

The Strength of the Mamas: Creating and Living in a World of Wonder,
Dignity, and Freedom

by
Christy Reed

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Department of Peace and Conflict Studies

University of Manitoba
Winnipeg

Abstract

Mamas in Melanesia are strong. This study explores the way that a group of 18 women, known as “Mamas” in a neighborhood in Melanesia find strength. The study was a qualitative study conducted over a year of intensive research and over an ongoing period of 12 years of relationship with the community. The Mamas’ stories of strength are recorded. They find strength in a spirit of *can*-ness, in the process of striving with all that you are to overcome, and hard work. Their *can*-ness and their striving carry them through unbearable hardship and pain. They share their dreams and visions where they find strength, and the adventures of their experiences of travel. This study concludes with a celebration of the way that Melanesian Mamas are “Guardians of Life,” constantly creating celebrations and banquets for their community, even under conditions of overarching violence.

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Dedication

To my Mom.

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Chapter 1: Introducing the Strength of Papuan Mamas

If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, all alone, these together ought to be able to turn it back and get it right side up again, and now they is asking to do. (Sojourner Truth, 1875, p. 135)

Breath assures an ongoing set of relationships that is open, and its connection to speaking, telling, praying, and witnessing only assures the power of story to decolonize spatial discourses by reminding of the connections people have to each other and the life-giving force at work. (Goeman, 2009, p. 187)

Women want genuine freedom: to be able to laugh, move, play, and not be afraid.
—Alama Mirino, Papuan Woman Activist

When I first arrived in the Land of West Papua, I knew little about the sustained violence against indigenous Papuans carried out by the Indonesian military. I only witnessed the laughter, the singing, the neighbourhood gossip, and the evening times of tea and of stories. The stories of this violence were hidden, whispered in darkened rooms, and silenced by a ban on international press. Each day, as the glow of evening fell over the roaring motorcycles on the street where I lived, my neighbors would welcome me to their porches, and we would sit in the waning light, watching traffic, sipping sweet tea, and telling stories.

The stories were of the neighborhood at first. Stories of Mama Koinonia's eccentric husband. Of the feud between Mama Warinuri and Papa Kolala. Of Anita's teaching career. Each evening, it seemed, the stories were the same, and soon I found myself lulled by familiar tales told and retold. But as the darkness deepened and my time there lengthened, new layers of the same stories emerged.

Papa Kolala's daughter Delila had been shot when soldiers opened fire on the campus in 2002. She was injured, but survived, and Papa Kolala struggled to support Delila and her

children. It was this stress that fueled his feud with Mama Warinuri. Mama Koinonia's husband was not always eccentric, my neighbors told me. He was once a brilliant and courageous preacher, always speaking in defense of his congregation members who were arrested and tortured by the Indonesian military. But after he returned from months of torture, Anita whispered, he was never quite the same. Mama Koinonia laughs now at his antics, but her laughter hides anguish.

As the evening deepened, the stories also deepened, and under the covering darkness, Mama Koinonia leaned over and told me, "Julian, we give you these stories for a reason" (personal communication, March 30, 2007). But I alone cannot tell the stories. It is those who own the stories who can tell them most effectively, and so I attempt in this study to work together with my friends to explore and celebrate together the stories and practices of hope and of dignity present in their never-silent voices.

What Happened

In this study, I asked women in a neighborhood in Lincoln City in Indonesia's easternmost province of Papua, "Where do you find strength?" They shared their stories and lives in response. In this introductory chapter, I will introduce why I chose to ask this question of women in Lincoln City and why I think the question and the answers of the Mamas matters. In the next chapter, I offer a more complete version of the context.

"Where do you find strength?" After living in a particular Lincoln City neighborhood on and off over a period of ten years, I witnessed an undeniable strength among Papuan women. In my proposal, I planned to ask them, "Where do you find strength?" Or, "How do you get through?" These were questions that I lived (see Rilke & Mood, 1994, p. 31) as I lived among

them. With these questions, I wanted to honor the strength of my participants, the Mamas as they are called, with whom I have lived and from whom I have learned.

Sometimes their answers would be surprising. Mama Matoa, so strong, who built her house alone—felling trees, hand-planing boards, planning and constructing so her two little children could have a home. Mama Matoa, who now, at 60, climbs and trims trees in the dark; who builds fires, and runs like the wind. When I asked her where she found the strength to do all these things, she looked at me and asked, “Am I strong, Julian?” (personal communication, February 20, 2014)

Others responded differently, however. Mama Delia says, “And so I say this, Papuan Mamas, they are strong. We are strong. So we must work. Don’t wait for others [...] God gives us strength” (personal communication, March 3, 2014). Or they say, like Ibu Georgina, “I get my strength from my ancestors, Julian” (personal communication, November 27, 2013). And others saying some variation of “Ah, Julian. I am strong from my mother, Julian. From my sister. From God.” I honor here the Mamas with my question, and they honor me with their responses.

A Valediction Affirming Stories

No, just the opposite, it is: I’d like to call them to the witness stand, knowing that what they say will always be bigger than the tapestry I’ll be trying to sew them into (Cixous, Derrida, & Bennington, 2001, p. 23)

In his article, “Life-Telling: Indigenous Oral Autobiography and the Performance of Relation,” Warren Cariou (2016) makes the statement that “All humans tell stories, and many of those stories are based upon their own lived experiences” (p. 314). He identifies this as “life-telling” (p. 314), noting, like Jessica Senehi (2002) does in her article “Constructive Storytelling: A Peace Process,” that it is something that everybody does. Cariou (2016) writes of the

importance of life-stories told, not merely life-stories written, particularly in Indigenous traditions which value oral culture. He writes,

For far too long we have considered storytelling through a Western lens that construes orality as the locus of a series of deficits such as fragility and unverifiability. [...] I argue that each example of life-telling is fundamentally a performance of cultural sovereignty and community self-determination. [...] Instead of relying upon external technologies like writing or recording to preserve the narrative, listeners can come to understand that their own bodies and spirits are the living link between the stories and future generations. As life-stories are shared over time, listeners become tellers, and the result is an ongoing collective performance of community identity. (p. 315)

This self-determination, dignity, reification, and transmission of culture under annihilative circumstances dwells in the stories of the Mamas.

Although I will delve more deeply into methodology in chapter five, I wanted to introduce here a valediction of stories and of voice and the power and dignity that this process brings. Specifically, within indigenous communities, the frame of dignity, Cheryl Duckworth (2011) argues, is powerful in addressing the “deeply dehumanizing conditions many indigenous communities find themselves in” (p. 2). She continues, “Dignity demands that one is able to define for oneself one’s destiny” (p. 13). One of the most profound indicators of strength by people living in an annihilative colonial discourse of cultural erasure (to be more fully discussed in chapters two and three) is the agency of voice, of creating and reifying reality and dignity through stories shared and given (see, among others, Anderson, 1983; Ong, 1987; Settee, 2011).

Since I arrived in Papua as a 25-year-old woman, I have been invited into the stories of a group of people experiencing systemic erasure of identity, land, language, and economic opportunity. They inducted me into storytelling and the vital importance of laughter. Within their stories was sadness, but most often a laughter that knew the darkness, reflecting Bill Harley’s assertion of “the ‘joy’ experienced in the storytelling interaction” (in Senehi, 2002, p. 53). I have visited other locations experiencing on-going conflict in the other regions of Southeast Asia, and

I have spoken to others who have lived in those communities for long periods of time and then visited Papua. One friend said to me, “Julian, everyone laughs so much!” I asked, “In your location, they don’t?” He responded, “No.” He and his friend over a period of a week’s visit in Papua, began to participate in the laughter and stories they found around them.

This is anecdotal. I have not conducted a study measuring incidences of laughter and joy across conflict zones. Nor am I qualified to claim that people in Papua are happier than people in other conflict situations. However, I have witnessed an intentional practice of laughter, of stories, of joyful gatherings on a daily and weekly basis. And Mama Koinonia, among others, has said, and I will quote her later in this dissertation, “You have to laugh, Julian. If you don’t laugh, you won’t survive” (personal conversation, August 20, 2005). Therefore, we tell stories, we listen to accounts recounted, often accounts of oppression, of discrimination experienced, with a twist at the end that brings laughter inspired by the ingenious and witty response of the Papuan telling the story.

Papuans, and specifically Mamas, hold and practice dignity through their stories. Writes James C. Scott (1990), “Short of killing its bearer, the human voice is irrepressible” (p. 163,). Inspired by the voices of the bearers of stories in Papua, the Mamas, this research explores the irrepressible agency, joy, and strength of the Mamas in maintaining survival and dignity in the ongoing cultural and physical violence of West Papua, Indonesia.

Women as the Guardians of life

I will not eat the darkness. (Detweiler, 1996)

“Women are the guardians of life.” Ibu Noreen teaches me as we sit on her front porch with the light off so students will not see us drinking wine. “These words must be spoken, Julian

(*ini harus di ungkapkan*). Men hold the power and women hold life” (personal communication, January 15, 2014). Mother, pastor, academic, teacher, sister, and friend, she continues:

My strength comes from my family. From my mother and my father. When we were being raised, it was our family.

My mother and my father they raised us to try to do what we wanted to do, but to always look out for others.

And if we failed at what we hoped to do, they guided us to be willing to live with our failure and to transform our failure.

They taught me to be strong in my principles, to hold to my principles, to be who I was. But also to care for others. Not to care for others above everything, but to care for others as far as we were able.

This means that we are not able to ignore the problem of Papuans and the plight of our people. Other people can, but we can't. I sometimes wish we could. (personal communication, January 15, 2014)

Ibu Noreen describes above the way in which she learned, from her family, to be a guardian of life. She practices that guardianship daily, creating and upholding, like many Mamas, structures of care and identity and feeding—keeping people alive is a vital component of being a guardian of life.

James Scott (2009) writes about the art of not being governed and explores non-state spaces—particularly Zomia, although he documents that these nonstate spaces are located all around the world. One of these spaces, I would argue is West New Guinea or West Papua. Even under Dutch colonialism, it was barely touched, and managed to avoid the most intensive period of colonization (see Gosden & Knowles, 2001). It was only after World War II, after the onset of the postcolonial movement, after Fanon, after the United Nations, after Holland lost Indonesia, that Papua became a model colony, Holland's only colony (Van der veur, 1963; Van der Veur, 1964). Holland worked to prove its post-colonial beneficence through training, education, medicine, schools, and treaties. Stories from Papuans recalling that time evidence a respect for Papuan people (Mama Koinonia, personal communication, September 2006).

Although Scott (2009) argues that current modern times of technology will increase the state's capacity to reach nonstate spaces, thus ending the liberatory, tuber-planting, oral cultures of zomiaesque systems of being; I live, and see others living lives across states because of these very technologies that Scott refers to, creating non-state communities across boundaries. While Scott argues for the geographic isolation necessary for nonstate spaces, there are locations where non-state identities construct a space, but not a physical space, where the state does not touch you, even as it tries very very hard and even has the power to kill. Such a space is Papua. I will discuss this in greater detail in chapter three.

It is in the naming and practicing of spaces of identity, dignity, and life where Papuan women hold power. They would not say this. They cannot say this. To even name the reality of the Papuan state would be rendered libelous, and to name their own power in conjunction to the state, to even acknowledge the state would be to admit its presence. They are above this. This is Papua. I would like to introduce the Papuan Mamas who participated in my study here. Their stories will appear in the following chapters.

What is a Mama?

She had not told me the secret of her every day, and nor had I seen it. (Cixous, Derrida, & Bennington, 2001, p. 37)

The first Mama I ever met is one of my participants. When I arrived on her terrace for tea after an all-night flight to Papua, I greeted her, trying to be polite, "Hallo, Ibu. Thank you for having me." I used the Indonesian word for Mrs. and Mother—*Ibu*. She immediately corrected me, "Mama," she said, "I am Mama" (Mama Tika, personal communication, July 7, 2005). She was the first person I had called Mama other than my own mother.

Over the weeks and months, I began to realize that "Ibu" was rarely used, and many women in the community were called and referred to as "Mama." Over my years there, I have

asked many times, “What is a ‘Mama’?” “How do you become a ‘Mama’?” “Why are some people ‘Ibu’ and not ‘Mama’?” Most often, I receive a sideways glance of exasperation that I take to mean, “You really should know this by now, Julian.” I get that look a lot.

But I have garnered a few things about what a Mama is. So here goes. The difference between Ibu and Mama: “Mama means someone who is close to us, Julian. Who will be there if we need something? An Ibu is distant” (Rev. Morgana, personal communication, May, 2014). “A Mama is someone who will feed the neighborhood children. Who has her door open” (Mama Koinonia, personal communication, August, 2005).

A Mama is someone who is called Mama. The neighborhood children, the young people, will eventually start calling a woman Mama when they feel she is close to them. That she is there for them, to listen, to share food, to offer comfort and advice (Rev. Morgana, personal communication, May 5, 2014). More formally speaking, a woman will also begin being called Mama when she has her first child. She will be referred to as Mama Esther (the mother of Esther) or Mama Barnabas (the mother of Barnabas). But the elders, the Mamas who are simply Mama eventually become known by their own names. Mama Koinonia. Mama Regina.

I began by being a *Nona* (“Miss” from Dutch). A formal title. I then became *Kakak* (older sister) to some, and *Tante* (Auntie) to others. But in my last year, I was surprised to realize that the neighbor children would, once in a while, call me Mama. They did it when I scowled at them for not sharing the swing with each other in the tree behind my house. They did it when I was organizing beach trips and they were helping me get ready. They did it when I brought them gifts from my travels. Come to think of it though, they did it most often when I was bossy.

There is a brilliant terrifying pastor, woman, professor. I say professor because the community where I lived and worked also included a post-secondary campus whose students

were also part of the community. The entire campus is terrified of her. She has the highest standard of any lecturer. She refuses to accept that Papua's underfunded and understaffed primary and secondary education system is an excuse for her students not to engage in critical thinking. Her name is spoken in an awed, terrified whisper, as if the students are afraid she will hear them and come over to demand that they analyze an Old Testament passage or explain Papuan feminism. She described to me how one time when the students had not done their reading and were not able to engage in discussion, she began yelling and lecturing them about what she required of them—what she believed they could do (Ibu Noreen, personal communication, April 11, 2013).

In front of others, her students call her "Ibu." They are too afraid to use "Mama" as it exhibits closeness and the more Indonesian title of "Ibu" is given to teachers. To show her respect, when they speak of her, they say "Ibu." But whenever I observe students speaking to her individually, they say "Mama." She has told them, "You are my children. That is why I am angry now. Because you are not doing everything that you can do. I am your Mama" (Ibu Noreen, personal communication, April 11, 2013).

The only people in Lincoln City whom I have ever seen challenging uncontrollably violent men are Mamas over 60. The whole neighborhood cowers as a man goes on a drunken rampage, and Mama Koinonia stalks towards him with a 2x4, yelling, "What do you think you are doing?! That is your child! She just wants to go to school! Put her down right now!" She doesn't even wave her 2x4. After a few steps in his direction, he has dropped his daughter, hung his head, and slinks towards the door.

I cannot tell you what a Mama is, because I cannot yet define it myself. But I hope the stories above begin to paint a picture of what it would be like to live among the Mamas. Below, I will share more about the specifics of the Mamas who participated in my research.

The Lincoln City¹ Mamas

The participants of this study consisted of most of the Mamas from the part of the church parish that covered the neighborhood where we lived. The neighborhood is a hillside revealing many worlds. Currently a post-secondary campus, formerly a World War II base for the Allied forces, corrugated metal, Quonset huts and cement pallets bear witness to its history. The houses travel down the hill, beginning at the main road. Many encounters happen while walking slowly up the hill in the boiling sun with heavy groceries to sell at a kiosk, or for supper. I sometimes give motorcycle rides up the hill, although after Mama Inaros and I tipped over into a pile of grass clippings, other Mamas are hesitant to ride with me.

There are other Mamas who are in the congregation, but this group of Mamas meets weekly, sings together, cooks together for church and community events, and throws their own Christmas parties. I was not able to interview all in the group as some were often away, but I interviewed the most present participants. Of the participants, three are lecturers at the college (two of these are pastors), two are teachers, one is a business woman, one is a midwife, one is a domestic helper/housekeeper, two run kiosks, and three work in the home (they are pastors' wives and often fulfill many of their husband's community roles). I have been a part of this group since August of 2005.

Each week, we saw each other as a group two to five times—on Wednesdays for the women's Bible study, and during the week for choir practice, volleyball, and planning

¹ All place and person names have been changed for participants privacy.

neighborhood and church events (these included women's aerobics/dance, cooking contest for the church, a sexual health seminar with a woman doctor from the neighborhood, beach trips, and neighborhood Christmas parties, to name a few). We also saw each other at church, but as part of a larger whole.

My research consisted of semi-structured interviews with each participant, and participation and learning in the group of women. Greetings have been given, to you who will read this, from Mama Tika, from Mama Josefina, from Mama Regina, specifically, "Hello to them, may our words give them strength" (Mama Tika, personal communication, January 17, 2014). Before we delve into stories, dreams, sadness, and laughter, here are some small tellings about who the Mamas are. They are written by me with wonder and gratitude, and not at all objectively.

Walk Like a Woman: The Mamas Introduced

Research is a tricky thing. Even more so, empowering research. Violence is a bodily act (see, among others, Cavanaugh, 2007) and empowerment is also revealed in the body. I would like to address here, not walking like a man, but walking like a woman. When I was in high school, we did a dance to the song "Walk Like a Man" (Crew & Gaudia, 1963). Our class consisted of eight women and one man. We swaggered and strutted, walking powerfully because we were walking like men. When I left Papua, I found that I walked differently. I strutted, with purpose, with my head held high. Men whom, before, I may have been afraid of, moved away from me on the street. My body had started to change. Living with the Mamas, I learned how to carry myself with power. I walked like a Mama. I will introduce to you in this section the Mamas who taught me to be strong.

Ibu Georgina is about four feet, eight inches tall. One of Papua's first women Ph.D.'s, she is the girls' dorm mother (and the boys wanted a mother, so she is theirs too). Ibu Georgina walks like she will change the world. In fact, she does change the world. Her shoulders straight, she moves quickly. But she is not thinking about conveying purpose. She is simply on a mission. People comment on her walk, and I ask others about it. Mama Tika pauses, and says, "She has her mother's walk. If you see her mother, you will see her walk is the same" (personal communication, February, 2014). She walks to the boys' dorm and tells them that they will get up and she will be doing room inspections and that if they have no clothes on she doesn't give a damn because she has seen it all before. They grow pale.

She tells me, "I find my strength in my ancestors, Julian, and in my faith. And with this strength, I find that I can help others and advise others" (Ibu Georgina, personal communication, November 27, 2013).

Mama Tika was the first person I ever called Mama. We sat on her terrace with dignitaries, and she fed us coffee and chocolate pudding—from her multi-level marketing brand. She told us how important it was to receive, to be hospitable, to be a guest.

Mama Tika lives to my left, in a house of three towers, with 30 people, aged two months to 75. Her sister, Mama Viki, tells me that they go through 10 kilograms of rice each day to feed everyone. Her home is more of a complex than a home. Beginning as a Quonset hut, she and her husband have added to it. First, a two-story cement structure in front, built by her nephew Jonah, a bearded man who wears red nail polish on one hand. On the bottom half is a store which sells selling coffee, potions, and snacks and is also an internet café.

It is an evolving, growing home. Like an organism, it is alive. Every time I come, something new has been added. Around a small palm tree next to the new kiosk/photocopy shop,

a table and bench are built—painted and carved by her nephew, Jonah, so that students can sit as they drink boxed chocolate milk, eat fried tofu, or drink a glass of water between classes. Every addition adds spaces for being. Mama tells me, “We are building another house, Julian. This time for Ophelia and her sisters” (personal communication, 2006). Behind the initial Quonset structure, her nephew built a second story out of wood, with a small balcony, looking over the current girls’ dorm, where her daughters live with aunts, and other girls who need homes.

A third house appeared at the very back, behind the ever-expanding kitchen/dining area, where the women of the house gather to watch TV each night. On the bottom was Mama Tika’s sister, Mama Viki’s apartment, who has cared for and raised Mama Tika’s children. The smoke from the boys’ dorm’s newly built kitchen blows in her window. Above her is Mama Tika’s oldest son, Ivan, his wife, and their three children. The children sleep often with Mama Viki below, washing her dishes and watching her TV. They call her Grandma.

There are always young men about: a nursing student who has lived there since he was 13, two tall nephews who run the photocopy shop, another relative who runs Mama Tika’s shop, and other young men—students and tour guides from the highlands who live in a row of rooms behind the garage, with soccer shoes stacked outside. Then there is Uncle Sylvester. He lives behind the final back wall of the complex but is still part of it. In the Tika family’s garden of fruit trees and sweet potatoes, Uncle Sylvester has created a home of corrugated tin, with carvings decorating an outdoor space and a park. He plants baby betel nut trees and cultivates *siri*² vines which twine up one of his trees. I walk by his home every time I go anywhere, greeting him and Mama Tika’s carpenter nephew who helps Uncle Sylvester make his park and home beautiful.

² A parasitic vine paired with betel nut for chewing. Called betel leaves in English.

Mama Tika has big meals, and sometimes invites the girls' dorm and the neighborhood to eat and celebrate various occasions. The meals are prepared by her daughters, daughter-in-law, sister, niece, and whomever else is living there at the time. To cook for 100 people is not rare.

Mama was raised on a small island outside a village, an island without sago³. Her mother was a fisherwoman and always had stored sago from the nearby island. Mama says her mother was one who loved. *Bin Syowi*⁴, a woman who provided for her village, who never turned anyone away without a meal or something to wear. Mama went to school in the city at an early age and lived with her oldest brother. She then went to university to become a midwife. She married Bapak Tika, a pastor, and they traveled around the island of Papua, being placed in varying locations until she came to her current house and began growing her home.

Mama Viki is Mama Tika's sister. She left her husband about 30 year ago and has lived with her sister since her sister's children were small, caring for them and raising them when their parents were away on church functions and business. She runs a kiosk, selling cold drinks and home-cooked snacks. Her *bakwan*⁵ are renowned in the community (my stomach rumbles as I think of them). They are made of green onions (called onion leaves), bean sprouts, and carrots, all fried in a garlicky spiced dough, dipped in a home-made hot sauce (once, unfortunately, her youngest grandnephew dropped the hot sauce onto himself! Mama rushed him into the bathroom and hosed his face off, worried that the spices had damaged his eyes. They had not).

I see Mama most often in the acts of preparing and selling food. In her kiosk, at 4 A.M., she begins preparing her bakwan. Her kitchen backs onto the garden next to my house, and I wake up to the smell of garlic frying. Sometimes in the early morning I peer out my kitchen

³ Sago is a palm that grows in swampy fresh water areas. It is an important food source in a number of South Pacific islands.

⁴ For a discussion of *Bin Syowi*, see Wospakrik & Reed, 2016.

⁵ Savory fritters made from flower, bean sprouts, garlic, carrots and green onions.

door, bleary-eyed, and Mama is standing in the garden, sweet potato leaves reaching to her calves, a knife in one hand. Even through my early morning haze, I am excited to see her, and I sleepily stumble in her direction. “Hi Mama!” I say enthusiastically. She looks at me, nods sagely, talks to me for a moment, and moves on. She often has a young woman with her, helping her reach the taller vegetables—the *sayur lili*⁶ and the siri leaves that climb up into the trees. These are young women who have come to the city but have lost their way. They are broken ones who stay with her—girls who have been kicked out of their dorms, or homes. They find refuge in her small set of rooms that Mama Tika built for her in the third tower of the house.

Mama Viki is known by others as a woman who is kind, almost too kind (*terlalu baik*). In addition to preparing food, the other role I see her in is with children. She tells me that, even though she has not had children of her body, she has eight or nine children who she has cared for. Mama Viki is the one that the children listen to. She is the one who goes seeking for three-year old Sandia when she wanders to my house.

When we have the women’s gatherings, even though Mama Viki works all day in the kiosk and cares for her great nieces and nephews, she comes with two large containers of freshly made bread and buckets filled with glasses for us all to drink from. Her feet pain her, and she struggles with gout, so she walks slowly down the well-worn mud path, over three small ditches, beside the church bathrooms, down around the corner of the church and up the stairs into the open-air church pavilion. Her presence is quiet, but when she speaks, people listen.

The community of Mamas loves and respects Mama Viki for her strength and her faith. Mama Koinonia says of her,

Yes, Mama Viki, she is a strong woman, she is kind (good of heart), her husband who married again because of the children. Because of children, you see. She is too much what the people of Biak call ‘*Syowi*’. ‘*Syowi*’, that is a woman who is kind (good of

⁶ *Sayur lili*, literally “Candle vegetable,” is a collection of thick whitish green stalks that can grow over 2.5 metres.

heart) like what before I said [...] and Mama Viki is also that way. She is a good person. In the way that she faced her husband. She did not divorce him, [...] but she, because [he was] her husband, she valued him until he died. Maybe there were those who came and asked her when she would let him go. There were many, but she [...] the Bible says until death. Then Achh! [Mama Koinonia laughs] Mama Viki. She valued her husband until finally he [...] until the deacons came and prayed, and he confessed, and it was finished. He died. She is a strong person. (personal conversation, March 25, 2014)

Syowi is one of the greatest compliments that can be given to a woman who is a guardian of life.

Mama Viki is the only living Mama I have ever heard it applied to (I have heard the Mamas discuss Mamas who had passed on as possessing *Syowi*).

Mama Regina. “Call me Regina” (personal conversation, January 19, 2014), she tells me as she sits at my dining room table. The rain is pouring, and I am boiling water as she calmly surveys my collection of teas. She is short, and her shirt reads, in pink sparkly letters, “Sexy Bitch.” Mama Regina is about 59. Never married, she has known Mama Koinonia since she was 13 years old when she lived with Mama Koinonia and her family when she was in junior high school.

When Mama Regina moved to Lincoln City, Mama Koinonia invited her to join our women’s group. Mama Regina is always the first to arrive at gatherings, perfectly coiffed and carrying her purse and her Bible. She is always present at the meetings -- at all events. She sits, watching the proceedings and relays wry observations under her breath. Mama Regina is trusted by all in the community to handle their money or their house keys or to help out during feasts or meals. She is known for her *keladi tumbuk*⁷, and is the first to arrive at Ibu Delia’s for the community cooking events.

Mama Regina’s prompt arrival for community cooking events reflects her identity as a “person who works (*orang yang kerja*)” (Mama Koinonia, personal communication, December,

⁷ A semi sweet dish made from pounded taro, shredded coconut, coconut milk, and palm sugar.

2013). She works hard and helps many people. She is proud of her work, and often she is the first to come to a cooking event and the last to leave. Mama Regina volunteers to help through working, but also receives pay for her work. If someone needs help for a large event, they will call her and then give her a payment for her help. As Mama is unmarried and without children, the normal safety nets of family are not as present for her, and through her hard work, she survives. Being unmarried in Papua is unusual, and Mama Koinonia tells me a bit about Mama Regina's history. When Mama Regina was a young woman,

She brought her beau to her older brother. But her brother beat the two of them until they were almost dead [Mama laughs]. Her brother was a harsh person [She laughs]. Mama Regina, but she accepted. Mama Regina made a promise that she wouldn't marry until her death. Now she lives outside, helping people [...]. Many. But she is a peaceful/calm person. Even if there are many burdens, she is calm. We are humble, humility it is needed. Our hearts must not be arrogant towards all, towards anyone. Mama Regina, if she comes here, I say, 'There is something I am cooking.' Then later, she cooks. She is brilliant at working. Now that I am older, I don't work properly anymore. I am too tired. (Mama Koinonia, personal communication, March 25, 2014)

Mama Regina uses her skills and her work ethic both to help her neighbors and also to make a living. She has crafted a way of surviving as an unmarried and childless woman in a society which is built around marriage and children and she is respected for this.

Mama Matoa⁸ is the woman I wrote about earlier in this introduction, who has built her own house from trees and who, when I asked her if she was strong, asked "Am I strong, Julian?" At first, I thought her question meant that she did not think she was strong, and I was confounded that a woman who built her house from scratch and provided for her children could think that she was not strong. But a deeper reading reveals a strength and a deep humility. Jessica Senehi reflects on Mama Matoa's question, "Am I strong?", writing,

⁸ All the names here are pseudonyms, but I use the name "Matoa" here because it is the name of the fruit tree that Mama often climbs to gather fruit for the community.

When she asked you if she was strong, I took that to mean something else, though I can't really articulate it. E.g., a combination of humility, an intimation regarding what you do you mean by strong as there can be different forms of strength, and a question about whether she is strong enough to be considered strong, in that she is strong enough to build a house, but not to do all the things she would want to do, and that are desperately needed, e.g., end the violence or transform power relations. So I was thinking there was tremendous nuance and iron in that question. (J. Senehi, personal communication, February 18, 2018)

Ibu Matoa attends the Mama gatherings and events, but as she has only been there a few years, the Mamas are still learning who she is. The inability to capture with words the quality and nuance of Mama Matoa's strength does not decrease the realization that she is strong. Mama Regina tells me that Mama Matoa is a true village woman. Stronger than the city Mamas. Mama Koinonia speaks of her.

