychological Association (2013) standard that requires indentation for more than forty words. This was to facilitate advantageous identification for these narratives.
We got up and turned the T.V. on and they were showing soldiers with the guns, which was then the reality started to hit. For a few days I was still going to work and thinking, “It’s nothing. Everything’s going to be fine.” We had a bit of trouble for a few days. We couldn’t go freely around the city. They were putting barricades, they were blocking the streets…. But I still didn’t pay attention. I still thought it was going away. And then two weeks on, it did go away and we thought, “Thank god, that’s it.”

It is a tragedy that rarely does the whisper of war dissipate into nothingness. For Jasmina, the whisper became a shout, exultant with ethnic patriotism and hatred. It could no longer be denied. Reality and the significance of family were intertwined in Jasmina’s recollection,

The war officially started with heavy shelling. It was pretty bad. I was 19. My brother was 15, 16.

War destroys the usual experience of life that forces individuals at times into roles they deem abhorrent, so that they are often drawn unwillingly into its web of horror, fear, and bloodshed. Jasmina’s family exemplified this. For Jasmina’s father and husband, this entailed conscription into the army,

Dad immediately got called into the army. He didn’t want to be part of the army. He didn’t want to go and fight, he didn’t want to kill people. He never hold a gun in his entire life…. My Dad was sent to the frontline to dig trenches for soldiers. They would send out Catholics and Orthodox because if they die, it was no big deal.

My husband was sent twice outside the city in the army. The first time he came back completely traumatised…. The second time he came back he was completely crazy. He couldn’t sleep, severely traumatised.

Jasmina herself narrowly avoided the same fate;

A year into the war they tried to get me into the army. Again I had some people that really helped me out.

Whilst the civil war in South Sudan was evidence of long standing enmity between distinct cultures despite their enforced political union, this was not true for Bosnia and Sri Lanka.
Jasmina grew up in Bosnia, a society characterised by mutual respect and communality. Thus, it is unsurprising that the theme of betrayal by fellow compatriots is strongly represented within Jasmina’s narrative, especially for her experiences in Australia.

Oppression against the Tamil people in Sri Lanka had been increasing since independence from Britain in 1948, and thus had been the lifetime experience for the participants from Sri Lanka, but this was not founded on a tradition of animosity. However, the theme of betrayal was very significant for Shankari, as her husband had been assassinated, not only by a fellow citizen but from her own community;

My husband was assassinated at our doorstep.

7.2.2 Loss of Family and Community Members

War inevitably results in death. For all participants, the heart of the grief was the loss of family. This focus knew no boundaries of race or religion. At times, this suffering was expressed factually and in detail, although still heartfelt. In Jasmina’s words,

My mother-in-law died in the first year of the war. There was a heavy shelling and she got killed.…

Three months after that, Uncle died as well. So the family suffered quite a lot.

Grief can enact an enduring cost. For Jasmina’s husband,

There is a lot of bad stuff. He was very close to his mother and when she died, he never dealt with that.

The yearning for lost family was emphasised by Mariam, who expressed this forcefully as her most traumatic experience in South Sudan;

Losing families. Missing family. You know like most families are dying. You miss them. In a minute you could be here with another one and a few days or an hour later because of sickness or maybe
hunger or get shot. So many things could happen... They lost their lives when the army are bombing people in Sudan. The people you lost. Bombing was very sad.

Such words of grief were accompanied by an expression of sadness through tears for a few participants. This sadness was echoed by Charuni,

Makes me sad when I talk about it. My two sisters they died in war because they were sick in the family. Because of the war and sickness, no medication, no food, no water.

Fear was intermingled with the sadness. This was very apparent with Vasikari’s description, whose limited English created a tense, staccato account that conveyed powerfully a vision of fear and sadness.

Younger brother died 1998. The army shoot him. In 1993 my father died. Army shoot him... One time in the bombing, army truck, bombing... twenty five or thirty in the army... died. And they [Sri Lankan army] coming here in the beach side, when people go in the fishing and coming and they shoot them, twelve people. I know the people. And the ladies crying... I saw them, they crying. Shooting, shooting... Helicopter come and shoot them. Very scared.

It is a supreme irony that the peacemakers striving to end bloodshed can be themselves cut down by the warmongers. This was the tragic truth for Shankari. Her husband’s murder shattered her relationship with him, as well as her home as a representation of security,

My husband was assassinated at our doorstep... I had to leave everything because I was an eye-witness to the assassination, so I could identify the assassin. No, it’s not safe for me.

Loss of family and friends has been reported for many refugees in prior research that highlighted the impact of exposure to recurrent violence and sudden death (Khawaja et al., 2008; Rees et al., 2009; Schweitzer et al., 2011). Grief and fear interweave into a heavy burden, as refugees strive to survive in their homelands, flight and resettlement.
7.2.3 Loss of Security for Life

That participants interpreted their survival within uncertainty, assumed that at some moments in their life, they believed that they would not survive. The threat to life aroused fear within participants. For Vasikari it was,

Helicopter come and shoot them. Very scared. Always looking in the air.

Fear and war go hand-in-hand. This can become prolonged for years, and even decades, exacting a huge toll in emotional anguish. This was true for Shankari, as she described fear as a very traumatic experience for herself,

We had a long civil war about thirty years.... Even when my husband was alive, the fear factor was there because he was acting in these peace movements and the militants were going around killing anyone who opened their mouth to say “peace” because peace was a bad word for them.... The militants come from my community, so anyone who talks about peace is a traitor according to them.

Fear was experienced by Shankari that was replaced by numbness once the fear had been realised. This may be a consequence of the energy of life depletion by fear, coupled with the shock of the deed feared but that was simultaneously hoped would not eventuate.

So after my husband’s death, I couldn’t cry, I couldn’t cry. I was numb. I was frozen. I couldn’t accept that. It took a long time for me to sort of internalise things that he was no more.

Shankari’s feeling of numbness is frequently felt by survivors, who experience traumatic grief (Prigerson et al., 2009). Difficulty with acceptance of a partner’s death has been associated with an ideology that emphasises justness within the world and difficulty with acceptance of death’s inevitability (Bonanno et al., 2002). However, this was not applicable to Shankari’s experience, whose spiritual Hindu beliefs emphasise acceptance of one’s life (Charles-Edwards, 2005, p.142).
Fear for Jasmina focussed on the safety of her family. The use of the preposition “into” rather than “in” highlights the pervasive nature of war as a life experience.

My dad obviously was scared that they were going to take him [my brother] away, that he wasn’t going to come back. My brother was approaching an age; at age eighteen … you can be sent into the war.

Fear for survival exacerbates the fear inherent in hope (Marcel, 1965, p.74). Participants fled with double fear; fear for life and fear that hope will be vanquished.

7.2.4 Loss of Basic Necessities for Life

War not only generates death directly through the bomb or gun but the concentration on firepower inexorably creates a dearth of basic life necessities, such as food, water, medicine, shelter and clothing. This was the experience for many participants. As Yaya remembered,

No food to eat. So was really hard in Sudan.

For Fazilah this scarcity was universal,

No shoes, no some food, no some water, no some clothes, everything, no some medicine. Everything is difficult in Sudan.

These shortages were extrapolated to placing survival in jeopardy. In Sora’s words,

It’s a terrible life. It’s a disaster…. Hunger, no food. No food is hard to survive.

The experience of Charuni and her family was a tragic testament to the truth of this statement that was extended to encompass her entire community.

When I was in Africa, my mother had to go the forest and look for some food, vegetables in the forest. There were times when it was difficult to eat. Sometimes we didn’t have enough water or food…. I was lucky to be alive. The problem that we have in South Sudan is the poverty.
Mariam’s agreement with these sentiments extended to thankfulness for the simple gift of water,

Hunger. Spending some days without no water because water is the main thing, even if there is no food. But if you have water, it keep you much stronger.

The theme of family is evidenced interwoven within this theme of basic survival. As Jasmina remembers in matter-of-fact but poignant detail that used a plural pronoun, not just a singular one to describe her actions collectively;

We suffered without food, without water, without electricity for years. We used to pay $100 for a kilo of sugar. Kilo of coffee was $100 … three eggs for $10 and stuff like that. I used to pay for the small bag of wood, I would pay $50, and basically you can’t even make one fire with that. So we used to burn the table rugs, shoes, everything to keep us warm. The winters are really cold. The temperature goes to minus seventeen, so it was tough.

7.2.5 Loss of Community

War kills individuals and communities. Individually escape from death is sought that decimates communities, their way of life and sense of communality. The loss of families inevitably results in disintegration of communities. This has catastrophic consequences for individuals as “a human being has roots by virtue of his (sic) real, active and natural participation in the life of a community” (Weil, 2003, p.43). Growth will become a struggle if roots are absent to supply nourishment (K. Erikson, 1976a). Such a dearth can be doubly destructive if family trees are rooted within trauma that may compromise growth (Danieli, 2004, p.574). This was expressed by Sora as,

Because of the war, everyone is homeless now. We lost a lot of families. In my community we lost a lot of families with the war.
The use of the present tense, especially as the participant is now buying her own home, suggests that homelessness does not just refer to the loss of homes but to the loss of a homeland community.

For Jasmina, her large apartment building for fifty families was decimated by fear of bombing, arrests and religious discrimination that was replicated throughout her city.

Out of those fifty families, mine was the only complete family that stayed. All the men got arrested, except my dad because they found the guns…. A lot of migration started to happen. Orthodox would run away across the river to the part where Orthodox would look after a piece of land. Majority of Muslims would stay in the city.

In place of a sense of community that unified a diversity of individuals, war created divisions and animosity that remain unresolved to the present day. As Jasmina lamented,

My city is the place where you never worried who you were going to marry before the war. We never worried which religion you are, because religion never played a big part in our lives. To this day, that is my biggest disappointment with my own community.

Death wrought by war may have multiple interpretations within diverse frameworks. It may be used as testimony for nationalistic and cultural outrage. However, for the participants, their focus was very simply on the permanent splintering of their family. Although the framework for hopefulness for participants emphasised collectiveness, particularly the family, this was threatened and challenged but not obliterated by the loss of hope objectives for family life following the death of family members.

7.2.6 Loss of Freedom for Movement and Speech

War inevitably places limitations upon freedom of movement, activities and speech. Voices are muted. Narratives are subject to alteration by external forces. For Shankari, this change in lifestyle was challenging, as it contrasted starkly with her former life;
When my husband was alive, we lived a very private life because he didn’t want to expose himself in the public eye…. I hardly had any friends of my own…. My life had restricted mobility and speech. I had to be cautious on whom I spoke to, what I spoke. As an individual, it was very stressful to me because I am open-minded and could make friends easily. I had lots of friends before.

Jasmina’s yearning for independence gave voice to her defiance against bullying and attempts at humiliation. This provided a sense of control and strengthened her determination for perseverance;

Where you got majority ruling the city, they would do everything in the power to sort of suppress the others and make your life hell…. I was quite open and always voicing my opinion. I always used to argue. I even used to argue with the neighbours. I would talk back. I would say how I feel.

However, Jasmina acknowledged that her audacious behaviour had placed her survival in jeopardy. Fortuitously, the support of friends averted tragedy;

My dad would often say that, “Someone is going to kill you because you are saying things that you are not supposed to say.” But somehow I worked with a group of people that would protect me. Somehow I got protected and I think it was a miracle that I did survive.

7.2.7 Ethnic and Religious Discrimination and Persecution

For Jasmina, life during the war was made more arduous and uncertain by ethnic and religious discrimination that commenced as a consequence of the hostilities;

When the war started, everybody started embracing their own religion. For me, the biggest disappointment was that everybody was sorted into subgroups based on who you are.

However, religious bigotry created suffering for Jasmina’s family that knew no bounds of ethnicity or religion;
My family really badly suffered by Muslims, really badly. Like I had family members being kicked out of the house, their whole property being taken over. My family members being thrown in concentration camps just because of their name. On the other hand, my husband’s family suffered so much from Orthodox, threatened to be killed and kicked out as well of the place.

This discrimination continually intruded into Jasmina’s everyday life with attempts to cause humiliation,

No matter how you tried they made sure that you feel small.

At some stage public humiliation. You are sitting there and people start talking things about you.

Where we had like a small lunch box that was delivered every couple of months through the UN. We were pushed at the back of the line, because we were not as good as someone else.

Religious intolerance invaded privacy, creating disruption and disillusionment with those formerly considered to be fellow citizens;

Every other day we would have soldiers running in it and digging through our stuff. Checking out whether we have some papers; that we are working with the other side.

Ethnic hatred was not only dispensed by the anonymous enemy but at times assumed the face of neighbours;

Sometimes people you know would walk in and they would walk out feeling ashamed.

One of our neighbours, their son died ... my Mum went to their unit to express her condolences and the woman spat on her face and that was the first time I saw my Mum cry during the war.

One morning the guy got up because his son’s body was outside the city and they couldn’t get it out…. He came down with a gun and he got the few of us that were left in the building and he walked us out of the building with a pointed gun and said, “Now I am going to send you there. They have to give me my dead son.” And eventually one of the neighbours came down and took the gun and sent him back home.
Familial bonds strove to ameliorate harassment, so that for Jasmina,

   We moved back in with my mum because my husband was in the army, in the Bosnian army. We
   wanted to stay with mum because we were worried that since dad and my brother left, they were going
   to come and abuse her and cause her trouble.

7.3 Hope and Trauma in Flight

   The flight narratives of the participants coalesced around the necessity for a
   marathon of hardship that was endured with inadequate life necessities and that in itself posed
   threats to life. The flight experience has been found to affect the process of re-settlement for
   refugee communities (Murray et al., 2008).

7.3.1 Flight as Necessity

   All of the participants and their families only left their homelands when this was the
   sole choice offering a chance at survival. The threat to Shankari’s life emanated from her own
   community;

      My home is still in Sri Lanka but I had to leave my home and belongings because I was an eye-witness
      to the assassination.

   An inevitable consequence of war is its separation of families. Sora had to leave her parents,
   as she escaped with her uncle;

      The war started in Sudan and we flee and left my parents, and I come with my uncle.

   Similarly, Mariam left her father behind in South Sudan when the family fled,

      After the war broke out, we migrated to Kenya to the refugee camp. We left my dad behind.
Initially, Jasmina tried to preserve her family’s unity, as for her it was unthinkable for them to be apart;

The moment he [her brother] turned eighteen, he got a letter saying, “You going” [to war]. And my Dad said, “No, he’s not.” I feel guilty till this day and I don’t think I’m ever going to get over it…. The last airplane at airport, we had to go on and leave and I didn’t want to leave, because I never separated from my family. We were always really close and always together. For me, it was more important to stay as a family unit together, no matter what. And I regretted it so many times later on because if I did that then my brother wouldn’t have had to suffer.

Although there was family reluctance for separation, Jasmina’s family realised that her father and brother needed to flee to prevent her brother’s conscription into the army. Risk existed in remaining but risk also existed in escape. Between both of these traumas lay another trauma – the trauma of decision. For a family whose universe centred on their very being, this would have been filled with anguish and uncertainty. However, the present reality held more terror than the unknown terrors of flight. Jasmina remembered,

We had to pay the people smugglers to get them on the other side…. We said, “We would get them out of Bosnia. They’re going to be safe.” They got caught out and got beaten up. They came back home. Eventually we sold all the jewellery, all the silver … and we paid the smugglers and they got my dad and brother out of the city successfully.

The family’s fear was tragically realised for the next group;

The following night they all got killed, while they were helping, smuggling people out of the city.

Although people smugglers have received popular and political condemnation in Australia, as many have led asylum seekers to their deaths for financial gain, acknowledgement is necessary for the lives saved, represented by Jasmina’s father and brother. Many past people
smugglers have been honored for their work, including Oskar Schindler and Raoul Wallenberg, who became Australia’s first honorary citizen (Burnside, 2013; Ireland, 2013).

The necessity for flight for her husband and herself became very apparent to Jasmina;

A month after he came back the second time around [from war], they said “You have to go again”. He came to me and said, “You know what, if I go I won’t come back.” And I said, “What do we do? We must just leave the country. We can’t just stay here.”

However, flight was not as straightforward as phoning a travel agent or joining a “queue”20. Jasmina was confronted with a daunting task,

We tried to get some smugglers to get us out of the city. We had a trouble because we couldn’t go on the Serbian side because my husband was in the Bosnian army. So the only option we had which was literally to go to Croatia. And we didn’t know anybody there. We did not know how to get there … because it was four years into the war and so many people had left the city already, the government paid much better attention of what’s happening and the people movements. I wasn’t even allowed to leave the country because I was over eighteen.

Fortuitously, even within adversity, unexpected advantageous events can occur that facilitate survival. This was true for Jasmina and her husband;

One night we were sitting with a group of our friends and one of the young boys … was telling us about being on the guard the whole night … and he said, “Interestingly enough, I came across the whole bunch of papers, like approvals to leave the city for the soldiers for a couple of days.” And he said, “I was so bored, I was just stamping and stamping.” And my husband thought, “My god, if we could get one of those, one of those papers, a blank one with a stamp, it’s our way to freedom…. Can you bring me one to have a look at it?”…. He brought him one paper … and we filled ourselves approval saying

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20 Although the myth of “queues” for asylum seekers is frequently invoked for political motives in Australia, it remains just that; a myth (Burnside, 2013). This is a fact even acknowledged by the Parliament of Australia (Phillips, 2013).
he is leaving the city, just for a few days to go to Croatia to visit the family for Christmas … and then we said, “That’s it. We’re going.”

Although there was a realisation of the necessity for flight, the departure from family and familiarity was very difficult. At times, this was understated. Thus, Jasmina stated,

It was Christmas time. We got up, said the goodbyes to my mum and father-in-law and walked. Whatever we had on us, that’s how we walked out of the house. We were leaving the city not knowing how far we’re going to get. Where we’re going to go? What’s going to happen?

They left clothed with sadness and uncertainty, rather than just the clothes they were wearing. This farewell would have been especially poignant, as it occurred at a time traditionally associated with family togetherness and merriment.

7.3.2 Flight as Marathon of Hardship

Epic treks were recounted that entailed thousands of kilometres of walking. Fazilah described walking as “in my feet.” This evocatively described her personal involvement in flight. This was the most arduous experience for Fazilah;

Most difficult thing in Kenya was walking. The walking. Long way.

Flight from war was necessary for Sora, not just from her homeland but also when hostilities erupted in their places of refuge;

War started in 1983 when I was three years old. So we went to countryside and we stayed there like five years. After we go to countryside, we decided to go to refugee camp in Ethiopia, near border of Sudan. So we stayed there for three years, when I was twelve or thirteen. So we left Ethiopia when fighting started again. We come back to Sudan and stay like six months and war started again, near border of Sudan. Then we went to Kenya.
The arduousness of such mammoth treks was emphasised by Sora;

You walk almost eight hours. Two days, three days, four days. When we walked from Sudan we went like four week, one month and a half. You come and sleep. Rest for four hours. Come, walk every day, every day. Then we walked back to Sudan.

Charuni’s trek followed a similar route,

We were in Sudan. From when we moved from Ethiopia to Sudan. And then we moved from Sudan again to Kenya. We have been travelling for a long time.

This is congruent with other research that also stresses the vast distances traversed by refugees on foot. Goodman (2004, p.1174) related that this was the experience for the so-called ‘lost boys’ from Sudan, “The next many months were spent traveling by foot over very large distances through the forests and deserts of Sudan.” Further, walking, as opposed to travel by truck, constituted additional risks for women, as this increased the possibility of violence and sexual assault (Nagai, Karunakara, Rowley, & Burnham, 2008).

Family was such a focus for the participants that families journeyed from one place of refuge to another, so that they could be together. As Yaya recounted,

My aunty was in Kakuma, so my mum come to her sister so they can stay together.

It is this love of family that continues to provide the motivation for refugees to return to homelands that continue to be characterised by serious discord and instability (UNHCR, 2013e).

In each of the homelands represented, Bosnia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka, the refugee journey was depicted as running, more than walking. This accentuated the intensity of the threat, from which they were fleeing. Jasmina from Bosnia simply iterated that,

We are running away … we can’t go back.
She described the flight of others in the same way,

All of those people run away when the first gun was shot in the city.

Yaya in South Sudan echoed this experience,

Running. So was really hard in Sudan.

For Vasikari, the running was a continuous experience in Sri Lanka,

Always running. Always war. Always coming, moving other place.

The use of the word “running” to encapsulate escape attendant with fear and haste from homelands was evident in other research with refugees. A young girl from South Sudan (Khawaja et al., 2008, p.497) recalled,

In a village raid I picked up my baby sister and ran to the bushes with a cousin who was six. I ran and ran and could not find my way back.

Similarly, ‘running’ was used to convey escape by another South Sudanese refugee, ‘Esther’, (Bishop, 2011, p.50),

When we run to Kenya, [my family] ran to a different country.

‘Running’ aptly encapsulated the need to escape from danger, as this improved the chance of survival. For ‘John’ (Goodman, 2004) from South Sudan,

I had to run to live. And if I didn’t run, I would die. I had to run to get away from [enemies], otherwise they would catch me and they would kill me. I ran from the wild animals. If I didn’t run, they could kill and eat me. So this is the way I survived.
In 2014, running has again become the experience for many South Sudanese, as they escape ethnic violence. It is such a defining characteristic of their life that the most popular name for newborn daughters is Nyaring that means ‘running’ (UNHCR, 2014c).

7.3.3 Flight as Inadequacy of Life Necessities

The refugee journey imposed huge demands upon the participants. This was summarised by Sora as,

You keep moving. It is hard. I can’t tell, it is very hard. It is difficult to envision.

I don’t know how I survived.

The basic necessities of life, such as water, food, clothing, and shelter, were frequently in short supply. This was expressed by Fazilah as,

The most difficult thing was walking and going thirsty without water. Sometimes you can have something to cook but no fire.

This was replicated by Yaya,

We ran to a place called [name]. We stayed there for like, one week. A place no food. They give people a little bit of food. Sleep outside. It was really hard to live you know ... as they took everything. They chase us away, so they can take everything in the houses and burnt the houses. So when we come back, no place to sleep and so have to build house again. So that was really hard in that place. No food to eat.

Running, no food to eat. So was really hard in Sudan.

7.3.4 Flight as Threat to Life

Whilst the decision to flee homelands was motivated by the desire for life, this was frequently placed in jeopardy by the flight itself. Events during the flight created serious
threats, fear, uncertainty and the necessity for escape from continual danger. For Sora, this was an ongoing struggle against guns, wild animals and the elements;

When the war started in Ethiopia they kill a lot of people in front of you because they just shoot you. They just shoot you. Even one of my aunty has been eaten by the wild animal. Lion. We were walking like eight hours or ten hours, two days on the way. I tired. I want to rest. My uncle tell me, “Don’t rest. Let’s go. Because it’s hot and where you rest, it’s dark. And if you keep here you will be eaten. People have been eaten.” We sleep on the footpaths. So some men were killed whilst we were sleeping there.... Also the rain is raining. And no shelter, no blanket.... So what my uncle do is he level to be on the high level. So we can’t drown, and we sleep there. So it is hard. A hard life.
I don’t know how I survived.

Threats were no less real for Jasmina, although these were all clothed in human form. There was the constant danger of discovery of their attempted escape and subsequent imprisonment or deportation that was exacerbated by ethnic discrimination (Burg & Shoup, 2000, p.177). Fear and insecurity were hallmarks of her flight;

Every few hundred metres, they stopped you to check who is in the car.... Sometimes I used to pretend that I am asleep, thinking that they’re not going to ask me for the I.D. My husband, it worked well with him because he had a proper stamp on the paper.

We still had to go through the migration for four hours with people asking us, “Is my husband a soldier?” and we kept saying, “No” and coming up with all excuses.

Flight for survival was undertaken by necessity that can rationalise fear at the time but that on reflection assumes greater intensity. As Sora reminisced,

To get away from the war. Oh, very scary. When I think about it now, it would have been more scary.

The uncertainty of the refugee flight was represented by fear, although founded on the certainty for flight. However, as uncertainty is just not premised on bad outcomes, good
experiences can occur as well. Such fortuitous experiences arose unexpectedly at times. For Jasmina, this contributed to their successful escape;

Once we got stopped ... and the guy said, “What do you want? What are you doing here?” And I said, “Can you help me? We are running away from [name of hometown] and we’re going to stay here. We can’t go back.”.... The soldier told me, “Don’t worry. We will keep you until we find you somewhere safe.”.... It happened that it was a small room full of soldiers and were sitting there and they got us a drink. And they said, “What are you going to do here now?” We didn’t have a single dollar in our pockets because we gave everything to the guy who was transferring us from place to place.... So there is a guy in his mid-fifty’s, he walks in and everybody gets up. And you can sort of see that he’s important, someone who is really important.... And he asks us for our names and when my husband said last name, it happened that that guy and my father-in-law, they used to go out together as young boys.... He actually put us in a motel. He said, “Stay here for a few days. I’ll give you all the paperwork, so that you can travel to Croatia.” The following day he did all the paperwork. He had that power.

7.3.5 Flight as Hope

The agonising decision for flight from homelands was made in spite of bonds to family, community and country, coupled with the uncertainty and perils of such a journey. The narratives reveal that hope empowered these journeys. It was the hope for life itself, as flight offered a greater chance for survival. As Fazilah remembered,

Someone is fighting a lot and some people kill a lot so you keep to going.

It was a run for life; a life that would be enriched in the future. This hope was firmly established within a futural perspective that came to fruition. In Sora’s words,

One day I say my uncle, “Will we survive another time? Will we get better life?” He tell me, “When we are alive, we get better life than this life.”
[Later in Australia] He said, “See your dream come over. You will get better life than the life you had before.”

Similarly, Fazilah focussed on hope in the future;

I cope with it with the strength in my heart and faith hoping that I will have something good in the future.

This was also conveyed by Charuni,

I had the hope that in the future, my children and I, myself would have better life. That was my goal. The future there may be something good for us, so that motivates us to try and hope.

7.4 Trauma in Places of Refuge

7.4.1 Refuge as Survival

Flight was fundamental for facilitating the possibility of survival. Participants fled from their homelands to places of refugee that included refugee camps and countries, in which they were seeking refuge. Participants readily acknowledged that the places of refuge were places for life, in spite of hardships. For Charuni, they were the means for survival,

The UNHCR have to bring some food, clothing and shelter, so they help people.

For a number of participants, refugee camps provided rudimentary formal education and so further opportunities. However, invaluable lessons were learnt in this arduous school of life. Fazilah stated,

I’m going in school with studying and then you grow.
Although there was acknowledgment that the places of refuge were most likely to facilitate survival, this did not assuage these places of hardship. Acceptance of inevitability, perseverance and difficulty can go hand-in-hand. As Mariam explained,

*The life we were in. We get education under trees but that’s what we want. We just aim to get something. It was really hard.*

The phrase “life we were in” is congruent with Heidegger’s (1964) concept of Being as ‘Being-in-the-World’, as it represents a totality of experience within the world.

Within the challenge of survival in the place of refuge, at times assistance from others was offered freely, even when there was risk to them. Shelter was provided for Jasmina by strangers, who were prepared to not only offer hospitality but also to move house to enable space for others in need;

*We didn’t know where we were going to go and sleep that night. So there was a group of young students that were locals that was helping each other. And one of the guys said, “Come and sleep at my place tonight.” So we used to go from no money whatsoever and every night we would sleep in someone else’s house for about I would say, three weeks, four weeks. Then one of the guys said, “OK, I got a home unit and you will stay there and I’m just going to go. My Mum lives on the outskirts and I will go and be there with her. You stay there for as long as you want.” Students had a special card and students could go and eat. And they would collect between themselves, so that we could go and eat. No money, we couldn’t get the funds. Our family didn’t know where we were.*

And later when Jasmina and her husband were again in need of accommodation, this was generously supplied;

*So we didn’t know where to go and he [man who had given them accommodation] said, “My mum lives at the outskirts. I will take you there.” So we moved in with his mum and we stayed with her for a few months.”*
7.4.2 Refuge as Hardship

Places of refuge presented opportunities for survival, but at times became places of death, rather than life. For Mariam, the camps represented adversity;

In the camp it could be the death or disease. The most difficult thing in the camps are the life and people dying. You just chat with a friend today and having that enjoyable moment and the next day that person might be gone. And that was really difficult for most of us.

So the quest for life can be killed by life itself. This was made problematic by the lack of life necessities, such as insufficient food, water and shelter that was experienced by all of the South Sudanese participants. Yaya summarised the camps as,

A place no food. They give people a little bit of food.

For Fazilah it was,


This was also Sora’s experience,

In the refugee camp we get a food and the food is not enough. We can’t eat two times. It terrible. We can’t eat during day. We eat at night time, so only one meal. And sometimes that goes on seventeen, eighteen days.

This must have been a widespread occurrence as Mariam also recounted,

There we had only one meal. We could not have two meals a day. In the camp we have to share the food there. So that ten people could eat it, we share. When we came here everyone has their own plate.

The inadequacy of food became dire for Charuni as a mother, when this impacted upon her children, as it compromised their future,
Need food. The food was there in the camp but not enough. The food they give us fortnightly ... was not enough. When you are a childhood, you don’t worry about not enough food or whatever. But when I grew up, when I was married, that’s when I found it difficult, looking after the children…. No shelter, water, clothing, education, there was no hygiene, sometimes there was no soap, nutrition, children not enough food. So they would not get enough nutrients in their body. As a mother that was when I experienced all these things.

Not only were experiences extremely difficult, but they also frequently extended for long periods of time. For Sora, the hardships in the camps continued for fourteen years;

We stayed there for fourteen years. Life is terrible there in the camp. In refugee camp in Kenya life is horrible. It is hard life. Sad life, sad life, I can’t tell you. Very hard. I don’t know how we cope.

Mariam also endured long years in a refugee camp,

We stayed for nearly twelve years in the refugee camp. The life there in is terrible compared with the life in Sudan.

Unsurprisingly, considering the scarcity of life necessities in the camps, there were few educational opportunities. For Charuni,

In the refugee camp in Kenya we had a difficulty with education. Sometimes no teachers to teach us. Sometimes there is no salary for the teachers so they stopped teaching. And sometimes we had no books, no pens. Have to write on the ground on the soil. Write ABC on ground. It was really hard.

7.4.3 Refuge as Persecution

Jasmina escaped from a homeland beset by persecution to a place of refuge similarly plagued;

Stayed with some friends for about two weeks, in the south part, then we had to leave because the police was checking up … for people running away from Bosnia. They wanted to send them back.
However, familial loyalty and care were compromised, when threatened by religious and nationalistic fervour. This was cruelly thrust upon Jasmina and her husband;

We went to the complete opposite side because I had an uncle and aunty there. So they agreed for us to come and stay with them for a few days…. She was in a mixed marriage, she was Croatian and my uncle was Orthodox. But when we got there, when she found out my husband was in the army, she kicked him out. So he stayed there only one night. I stayed with my uncle because I was allowed to stay…. But after two weeks I couldn’t survive there because she was really nasty, probably one of the nastiest people I ever met and one of the most racist people in the whole world.

When we first got there, it was a struggle where to sleep. We got the last place where we stayed for a couple of days…. So, one very early morning the guy gets in and he goes, “Pack up and leave. The police is coming.”

We had a special white card that you would take every month and the police would put a stamp that allows you to stay an extra month…. So it was really, really bad. Very uncertain.

7.4.4 Refuge as Challenge

Hardship and sadness interposed with each other to create the need for adaptive strategies. As Mariam explained,

In the camp, the life there was a desert but people managed to live there. We grew trees so that we have shade, and houses made from moss grass and some from the iron sheet. They were hot.

The difficulties to be overcome were so intense and of longstanding that on reflection, participants were surprised at their tenacity. Sora expressed this as,

Very hard, I don’t know how we coped…. I don’t know how I survived.

It is by luck, if you luck it…. One day I say my uncle, “Will we survive another time? Will we get better life?”
7.4.5 Refuge as Imprisonment

Participants experienced difficulties in their applications for resettlement in another country. For Charuni,

I was rejected three times. And the fourth time, that’s when I was accepted to come to Australia.

Perseverance also bore fruit for Sora,

I applied for the Australian embassy. And I tried two times to Canada, and they rejected me and I apply for America and they rejected me.

Jasmina remembered her story of refugee applications in great detail, as this was fraught with fear, desperation and finally sorrow. The numerous applications were continually interpreted through the lens of family. Jasmina and her husband were separated from the rest of their family but resettlement decisions focussed on the impacts these would have on family;

We tried going to Europe…. Once the [Peace] Agreement was signed, they started sending refugees back because now we are officially refugees. So send them back home. And we started panicking and saying, “My husband deserted the army. We can’t go back. They’re going to kill him.” So, we didn’t have an option. We couldn’t go to Bosnia or Serbia because he was really worried.