Ibu Matoa, I am not yet really, eh, finally, she, sometimes, she doesn't control what she, ah! I, ah! Several times, I invited her to come. 'Here is *papeda*⁹. Let us eat!' But yes, truly, she is a widow, so I feel for her. She has a burden. We don't know, you see, what she has experienced. (personal communication, March 25, 2014)

This is what we do know. Mama Matoa moved from her coastal village into the Lincoln City neighborhood when her daughter came to go to university. She and her daughter live in a traditional house made of *gaba gaba*¹⁰ next to Mama Josefina's house. She helps Mama Josefina with the work around the house, caring for their pigs, gardening, and landscaping. Mama Matoa seems to be good at everything—gardening, clearing underbrush, climbing trees, playing volleyball, running, carrying heavy things, cooking. Mama Matoa tells me that she also drives a *Jonson*¹¹ with great ease and fishes expertly and successfully back in her village.

Mama Josefina is a teacher in her mid-fifties. Her husband is a professor at the college and also a pastor. She has one son and a niece who lives with her. Mama Josefina is quiet and

⁹ Sago pudding

¹⁰ The stalks of the sago leaves used to build a house.

¹¹ A wooden boat with an outboard motor.

often holds leadership positions in the church. She had an itinerant childhood as her mother died when she was two years old and her father remarried a woman who did not want her living with them. She was raised mostly by her grandmother with whom she traveled frequently around Papua.

Mama Koinonia says of Mama Josefina,

Ibu Josefina, I see she has a burden in her heart. She has begun to story it. Her burden is about Bapak [her husband]. She has never storied this for us about her burden. The difficult part is that if she holds onto that burden, it will become an illness. The most we can do is speak. But, ach! only if she wants to. (personal communication, March 25, 2014)

Mama Josefina, in the 13 years I have known her, has begun to story these burdens and participate more openly and joyfully in the Mama events and activities. She prepares healthy snacks for the Mamas when they worship, as she herself is diabetic and she arranges dancing in the volleyball court outside her home to get the Mamas to exercise (and laugh!).

Morgana is Mama Koinonia's daughter. She a pastor, professor, and mother, and is deeply trusted by the community. When many pastors and community leaders are perceived to use their positions to further their own prominence and are known as Mr. Rev. so-and-so, or Mrs. Rev. so-and-so, Morgana is known by everyone simply as Morgana. When there is a death, she is called because people know she will come, and she will sit with them and sing with them until morning. When there is a celebration, she is called because she laughs with those around her and tells good stories. When there is a child who has died, she is called because she is also a mother. When there is violence on campus, she is called because students know that she is fair.

Morgana is not often spoken of with lauded terms (although this does happen), not called to be a speaker at a big conference or gathering (although this also sometimes happens), not heralded as a great leader in the community (although she is). Not because she is not capable of

these things, but because she has consciously chosen and chooses every day to be, not apart, but together with the community and the students whom she serves. When there is pain or violence in the community—cultural or military violence or other forms of conflict, people call Morgana because they trust her, because she is one of them, and because they know that she loves them.

Morgana is in her early 40s and has two sons. She and her husband live with Mama and Bapak Koinonia and Morgana's sister-in-law and a niece and nephew.

Mama Delia is still in the transition between Ibu and Mama. She is Mama Koinonia's chosen successor for neighborhood Mama. Ibu Delia coordinates the women's meetings, visits the Mamas, hosts cooking for events in her kitchen, arranges volleyball games and choir practice, and keeps everyone abreast of what is going on and of what we should be doing. Even though I am not a very good cook, she summons me to her kitchen to join the Mamas in cooking.

Ibu Delia is the one who keeps us abreast of what funerals we should go to, who needs to be visited in the hospital, or who is sick and cannot leave their home and needs some food. She has a kiosk and bakes chocolate filled bread which sells out every morning before 9 am.

Ibu Delia has three daughters in college and a daughter and son in secondary school. They live in a wooden house that she and her husband and his relatives have built on stilts into the hillside. Their house looks out on the tops of trees. In the evenings, she and her family sit on their porch in the trees and watch the neighborhood go by, monitoring if anyone comes in to the neighborhood who might harm anyone. I cannot leave or enter my own home without going by them and often she invites me for a cup of tea or a piece of home-baked bread as I pass.

Ibu Delia is married to the brother of one of the other Mamas. He saw her in the village where she was a young woman in high school and fell in love with her beauty and her friendliness. He married her and brought her to the city. Her daughters are brave. They ride big

motorcycles and her youngest daughter beats up the boys. Her son always carries her groceries from the market for her.

Mama Koinonia says of Ibu Delia that she is “open, friendly, welcoming” (personal communication, November, 2013). She holds the community together.

Ibu Noreen is the terrifying, brilliant, pastor-professor-Mama I wrote of earlier. In her 50s now, Ibu Noreen lived an itinerating life with her educator father, her strong mother and her five brothers and sisters. Her family is important to her, and they inhabit most of her narratives. Ibu Noreen and her family are among the most educated in Papua and have used their education to serve their people. Because of this, she and her family are respected and loved.

Ibu Noreen is a private person, Mama Koinonia says, preferring the company of her siblings, her husband, and two daughters to wider neighborhood social events. Her students tell me, however, that she spends most of her time on campus so much of her Mama-ness comes in her interactions with her students. She is a gifted preacher and is often requested to speak at large events. Ibu Noreen tries to maintain the gravitas associated with pastors during her speaking, but she confides to the Mamas that she frequently moves herself almost to laughter during her sermons and experiences significant physical strain trying not to laugh.

Ibu Noreen is greatly loved at parties. She doesn't attend too often due to family and student commitments, but when she does come, her stories (often told in the traditional Papuan form of humorous stories called “*mop*” told in *Logat Papua*¹²) have most of those gathered rolling on the floor with laughter. She and Mama Warinuri don't attend the Mama's gatherings too often, but when they do, their story-jokes play off of each other, and we end up going home at midnight with sore bellies and slightly peed pants from laughing so hard.

¹² The Papuan dialect of Indonesian/Malay

Mama Bunia is a mother of five. Her husband was a pastor who, when he was doing his first year of pastoring in her village, heard her singing in church and fell in love. Mama Koinonia, who has known most people in the neighborhood for many years, tells me that Mama Bunia used to love to come to gatherings, to play volleyball, to laugh, and to tell stories. But over time, her husband grew more controlling, and the neighborhood saw less of her and her children.

Mama Bunia has struggled with an unknown debilitating illness for many years. She has recovered enough to walk in the year since I last saw her, and she can go to church now. She loves to sing in church, often with her daughters who are now grown. She always sings barefoot, like she did when she was a young woman when her husband fell in love with her.

Mama Koinonia says of her,

Ibu Bunia, actually, she is good and kind, yes. I have followed her life from when they first came here. Bapak. No.

She played volleyball amazingly! And she laughed!

Yes, Bapak Bunia [...], we see from where Bapak Bunia sits. He has to sit there [in the living room].

So if the rest of us want to come in and joke and laugh, we can't. Even when we worship at their house, always Bapak is watching us. We don't feel comfortable. Ah! [Mama laughs].

She is sick. She has been sick for so long. Going in and out of the hospital in Jakarta. Bapak brings her there.

She used to love to joke and to laugh. And she would eat with us [...]. [Mama] washes the clothes of the children and grandchildren. (Mama Koinonia, personal communication, March 25, 2014)

Mama Koinonia reflects on how Mama Bunia loved to laugh and joke, even within the constraints of her household. She later tells me that when Mama's children were small, her husband would lock them all in the house. They could not come out and play with all the other children. Mama Bunia's grown children live in her house and a house across from her. Two are married. Their husbands live there too. Two more have finished college and are working and her youngest daughter is just finishing college. They rarely leave the house.

Mama Kolala was one of my closest neighbors for my first three years in Papua. As I write this, Mama Kolala's husband has just passed away. He was in his 70's and had struggled with circulation and walking difficulty for the last three years. Almost all of Mama Kolala's stories tell of her husband. He was a pastor and later a teacher. He, like Ibu Noreen's father, itinerated around Papua while their 6 children were growing up, finally settling in Lincoln City. Mama tells story after story of her life with her husband and often her children as the central characters. Rarely does she speak about herself. But I gleaned some from the other Mamas.

Mama Koinonia knew Mama Kolala when their husbands were both posted in the same small town. She said that Mama Kolala was the most beautiful woman she had ever seen. And that Mama Kolala was painfully shy and quiet. Mama Kolala now can speak for 2 hours without stopping. I am glad.

In the last three to four years, Mama Kolala almost never leaves her house and yard. She tells me that if she gets beyond the campus gates (about 200 meters away), she has trouble breathing and has to come home. Because of this, she rarely attends women's or community gatherings. I spoke to her often because her family lived just up the hill from me when I first moved to Papua. They could see all the comings and goings from my house, and Mama always watched over me. Also, although she rarely left her home even then, she would send her daughters, and later her granddaughters, to take me to church, to show me the city, to invite me to her home. I later moved up the hill, but my route out of the neighborhood took me right in front of her porch where she sits drinking tea after doing her children's and grandchildren's laundry.

Mama Koinonia says that Mama Kolala gives most of her time and energy to her family. Between four and seven of her children live with her and her husband at any given time, and

those children's eight children live with them also. She cooks, cleans, and launders for all of them and is often ill from the hard work.

The little bit that Mama Kolala has told me about herself was of her life before her marriage. She spent her early childhood in what others call one of the most beautiful villages on the bay. She then was given to her Uncle and Aunt to raise and she moved to the city where she grew. Mama Koinonia tells me that Mama Kolala's beauty captured her husband's attention. A young pastor, he went to her Uncle and said, "I must marry your daughter." She was in her teens at the time. She herself does not mention her beauty, but she does tell me how she loved her hair. Her long beautiful hair—down to her hips. She smiles as she tells me of her village, and of caring for the flowers in her Uncle's garden. Her stories from after her marriage will appear in later chapters.

My friend Morgana texted to tell me that today Bapak Kolala, Mama Kolala's husband, is lying in the college pavilion, and all the students are with his body. Mama must be there too. According to tradition, she would be sitting at his head, with female relatives sitting near her, comforting her.

Mama Warinuri and her husband lived directly behind me when I first moved to Lincoln City, next to Mama Kolala and her family. Almost every evening, I would go up and have coffee on Mama Warinuri's terrace with Mama and Bapak and whichever guests or relatives were coming through. Mama loves to laugh. She is the only Papuan Mama I know who smokes. And she loves coffee, a drink more often reserved for men. Mama is now in her early 60's and is a primary school teacher. Her husband is a pastor and professor. She has four grown children and three grandchildren. And a tree kangaroo.

Mama is known for her contagious laughter and for her ability to tell good stories. She lives in her stories and so when she speaks, she herself is wherever she is speaking, and so we all can't help but go with her. Often in the evenings, she and Bapak will be telling stories of their past and talking over each other as they sputter and snort from laughing so hard.

Although this will be told more completely in the "Dreams and Stories of Dreams" chapter, like Mama Bunia, Mama Kolala, and Mama Delia, Mama Warinuri married her husband when she was a younger woman. His family and hers arranged the marriage. It was to be to her elder sister, but Bapak saw Mama Warinuri and found her beautiful. She was 17 years old. She did not want to marry him, but she was an orphan and her brothers insisted. After their marriage, Mama and Bapak lived in many places. They are living their old age in Lincoln City and all the neighborhood children call them *Tete* and *Nene*¹³ and the most popular place in the hood is their small kiosk which sells instant noodles and other goodies.

Mama is still teaching and loves being a grandmother to her grandchildren who often live with her. She still loves to laugh.

Ibu Loyana is a civil servant and a widow. She lives with her adult daughter (also a civil servant) and her granddaughter and their dogs. She formerly lived in the neighborhood, but now has built her own house (the previous house was a house provided by her husband's work at the university), and although she lives outside of our neighborhood, she continues to join us. Ibu Loyana drives a car and runs several businesses. She is an elder in the church and works to provide for her daughter and granddaughter so that they never need worry like she did when she was a child. She was left as a child when her mother married a Dutch man and went with him to Holland. She had to fend for herself for much of her youth and later life. This has shaped her

¹³ Grandma and Grandpa

commitment to work. She is a regular member of the women's group and is trusted by the church elders to get things done.

Mama Lula: The One Who is Not Here

There is a plague on guava trees in the greater Lincoln City area. The one in my neighbor's yard overlooking the valley, in the yard cemented so that it does not fall into the ravine where the pig poop goes, is now only a hole in the cement. The guava tree at Mama Kolala's, where a homemade swing hangs, is a brittle husk (but the swing still swings!). The guava tree at Mama Lula's house where her granddaughters used to sit and sing, is gone. But at Mama Lula's grave, the guava tree lives.

The strong, small, twisted guava tree grows from Mama's grave. To an island in a lake (like Avalon), Morgana and I went by boat. We searched, led by a man with one sandal, up and down the dusty hillside, a hillside where the Lula clan keep their dead. Mama's cross was broken, but there was a guava tree growing from her husband's grave, its roots also in hers. "Her suffering is over," Morgana says.

I first ever heard Mama Lula singing from the house next door. A grey house, paint faded, roof broken where the ancient mango tree had fallen on it. Only one chair remained intact on the terrace. A rusted metal bed frame was in the yard with children playing in it—a drunk man swaying on the torn cement of the porch. I was afraid, the first time I saw her house, which was next door to mine. And so were the neighborhood leaders who brought me to my house. They discouraged me from going there, instead telling me about all my other neighbors, of Bapak and Mama Warinuri, in the house behind, of Mama Koinonia, two houses down, and Mama Kolala, behind and to the right. But about these neighbors, right outside my kitchen door, they were silent.

I first ever heard her singing.

Her name was Mama Lula. I called her Mama. She is dead now. She starved to death. She was too proud to ask for food, says Mama Koinonia, her neighbor and her friend. It is from her that I know what dignity means. The story is a slow one, as stories come out. A story lived over years of being. I will put it in chronological order here as much as I can.

Mama Lula was from a village on an island in a lake. Her people, it is said, came from the mountains, specifically from a mountain they sometimes call mother—a blue mountain against the backdrop of the lake's waters. I could see the mother mountain from my house, and so, I think, could Mama Lula. Blue against the pink of sunrise and the orange of sunset. Mama mountain.

The Lulas were isolated, it seemed. Their house was devoid of color, unlike other houses in town. I asked Mama Koinonia why, and after Mama Lula had passed, she told me. There had been a curse upon their family, she said. Mama Lula had been entrusted to her older, male cousin's care until she was to be married. She was beautiful and he fell in love with her and she became pregnant. They were first cousins. Their parents were siblings of the same womb (*saudara kandung*). And so their family was cursed.

Her cousin/husband was brilliant and became the leader of the college. He had been a pastor and a lecturer before that. Inside the house, there is blue and red wallpaper, with one picture of her daughter in her volleyball uniform, serene and serious on the wall, above the height of my head. "They had cars," Mama Warinuri told me. And they were wealthy. But Bapak Lula died suddenly.

Other secret stories arose of him long after his death. Of his dismissal from the college for his excessive appreciation for young women students. Of the way he beat Soren, their son. Of

the way he took advantage of his beautiful young cousin, Mama Lula. But these stories I did not hear from Mama.

Mama Lula eulogized her husband to me with pride. *Bapak*, she called him. She began her stories with “When Bapak was still here...” When he died, they lost everything, even their rights to the house (an old Dutch house, or facsimile thereof), but they stayed in the house anyway. She lived in a room with French doors patched with plywood. These doors opened into the yard between our houses, and in the morning I would hear her singing. She could no longer read, because of cataracts and so she sang the songs of the Church by heart. Her voice was powerful and deep—spreading praise and gratitude to me, the Warinuris, the Kolalas, the Koinonias, and the students who lived in the garage between our houses. It was her voice that woke the day.

One time I asked Mama Lula for her story. She had attended a storytelling seminar at a women’s center, and sat, listening to the stories of others, her body tense. She only attended the first of the three-day seminar, but the second day, when I came to visit her, she handed me her story, written I think by her granddaughter as Mama could no longer see well enough to write. She said, “Read it, Julian. Read it for them” (Mama Lula, personal communication, May 2007).

It was a story of loss. Of the loss of husband, of a beloved son lost to alcohol. It began, “This is the story of my burden.”

Overcome by my own small burdens—a drunken man threatening me, two years of living in a place where no one ever sleeps safely—I almost lost myself one evening, and I came to myself screaming in front of my kitchen door, collapsed on smooth cement in the light of the setting sun. Mama ran across her yard, past the rusted bed frame and the living guava tree, through the hedge. She sat down on the cement and cradled my head in her lap. She asked,

“What is wrong, Julian? What is wrong? It’s okay, Julian. It’s okay.” Mama’s song woke each day and on this evening, her strength brought me safe through terror into night.

Blessedly, every evening did not end in screaming. For three years, we would sit every evening watching the setting sun. The lonely girl, new in town, and the cursed Mama. We had tea in red Nescafe cups when Mama had sugar. When she served tea, she said, “Julian, Mama received a blessing today. Mama has sugar.” Mama was the first Mama who taught me strength. She also fed me my first *papeda*¹⁴, my first *bete*¹⁵. We shared a birthday.

I woke to screaming, this time not my own. It was hers. Her drunken, precious son was beating her in his broken rage. He was arrested shortly after, and she bailed him out of prison, even though Mama Koinonia told her not to.

The last time we met was when the Mamas took me to the airport. Mama Lula put her cheek against mine. She smiled and started singing “Abide with Me.” Invited by her voice, the other Mamas joined her in singing.

Mama Lula had her first name tattooed on her right arm, but when I was looking for her grave, in a graveyard full of Lulas, I could not find it because I could not remember her first name. All I knew her as was Mama. The cross that marks her grave is broken, but there is a guava tree growing from her body. I have a guava tree tattooed upon my back to lean against and to remember.

Conclusion

The storyteller’s shift in vocal and facial expression when she speaks the word ‘nothing’ is startling. A sudden strength and intensity comes into her features, revealing a demeanor that might be described as warrior-like, or sovereign. She resonates with pride and purpose, knowing that she and her grandmother are the guardians of the family, the custodians of the songs that will keep the kinship ties strong, no matter what happens. (Cariou, 2016, p. 320)

¹⁴ *Papeda* is a gelatinous porridge made of Sago.

¹⁵ *Bete* is a tuber similar to Taro.

I would like to end this chapter with an affirmation (again) of the power of the telling of story in resisting annihilation. Warren Cariou (2016) describes the importance of life-telling—and although, in my research, I simply asked the Mamas about their strength, it was their lives that the Mamas gave me in their stories. Reflecting on the nature of telling a life, Cariou writes,

For an indigenous person, to tell one's story is to affirm, against the genocidal history of colonialism, 'we are still here.' To listen to such a story is to understand, in an embodied and active way, that indigenous life-telling is fundamentally a medium of relationships, one that binds people together and affirms their connections to the land. (p. 315)

“We are still here.” The hidden voices are not hidden. They are real. The Mamas are real, and they are strong. They inhabit and create their reality. They live and practice dignity and freedom.

In this dissertation, following this chapter, I will discuss the context of the Mamas and West Papua in chapter two. Specifically the chapter two explores the “time of wonder” that Papuans story and live in even under conditions of violence (See Giay & Godschalk, 1993, p. 342). Following the context chapter are two literature review chapters. Chapter three reviews literature about movements of dignity and resistance under totalitarian systems. Chapter four explores specifically literature on Mama movements in Papua. I describe the methodology I used in my research in chapter five. In it, I describe my experience and learning about how to become a part of a “we” while doing research among the Mamas in Papua. Chapters six through ten cover the findings and consist primarily of the Mamas’ stories of strength. These chapters are arranged according to the following themes found in the Mamas’ stories: I can. Yes, I Can!; *Berjuang*, Strength and Work; The Death of Children and other Tales of Sadness; Dreams, and Stories of Dreams; and Where Adventure and Welcome Collide. I end with a concluding chapter which revisits the Mamas work in guarding and maintaining life.

Chapter 2 Living in a “Time of Wonder”: The Context of West Papua

Who Tells the Story?

[t]he lifelessness usually attributed to the ethnographic object is not the deadness of the object (of analysis) but the violence of the theoretical approach/lens. (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in Taylor 2004, p. 368)

“We had big coats,” he told me with a smile. “It was cold. They didn’t suspect us.” They were two Papuan young men, brought to Holland as exemplars of benevolent rule in Dutch New Guinea by the Netherlands in the 1950s. Wined and dined in the motherland, learning the ways of winter, dikes, and libraries, Bapak Koinonia and a friend were shown a collection of documents on Papua, some from early church leaders in the church where Bapak Koinonia would later become a pastor. “We took them,” he says, of the books. “They were ours. So we took them.” Smuggled in their coats. No one ever knew. “They were our stories, so we took them” (Bapak Koinonia, personal communication, 2006).

The representation of those long colonized is frequently a battleground for who gets to be human. Who holds the narratives of a people? Is it the people themselves or the anthropological libraries of four-seasons countries fascinated by tribes, cannibalism, states of undress, and mythology? And even greater than the question of who holds the tales: Who tells the tales of a people? I had not read about Papua when I first arrived over ten years ago. But once I left, I read extensively. And although I recognized some of what I read, I often did not see the laughter, the wonder, the power, the resilience of my friends, colleagues, and neighbors in many of those texts (although notable exceptions exist).

Many authors were and are concerned for Papua so there are human rights monographs describing victims. There are excellent political discussions (which often tell the stories of men) (Chauvel, 2005). There are ethnographic descriptions which do not mention the political strains

(notable exceptions are Danilyn Rutherford and Eben Kirksey, among others). There are travel discussions on the exotica of stone age cultures (Pickell, 2001). There are environmental discussions written by helicoptered researchers about new species (AFP, 2006). (My Papuan researcher friends said that foreign researchers flew in the helicopter to Mamberamo while Papuans and many Indonesians hiked days with a Papuan guide from the area.) These writings, any writings about Papua, are vital. They carry part of the Papuan story—and it is beyond amazing that the story is being told! But many of these stories hold little laughter, wonder, and resilience.

The context, as told by people like me (from four-seasons countries) is as follows: West Papua is a province with continued human rights abuses, sometimes termed genocide (Brundige, *et. al.*, 2004; Banivanua-Mar, 2008), that has little or no access to international media. It is a cultural and ecological treasure with societies from what is termed “the stone age” (Davidoff, Davies, & Roberson, 1999) and exotic woven cell phone covers and 300 new species of plants and animals discovered over the last 10 years (Rainier, Richards, & Tjaturadi, 2009; AFP, 2006). While contexts often become a tale told by others, Papuan people speak their history and their continuing story in order to break the silence created by the overarching story of Indonesia and its conquest of Papua (Ipenburg, 2002; WestPapuaMediaAlerts, 2011). These stories include Korero and millennial movements (Giay and Godschalk, 1993; Rutherford, 2006), armed rebellion (Ondowame, 2000), musical revival (Papua K. , 2007), Mama market movements (BBC, 2016), and many other examples of how Papuan identity is upheld.

The people of West Papua do speak. It’s just that their stories rarely reach beyond the boundaries of Papua (although this is changing rapidly with the easy access of cellular phones connected to the Internet). Alongside political endeavors (such as those carried out by the

International Lawyers and Parliamentarians for West Papua in the United Kingdom), endeavors that touch the global moral consciousness are vital for effective erasure of military occupation. However, such stories are most often told by those from outside Papua who are from within the realms of power, and their discourses often unintentionally reproduce the dehumanizing categories that are used to justify violent action (see Nurenborg, 2011; Turner, 2003). In particular, women's stories from within Papua are rarely heard on global levels (although this is changing!). In this dissertation, I relay stories from Papuan women. What may look in the literature like silence is not so.

Overview of the Chapter

We recognize in all these movements the presence of a deep-seated imperative, the knowledge and certainty that a time of wonder is at hand. (Giay and Godschalk, 1993, p. 342)

This chapter will give a brief history of Papua and explicate the context of the location as it impacts and shapes the community where I have researched. It will take the format of what Giay and Godschalk in their 1993 article about cargo movements in Papua call “a time of wonder”(p. 342), exploring and explicating how, in spite of violence, silencing, and economic exploitation, the Papuan construction of being remains characterized by wonder, and even when that wonder cannot be found immediately, it is dreamed of and anticipated through shared stories and laughter.

We will explore together some iterations of wonder in the story of Papua. It will not be a complete story, but I have chosen narratives by Papuans that highlight the wonder, strength, and creativity found in the Mamas of Lincoln City. This context chapter is a gathering of stories of wonder with theories that help explain how this wonder is possible, even under conditions of sustained violence (although theories will be discussed in greater detail in chapter three).

Silence?

Papua is not silent, nor are Papuans silent. With the advent of social media, there are more and more first-person Papuan voices and stories accessible in a global discourse. However, formal published works telling the Papuan story from a Papuan perspective remain few—as previously mentioned in this chapter. There is, however, a powerful first-person narrative of a Papuan woman available in published sources. Mama Yosepha is a hero and activist in the Amungme community—the ethnic group surrounding the Freeport McMoran Mine. Her story has been instrumental in breaking the silence surrounding the experience of Papuan indigenous people surrounding the mine, and their experiences with the Indonesian military payed by the mine to remove an inconvenient population (Giay & Kambai, 2003). Here is an excerpt from Mama Yosepha’s story. She begins by directly naming the impact of the mine on her life. She says, “[When I] am interviewed, I always speak of how the Indonesian government and PT Freeport have destroyed [*hancurkan*] my household and, slowly, but surely killed my husband” (in Giay and Kambai 2003, p. 23). In short, Mama Yosepha tells the story of how the mine came, payed the Indonesian military to kill and force out the people—in her case, the Amungme (although this narrative is played out in many regions of Papua). Even if villagers weren’t killed, they lost access to their gardens, or went into hiding and, unable to harvest food, often starved. The land was cleared, the mine was built, the villagers who were still alive resettled. And those who remained were brought into the use of drink as recompense for land. Drink was and is one of the military’s strategies (International, 2013).

One of the intimate pieces of Mama Yosepha’s history that she shares is related to drink. She tells how the mine, dislocation, introduction of alcohol and lack of work impacted her family. She tells below, how she—who knew the Doctor and was favored by him—used her wit

to keep her husband alive. In the quotation below, she distills an all-too-familiar global pattern of indigenous erasure through mining/oppressive government into a real person family account struck through with gumption.

I grew bored chastising him for his drink. There was one time that he drank until he fainted. I saw him as one almost dead. Seeing his situation, I felt pity, and I brought him right away to the doctor. When we reached the doctor, I explained to the doctor that he was this way because of the drink. The doctor right away put in an IV in both of his arms. Not only that, the doctor also gave him medicine. One of those forms of medicine was large, the other was small. Before giving him something to drink, the doctor ordered me to prepare a bucket near his bedside for two days and two nights. After I gave him that medicine, he urinated and urinated and smelled so much of urine that he smelled like one dead. To dispose of the urine in that bucket, the doctor ordered that I dig a hole, and then, only then, dispose of his urine. Do not throw it away without care. The doctor said that it was the drink that came out through his urine. The doctor also told me that if *Paitua*¹⁶ did not stop drinking, smoking, drinking coffee—it is as if *Paitua* is killing his own self. This was actually the doctor's secret, but because I was the favorite child of the doctor, he gave me this knowledge. (Giay and Kambai, 2003, p. 23)

Then, Mama Yosepha tries to save her *Paitua*'s future. He doesn't listen to her and loses himself.

When he was recovered, I told him all that the doctor had said. I also threatened him, that if he drank again, I will 'release my hold on you. I will draw away from you and you will die alone. I ask, with respect, that you will hear all of this'. (Giay & Kambai, 2003, p. 23)¹⁷

Mama Yosepha keeps on going—upholding the rights of her people to make a basic living in the area of a mine that is among the richest in the world. She gets imprisoned for speaking, and then she becomes heard on a global stage, effecting change for her people. This is why it is important to hear the Mamas speak! Because they are not silent.

The study of silence seeks to expose and illuminate stories that have hitherto been untold. Elucidated in Spivak's (1988) landmark text, "Can the Subaltern Speak?", the question of voice becomes glaring in the context of populations long unheard because of the power dynamics imposed along lines of race, gender, economic oppression, or simply invisibility. However, in

¹⁶ A word in the Papuan dialect for husband/old man.

¹⁷ Translation, mine

response to Spivak's question, James C. Scott argues that the "subaltern" (although he does not use this word) already and always have been speaking. In *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Scott (1985) offers historical examples of speech perpetrated by "silenced" communities. These include subtle, but very real responses to the dominant discourse, such as humor, non-cooperation, gossip, and appropriation of resources (poaching, for example). The reality of Scott's assertion against what seems to be silence is evident in West Papua, where the stories of women have been present in shaping and sustaining resistance and identity for those within Papua for many years (Herliany, 2010; Giay & Kambai, 2003; Papua K. K., 2010; Wospakrik 2015).

Like Mama Yosepha, women are engaged in acts of economic, political, ideological, religious, and health resistance (BBC, 2016). Although strong in their communities, the narratives of their practices of liberation have long been unspoken in the few discourses of Papuan identity articulated in international realms—even in tales where they figure prominently, their very real work and resilience for Papuan identity and survival has been among the silent voices (Kirksey, 2002; Nerenburg, 2011).

Silence is not a new theme when considering West Papua, which has been under military occupation since before a UN monitored Temporary Authority in 1962 (Saltford, 2003)—with foreign press banned (Contributor, 2014; Conan, 2018), and local press regulated to the point of violence (Indonesia, 2010; Mambor, 2017). While West Papua's sustained nonviolent struggle for cultural survival has been one largely hidden from the outside world (for a complete discussion, see McLeod, 2015), history reveals ongoing communal acts of resistance in Papua to this day (see Webster, 2001-2002). Currently, larger bodies such as the Indonesian government, as well as economic bodies like the American-owned Freeport Gold Mine are being called to

task by the international community (Elmslie & University of Sydney, 2010; Giay & Kambai, 2003) as narratives of the violence are spread through conduits of Western Media—for example CNN and BBC have shown the film of a priest from the highlands whose genitals were burned with hot iron by Indonesian soldiers before his death was captured on film (Vaswani, 2010).

One woman writes of her own experience of violence and its effect on her livelihood. She speaks of living in the forest after their village was attacked by the military. She attempted to return to the garden to dig up some cassava and speaks of her treatment,

Two soldiers came over to me and I was pushed up against a rock and raped. After that they said ‘Your husband is OPM, isn’t he? Tell him to come here.’ And they took my cassava and as I was leaving, a soldier pulled me into a small ditch and raped me again. I didn’t tell anyone because [...] fear [...]. After that I never went to my garden again. We remained hungry, but we could not find food. After one month, my child who was a year old died. We buried him under the Red Fruit tree. (Papua K. K., 2010, p. 34)

Tracy Banivanua-Mar speaks of the ‘consumption’ of horrific images such as this one, writing, “The globalized consumption of the spectacles and discourses of savagery which accompany colonialism’s racial violence means that modern genocides are sold to, and allowed to happen by all of us” (2008, p. 586).

This publicizing of images of dehumanizing sexual violence, however, along with past images of warfare and black skin and penis gourds, perpetuate the 1962 U.S. rationale for setting aside claims to Papuan self-determination as ludicrous, referring to Papua as “a thousand miles of cannibal lands” (in Banivanua-Mar, 2008, p. 583). They asserted, in order to gain access to unprecedented wealth (see (Poulgrain & Wardaya, 2015)) that Papuans were not human enough to govern themselves.

Although their situation is increasingly represented in media (this is admittedly a vital step in the movement from a local to a global discourse in Papua), Nurenborg (2011) argues that the agency of Papuan voices remains absent in media depictions of them, which rather than

listening to the voices of authenticity and dignity of Papuan people, reifies exoticized stories of racialized otherness and violence.

The translation of voices from the local to the global, both Turner (2003) and Engle Merry (2006) argue, is a process rife with power differentials which carries the potential that stories told become a reiteration of the dominant discourse of those seen as silent. While this is often the case, Pratt (1994), Sandoval (2000), and Turner (2003) argue for a playful way of engaging the story in which a “middle voice” (see Sandoval, 2000, p. 149) is brought out. A middle voice is a voice which neither reifies the dominant discourse nor sustains victimhood, but which articulates its own reality in ways that can be heard by the global discourse, while not becoming one with the power of its structures. It is a voice between—which neither becomes part of the narrative of power, nor lives as a passive recipient of violence, but speaks and acts, affecting both itself and the powerful ones. It is way to break the silence without directly combatting the structures of power (as that would result in physical silencing, often).

The silence is always being broken, my Papuan Mamas and friends tell me. The question is, how is the silence being broken in ways that honor the dignity and agency of those who maintain laughter, wonder, and strength in the face of sustained dehumanizing discourse? The next section includes two stories from history—a history which is often told without the presence of Papuan voices. But when Papuan voices do tell the stories, the history is acted upon by their stories.

World War II in Papuan Voices

The first time that Papua really entered the global consciousness was when thousands of young American and Japanese troops traipsed around the island of New Guinea shooting and bombing each other from 1942 to Japanese surrender in 1945 (Taffe, 1998; Toyoda & Nelson,

2006). Remarkably, most historic accounts of the Pacific War rarely mention that there were actually people living on the island. But they were there.

Although the jungle has overtaken much of it, for most of those who are alive in Papua, the Pacific war is a remembered war, because the physical artefacts—the bombs, the planes, the corrugated metal, the airstrips, the cement slabs where the missionaries built their houses, all were built in frenzy by the Japanese and allied forces. One old man sits by the sea at Holtekamp beach and tells of when the allies landed. Saying that they had so much, that they unloaded it all, and then set it on fire. Because they had so much. “They used to call me ‘boy,’” he said. And told of what they gave him. War texts of the time document that indeed the supplies were burned, a beach full of supplies. But in fact, it was an accident. The fuel canisters exploded.

Mama Koinonia tells me that she used to pile up the unexploded bombs with her friends when they were children, then light them and run. The artefacts of the war exploded upon her reality (and as she told me this tale, she giggled).

Grandfather Xavier talks about when the Japanese built the runway in Biak to launch their attacks on the Americans. It was, in fact, he says, not the Japanese themselves who built the runway. It was the Papuans. He says that if the workers did not work well, they had to dig their own graves, kneel before them, and be executed. He was chosen, when he was a young man, to help build the runway and was appreciated by the Japanese, so he tried to use his influence to keep his people safe. One night, he heard that they would raid a certain part of the village. He told his friends, and they put out all their lights and pretended that they weren’t home. The Japanese passed by (Grandfather Xavier, personal communication, August, 2009).

Scholars on Papua aver that World War II succeeded, in showing Papuans that black-skinned people could have the same rights as white or lighter-skinned people. Papuans saw

African American soldiers and began insisting that they had the same rights as the Dutch and the lighter skinned Indonesians (Van der Veur, 1963). World War II, and the greater exposure and accessibility to Papua also brought about a greater familiarity with Papua's resources. A region once largely sidelined became a pawn between Holland and Indonesia and a few years later, by proxy, China/Russia and the United States. Underlying the excessive interest in the region was, not its people but its unparalleled natural resources, including oil, gold, nickel, and natural gas, to name a few (Poulgrain & Wardaya, 2015).

What was Under the Ground

I am Nemankawi mountain.
My womb, Wanagong lake.
My feet, they are the Ocean.
This land between, my body.
You have consumed me.
Show me which part of my body you have not consumed and destroyed?
You as the government must see
And be aware that you are consuming me.
I dare you to value the earth that is my body¹⁸
(Yosepha Alomang in Giay & Kambai, 2003, p. i)

Sources on West Papua include, as mentioned above, accounts of human rights violations in periodicals (Bakrie, 2017) (Affan, 2016), anthropological accounts of discrete cultures often devoid of political context (for a superb account of this issue see (Kirsch, 2002)), accounts of plane accidents in air traffic control reports (as Papua is one of the most treacherous fly zones in the World) (Zealand, 2016; Richter, 2016), and business and geological accounts tracking gas mines, copper, and gold exploration and sales (Rubin & Kyle, 1997; Prayitno, 2018). For a place so physically isolated, it is largely known, not for its people, but for what lies beneath its land.

Papua was colonized for its mineral and oil resources (for an extensive discussion, see Poulgrain & Wardaya, 2015). Limited Dutch excavation discovered gold in 1936 at the Grasberg

¹⁸ Translation mine

mine (Mertig, Rubin, & Kyle, 1994), a mine which has been the largest gold mine in the world (currently 4th (Padhi, 2017)). In the 50s and 60s, further exploration discovered unimaginable oil reserves in the off the northwest coast. However, under the ground were not only the minerals and riches which became a vital component in defining the trajectory of Papuan life, but also the bodies of those killed by the military, by hunger, by disease, and by the consequences of poverty (see Brundige, 2004). The richness of the mineral and gas resources resulted in both political machinations to gain Papua by the Dutch, the U.N., and Indonesia (allied first with the Americans, then the Communists, then the Americans again) and in physical annihilation and removal—including bombing campaigns, chemical warfare, forced removal, and imprisonment—resulting in the deaths of between tens and hundreds of thousands of Papuans (Elmslie & Webb-Gannon, 2013). What was under the ground put Papuans in the ground.

The story of these resources—the business updates of Freeport Gold Mine, BP’s Bintuni natural gas mines, and Indonesia’s Pertamina oil company—does not require the existence of the Papuan people. The money will be there—in the mountains and under the sea—whether or not the people are. However, Papuans have always been present in the stories of resource extraction and the concurrent colonialism and military presence. Since the beginning of more extensive direct engagement of war and colonialism, Papuans have developed a rich heritage of interactive practices of identity and resistance and laughter to name and reclaim their land. One of the most well-documented of these movements are the Koreri and Cargo movements.

Koreri¹⁹ and Cargo Movements

The people of Biak tell a story about Manarmakeri (Manarmakeri literally means “man who has scabies,” but other understandings also include “the wealth of Biak,” “the wealth of

¹⁹ The most extensive written discussion with multiple interviews is F.C. Kamma’s 1972 book *Koreri: Messianic Movements in the Biak-Numfor Culture Area* (Kamma, 1972).

scabies,” or “Mansren Manggundi, God himself” (Nanlohy, 2010), a man in Biak history who suffered from a skin disease and was rejected by his people. Manarmakeri had a garden outside of the village—he was not well liked by the villagers because of his diseased skin, so he was enjoying himself in his garden when the Morning Star, *Sampari*, came to him and told him about a wonderful state of being called *Koreri*, where everyone is blessed with peace and prosperity. Manarmakeri then told the people in his village about what he had heard and invited them to go with him on a quest to the West to find this wonderful state of being called *Koreri*. But Manarmakeri was rejected by them. He went off in his own by boat, to the west, and visited other villages, inviting them on his quest for *Koreri*, but they rejected him too, because of his unlovely skin. Eventually, Manarmakeri ended up on the outskirts of yet another village, rejected. He encountered a creature who was trying to steal a coconut from the tree he was near. He wrestled the creature, and it turned out to be his old friend Sampari, the morning star. As they wrestled, Manarmakeri asked to be given the state of *Koreri* that had been promised him many villages ago. In some versions of the story, Manarmakeri is healed at this point (Nanlohy, 2010). The Morning Star fulfilled his promise to Manarmakeri by facilitating the miraculous impregnating of a woman named Insoraki who then had a beautiful son, Manarbeu—which means King of Peace (Nanlohy, 2010). The three of them, Insoraki, Manarmakeri, and Manarbeu were driven out of Insoraki’s village and they traveled west to search for *Koreri*. They ended up trying to establish *Koreri* on the island of Numfor, but they failed, and they continued traveling west, to Raja Ampat and beyond, searching for *Koreri* (Asmabusappe, 2004). Manarmakeri said to the villages that he passed that he would come back and bring *Koreri* with him (Kamma, 1972).

Variants on the *Koreri* story exist all along the Northern Papuan coast, as far as Raja Ampat. The people of Biak say that this is how the coastal people and the Biak language spread west from Biak (Mama Koinonia, personal communication, 2007). There have been, across history, reignitings of the search for *Koreri*—for wellbeing and prosperity. These reignitings are often in times of great transition and difficulty (see Giay & Godschalk, 1993 and Herliany, 2010). For example, when white men from the West came as missionaries with novel technologies and good news of salvation, the Biak people thought that Manarmakeri had returned from the West bringing *Koreri* with him (Kamma, 1972).

As a united Papuan consciousness arose after World War II, one of the unifying stories used to represent history and Papuan identity is the *Koreri* myth. Similar reignitings of hope and wonder exist across many Papuan cultures. These reignitings have been termed, along with *Koreri* movements, by anthropologists and missionaries as Cargo Cults, Cargo Movements, or Cargoism (Worlsey, 1957; Steinbauer, 1979). The cargo movements of Papua have long been interpreted as religious exoticism, and not explored within the larger sociopolitical context of what is occurring in Papua (Giay & Godschalk, 1993). Benny Giay, a Papuan activist, pastor, and academic, and his co-author, Jan Godschalk, explore these movements more completely within the context of what is happening in Papua, explaining that these movements arise to address issues of poverty and human rights abuses. Write Giay and Godschalk (1993), Cargoism is appreciated by many Papuans because of their experience of a denial of “fundamental human rights.” They are “searching for something that goes beyond this: a world in which they will enjoy health and a life of youthfulness; in which they will live with one another in peace and happiness and have access to wealth without limit” (p. 330). Cargoism addresses the concrete economic inequalities experienced under a colonial economy (previously Holland and Japan, and

now Indonesia as well as multi-national corporations). Cargoism, when filtered through Christianity, questions Dutch Calvinism's practice in the Papuan church of upholding well-being in the after-life rather than asserting human rights in the current time (Jenbise, 2018).

Giay and Godschalk continue their discussion of cargoism, explaining a specific movement led by a Me man, "according to one of his close relatives (studying at the Cenderwasih State University in 1986), he is trying to find the right method to placate the spirit being who is just waiting for the right time to deliver the Me people from their poverty and backwardness" (1993, p. 332). Women function as prophets within these movements, and undoubtedly, although unmentioned, are feeding everybody.

Another example of a cargo movement seeking to restore well-being, peace, and prosperity is the *Batu Delima* cargo movement. The story goes that a man found a stone, went to Australia, was the 154th richest man in the world, created an organization called Freeport Indonesia Yawudi Nota (Giay and Godschalk, 1993, p. 334). In December 1989, they write,

the cult leader left for Obano and held similar propaganda meetings, saying that Freeport Yawudi Nota was about to start working so as to meet the socio-economic needs of the people and that it was going to supply the guns to drive out the Indonesians. (1993, p. 334)

The leader was arrested by state authorities in 1990 and beaten almost to death by security forces.

Giay and Godschalk then tell the story of one of the cargo movements which was initiated the Papuan spring. They note that to depoliticize cargo movements takes away the agency, dignity, and context of the action, making them seem unsupported and absurd. The Thomas Wanggai movement began at a gathering on Dec. 4, 1988. Giay and Godschalk write, "at the meeting a manifesto was read out proclaiming the independence of the state of West Melanesia. This was followed by the raising of the flag of the new nation" (1993, p. 338). In

response, Wanggai was arrested and sentenced for 20 years in jail, his wife for six. Dr. Wanggai, who received his Ph.D. in Public administration from Florida State University in 1985, asked

How much longer should the indigenous people of Irian Jaya whose province is so rich in natural resources (i.e. petroleum, copper, nickel, timber, shrimp, crocodile skins, cocoa, coconut oil, etc.) have to undergo this traumatic tragedy of underdevelopment? Second, who should plan and develop this province with its indigenous people? (in Giay and Godschalk, 1993, p. 335)

He received no response and the economic gap widened, so Wanggai raised the flag of West Melanesia. Giay and Godschalk write, “The only way to help raise the standard of living of the local people was to be free from Indonesian political domination.” They continue,

It was during one of these sessions that a lady living in Jayapura had a vision, in which she was told that the proper date for the proclamation of the independence of West Melanesia should be December 14 because ‘according to the Holy Bible it was on the 14th of the month of Adar that the Lord God delivered the Jews as a nation from the calamity brought upon them by Ham. (1993, p. 340)²⁰

Giay and Godschalk (1993) ask,

Why did Dr. Wanggai initiate and lead this movement? He knew that with this program he would be sent to jail, or he could even be shot to death. He had, however, a firm conviction that the Lord God of the Bible would be on his side. He would guide him and, as he cited again and again in a letter written from jail, “Tuhan adalah Gembala kami;”, a Bible verse upon which Dr. Wanggai stood through-out his trial. He is very much a Melanesian. (p. 340)

They conclude,

the dominant triggering point in our opinion, however, appears to be a widespread sense of unhappiness and dissatisfaction experienced day in day out in the social, economic and political areas of life. A recurring theme in the interviews and reports is that many development programmes have not brought the anticipated benefits, because services and materials lack quality or simply because of persistent corruption that drains away allocated funds. (1993, p. 341)

The cargo movements then work to address this unhappiness, while also stemming out of it.

²⁰ see the book of Esther, chapters 7-9

The *Koreri* movements, including response to missions, colonialism, and addressing the realities of poverty, violence, and lack of well-being in more modern Papuan history reveal a negotiation of reality, and an improvisation among the constraints (See Bateson, 1989) of Dutch and Indonesian colonialism to create new and empowered realities and stories. As Mama Tika says, “We must always create.”²¹ Giay and Godschalk conclude,

We recognize in all these movements the presence of a deep-seated imperative, the knowledge and certainty that a time of wonder is at hand, when people will be able to regain what has been lost in the past, a quality of life that incorporates health, longevity, wealth, happiness, self-esteem, or freedom (1993, p. 342).

That is what Papuans have always been doing. One of the ways that this “time of wonder” has been established is through the movement called the “Papuan Spring” of 2000 and 2001.

Papuan Spring

After the fall of Suharto in 1998, Indonesia became a place where change was possible. In the interim government, a progressive and deeply respected politician, Abdurrahman Wahid, was elected president. As the reformation (*reformasi*) was spreading across Indonesia, Papuans requested greater freedoms. These included the right for Papua to be called Papua (previously it had been named Irian Jaya by Indonesia), the right for Papuans raise the Papuan flag, the right to sing the Papuan Anthem, and the drafting of legislation which would allow Papuans greater control over their resources and greater self-governance (Chauvel, 2011). In 2001, Papuans assembled in Jayapura, and sang the anthem and raised the flag freely, without fear of violence. Video of that event shows people weeping, and when my friends tell me about it, they also weep. When president Abdurrahman Wahid’s presidency ended and Sukarno’s daughter, Megawati Sukarnoputri came into power, most of the freedoms obtained during the Papuan spring ended. In fact, as Indonesia’s two other separatist regions, Aceh and East Timor, have obtained a peace

²¹ Personal Interview, January 21, 2014

agreement (2005) and independence (2002), respectively, the military only has the region of West Papua left to maintain its work—resulting in large influxes of military personnel and infrastructure with nothing to do but ‘interact’ with Papuans. But, although constraints are increasing, as before, the spirit of freedom, wonder and dignity, what David Webster (2001-2002) terms the “notion state” of Papua, remains. Below, I will discuss further some of the strategies that Papuans have used and continue to use to create and maintain their identity.

Creating and Living in a “Time of Wonder”—The Church, Colonialism, and Entanglement

Far more experiment took place amongst New Guineans than amongst whites and New Guineans learnt much more deeply about all parties as a consequence. Here were the true anthropologists for whom the need to understand social relations and mores was most urgent and pressing. (Gosden & Knowles, 2001, pp. 209-210)

The church since its 1865 arrival in Papua has been a site of engagement with colonial powers and economic and physical violence. Although the church was a tool of the Dutch colonial government, it has become a sort of parallel Papuan government, disbursing aid, economic succor, and identity and often (but not always) supporting activists. During Papua’s spring, the violence perpetrated by the government was named and the church formed a commission to visit the government concerning the deaths that had taken place in Biak (In 1998, during the historic “*Biak Berdarah*—Biak bleeds,” an estimated 40 people were massacred (McLeod, 2015). Activists Yosepha Alomang and Tom Beanal came to prominence through participation in the church. Danilyn Rutherford states that institutional power can be appropriated. Specifically, religion has been a site of contesting identity and authority. Says Rutherford, “institutional power both shapes and is subject to interpretive practices. This is why, some fifty years after Korori, the forces capable of making West Papua a reality still go by the name of the Lord” (2006, p. 160). The church remains a powerful space for enacting Papuan identity.

Within the Papuan narrative, the first encounter with the “white man” is on February 5, 1855 with Carl Wilhelm Ottow and Johan Gottlob Geissler—of Germany and Holland (Onim, 2006). February 5 is still celebrated as the day the gospel came to Papua. Ottow and Geissler and later missionaries spoke of a God who had come in the form of man and who had been rejected and been killed by his people, but who had risen from the dead and promised to come again to bring all with him into paradise. For the people of the coastlands, this was the story of Koreri, and they knew the white man who came to return this state of prosperity to Papua (Mawene, 2003). It was a story where categories met, and where Papuan agency and identity manifested in the new power structures of colonialism. The church was embraced. Since then, the church has often served as a proxy for Papuan political power and also a site where Papuan identity is created and battled as well as a site of interaction with the Dutch and the Indonesian state, where violence, coercion, and eventual cooperation are found.

With regards to the church’s coming and history in Papua, Lipjhart writes,

In West New Guinea itself, the missions have been dominant forces ever since the middle of the nineteenth century. They started their work in the territory long before the Dutch government or private enterprise showed a more than perfunctory interest in it. After 1949 the missions continued to play a very important role in New Guinea, and greatly expanded their operations with the aid of government subsidies. Education and medical care were almost entirely in the hands of the missions. (1966, p. 151)

The Church’s current role as a parallel government is not a new one. Rutherford describes the beginnings of this parallel government: “The first missionaries to work in the region were two German cabinet makers, Carl W. Ottow and J.G. Geissler, who settled in the Doreh Bay, on the Bird’s Head peninsula, in 1855” (Rutherford, 2006, p. 149). Ottow and Geissler were strongly anti-institutional and came to trade and work and speak of faith. They facilitated trade with Ternate—trading forest goods. For the first 50 years, the only converts were freed slaves (from the Indonesian kingdoms of ternate and Tidore), but Biak people did come to trade and to hear

the word—they then brought the word to their villages “which they repeated verbatim” (Rutherford, 2006, p.109). The gospel became a commodity. The words were powerful, because they came from the colonial state. The missionaries were paid a stipend by the Dutch colonial government to maintain the perspective of Dutch power. Thus maintaining their own security.

Over time, the missionaries requested greater Dutch presence to “pacify” the natives, and in the 19th century more Dutch outposts were formed, and also established a head tax, forced labor (Rutherford, 2012). Papuans perceived at that time, that the missionaries and their Ambonese colleagues, were powerful, and, writes Rutherford, “by the 1920’s despite the missionaries’ efforts to impose a division between the affairs of church and state, the two remained interchangeable in the local imagination” (2012, p. 159). The parallel government that Rutherford describes here has shifted over time from one run by missionaries and Ambonese evangelists, teachers, and medical workers to one largely represented by indigenous Papuans. This transition occurred through a fascinating process described by Gosden and Knowles.

In their anthology *Collecting Colonialism*, Gosden and Knowles (2001) describe “how social relationships among Melanesians, whites and other communities helped to erode distinctions between colonizers and locals” (p. back cover). They describe the renegotiation and reconfiguration happening in Melanesia under times of significant change, from colonialism, to World War II, to post-colonial colonialism. Writes Gosden and Knowles, “things did not fall apart for New Guineans when whites arrived, but rather life was worked into new configurations, work that continues until today” (2001, p. 211).

In West New Guinea or Papua, a traditionally colonial encounter in which one identity is defined, in economic and political terms by another, becomes instead, one of interaction. Shared meaning and interpretations struggled to create society. Gosden and Knowles write, “colonialism

opened up new sets of possibilities and constraints, necessitating novel strategies. Neither acculturation nor stasis were possibilities, so that new social forms arose when local social logics were put to the test in the social arena of colonial relations” (2001, p. 209). Benedict Anderson explains how this interaction occurred in Indonesia itself.

This is in good part due to the groundedness of Koreri’s messianic logic in the practices of everyday life. By valorizing the ‘foreignness’ of government slogans and schemes, Biak’s satisfied the demands of New Order Hegemony without accepting a New Order sense of self. (Anderson, 2001)

While New Guineans may acquire “foreign” wealth and use it for negotiating relationships, so too foreigners acquire new Guinean wealth and use it for negotiating in museums and in the academy. (See Kaufmann’s (2001) discussion of Felix Speiser. For more nuance on the acquiring of the foreign, see also Rutherford’s (2002) extensive discussion of *Amber*).

For colonists and researchers and Indonesian civil servants, collection is a “matter of negotiation” (Gosden and Knowles, 2001, p. 59). This is evidenced in the retelling of one of the last tales of Papuan cultural steward, Arnold Ap—where relationship was negotiated around the material objects collected for museum use and display, say Gosden and Knowles (2001),

Colonialism in New Guinea created a new culture which joined all parties through continual social relations. Objects were crucial to these relations. But the linking of white, black and Asian did not make for acculturation, or even hybridity, but rather produced novel forms of difference. These forms of difference were constantly novel due to the experimental nature of social relations, especially on the part of New Guineans [...]. Colonial culture was the product of all parties involved in it, and cannot be understood in terms of the top-down imposition of power and the bottom-up resistance to it. Experiment, instability and novelty were the key elements of colonial culture, which constantly shifted the dimensions of the world in which people lived. (p. 24)

Papuans have always been present in their history, collaborating and engaging with colonial and other religious entities of power to collect what they viewed valuable and work it into their own identity and culture.

Reflecting this negotiation, in his book, *Freedom in Entangled Worlds*, Eben Kirksey (2012) reflects on Papuans' collaborations, engagements, and entanglements with the various powers they encounter. He writes, "Amid campaigns of state violence, West Papuans embraced the sort of hope that arises only in times of complete hopelessness...indigenous activists began to find small cracks in the architecture of power" (2012, p. xiii). Papuans use what Kirksey describes as "strategic engagements" and dream "remarkable dreams" resulting in what Kirksey (2012) terms a "freedom in entangled worlds" built of collaboration—"an expansive imagination" (p. xiii).

Kirksey begins his book with a story of the way that Biak fishermen lure flying fish into their nets with a song, and then speaks of how tourists also are "courted by Biak performers" being greeted with song (2012, p. ix). He expresses the creativity of spirit with which Papuan people capture the imagination of both outside and inside forces to pay attention to the reality of their conflict. He writes, "The reaction of many people upon hearing about yet another underreported and asymmetrical war is to simply turn away. As a result, West Papuan activists have become savvy at capturing the attention of tourists and other visiting foreigners" (Kirksey, 2012, p. xii). He uses phrases such as 'expect the unexpected,' and 'surprises' which speak of the profound creative agency and effort that Papuans possess as they live in and protect their time of wonder.

Kirksey writes of dreams translated into collaborative action—stating that as "West Papuans linked expansive dreams to established institutions, historical possibilities multiplied beyond control" (p. 2). Possibilities multiply when dreams are shared and acted upon. And although an official Papuan state does not exist, a Papuan identity of dignity and wonder does

exist, a sort of *Koreri* in which Papuan people are already free. This is what David Webster (2001-2002) calls a “notion state.”

Notion State: Already Free

Personally, I see the transitional government as a political statement that must be valued by all parties, even if today or tomorrow the congress is dispersed through violent means. This announcement is done with respect, but in the eyes of the Indonesian government, it is viewed as a violation of the law. The government must open themselves up to see what is really happening. I think from 1961 until the present, as this process (Indonesia’s process?) has been implemented [by the govt?], Papuan people have grown tired and frustrated with all that they have experienced. This is how I see it. And this congress is another way to express this frustration to the government of Indonesia. I hope when the transitional government is declared, it will give room for Papuan people to understand as well as giving room for all factions within the struggle, including the Papuan council, the Papuan presidium and the Indigenous Peoples Council of Papua as well as other Papuan communities/groups that are engaged in the struggle. They [the congress?] are making a political statement.

—Rev. J

On October 19, 2011, Papuans again declared themselves free in the third Papua People’s congress that Rev. J speaks of above. After two days of singing and the election of a leader and a government in a field in a Catholic college, the people were rounded up, imprisoned, and some were killed. But the Papuan insistence on living in a state of wonder and dignity continues.

Although the Land of West Papua has never known political freedom, the Papuan people are “already sovereign as a people” (Webster, 2001-2002, p. 598). They gained their freedom, Papuan leader Tom Beanal stated, on December 1, 1961 with the raising of the Papuan flag and singing of the National Anthem (Van der Veur, 1963), and were subsequently annexed by the Republic of Indonesia between 1962 and 1969. Webster contends that while a nation state has never existed, an ideological “notion-state” has been present for over 50 years—a state which holds the land of Papua in the storied and musical consciousness of its people (Anderson, 1983; Glazebrook, 2004; Hill-Smith, 2009; Rayfield, 2004; Juillerat, 1984; Smythe, 2010; Yampolsky,

1995), in resistance to the continued and unacknowledged violence against Papuan people perpetrated by the Indonesian occupying forces.

Similarly, Faosto Barlocco (2013) avers, “Both the nation and the ethnic group can be considered, according to this typology, as communities of imagination but also, when they become the basis for any corporate form of action, as communities of alignment” (p. 11). Communities are both communities of imagination and “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998, p. 45) which are, Barlocco writes, “derived from engagement in practice, and more specifically in social interactions between villagers” (Barlocco, 2010, p. 406). It is in this context of a “notion state” of sovereignty and identity woven in the everyday practices of engagement, dreaming, and definition, that my research takes place. This is the world where the Mamas live and daily create survival and wonder for their families and communities. The practical engagement and coordination and maintenance of social interactions and practices of life are largely carried out by the Mamas in Papua. This is the Mamas’ Papua.