As Jasmina and her husband could not return to their homeland, they looked further afield;

Whoever was smart, I can say that now, smart to leave at the beginning, they sort of settled well. They had the support from the local governments and all that. And then four years into the war, everybody got fed up with Bosnians and wanted to get rid of them. And we were too late to go anywhere. We tried everything.

Political circumstances compelled the search for refuge to be significantly broadened; even to what appeared as the ‘ends of the world’, such was their desperation;
There was a couple that we met while in Croatia, who were Bosnians as well … the guy was saying, “Oh, my sister lives in Australia and we are applying to go to Australia.” So I said, “OK, why would you go to Australia? It’s so far away.” And he said, “No, we have to go. We can’t stay here but we have to pay for the tickets.” …. And he said, “Why don’t you apply? Like, nobody else wants you, so Australia’s the only option.”

We went for the interview … and the guy said, “That’s it”. And I said, “What do you mean, that’s it? When are you going to let us know?” And he said, “No, that’s it. You are going to Australia.”… We walked out and it was snowing, and we were standing in the snow and thinking, “Oh, my god, we’re going to Australia, the other end of the world. It’s like, so far away.”…. And I said, “OK, let’s call the family and tell them that we’re going to Australia.” We rang my mum and she picked up the phone and I said, “Mum, I’ve got exciting news.” And she goes “What?” and I said, “We’re going to Australia.”

Then for two minutes she didn’t even breathe.

Delays in refugee applications can be so lengthy that death can intervene before they are granted. Tragically, this was the reality for Jasmina’s mother;

We tried to get them [parents] in here and then two years they got refused and then reapplied.

There was a lot of trauma that was going on and then my family was trying to come here. It took four years, and my mum got sick in the process and she passed away before they got visa granted. The day of the interview she had surgery, four months on she died. So, on the day of her funeral, the visa got granted.

7.5 Hope and Trauma in Resettlement and Exile

7.5.1 Resettlement as Beauty

Life in Australia was depicted as being wonderful. Fazilah expressed her joy as,

Life is beautiful in Australia.
Thus, for Yaya,

My kid is happy and I am happy here.

This is not the beauty of a misty dawn filtering through gum trees or the crashing swirl of waves against weathered rocks but the splendour of abundant food and education that will provide opportunities for participants and their families to enjoy together in a feast of life. Primarily, this has been made possible by the absence of civil war in this country. Yaya compared her life of peace in Australia with her experience in war torn South Sudan as,

There was fighting so is better here than in Sudan. In Australia it’s a better life.

The provisions for this bountiful feast of life are readily available here. This contrasts starkly with the situation in their homeland or place of refuge. Not only is food, water, shelter and medical facilities available but opportunities exist for the future. Frequently, this was expressed within the lens of the family. For Fazilah,

In here, the children are getting support from the government.... Getting free education... Free doctor....

My kids are eating healthy.

This was echoed by Yaya,

You can go to free school, get a food.

Education was highly valued, as it was the doorway, by which opportunities could be entered into that offered promise for hope in the future. Indeed, for Fazilah, it provided the foundation that gave meaning to her life;

What gives life meaning to me, is my children. So have good future. So when they get educated that means they will have a good future and will not have to cope with current life I is in.
Participants expressed gratitude for Australia’s provision of a new life for them and their families. Charuni described this as,

The environment here is really good for us. Education. Good education here in Australia. And health facilities are really good…. So I like, really like, life in Australia... As they [my children] are in Australia, they have water, food, shelter, education.

For Shankari, who was accustomed to enjoying financial independence, this was difficult but necessary,

I am partly still dependent. I get some salary from [employer] and the balance I obtain from Centrelink. So as it is, it is OK for me. The amount is sufficient as my brother is paying my house rent.

Opportunities for employment were appreciated by participants. For Shankari,

I was able to find a job three months after I came.

Additionally, life in Australia had opened up new opportunities for Shankari that offered more fulfilment than she had previously experienced;

The work that I am doing here in the communities; it’s something that I like to get involved in. But back home there were so many other restrictions. I couldn’t expose myself to the community because of my husband’s involvement … but here, is something different. You meet lots of people. You get to know so many. You help so many.

Australia was also judged to be a wonderful place, in which to live, as there is a general acceptance of cultural diversity. As Charuni explained,

It is a good place to live in. People are multicultural here. And friendly.
7.5.2 Resettlement as Thorns amidst Beauty

In the midst of the beauty of life in Australia, difficulties have been encountered by all participants. These relate to their past, the unfamiliarity of their present environment and to adverse life events. For Mariam, present problems do not arise in the midst of a battle for survival but as part of everyday life;

Life in Australia is difficult but it’s quite easier somehow.

The early experiences in Australia were the most challenging for all of the participants. This is unsurprising when one considers the disparity between the homelands and their new environment. Yaya conveyed her struggles within the positivity of her new life,

It is really good but when I first come, life here was very difficult. Life was difficult for me. There is food to eat and everything but was hard to live. But I like it because it’s good. It is really good.

The initial resettlement was made more challenging, as migration was not a life choice these women would have made ordinarily. They had been forced into this decision through desperation. Uncertainty, fear and even dismay were dominant themes in the participants’ narrations of this time in their lives. Jasmina’s narrative overflows with detail and emotion, as this period held such significance for her;

I would never ever have to come to Australia, if I had a choice in my life, because my life was ten times better than what was here. I still can’t believe we came here with $50 in our pockets without a bag because we didn’t have any belongings. And $50 we managed to save, selling some jewellery and whatever. And it felt like, “Oh, my God, why did I come? It’s the end of the world. Everything is so different. Everything smells differently.”

We had a bad luck in terms of we were the second group of Bosnian refugees that came after the war…. So I don’t think everybody was well prepared for us here as well. There was no support as much as people are getting here now. Because we had somebody from that international organisation,
from the migration, they were waiting for us at airport.... They put us in a van and drove us to the place in Blacktown.

The interpreter could barely speak our language, because she was born and raised here. And then we came at around 11 o’clock at night and it was so humid, and there’s no humidity back home. We walked inside the unit. It was old furniture. It looked really poor and it looked really old. So compared to the life I had back home, doesn’t matter what I went through and which conditions I lived through for a year and a half, I still had high expectations. And you walk into a place and there’s some old fashioned washing machine and someone is telling me, “Do I know how to actually turn the stove on?” That sort of stuff. I felt so humiliated. I felt so bad because ... we were treated like nobodies. The first thing was, somebody assumed that my speaker could speak my language. We came from two completely different cultures, from different cities. Even here, you see such different cultures. So I didn’t have such a good experience to start with.

I remember my mum picked it [phone] up and she said, “How is it?” And I said, “It’s the worst thing in the world.” I was so disappointed. I was crying at that point but I wanted them to think that we are really happy, but I was really disappointed.... I lived in the city and for me, Blacktown wasn’t a city. Blacktown wasn’t alive. Seven o’clock it’s dark. There is no life. In my street, the life was 24/7. So it was just sort of the transition was really hard. It was really hard. I wasn’t prepared. I had different sort of expectations. And people were telling us different things … “You won’t be able to do this. You won’t be able to do that.” You hope. You hope for a good life. You hope for a different change for the better. The thing was, I thought it was a change for the worse.

Jasmina’s dismay at the divergence between Australia and her homeland is reiterated by Shankari, who emphasised that ‘home’ remains in her homeland, not Australia. The good and the bad are intertwined together to create a multi-dimensional experience;

The first two years I went through a lot. Firstly, I left my home and everything and I came here. The only positive thing about Australia was that it was an English speaking country and they encouraged migration. I came on a humanitarian visa and I got my permanent residency straight away. So that was a positive, as I was able to find a job three months after I came. But there were other things. Everything
Many aspects of everyday life are proving to be problematic for Fazilah,

Is very hard. So I’m over here with my kid and my kid is going to school to try. And me I try to work and go to school too, but now, it is very hard in Australia. Very hard. My husband, very hard to find out work … and it’s very hard to go accommodation and then to find house.

Everyday life for Sora will continue to be a struggle but she accepts this, as it offers more security and opportunities for her family than in her homeland;

Life. In a way life is hard, than how like, if I born here, would not be hard but is hard because I was not born here. But it is better than the life I was in…. But anyway, I am settled. It is hard for me to go shopping. It is hard for me to drive because I don’t know where they are. It’s different. But anyway, in other ways it is better than life I come from. So I’m happy about it, though I’ve struggled.

Mariam’s focus on her difficulties rests with her responsibilities to her family;

It’s hard for someone, who have kids in hand.

Difficulties with everyday life were exacerbated by unfamiliarity. Negotiating transport around Sydney frequently proved problematic. Mariam described this within the framework of integration from her initial ‘prison of home’,

Before I came, I do not know how to drive. It is part of my integrating, transition into this country. I get my license. I get to know which train to take, which bus to take … which road do I take? So all these, it take time. In the first two years or the first year of coming, you like in a prison, because you don’t know anywhere to go. You just sit there. Go to the learning English centre. Come back. This is the only road you’re allowed to go to. Come back to the house. It is like in a prison.

This was echoed by Shankari,

Travelling was difficult. I don’t drive. So places were far away. My freedom was curtailed.
And Sora,

   It is hard for me to go shopping. It is hard for me to go. It is hard for me to drive because I don’t know where they are.

Refugees in England have also characterised their resettlement as one of entrapment, particularly when uncertainty was a critical component of their experience (Zimmermann, 2012). Shankari’s experience of isolation did not eventuate from physical barriers but from emotional difficulties that were no less real in creating a life of imprisonment;

   So I had no one I could relate to with my problems, my fears. My freedom was curtailed.

Financial difficulties invariably create stresses. For Shankari, some avenues for the achievement for financial independence have been stymied;

   One problem, because I had no citizenship, I couldn’t apply for [government jobs].

There was acknowledgement of the importance of learning English. Shankari stated that,

   The problem they [refugees] have in the community is the language difficulty. It is hard, particularly when they’re an older person. It’s good for you to learn the language.

The majority of participants struggled with their acquisition of English. Yaya described this with emphasis as,

   Its English is difficult because you go to school and the teacher talk to you and you don’t know what she is saying. Very hard to understand, difficult English. Very hard.

This was also Fazilah’s experience,

   It is very hard for me to learn English, for me to understand. Difficult for me.

However, learning English was interpreted as an important challenge to be mastered. Mariam expressed this as,
I find it difficult but because, something you want, you give more strength to do it. You put more effort.

Language enables communication of self to others and thus silences silence. For Jasmina, the capacity for expression was critical. The need for a voice was imperative;

You don’t know the language, you have to start from scratch. You want to express yourself and you can’t because you don’t have enough words to express yourself.

Similar difficulties were experienced by Sudanese refugees in other Australian research. Social isolation, inadequate understanding of English and problems in obtaining employment were all interrelated, especially in early resettlement (Hugo, 2011; Khawaja et al., 2008). Accessibility to language classes for refugees is a practical and low cost strategy that expedites successful resettlement. Refugees in Australia are entitled to free English lessons to attain a functional level of English (Australian Government, 2013a; Hugo, 2011). Consequently, this may facilitate fulfilment of hope objectives for refugees and so promote hopefulness.

7.5.3 Resettlement as Discrimination and Racism

Discrimination arising from racial prejudices was frequently communicated, although participants emphasised that this was only an infrequent occurrence by a minority of Australians. Charuni’s understanding of English was sufficient to enable her to recognise sarcasm;

People just speak while you are hearing them and they talk about me…. But sometime they say, “Oh, you have nice skin. Your skin looks beautiful.” And I say, “Your skin looks beautiful too.” “Oh, you have nice hair” … and I say, “Your hair looks nice too.” But I know, I know it is discrimination. It is not reality but I have borne it politely.
It’s not everywhere. Just sometime, people say, “This is not Africa. You are black? Where are you coming from? This is not Africa.” The time when you meet them on the train, they are very strange on the train and the buses. “This is not Africa. You cannot come here”.

We should respect each other. And forget about the colour.

Mariam’s experience also occurred on public transport that fortunately was handled by authorities swiftly and decisively;

I get onto a train. I think two teenagers, they were drunk, and they say, “Ah, look at this fucking black monkey.” And I get angry. The security guard was there and he witnessed what they say and so the security guard did not allow them to board the train. And I feel bad. Because is this I say, “Is this how the white people will treat the black here?” I experience that a lot. I feel bad.

Unfortunately, racial abuse against the Other continues on public transport in Sydney with a woman charged with the abuse of an Asian student (Oriti, 2013).

Passion and outrage can facilitate response, even in the absence of fluent language ability. Jasmina remembered an occasion when her limited English was an effective communication tool, as it was fuelled by deep indignation;

I personally didn’t [experience discrimination]. I was in the situation once where I was doing cleaning…. They were talking about the elderly person coming from somewhere, being at the airport, not knowing the English…. There was about one hundred, two hundred people. And the guy said, “People like that should be put back on a plane and sent outside of Australia.” And I got up. I was so upset. My English was awful, awful. I was shaking like that to talk to anybody in English, let alone to get up in front of two hundred people. And then I got up. I don’t know what happened to me. I said, “Shame on you! How you can say such a thing?” And he said, “What do you know? You are migrants?”…. I said, “Let me tell you something. To start with, you speak English and I respect that. At least I’m trying to learn your language, in your country … you can’t just judge people. To be honest with you, I would never ever have to come to Australia if I had a choice in my life. Because my life was ten times better than what was here.” He looked at me and I said, “How disrespectful. What do you
expect? Take your father or whatever. If he’s 60 something, what do you do with him? Do you just put him on a plane? You come to Bosnia and what would you do if you were in my shoes?"

And he was really quiet and he sat down. I don’t even remember how I explained it because my English was really poor. And the whole room went quiet. Nobody said anything. And it felt good. But that was the first time when I actually felt something. But, me particularly, I never had anybody, for all these years, not a single person came to me and showed me disrespect, based on my beliefs, or religion or where I come from, whatever. I honestly never had that experience. I am happy for it.

Experiences of racism and discrimination have been reported by refugees in other research in Australia (Hugo, 2011; Khawaja et al., 2008; Onsando & Billett, 2009). Khawaja et al., (2008) found that a quarter of participants reported incidents of racism. These were described as less overt aggression than the racism in the past. Whilst difficulties in employment may be subsumed into such a category, it is problematic whether this is an appropriate characterisation for the reported verbal abuse. Racism in such form should not be underestimated as its consequences can be deleterious, including exacerbation of social isolation with an analogous reduction in a sense of belonging. Additionally, fear of racism had prevented young refugees from continuing with their education goals (Onsando & Billett, 2009). This fear of the reoccurrence of racism was also evident for Mariam;

You know you are the black getting out there. People might look at you, “What she doing? Look at her.”

However, this fear had not prevented Mariam or the other participants from striving for the achievement of their objectives.

Discrimination was experienced in various ways. Some participants experienced this in their attempts to provide housing for their families, particularly large families. As Charuni recounted,
With the discrimination that I have experienced is about the real estate. When I came here I had three children. They say, “You have three children, so your application has been declined.” I am still experiencing this when I had my fifth child…. They said, “Sorry, you have a lot of children. We can’t grant you.”

This becomes particularly difficult, as most families are dependent upon the private rental market. The background to this was explained by Charuni,

We don’t have real estate here. We don’t have businesses here. We just come here as poor for the background. It is very hard the real estate. And even with the community housing I apply and they say, “Sorry, you have more children.” So with five children you have a lot of benefit from the government, for the rent…. So it’s really, I found discrimination in Australia. I need a place to live with my children. I work now but still they say you have five children. So it is very hard. Can’t afford the mortgage to buy the house. It is very hard.

For Shankari, discrimination was in terms of employment opportunities. This impacted so severely on her life that she considered returning to her homeland, in spite of the problems she would face there. As she related,

Not in terms of my colour or anything, but in terms of my overseas qualifications. For the whole of the last year I could not find another library job. I have experience in my career. I got nothing but doubt. The only reason they would not want me is that my overseas qualifications and my age…. Hard, it was a very uncertain phase that I was going through at that time…. At one stage I just wanted to go back to Sri Lanka. I was trying to get back to Sri Lanka. My brother and my sister convinced me, “Don’t.”