Lincoln City

Lincoln City is a mid-sized city located in Papua. I researched in a subset of a church parish there. This community consisted of about 18 families and also students from a local college. The families and students lived in a residential area of about a square mile and interacted multiple times weekly through church, community, and college events. Most of the families had been there for at least 20-30 years and had known each other that long or longer. The age range of the families consisted of babies until people in their 80s. I interviewed 13 women from the community over a period of one year, and lived and interacted with the community off and on over a period of 12 years, with five and a half years spent living there full time.

The Haunted Hall

Because I was haunted by something not seen, a woman who was not in a photograph, and I was looking for a field that gives notice to structures of exclusion and that does not enclose the landscape in only what can be seen. (Gordon, 1990, p. 498)

We sat in a haunted hall, filled with photographs of presidents, church leaders, generals, and missionaries. The hall and its pictures are now burned to the ground, but the people who created it remain. I asked Bapak if he would talk to me about the context of Papua, what things are like right now. I asked him under the *ketapang*²² tree next to the volleyball court where the chairs and tents were set up as we rehearsed for the annual neighborhood Christmas party. I asked him quietly, as Bapak and many others had trained me to know that even there in our beloved neighborhood, trees have ears. But not the *ketapang* tree. But much to Mama's chagrin, when the ears arrive, in the form of undercover Indonesian intelligence officers, known and unknown, Bapak engages them in heated and passionate conversation. He walks Kirksey's (who he knows as Eben) line between collaboration and action, and in a place where talk can get you killed, talk is indeed action.

The act of opening the mouth and naming what is. Naming the world is power (Friere, 1970). Bapak names the world to me under the *ketapang* tree, with Christmas lights and a people-made pond where candles float representing each family. Surrounded by rituals of light and life, we stand under the *ketapang* tree, and I ask him if he will tell me so that I can write about what is.

Later, in the haunted hall, we sit, and another man is there, a neighbor whose wife has died, whose wife was mama's closest friend. Mama tells me that during his wife's life, he was not considerate but in her illness and in her death, he loved her well.

²² A large shade tree with edible nuts.

Bapak shares with me the context of this year. The context is ever changing, although things remain the same. Unlike in Chinua Achebe's most well-known work, in Papua, things do not fall apart. Papua is carried in many ways, but at this time, the challenge being faced is the lateral conflict playing out among different groups of Papuans.

Christmas approached and Bapak had arranged our meeting. When I arrived, Mama woke from her nap, surprised to see me. It was the deaths of several teenagers one week before in an isolated region that was spurring the current difference of opinion. Bapak explained to us what had happened, and I heard it several times, as more guests came, that two youth had been going home, and the soldiers stopped them, and they did not want to be stopped. The youth were killed, and as the community gathered in mourning, the soldiers opened fire on them in a field. Because they mourned. There is more here of which I dare not write. Suffice it to say, larger forces were at work to divide Papuans and Bapak worried that it was working.

I wonder how long Bapak will live, but I shut off that thought. Mama will protect him. At this point in the conversation, Mama brings us tea and chocolate pudding. It was Mama who had taken or placed the many photographs haunting the hall. It is Mama who closes the door when Bapak's voice grows hushed. While the men talk inside, she and Mamas and young people sit on the terrace, reifying life with words and food and interaction. "Who has died?" "Eat this Red Fruit sauce that Julia brought me yesterday from the highlands." "Do you know what is so amazing about the Banana tree? Every part of it is useful!" While Bapak discusses the world, Mama holds it together.

Conclusion

Within the enforced silence of often unspoken violence, only hinted at in hidden spaces—murmurs of "they"; whispers of what happened to Papa Koinonia, the betrayal of Mama J

(personal communication); wonderings as to the “accidental deaths” of Franz, of Robert, of Ferdinand—it is the stories not told (Weingarten, 2003; Krog, 1999), the gaping holes around which life is lived which speak the magnitude of the violence. This is the unspoken and silent problem that is faced daily in the lives of Papuans.

The issue of silence rings out in studies of oppressed communities, raising a question articulated most notably by Spivak: “Can the subaltern speak” (1988)? The question of silence becomes even more salient in the context of genocide, where events are most often defined by outside observers or by perpetrators of violence (Power, 2002). In cases of extreme subjugation and annihilation, it is the absence of a voice, argues Turner, that is sometimes the only voice than can be found (Turner, 2003).

However, literature indicates cracks in this apparent silence! James C. Scott (1985) in his study *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, identifies the real, but subtle “backstage” actions of resistance carried out by peasants in response to powerful narratives of economic suppression (see also Petersen, 1984). Scott (1985) identifies the “weapons of the weak” as the everyday acts of resistance carried out by subjugated societies throughout history. These acts are characterized by “hidden transcripts” of humor, noncompliance, and bending of rules. These actions are rehearsed among the marginalized to create an alternative but hidden discourse of dignity that sustains survival, even though it remains hidden from the powerful.

While Scott affirms the hidden transcripts of the marginalized, the question remains: if the discourses of dignity remain hidden, can they “construct an empowering discourse capable of altering the power structures that construct and sustain its very subjectivity” (Turner, 2003, p. 130)? While the voice of the subaltern may speak, does not the very telling of its victimhood reaffirm “the tools and theories of the oppressor” (Turner, 2003, p. 130)?! So too, in the case of

the individual psyche, what is spoken is “so heinous, horrible, toxic, unacceptable” (Weingarten, 2003, p. 391), that, even though the silence is broken, the “victim” retains his/her status as victim, and the silencing structures of power and of violence are unchanged (Turner, 2003).

While the victimization and silencing of genocide is seemingly insurmountable, in that it aims at the eradication of a people, the remarkable resistance and lived dignity (Ammicht-Quinn, Junker-Kerry, & Tames, 2003) of a group of women in the town of Lincoln City has served as a space in which an alternative discourse of wonder—“a differential consciousness” (Sandoval, 2000)—has been sustained. Survival is an act of resistance within the context of sustained human rights abuse (Kelley, 2003; Power, 2002). And the continued physical and cultural survival of the West Papuan people under 50 years of Indonesian military rule is indeed an act of resistance which holds within it the potential for transformation. Under a regime which, rather than creating participatory spaces of empowerment, acts instead to streamline terror, torture, and death (Abrash, 2001; Banivanua-Mar, 2008; Brundige, *et. al.* 2004; Susanto, 2008), the very act of physical and cultural survival speaks.

Although Indonesian rhetoric aims to stamp out Papuan identity, an alternative and liberated identity flourishes among women in Papua— “the Mamas,” as they are called by their community (Giay & Kambai, 2003; Kelompok Kerja, 2010). These women engage in daily acts of resistance and survival—stories, songs, and everyday ways of caring for family which are able to maintain a level of laughter and of dignity, even in the midst of violence. It is these practices which form a collective consciousness of wonder and dignity, an alternative to the one imposed by the Indonesian state.

The following literature review chapters will further discuss these collective alternative consciousnesses as well as the growing movements of the Papuan Mamas and the literature which records their history, life and movements.

Chapter 3: Collective Expressions of Identity and Dignity in Totalitarian Systems

This review includes two chapters. The first explores texts of liberation, strength, and dignity under totalitarian conditions, with a special focus on such texts which are made by and from indigenous communities and women. The second explores literature regarding women and Papua. A literature review requires selection as not all texts can be included. As I explored texts, I had a Mama litmus test. I asked the Mamas in my heart if these were texts which addressed the reality of strength that they live. These were the questions I asked them in my heart.

Is it real—meaning, does it dwell and come out of the nitty gritty world?

Is it funny—does it make us chuckle, smirk, guffaw, giggle?

Is it strong? Does it leave us stronger through learning about it and reading it?

Does it look suffering in the eye and still retain some semblance of hope?

This literature selection, then, is inspired by the women of Papua. Through dark and winter nights, I found myself on a quest for literature that fit with the strength of the Mamas. I found shadows of theories and whispers, of laughter that knows the darkness. Here it is.

Introduction: The dream

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over
Like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.
Or does it explode? (Langston Hughes, 1970, p. 199)

We are made not only of sticks and stones and puppy dog tails (and everything nice!) (Crane, 1877). We are made of dreams (Kelley, 2002). Of words (Momaday, 1975). Of stories (Pratchett, 1991). Of songs (Gioia, 2006). And when we make and live in these things together,

we hold onto who we are (Tsing, 1993). Twelfth century Sufi poet and mystic Rumi writes, “Human beings are discourse. That flowing moves through you whether you say anything or not. Everything that happens is filled with pleasure and warmth because of the delight of the discourse that’s always going on” (The Essential Rumi, 1997, p. 76). Totalitarian systems are systems which intentionally dismantle identity (Arendt, 1958; Fontaine, 2012), replacing communal or clan identity with the identity of either citizens or ‘others’ (Marchak, 2003). Under such systems, communities use their imaginations to continually make and maintain their physical and cultural identity (Anderson, 1983; Smadar, Narayan, & Rosaldo, 1993; Tsing, 1993). Some research on this process focuses specifically on art, but in Papua, this process of maintaining physical and cultural identity takes all forms. In Papua, Mamas engage in the creativity of survival.

In *The Strength of Women*, Patricia Settee records stories of art and life from women across Canada. One of the tellers, Waabi-bizhikiikwe, creates embroidery and appliqué for herself, and in so doing sustains her being. She testifies, “It is in art we learn to survive. In art we find spirit which sustains us [...]. It is in art we find our way home” (Ningewance, 2011, pp. 64-65). Building on this, anthropologist Aihwa Ong (1987) states that identity is produced in “intersecting discursive fields” (in Tsing, 1993, p. 90) and Sarah Whitecalf states that identity is tied to language (in Settee, 2011). Art and language are among the living structures that carry identity, bringing people back to themselves (Sewell 1992 in Selbin, 2010). Holding onto this identity involves collective and imaginative practices of connection.

These practices of connection bring not only static identity, but something dynamic which carries within it a “force for social change” (Stene, 2011, p. 71). Writes Stene, “Art such as music, painting and writing have been a powerful form of resistance and source of healing for

women” (p. 57). A possibility for resistance and rebellion is carried within art and within story, Eric Selbin (2011) writes. Rapper Eekwol or Lindsay Knight illustrates this:

My words are weapons against the system. [...] I have strength beyond my own awareness sometimes, and find that I heal for my people and then take some of the weight for those that need help. I take no credit for any of this. It comes from another place [...]. I am still young and I am still angry. And I am not stupid. I have thousands of years backing me with powerful ancestors. I’m not scared because I am protected. I will fight with this weapon until I can’t fight anymore. (Knight, 2011, p. 68)

The collective creation over thousands of years that Knight describes is not a onetime event such as a political revolt (Fornet-betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Muller, & Gauthier, 1987). Rather, art and the creative power of language are repeated daily in the rituals of being. Art forges connections daily, and remembers and survives identity through every stitch and every song. Writes Stene, “My fabric art reflects traditional designs, which will ensure cultural continuity for future generations. [...] my art focuses on the fragility of nature and the interconnectedness and interdependence of human life in the natural world” (2011, p. 58). Art and creative practices of identity such as story allow people to engage in daily practices through which they “know themselves” and each other (Selbin, 2011, p. 25).

The creative power of art affirms the living nature of culture by offering “a counter-balance to the overwhelming negative focus of destruction, despair, violence and death” found in totalitarian systems (Stene, 2011, p. 58). Instead of dwelling in despair, creative activity allows people to dwell in what is beloved (Nouwen, 2002). In this beloved place, identities and dreams are carried. Mnaachimo-Kwe/Alice Olsen Williams (2011) always loved fabrics. She writes “I tried to think of ways that I could distinctively put myself into my work [...]. Who is me? What is me? Who am I? What has made me who I am?” (p. 61). Olsen Williams (2011) carries these questions of identity with her as she sews. And as she creates her quilts, she loves them, and

places herself in that love, writing “I love this so much that it’s going to be ‘the Me part’ of the rest of my life” (p. 62).

In spite of these inspirational examples, the question is this: Can collective expressive forms of resistance such as language, story, music (etc.), which carry deferred dreams, explode (nonviolently) in a totalitarian system and effect continued systems of survivance and dignity? To answer this question, I first give examples of deferred dreams which are sustained even under totalitarian rule, then I explore the nature of totalitarian rule, and finally I dive into dreams which keep exploding systems of dignity and strength.

Although I discuss each component in greater length in the body of this chapter, I offer some basic definitions here. By collective expressive forms of resistance, I combine Foucault’s (1987) daily “practices of liberty” with Sidran’s (1971) and Glazebrook’s (2004) description of the collective and connecting role of music in oral societies, to refer to daily and creative practices through which individuals sustain what Sandoval (2000) terms a collective “differential consciousness” which carries out “global oppositional politics” (p. 182), or more simply, the ways a community lives and expresses their dreams under sustained hostile conditions.

By totalitarian systems, I build on Arendt’s (1958) idea of “totalitarian bureaucracy” which systematizes what Fontaine (2012) describes as an erasure of identity, resulting in daily bureaucratic practices which attempt to remove both physical and cultural identity and connection from a people²³ (see also Menjivar & Rodriguez, 2005). I refer to systems rather than states, because totalitarian systems also target populations within democratic states (Arendt, 1958; Marchak, 2003; Menjivar & Rodriguez, 2005).²⁴ I have chosen to illuminate Ghandian

²³ This also relates to the genocide convention in Power (2002).

²⁴ I refer to totalitarian ‘systems’ rather than totalitarian ‘bureaucracies’, because I cannot for the life of me spell “bureaucracies” =).

principled nonviolence (Burrowes, 1996; Holmes & Gan, 2005; Jeong, 2000; Sharp, 2005) through stories of collective expressive resistance which carry and sustain the dreams or the ‘soul-force’ of a people (for a discussion of soul force, see Cortwright, 2008). In short, I try to illustrate in this discussion that the daily creative actions inherent in collective expressive traditions create and sustain an identity, or soul force which offers the strength and dignity needed to bring about social change (or exploding dreams!) in totalitarian systems.

This chapter will travel through the stories and theories upon which these definitions are built, including Vizenor, Scott, Bakhtin, Ester of Papua, Monae, Kelley, Anderson, Rumi, Toer, and Romero, to name a few. In connection to the context of my research in West Papua, I try to build on examples of collective expressive forms of resistance which reflect the actions of indigenous communities and women under totalitarian systems. The examples span across history and genre, from medieval mystics to 21st century rock stars, but all center on the way that collective expressive resistance carries, recreates, and remembers dreams and identity under totalitarian systems. How people keep surviving. Although I am discussing largely nonviolent actions of survival, I at times use violent language to honor the fierceness of these expressive forms, and the sheer soul force it takes not just to stay alive under such systems, but to giggle²⁵.

Part I: Dreams Deferred: Shadowlands

In one nearby canyon was a giant oak tree, and under its branches, where they brushed against the top of a sharp rise in the canyon wall, I had one of my favorite hiding places. Like an animal of the earth, I loved to rest in such secret places, where I could see but not be seen, and where I could dream. (Jack Forbes on what saved him when his family moved to L.A. in Vizenor, 1993, p. 21).

Before reveling in exploding dreams, I dwell first in dreams deferred. Gerald Vizenor (1993) in “The Ruins of Representation: Shadow Survivance and the Literature of Dominance”

²⁵ For this invaluable lesson, I thank Mama Koinonia.

writes of traces of “tribal survivance [...]the remnance of intransitive shadows” which shimmer even within dominant stories (p. 7). These shadows are, he writes, “the natural trace of liberation in the ruins of representation” which “bears a referent of tribal memories and experience” (p. 11). These shadow memories are collective and passed down through generations, resulting in Momaday’s grandmother hearing “the shadows of a landscape that she had never seen” (in Vizenor, p. 12). I trace these surviving shadows. For I believe it is these shadows that carry the force of soul that expressive traditions need, not merely to resist totalitarian systems, but, like Momaday’s grandmother, to recreate a space, a “differential consciousness” (Sandoval, 2002, p. 182) where a community is free to live and dream their world. This too is the case with the Mamas in Papua.

Shadows find flesh in remembered and storied land. Land loved and later taken away under the state is inscribed in dreams and lived in stories (Momaday, 1975; Vizenor, 1993). In these stories, Vizenor tells us, “The shadows and language of tribal poets and novelists could be the new ghost dance literature, the shadow literature of liberation that enlivens tribal survivance” (1993, p. 27-28). Echoing this vitality of poetry in movements of liberation, Anna M. Agathangelou writes of “sexual revolutionary poetics”—what she terms that “challenges and disrupts dominant wordlings of patriarchy, imperialism, and militant regimes” (2011, p. 582). Identity is rooted in Vizenor’s shadows and Agathangelou’s poetics, and such identities are lived through “a tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and world views that people carry in their heads,” Tilly (1978) tells us, stating that “The identities of people are rooted in common culture, language [...] and shared experiences and understandings” (Tilly in Selbin, 2012, p. 143).

I share below some concrete examples of the shadowlands where dreams dwell under totalitarian systems. These are slippery examples. Like Peter Pan’s shadow, they cannot be

caught. They are, to use Sandoval's (2000) words, an "obtuse, shimmering of signification that glances through every binary opposition" (p. 182). In order to survive, sometimes these shadow stories feed into the totalitarian systems they are under, and at other times turn them upside down. My first example is the shadowland created and lived by Uma Adang and her community in the Meratus mountains in Borneo (Tsing, 1993).

Shadows of the diamond queen.

Under the terror of state-sanctioned, military-enforced logging, Anna Tsing (1993) invokes the refusal of her friends in the Meratus mountains of Kalimantan²⁶ "to be numbed by terror in a terrifying world" (p. xi). In *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*, Tsing explores identity vivified through real and imagined dialogue between Meratus Dayaks and government and global forces. The Meratus Dayaks form and shape their marginality through protesting and reinterpreting the processes by which they are ruled. As part of this response, the women of the community "offered complaints and sarcastic remarks and a few challenged local standards to become leaders themselves and publicize their views" resulting in, Tsing states, a destabilization of the "asymmetries of ethnicity and state rule" (pp. 8-9).

This destabilization comes in the form of Uma Adang, who, on the afternoon of June 21, 1974, heard voices from the ancient Majapahit kingdom of Indonesia which "told her the true forms of history, ritual, and law" (Tsing, 1993, p. 6). She began leading her village in these true forms and was still doing so when Tsing arrived in 1980. At a time when the Meratus were living on land that was suddenly summoned to fuel the global economy, Uma Adang was receiving lessons from the original diamond queen of Meratus legend. The diamond queen was a ruler who came when her people needed her—when the rains would not stop, and the rice would not grow.

²⁶ Although known in the West as Borneo, the name in Indonesia is Kali (River) and Intan (Diamonds). Or River of Diamonds.

The village sent Datu Limber with gold dust to the city to request a king, but in the journey back over the mountains, the king died. So they sent Datu Limber again, and “this time, he got *Ratu Intan*, the Diamond Queen, who hiked over the mountains from the West side to her new seat [...] She instituted the *dewa* [god/goddess] rituals performed today, bringing *adat* [ritual ceremony], ceremony, and well-being” (Tsing, 1993, p. 277).

When the diamond queen visited Uma Adang, the situation was as dire as it had been upon her first coming. The military had arrived. Malaysian and Korean companies were cutting down her forests. The world was turned on its head, but with the Diamond Queen’s arrival, Uma Adang was ready to re-discover her “powerful history” (Tsing, 1993, p. 11). This powerful history was retold in many ways, but most often through parody. Uma Adang used fake Qur’anic readings, “‘Government’ speeches full of unintelligible patriotic verbiage and eerie pronouncements about the political intersections of the past and the future” (p. 11). Just as Uma mocked with accomplished pomp, family and neighbors responded with equally sarcastic parodies. Their parody was serious business through which they “simultaneously reproduce ridicule and refuse the constraints and categories of every day domination” (p. 255).

Uma Adang, through her parodic remembering of the Diamond Queen, not only fought the history which demanded that the military rule, that the trees be cut down, and that her people were expendable. She constructed a new history, another system in which to dwell. Her rituals of speech were a “conjuring act” in which “new forms of speech, new regional positioning and new local and global ‘histories’ are formed” (Tsing, 1993, p. 255). Uma Adang’s actions did not just remake history, they re-made place. Retelling the Diamond Queen’s journey across the mountains, Uma Adang and her co-conjurors named the places their Queen passed through. In their ritualized “litany of the landscape” (p. 278), Uma and her community re-claimed land taken

by state and companies. Their stories became political spaces where they “renegotiate[d] the state’s terms” and their chants became their “travel passes through which shamans try to outmaneuver the state’s protection” (p. 96). They lived in a world where their Diamond Queen reigned. And unlike the military and the state rulers, she knew that they were there.

Uma Adang’s parodic politics, alternative histories, and Diamond Queen were “no joke but a gesture of respect toward how much imagination it takes to stay alive” (Tsing, 1993, p. 254). Uma Adang and her people, through their collective expressive actions, dwelled in what Tsing calls a “positioned imagination” through which they created a world where even marginalized groups can control their own destinies. Through their slippery and parodic homage to the systems which they mock, the Meratus both “bend to state power and evade it as they point to the violence of administration and the ritual order of development [...] they thus confound order and its subversion” (p. 289).²⁷

Queen Ester of Papua.

There was once a queen who saved her people with body, courage, and wit. Hadassah, later renamed Esther, together with the council of her Uncle Mordechai, saved her people from genocide by her then husband, King Xerxes (The Book of Esther). Her life is celebrated upon the Jewish holiday of Purim which remembers her role in the salvation of the Jewish people.

There is another Ester who saved her people through the use of her body, her courage, and her wits. Eben Kirksey in his introduction to *Freedom in Entangled Worlds* (2012) shares the story of Ester Nawipa. She told him of how she was abducted by soldiers from her home in a village in the Enarotali region when she was 15. She describes what they said, ““You are going to be our new girlfriend”” (in Kirksey, 2012, p. 2). Although she protested her capture, her uncles

²⁷ And they giggle.

told her, “‘We could all end up dead here—it’s better if you just go with them’” (in Kirksey, 2012, p. 3).

Ester was raped routinely by 6 soldiers over a year’s time before she became the “exclusive ‘girlfriend’ of the commander” (in Kirksey, 2012, p. 3). When she was in this position, Ester said, “No villagers were ever shot while I was there. When soldiers’ tempers would rise, I would steal their guns and hold on to their magazines of bullets [...] while I was the commander’s girlfriend—I might have saved thirty people from getting shot” (p. 4). Kirksey writes that Ester insisted on sharing her story with her own name. He writes of her “despite being trapped in an extreme situation of exploitation, she managed to assert herself in a subtle way. Ester exceeded the conditions of her exploitation. She became a voice of peace, of human rights, or freedom” (2012, p. 4).

In my mama curated mind, I imagine that her story ends, like the Queen Esther of history, this way, “*And it was decreed upon that day that every year, upon the date of her capture, the people of Papua would sing songs of her courage and share food with the poor, and eat together in memory of the way that Ester Nawipa saved them.*”

Shadows of another queen.

The British are strong-minded, out-spoken people who are ambivalent about very little except possibly the monarchy and sex. So it was inevitable that out of the rock rebellion would come a group with the exploitative impudence to crown themselves Queen. (Hauptfuhrer, 1977, p. 177)

There is another Queen. A Queen who turned the British empire and the world upside down. A boy from Zanzibar, Farrokh Bulsara, walked the line between male and female, colonizer and colonized, subverting empire through the canvas of his colonized, sexualized, and dying body (see de Boer, 1999). Although Freddie Mercury’s feminized caricatures made Queen unpopular with the press, Freddie and his band rocked the masses from Latin America to Great

Britain. And they are still champions of many, de Boer claims, even after Mercury's death, as is evidenced by the case of a seventeen-year-old boy in 1999 whose back was etched with "homo" because he liked to listen to Queen (de Boer, 1999).

Freddie resisted the systems of gender hierarchy and the violent 'othering' of gay men by dwelling in the incongruous middle, between masculinity and femininity. De Boer (1999) writes, "Mercury's image formed 'a complex interplay, slippage and parodic recontextualization of gender markers and gender categories'" (p. 36). Often appearing as the harlequin, Freddie was a living alternative to patriarchal images of rock and roll. Living Bakhtin's (1984) carnival in his body, he intentionally "costum[ed] himself in outfits that transgress traditional concepts of masculine dress" (De Boer, 1999, p. 41), using his body as a canvas for his audience (Freddie Mercury, 1993). His body exuded both strongly masculine and feminine stances, and, de Boer writes, his "form of drag (in costume and in movement) is subversive, as it reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is itself produced and disputes heterosexuality's claim on naturalness and originality" (1999, p. 57). This resulted in what Gerber terms a "category crisis [...] A failure of definitional distinction" creating a permeable border which can be crossed at will (Gerber, 1997, p. 16 cited in De Boer, 1999). In 1980 with the advent of his moustache, Mercury shifted from his boundary-confusing look to an overtly homosexual look. Some fans sent him razors in the mail, but he kept playfully expressing himself while never fully revealing his sexuality. He used a "camp sensibility" (Susan Sontag, 1969, p. 277), characterized by ironic juxtapositions, to mock norms.

Mercury used this camp image as a picture of sexual liberation, de Boer states, but I would also argue that, alongside the sexual liberation, was a symbolic liberation from British global imperialism. His Queen ruled a kingdom unlike any other, where,

On occasion at the end of concerts, Mercury would appear under the bright stage lights, draped in a floor length, fur-trimmed, red velvet robe and a jeweled crown. Accompanied by Brian May's orchestrated electric guitar rendition of 'God Save the Queen,' Mercury would regally cross the stage, head raised high, as if he were the Royal King (or Queen?) himself [...] an irony of 'sacred' juxtaposed against the 'profane' being played out in front of the eyes of millions of fans. (de Boer, 1999, p. 74)

In contrast to the Sex Pistol's direct assault on the monarchy in their rendition of 'God save the Queen,' Queen's appropriation of the song was "a knowing wink" subtle and audacious, and not quite able to be appropriated (de Boer, 1999, p. 74). Freddie used the symbols of empire which had ruled his land to glorify something repulsive to that empire: a gay, colonized man. This audacious parody can be found even in the very construction of Queen's music, which combines styles based in such traditional European masterpieces as Handel's Messiah with bawdy songs and choruses (de Boer, 1999). In conjunction with Julia Kristeva's idea "that calls for women to embrace their Otherness as a subversive force," Freddy owned his otherness, delighted in it, and used it as power to subvert a system which had attempted to remove his ethnic and sexual identity (Kristeva in de Boer, 1999, p. 80). He was the champion, my friends.

Motherwork in the shadows.

Land is a Macro prototype of our Mother [...] Land known as Mother Earth is not a metaphor to Dine. Mother Earth is a being who is a source of life, gives birth to all living creatures, and sustains the life of her children by providing them with food and protection [...]. Land...is a place of conception, birth, growth and development, and death. (Canella and Manuelito, 2008, p. 53)

Since childhood I was taught by my mother to be a free person. Not ordering others around, and also not being ordered around by others. That was how my mother socialized us [...] my mind has been free since childhood. I create freedom for myself. (Pramoedya Ananta Toer in Rothschild 1999, p. 32)

As I write of Uma Adang, Ester, and Freddie Mercury, I remember the queens in my own life. My birth mother, and my Papuan mamas, mothers who move like queens through lands and worlds that are no longer technically their own. It is here that I would like to transition to another

way that dreams are held: I would like to discuss motherwork as a nonviolent expressive tool of shadow survivance under totalitarian rule. I base my discussion of motherwork on Lisa Udel's appropriation of Patricia Hill Collins "motherwork" in her article "Revision and Resistance: The Politics of Native Women's Motherwork" (2001). She defines motherwork as the life-giving and activist work of growing and sustaining life through procreation and the nurture of "children, communities, and the earth" (p. 43).

Both the Dine of Canada and the Amungme of Papua speak of the land as mother (Canella and Manuelito, 2008; Healey, 1998). This mother is powerful, a fiery and potent source and sustainer of life (Lutkehaus, 1995). While motherwork creates land and physical life, it also creates and sustains other forms of identity. The physically creative action of motherhood is often mirrored by the socially constructive acts of mothers in totalitarian systems.

When Cherokee chief Attakulla came to negotiate a treaty with the settlers he asked, "Where are your women?" (in Anderson, 2001, p. 65). One of the tools of European expansion in the Americas²⁸ was, Kim Anderson argues, to "disempower the women" because "Indigenous systems that allocated power to women were incompatible with the kind of colonial power dynamics that would be necessary to maintain colonial power" (2001, p. 58). Within the context of women's power in response to colonial encounters, Gail Canella and Kathryn Maneulito (2008) write, "Mestiza warrior wisdom would consciously construct new spaces for multiplicity, border essence, and woman identification" (p. 56). One such possessor of warrior wisdom is Molly Rush.

Sara Ruddick (2005) writes that mothers in their marginalized position within patriarchal systems have often been compelled to develop nonviolent strategies of interaction with and on

²⁸ Winnipeg Muslim Women's activist Shahina Siddiqui also states that this tool was used in the Arab Peninsula during European colonial endeavours. Personal Conversation, October, 2012.

behalf of their children. A vivid example of this death-destroying motherwork is the story of Molly Rush, a mother of six from Pennsylvania who used her conviction as a mother as a reason to destroy nuclear warheads in a General Electric plant in Pennsylvania. She saw her identity as a calling towards and on behalf of life. Liane Norman (2005) tries to explain Rush's perception of herself and her stated rationale for action, stating "Without being possessed of heroism, special insights, special morality or special intelligence, she was a mother, and she had made her decision on that basis" (p. 155). Rush's action was driven by her choice to love and affirm life—the lives of her children, of her enemy's children, and the earth (Norman, 2005).

Other mother warriors have formed organizations on behalf of their missing or murdered children. The mothers of the disappeared in Argentina and Papua perform vigils, marches, hold posters, and letters (Kelompok Kerja, 2010; Sosa, 2011). But mothers also engage in other creative acts of persistence. Sitting on the porch with Mama Warinuri in Papua one rainy afternoon, I listened to the latest news from Papua. She and her husband told me of recent Indonesian "military action" which stirred up violence among civilians. The more she and Papa Warinuri spoke, the more I clutched my coffee cup, scanning for anyone suspicious listening through the raindrops. Overcome for a moment by fear, I was surprised to see a grinning granddaughter open the screen door onto our conversation.

"What is her name?" I asked, glad to be distracted from our treasonous talk.

"Plebi²⁹," said Mama.

I stumbled over the unfamiliar name. "Plebi? What does it mean?"

Mama's eyes twinkled as she explained, wresting her keys from Plebi's eager fingers.

"She was born during the plebiscite (although unrecognized, Papuans have declared

²⁹ This is not her real name, but one with a similar meaning.

freedom number times). I named her ‘Plebiscite,’ but we call her Plebi for short”. In the midst of our fear, palpable as the raindrops, one little girl held freedom in her small, smiling self.

In addition to giving and holding onto to life and freedom, motherwork carries death when no one else will. Walter Brueggemann (2001) argues that one of the ways a largely silenced female population holds onto communal life and humanity is through their mourning. Derrida (2003) discusses such a “work of mourning” as an act of life and of creation. Through the remembering of love, we create again the one who is lost (Derrida, 2003). The ritualized wailing of Papua, known as *wor*³⁰ transfers the essence of the one lost into the lived voice of a melody, spreading across silent land and weeping mourners (Kamma, 1972, and personal notes). Through rituals of mourning, one who is lost *is* once more.

Broken bodies cast shadows of eloquence when no words are spoken. Rituals of mourning allow these bodies to speak (see Derrida, 2003; Brueggemann, 2001). From within the hegemonic discourses of totalitarian and patriarchal systems emerge stories of mourning from women. One story is Joyce Hollyday’s (1994) analysis of Rizpah, concubine of Israel’s first king, Saul. Rizpah comes into the story only when her husband has been overthrown, decapitated, his body nailed to a wall and her sons hanged. Their burial and rituals of mourning are forbidden. As her fate is being discussed by the military commander who raped her and the new king David, Rizpah, who in the biblical text never speaks, goes, takes down her husband and his sons, anoints them with oil, cradles their rotting corpses and weeps the tears that no one else will weep, at the risk of her own death (Hollyday, 1994).

Actions such as Rizpah’s offer connections which counter the disconnecting discourse of totalitarian systems. Rituals of mourning transform the dis-membering power of death into a “re-

³⁰ *Wor* refers to the wailing and singing during mourning, but also to many other forms of ritualized singing and celebration.

membering” of connections see (Cavanaugh, 1998). Totalitarian systems’ perpetration of unmourned everyday death and disappearance is a vital component in dismantling connections which could further resistance (Verbitsky, 2005). In a context where death is justified and where citizens pretend that the dismemberment of death and violence does not exist (Cavanaugh, 1998; Marchak, 2003), Rizpah’s use of her body to weep and mourn a death exposes a system which justifies such death. It is not merely her act of mourning, but the very embodiment found in death and physical suffering which offers a physical canvas where the stories of suffering can be told and heard, functioning as a space of resistance, when speaking is not possible.

Molly Rush, Mama Warinuri, and Rizpah name and deconstruct totalitarian systems and the disconnecting terror which sustains them. Such deconstruction is serious business, and some terror is so serious that it can only be overcome by laughter. A laughter which, like Rizpah’s sadness, is often lived in women’s physical bodies. In South Pacific societies, women dress like men, adding various male bodily accoutrements, in order to mock war dances (Mitchell, 1992). Such irony is also evident in the Russian band, Pussy Riot, an all-female punk band who danced into global consciousness on the altar of Russia’s largest orthodox cathedral (Elder, 2012). Through the very placement of their bodies and the sexuality of their name, Pussy Riot countered the totalitarian system of church and Putin’s Russia in one symbolic swoop, their actions combining the expressive tradition of music with something akin to the bawdy resistance of what Bakhtin (1984) called carnival humor (Bakhtin, 1984). Through these forms, both Pussy Riot and the women of Tubetube in the South Pacific juxtapose bawdy bodies with the sacred institutions of church, state, and warfare (Elder, 2012; Macintyre, 1992). For Pussy Riot, the severity of their punishment evidenced the power of their protest. They were heard and they were seen, their creativity catapulting their cause into public spectacle—making themselves, and their cause, real.

Ruth Wilson Gilmore (1999) documents the ways that women environmental activists “join forces not only as petitioners to the state [...] but [...] in the name of reconstructing space” (in Redmond, 2011, p. 15). These petitions to the state and to the community are carried out by the motherwork of Rizpah, Molly Rush and other mother warriors. Groups such as Pussy Riot and individuals such as Mama Warinuri carry their petitions from the realm of dreams into the realm of the real. This journey from shadow to flesh begins to reconstruct their dreams, and their worlds.

Theory I: Constructing a dream: social constructivism and the creation of place.

Psychoanalytic Anthropologist Gananath Obeyesekere (1990) argues that the social construction of being is what dreams do. I would expand on his discussion to state that the practice of such dreams, like the practice of motherwork described above, creates a space (both physical and imagined) to live in when land defined by totalitarian systems is annihilative. Below I explore a theoretical framework for this social construction of alternative spaces through popular expressive traditions, contending that through the daily practices of nonviolent and communal creation, through dreams dreamed and dreams shared, an already existing alternative space is both created and remembered.

Gergen (1985) describes a social constructivism which “views discourse about the world as an artefact of communal interchange, and is concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves)” (p. 266). N. Scott Momaday captures this linguistic social constructivism with elegance, stating, “We are made of words” (1975, p. 171). And Sufi Poet Rumi, with love, reminds us that human beings are an ever-flowing discourse that creates a world of delight and companionship (in Barks, 1997).

However, it is not only humans who are made of words and of interactions. It is also, Benedict Anderson (1983) contends, states that are socially constructed. It is this that makes collective expressive traditions such a powerful resistance to the state. Because, by using the same rules of social constructivism that create and maintain the state and totalitarian systems, collective expressive traditions create and maintain an equal and alternative social space to the state (see Webster's "notion state", 2001).

Benedict Anderson (1983) argues that nations are culturally constructed. He describes nations as "an imagined political community [...] both inherently limited and sovereign" (p. 6). Nationalism is a form of connection, like kinship or religion which lives within the "minds of each" person (p. 6). A nation is simply a "notion" shared (Webster, 2001). This is true of all communities larger than the face to face encounters of a primordial village (Anderson, 1983). Writes Seton-Watson, "All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they formed one" (in Anderson, 1983, p. 5). If a community is imagined, it lives. The argument follows, then, that if a nation is the shared imaginings of people, then an alternative and equally real shared imagining created and sustained by a group of people is just as real as a nation or a totalitarian system. Below, I give examples of collective expressive traditions which create and sustain such an alternative space or shared imagining where people and their dreams can dwell (for further examples see Bakhtin, 1984; Brandist, 1997; Williams, 2011).

Janelle Monae.

It's up to you to paint that vision. Not just talk about it, just do. As a result of doing, that's when you realize that it can be done.

—Janelle Monae on *Q*, 2011

What boundaries conceive a world? Is it the boundaries of a nation-state, conceived as princes fell (Anderson, 1983)? Is it the boundaries of race? Is it culture: that ever-changing, ever flowing construction of systems, belief, and practices, that builds who we are? Is it the economic networks that bind Congo to my Nokia phone? Is it the system of taxation which uses my resources to rule, govern, and protect? What is it that makes a world?

Janelle Monae, singer-songwriter and her alter ego Cindi Mayweather speak of what it is that makes a world. “My parents were wizards” she says (Monae, 2011). Growing up in Kansas, her father was a garbage man and a janitor, but her parents encouraged her to dream, she says. And so she dreamed. And like a long-ago Kansas wizard, she dreamed a new world into being. In her musical world, Janelle dwells in the future. She uses the character of android, Cindi Mayweather to “rewrite history,” using musical science fiction to comment on the ultimate other of a future universe—the nonhuman android. Through the stories in her songs, Monae gives this “other” a face, allowing Cindi to fall in love, to speak, and to sing.

Building on the theme of Oz, Janelle and her friends built the “Wondaland Arts Society,” with the belief that “imagination inspires a nation” (2011). Janelle Monae imagines in her lyrics, her music, and her videos, a world where the “stolen [...] kings and Queens, Sudanese and Congolese, who put the roll in rock” sing. A world where totalitarian systems of colonialism, racism, and capital-driven war are driven out by an active participation in dance (“you might as well keep dancing if you’re not gonna run” (Joseph, Robinson, Parker, Irvin, & Williams, 2010)). A world where “They run from us, are we that dangerous? There’s a war in all the streets and yes the freaks must dance or die” (Joseph, Robinson, Parker, Irvin, & Williams, 2010). In her songs Monae creates a world through dance, song, and her own black woman’s

body where the history of violence can be lived and transformed into active agency (Redmond, 2011).

In her music, Monae is, like her parents, a wizard. She's not in Kansas anymore. She chants on stage in her black wizard's cloak, "These dreams are forever" (Joseph, Robinson, Parker, Irvin, & Williams, 2010). She explores these forever dreams which interrupt the numbness of totalitarian systems supported by the culture industry, asking,

Zombie, zombie, zombie, where do dreams come from?
A little bird is chirping and she's singing a song
She's shaking 'em and waking em and giving 'em *mas*
As the clock tick tocks and the bodies drop
[...]It's still a war in all the streets and yes freaks will dance or die. (2010)

Monae's music models a social constructivist/interactionist view of society which begins to explore how to move from a dream deferred to an exploding dream. Writes Redmond (2011) of Monae, "The themes of free speech, access to community or public space, and safety from physical and psychic assault, especially white supremacist violence, scaffolds much of the efforts of black women to construct alternative worldviews during the 20th century" (p. 393). With Monae, we dwell in an inter-galactic dialectic between freedom realized in our own psyches and freedom collectively externalized in creative ways. One way that these collective alternative worlds are lived is through what Scott (2009) terms "non-state spaces" (p. 1).

Constructing non-state spaces.

In *The Art of Not Being Governed*, James C. Scott (2009) documents a mountainous space in southeast Asia where communities, although technically under the jurisdiction of China, Burma, Cambodia, and India, have existed for hundreds of years largely outside the influence of the economic taxation system of both pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial states. These "non-state spaces" are tightly linked to landscape, existing in regions largely inaccessible from the

economic and agricultural centers. Although part of different states, these non-state spaces share significant characteristics (Scott, 2009). They share agricultural means of production, often farming nutritious, mobile crops in small plots interspersed in forests to ensure mobility and hiddenness from bureaucratic taxation procedures. They share similar forms of social organization—small scale clans with no more than fifteen families. And their myths are perpetuated also in highly mobile ways, post-literate ways, through stories rather than documented sources. Many dwelling in these non-state spaces have intentionally fled for hundreds of years the economic systems of taxation and ideological and linguistic control in the lowlands, and have developed through much intentionality and practice an art of creating and cultivating their non-state spaces.

Eben Kirksey's 2012 book, *Freedom in Entangled Worlds* and Danilyn Rutherford's 2011 book, *Laughing at Leviathan* deserve special mention here. Rutherford and Kirksey capture in the respective texts the perseverance, determination, dignity, and even playfulness of the process by which the Papuan community continues to assert the ideological and physical non-state space in which it exists. Kirksey writes in his introduction to *Freedom in Entangled Worlds*, "In short, I argue that freedom emerges when people collaborate with existing institutions of power while imagining seeping transformations on future horizons. Imaginative dreams bring surprising prospects into view when translated into collaborative action" (2012, p. 1).

While Kirksey focuses on creative collaborations across boundaries of power, Rutherford explores the multitude of actors and audiences which, together, create a state. She, in her own words, "dissect[s] the play of gazes that incites and thwarts claims to sovereignty" (2011, p. 1). She delves into the inherent dichotomy of sovereignty, where to be sovereign is to have absolute power, but in order to have that absolute power, others (an audience) have to see and witness that

absolute power. Only with an audience can there be sovereignty, thereby negating the very definition of sovereignty which means absolute power (Rutherford, 2011, p. 3-5). This presence of audiences who can often become interlocuters in defining a “sovereign” space can catch sovereigns “off balance when the power they seek suddenly appears as dispersed across a shifting political terrain” (2011, p. 6). Rutherford continues, “The proliferation of these audiences opens opportunities for new claimants to partake in the dream of sovereignty, but [...] it also makes it difficult to sustain the illusion of being in charge” (2011, p. 6). She uses examples from across Papuan history to demonstrate a sovereignty in constant negotiation. A space of sovereignty where many incongruous audiences interlocute, throwing those who think they rule off balance. A space where, to use Robin Kelley’s (2003) words, “a freedom dreamed” is real.

Rituals of not being governed.

Ritual configures a structural space that forms and shapes lives. Rituals grounded in popular expressive traditions are among the “arts” used to construct non-state spaces among the people of Eastern Indonesia. In *Language, Identity and Marginality in Indonesia: The Changing Nature of Ritual Speech on the Island of Sumba* Joel Kuipers (1998) recounts that Sumba linguistic rituals, once feared lost, were remade in conjunction with new needs in the Indonesian system of the 80s which attempted to erase the use of indigenous languages through Indonesianizing children in schools. In Sulawesi, the ritual of *Mabolong* is the ongoing process by which the relations that make up society are constructed. Atkinson’s (1992) book, *The Art and Politics of Wana Shamanship* “shows how collective ritual operates as a means of both convening communities and conjuring a polity” (p. i). Ritual opens up a world (Ricouer, 1979 in Atkinson, 1992). The Mabolong shamans open up this world through song, borrowing from

different languages, playing on words, summoning their “spirit familiars” (Atkinson, 1992, p. 16). Through accessing these powers, shamans heal both physical and communal bodies.

Ritual, Victor Turner tells us, operates in the “subjunctive mood” in contrast to “the indicative mood” of daily life (in Atkinson, 1992, p. 18). This means that ritual imagines what could be by creating new space and timeless time. Turner terms this liminality: “The ‘dismemberment’ of order in the context of ritual liminality, the ‘time out’ from social life that ritual affords in the process of transforming participants identities and consciousness” (1981, p. 160). The Wana and the people of Sumba used their ritual in a time when the Indonesianization in language, culture, and political systems was overtaking their formerly non-state spaces. Wana used “ritual practices to cope with political turmoil” (Atkinson, 1992, p. 19). The spiritual and political realms are intertwined through Wana rituals which create leadership and social cohesion and serve as the primary form of “political organization” and participation within Wana society (1992, p. 7). Mauss, in his discussion of magical performance, notes the way that such a performance draws participants into the process, where “they become as much actors as spectators in the magical performance” (Mauss in Atkinson, 1992, p. 230), where actors can participate and determine the nature of their own political and social spaces, even as totalitarian systems encroach.

Exposing the contradictions of totalitarian systems: surrealism, a freedom dreamed

Our homeland is one and the same whether it be in here or outside
Time and space cannot be separated
I see the moon through a keyhole
You watch it rise over the shore
The moon, it too is one and the same
For all our homeland
One time

In differing places (Balinese poet, Putu Oka Sukanta in Hoadley, 2005, pp. 28-29).

Non-state spaces exist, not merely in physically isolated regions discussed by Scott, but also within the very strongest confines of totalitarian systems. There are practices of constructing, or *doing* culture (Obeyesekere, 1990)—what Foucault terms “practices of liberty” (Fornet, *et.al.*, 1987) and what Bourdieu calls “habitus” (Bourdieu, 1977)—which are no less real than the realist world of totalitarian systems. These practices are able to transform the experienced reality of these systems.

There are many ways to do this, as seen in the examples of Janelle Monae, Freddie Mercury, and Uma Adang, but a practice that is specifically tuned to transform the experienced reality of totalitarian systems is surrealism. Surrealism, Robyn Kelley (2003) argues in *Freedom Dreams*, was one of the first movements to question the ideological hegemony of the West, forming an infusion of non-western ways of thinking, being, and expressing into the world of politics, social theorizing, art and music. In a world where the “real”, in North American discourse—of a home, freedom, and plenty—corresponded with the reality of few, surrealism was embraced by African American artists in the 20th century. For them, the surreal was more real than the “real”. They lived in a world where they worked under crystal chandeliers, and lived with no electricity; where they walked while internal combustion engines motored by; where they laundered fine silk and picked cotton. Their reality was surreal, Kelly (2003) argues. They dwelled in contradictions, and naming these contradictions through art, they exposed the fabrication of what the capitalist state portrayed as “real”. In exposing these contradictions, these communities no longer bought into the ideological reality portrayed through mainstream images and music in the United States. Exposing the surreality of what had been real was their first step in creating, Kelley tells us, a different world.

This dream of another world begins with a recognition of the inconsistencies of the economic and cultural hegemony in existence since Portuguese maritime expansion in the 16th century and Gunder Frank (1998) argues also present in the China-centric economic milieu of pre-European expansion. Through surreal images that result from juxtaposing wealth and privilege with poverty, communities are able to reveal the false consciousness upon which this economic and political colonization is constructed (Fanon & Farrington, 1965). It is the internalization of this false consciousness (Freire, 1996)—working for the profit of another while ignoring the freedom of oneself—upon which colonial systems depend. Totalitarian systems, like colonial systems, also primarily control through ideological hegemony (Gramsci, 1990) and through fear (Arendt, 1958). It's cheaper than raw force. However, Freire (1996) argues, that once hegemony is overcome on an ideological level, the work of freedom has begun!³¹

Although the means of violence and political control may still be in the hands of the state, the contradictions and absurdity inherent in the system are exposed by surrealism, leaving space for an already existing internal freedom to blossom—what Ghandi might term “soul force” (in Holmes and Gan, 2005), and Martin Luther King Jr. (1963) speaks of as the “strength to love” in his book by the same name. What Monae (2011) speaks of as the recognition of one's own worth. What Ross terms dignity (in Cull, 2009), and Kelley (2003) calls freedom dreamed.

It is in this realm of freedom dreamed that collective expressive resistance functions. We create the world in which we live. And through the very act of living we continue to create our world, like children who “without fear” (Monae in Redmond, 2011), play their way into understanding the realities, boundaries, and interactions which conceive society (Smadar, Narayan, & Rosaldo, 1993). But the miraculous piece which allows collective expressive

³¹ Woot woot!

traditions to build society is that society is not static. It is continually being recreated—bending, binding, winding around boundaries. Dividing, forging new alliances, new ideas, new realities, while reconfiguring and re-membling the old (see Engle Merry, 2006). The formalized, on paper structure of the state, particularly of the totalitarian state, is static. It is a structure which attempts to quantify and possess its people and resources both physically and ideologically for its own maintenance and unending sovereignty (Arendt, 1958). It is one static story. A totalitarian story (Marchak, 2003).

However, Andaya argues, this one story never really existed, although, and here's the joke, it thought it did! There has always been, Scott (1990) avers, and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) explicates, resistance to such totalitarian stories. Bakhtin, in his study of 16th century French novelist Rabelais, outlines the ever-present resilient counter-narratives to the state and to the church in the form of Carnival. In the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th centuries, for every holy somber church festival grounded in Cartesian neoplatonic duality—celebrated through the systems of golden order and control where soul/mind were holy and good, and body and masses were unruly and bad; there was always a counter festival! These counter-festivals celebrated the other story. The bawdy body—low-born, crude, lustful, jocular and uncontrolled (Brandist, 1997). For every Lent, there was a Mardi Gras. For every ball, a carnival. These counter festivals reveled in the creation, Bakhtin argues, of a space where the hegemony of the feudal system, the church, and later the state, did not exist. Grounded in humor, jocularly, and a bawdy embodied laughter, a new space *was*. Even while the old space thought it wasn't.

Theory II: Arteries of Freedom in the Popular Expressive Traditions: Exploding Dreams

Bakhtin's embawdiment of freedom parallels Foucault's discussion of colonial control on the arterial level (discussed in Scott, 2009). Foucault insists that it is from this arterial level that

resistance too must persist through “practices of liberty”—arterial practices through which society makes and remakes itself daily (in Fornet *et.al.*, 1987) and eventually, if one extends the bodily metaphor, causes the totalitarian heart to explode. When such arterial practices of freedom are not allowed in the political realm, they can be held in the expressive traditions of a society as in the case of Wana shamans discussed earlier and the embedding of Estonia’s political consciousness in collective and localized choral practices to be discussed in a later section (Puderbaugh, 2008).

Arterial freedoms practiced through collective expressive traditions under totalitarian systems are often sneaky. Forms of expression where people can communicate their dissatisfaction in hidden ways and still stay alive—what Scott would term a “hidden transcript” of resistance (1990, p. 5). These forms allow people to communicate with each other (often in hidden ways) and to form a collective dream to hold onto and to live in until the dream is ready to explode. This allows communities to express themselves as agents of creativity, creating their world, while still retaining their survival.

I would like to mention here not simply resistance. What I have discovered as I have researched popular expressive traditions of nonviolent “resistance” under totalitarian systems, is that the methods of resistance stem from the cultural strengths of agency and “detournement” (Swedenburg, 2004) practiced by communities, often prior to the arrival of an occupying force.³² Such acts as music, dance, spirituality, mourning, literature, story-telling and mothering are actions which form the strength of a society. Their very strength arises, not from being reactionary, but from being actionary. They are not simply deconstructing violence or terror

³² For this thought I thank Shannon Courtemanche Cormier for her conversation of February, 2012.

(Brandist, 1997). Violence and terror are deconstructing these systems which were (I dream) there first. Below, I will explore some specific collective expressive practices of persistence.

Music (and dance).

Lucille brought me out of the plantation.

B.B. King on his guitar,
Lucille

Indians who don't dance, who don't believe in this word [of the Ghost dance] will grow little, just about a foot high, and stay that way. Some of them will be turned into wood and be burned in the fire. (Captin Dick, in Vizenor, 1993, p. 27)

In "*Put a Song on Top of It*" a young woman on the Apache reservation in Arizona remembers the past of her people (Samuels, 2004). When she remembers this past, she cannot comprehend how they survived. It is only when she hears Mariah Carey's song *Hero* that she knows how they did it. "They put a song on top of it" she says (p. 176). Songs offer physical pleasure and healing (Sacks, 2010). They are imbedded in the everyday and at the same time, journey outside of time. Putting a song on top of it, Samuel's informant explains, transports us to another space where we can put another reality on top of the one we are living. One no less real as the one that we live in.

We sang before we spoke, Sachs (2010) argues. There is a structure deeper than the meaning making of speech (see Chomsky's (1969) "deep structure" of language). A fluid structure of connection to ourselves, our evolutionary history, the land, and each other, through music. The earliest music reproduced the sounds of nature. The rhythm of heartbeat, the pounding of rice. The melody of birds and streams. On the level of the brain, music can promote memory (Sachs, 2010). On the level of the body, rhythm can heal. Where totalitarian systems attempt to dismantle previous connections and recreate connections characterized by informant culture, pitting citizens against each other (Marchak, 2003), art and music reveal "constellations

of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time, space [...] connecting (however unstable) parts to a constructed configuration or a social network” (Somers 1992 in Selbin, 2010, p. 25). Musical stories create a shared identity, enmeshing people “in a single society by transmitting shared pictures of how the world is or ought to be” (Appiah, 2003, p. 46). Identities are bound in story and in art.

‘Beneath the Flag Pole’: reclaiming humanity in Papuan music.

If we don’t sing, we will die

—Papuan Saying

Identities and connections bound up in melodies and stories of music are evident in Papuan musical interactions with the Indonesian State. Symbols such as flags, land, clothing and hair emerge in Papuan music, both to appease the Indonesian state and to reinforce Papuan reality. One example is Edo Kondologit’s “*Aku Papua*” in which he reinvests traditional symbols of Papuan denigration (black skin, tribalism, and curly hair) with dignity (Sahilatua, 2008). Against the video backdrop of curly haired children, traditional grass huts, and tribal dancing, Edo sings “Black is my skin, curly my hair. I am Papua. Even if the heavens should tear apart, I am Papua” (Sahilatua, 2008). Holding the identity of Papua within his song, Edo triumphantly sings of a body which, even though it is continually violated because of its blackness, persists.

Kondologit walks the line between the Indonesian state and the Papuan national consciousness—a line lived by many Papuans in order to survive. He married an Indonesian singer, and at the same time grew his curly hair long (a symbol of freedom). He sings to an Indonesian crowd in Jakarta, a song which, at first glance is a nationalist song: “Beneath the Flag Pole (*Di Bawah Tiang Bendera*)” written by Iwan Fals (2011). Fals was, however, exiled under Suharto’s new order regime and wrote songs which parodied Indonesian corruption. His song “Beneath the Flag Pole”, while on the surface, a patriotic song whose chorus lifts up the name of

Indonesia, is, upon deeper analysis, a call for Indonesians to see their common humanity and fight against the everyday violences experienced by other Indonesians.

As Edo sings, the camera captures the cheers of an Indonesian audience lauding the wayward Papuan's musical ode return to Indonesia (Budiman, 2011). But a closer look at the lyrics indicates that there is more to this song than just nationalism. One of the primary purposes of nonviolent action, Martin Luther King (2008) argues, is to create spaces of discussion and negotiation where a party once viewed as not worthy of speech is seen, heard, and recognized as an interlocutor. Edo's performance of "Beneath the Flag Pole" does just this! Here is the text:

We are brothers
From the womb of Mother *Pertiwi*...
Grown by the ages
Beneath the flag pole
We were once together...
We could believe in each other.
We were certain that in our steps
We could pass through the storms of history.
From the same earth, we stand
From the same water, we vow.
Because our blood is the same
Do not fight.
Because our bones are the same
What is the use of fighting?
Indonesia. Indonesia. Indonesia
Let us meditate
And then let us ask
Is it true that that we are human?
Is it true what God says?
Say I love you (Fals, 2003-2012, my translation).

Although Edo's audience may have felt that the singer of "I am Papua" fame was supporting Indonesian sovereignty, he was also declaring equality. Underneath the flag pole (also a potent symbol for Papuan identity) Edo asks a packed stadium of Indonesians, "Is it true that we are human" (Budiman, 2011)? Using the same imagery, Rev. Manusia, as he spoke to an audience of Indonesians and international peace workers in the Philippines ended his description

of Papuan history and Indonesian takeover with these words, “If I break in two, my blood is red like yours. We are the same. We are brothers”.³³

Literature.

During the Indonesian New Order, a time characterized by economic prosperity and repressive politics, literature and music were one way that resistance was expressed. The never-told violence of the means by which President Suharto had come to power through an anti-communist coup where between 200 and 500 thousand civilians were killed (Gareau, 2004) was told by Indonesia’s writers and musicians rather than its’ historians.

One of the tools of a totalitarian system is silence (Menjivar & Rodriguez, 2005). Silence regarding the atrocities that have been committed, and silence of the names of those who once were. If the shadows that survive are never be spoken, then maybe they will go away and the connections with the rebellious dead will be severed. However, although silence reigns in Indonesian history, it does not reign in its literature! Hoadley (2005) writes that “Those who scrutinize Indonesia’s communist past are the writers—not historians” (p. 2). In a three-week period in 1965, across Java and Bali, more people were killed than were killed in the entire Vietnam war. For 40 years after the event, to even use the word “Communist” resulted in imprisonment or death. What could not be reported, however, was storied and poemed by writers, and although those who wrote were often exiled, imprisoned, or executed, they kept writing.

Such authors as Ahmad Tohari, Umar Kayam, and Pramoedya Ananta Toer wrote about the crises in society that resulted from the killings of Indonesian communist civilians in October and November of 1965. Although the political realm is not highlighted in their stories, family

³³ Manusia, Charles (not his real name). Davao, Mindanao. May, 2012.

stories are told against the backdrop of the Indonesian Communist party (the third largest in the world at the time, after the USSR and China), and the state's response. The silence is spoken, broken, even in the titles of the authors' works: *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang* (The Mute's Soliloquy) and *Mencoba Tidak Menyerah* (Trying Not to Give Up) (in Hoadley, 2005). Many authors, in spite of the familiness of their tales, told too much, and were imprisoned. Former Political prisoner, Hr. Bandararo's writes in *Poems Written in December 1965*:

Stories come
Of the young sons and daughters of our land dying
Corpses sprawled across the roads
Or swept away in the rivers
Why does all this death
Have to strike our land?
Those who died do not know (in Hoadley, 2005, p. 51).