Discrimination in employment and housing was also experienced by other Sudanese refugees (Khawaja et al., 2008). Housing programs for refugees in Australia are inadequate, as assistance provided through Humanitarian Settlement Services is limited to a year with some refugees ineligible for support (Settlement Council of Australia, 2012).
7.5.4 Resettlement as Own Community Discrimination

Jasmina’s experience of discrimination has resulted more from ethnic and religious divisions emanating from her homeland than from discrimination from the wider Australian community:

I have more issues within my own community and being disrespected here, within my own community because here in Australia, the communities are sort of separated. You’ve got one, who live on the Orthodox side now, hanging together. You’ve got the Croatians one, who are quite extreme in their beliefs, views. Then you have the Bosnians one, a lot of them are in the mixed marriages, between different religions. And we felt it’s a place where we belong, like it’s a Bosnian community. Let us be part of the Bosnian community.

We were supporting like the soccer club and trying to promote it and playing for them. My best friend was a coach, was a Muslim by the way. Then the coach told my brother he shouldn’t be playing because of his name and all that…. So you get disappointed, because we were there every weekend and screaming our hearts out when they achieved something and thinking, “OK, let’s be part of that community. It’s a really deserving community. Let us prove everybody wrong.”

You get Serbs and Bosnians together; a tennis match and they hate each other. And unfortunately in Australia, they hate each other more than they hate each other back home, because people live in the time when they never move on from that. They just stay where they are…. I always say at the end of the day, why two of us have to hate each other, because some crazy people did what they did?

This contrasts starkly with Jasmina’s experience of community acceptance of religious difference in her homeland. This has now been replaced by enmity that has brought disillusionment and sadness to Jasmina,

We never worried which religion you are, because religion never played a big part in our lives. To this day, that is my biggest disappointment with my own community. To this day, people are not admitting that it was the way it was. Now people are coming up with all sorts of different stories because they are embracing the culture, the religion, different way of life.
There was little community support for Shankari as well, as she was in the painful circumstance of being surrounded by supporters of the group, who had assassinated her husband;

I had these fears. I used to hate my own community people. I couldn’t stand any of them at that time, especially my town community as most of them were in support of this militant group…. Even in public I was very, very withdrawn … I didn’t want to speak out. If I speak out I might blast them.

Collective trauma had physically devastated communities and scattered their members all over the world. In Australia, collective trauma continued to create harm through the festering of unhealed wounds. However, perseverance and growth may also transpire through collective trauma (Kaniasty, 2005; Landau et al., 2008; Norris & Stevens, 2007). Jasmina and Shankari continued to be agents of reconciliation within their communities. South Sudanese refugees actively support community engagement. During the course of the research, I was invited to a social gathering of South Sudanese women, who meet regularly in each other’s homes.

7.5.5 Resettlement as Adverse Life Events

Not only do participants have to cope with their past and resettlement concerns, but with trauma arising from contemporary life events, such as death, loss and grief. Trauma knows no boundaries of time, place and individuals. Wherever there is life, there will be trauma. Within family sorrow, the distinction between homeland as birthplace and home as country of nationality determined the place where the father preferred to die surrounded by his family. As Sora explained,

The doctor asked my husband, “You are really very sick. Where would you like to die? Would you like to die in Sudan, or die here?” My husband say, “I am going to die here, because my family are here and I am Australian citizen. Sudan was where I was born but not where I live.”
The death of Sora’s husband has exacerbated past trauma through present grief, and created profound uncertainty for both herself and her family. However, within this suffering, Sora displayed continual perseverance. Whilst this was enhanced by acceptance of divine providence, this did not result in a negation or diminution of her loss and the consequences for her family;

My husband died six months ago. So is sad life for me now because I have a hard life because I have a five kid and I have two step kid. My husband married before me. I have seven.

Ah, it’s very hard. I still not know. I still not know where to go. Where to start at and where to end? I don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t know yet, but I keep going. It is very sad … but I am not the one, who bring him. God is the one who bring him and take him. I don’t have a choice. I don’t have a choice. It is very hard. Very sad for my family, very sad. Especially in Australia it is hard. Yes, very hard. Not having a father [softly].

Trauma intruded into Vasikari’s life with the death of her baby associated with her serious ongoing health problems.

Then I’m pregnant…. I went to hospital … they found, “You have high blood pressure. You have to stay in hospital.” And after six days your child, baby, baby girl, after six days born and dead. I was really sick. I am very, very sick.

Jasmina’s family suffered the loss of her mother and other family members within a short period of time.

I saw my Mum for the first time after seven years. That’s when she was dying literally. They were supposed to come here but then they found that she had a brain tumour. And she went through the surgery. My son was three and a half and I decided to travel with him because they told me, it was pretty bad…. We spent three weeks with her. Out of three, one and a half weeks she was in a coma and she passed away…. My mum was the strongest person in the family, so it was sort of life changing for everybody. And I think that left a lot of trauma.
My life was being up and down because there was so much happening…. After my mum, her sister passed away, then my uncle, three people died in six months’ time … in the first few years, nearly half of our family passed away and it’s just hard to deal with all the loss. So much grief.

My husband grew up with his grandma, maternal grandmother, who also died while we were here. He never saw her afterwards.

7.5.6 Resettlement as Integration

Resettlement requires adaptation and integration that are processes occurring over a period of time. They are not achieved immediately or without effort. As Mariam reiterated,

It is still hard, the life here. It takes years to integrate into it. It take time to integrate into the life here.

This was echoed by Jasmina,

It took a long time. It took us a couple of years after we sort of settled a little bit.

The importance of integration was acknowledged, especially for participants’ families. As Mariam stated,

We need to get integrated for our children. We cannot chain them. Our children will be like Aussies born here…. We need to get educated. We need to get integrating.

Resettlement was complicated by a dearth of understanding about Australian culture and its dissimilarity with the culture of their homeland. Mariam explained this difficulty as,

Getting integrated, adapting to the lifestyle of Australia because the lifestyle is different. In our country we don’t, girls and boys don’t mix. In our country we don’t wear naked as most of Australian. We don’t wear those shorts. [Laughter]…. We are getting used to it but for us who came as adults, it is hard for us to wear those. It is very difficult.

Difficulties in adaptation to life in Australia for Sora focussed on coping with the death of her husband. However, cultural dissimilarities towards alcohol consumption were a concern;
In our culture, it is a miracle (sic) to drink alcohol, is very bad. We don’t like it and like some of our kids like it. Drink alcohol.

Cultural difference has created uncertainty and consternation for Shankari,

Once or twice I have faced some embarrassing situations; embarrassing because I did not know how to handle it. You see, it’s a different society where people are free.

For Jasmina, inadequate understanding about Australian culture resulted in fear of judgement;

You think that people are going to laugh at you, because you don’t know the culture. Nobody told you anything about the culture and the way of life here. Because yes, back home, people would laugh at you, if you say something wrong. And obviously you think, “OK, everyone’s going to judge me, for every single action, for everything that I do.” Which is not the case.

The importance of understanding cultural diversity was emphasised by Charuni, that is applicable to all citizens, as this promotes accord within difference;

In Australia, it really is very important to understand the life of other people, to understand their culture.

Mariam summarised the dilemmas of resettlement in her first years in Australia, simply and starkly, as,

You don’t feel like yourself.

Mariam was expressing a sense of unfamiliarity of her usual self, as defined and experienced in the very different environment of her homeland and refugee camps. Refugees experience cultural disjuncture, as they feel ensnared between divergent cultures (Baird & Boyle, 2012; Braakman & Schlenkhoff, 2007; Khawaja et al., 2008). This liminality21 exists within

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21 Although the term ‘liminality’ was introduced by van Gennep in 1908 to refer to anthropological rites of passage, its use has been extended to include individuals, communities and societies (Thomassen, 2009).
uncertainty and thus creates difficulties with adaptation. Whilst this has been said to result in irrationality and dysfunction (Szakolczai, 2009), this was not evident with research participants. Myriad difficulties existed but these were faced with a steely determination to confront cultural incongruity to ensure hope for themselves and their families within a ‘beautiful’ country. Mariam’s perseverance in tackling the challenges in her new homeland was reaping the benefits of a new life;

I was just hoping that one day I will be in a better place and today I am in a better place, better country.

Simultaneously, there was a longing for and loyalty to their homelands but such fealty did not compromise their commitment to settlement in Australia. Both obligations were inextricably interwoven into a strong strand of purposeful life. No individual exists within a sole orientation but within a multiplicity that each informs the other. As Havel (1988, p.155) suggested, “I exist … as the tension between all my ‘versions’, for that tension, too (and perhaps above all), is me.”

7.5.7 Resettlement as Connection to Homeland

No person lives in the present within a vacuum, as the past and future impinge on present experience. Thus, all participants bear wounds from the past, as all endured severe and multiple traumas over an extended period of time. As some time has passed since their occurrence, healing has commenced and continues. However, as with physical wounds, emotional scars remain that bear witness to the past. They possess the potential to cause deep distress and to wreak havoc within lives. The sound of helicopters retains the power to unleash fear for Vasikari and her family, as their experience in their homeland was that aircraft are the harbingers of death and destruction;
When coming the plane, I scared. My brother, family coming here, they had children... They hear coming in the helicopter. They going under the table. My Uncle say, “No, not scare. They not shooting.”

Nightmares are frequently associated with trauma, when past fear and horror invades the territory of restful sleep (Calohan, Peterson, Peskind, & Raskind, 2010; de Jong, 2005; Norris et al., 2002a). This was very true for Jasmina’s husband,

He had a lot of nightmares. Probably two or three years on, he started having lots and lots of nightmares. He often used to tell me that he had the dreams of him running and someone chasing him up. Or he would say, “I’m having the dreams of going back home to visit and then for some reason, I can’t leave.” And I think always that was the fear him going back, and sort of facing all people, his friends…. For him, friendship is number one in his life and that’s why people respected him for that and liked him.

The way that he left, he always felt that he did the wrong thing. He never thought doing it to save himself. He thought, “Oh, the way how I left. Everybody else stayed there and they died.” And he could of stayed to die as well, and he had that sort of guilt.

Although all participants were committed to adaptation and integration into life in Australia, there was continuing concern for family, who remain in their homeland, struggling with poverty, oppression and social unrest. Vasikari’s desire to provide financial support for her family in her homeland has resulted in financial inadequacy for her family in Australia;

Not enough in the money. I have a little bit. I have to send to my brother, sister…. Is very hard, not enough in the salary ... very, very hard.

This was also true for Mariam, who has chosen to forgo study, so that she can contribute to family in South Sudan. Her decision was reinforced by feelings of guilt, as she was dismayed by the disparity in living conditions between her homeland and Australia;
It is shocking when you first came. Seeing yourself in this house I live here. Back home I left those relatives, friends and family living in those tents. Hot. And I live here. I feel guilt of how I live here. Is very sad because I am happy, they are not happy. And yet they need my support and I cannot support them unless I should not study or just work to support them.

Other research has indicated that the provision of financial support for family in homelands can complicate resettlement, as refugees endure hardship and restrict their choices, in order to assist family in their homelands (Bishop, 2011; Lim, 2009; Shandy, 2003, 2006). However, this has contributed positively to homeland economies, especially as families as primary economic units have been the beneficiaries (Hugo, 2011; Shandy, 2006).

The disparity between living conditions was also reflected in a desire for family reunification, so that families could enjoy life together in a land offering more security and opportunities than in homelands. Yaya conveyed this as,

I have two brothers and one sister and my father is in Africa now. And my bigger sister and I really want to bring them here, but it is really difficult. We try all the time to bring them, but we couldn’t.

Vasikari also expressed this same desire,

Older brother living in my country. He is married, he has six children. I always trying here, I sponsor I take him here. He like to come to Australia, but can’t. Very hard.

This same desire was true for Fazilah,

My dad. I want to try to bring my dad. Is very hard to come in here, because my dad is one leg and then my mum is died and my dad is live by selling. So is very hard, and then no walking, one leg.

Insufficient attention has been given to the needs and rights of older refugees, who are frequently less able to flee from adversity in their homelands (MacDonald, 2002; Mooney, 2002). Although many cultures revere the wisdom of older people, their contributions to
communities and their rights are subject to alternative discourses (Habyarimana, 2002). They can be characterised as burdens impeding progress, even in cultures traditionally imbued with respect for older people (Eruesto, 2002; Goveas, 2002; Kesselly, 2002). Thus, too often, older refugees are rendered ‘invisible’ by the prioritisation of younger refugees, thus resulting in further marginalisation (Goveas, 2002; Kesselly, 2002; Habyarimana, 2002; MacDonald, 2002). Older people were held in high esteem and concern by participants in this project.

Jasmina expressed gratitude for the presence of her father in Australia;

I feel good because I have my dad and my brother here with me.

At other times, connections to homeland were related as desires for visits to their homelands. For Jasmina, this had been realised with great joy,

I love going back. Doesn’t matter if most of the people I know aren’t there. Most of our family is no longer there, just the buildings. I just love walking down the streets with my son and saying, “This is the school where your mum went.”…. I want to keep going back. I am trying to get him [her husband] to go next year…. I keep saying, “You want your Dad to spend some time with our child, so we have to go.”

For Charuni, this objective remains in the future,

My father is still there. But sometime, when my children grow up, I can go there…. It’s very hard as a woman but I have a hope that I may go and see them. Miss them. My mother live in USA now.

7.5.8 Resettlement as a Refugee

A refugee was characterised strongly as being coerced into this role to enhance the possibility of survival. The choice for life necessitated flight. Flight for survival was the focus of being a refugee for Yaya,
Refugee is someone run from the house. Run away to live. And there is a big war in your country and you can’t be able to stay.

Shankari reinforced the understanding that a refugee is one born from necessity through reference to her own story. This was a role that Shankari initially resisted but ultimately accepted as her life was under threat.

While I was here for a holiday, my sister told me to stay behind and apply for a refugee status. I refused because the word refugee meant something. Why should I? I have a life. I will go back. After going back I realised that my position was vulnerable. Then I applied. I had no choice at that stage.

For Shankari, the label of refugee had lost its aura of pathology;

After I came here, the word refugee didn’t mean anything less than a normal person…. I felt quite at home…. So after I came here, the word refugee didn’t matter.

Jasmina also described a refugee as a victim of mandatory exile;

People that are definitely forced to leave their country for their various reasons but at the same time, people with the no choice in their life. People that are in such a disadvantaged position where they can’t speak for themselves…. They had no choice. They can’t stay in the country of origin.

However, there was extreme reluctance to adopt the cloak of a refugee. Jasmina remembered that acknowledgement of her refugee status as one of the most difficult undertakings of her life. This role was not chosen willingly but was thrust upon her;

We go in and we register as refugees. So, that was the start of my life and probably the hardest, the hardest thing in my life to call myself a refugee.

This was framed within her initial perspective of refugees as illiterate intruders;

I lived in my own bubble. I lived in my own world…. You don’t worry about somebody else’s trouble because there is a war in Africa or Iraq or whatever. “Poor people”, switch off the TV and go on with your life. You don’t worry about that sort of stuff because it’s not touching you. And at the beginning
of the war, when the refugees started coming into the city, all people … who started arriving are
uneducated people, are people that lived in the villages. So my idea of, (I actually never said that to
anybody ever), my idea of the refugee was uneducated person, illiterate person…. They had to go but
why did they have to come and impose on me and my life? I’m not guilty because the war is in their
village. So I didn’t have, in all honesty, such a high opinion. I never thought about it. It never crossed
my mind what people are going through to make them refugees. Never worried about it.

Consequently, Jasmina’s preconceived framework resulted in a sense of hopelessness, as she
had now joined the ranks of the scorned;

When I got to Croatia, I had the label refugee and I felt hopeless, as much as they may, and I felt bad as
much as they might feel bad. But I still didn’t want to be seen as part of that community because that’s
not me. I’m somebody high. I’m somebody better. And that was the hardest part. It was really, really
hard.

Following her own experience as a refugee and personal contact with other refugees,
Jasmina’s viewpoint was transformed radically, especially by the power of refugees’ stories;

My husband and I started working with them and the more I worked with them, the more I met people
and started listening to their stories. What they had been through. What was happening. And that’s
where my passion for the community centre started, because I started to get the whole thing through
different eyes. It’s not just who they were, what they looked like. It’s their stories. They touched my
heart…. I really felt that I’m giving something back because again I felt guilty having all those feelings
beforehand. Because a refugee was something really bad. Really bad.