The first novelist to write about the killings was Ajip Rosidi in the mid-80s in his book *Anak Tanah Air*, or *Children of our Homeland*. He wrote about civil society's role in the massacre. In their works, the authors "challenge the official version of what happened after the coup attempt" (Hoadley, 2005, p. 6).

Through their stories, these writers call Indonesia to "come to terms with its past" (Hoadley, 2005, p. 123), In doing this, they succeed in Adorno's requirement for art to "perform a negative role" in refuting the official versions of the events of 1965 (in Hoadley, 2005, p. 5). Through their stories, as through the motherwork of mourning, those hundreds of thousands who were forgotten, *were*. At the end of one of his books, Pramoedya Ananta Toer included a list of 325 detainees in prison with him who did not survive. He includes their names and pieces of their story in his writing "so that they will not be forgotten" (in Hoadley, 2005, p. 133).

Practicing presence—a spiritual practice of resistance.

Bakhtin's (1985) discussion of the alternative and resisting space was a space outside of time, a special moment of festival and carnival. But what happens in ordinary time? In those times between festivals, where everyday reigns? In this section, I propose that the arterial work of liberation often takes the form of spiritual practices (Gutierrez, 1988). These practices can form a space where communities can organize and live their dreams outside of the larger and more dramatic carnival spaces of which Bakhtin speaks.

When I was young I read a small book by a 17th century monk. Brother Lawrence had been a soldier and a footman, and upon his retirement from the military, became a lay brother. Befitting his class, he was given dish duty. His biographer writes, "He was a great awkward fellow who broke everything" (Lawrence of the Resurrection, 1958, p. 9). But in his dishwashing, he was serene, cheerful even, and others began to spend time in his presence. When asked his secret, he said that he did not find God in meditations and prayer, but somehow, when he turned, God was there. In the kitchen.

Brother Lawrence's daily practice of God's presence flowed outward from his own internal realization into a practice that has influenced generations of all faiths. He writes: "In the noise and clutter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the Blessed Sacrament" (1958, p. 26). There is something of the surreal in Brother Lawrence. A clumsy footman no one else would take ends up in the kitchen. And as he breaks dishes, he finds God. Lawrence carried an internal power, a liberation within himself. So much so that powerful ones—bishops and rich sad French ladies—wrote letters to him begging to know the secret of his practice. He answered that he had found God, not in the hallowed halls of the cathedral, not in the bishop's presence, but that God was always with him. That "the shortest way, to go straight

to Him” was “by a continual practice of love and doing all things for his sake” (1958, p. 15).

Brother Lawrence broke down the wall between God and men, in the kitchen. He discovered that the daily practice of the presence of power was where power was.

Brother Lawrence lived both in the space where he was and in the space where God was. This phenomenon was not unique to Brother Lawrence. Sufi mystical poet Rumi too lived in two worlds, writing of Sobhet—a deep communal meditation with friends which draws one out of one world, and into another (The Essential Rumi, 1997). As I read of these religious practices of the ecstasy of the everyday, however, Marx rears his lovely head³⁴, reminding me of the opiating tendencies of religion. My stuffed Marx tells me, “Lawrence still washed dishes, Julian! And Rumi’s most beloved friends were assassinated.” So really, their dream worlds changed nothing. It was simply ancient ecstasy. “Get Real,” Marx tells me. And I am inclined to agree.

But then I read Rumi and Brother Lawrence, and something changes. I too am a nonviolent practitioner of popular expressive tradition. And when I wake up in the morning, I am often paralyzed by the totalitarian systems of patriarchy, capitalism, and terror which I have lived. But as I wash my tea cup, Brother Lawrence looks over my shoulder and tells me “Julian, there is power in that dish.” And then Rumi turns my eyes from my teacup to the squirrel frolicking outside my window, and somehow, my teacup, the dish soap, and the squirrel become an elixir of wonder which I consume. And revived again, I act.

Intermission: Totalitarian Systems

Writing of Brother Lawrence and Rumi gives me the courage to delve into a topic which I have been too frightened to write of extensively until now: the historical and ideological components and stages of totalitarian systems. Violence, Stephanie Westlund (2012) argues, is

³⁴ A stuffed Marx doll keeps guard at my desk as I write.

an act that takes away our humanity. The control of behavior through constant threat of violence that exists in a totalitarian system disconnects us from ourselves and from each other, separating us into individuals who are easier to rule (Ellul, 1965). Totalitarian states thrive on separation (Arendt, 1958). Sociologist Jacques Ellul (1965) writes that the effectiveness of state media campaigns requires that small groups be separated into individual pieces. As individuals, we believe the propaganda given to perpetuate the state and the state becomes our community. The communal creation of alternative discourse thrives in small informal groups which practice oral engagement with each other, such as the clan or the book club. Ellul argues that these groups create a space where alternative discourse can be created and sustained.

The primary action of a totalitarian system which popular expressive traditions resist is the erasure of identity (see Fontaine, 2010). Genocide is the most extreme form of this system where both physical and cultural identity are disappeared (see Lemkin in Power, 2002). This can be seen in Stalinist Russia, Nazi Germany, West Papua, Cambodia, and in colonial Canada and the United States (Power, 2002; Rutherford, 2012; (Fontaine T. , 2010)). The philosophy behind a totalitarian system is to erase the bonds that connect to each other and to an undesirable group. Effective citizenship in totalitarian systems requires that there be an ‘other’ against which the dominant group can define itself (Marchak, 2003). The effectiveness of a nonviolent use of expressive traditions is in their maintenance of identity, their ability to maintain connections, and their ability to say, after the totalitarian regime has ended “We are still here” (Fontaine, 2010).

Although popular expressive forms carry the dream and identity and forge connections which sustain an alternative space or notion-state in which to dwell (Webster, 2001-2002), can they succeed in changing totalitarian systems? Can the dreams that they carry counter Stalinist Russia or military presence in Papua? On one level, they have already succeeded when the goal

of a system is to annihilate an “other” and that “other” survives. This is victory. But are there also cases where more than survival is achieved? Where systems are toppled through nonviolent use of expressive traditions? Before answering this question, it is necessary to delve into what sustains totalitarian systems.

Hannah Arendt (1958) identifies two “political devices” which are key in the formation of totalitarian bureaucracies. One is race—when one population is constructed by another to be non-human in order to exploit labor and land. The other is bureaucracy, used by France and England in Algeria, India, and Egypt, and by the Netherlands in Indonesia. These two devices model disconnection from each other, from self, and from land.

Arendt (1958) documents the disconnection of racism that is often part of the formation of totalitarian systems (Marchak, 2003). She gives the example of the rise of the Boer state in South Africa. When the Boers arrived in South Africa, she writes, the “black” other was met with wonder (1958, p. 190). But over time, infertility of the land and fear of the other resulted in slavery and in the disconnection of Boers with the soil, so that eventually, Arendt writes, “The Black slaves in south Africa quickly became the only part of the population that actually worked” (p. 193). The Boer economy began to depend on the use of black labor, and the founding stories—theology and political ideology—adapted to maintain this source of labor through denying the “the common origin of men” (p. 195). Blacks became no longer human. Instead they were equated with natural resources. Arendt writes “absolute European supremacy [...] could hardly be maintained except through racism” (p. 197). Vast economic wealth coupled with slave labor allowed Europeans to cease working altogether and exist as supervisors in the second political device Arendt identifies, bureaucracies.

Just like Arendt's device of race functions under a certain story—a way of making sense of the world which says that the 'other' race is a commodity and expendable—bureaucracy also functions under a story. That story is this: that the "others" described above were in need of European guidance and protection. This bureaucracy, she writes, was even more dangerous than the deliberate despotism of racism, because it was characterized by the ultimate separation between the rulers and their subjects, at least in the direct exploitation found in racism, two populations acknowledge each other's existence. The "other", whether African, Communist, or Papuan, although sub-human, does exist. But through the device of bureaucracy, ruling is done in secret. Leaders create a never-ending process of expansion which separates the expander from himself, from his people, from his goals and needs. A process which serves only the economically driven system of expansion. The bureaucrat was disconnected, even from his goals, and served simply the process—the bureaucracy. This process created, Cecil Rhodes and Lord Cromer, point out, anonymous and secret "agents of the force of expansion" who were beyond the law (p. 215).

There are two key figures in this system: "The bureaucrat and the secret agent" (Arendt, 1958, p. 216). These figures follow no law but the law of expansion; hold no commitment to anything except expansion; becoming hidden gods who create and sustain the system of expansion. Arendt lays out the way in which the law of never-ending expansion which underlies empire unroots the bureaucrat and the secret agent from place, from human laws, and from relationship. It is this unrootedness in relationship and in place which allows totalitarian systems to continue. She describes this process of disconnection combined with racism:

When the European man discovered what a 'lovely virtue' a white skin could be [...] when the English conqueror in India became an administrator who no longer believed in the universal validity of law, but was convinced of his own innate capacity to rule and dominate, when the dragon-slayers turned into either 'white men' of 'higher breeds' or

into bureaucrats and spies, playing the Game of endless ulterior motives in an endless movement; when the British Intelligence Services [...] began to attract England's best sons, who preferred serving mysterious forces all over the world to serving the common good of their country, the stage seemed to be set for all possible horrors. Lying under anybody's nose were many of the elements which gathered together could create a totalitarian government on the basis of racism: 'administrative massacres' were proposed by Indian bureaucrats while African officials declared that 'no ethical considerations such as the rights of man will be allowed to stand in the way' of white rule. (Sir Thomas Watt, a citizen of South Africa of British descent in Arendt, 1958, p. 230)

These totalitarian systems built on the racialized other differ from Nation-States. The Nation-State, Arendt writes, was born from the emancipation of the European peasant classes—an emancipation centered around connection with and pride in place. The nation state relies upon the creation of a shared national consciousness “of themselves as cultural and historical entities, and of their territory as a permanent home, where history had left its visible traces, whose cultivation was the product of the common labor of their ancestors” (p. 229). Arendt argues that a separation between nation and state occurred when “the French Revolution combined the declaration of the Rights of Man with the demand for national sovereignty” (p. 230). With this demand, rights no longer belonged to man, but to citizens (Marchak, 2003), whose rights were dependent upon their ability to maintain the sovereignty of the state. This was the ultimate law. With this shift, belief in common humanity which required collective responsibility for the well-being of all was replaced by tribal nationalism characterized by increasing racism which Arendt calls “the very realistic, if very destructive, ways of escaping this predicament of common responsibility” (p. 236). The result was that the greatest good was sovereignty. And the greatest loyalty was to the state, not to the people who make up the state.

This resulted in what Arendt terms a lawlessness driven by “totalitarian bureaucracy” (1958, p. 237). This bureaucracy differed from “pre-war rulers” who simply controlled the outside of a person. These pre-war systems made allowances for internal non-state spaces in the

mind and heart. Totalitarian bureaucracy, however, “intruded upon the private individual and his inner life” (p. 245). Bourdieu explains the way that “stateness and its hegemonic location at the center of society is (re) produced through symbols and rituals” (in Scott, 2009, p. 7). Theodore Fontaine (2010) tells of residential schools which not merely physically abused, but more potently abused identity, attempting to eradicate the Indian from the child. Identity abuse, or attack on the inner life was, he states, more difficult to overcome than an attack on the physical or sexual self (See also internalized oppression discussed by Fanon, 1965). Leaders of totalitarian bureaucracies knew this, and their efforts resulted in what Arendt terms a “radical efficiency” through which “the inner spontaneity of people under its rule was killed along with their social and political activities, so that the merely political sterility under the older bureaucracies was followed by total sterility under totalitarian rule” (1958, p. 245). This is the golden bullet of totalitarian rule. And it is this golden bullet which popular expressive traditions counteract—the internal passivity imparted by totalitarian bureaucracy.

The effectiveness of totalitarian systems is that they rule even the rulers who do not care if they live or die as long as they serve the system (Arendt, 1958). Writes Arendt “Political, social, and economic events everywhere are in a silent conspiracy with totalitarian instruments devised for making men superfluous” (p. 459). The systems which build totalitarian regimes live on, she states, after the regime has ended. It is these systems that, even in seemingly democratic governments, still exist. One of the locations where such systems persist is in the multinational corporation (MNC) which marries economic imperialism and totalitarian rule, modeling the anonymity and radical efficiency of the expansionism which drives totalitarian systems³⁵. As in

³⁵ *While I have discussed the role of popular expressive forms of nonviolent resistance to identity-destroying totalitarian systems, these expressive forms also offer an engagement with the economic base of the expansionist totalitarian system. Papuan activist and mother Mama Yosepha Alomang attempted to combat American owned Freeport McMoran goldmine on her ancestral land in Papua. Fighting the extracting rootlessness of the*

the totalitarian state, the person does not exist in the MNC. I explore in this chapter the use of popular expressive traditions within pockets or systems of totalitarianism which remain, even in seemingly democratic states.

The ultimate result of totalitarian bureaucratic systems is disconnection, not only from each other and from the land, but also from oneself. This is loneliness, Arendt writes. “What makes loneliness so unbearable is the loss of one’s own self which can be [...] confirmed in its identity only by the trusting and trustworthy company of my equals” (p. 477). If the system in which I find myself regards me as superfluous, then I too begin to find myself superfluous. Institutionalized loneliness, once occurring only in isolated cases, paves the way for totalitarianism where only the system is left to tell us who we are. But there is always ever, Arendt avers, a new beginning—in every birth, in every person. It is in this new beginning which popular expressive traditions dwell. They allow us to create anew our own world, even when it seems broken beyond repair.

The act of creation.

What is there in the darkness to imagine into being? What is there to dream and to relate? What happens when I or anyone exerts the force of language upon the unknown? [...] We are what we imagine, at least, completely, who and what, and *that* we are. The greatest tragedy that can befall us is to go unimagined. (N. Scott Momaday, 1975, p. 103)

As I write of participatory power present in acts of creative resistance, Adorno rears his lovely head. It would be impossible to write of popular expressive traditions without referring to Adorno’s culture industry which “arouses a feeling of well-being that the world is precisely in that order suggested by the culture industry, the substitute gratification which it creates for

corporation, she rooted her body to her ancestral land, to the airstrip, in fact. Forged her literal connection to the land, she would not move, and the mine’s airplanes could not land. The disconnected American mining engineers required the airstrip to live their disconnected lives. She connected herself to that symbol of disconnection and their exploitation stopped. For three days (see Giay and Kambai, 2001).

human beings cheats them out of the same happiness which it deceitfully projects” (Adorno, 2005, p. 106). While I do refer to some participants in the culture industry, such as Freddie Mercury, Janelle Monae, and Edo Kondologit, my primary focus is on participative and folk forms of popular expression, where people are active participants and creators of meaning and alternative spaces. Adorno’s critique of the culture industry is compelling, but I have chosen to select his view of art as a powerful alternative to the world, a negative way where beauty, such as that found in classical music, can be a place to “resolve contradictions” (in Hoadley, 2005). However, I rely on Bakhtin’s carnival spaces for my primary theoretical framework, and I view those negative or carnival spaces of resistance found in collective expressive traditions, not merely as resolving contradictions, but as a place where those contradictions can be exposed and stirred up, and eventually, explode.

The creativity and agency present within expressive traditions allow us to resist totalitarian rule by creating and recreating our own words, our own shadows, and our own stories. Through creativity, we can “detourne” (Swedenburg, 2004) each act of annihilation, as trickster traditions—“the uncertain humor of shadow survivance that den[y] the obscure manoeuvres of manifest manners, tragic transvaluations, and the incoherence of cultural representation”—do (Vizenor, 1993, pp. 7-8, see also Thomas King, 2010, for North American trickster stories). Totalitarian systems work to erase being. Acts of creative nonviolence work to affirm being (Anderson, 2001). Totalitarian systems work to dissolve connections, from the spark of being in the self and from the spark of being in another. Acts of creative nonviolence seek out and affirm these connections.

Like Turner’s liminal practices, creative activities of nonviolent resistance have the potential to “form social situations that enhanced full human encounters and understanding

[...and] to rework their past and move toward a renewed future” (in Smadar, Narayan and Rosaldo, 1993, p. 1). Most often, these creative spaces of ritual processes, play, frolic, joking, and affective action, Turner states, are found in those spaces directly affected by totalitarian systems, on the margins. “For him [...] significant human contact and creativity flowed from the margins to the centers” (in Smadar, Narayan, and Rosaldo, p. 2). Such creative action and collective affirmation of the way that communities together make meaning was the invitation that Ghandi offered to the British (Holmes and Gan, 2005).

Engaging in processes of creative nonviolence requires a naming of the oppression and its sources before constructing an alternative realm. David Cortwright (2008), in his discussion of the stages of nonviolent action, begins with a naming of the violations and erasures of being that are present in violence. Silence is the first step of terror, and countering the silence, even in small ways, is the first act of affirming the reality, the existence of the person who is no more. Expressive traditions often name violence through the naming of actual names, enacted by Toer and by Argentina’s mothers, and through the visual or musical representation of the violence found in surreal artists Frida, or Janelle Monae.

The next step of nonviolent action identified by Cortwright (2005) is the establishing of dialogue through collective action. In asymmetrical conflicts, one party often does not see the humanity of the other, and is not willing to co-create a world, to engage in meaning making through dialogue with that other. Principled nonviolence is grounded in the very humanness of the self and of the other. The soul-force of an individual drives action, but the power of nonviolence and of that soul-force is not found alone (Holmes & Gan, 2005). The realization of my own spark of humanity means that I cannot help but see that spark in another. And in the realization of the humanness of another, I will be willing to offer myself for that other (Levinas,

1998). But my ultimate goal, although I am willing to die, is to engage in equal relations of power, of co-creation of meaning together with that “other”.

Hannah Arendt speaks of terror’s ability to “atomize” or to break apart the me from the we. This isolation is horror itself. “It is the breaking apart of what it means to be human.... love is gone” (Erickson & Jones, 2002, p. 147). In love we find the power to overcome this atomization, to once more become “we”³⁶. Pain and terror have the potential to either destroy the “we”, or to, if we respond with love, make it stronger, and “stabilize the group” (Erickson & Jones, 2002, p. 145). The effectiveness of totalitarian systems relies on the informer. Through the informer, terror not only isolates enemies, but divides friends, because totalitarian systems are afraid “of all power, even the power of friends” (Arendt in Erickson & Jones, p. 141). There is a violence in love (Romero, 2004) which overpowers the atomization of terror. Instead of the informant turning in a friend because of fear, the one who loves offers himself (or herself) for the friend (or the enemy). This is Ghandi’s self-suffering (Cortwright, 2008). It is only “the violence of love”, Romero argues, which can overcome terror. A love so fierce that it gives itself, not for the maintenance of the system, but for the maintenance of the other (Levinas, 1998). It is this violence, this core of self-suffering which makes the dream explode.

Part II: Exploding Dreams

When History sleeps, it speaks in dreams; on the brow of the sleeping people, the poem is a constellation of blood.

—Octavio
Paz

So, you might be wondering, what really happens to a dream deferred? Robyn Kelley in *Freedom Dreams* writes, “Virtually every radical movement failed because the basic power relations they sought to change remain pretty much intact. And yet it is precisely these

³⁶ I discuss my journey into “we” in the Methodology Chapter.

alternative visions and dreams that inspire new generations to continue to struggle for change” (2003, p. ix). As Freire and Fanon remind us, ‘til our consciousness is free, we will not be. We build on the imagined and lived stories of our history, tapping “the well of our collective imaginations” (Kelley, 2003, p. 9). In this collective imagination, the “poetics of struggle and lived experience [...] the utterances of ordinary folk in the cultural products of social movements [...] the reflections of activists we discover the many different cognitive maps...of the world not yet born” (Kelley, 2003, pp. 9-10). Below, I explore three examples of dreams held through expressive traditions which offered a map for the future. And then exploded.

“Holy Terrors”: The constantly exploding, unimagined communities of women artists in Mexico.

Scholar of revolutionary performance art, Diana Taylor writes in *Holy Terrors: Latin American Women Perform*, of the artists and performers who make up a group of women so incongruous, she calls them “unimagined communities” (for a discussion of “imagined communities,” see Benedict Anderson, (1991)) (Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. xiii). Taylor writes of how these women, being multiplicitous in ethnic and national origins, all

have commonalities in practices and strategies, tackling systems of power that date back to colonial times—church domination, imperialism and neo-imperialism, political oligarchy and dictatorship, and the pervasive sexism and racism encoded in everything from education to eugenics efforts, to theories of mestizaje and progress. Each, in her own way, uses performance—broadly understood here to include theatre, performance art, cabaret, and political performance interventions—as a means of contesting a sociopolitical context that is repressive when not overtly violent. (Taylor & Constantino, 2003, pp 3-4)

Women are, by nature of expedience and experience, warriors. It is a natural outflowing of their existence. Taylor quotes Denise Stoklos, one of the artists in her book who says, “‘It’s a kind of work where you don’t have to first think about the issues and then try to respond to them. They are with you because you live with them’” (Stoklos in Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. 4). Taylor

continues, “The force of these works comes from the urgency of the intervention” (Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. 4). Although not specifically artists, storytelling can be considered art, and Papuan women also do the continual work of community, cooking, playing, singing, caring, telling stories, worshipping and many more. These actions are done in the context of ongoing and urgent situations of cultural erasure.

Taylor writes “As women working in deeply entrenched Catholic societies, these artists have become ‘holy terrors’ taking on not only the authorities, but also the systems of belief that demand that they behave like obedient, subservient creatures. They fight for cultural participation—access to space, to resources to authority and to audiences” (in Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. 6). They use any method in their power to fight for “cultural participation”. Taylor explains,

While their artistic goals, media, and strategies vary—one thing remains constant: these women unsettle. Through their use of humor, irony, parody, citationality, inversions, and diversions, their art complicates and upsets the dogmas and convictions that dominant audiences hold near and dear. (In Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. 13)

However, their eventual participation, Taylor points out, is not necessarily within the space and structures that they find themselves within. Rather, she explains, “Most of them have forged their own space—physical and /or professional—to stage their own ways of working, having been closed out or expelled from existing groups or organizations” (in Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. 6). The Holy terrors she writes of “forge their own space”—their own communities (in Taylor & Constantino, 2003, p. 6). In attempting to have a voice in an oppressive discourse that refused to acknowledge them, they end up doing something even more powerful, they create their own discourse, their own way of being and living together that constantly upsets and unsettles. Their dreams, their fury, and their art constantly explode into the structures of power.

A map of the past for the sake of the future: dreams lived by the Xavante of Brazil.

Songs—gifts to the living—so that, performing them, the Xavante would continue as Xavante forever. (Warodi in Graham, 1998, p. 2)

Among the Xavante, dreams live. Collective dramatic and musical expressions make real the dreams of the Xavante people of Brazil. Elder Warodi dreams the dreams given him by the immortal Xavante ancestors. In Warodi's dreams lies the connection between the immortals, an elder, and his people. When companies began taking Xavante land and forests and the Xavante began to forget who they were, Warodi shared the story of his dream with his community, and together, they physically performed his dream, under the guidance of the immortals. "Through this process, Warodi moved his dream experience outward, so that it could be experienced by others, both in performances and in making arrangements for it, Warodi socialized his dream" (in Graham, 1998, p. 5). Among the Xavante, this dream sharing is a recurring social action. Young Xavante males "sing and dance each other's dreams" in order to create and maintain a participative continuity of identity in the changing Brazilian context (Graham, 1998, p. 5).

"A myth has a life that is born through its telling" Graham (1998) writes (p. 8). This identity can be found in both collective telling the dream and in its verbal content. This is Warodi's dream:

The descendants of the first Xavante [...] they don't die
They have many lives
those descendants like us they keep living
They continue living always[...]
they keep visiting us
they are forever Xavante
they are forever Xavante. (in Graham, 1998, p. 168)

Warodi then describes his meeting with the immortals:

They gathered as always
[...] they like this suggested
[...] they, for us, suggested

[...] something according to their knowledge
I...in the meeting
Tried
tried to fight...for us to remain always Xavante
to remain always Xavante
To forever live as Xavante always...ah Xavante to be always Xavante. (in Graham, 1998, p. 175)

Through performing their dreams, the Xavante are agents in their own historical process. Their practices are participative and centered in existing relationships and connections which are “kindled and rekindled through expressive performances which, in both form and content, generate feelings of connectedness with the past” (Graham, 1998, p. 23). Men, when they dream, lie on the hard earth looking up at the moon. From the land they story their dreams “lying by their fathers’ sides listening to stories of the past, performing songs and dances and recounting narratives—Xavante foster an empowering sense of continuity that engenders a feeling of control over historical processes” (Graham, 1998, p. 24). They sing each other’s dreams. And through their songs they create a place where they can remain always ever Xavante.

Estonia: “The land of the singing revolution” (Whitehead, 1996, p. 11).

In Estonia, the dream exploded. “Massed groups of protestors showed the strength of their feelings and their will for freedom by singing banned national folk songs rather than by taking up arms” (Toomas Siitan in Whitehead, 1996, p. 11). Estonia is perhaps the most well-known case of a popular expressive practice effectively overthrowing a totalitarian system.

In 1939, on the 23rd of August, the Nazis and the U.S.S.R. agreed to “give” the Baltic states to the Soviet Union (Puderbaugh, 2008). As Estonia sank under soviet rule, music revived and sustained Estonian cultural pride and identity. The previously independent Estonia already had a flourishing musical tradition, and although under Soviet occupation, music in appearance acquiesced to Soviet traditions with such compositions as Hugo Leppnurm’s “Soviet Organ

Music”, the Estonian spirit was held in choral festivals occurring every four years. Modeled after the choral festivals of western Europe, Estonia’s first national song festival in 1869 awakened “the people to a national consciousness, to unite them, and to promote the improvement of both social and political conditions” (Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 3). It was within these festivals where the concept of Estonia and was held, even during soviet Russia. These festivals have tens of thousands of performers, run late into the northern night, and have an audience of 100,000-200,000. The music played is Estonian choral music and folk songs along with a few Soviet songs.

The seeds for Estonia’s 1991 singing revolution were already present in its last festival before Soviet occupation. The 1938 festival “represented the apex of Estonian nationalism, consisting almost entirely of patriotic compositions and songs from Estonia’s past” (Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 5). In the 1938 festival, “14 songs came from Estonian folklore; 15 pieces referred to the Estonian nation in some form; 17 songs were composed by choral conductors of previous festivals” (Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 5). The songs in the 1938 festival referred explicitly to the Estonian break from feudalism, with such texts as “Lee, lee, lee, leelo, leelo, what are these ties holding us down/what are these bonds keeping us down/Ties that bind us! We desire to become free/From slavery” (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 6)! Further songs referring to Estonian nationalism included “Songs, be heard, in Estonian/And accompanied by harp!/In Estonian language, in Estonian spirit [...]/The spirit of Estonia has resisted/The times of plague and famine [...] /We have courage/We have always had courage/Let us then sing in Estonian/And accompanied by harp” (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p.6)! The music had a military tone, and was sung by a male choir of thousands. In 1869, Puderbaugh writes, “organizers could muster the inclusion of only two Estonian pieces in an otherwise German program. By 1938 [...] only two foreign pieces found

their way into an all-Estonian program” (2008, p. 6). The audience in the festival was active, participating in the songs.

During Soviet occupation, “the festivals became the single, most visible and active manifestation of Estonian national identity in the face of foreign occupation” (Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 7). The first festival under Soviet rule in 1947 was maintained by the Soviet government to promote continuity and a sense of well-being after the war. However, the Soviets attempted to co-opt the festival—choosing socialist songs, the Soviet anthem, and erasing musical contributions referring to the Estonian nation. Any references to Estonia lauded Stalin and his state such as the following text:

You, Estonia, awoke and called as we saw
The mighty rose of the October flag.
Great Stalin led us [...] in working nation’s truth and strength [...]
You, Estonia, will witness happier times
Together with the Union’s firm nation [...]
Estonia, remain firm
The free land of Soviet brotherhood! (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 9)

Another song urged citizens to support and participate in the five-year economic plan. Although these songs blatantly supported the Soviet state, other songs were more subtle, allowing, Puderbaugh argues, for “multiple meanings in the soviet-era song festivals” (2008, p. 10). One such song is *Noorte Laul* [Song of the Young] by A. Saarik: “Our paths are filled with young fire./We come with a mighty army/And build a citadel,/That will stand for all time./Our native land is full of the steps of the heroes./ We, Youths, will all participate!” The government officials hearing this song envisioned Estonian youth building their new Soviet nation. However, Estonians hearing this song, remembered their “homeland” (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 11).

Also sung in the festival were songs of the feudal revolution: “How the reigns did hold us down [...] /We craved to become free from oppression/To become free from slavery” (in

Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 11). These songs were allowed by the Soviets as they were historical, singing of feudal and German oppression. Also, the 1947 song festival introduced the “unofficial anthem of Soviet occupied Estonia: Gustav Ernesak’s *isamaa on minu arm* [my fatherland is my love]. The lyrics end with “My holy Estonia! /Your birds will sing me to sleep/The flowers will grow from my ashes/[...] My fatherland, my fatherland!” (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 13). To deflect from their subtle sedition, at the end of the festival, musicians sent a formal letter of flattery to Stalin.

In spite of this, the musicians and conductors were arrested 6 months later and *Mis Isamaa* was forbidden; however, at the end of the last performance on the last day of the 1960 festival, someone started to sing *Mi Isamaa on Minu Arm*, and soon the ten thousand strong choir was singing the song with the audience joining in. After that, *Mi Isamaa on Minu Arm* closed each festival in spite of Soviet disapproval. After Stalin’s death, Estonia’s festivals became places where Estonians could sing their identity—diplomatically. The conductors were, Puderbaugh states, “both musicians and diplomats”, including in the program socialist songs, communist songs, and Estonian songs (2008, p. 28). When Ernesak (the festival conductor) was critiqued by his country people for including communist songs, he answered “don’t worry, we will sing them fast” (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 27)!

As the choral festivals progressed, their political momentum increased. In 1975, Veljo Tormis’s *Lenini Sonad* [Lenin’s Words] was sung, quoting Lenin’s own words guaranteeing “the right of all nations to their own identities” (Puderbaugh, 2008). Using the founder of the empire’s very words, Estonia condemned increasingly totalitarian Soviet rule. Then, in the festival of 1988, a 3-year long, bloodless, singing revolution began as a crowd 100,000 strong gathered, waving forbidden Estonian flags (this was almost a tenth of Estonia’s population). The

building of Estonia's nationalism, from the "covert Estonian nationalism" of the 1947 festival, through to the direct actions of the 1988 festival, were a moving crescendo of ever-increasing national identity kept safe in the institution of the summer choral festival (Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 14).

Estonia's use of popular expressive culture to hold the dream of freedom explicitly models the ability of popular expressive forms to obfuscate, on one side, while remaining crystal clear to those who are doing the obfuscation. Colonial authority is, Babah tells us, vulnerable to ambivalence, mockery, and "oppositional cultural practices" (in Puderbaugh, 2008, p. 16). The very form of music makes the playfulness of these forms literal, as conductors, composers, and musicians, play with the boundaries of state and rule that they are given, moving just beyond the boundaries, the notes, and then returning, appeasing, ending with a letter to Stalin.

Conclusion: Practices of Identity—Reclaiming Land and Names

Stories make and unmake the world. Lyotard writes "The people does not exist as a subject but as a mass of millions of insignificant and serious little stories that sometimes let themselves be collected together to constitute big stories and sometimes disperse into digressive elements" (in Vizenor, 1993, p. 9). "Legends" writes Hannah Arendt, "have always played a powerful role in the making of history [...] Legends were the spiritual foundation of every ancient city, empire, people, promising safe guidance through the limitless spaces of the future" (1958, p. 208). Momaday writes, "Storytelling is imaginative and creative in nature. It is an act by which man strives to realize his capacity for wonder, meaning and delight. It is also a process in which man invests and preserves himself in the context of ideas" (1975, p. 104). Thomas King writes, "The truth about stories is that that's all we are" (2003, p.5). Cook-Lynn writes, "When the Lakota/Dakota Oyate say that 'we were once the star people', they mean it literally because

they understand the functions of storytelling as chronologies of the past and the future” (2008, p. 331). In the “semiotic spaces” of our stories, we live and sustain being (in David and Wilson, 2002, p. 48).

Spaces are created and contested through popular expressive traditions. However, it is not merely in the ephemeral world of poems, songs, and stories where space resides. Expressive traditions take back land. Arendt (1958) writes that rootlessness is both a cause and a symptom of totalitarian systems. Rooted in imperialism, rootlessness, expansionism, and anonymity—totalitarian systems are characterized by conquest of land and disconnection with labor. In response to this rootlessness, Bruno David and Meredith Wilson (2002) explore the sudden onslaught in graffiti at the time of European contact in Australia. As the colonial state was taking over land, rock drawings became “a mobilization of the right to be-in-place in a context of resistance” (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 43). Graffiti, the authors explain, “confronts and contradicts the ordered and ordering spaces of institutionalized life” (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 43). Graffiti is the concrete expression of subordinated voices. “The writing inscribes the protagonist onto the land as a right of place and self-determination” (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 43). Graffiti is a tangible way to regain control of public spaces ordered by the state. It “represents an inscription of the self in various kinds of social spaces and has the ability to mobilize sentiment” (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 43). Graffiti forms an “emplaced resistance” which embeds individuals in stone (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 45). It is a political act which writes “the self onto the land [...] inscribing the land with an identity that identifies the marker with the place irrespective of the written message” (David & Wilson, 2002, p. 46). It is art that claims space.

The shadow of a name.

N. Scott Momaday speaking of living memory, shares how a meteor shower of 1883 became a “living memoir” held in the woman Ko-sahn.

Ko-sahn is among the most venerable people I have ever known. She spoke and sang to me one summer afternoon in Oklahoma. It was like a dream [...] She sat perfectly still, folded over on herself [...]. Her voice shuddered, but it did not fail. Her songs were sad. An old whimsy, a delight in language and in remembrance, shone in her one good eye. She conjured up the past, imagining perfectly the long continuity of her being [...] she imagined the Sun Dance: There was an old, old woman. She had something on her back. The boys went out to see. The old woman had a bag full of earth on her back. It was a certain kind of sandy earth [...] The old woman held a digging tool in her hand. She turned towards the south and pointed with her lips. It was like a kiss, and she began to sing: *We have brought the earth. Now it is time to play. As old as I am, I still have the feeling of play.* That was the beginning of the sun dance. [...] At times, in the quiet of evening, I think she must have wondered... Was she become in her sleep that old purveyor of the sacred earth, perhaps, that ancient one who, old as she was, still had the feeling of play? And in her mind, at times, did she see the falling stars? (1975, pp. 97-98)

Momaday describes his ritual of remembering the story. Knowing that we are made of words, he speaks her name. Ko-Sahn. Ko-Sahn. Ko-Sahn. And “All at once, absolutely, I had the sense of the magic of words and of names [...]. Then it was that that ancient, one-eyed woman Ko-sahn stepped out of the language and stood before me on the page” (1975, p. 98). He could not believe that he saw her, that she was really there. But she said, in a variation on Descartes,

Be careful of your pronouncements, grandson [...]. You imagine that I am here in this room, do you not? That is worth something. You see, I have existence, whole being, in your imagination. It is but one kind of being, to be sure, but it is perhaps the best of all kinds. If I am not here in this room, grandson, then surely neither are you. (in Momaday, 1975, p. 99)

We are made of words, Momaday says. And even when land and life is gone, he writes, a man can hold onto it. Through imagining, “he touches it with his hands at every season and listens to the sounds that are made upon it [...] I am interested in the way that a man looks at a given landscape and takes possession of it in his blood and brain” (1975, pp. 100-101). And then he tells the land. With his words and his memories, he crafts it.

We survive because we speak: “For the arrowmaker,” Momaday writes, “language represented the only chance of survival” (1975, p. 110). And the arrowmaker says, “If you are Koiwa, you will understand what I am saying, and you will speak your name” (p. 108).

“I’m practicing your name so I can say it to your face” sings Maori artist, Bic Runga.

“Say my name, say my name” chants Destiny’s Child.

“What’s in a name?” asks Romeo (or is it Juliet?!).

We are the words that we speak. We are the stories that we imagine. We are the dreams that we live. Writes Momaday of the man made of words, “The principle fact is that he speaks, and in so doing he places his very life in the balance” (Momaday, 1975, p. 108). A little boy sits on his grandmother’s porch. As the soldiers and convoys roar by, they almost, but not quite, drown out his voice. He is singing. “Black is my skin. Curly is my hair. I am Papua.” He sings his name. The dream explodes. In Papua, the exploding dream is not just art, it is the brutal, joyous, grueling, life bearing unceasing work of keeping people alive. This is what the Mamas do. The next section of the literature review will draw us specifically into the Mamas’ work of exploding dreams.

Chapter 4: Papuan Mamas in Literature and Media—Guardians of Life and Dignity

I am an indigenous woman of this place. The ice mountain, it is mine. The place I was born is here. My husband was from the Bela Alama, of that place. I said to him, this land must not be sold. God created this land with a right to be used, not a right to be sold.

—Mama Yosepha

Alomang

Introduction to the Literature on and by Papuan Women

While a moderate body of information is available regarding the context of West Papua, most earlier studies focus on militarized male discourse of the political conflict, or on apolitical cultural studies (see Kirksey, 2002 and Kirsch, 2002, discussion of this issue). Current scholarship, however, (see Rutherford, 2011, and Kirksey, 2012, and Slama & Munro, 2015 (Slama & Munro, 2015)) is beginning to highlight the constantly exploding dream I described in the previous section, reveling in the role of Papuans as agents of change and of hope, constantly navigating colonial, and some say, genocidal (Brundige, 2004) encounters with laughter, wit, and an ability to bridge many categories of identity in order to survive. I look here at the literature describing how women take part in these processes of exploding survival dreams.

The following are notable texts about Papuan women: Mama Yosepha's vanguard text, edited by Dr. Benny Giay and the late Yafet Kambai (2003), describes Yosepha Alomang's life story, beginning with her village's displacement by military supported mining enterprises, and telling of her own formation as a woman facing abuse, widowhood, motherhood, and torture at the hands of the military in her effort to get Freeport mine to support local women farmers by buying their produce (Giay & Kambai, 2003). *Stop Sudah!* (Stop Already!) is compilation of women's witness to violence in order to stop it (Kelompok Kerja, 2010). Multiple *Pasar Mama* (Mama Market) films record women's efforts to keep their market location (Foundation, 2016) (Koten, 2018). Ien Courtens' (2008) book examines women's traditional roles in

community healing, and Dorothea Herliany (2010) records efforts by Lena Simanjuntak Mertes and a group of Papuan women to reveal their own stories through the dramatization of the story of the historic “Queen of Papua,” Angganetha Manufandu (Herliany, 2010), while Leslie Butt explores the process of women’s access to health care in the highlands in relation to HIV/AIDS (Butt & Eves, 2008).

When I first began to research literature on the lived experiences of indigenous Papuan women, these texts above were available, but in the last 3-5 years, a number of sources by and about Papuan women are being written, building upon and inspired by the above studies and by the reality of the Mama movement for a market to sell their produce (*Pasar Mama Mama*). New studies are emerging that explore the real, lived stories of identity and survival negotiation of women in Papua. I have been informed by these studies and my work follows in their footsteps.

The Rev. Dr. Marta Wospakrik, in her landmark and extensive qualitative study of the concept of *Binsyowi* (loosely translated, “woman who loves”) conducted hundreds of interviews of Biak women of all ages around the roles of women in Biak and how those interact with the roles of men. Guided by the concept of *Kearifan local* (local wisdom), her dissertation is rich with ethnographic detail of how “women in Biak weave communal connections on the level of family, clan, and village through the continued family and community exchanges that they encounter in their participation in bride price (*ararem*)” (partially published in Wospakrik & Reed, 2016). Dr. Wospakrik’s work honors the strength of Biak women by reclaiming the traditional categories of their past, and bringing them into the present realities of what her sister, scholar Josina Wospakrik (2018) describes as the role women in Papua, specifically Amungme women, play as agents of transculturation during a time of ongoing environmental, economic, political, and social change as Papua transforms. Both sisters are ecofeminist warriors—are

pastors, scholars and activists, exploring and reinvigorating Papuan gendered traditions to counteract both Christian and Colonial patriarchal structures as well as the ecological destruction present within the Land of Papua (for a full and inspiring discussion of ecofeminisms within theological/Christian contexts, see Eaton, 2005).

Papuan woman educational pioneer Dr. Fransina Yoteni's study of the history of education within the Papuan context, although not dealing exclusively with women, provides insight into the processes that continue to shape women and their families through the history of educational realities in Papua. She describes how the church's arm of education became an arm of empowerment and acknowledgment of Papuan culture even during a time of colonization (Yoteni, 2013). Like current reflections of the finesse of indigenous Papuan finagling of categories and institutions that have the potential to destroy culture and identity, described by Kirksey (2012) and Rutherford (2011), Dr. Yoteni charts the agency of Indigenous Papuans within her extensive history of education in Papua.

Further literature includes extensive documentation on the Mama market movement and additional sources from indigenous Papuan women telling their reality and engaging with both their historic and present community through story and words. I will delve more deeply into some of these stories and movements below.

Part I: Biak, Amungme, and Mpur Women: Two Studies and a Story

Biak women.

Mother, professor, pastor, and Biak woman, Dr. Wospakrik tells, in her dissertation and in her chapter in *Creating the Third Force* (2016), of the categories that she also inhabits. The appellation *Bin Syowi* means woman who loves, who makes a big garden, not only for her own family, but for others who do not have a garden. *Bin Syowi*, if she sees a child crying, she goes

and talks to the child, and gives the child something to eat. *Bin Syowi* provides the bride price for those who have no one to provide for them. *Bin Syowi*, woman who loves, does not claim her name/appellation as *Bin Syowi*, it is given her. *Bin Syowi* is the glue that holds a community together when everything else, family problems, poverty, ethnic/tribal conflict, colonialism, genocide is working to tear it apart. *Bin Syowi* is the guardian of life. This is what Dr. Wospakrik writes about in her dissertation which re-explores traditional Biak appellations of women's role in Biak community life, and this is what she lives as a mother, lecturer, pastor, and dean at a post-secondary institution.

Her work explores specifically the roles of Biak women in building and maintaining intergenerational connections within and among communities. Through inhabiting specific appellations, namely *Bin Syowi*, woman who loves, *Bin Babyak*, woman of atonement, *Binggon*, woman who stands at the crossroads, and *Bin Mambri*, woman as hero; women have, across Biak history worked to continually care for the well-being and justice of the community (Wospakrik with Reed, 2016). Her work describes the roles and appellations of

These networks woven by women through their participation in *ararem* (bride price) create a peace held and nurtured through many generations which continues to expand and strengthen the connections of a Biak women and her kin.... passed on to the children whose blood carries the testimony of their mother's work as weavers of peace and guardians of life. (2016, p. 411)

Amungme women.

Dr. Josina Wospakrik (2018) carried out numerous interviews with Amungme women, activists, and their families to explore the changes in gender roles and experiences among an ethnic group existing in the frictional zone of connection (see Tsing (2011)) around the Freeport McMoran mine. Dr. J Wospakrik writes,

the Amungme people are in the midst of a transition from traditional ways of functioning and living to modernity. This transition is caused by the encounter of the people with new

ideas brought by Christianity, capitalist development through the presence of the industrial company of the Freeport Gold and Copper mine, as well as feminism ideas that challenge the establishment of patriarchal dominance. (p. 1)

Her study offers information about the current challenges facing Papuan women as environment, land, economy, families, and social and cultural roles undergo constant unplanned and often violent changes. Dr. J. Wospakrik cites Rob Nixon's (2011) work on "slow violence," a "violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). She explains that the "long-term" impact of mining waste on the future life of local people is a big issue faced by the people (2018, p. 19), and is an example of the "slow violence" which can spur other forms of violence, including poverty and intergroup conflict. The courage of her participants in negotiating these realities and in sharing their experiences of navigating their shifting economic and gender roles is remarkable. She records many stories. Here are a few.

Dr. J. Wospakrik (2018) tells the story of Delila, a woman employee of Freeport's environmental division, who grew up in a village with her parents. After her father passed away, she moved to the city. Hoping to go to secondary school, she was instead expected to work helping her uncle and his new wife however she could. But she always kept trying to find ways to go to school. Finally, her uncle helped her get into and pay for high school. After graduating, she married and, a few years later, she began to work at Freeport through their initiative to hire indigenous Papuans.

She did well and began to work in the environmental division, assisting the company in proving the harmlessness of the company's tailings disposal methods. The company's studies assert that they dispose of mining waste in safe ways; however, this is "contrary to the reality

experienced by the people who live downstream from tailings dumps, in which tailings waste has caused widespread destruction in the lowland environment” (Wospakrik, J., 2018, p. 8). The tailings also cause health problems. Delila lives, enjoying the benefits of being a woman with her own income and the ability to make her own decisions that comes from that, but she also lives between the benefits of a good salary and educational opportunities with the mine and the reality of what the tailings are doing to her land and to her people (Wospakrik, J., 2018).

Dr. J. Wospakrik goes on to weave many participants’ stories into her work, focusing on their strategies in navigating their changing roles as breadwinners, activists, and city-dwellers, and how they all negotiate the changing reality around them brought about by capitalism, Freeport, and the church. Dr. Wospakrik writes about Caroline, a member of LEMASA (the Amungme tribal council which works to protect Amungme land). LEMASA is traditionally a man’s council, and Caroline is one of the first women on the council. Although in the economic arena, as illustrated by Delila’s story, women are becoming increasingly more independent, in the tribal council decision-making, women remain marginalized. Caroline says,

Our men are not willing to listen to what is said by women. They always assume that we [women] do not know anything, and they even forbid us to talk much in meetings. If we disagree with what they decide, then they will say, ‘you sit and stop talking. You are only a woman, so you should listen and follow what we (men) say and decide’. For me, if the men want us [women] to work together with them in this organization, they must respect us by allowing us to be actively involved in decision-making. (Wospakrik, J., 2018 p. 21)

After this encounter, Dr. J. Wospakrik met Caroline, and Caroline expressed her anger and frustration, echoing the frustration of Yosepha Alomang who contends that the tradition of men being leaders in the community “undermines and ignores the ability of Amungme women (p. 23).” Mama Yosepha and Caroline are working, Dr. J. Wospakrik explains, “to shift the place of women from the margins to the center of the social life of the Amungme community” (2018, p. 23). She continues, “Today, Amungme women see that their roles are not just related to

reproductive roles in the household, but more than that, women also have a responsibility to solve the socio-political and economic problems faced by the community” (Wospakrik, J., 2018, p. 23).

Dr. J. Wospakrik’s study offers a nuanced real-person account of the navigations of women in a quickly changing environment and their work to balance their home, work, and social responsibilities within the constraints of Freeport, gender inequality, environmental destruction, and poverty (for women composing a life within restraints, see Bateson (1989)).

The power of the pussy: women in the Fentora myth.

It’s called power of the pussy.

— “long-legged woman,” Winnipeg, May 30, 2017, upon hearing a retelling of the Fentora story.

Let the vagina have a monologue.

—Janelle Monae as *Django Jane*, 2018

Storyteller Mince Jambuani’s telling of the Fentora myth is recorded in Cecilia Ode’s linguistic analysis entitled, “Mpur Prosody: An Experimental-Phonetic Analysis with examples from two versions of the Fentora Myth” (2002). My meeting with the Fentora story captures the multiple ownerships of a story and the pride that can rest in stories of identity. I first met Ode³⁷ Wolina in 2015. She was 19 years old and was a student at the college where I was teaching. She would often stop by to chat and share stories of her childhood in the Kebar valley of the Bird’s Head region of Papua. Threaded throughout our conversations and her papers in class was her pride in her language and in her relative who knew the old stories and taught them to her. Just as I was getting ready to leave, she gave me *Mpur Prosody*, by Cecilia Ode. She was named, she told me, after the author, who knew her relative before she was born. She brought this book from

³⁷ All names have been changed to protect participants’ identity.

her home village to give to me, because her relative said that I must use it for my research. “It is my gift to you, *kakak* (older sister),” she said.

The book has a picture of her relative looking off into the distance with pride and dignity in her face, and I can see where Ode gets her jubilant pride in her identity. I thumb through the book, a complex linguistic analysis, which I do not much understand, but Ode turns me to the portion where the Fentora myth is recorded by Mince Jambuani, storyteller (in Ode, 2002, p. iii). Mince’s rendition begins on page 139, and is recorded in Mpur, in a direct word for word translation, and in English. Ode reads the words to me, and later I read the translation of the Fentora myth, the story of a white boy born from a boil on an old man’s testicles. Here is my paraphrase of the story.

One day, two sisters decide to curse a river. They deceive Babwafe, their father, so he takes his older daughter, ties her up, and calls his brother-in-law, a human snake, to penetrate into her vagina, through her body, and out of her mouth. Her younger sister then goes to look for her. She finds her dead and then coaxes the snake brother-in-law out of her sister’s vagina by offering to weave his hair and feed him sweet sugarcane juice. Upon his exit, she peels his skin off and cuts off his head.³⁸ Her sister then comes back to life!

The sisters then bring vegetables back home, along with fat from the killed snake/brother-in-law, and their father, Babwafe, eats and eats and eats what they have brought him. After eating, he feels a boil swell up on his balls and, a “white child” is born from it. The child is called Fentora, and he is beautiful, “like streaming water from bamboo” (in Ode, 2002, p. 182).

The sisters try to kill Fentora, but he remains living, carried by Babwafe to the bridge, which the sisters had rigged to break. Fentora falls into the Api river, and floats downstream. He

³⁸ His remains formed Jambuani hill that is still there to this day.

gets caught on some sugarcane near the river and drinks its juice, becoming big. He is then found by a man in his garden, where he was strongly resembling the bananas that he was eating, “he didn’t admit, he sat there being yellow” (in Ode, 2002, p. 164).

The man then brings home Fentora and has his daughters sew a big sleeping mat to have sex with him (the identity of the “him” is unclear in the translation) on. Fentora then goes across the mountain, to Waisin’s land and kills a pig he isn’t supposed to kill. Then there is a lot of pig roasting, singing, drinking, dancing, scaring people with his beauty, and Waisin and her people keep trying to keep Fentora and the old man contained, often by tying everything and everyone up with their pubic hair—they tied people, dogs, arrows, and even a house—up with their pubic hair, but then the female equivalent of the snake-man from the beginning of the story, cuts everyone loose. After a second pubic hair capture, when people from all around the bird’s head region have come to dance and celebrate with the beautiful Fentora, the uncle sang, and a coconut came like an airplane and crushed the house and the bindings were released. Then Fentora gathered his uncle and wives on the coconut tree and went away to the west and have yet to be seen again.

Although Fentora escapes with the second two women, I cannot help but be impressed with the ingenuity of the sisters and of Waisin who manage to withstand significant and brutal sexual assault and respond with, as the long-legged woman puts it, “the power of their pussy.”

Ode gave me this story with pride, saying her mother had heard the story from her grandfather, and then they had chosen to give it to Cecilia Ode, the researcher. Cecilia Ode went to write a story about Mpur prosody. She then met Mince who was a pregnant widow, and who stayed with her because of dangerous times, and it was unsafe for a woman to stay alone (Ode, 2002). Mince gave Cecilia this story, and Ode gave Mince’s relative her name. A story traded for

a name. Ode then gave me this book, her pride in her own language shining through. Although it is a story of Fentora, and of origins of landmarks, I see it also as a story of women dwelling in situations of violence, but retaining who they are. Two sets of two sisters, along with Waisin and her ladies, manage to overcome death, potential rape, and the killing of their pigs with their wits and their loyalty to each other and some very strong pubic hair!

Part II: Practical Rituals of Freedom—Mamas as Economic Providers in Papua

The Mamas create the tangible boundaries of survival through their work: selling betel nut, gardening and selling produce, building local kiosks, working in multilevel marketing, selling fruit to school children, and negotiating with their often-drunken men for their right and their children's right to live. The articles below on Papuan women demonstrate their often-central role as economic providers in their families and how their changing role, in contrast to a trajectory of disempowerment of men in Papua (B. Nanlohi, personal conversation, August, 2007) has affected their reality as actors in their families and in their larger society. Below is a summary of periodical literature addressing the current lived economic reality of Papuan women.

The Mama movement.

I write for my Papuan Mamas, and for my grandmother, and for my mother. They are my heroes, always. My mother has met my Papuan Mamas and always gives me newspaper clippings that catalogue the economic movements of Papuan Mamas. Every time I see her, she hands me articles that she has cut out, often accompanied by a picture of Mamas, sitting on the ground, selling pineapple and fresh ginger, or sitting on a sidewalk, weaving string bags. "I cut this out for you, Julian," she says.

The Mama movement has reached my mother's Javanese newspaper, and many papers record their work in campaigning for the simple right to have a place to sell the produce that they

grow. The most notable work done for the Papuan mamas is that of the late Robert Jitmau in his advocacy for them to have their own market. Until the market movement, as Josina Wospakrik records, Papuan women sold their produce and wares on the ground, on the sidewalk, or in front of existing market stalls, inhabiting alternative economic zones (Koten, 2018).

The phrase “*Mama Mama Papua*” (Papuan Mamas) has become, in recent years, a key word for numerous newspapers and on-line news sources. These include the English language newspaper *The Jakarta Post*, the BBC, *Tabloidjubi*, *Suara Papua*, *Cahaya Papua*. All list *Mama Papua* as one of their subject tags. Below, I will recount the recorded journeys of *Mama Mama Papua* in acquiring market rights where they can sell their wares and produce.

A number of YouTube videos document the Mamas’ struggle for their market, their sharing of their views, songs, and dances in protest, and the Indonesian president’s visits and discussions. Papua Storyteller posts on YouTube “*Mama punya cerita: Perjuangan Mama Papua di bidang ekonomi* (Mama’s story: The struggle of Papuan Mamas in the economic realm)” posted on October 1, 2011 (Storyteller, 2011). In the video, a Mama begins singing in their own language, “*Waya, wayatawei, waya mukaweeei*.” The video observes the specific tent set aside for Mamas to sell in, next to wooden and brick market stalls. In it, you see Mamas sitting with bananas, coconuts, squash, taro, and greens. A mama sitting under the tent, holding her sleeping child shares, “Our own tribe rarely shops our wares, most of those are outsiders” (Storyteller, 2011).

The song “*Waya, wayatawei, waya mukaweeei*” continues in the background and another mama says,

I hope that the government can see we who are Papuan [...] especially if the *becak* (pedicab) drivers can bring customers to us because they have their specified routes and don’t come here [...]. It’s hard for us to come in the morning so we can compete with the

others [due to transportation] [...] I want for us to *maju* (develop, go forward). Why do others *maju*, but we indigenous Papuans are like this? (Storyteller, 2011)

A woman sells gingers and turmeric root, saying we want “a market that is good so that we can be calm and safe” (Storyteller, 2011).

Eating betel nut and weaving bags while she sells, a Mama sells fish, brushing off the flies. She says, “We come at 1 or 2 pm, because we are in the village and taxis [minibuses] are difficult (*taxi susah*), we don’t get here until 9, 10, 11, 12” (Storyteller, 2011). Minibus service to the villages is limited and often they don’t come until later in the day or don’t even come into the villages requiring Mamas to walk miles with string bags (*noken*) hanging down their back filled with their produce.

Cahaya Papua of Manokwari reports on 13 January 2016 that the Mamas’ market in Manokwari will be completed at the end of January or early February, 2016. So that, the minister Supomo said, “We hope that they who are still selling on the ground or underneath will occupy this mama mama market” (Setiawan, 2016). *Cahaya Papua* reported the DPRD said that the mama’s market must be opened formally on August 16, 2016, although as of the writing the market remains unopen (ACH/CHE, 2016).

The Mama market in Jayapura, the president’s support, and the death of Robert Jitmau (Rojit).

On April 30, 2016, BBC Indonesia reported that President Jokowi, after many delays, officially opened the Mamas’ market, although the mamas remained vocally disappointed and shocked that a hotel is planned on the upper floors of the market called the “Hotel Mama Mama” (Indonesia, 2016). President Jokowi in his speech said, “I don’t want to know how it’s done, what’s important is that the market is built immediately” (Indonesia, 2016). President Joko Widodo has, since shortly after his election advocated for the *Pasar Mama Mama* (the Mama’s

Market) in Jayapura, Papua's capital city, visiting it most recently on May 10, 2017 (Desk, 2017).

Twenty days after the president's April 2016 visit which coincided with the opening of the Mama market, Robert Jitmau, the market's strongest advocate and organizer, was found dead.³⁹ He had stood next to the president and the Mamas as the president laid the first stone. The death of Rojit, Robert Jitmau, who campaigned until his death for the right for Mamas in Jayapura to have a market, shook the Mamas and the community, and resulted in even stronger activism to obtain a market. A little over a month after Rojit's death, Stevanus Yogi reported that the family of Rojit remained skeptical of police attempts to explain his slaying. His wife said, "My husband was beaten until he died. It was not a car accident like the police played out in their re-enactment earlier. I am altogether not satisfied" (Yogi, 2016). His death was ruled a traffic accident in an unannounced meeting on October 6, 2016. This explanation is not accepted by his mamas or by his family. Further reports on his trial can be found in *Tabloid Jubi*, Oct 5, 2016 (Admin, 2016).

A video posted on October 6, 2016, during the time of the trial regarding his death, documents the silent action of the mamas for their son, Robert Jitmau. They stood in front of the court of Jayapura in Abepura saying,

We demand justice [...] for Rojit [...]. We are disappointed and we have told the judge and that court of this. They have not heard our voice and so now we are looking for justice on the street [...]. We ask that they thoroughly investigate the perpetrators who killed our son Robert Jitmau. (Koten, 2016)

Text added to the video as images of the Mamas' silent protest outside the courthouse where Rojit's case is being discussed reads as follows:

³⁹ His death was ruled a traffic accident, but his body was found beaten to death and then placed in his car.