Following resettlement in Australia, there was a further alteration in perception. From
intruder with choice to escapee with no choice and no voice;

If you asked me today, I would definitely say ... people that are definitely forced to leave their country
for their various reasons … people with no choice in their life. People that are in such a disadvantaged
position where they can’t speak for themselves.
Such was the change of viewpoint that Jasmina is now loathe to further diminish choice for refugees;

When they come here, I tell them what to do. I give them the advice. But who am I on earth to tell them anything? You’re taking that freedom from people once again. Yes, we are helping, but they not free people in so many different senses…. They’re not free to speak because for different reasons. They’re not free to do things, because of this, this and that.

Indeed, Jasmina now wears her past refugee status as a badge of honour with pride;

Fifteen years on, I proudly tell everybody, wherever I go, that I came to Australia as a refugee. And I’m really proud of it today. Because only by succeeding in life can I show people and tell people who am I.

The word ‘refugee’ was interpreted primarily as individuals, who have lost their homeland. Fazilah expressed a refugee as,

Because you lost your country.

This is poignantly identified with the loss of home. As Charuni explained,

Refugees are the people, who have no home, where to live. Their home has been taken by strangers.

This was reiterated by Shankari,

My home is still in Sri Lanka. I had to leave everything because I was an eye-witness to the assassination. I left my home and everything and I came here.

Similarly, a refugee was viewed by Sora as indicative of homelessness, even though she has bought a house in Australia. This is not yet home and may never be;

Because of the war, everyone is homeless now.
This exile from homeland was highlighted as the meaning of refugee by Mariam as,

Left the country and living in exile. Living in refugee camp and we travel to the different countries and end up in Australia. Someone who has had to leave for so many reasons because of food, war, drug. So many reasons.

Jasmina explored in detail the severance from family as a reason for her difficulties. Home and family were connected inseparably, with family providing the meaning for home as it furnished a sense of love, acceptance and security. Thus, the sense of homelessness is inextricably interwoven with separation from family. She questioned whether her feeling of homelessness was the consequence of separation from her family;

Or being just the two of us and feeling like there is nobody else to help us? I was always, not dependent. I was always an independent child but I always felt secure. I needed it. Home, safe, family.

Whilst Jasmina identified with Roma, “We were like two gypsies”, as travellers with no permanent homeland, her position is more dire as Roma travel with their families, who are the focus of their life. Their ‘homeland’ and home travels with them (Dundes & Vivian, 2004). However, for Jasmina separation from family engenders a loss of belonging, so that she is ‘lost in the world’.

Nothing that belongs to you. You don’t belong anywhere. You are just lost in transition. So that was the hardest. That was the hardest time.

Such a lack of belonging is frequently repeated by refugees. The life of a refugee has been likened to a leaf torn from its branch of a tree floating down through the air (Soltani, 2012). This uprootedness is not conducive for a sense of belonging, as one is divorced from one’s origins.
7.6 Hope within Trauma

Hope was ascribed a pivotal role in life that contributed both a foundation for life and meaningful life objectives. Both were congruent with each other and reinforced each other.

7.6.1 Hope as Meaning in Life from Individual Selfhood

Hope was frequently grounded within individual selfhood, from which strength emanated for perseverance required for the struggle to attain life objectives. This was described by Charuni as,

Because I have the hope in myself.

Hope was interpreted by Fazilah as residing within herself that inspired perseverance for future good;

Hope is in my heart. Because I cope with it with the strength in my heart and faith hoping that I will have something good in the future.

The same thoughts were conveyed by Yaya,

A strong heart. You have to be strong and keep going. I will do it, I will do it. One day you will get something good in your life.

Strength emanated for Jasmina from herself, although this was encouraged by the example of her mother.

I see myself as a very strong person and my mum was the same.

The importance of the need for individual reliance on inner strength was also emphasised by Shankari,

So I thought, “Let me do it.” How long can I hold on to these people? I have a life of my own.
Inner strength was identified as a cognitive strategy by Khawaja et al., (2008). However, this inadequately described the role of inner strength for the participants in this research. Inner strength had a wider application to the whole of one’s Being, rather than restriction to cognition. This strength enabled perseverance that bore forth achievements that in turn reinforced such strength. Indeed, even when perseverance was insufficient for the realisation of goals, it may have been compromised temporarily but was not extinguished. This inner strength arose from a sense of hopefulness for the striving towards hope objectives.

7.6.2 Hope as Meaning in Life from Family

Meaning in life was frequently founded on the wellbeing of family that then formed the substance of life objectives. Fazilah stated this clearly and succinctly as,

What gives life meaning to me is my children. So have good future, so when they get educated that means they will have a good future.

For Charuni, this was premised on a past life of struggle that continued to hold difficulty in the present but also the promise of a bright future for her family;

I had the hope that in the future, my children and I, would have better life. That was my goal. So when I applied to come to Australia, I really had a goal that my children not in the situation that I live. As they are in Australia they have water, food, shelter, education... I am really struggling but I have that hope that in the future, my children will get a better life.

Within the framework of gratitude for her survival, the future of her children was the focus for significance in Mariam’s life;

I would say that I am lucky I am here today. But the important thing I need a good future for my children. That is the most important thing for me.
For Yaya, hope was similarly stated, with much pride as;

Hope is I will have my baby and I will take care of it.

Jasmina clearly expressed that hope for her was founded on family wellbeing. This was partially realised after many years of perseverance;

The main hope is my family and being healthy, that’s the number one. Because I think fifteen years on, I got a small part. It is incomplete, but I got a small part of the puzzle what I was hoping for…. I feel good because I have my dad and my brother here with me. I feel thankful that I’ve got a husband and child here.

The foundation for Jasmina’s hope was built by her life with her family that provided the reason for Being and the life objectives that emanate from this, both in Australia and her homeland. From the beginning of her narrative, Jasmina highlighted the fundamental importance of family for her. Family represented utopia;

The family was always really supportive. My parents come from the families where the family was the number one priority for everybody. Old fashioned sort of family, there are no divorces in the family. You marry once for a lifetime and live happily ever after.

As utopia bestowed privileges, this also necessitated responsibilities. Such were undertaken willingly for the maintenance of this life by Jasmina;

I made a break from going to uni because my Grandma was diagnosed with cancer. As the eldest child, I was asked to look after her that year.

As family existed for the welfare of its constituents, acceptance and encouragement were its hallmarks, even when this threatened and flaunted tradition. The present family possessed a higher importance.
Why two of us have to hate each other, because some crazy people did what they did? And for that reason I highly respect our families, because in the middle of the war we decide to get married. Nobody ever said, “Why did you do it? Don’t do it, it’s a crazy thing.”.... I’m really thankful to both families for that ... and there might be a big chance my parents weren’t happy about the decision that I made, considering what they had been through in the whole process.... My husband’s family was mixed, so probably they were more flexible because they were already mixed. My family, no. In my family we had only two Catholics, everybody for 700 years after that, Orthodox. So if you’ve got a 700 year old family and no mixing there whatsoever, and here I come and mix it up. Not a single person ever questioned my choice.

Consequently, it is unsurprising that emotional inheritance bequeathed strength and responsibility to Jasmina;

I see myself as a very strong person and my Mum was the same. And I think I sort of inherited, or took over some of the stuff that she was.... She was the eldest out of three and I think she was always held responsible for all ups and down in life. And she always worked hardest out of all them. And she was always the big sister, her whole life. This one is getting worse, Mum is there. This one is having trouble, Mum is there. She’s always there. She was a helper and she would sacrifice. She literally sacrificed her whole life for the family, either the three of us, or her family. She was always there for everybody. Everybody first and then her. And I think that I am getting a lot of that from her as well. Because I am well, no matter what happens, if somebody from my family needs something, I would never think twice. I would just do it. Doesn’t matter what it takes, doesn’t matter if someone else won’t do it, I don’t think twice. I will do it. I think I am happy that my son is not as extreme as I am, because you know of finding a bit of balance.

For Jasmina, meaning for life emanates from family that determines responsibilities and joys;

Family.... Number one, family is everything in my life. And I was just talking to one of the girls the other day and we were talking about career choices ... and she said, “Oh, if you wanted, you could have done this.” And I said, “Probably I could, but I don’t have the aspirations to go that high. I’d rather have my son reach that level because he’s the world to me and I would do anything in life to give him
an opportunity to change the world, if he can change it.” So I would say family is everything and I would do anything for family. And that’s what makes me happy. That’s what makes life meaningful for me.

Not only was family viewed as the foundation for meaning in life, it also provided sustenance for the struggles in life. As Jasmina recounted,

My husband was there. Was a really, really good support, but on my own. And I think what helped me the most, out of all, is my son. Because he is a really affectionate child since he was born and he’s got a really close relationship with us. Everything I had always wanted in my family, and even more that I wanted for affection, I give my child and he is giving me that back. So anytime I was feeling a little bit down, I would sit down. He was very little, three … he would run to me and give me the biggest hug and that’s when I would get strength. And I would say, “OK, stop this. You have got a baby there.” So that’s what kept me going. It took me a while because then I had the nightmares and I was told, “It is just the trauma.” We started going for walks and he [husband] was sort of paying more attention to what was going on. And that’s how I got through, without taking a single pill, without seeing anybody, without talking to anybody.

Vasikari has coped with the loss and sadness associated with the loss of her baby through a focus on her daughter;

My baby spending all time ... She likes always going to the playgroup.

Shankari receives emotional and financial support from her family;

Fortunately for me I have got family support. My brother and my sister are very supportive. She doesn’t talk much but if I ever need any help I can go to her, I know that. My brother-in-law is also a very nice person. The amount is sufficient as my brother is paying my house rent. My brother is planning to invest in a unit here…. If it works out, he wants me to move there.
Mariam acknowledged the significance that family support can have in the provision of assistance for life. This is particularly pertinent for those, who lived in cultures with a strong family focus but now live in Australia with minimal family support;

When you have family it is easier. But if you don’t have family here, it is very hard, because especially when you have kids and you have no other people supporting you.

7.6.3 Hope as Meaning in Life from Religion

For some participants, meaning in life was characterised within a religious framework. This was expressed by Fazilah as being a recipient of divine benefice,

God is helping me a lot.

Charuni echoed this belief,

My mother said, “My children, when God help us, maybe we will be in the Western world.”

Sora interwove this divine omnipotence (all powerfulness) with omniscience (all knowingness) to explain the miracle of survival;

Very sad, very sad but God is very wise. I think God is the one who brings us because God knows when you are going live and when you are going to survive. So I think it is a miracle because I can’t believe it, how you survive. And we lost a lot of people without notice.

Such a religious justification for survival was evident in Mariam’s narrative,

I could have been dead, if it is my day I could have gone. God said, “It’s not my day.” It didn’t turn out to be my day and that is why I am here today.

Shankari’s religious framework is formulated within Hinduism with its foundation on fate, karma and individual responsibility (Singh, 2005, pp.14-19). This provides a basis for
understanding the reason for events, whilst not diminishing the requirement for individual responsibility. As Shankari explained,

I attend a mission within Hinduism, concerned with the spiritual aspects, not so much the ritual aspects, but the spiritual. After my husband’s death, I went in for meditation and I learnt yoga … and I go to their sermons whenever possible. So I see myself in a different light now. They believe in God, they believe in religion, but it is more at the spiritual level. They don’t talk about rituals and temples and deity worship, but higher oneness…. The person is one with the divine. Yes, it helped me a lot. Buddhism and Hinduism believe in reincarnation. It is a cycle. We say that there is no such place called heaven or hell, it’s the earth. This world, heaven and hell are here in this world. Earth is everything.

Consequently, Shankari interprets survival primarily as the consequence of fate interwoven with the application of individual effort,

Firstly, it is a destiny. I was destined to come and live here. Even his [husband] death and things that followed and it was not in my control. I applied for my visa, but I was not sure if I would get it or not because I gave my application to the High Commissioner. I was told there were three thousand applications for a humanitarian visa and they were going to select only fifty. So it was destiny, nothing but destiny. Secondly, I don’t give up easily. I don’t give up on anything easily, even with the hardest times. I feel that I suffer. I get depressed about all that happened but I don’t give up.

Religion was perceived by Jasmina as profering a potential rationale and balm in the midst of suffering;

I’m not a believer. But now that she [mother] passed away, I do want to believe that there is something there. And I always believed that she had something to do with it, the whole process.

Other qualitative research demonstrated the significance of religion for other refugee communities. Sudanese refugees most frequently identified religion as providing sustenance through divine assistance; active intervention through prayer and passively through acceptance of a divine plan (Khawaja et al., 2008). However, Khawaja et al., (2008) viewed
religion as a lens through which to interpret coping mechanisms, whilst in this project it was interpreted as a foundation for both hopefulness and hope objectives. Thus, religion fulfils more than a coping role, becoming a significant basis for perseverance within life.

7.6.4 Hope as Meaning in Life from Relationships

Employment in community work has assisted Shankari and Jasmina, as it provided them with fulfilment, relationships and financial support. For Shankari,

I started working and that helped me a lot. I help people to talk about their problems. I was able to move with my own community, with a new confidence, working with a multicultural women’s group.... This gave me a lot of strength.

You meet lots of people. You get to know so many. You help so many. Yes, I am happy.

Social support was acknowledged as a source of strength. For Mariam, the narratives of others reinforced her own perseverance,

When you interact with others, you know you want to do it. When you hear the stories of other people, you just I say, “I really want to do it.” I did want to put more strength so that I could do it.

As Sora does not have family support, friends have fortuitously provided this care;

I have a couple of friends. They are like my families. When my husband die in hospital, they come to look after me. When I have my twins, they come to visit. It is a good thing in Australia, because everyone look after one another. In school, my kids they say “We look after one another.”

7.6.5 Hope as Meaning in Life and Objectives from Perseverance

The theme of the necessity of perseverance was strongly iterated by all participants, as it allowed survival in the midst of adversity. Mariam expressed this starkly as,

If you give up in that walking distance, you die.
Perseverance was required to allow strength to flourish. Yaya described this as,

A strong heart. You have to be strong and keep going. I will do it, I will do it. One day you will get something good in your life. No, never, never give up. Strong, strong heart. Keep going, keep going until you did it... So if you say keep going, keep going, and you can do it.

The quest for survival can be very productive for perseverance. As Jasmina explained,

Throughout the war, for those four years, I never thought “Oh, my god, that’s it”. Doesn’t matter how hard it was, I never thought of giving up.

Similarly, Charuni’s assertion was repeated for emphasis,

No, I never give up. No, I never give up because I have the hope in myself.

Additionally, capitulation to adversity would prohibit the attainment of future possibilities.

This was described by Fazilah as,

If I give up, I will never get what I want.

This was similarly articulated by Sora with her emphasis on perseverance for realisation of life objectives,

Keep going. Never give up. If you give up, you surrender. You can’t get where you go. So you keep going, keep going, keep going ... If you didn’t die, you keep on going until you get something in the future.

Similarly, Mariam employed some of the same words to describe the importance of perseverance. Significance of life objectives provides additional impetus, although accomplishment is realised at a cost. In Mariam’s impassioned words that she repeated for emphasis;
You have to be strong and keep going. I will do it, I will do it. One day you will get something good in your life ... Keep going, keep going until you did it. And if you give up, you never achieve. You keep going until you get something better. It is very hard but I have to keep going. But because something you want, you give more strength to do it. You put more effort. It is very hard but I have to keep going.

The phrase “keep going” assumed literal significance for some participants, as death was inevitable if they did not keep walking. The destination of objectives can only be reached by perseverance.

However, human beings are not robots that only require electrical and mechanical maintenance for their ongoing operation. All humans have a finite supply of strength that can be depleted, if the adversity is too severe or too extended and social ecological supports are non-existent or inappropriate. Trauma may result in exhaustion (Litz & Gray, 2002). Renewal requires rest and recuperation. This was the experience for Jasmina, who suggests a single word, “overcoming”, to describe a possible reason for her collapse. “Overcoming” is indicative of triumph but also exhaustion after her successful but arduous and stressful refugee flight. Jasmina overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles but this came at a cost, as it overwhelmed her for a time;

When we went to Croatia, the first month, I spent in bed, being completely sick and I, with all the trouble that we had, when we became officially refugees. That was the hardest time for me. I don’t know what it was. Overcoming, or being just the two of us and feeling like there is nobody else to help us. I was always, not dependent. I was always an independent child but I always felt secure. I needed it, home, safe, family. We were like two gypsies. Nothing that belongs to you. You don’t belong anywhere. You are just lost in transition.

So that was the hardest. That was the hardest time and I never in my life thought of killing myself ever. Because I always said, “You have to be brave to do something like that.” And I don’t know whether I would ever cross that path. I cannot say, but never for a second ever crossed my mind in my life, not to that extreme. But when I say giving up, but being scared of what’s going to happen tomorrow, of life
having no meaning I would say, “No hope.” The hardest for me, no-man’s land. And I always, when they say, “No man is an island” and I thought I felt like an island.

Vasikari’s ongoing and severe illness created a sense of hopelessness, especially as this had tragic consequences resulting in the death of her child. However, family provides the inspiration for life continuance;

When I was hospitalised I had that thought, when I was sick. I had had seven surgeries in Australia. So, still sick. So, when that problem comes in, I feel like giving up. But don’t give up for child, married, child, work.

Although Shankari had emphasised the importance of perseverance for herself, after experiencing a number of obstacles, she related a desire for the river to overwhelm her.

After coming here, in the first couple of years, I have really gone to the brink of it. Once it happened when I was searching for the apartment.... I was not getting any employment at that time, I was a volunteer. So I just couldn’t find anything. Every application was rejected. So at one stage, I sat down near the dark riverbank. I told myself that I could just throw myself in. I told this to my counsellor. I was desperate. I wanted a home of my own.... Very tiring and very stressful. At one stage I was devastated, and I told a friend that I wanted to go back to Sri Lanka. I couldn’t continue like this. I can’t go on. I have a home there ... I wanted to put an end to it…. I made a few phone calls to this suicide prevention. So I spoke to these people. I didn’t know these people personally. I was reluctant to talk it out. They are unknown people.

7.6.6 Hope as Life Objectives

Hope was rarely expressed as ‘wishes’ within the narratives. When it was used, it was always with reference to significant objectives. Wishes and dreams were synonymous for Sora. They were highly significant, as they facilitated survival, by profering the impetus and opportunity for new life. However, they were beyond the agency of the individual;
It is good to have a dream. You have a dream, you have a vision, so you have a hope…. That is how I survived. It is a good thing to have a dream.

I was wishing and hoping when I was waiting for my visa…. I dreamed to get it, for it to come true. If it does not come true, you can’t blame yourself.

Jasmina held a wish that religion would provide a framework for meaning;

I always wish that thing. I always used to say, “I’m not a believer, I’m not a believer.” But now that she [mother] passed away, I do want to believe that there is something there.

Mariam light-heartedly wished to become two people, so that she could fulfil her multiple roles;

I cannot divide myself to be two people. I wish I could.

No participant evinced pervasive positivity in life, as their hope had been born out of adversity, and nurtured through uncertainty and further adversity. Life had not supported unbridled optimism. Sora questioned,

Will we survive another time? Will we get better life?

However, a diversity of life objectives was articulated. The ‘good life’ was frequently espoused, although this was interpreted in a variety of ways that reflected life history and culture. In Jasmina’s words,

You hope, you hope for a good life. You hope for a different change for the better.

This was similarly stated by Yaya as,

To be healthy and happy…. Sometimes I will do something what I like.

Fazilah outlined happiness within the framework of her family.

My kid she find a job and she growing. Is happy life in Australia.
For Shankari, this good life could also be a life of simplicity,

The food that I eat, the clothes that I wear, everything I choose on my own now…. The simple things in life.

Personal circumstances have resulted in the need for Shankari to alter the vision for her life. The death of her husband and their choice not to have children has resulted in objectives that will facilitate adaptation and growth for herself as an unmarried woman. This reflects her past, as she strives in the present for her future. Thus, freedom from fear that enables independence is of paramount significance. As Shankari explained,

Hope, in my own terms, hope means a life free of fear and life with personal freedom. With these two things I find life hopeful.

Within these parameters of freedom, she will be able to explore alternative ways of defining herself. Shankari described this crucial objective as,

To rediscover myself. For twenty eight years I was a daughter. For another twenty eight years I was a wife. Now, for the first time, I am on my own. It took some time for me to think myself along those lines, but I feel that I’m a person on my own. I am trying to see who I am… So that’s what keeps me going now is to rediscover myself.

Education was critical for Mariam, particularly as this has facilitated her ability for communication and independence.

What gives my life meaning at present is because I can get educated. And I can, even though it is not high education. That little one it keep me going. Because I can speak English. I know if I go the doctor I can explain where I get pain…. And I can read if I am driving. Where do I go? Which street do I go? Which train do I get to this place? That encouraged me to do more.

This was also expressed by Yaya as,

Do some more schooling. Go to school and learn some little bit more.
However, Mariam has so many objectives that are central to her Being that life at times feels overwhelming. However, her commitment to them fuels her perseverance;

I want to go to school. I want to work. Looking after the kids. Too many hats. It’s very hard to do those things at once…. I cannot divide myself to be two people. I wish I could.

It is very hard but I have to keep going…. Well, I just have to fly.

Employment was delineated as an important objective that has been made more problematic by a lack of educational opportunities in homelands. In Vasikari’s words,

I want to get job but I can’t speak the English or writing very well. I not studying in my country.

Always running. Always war.

For Fazilah, employment was framed within the context of her family, as it would proffer further opportunities.

My kid is finishing school and then is growing good and then find a job and then find a job me too.

Live a happy life. This is one important thing for me.

Employment for Vasikari would facilitate support for her family in Australia, as well as support for family in her homeland.

I don’t have lot of money…. Not enough money.

Home ownership was emphasised by several participants, as this would alleviate the sense of homelessness and create a ‘home’. A mortgage was viewed as the fulfilment of a dream by Sora,

Me and my husband we got a mortgage. So it is a good thing…. It is a dream. It is a good dream.

When my house come, when my friend come to my house, she says, “Your dream come true.”
Fazilah also described the purchase of a home as bringing happiness to her family,

   My husband find a real job and then you buy house. And my kid is really happy. All of my family is happy.

An important objective for Vasikari was peace in her homeland and assistance for her community, who remain in need,

   No more war. That gives me hope. I hope in the government and you have to stop the war. You must help Tamil people.... Always poor people now, they lost all everything.... The war has stop and Sri Lanka the country is OK. But they don’t know really what happened there. They can’t to getting job. Very difficult ... most Sinhalese people get the job.

7.6.7 Hope within Temporality

Hope is customarily relegated to a future orientation (Freire, 1998b, p.45). Many of the participants’ narratives had congruence with this understanding, as the hope for future objectives inspired perseverance for their attainment. However, a diversity of interpretations of the temporal orientation of hope was also evident; future, past, present and present-future. For most participants the objective of hope was to overcome adversity, so that good could occur in the future. This was expressed by Fazilah as,

   I cope with it [adversity] with the strength in my heart and faith, hoping that I will have something good in the future.

Additionally, Charuni expressed optimism for the future as,

   Hope means that in the future things will get better.
Similarly Yaya stated that,

One day you will get something good in your life.

The future was a shining light for Sora in the midst of recent and past traumas and sorrow;

So you don’t think back. You think forward. One day it will pass…. You can’t go backward. You can’t look backward.

To hope, you hope for the future. If you do not die, you dream that you will get one good thing one day.

However, an orientation to both the present and future was also expressed. Hope for Mariam is grounded in both the present in her survival and in the future for her family;

In my life the important, the most important thing is that I am here today. I would say that I am lucky. I am here today. But the important thing I need a good future for my children. That is the most important thing for me.

This future orientation was recognised by Jasmina but within the context of disillusionment upon her arrival in Australia;

You hope for a good life. You hope for a different change for the better. The thing was, I thought it was a change for the worse.

The temporality of hope for Jasmina has altered over the years. Previously, the hope was focussed in the future as a yearning for the past to be relived;

I’d say 15 years ago, hope meant for me a better life. Hope meant for me personally, just a tiny bit of the life I had before, nothing else. I always wanted what I used to have; the happy childhood, happy family, feeling secure and safe in familiar environment, being surrounded by people I could trust and people that are there no matter what for me. That was the hope back then.
In the same way that Freire (1998b, p.45) questioned the efficacy of nostalgia as it extinguished hope, Jasmina’s experiences brought awareness that the past cannot be resurrected. This has resulted in an alteration in the orientation of hope, so that now it is focussed on life within the present;

Today … the main hope is my family and being healthy, that’s the number one.

However, as family is the pivot around which life rotates, the wellbeing of her family in the future will have an impact within the present. This present-future focus is advocated by Benjamin (1997, pp.9-10), as it facilitates strength and purpose;

I don’t have high hopes for the future. I just want my child to do well, and to sort of have the health in the family, and have everybody healthy.

7.7 Integrative Analysis

7.7.1 Introduction

In accord with striving for understanding the parts within the narratives for a hermeneutic phenomenological analysis, the most frequent themes in each narrative were identified, which were then compared with those in the other narratives. Three focal themes emerged consistently across all narratives; family as the focus and catalyst for hope, trauma as the focus and catalyst for hope and resettlement as the focus and catalyst for hope. However, whilst each theme will be discussed individually, all could be understood as being inextricably intertwined with each other. In the same way that the strands of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) are interwoven and are dependent upon and influence the other, these three focal themes operate in a similar fashion. One cannot be understood without reference to the others.
7.7.2 Family as Focus and Catalyst for Life through Hope

The family as the focus and catalyst for life through hope emerged as a very significant consideration in each narrative. The family was central within the narratives of trauma in the homelands, refugee flight, places of refuge and resettlement. The horrors, hardships and grief associated with war for an individual were interpreted through the lens of the family. Each woman was adversely affected by the trauma of war but this was interpreted within the framework of family. For Jasmina, family created the bedrock for life,

My parents come from the families where the family was the number one priority for everybody.

Thus, during the war trauma, the focus of suffering was the family. Together as a family, they weathered the battering of the storms that assailed them;

The family suffered quite a lot. All the mum’s side of the family, they were all Muslim so they suffered heavily from Orthodox and vice versa…. For me it was more important to stay as a family unit together, no matter what.

The challenge of coping with and adaptation to trauma, altered Jasmina’s more individual conceptualisation of hope, although with a focus on family, to one firmly grounded within family and for family;

I’d say fifteen years ago, hope meant for me a better life.

Today … the main hope is my family.

All participants emphasised the importance of the presence of family in Australia with emphasis on hope objectives within this familial framework. Mariam expressed this as,

The important thing I need a good future for my children. That is the most important thing for me.

A corollary of this emphasis on family was that there was considerable concern, and even guilt, for family remaining in the homelands. For Mariam,
Back home I left those relatives, friends and family living in those tents, hot. And I live here. I feel
guilt of how I live here. And those people left behind. And life here to me, as I would experience it is
very sad. Because I am happy, they are not happy.

The significance of the family for refugee communities has been previously
acknowledged, as it was the focus for interpretation of experience, rather than the individual
(Ajdukovic, 2004; Weine et al., 2004). This is unsurprising, as the family is an essential
foundation for ontology and cosmology in some cultures, and thus will be critical in the

7.7.3 Trauma as Focus and Catalyst for Life through Hope

All participants expressed willingness and even enthusiasm to share their narratives of
trauma, as this played very significant roles in their life history. These narratives represented
integral components of who they were, who they are and who they want to be. With support
from family and for family, the women were able to face the traumas with courage and
perseverance. The emphasis in research on the biomedical model of trauma concentrates on
adverse effects of trauma, so that resilience and growth receive insufficient consideration
(Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2012). All refugees have endured trauma, with this being a
significant characteristic of participants’ narratives. As such, these necessitate
acknowledgement. However, this only represents one aspect, as resilience and growth were
inextricably interwoven within their experience of trauma.

Mariam’s perseverance throughout her experiences of trauma reinforced her
determination to continue life with hope for a brighter future;

I have to keep hope, I have to keep going as I have been. I have passed so many difficulties. And I am
here today. It gives me more strength. Keep going, I will achieve something. I will be in better life
later, in years coming. It’s not the end of life, you know. You experience bad things. You experience
good things the other day. But just keep having hope that you will have something nice.

Participants recounted serious problems that occurred because of their experience of trauma.
After she became a refugee, Jasmina experienced extreme exhaustion, in response to the
years of severe stress and especially, exile from their homeland. She needed an extended
period of rest to replenish her strength to resume life;

When we went to Croatia, the first month, I spent in bed, being completely sick ... with all the trouble
that we had. When we became officially refugees that was the hardest time for me.

Following the death of her mother, Jasmina again experienced severe fatigue.

I never grieved. Even when my mum passed away, I didn’t want to show my weaknesses because I felt
I had to be there for dad and my brother. And then I can here and I collapsed and it took me a really
long time to pick up myself and to get myself together.

Similarly, at one moment in her life, Shankari had to contemplate whether she had the energy
or desire to continue with life. These experiences would have all evoked fear and uncertainty.
Both had run out of energy. It is a testament to their life force that they continued to
persevere in the midst of exhaustion. Formal counselling was used by some, when there was
no other option. Shankari’s experience was beneficial as,

I had no one I could relate to with my problems, my fears. So I went for counselling regularly for two
years. I had ‘unspoken’ fears. I used to hate my own community members as most of them were
supporting the militants and were raising funds for the war back home. I couldn’t stand any of them at
that time. Even in public I was very, very withdrawn. I didn’t want to speak out. If I speak out, I might
blast them. In many ways it was very helpful.
However, when Shankari applied for an extension for counselling, mismanagement within the health care system created an obstacle for this to continue. It was fortuitous that Shankari found that she was able to cope without this support;

I am a new patient to the GP. She said, “You give me the counsellor’s assessment. Then I will put you into the health care system.” My counsellor went on maternity leave, so I could not contact her. It was like going around in circles.

Whilst counselling was advantageous for Shankari, Jasmina’s experience was completely unhelpful. Jasmina suffered nightmares and severe feelings of being choked;

I had the nightmares and I was told it is just the trauma. And I went to the doctor and he said, “Oh no, you need to see the psychiatrist.” I used to wake up in the middle of the night with blue lips and no air. And I would wake up and feel like someone was choking me … I went to the psychiatrist…. I had to pay him, a couple hundred dollars. And he didn’t even ask me, “What’s wrong with you?” He said, “OK, I’m going to give you meds and they’re going to help you sleep and they’re going to relax you.” I said “OK.” I didn’t stay with him for even two minutes.

I walked out and my husband said, “What did he say?” Because I was really bad. I would wake up, literally choke, couldn’t breathe…. I said, “He gave me meds.” And my husband took the prescription and ripped it in front of me and said, “You are never ever going to need these medications. You’re going to get drugged with them or whatever. We’ll get through this.”

Such a brief consultation did not allow a comprehensive evaluation, or in fact, any evaluation at all, as Jasmina was not asked to describe her situation or outline any symptoms.

Consequently, no medications could have been appropriately prescribed, although some types of medication may have been efficacious, especially in the short term (Rechtman, 2009). The brevity of this consultation may have aroused the husband’s concerns that account for his subsequent dismissal of the psychiatrist’s strategy. This experience highlights questions about the dominance of the biomedical model as the preferred approach for the ‘treatment’ of
suffering. Sadly, it was not thought relevant to ask the patient to recount her story, so that she could detail her distressing difficulties with breathing, particularly a choking sensation. Jasmina was denied the benefits that she would have assumed a professional, may have been able to offer her. These would conceivably include support and assurance that her breathing problems are very common amongst Bosnians, who have experienced trauma. In fact, choking is one of the defining features of adverse trauma responses for Bosnian refugees (Schulz, Huber, & Resick, 2006).

Such an example is in accord with research that has questioned the efficacy of counselling for refugee communities (Wani, 2008; Westoby, 2008). However, in spite of her unhelpful experience and cultural unfamiliarity with counselling, Jasmina did not express opposition to this per se, as she noted its potential for benefit;

"I don’t know anything about counselling. Who knows there is a counsellor to help you?"

Rather than being interpreted as ‘abnormal’, adverse consequences can alternatively be viewed as normal occurrences in light of the severe adversity that both had suffered. The pathologisation of the adverse effects that trauma has wrought in the lives of refugees does not elucidate the resilience wrought through perseverance that enabled them to escape and live in new environments. This renders a double disservice to refugees; it may contribute to alienation from their places of resettlement and increase negative perceptions of the wider community to refugees, as ‘damaged goods’, who will become a burden to Australia (Hutchinson & Dorsett, 2013).

In addition, suffering can be a catalyst for new understanding and growth, as well as for the encouragement of perseverance. Jasmina conveyed gratitude for the trauma, as its horror, grief and betrayal inexorably altered her life. The transformation of her worldview increased her understanding for other people;
Definitely grown. Oh, definitely, as a person, as a human being. It’s given me a different view and I try to make the different choices.

I’m really thankful for the experience. Because I like who am I today, but I don’t know if I would like myself if I stayed there and had that sort of mindset growing up. Because I don’t know if I would be as empathetic, as a giving and caring person today, if I didn’t go through what I went. So I think that’s what changed me, and I want to believe that it’s changed me for better, to become a better person. I’m grateful for the experience. It was tough, but I feel I survived.

Thankful for the simple things. I started, in the whole process I started appreciating different things. I started looking at life differently.

Shankari’s worldview altered following her husband’s assassination, in her quest to discover peace and meaning in life;

After my husband’s death, I went in for meditation and I learnt yoga in Sri Lanka. And so I still meditate, I practice yoga and I go to their sermons whenever possible. So I see myself in a different light now.

### 7.7.4 Resettlement as Focus and Catalyst for Life through Hope

The challenges faced by all participants in Australia are considerable. Mariam expressed it as,

It is still hard, the life here. It takes years to integrate into it.

These difficulties were exacerbated by the absence of family support, as family is the bedrock of her life. For Mariam,

When you have family it is easier but if you don’t have family here it is very hard.
All of the participants were separated from family, who had remained in their homelands or who had been resettled in other countries. Yaya’s family have been unsuccessful in their attempts for family unification;

Was really hard but because … my bigger sister and I really want to bring them [family] here, but it is really difficult. We try all the time to bring them, but we couldn’t.

This was compounded by their exile from their homelands that since antiquity has created anguish (Gorman, 1994). Mariam spoke of her attachment to her homeland;

Unforgettable country where I come from. It is still my country. I love it. And I hope one day I should go back.

However, in spite of this doubled disconnection, the women remained strong in their determination to take advantage of opportunities in Australia for the benefit of their families. Charuni expressed her appreciation for education and health facilities, as well as social and financial security that facilitate a secure foundation, in which to strive for hope objectives;

I really like Australia because it is a good place to live in. People are multicultural here and friendly. The environment here is really good for us. Education, good education here in Australia and health facilities are really good. I really like Australia government is supplying food for us as refugees and food for us and we receive benefit, if I’m not working we get benefit … so I really like life in Australia.

As there is “no running away now”, Yaya also aspires to pursue education and employment;

To go to school and go to work.

Such opportunities provide a milieu, in which objectives for the family can be established.

For Mariam,

I will have that hope, I have that for my future and especially now that I am grown up adult and a mother. I need to have hope for my children.
7.7.5 Analysis as Multi-stranded Helix

The references to hope for individual, family, and community/homeland can be productively represented by spirals that are inextricably interwoven with each other. Just as DNA receives nourishment from the protein ‘soup’ that enables it to grow (Watson, 1968), the multi-stranded helix of refugee lives can be described as being nurtured by hope (both hopefulness and hope objectives) that instils perseverance in life. If difficulties occur on one of the DNA spirals, a segment can be ‘unzipped’ and repaired that is replicated on the corresponding segment of the alternate spiral (Dalling, 2006, p.65; Lister, 2002, pp.10-13).

For participants, a triple spiral can represent the effects of experiences on an individual, family and community/homeland. The phrase ‘community/homeland’ is appropriate as the focus of homeland for participants was their community, especially as distinct ethnic groups existed in their countries. Communities in Australia were a partial representation of their homeland, although a distinction between the two was maintained. The influence of culture was entwined within and expressed through the significance of family and community/homeland. At times, culture and religion were subsumed into each other.

Adversity can be said to impact upon all strands of the triple spiral with each affecting the others. Fortuitously, this facilitates recovery, adaptation and growth, as strength can be gained from all three spirals that can be reflected on the other spirals. Just as the DNA’s capacity for repair is not unlimited, adversity may overwhelm individuals, families and communities/homelands. However, focus on and support from their fundamental strands of life enabled hopefulness and perseverance towards hope objectives.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

A synopsis of each of the hope, trauma and refugee discourses from the secondary research will be presented. This will highlight significant conclusions from the historical, philosophical, theological, psychological, health science and social work discussions, as well as implications for each discourse at the present time. From this background, the focal themes from the primary research with women from refugee communities will be outlined. These encompassed their conceptualisations of hope based on hopefulness from which emanated hope objectives. The utility of the Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework to facilitate understandings of hope within trauma will be outlined, with particular reference to its application to social work. As limitations to such understanding exist, the implications within a framework of social justice and human rights will be described.

8.1 Hope

The secondary research revealed that whilst hope has been identified with wishing, the differentiation between the two becomes distinct if both are viewed with relation to trauma. Wishing may disappear within the shadows of trauma, as its nebulous character cannot provide ontological security or germane objectives. Similarly, optimism with its emphasis on the certainty of positivity is incompatible with a reliance on hopefulness and hope objectives within trauma, as trauma by definition is characterized by negativity, uncertainty and chaos (Havel, 1990, p. 181).

The secondary research that focussed on the discussion of hope within philosophy, psychology, theology, health sciences and social work revealed a diversity of interpretations within and across each of these disciplines. Historically, different philosophical frameworks have interpreted hope within positivity, negativity or ambivalence. This has continued to the present time. Whilst Sartre (1975, p. 360) declared that only action provided the foundation

Unlike the certitude of optimism, hope requires uncertainty to flourish (Bloch (1986, p.285; 1996, p.17). This can provide the impetus for cognizance of challenges to be transformed into hope. Paradoxically then, trauma with its inherent and abundant uncertainty, can become a potent catalyst for hope. However, trauma both exterminates and creates hope. Trauma can powerfully ignite a spark of hope that defies extinguishment, as it was lit at great cost. Hope with a foundation of hopefulness from which emanates hope objectives will expedite this endeavour, as meaning and direction is provided for the quest for hope. This is fuelled by the propensity for perseverance that enables survival, adaptation and new life.

Trust has been described as being fundamental to hope (Erikson, 1994, p.33; Nunn, 1996; Marcel, 1962, p.60). In the same way that trauma challenges hope, so too does trauma challenge trust in ontological and cosmological security, the sense of self and interpersonal relationships (Allen, 2007; Herman, 1997, pp.51, 205; Neiman, 2002, p.9). If trust is interpreted as the acceptance of uncertainty, it can facilitate hope within the uncertainty of trauma. However, the assumption of trust as critical to hope implies that if trust is jeopardised, then this will extend to hope as well. Trust and mistrust characterises the refugee experience (Daniel & Knudson, 1995, p.1). The initial decision for flight is founded on mistrust of their homeland to offer life. Simultaneously, there is trust that countries of hope will offer life. However, within these countries, trust and mistrust towards refugees abound. Proffered trust expedites hope, whilst the denial of trust exacerbates hopelessness.
8.2 Trauma

The representation of individual and collective trauma from the secondary research reflected endeavours throughout history to interpret experience. The historical overview of understandings about trauma indicated that this has been transformed by fluctuating social, cultural, political, economic, religious and military imperatives since this was first recorded 4,000 years ago (Ben-Ezra, 2010; Kirmayer, 2007, p.4; Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). At the present time, there has been diminished dependence on religious and political meta-narratives for the interpretation of experience (Lyotard, 1984, pp.15, 37, 41). One consequence has been the supplanting of historians, theologians and authors by medical authorities in the interpretation of trauma (Ben-Ezra, 2010; Bennet, 2011; Bracken & Thomas, 2001; Thomas & Bracken, 2004).

This has ensnared trauma within a biomedical framework that has individualised, pathologised and objectified such experiences with a subsequent loss of understanding of the lived experience of trauma (Hanna, 2003, p.102; Phillips, 2007). Voices will be heard from within a restricted perspective (Wong, 2004). Consequently, strengths inherent within resilience have been minimised, whilst simultaneously emphasising vulnerability and fragility. Interpretation is focussed primarily on threat, rather than challenge to threat (Fournier, 2002). This is not conducive to the facilitation of hope within trauma, as emphasis is on negativity, rather than additionally encompassing positivity within negativity.

The individualisation of trauma further contributes to diminished understanding, as collective interpretations of hope within trauma are the default mode of interpretation for many cultures (Ajdukovic, 2004; Fernando, 2010, p.140; Weine et al., 2004). Interpretation of trauma within a framework that focuses on collective strengths, pathways for its facilitation and the resources required for its implementation will expedite hopefulness from which arises hope objectives. Consequently, it will encourage perseverance for the quest for
these objectives and the validation of hopefulness. Such is the Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework.

8.3 Refugees

The secondary research revealed that throughout history there has been discord between the quest for freedom by refugee communities and the quest for preservation of freedoms in the countries identified as offering hope by refugees. Citizens will continue to be transformed into refugees, as hope and trauma are endemic within life. Historical understandings informed by political, economic, social and religious imperatives have resulted in a multiplicity of perspectives. Within the countries of hope, citizens have demonstrated a polarity of opinions about this new class of citizen; negative when their own accepted worlds of hope are perceived to be threatened or positive when hope has encompassed the quest for human rights.

At the present time, controversy has arisen with the interpolation of these constraints within the agenda for universal human rights and social justice (Stevenson, 2005). Consequently, the refugee discourse can facilitate or compromise the experiences of hope for refugees and for citizens, as well as affirming or undermining international covenants governing human rights and the pursuit of social justice. For Australia, this has occasioned a weakened interpretation of its legal obligations towards asylum seekers and refugees under the UN Refugee Convention (Fraser, 2012; Palmer, 2009; Refugee Council of Australia, 2012; Triggs, 2013).

If refugee experiences of hope within trauma are interpreted through the lens of the biomedical trauma discourse and the restrictive cognitive theories of hope, understanding will be narrowed to these frameworks. Individuality and pathology will be emphasised rather than collectivity, cultural interpretation and strengths, resulting in not only a diminution but a
distortion of understanding as well (Watters, 2001; Westoby & Ingamells, 2010). Alternative frameworks of understanding will facilitate the hearing of voices from further perspectives. The restoration of experience in resettlement based on relevant hopefulness and congruent hope objectives will promote social justice for refugees (Westoby, 2009).

8.4 Women Speak as Victors of Trauma through Hope

Trauma threatens and terrifies but may be overcome through hope; a hope with a firm foundation offering meaning to life that provides significant objectives that can be achieved through tenacious perseverance and courage. Wounds of suffering may linger painfully but new life can prevail. The truths embedded within the narratives of the women, who participated in the research are borne from the grit of tumult, chaos, loss, fear and pain. It is these women, who are true victors. Their voices spoke with clarity and conviction in the midst of darkness and light. With courage born from hopefulness, these women fled from trauma only to confront more trauma in their quest for hope objectives for themselves and their families. In spite of severe obstacles, their perseverance endured, enabling the achievement of objectives and strengthening hopefulness.

8.5 Hope within Temporality

These refugee women embarked on journeys from their homelands facing a radically different life. It was one cleaved asunder from their known world but still founded on its past, as they walked in the present towards an unknown future. This past they carried and continue to carry with them. However, narratives are subject to ceaseless accumulation and interpretation, as reinterpretation and innovative experiences transform lives. Thus, there will be continuity and discontinuity within dynamic narratives over time.
The narratives indicated the utility of Heidegger’s (as cited in Bracken & Thomas, 2005, p.65) and Ricoeur’s (1990, p.60) conceptualisation of temporality as the interweaving of past, present and future. Whilst hope was located primarily within the future, the present and a present-future focus was also evident. However, all conceptualisations had a foundation in the past that influenced hopefulness, as well as present and future objectives. Consequently, hope can be beneficially interpreted within a unified framework of temporality encompassing reciprocal relationships between the past, present and the future.

8.6 Hermeneutic Phenomenological Analysis (HPA)

The analysis of the narratives using a HPA was advantageous, as it yielded further understanding about hope within trauma for refugee communities. Such a partnership may offer opportunities for further research that aims to advance understanding about abstract concepts within the experience of trauma, with particular relevance to cross-cultural communities. This is facilitated by the flexibility inherent within HPA, as it is not reliant upon standardised measures that may have uncertain validity, especially within cross-cultural communities. HPA facilitated a comprehensive analysis of narratives, as the overall integrity of narratives was maintained, and individual themes within narratives and focal themes across narratives were explicated.

8.7 Convergence and Divergence within Narratives

Whilst narratives are the building blocks of life (Bruner, 1990, p.45), voices need to be heard to create this life and to be created by it. Participants willingly shared their narratives, as they wanted to give voice to their stories of survival, suffering and growth through trauma and opportunity. They shared their lives. A multiplicity of unique journeys was represented within these narratives that are indicative of the diversity within refugee
communities (Eastmond, 2007). However, similarities across the narratives were also in evidence, as participants shared bonds of suffering and overcoming through analogous challenges and opportunities.

8.7.1 Hope as Hopefulness and Hope Objectives

HPA yielded understandings about hope that were congruent with the dichotomous philosophical perspective of hope that delineated hope both as a sense of hopefulness and hope objectives with reinforcement of both through reciprocal relationships (Dewey, 1929; Freire, 1970; Godfrey, 1987; Marcel, 1965). However, the narratives in this research further revealed that despite cultural diversity, the family, rather than the individual, was the lens through which interpretations of hope were primarily formulated. The family represented the foundational principle for the formation of hopefulness, from which emanated hope objectives with a focus on the wellbeing of the family. Additionally, it revealed the potency of hope through relationship (Bloch, 1996, p.108).

Some disparity in understandings about hopefulness was evident, as different religious frameworks were significant for the determination of meaningfulness. However, this did not result in diverse hope objectives that were characterised by similarity across narratives. These focussed on the present and future welfare of the family, with an emphasis on wellbeing, education, employment and housing. The critical importance of perseverance was emphasised, as this was the facilitator of reciprocity between hopefulness and hope objectives. Unrelenting adversity was faced with courage and perseverance emanating from a firm foundation of hope as hopefulness based on meaningfulness and significant hope objectives that interrelated with each other, informing and supporting each other.
8.7.2 Hope within Positivity and Rationality for Action

Hope was not perceived by participants within ambiguity (Aristotle as cited in Scott, 2000) or negativity (Nietzsche, 2004, p.45; Sartre, 1975, pp.357-359), as it was not confined to wishes and dreams founded in unreality. The foundation for life was hope within reality, as its significance and potency resided in the battle between life and death or at the very least, between death and quasi-life, entrapped by enduring trauma with few opportunities for transformation. Thus, it was critical to their survival, perseverance and adaptation to a foreign land. The seriousness of the struggle demanded rationality within hope. The decision to become a refugee was grounded within reason. Remaining expedited death. Flight expedited survival. However, hope provided the significance, impetus and strength for flight and adaptation. Thus, hope and reason were inextricably interwoven (Bloch, 1986, p.1367).

Hope without action cannot thrive (Freire, 2004, p.2). Hope inspires action whilst action sustains hope within a reciprocal relationship. Opportunities arose for participants as a consequence of their consistent actions within hope in their homelands, camps and Australia. Struggle, disillusionment and loss all ensued but hope enabled participants to walk forward. Fulfilment of objectives through their initiatives reinforced their hope for striving into the future.

8.7.3 Hope through Perseverance within Uncertainty

The assertion that hope supplies strength and motivation to keep walking towards new life was clearly demonstrated by the participants (Freire, 1998a, p.69). The requirements for uncertainty and opportunity for the growth of hope by Bloch (1986, p.285) was similarly supported. Uncertainty dominated participants’ experiences in their homelands, flight, camps and resettlement, as they walked towards opportunities. However, uncertainty without opportunity decimates hope. In 2013, opportunities and uncertainty for potential refugees in
Australia have been much diminished, as applications for family reunion by refugees, who arrived by sea, have effectively been cancelled (Australian Government, 2013b; Cowie & Medhora, 2014) and no asylum seeker arriving by sea will now be allowed to request asylum; “No way. They will not make Australia home” (Australian Government, 2014b).

8.7.4 Trauma in Homelands, Places of Refuge and Australia

The family was the focal principle for the interpretation of trauma in their homelands, flight, places of refuge and resettlement. This has congruence with research that has highlighted the fundamental role of family for the interpretation of trauma for refugee communities, including Weine et al., (2004). Understandings about trauma bore similarities, as they focussed on the loss of family, community and homeland. War, illness, betrayal, and inadequacy of life necessities, such as water, food and medicine, were all implicated as agents of trauma. The participants’ understandings about trauma encompassed a broader definition of trauma than that of DSM-5 (APA, 2013). The death of family was not only interpreted as trauma with reference to violence, but included expected death through illness and unexpected death through inadequate medical treatment. This understanding has congruence with the family being a significant interpretative lens for experiences.

Additionally, trauma referred to grief over the loss of community, physically and emotionally. Communities were decimated by war through death and flight. The sense of belonging to a community was also shattered by betrayal by fellow members for several participants. Both interpreted this perfidy as traumatic, as trust in their communities was broken. Further, exile was frequently depicted as a source of continuing sorrow due to the unfathomable chasm between an individual and homeland (Said, 2001, p.173). As much as participants appreciated the opportunities offered by Australia, it was not referred to by any
as ‘home.’ In spite of this, participants acknowledged that it was imperative for their children to become in Mariam’s words, “like Aussies”.

8.8 Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework (HSEF)

Trauma conveys messages replete with ambiguity and opacity that complicates its interpretation. In addition, trauma creates dis-order that resists categorisation into ordered ‘disorders’. Its web of chaos and complexity reflects multi-stranded and interdependent relationships of causation and consequence that extend beyond the individual to encompass family, community, nation and the world. Comprehension and response will be dependent on a diversity of interpretations emanating from the individual and beyond that will fluctuate as a result of reciprocal interactions.

The HSEF facilitates understanding of ‘Being-in-the-World’, as both beneficial and deleterious influences can be identified. Strengths can be encouraged whilst prejudices can be challenged (Marlowe & Adamson, 2011). This can advance social justice and the implementation of human rights that, in turn, promotes hopefulness and the attainment of hope objectives. Social justice, human rights and hope are intimately entwined. The denial of one results in the denial of the other. Conversely, the protection of one facilitates the other. Hope withers if human rights are shunned but will flourish when they are accorded applicability to all.

In the same way that the ecology of the physical environment requires respect of diversity for survival, so too does the social ecology of humanity. Diversity enables, enriches and ultimately brings life. Uniformity stultifies, restricts and ultimately brings death. The encouragement of diversity interprets all behaviour through the lens of normality, whereas a pathology framework divides humanity into the acceptance of the normal and rejection of the abnormal. Some participants shared experiences that a biomedical model would have
identified as abnormal. Notwithstanding the distress caused to the women, such experiences are explicable within their life stories and thus can be interpreted within normality. It is when the behaviour of an individual or a community threatens the right of another to exist, be respected or flourish that “Enough. No more!” can be uttered. This should not be applicable to behaviour that is just inexplicable to some communities or differs from widely accepted conventions. The crux and criteria should be mutual acceptance and respect. In the words of Charuni, “We should respect each other. And forget about the colour.”

8.9 Listening within Silence

Silence can represent a potent icon of hope, as voices can be heard that produce understanding issuing forth with constructive and empowering response (Ricoeur, 2004, p.449). In turn, this can lay the foundation for beneficial social policy and practice by health professionals. However, silence can mute voices, whilst hearing within predetermined frameworks assumes superiority and imposes dominance over others. This inevitably results in the imprisonment and denial of fundamental human rights. Such is the case with asylum seekers. Voices of despair and hope will not be heard if they are denied the opportunity to apply for refugee status in Australia. This militant perspective has not heeded the voices of former asylum seekers, now refugees, who have successfully resettled and who contribute significantly in a multiplicity of ways to their new country and to their homelands (Hugo, 2011; Parsons, 2013). Denigration of the refugee experience risks increasing disbelief and mistrust towards refugee communities. As narratives constitute our lives, they possess the power and potency to transform the life of the narrator and the life of the listener. As Jasmina poignantly recounted about refugees; “It’s their stories. They touched my heart.”
8.10 Tensions within Refugee Discourse

Asylum seekers as potential refugees and refugees are subject to conflicting interpretations in Australia. On the one hand, they are viewed as communities in crisis, whose human rights are in jeopardy. On the other, they are interpreted as criminals, who choose to leave their homelands for economic and social advantage. The participants in this research indicated compelling reasons to dispute this allegation. Bonds of family, community and culture mitigate the aspiration to leave homelands wherein their Being is defined. It is only when survival was subjected to enduring threat that flight was chosen as the option to more likely secure a future for the individual and family.

The history of trauma, hope and refugee communities continues. They have never been static and will continue to progress, subject to alteration that can be of harm or benefit to refugees and the wider Australian community. As refugees represent communities with enduring experiences of trauma and hope that has compelled their escape, they have much to share of hope within trauma. Herein lies the potential for constructive debate as refugees will exist, as long as trauma and hope exist.

8.11 Application to Social Work

Social workers, along with other health professionals, have the privilege of witnessing the survival and transformation of individuals and communities, who have experienced trauma. Hope has been deemed to be integral to life. Consequently, the encouragement of the growth of hope within social work is paramount. However, understandings about hope \textit{per se} have rarely received focussed attention in social work, although it is an assumption of engagement with individuals, families and communities, advocacy for social policy, research and education. What is the purpose for these endeavours if there are not rationales and objectives for each one?
As hope has been shown to be characterized by hopefulness and hope objectives that are both mediated by perseverance, all need to be addressed for the facilitation of hope. However, such consideration will differ within diverse social, cultural and religious environments. In particular, the importance of individual and collective orientations of hope necessitates acknowledgement. Additionally, as understandings about hope are dynamic, recognition is required that these may be transformed through adaptation and growth in response to life experiences, especially trauma.

Understandings concerning hope will be promoted by the application of frameworks that enhance awareness of the foundation for hopefulness and the concomitant hope objectives. Perspectives with the assumption of hope and strengths rather than pathology will be invaluable in this task. Furthermore, models that enable interpretation of the individual within their multiple social ecological environments will be advantageous, so that cultural and social differences can be identified, as well as the strengths present and resources required. The Hermeneutic Social Ecological Framework has the potential to fulfil this purpose.

8.12 Voices of Hope through Whispers and Echoes

Understanding hope within trauma is fraught with a multiplicity of challenges. However, if we do not seek, we will not find. Socrates (c.469 BC - 399BC/2003) presented encouragement from 2,000 years ago for this quest, when he emphasised that all important endeavours encompass difficulty. If a journey for truths about hope within trauma is characterised as a continuing and incomplete conversation, rather than an ultimate destination, there remains the potential for hope to flourish anew in the future. Hope challenges all of us to listen for the whispers and echoes through the shadows and reflections of trauma within our own lives and that of our neighbour.
Whilst this thesis has addressed the former limitation of primary research examining directly the conceptualisation of hope for refugee communities and augmented understandings of hope, trauma and refugees through the secondary research, these both represent whispers and echoes through shadows and reflections. Albeit within whispers of understanding through life’s shadows, hope can be acknowledged as fundamental for life. This will be even further diminished if hope is founded on wishful cognitions with magical potency, rather than in reality.

Hope gives life and proceeds from life when life proceeds as usual. When trauma intervenes, as is inevitable, hope will be further refined through the fires of adversity. Hope can shine with significance through the shadows of trauma. Nonetheless, interpretations can only be whispers, being clothed in the ambiguity, paradox and complexity inherent within trauma (Foster, 2012; Phillips, 2007). Indeed, some aspects of these experiences will defy comprehension (Achino-Loeb, 2006, p.12; Tallis, 1998, p.11). Understanding is further circumscribed by ambiguity and incomprehensibility, as it emanates from divergent frameworks of ontological and cosmological security to produce diverse characterisations. This is especially true for cross-cultural research, as preconceptions from specific cultural heritages are coalesced into one’s Being from infancy. Thus, respect for difference is paramount.

Moreover, such understandings are subject to continual transformation, as they are subject to dynamic and reciprocal processes between the individual and social ecological relationships. This is in response to fluctuating circumstances that constitute threats, challenges and opportunities. These continuously reinforce, augment, diminish, eliminate and modify interpretations as Being-in-the-World cannot be static within life.

As trauma challenges hope, this necessitates a firm foundation that can withstand onslaughts against hopefulness and the loss of hope objectives. Magical thinking and hope
solely conceptualised as goals can be expected to collapse in the face of trauma. However, hope as hopefulness and hope objectives inspire perseverance that, in turn, sustains hope. This is hope that can resonate creatively and innovatively through the echoes of shared humanity.

8.13 Repudiation and Facilitation of Hope for Refugee and Citizen

Hope for refugee communities are confronted by crises in many countries at the present time. Not only does severe and continuing trauma compel flight from homelands, but restrictive and punitive policies within countries of refuge deny hope. Such rejection also negatively impacts upon the population at large, as nations refute basic human rights and are in jeopardy of contravening international law and international conventions to which they are signatories. The indivisible bonds of humanity are repudiated when humanity is divided into those who are acceptable and those who are excluded. Refugees are the creation of hope for survival within trauma and a future with opportunities. It is not criminal to live within hope. When refugees are welcomed and valued, they and the receiving nation both become beneficiaries. Respect is given to humanity, fear of the Other is diminished and nations benefit from the social, cultural and economic contributions of newcomers.

Acceptance and respect for all communities not only creates challenges but also opportunities of hope for all citizens. It extends the inalienable right to human dignity and hope from citizen to refugee and in turn reinforces the rights of citizens to be recipients of this hope. The refugee women in this research reflected truths of the potency of this hope in the midst of trauma. With strength, purpose and perseverance they have walked within life created from the interwoven threads of hope within trauma. They have declared that their families have a right to life founded on respect, rather than ignominy and prejudice. These
women shine as symbols of hope through the blackness of trauma for themselves and for each of us.

From “always war” (Vasikari), “losing families” (Mariam) and “no food to eat” (Yaya), so “you can’t be able to stay” (Yaya), as “you lost your country” (Fazilah), so they “walk every day, every day” (Sora), though “you are just lost in transition” (Jasmina), and “I don’t know how I survived” (Sora), but with “the strength in my heart and faith hoping that I will have something good in the future” (Fazilah), to “life is beautiful in Australia”(Fazilah), although as “everything was new to me” (Shankari), “I am really struggling but I have that hope that in the future my children will get a better life” (Charuni), as “family is everything” (Jasmina), “we need to get integrated for our children, we cannot chain them” (Mariam) and “what keeps me going now is to rediscover myself” (Shankari), as “hope means a life free of fear and life with personal freedom” (Shankari). This odyssey only transpired as each woman persevered with courage and purpose,

A strong heart. You have to be strong and keep going. I will do it, I will do it. One day you will get something good in your life. No, never, never give up. Strong, strong heart. Keep going, keep going until you did it (Yaya).
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APPENDIX A

ETHICS COMMITTEE LETTER OF APPROVAL

RESEARCH INTEGRITY
Human Research Ethics Committee
Web: http://sydney.edu.au/ethics/
Email: m.humanethics@sydney.edu.au

Address for all correspondence:
Level 6, Jane Foss Russell Building - G02
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA

Ref: [SA/KFG]

11 August 2011

Professor Barbara Fawcett
Social Work & Policy Studies
Faculty of Education & Social Work
Education Building – A35
The University of Sydney
Email: barbara.fawcett@sydney.edu.au

Dear Prof Fawcett

Thank you for your correspondence received 8 August 2011 addressing comments made to you by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

On 10 August 2011 the Executive of the HREC considered this information and approved the protocol entitled “The role of hope within the experience of trauma in a refugee community”.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Protocol No.: 08-2011 / 13894
Approval Period: August 2011 – August 2012
Annual Report Due: 31 August 2012
Authorised Personnel: Professor Barbara Fawcett
Ms Susannah Tobin
Documents Approved: Invitation Letter (version 1, 31/07/2011)
Participant Information Statement (version 2, 31/07/2011)
Participant Consent Form (version 1, 12/05/2011)
Questions for Qualitative Narrative Interviews (version 1, 12/05/2011)
Safety Protocol (version 1, 12/05/2011)
Chief Investigator / Supervisor’s responsibilities to ensure that:

1. All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

2. All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

3. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms and provide these to the HREC on request.

4. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

5. All research participants are to be provided with a Participant Information Statement and Consent Form, unless otherwise agreed by the Committee. The following statement must appear on the bottom of the Participant Information Statement: Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Human Ethics, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); + 61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

6. Any changes to the protocol including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC by submitting a Modification Form before the research project can proceed. Please refer to the website at http://sydney.edu.au/research_support/ethics/human/forms to download a copy of the Modification Form.

7. A Completion Report should be provided to the Human Research Ethics Committee at the completion of the Project.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

S. J. Assinder

Dr Stephen Assinder
Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

cc: Susannah Tobin
slob7714@uni.sydney.edu.au

Human Ethics Secretariat:
Dr Margaret Faedo
T: +61 2 8627 8176
E: margaret.faedo@sydney.edu.au

Ms Karen Greer
T: +61 2 8627 8171
E: karen.greer@sydney.edu.au

Ms Patricia Engelmann
T: +61 2 8627 8172
E: patricia.engelmann@sydney.edu.au

Ms Kala Reinam
T: +61 2 8627 8173
E: kala.reinam@sydney.edu.au
THE ROLE OF HOPE WITHIN THE EXPERIENCE OF TRAUMA IN A REFUGEE COMMUNITY

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is the study about?

The aim of the study is to explore the role played by hope for women from refugee communities, as they survive and cope with adversity. The objectives of this project are to provide an opportunity for those interested in participation to share their narratives and to increase knowledge in this area.

(2) Who is carrying out the study?

The study is being conducted by Susannah Tobin and will form the basis for the degree of PhD at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Prof. Barbara Fawcett, Professor of Social Work and Policy Studies at the University of Sydney.

(3) What does the study involve?

You will be asked to share your story in an interview. This will focus on your ideas about the role played by hope within your experiences of trauma. As this may cause you some distress, you may stop the interview at any time and there will be an opportunity for you to talk about any concerns that you have at the end of each interview. Additionally, you will be given the names of organisations that may be able to assist you, if you are experiencing distress. These are the Westmead Traumatic Stress Clinic, Ph.98457979, and STARTTS (NSW Service
for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) email startts@ss wahs.nsw.gov.au or Ph.97941900. Both of these offer counselling services for refugees at no cost and do not require a referral. The interviews will be audio-taped so that your story can be analysed accurately. You will be given the opportunity to check that the written account of your narrative is correct and to change or remove details if you would like to.

(4) **How much time will the study take?**

There will be two interviews that will each last for about one hour. These will take place at a convenient and appropriate community centre in your area.

(5) **Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with The University of Sydney. You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study. You may withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason and the information that you have given will be destroyed.

(6) **Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the two researchers will have access to information about individual participants. A pseudonym (different name) will be given to each participant to ensure confidentiality about individual information. All of the interview recordings and transcripts will be kept securely in Prof Fawcett’s office at the University of Sydney. These will be stored for 7 years, after which time they will be destroyed. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

(7) **Will the study benefit me?**

You may find it helpful to share parts of your story with another person. In addition, you will be given a copy of your own narrative to keep.

(8) **Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes, you can tell others about this project.
(9) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?

When you have read this information, Susannah Tobin will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Prof. Barbara Fawcett, Ph.90369316 or email barbara.fawcett@sydney.edu.au or Susannah Tobin, Ph.90316741 or email stob7714@uni.sydney.edu.au

(10) What if I have a complaint or any concerns?

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Faculty of Education
and Social Work

ABN 15 211 513 464

Room 743
Education and Social Work A35
The University of Sydney
NSW 2006 AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 90369316
Facsimile: +61 2 93513783
barbara.fawcett@sydney.edu.au
http://www.usyd.edu.au/

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, .................................................................[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

TITLE:  The Role of Hope in the Experience of Trauma in a Refugee Community

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

3. I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.

4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential and no information about me will be used in any way that reveals my identity.

5. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.
6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

7. I consent to: –
   i) Audio-taping YES ☐ NO ☐
   ii) Receiving Feedback YES ☐ NO ☐

   If you answered YES to the “Receiving Feedback Question”, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

   **Feedback Option**

   **Address:**
   ________________________________
   ________________________________

   **Email:**
   ________________________________

Signed: ........................................................................................................................................

Name: ........................................................................................................................................

Date: ........................................................................................................................................
APPENDIX D

QUESTIONS FOR QUALITATIVE NARRATIVE INTERVIEWS

Participants were asked an initial question: “Could you please tell me about your life in your homeland and your journey to Australia?”

At appropriate times during the interview, more focussed questions encouraged the participants to expand and clarify their understanding of ‘hope’ and ‘trauma’. These included:

- Could you please tell me about your ideas of hope?
- What are the important goals in your life?
- What gives your life meaning?
- What were the most difficult experiences for you?
- How did you cope with the difficulties in your life?