Robert Jitmau, (Rojit) was a champion for the Mamas' market when the state, specifically the local government and the Papua legislative assembly failed to empower the economy of indigenous Papuans. Rojit arrived and empowered Papuan mamas in their struggle (*perjuangan*) to build their market together with SOLPAP (the market solidarity group for indigenous Papuans). On January 25, 2007, SOLPAP was formed and began to carry out its mission to empower and champion (*memperjuangkan*) the economic rights of indigenous Mama sellers. Since then, *perjuangan* after *perjuangan* has been enacted by SOLPAP to urge the state to build a market for indigenous Papuan Mamas. President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, when he was a candidate for president, visited the temporary Mama Mama market in Jayapura on June 5, 2014 and at this opportunity, President Joko Widodo promised that if he were chosen to become president, he would build the market. This promise was only realized when 6 Mamas together with Rojit went to Jakarta to collect that promise in October and December 2015. A year later, President Joko Widodo came to Papua to fulfill his promise. In his visit to Papua from April to May 2016, on 30 April 2016, President of the Republic of Indonesia Jokowi placed the first stone of the permanent market for indigenous Mama sellers. 20 days later, on Friday, May 20, 2016, the champion (*penjuang*) for the indigenous Papuan Mama Market, Robert Jitmau was killed on Ring Road, Hamadi, Jayapura. According to the police, the death of Rojit was due to a traffic accident, but his family, the indigenous Papuan Mamas and Solidarity [SOLPAP] ascertain that the death of Rojit was a planned killing. (Koten, 2016).

Rojit's actions and his death inspire continued Mama Market movements as seen in the section below.

Post Rojit market movements.

Indonesian and Papuan news agencies are following nonviolent actions of *Mama Mama Papua*, often involving their rights to market spaces. Rev. Dora Balubun, colleague and mentor of Rojit and coordinator of "*Solidaritas Pedagang Asli Papua* (Solidarity for Indigenous Papuan Sellers) insisted that the presence of the Papua working group created new problems because it came to intervene in a market which had already been built" (Rumbarar, 2017). On April 3, 2017, *Mama Mama Papua* demonstrated peacefully requesting that a new working group (*Pokja*) based in Jakarta, led by Judith Dipodiputro, leave the Mamas' market out of their plan, as they prefer to manage their own market and Judith has been apparently co-opting their market. Says Cintya Warwe, a Solpap organizer reported in *Tabloidjubi*,

They make a proposal out of Mama-Mama Papua to BUMN [the Government Business Bureau] and other parties without our agreement. They live in a hotel here [Jayapura] for two months to try to intervene us [sic]. They even want to use the fourth level of the market for their office. That's why we refuse their presence. This market was a result of 15 years struggle with bloodshed, sweat, even lives. (Tabloidjubi, 2017)

Stevanus Yogi in his July 16, 2016, article reports on *Noken*⁴⁰ artisan Mamas in Nabire requesting a worthy place to sell their wares. Stevanus cites Mama Maria Bunai who shared that because of three months of inclement weather, their sales have been down, and their woven bags have been piling up. Currently, like Mamas across Papua, they sell on the sidewalks, as market spaces are occupied by Indonesian immigrants. Says Mama Bunai,

We only need a safe place to sell our wares, as they have in other markets. Because this [the place where they sell their *nokens*] is the problem. We hope that the government of Nabire can see our condition, and provide a worthy place. (Yogi, 2016)

Another artisan, Mama Tebai says, "Mama always prays every night, that the government can see our fate. Because this is our only economic livelihood" (Yogi, 2016).

Meki Mulait, in his article of October 10, 2016 entitled "Mendengar Tangisan Mama Papua (Hearing the Weeping of Papuan Mamas)" discusses the ongoing economic marginalization of indigenous Papuans, saying that this means "local communities are conditioned to become economic foreigners in their own land. Papua is experiencing this situation" (Mulait, 2016). He states that long fought for regulations protecting the businesses of Mamas in selling betel nut, sago, and other local foods are not yet implemented in the field. He writes of his own Mamas in Wamena who sell cabbage, carrots, potatoes, greens, ground nuts, "often they go around to restaurants trying to sell their wares for a fraction of the price" (Mulait, 2016). In spite of these conditions, he honors the economic spirit of Papuan Mamas saying, "Papuan Mamas only need a worthy place and their wares/produce will be sold" (Mulait, 2016).

⁴⁰ *Noken* is a traditional string bag woven by Mamas in Papua and used to carry, among other things, produce, children, school supplies, pigs, and other livestock. They are strong and beautiful bags.

Women's Changing Roles and the Impact on their Relationships with Men

While I was in Fak-fak, without my consent, Markus, he sold my land for the price of drink.
—Mama Yosepha Alomang

The success of *Mama Mama Papua*, economically, has and continues to correlate with instances of tension with Papuan men as well as at times, domestic violence. In her research on the interactions between educated women and men, Jenny Munro (2017) writes of Papuan men, “It is not necessarily that his masculinity is in crisis, and he lashes out, but rather that the constant structural violence, injustice and disruption around him challenges his hold on, and ability to act on, modern gender ideals” (p. 55). This means that women are often, as described in the above section by Dr. J. Wospakrik, working one formal job, caring for their family, working in the garden, and struggling with violence from their husbands/male relatives (2018). Munro tells the story of Celestina, a young woman in the highlands who was educated, but struggles still to find work.

Despite Celestina being the first young woman to graduate from high school from her village (over the bridge), she was not able to get work either, until 2011. Yohannes does not work in a garden, though Celestina divides her time between her garden over the bridge and her public service job. (Munro, 2017, p. 52)

When Celestina does find work, gender expectations continue to require her also to work in the garden, although her husband does not.

The success of economic development and empowerment for Papuan Mamas has resulted in multiple and varied Mama movements and demonstrations, including sit-ins, silent actions, walking actions, prayer movements, travels to the capital for lobbying, films made, centers developed, and multiple small industries created. These movements exhibit strength from the Mamas and perhaps because they are less militant than men's movements, or at least viewed as less militant, they are less restricted. Munro describes how the constant crackdowns on men's

activism, a key source of identity and pride for Papuan men, has impacted their interactions with women. She writes, “although women’s participation is typically welcomed, activism is an integral part of how educated men demonstrate ‘modern’, primarily male-dominated forms of peer leadership while connecting themselves to a broader masculine community” (Munro, 2017, pp. 58-59). She continues,

treating educated Papuan male activists in a demeaning fashion, such as in November 2011 when participants in the 3rd Papuan congress were stripped to their underwear, chained together, and marched to the local police station in Jayapura, is an example of how security forces enforce a pattern of denying Papuan men the status of education and of civilised masculinity. (Human Rights Watch 2011 cited in Munro, 2017, p. 59, 2017)

Munro quotes Martha Macintyre (Macintyre, 2012) as saying, “For women to gain the control over their own lives and bodies that ‘eliminating violence’ entails, men are going to have to lose it” (p. 239). Munro asserts, “I conclude that innovative gender ideas are not always translated into practice, and practicing equality in gender relations may be challenged by broader conditions that make unequal relations the path of least resistance” (2017, p. 57). She cites Kirksey (2012), writing, “While Papua’s frontier economy is burgeoning, it is not controlled by Papuans, and Papuan men are not necessarily the main players in it” (2017, p. 58).

This trend is increasingly noted by women’s development programs in Papua, who have been successful in encouraging and facilitating women’s economic growth. Writes Munro,

Feryana Wakerwa (2015) records failed development and government programs in the highlands and other locales in Papua that have tried to unilaterally rectify women’s poverty, lack of rights, or disempowerment without involving men in discussions about gender roles, norms or broader power asymmetries. (2017, p. 47)

Munro writes “Men are often said to resist, or even lash out against changing gender norms where they seem likely to advantage women and displace their own authority” (2017, p. 57).

Mama Yosepha echoes this in her words,

This was especially true, because he (the husband of mine) was a heavy drinker. He drank so much that, he wasn't himself aware and he wanted to drink his own urine. At another opportunity, he licked his sweat from his own armpit. I could not accept such actions. And those most responsible for these conditions were ABRI⁴¹, and the government of Indonesia and Freeport mine. It was they who brought in alcohol, they intentionally wanted to kill Papuans through alcohol. They simply killed. They also destroyed/demolished my family. Another reason which strengthened my heart to divorce my husband was; I was caring for many problems in the community and sometimes, I had to travel far away for many days. (in Giay and Kambai, 2003, p 24)

The loss of her husband's identity and dignity through alcohol that Mama Yosepha catalogs reflects Agus Alua's words about Papuan male identity. He writes "Big men achieved standing based on their ability to do good things for others, providing leadership through words, actions and networks" (Alua 2006 in Munro, 2017, p. 46). Identity for Papuan men relies on their service to their community, through leadership and through economic empowerment which has largely been denied them

Conclusion

The stories and movements about Papuan Mamas chronicled in this section evidence a strength of identity and economic survival that remains strong. Through gardening, artisanship, small business, lobbying, grass roots movements, and community organizing, Mamas are supporting their families and fighting for their economic right to make a basic living in a colonial economy (Wospakrik, Wospakrik, & Smythe, 2015). But this literature also reveals the reality of latent conflict that women experience through the slow killing of their men's dignity and worth. My study hopes to build on these stories and studies by offering an analysis of the discourses of dignity of a group of Papuan women in response to the violence they routinely experience.

⁴¹ The Army

Chapter 5: Methodology—An Invitation into “We”

How we do what we do is as important as what we actually do. Luce Irigaray, at her doctoral thesis defense, responded to the question of her method for her research this way: “a delicate question. For isn’t it the method, the path to knowledge, that has always also led us away, led us astray, by fraud and artifice?” (Irigaray 1985a, p. 150). The creation of knowledge is a political process. Although the results are important, the how of that knowing determines the knowing (Wospakrik J. , 2018). Here I would like to share the story of this knowing as experienced it in my research journey.

I begin with an overview, originating from my research proposal, of my methodology, and share how the specifics changed as a result of being led back from my straying by the Mamas, my participants, and my guides. After this, I delve more deeply into the larger methodological theme that has arisen from their guidance, of an “invitation into we,” exploring both theoretical underpinnings to this invitation as well as stories from and about the Mamas who led me on a new path of being we. The invitation to being we covers that transformation from pain and suffering into healing and love exhibited by the Mamas every day.

Overview of Methodology

The Mamas in Papua are living freedom, even though their conditions are daily interrupted by state and domestic violence. It is their very practices of liberty, daily engaged in, that I studied. My methods needed to, then, reflect the very nature of liberty. Writes Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005), “In many projects the process is far more important than the outcome. Processes are expected to be respectful, to enable people, to heal and to educate. They are expected to lead one small step further towards self-determination” (p. 128). When self-determination is violently forbidden by the state, self-determination as part of the research

process is vital. Methods which simply quantify, or which limit responses due to pre-existing plans and expectations do not follow the spirit of the practices of liberty. What, then, does a liberational, healing methodology look like? A methodology where the very process of gathering information is inclusionary, liberating, respectful and dialogical?

There are many revolutionary and liberational methods within qualitative research, as qualitative research itself has grown out of the acknowledgement that people's stories have validity and should be heard. Ethnographic researchers of the past such as Bronislaw Malinowski (1922), Clifford Geertz (1973), and Margaret Mead (2001) have described and listened to many groups, drawing out and respecting their ways of life. While these methods were revolutionary at the time, they were still impacted by the positivistic separation of the knower and the known, of the subject and the object. The researcher was the one who knows, the one who observes, the one who is at the same time "friend" and "stranger" (Powdermaker, 1966, p. 1). Geertz (1995), in a later publication, reflects on this binary positionality: "What gives us the right to study them? When we speak of others in our voice do we not displace and appropriate theirs? Is a representation of others free of the play of power and domination in any way possible? Does it all come down to who writes whom" (p. 107)?

Post-modern discourses of intersubjectivity and liberational discourses in education and theology (see Derrida, 1966; Freire, 2003; Gutierrez, 1988) invited researchers, educators, development workers, and theologians into processes of dialogue, reflexivity, and relationality (see also Wilson, 2009). Discussions applying such liberational and intersubjective theories to research methodology resulted in the incorporation of greater degrees of reflexivity, dialogue, and partnership in the process of making meaning (see Smith, 2005; Wilson, 2009; Tomaselli, Dyll, and Francis, 2008). These methods, particularly the indigenous methods, emphasize the

wholeness of our interactions with our environment and with each other, affirming that the “other” is not separate from us, to be told by us, but that we are present with that other in a shared relational reality. Research then must honor these relationships, and must, Tomasselli, Dyll, and Francis argue, listen to the needs of both the community and the researcher.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2005) offers guidelines received from her community regarding research practice informed by the principles above. They are intensely moral guidelines which emphasize the need for rights to be honored by acknowledging that the researcher is a person within the community, and as such, should abide by the principles which guide community well-being. These include being respectful; being seen and seeing—face to face (see also Levinas’ (1998) discussion of the ethical need to see and be seen); being cautious; sharing; looking, listening, then speaking; and humility (Smith, 2005, p. 120). These are essential in creating a decolonizing methodology and also speak to the essential nature of reflexivity in the very process of research in order to write a “decolonizing narrative” (Smith, Denzin, and Lincoln, 2008, p. 324). Tomaselli, Dyll, and Francis (2008) see this form of narrative methodology as “a form of anthropological/ethnographic participant observation that enables our informants to have direct access to the information we have written about them in the form of an ongoing dialogue” (p. 348).

In the spirit of the increasingly liberational trajectory of qualitative research, and in honor and remembrance of the daily lived practices of liberty engaged in by the Mamas in West Papua, I am compelled to ask myself the methodological question, what would the Mamas do? How would they conduct research?

I called Mama Koinonia yesterday, and she answered with joy. She stated that her son Ferdinand was marrying Agnes whom he has loved for 7 years. And she asked me the question

she always asks, “Julian, when will you come back?” When I joined the community in Lincoln City as a woman alone, all my neighbors, but particularly Mama Koinonia, invited me to “story” with them (The Papuan word “*cerita*” or “story” serves as both a noun and a verb). Mama Koinonia told me that in the afternoon, we are to leave our doors open (she did qualify that if soldiers are present, doors are allowed to be closed), and as people come, we drink tea and we “story” together. And so, one lonely afternoon, remembering Mamas words, I walked across the Lula’s yard to her house and stood on the edge of her porch peering, until the dogs found me and the whole family poured out. We sat and we drank tea. We laughed at the grandchildren. Like Wilson’s (2009) metaphor of research as ceremony, our collective research of each other was shaped by the practice of celebration. But it did not end there.

We heard the cries coming from next door as Mama Lula and her son screamed at each other. We sat, silent, holding our tea cups and listening for escalation that, this day at least, did not come. Not long after, Mama Lula, dressed in Sunday clothes, slowly walked through the hedge to join us. Her face carried the torment of drunken sons. Her eyes, the quiet hunger of granddaughters. Her face mirrored grief—as if a smile would betray the stories carried in that bit of sacred skin that was her face. But it was the way she carried this face that I will remember. Her head was high, her chin strong, and her face held the grief that her land and nation and family lived. She held this grief with dignity, sitting like a queen in Mama Koinonia’s rattan chair, gazing, head high at the road and the soldiers and the vegetable vendors selling on the street because Papuans do not merit market space. We sat with her as she carried the grief of her land in every muscle of her face. We hand her a cup of tea, and we watched the motorcycles and military convoys and mosquitos go by.

I had first thought, as I reflected on the context of Papua, that my metaphor of research would be celebration. For so very often during my time in Papua, the Mamas invited me into storytelling, laughter, and a togetherness which could be called nothing other than celebration. But Mama Lula's face and Mama Koinonia's quiet and knowing presence adds another metaphor to celebration. It adds mourning. Although this study honors the practices of liberty among Papuan woman, it must also acknowledge the reality of suffering under which that liberty is practiced.

I have quoted him before, but I find again that Benny Giay, Papuan activist and writer has captured the desperate, grief-filled elegance in Mama Lula's face. Giay says that we must "celebrate the suffering" (personal conversation, August, 2007). And I feel that the work of research in the context of such courageously celebratory people, must be both celebration and mourning (see also Derrida's *Work of Mourning*, 2003). For it is for celebration and for mourning that the Mamas come together, and it is into these spaces that they have invited me.

Research methods.

What methods, then, fit into these participatory spaces of celebration and of mourning? The traditional methods of interview, participant observation, and recording and observing stories are a vital part of this process, but with a twist. What I love about the method of Participatory Action Research (PAR) is that it is a process of collective meaning making and action (see also Friere, 2003) where questions are developed reflexively with participants, and the results are also analyzed in community (Reason and Bradbury, 2001, p.1). I feel that this reflexivity and dialogue must be at the core of my research, but I realize that I in fact have no choice. For, were I to engage in a top-down research paradigm, the Mamas would not let me. Alice McIntyre (2004) in her study of how violence affects identity among women in Northern

Ireland's Monument Road district affirms the need for relationship in PAR. This relationship between the researcher and the participants and among the participants is essential in the research process. I have an existing relationship with my participants. I am a learner, one who is and has been invited into their space, on their terms (for a discussion of invitation, see McIntyre, 2004), and whether I acknowledge it or not, the nature of our relationship means that the Mamas voices will be present in all parts of the research process. Thus, as I interviewed, observed and participated, and as I listened to stories, I listened to the needs of the community, and followed their suggestions.

My basic question was "Where do you find your strength?", and I trusted the Mamas to guide me in this process. As I discovered and recorded stories, interviews, and observations, I listened to where they directed me (the snowball effect). As Alistair Thomson (2007) writes, I "celebrate the subjectivity" of my interviews and interactions with my subjects (p. 61). I had no choice. To live with the Mamas is to live in celebration. There is a word in Papuan which means "come alongside" (*mendampingi*). This is what an older person does to a younger person. My participants, my Mamas have invited me to come alongside them. Our relationships remain across boundaries of ocean and time, and every time I return, I re-enter these relationships.

My study was modeled after studies that use participatory or collaborative Research among communities of women living with violence (McIntyre, 2004; Herliany, 2010) (Shiu-Thornton, Senturia, & Sullivan, 2005) (Sung-Chan & Yuen-Tsang, 2008), as well as by texts which discuss research conducted according to community values in indigenous communities (Tomaselli, Dyll, & Francis, 2008; Wilson, 2009; Smith, 2005). I tried to celebrate the existing strength and extraordinary resilience present in the continually reconstructed counter-narrative lived by the Mamas. I entered into this research in the spirit that they invited me into their

community 12 years ago, a spirit of the celebration of life and as a courageous mourning of the continuing violence and disintegration of Papuan land and people, and finally as a participant in the joyous art of survival.

Research participants.

The participants were a group of 17 women (or Mamas, as they are known in the community) living in a parish in Lincoln City (not its real name). Most participants lived within one mile of each other and shared a church. They are a self-identified group which has been meeting for many years. Members varied in age from mid-twenties to late sixties, and most are married with children and/or grandchildren and many other children that they care for. Many are widows, or have husbands absented by violence. The Mamas are a group working together to care for each member in situations of economic, domestic, and political duress. The existing meetings, both formal church gatherings which occurred biweekly, and informal encounters while going to the market, cleaning the church, cooking together, were characterized by laughter, singing, and informal storytelling. By situating my research within an existing group, the upheaval to participants was minimized as it is an already functioning gathering for religious and communal purposes.

Access.

I have been a member of the Lincoln City community for over 12 years, living there from 2005-2008, 2009, 2013-2014, and 2015-2016. The bulk of my research was conducted between 2013-2014, although it is informed by previous and later connections. While living there, I was invited to participate, celebrate, and mourn with this community of women and their families.

A number of community leaders, from within and outside of the community of Mamas, invited me to return to conduct research. These included the head of the college which was in the

community and where I also worked, the head of the women's church assembly, the pastor of the church, three of the women elders in the community as well as the members of the women's church assembly. This provided access to Lincoln City in a natural way.

Ethical considerations.

Vanessa McLennan Dodd (2004) writes about the research process that “getting involved gets you into shit” (p. 27). This is particularly true in an area as politically sensitive as Papua. Wilson's emphasis that research must be ethical, along with the very nature of participative and indigenous research as morally committed implies that truly ethical research in Lincoln City must, to some degree, use its results for purpose of justice.

The island of New Guinea (and its surrounding atolls) was one of the birthplaces of 20th century anthropology. Branislav Malinowski, Margaret Mead, and Michael Rockefeller are only a few of the names made famous by the varied and exotic cultures of the stone age, “cannibalistic” peoples of New Guinea and its environs (for a discussion of cannibalism tropes in Papua, see (Banivanua-Mar, 2008; Kirksey S. E., 2002). Numerous studies have taken place; most in Papua New Guinea (the eastern half of the island), but a number of key studies also in West Papua. Anthropologist Eben Kirksey (2002) has called attention to the fact that most studies have been apolitical—examining an isolated community outside the existing political context of the ongoing violence (see also Stasch, 2009) (Notable exceptions can be found in Kirksey's work, among others). Kirksey calls for research that is politically situated, integrating the rich cultural data with the reality of the existing regime, chastising researchers for making their name on Papua without naming the pervasive violence present there (2002).

There is, however, a reason that political engagement has not been attempted by many established researchers. Research permission is only granted by the state if no political purposes

are noted in the study, and the presence of foreign researchers is highly controlled. In response to this, I sought to gain permission from indigenous community leaders. This practice follows Smith's invocation that the very process of research in indigenous communities must further the goal of self-determination.

In spite of these challenges, the people of Lincoln City (and in this case, the Mamas, in particular) unequivocally desire their stories to be told and creative efforts can be undertaken to both protect sources as well as to honor the existing political reality and name the violence in the international sphere. One such creative effort is studying hidden and unacknowledged strengths. Historian, James C. Scott identifies everyday acts of resistance in which the subjugated use the language of the oppressor but imbue it with new meaning. Within the context of Lincoln City, the topic of women and their stories and strengths is an innocuous one—relegated to the home, and in the case of my research, to the nonthreatening spiritual realm of the church (M. Hiram, personal communication, May, 2008). Although the content of my study attempts to radically name and honor existing and powerful methods of strength and survival for the purpose of lifting up existing discourses of dignity which daily counter the hegemonic discourse of annihilation, it took place among a “weak” (see Scott, 1985) and seemingly ineffectual group of participants—women.

In addition, I asked the Mamas if they would prefer anonymity. Some of them selected the pseudonyms that they wanted me to use.⁴² I also did not use photographs. No participant was included in the study without informed consent (Stringer, 2008), however in accordance with indigenous research guidelines, we had an oral informed consent process. In addition, the final

⁴² All names of participants and their families used in this text are pseudonyms.

dissertation will be published anonymously or using a pseudonym and the specifics of the location will be concealed.

In addition to the above risks, when stories are told in a context which remains unsafe, there is risk of re-traumatization. Many times, participants wept, and I held their hands, brought tissue, laughed with them at their pets and my pets, swatted mosquitoes, looked up at the mountains with them, made tea, and wept with them, all the while feeling completely helpless. We sat in silence, often, through the pain. Generally, however, the Mamas themselves kept storying, kept sharing, ending their stories in a place of strength. I will share more of this process in my findings chapters.

Data collection and sources: methods of celebration and mourning.

What I love about the methods of celebration found in Papuan dance (the *Yosim Pancar* in particular) is that it is a full circle of pairs. In the circle of dancers, as the music changes, one pair will initiate a new step, and the other pairs will follow. But, because they dance in a circle, it is difficult to tell who is leading the movement and who is following. The dancers are attuned to each other, following each other—not rigidly, but with delight—even through the unintentional mistakes. The dance is a moving, vibrant, changing, interdependent community of celebration.

Celebration is participative. It is contagious, like laughter. The celebratory nature of my research meant that, like the *Yosim Pancar* dance, it remained open to further movements, further methods of data collection. I had intended to have the primary site of the research be the weekly meeting of Mamas which are held in a different Mama's home each week. I did attend these meetings, recorded my observations, and made connections, but in keeping with advice from elders, the bulk of my research involved conducting interviews individually with each participant. From living with the community, I collected data through observation, listening, and

participation which then informed me in determining who to interview. I spent six months, from July to December 2013, participating and re-establishing connections in the community, and then began interviews in January. This time of reconnection deepened the interviews.

The land is vital to Papuan people. When Papua is spoken of, it is not the nation, or the province, it is the “Land of Papua” (Onim, 2006). Among the Amungme of the southern central region, the land is mother. Freeport mine has decapitated the mother (Erari, 2006). The violence of the state and of the family continually breaks not only the people of Papua, but also the land. The two are interchangeable. When the land breaks, the people break. To capture this grounded part of the context, I had intended to include photographs that did not identify faces to identify the physical spaces of the context (Kesby, 2005). However, those photographs and landscapes might also be identified, so I chose not to do this. In addition, the women regularly went once a year (or sometimes more) to a nearby beach with their children for a picnic. I was able to show my gratitude to my participants by inviting them there. We did this, not as a formal part of the research, but simply as an opportunity to be together and enjoy the beach with the children. It rained. We had fun anyway.

Action.

Core to the method of Participatory Action Research is acting or doing something! I had thought that an action might arise from this research, and a number of actions, or products have arisen from the process of being present in the community. This includes an article written with one participant, a translated book of sermons from one participant, and English classes for both the Mamas and their children. These actions were initiated by participants. Further actions of this very active community occurred which I was invited into. I realized that I did not need to try to elicit action from the community as all they do, all day, every day, is act! What I can do, and

what they have asked for, is copies of their stories. I will prepare copies of their stories in book form

Data analysis.

I recorded my interviews and then, upon returning to Canada, transcribed and translated them. I combined these transcripts with my written observations and with writings of my own experiences of the context. I then read them extensively and, through conversation with participant advisors, identified themes that floated up out of the texts time after time. Next, I divided the interview transcripts and my own stories according to these themes and I arrange the presentation of data according to these themes in the findings section. I double checked the themes with my community and most of the responses I got were to the effect of, “Well of course, Julian, we told you all that already”—with an accompanying eye roll. I realize that my ongoing participation informed my identification of themes. When I sat down to write, I was reflecting and showing what the Mamas had been telling me, day in and day out.

The Mamas were not very impressed with the themes, as they were not new or different, but simply what they talk about and experience daily. I kind of felt like they were thinking, but were too polite to say, “Julian, you are getting your Ph.D., and all you can think to come up with are the same things that we have been telling you over and over again?” I rejoice, because this was what I dreamed would happen.

Timeline.

Although the community of participants with which I studied was not large, I pursued validity through prolonged engagement. The duration of my study was a year (with many extra bits added on later) as to allow sufficient time to re-engage with the community, after an absence of 4 years.

My year of research, 2013-2014, began with 6 months of reconnecting and participating in women's meetings and in other community activities I was invited to. These included church services, funerals, graduations, weddings, afternoon tea drinking, cooking, chatting at the corner store, evening women's volleyball, holiday celebrations, children's English classes, beach trips, fishing, traveling together and many other activities. I conducted interviews during the second 6 months.

An invitation.

We have to celebrate the suffering

—Benny Giay

As I contemplate this phrase, two images of celebration and of suffering remain with me. The first is an image of celebration. When our church in Papua went on a parade over Easter, we walked and we sang, but only three people danced. They were the widows. Up went their hands with reckless abandon! Their hips swayed in elderly seduction. Their feet shuffled to a rhythm of life and of death and of joy that is intrinsic to their stories. The Widow Walina has very few teeth and her gums are stained red with betel nut. She is poor. And she is tired. And she woos her community into celebration.

The second image is from the funeral of Isa Torabi, a young man who took his life while serving a prison sentence for his protests against the American owned Freeport Gold mine. It is 11 pm. And outside the door to his parents' house where his body has been placed, the Mamas are encamped. 50 and 60 years old, they sit. With jackets and scarves for the 70-degree night. They have known Isa since he was small. They will not leave him even in death. They sit through the night, and the next day. They keep awake with singing.

The methodology of this study seeks, not to address a problem, but to explore the powerful way in which women in West Papua both mourn and celebrate their reality with dignity

in the face of annihilation. In providing a participatory space for the naming of the practices of liberty, I had hoped to expand the horizons of empowerment and survival, with the hope that naming and identifying the existing power “can offer participants an arena in which to rehearse for reality various lifesaving practices” (Kesby, 2005, p. 2049), however, it was I who was invited into these stories of liberation, celebration, and strength. I was invited into a “we” built and sustained by the Mamas of Papua.

An Invitation into We

I.

I write, acknowledging the I, while rejoicing that by the process of engaging in research in the community of Lincoln city, I have been invited into a “we”. It is then, both from the I and the we that I write. I write from Spivak’s (1987) “I-slot” because I cannot do otherwise. And in this I, the stories I have heard and the dreams I still dream unite into a creation of something “real”. Spivak explains it this way.

[Th]is understanding [...] does not entail ignoring what it is that sentences report or tell. It is the precondition for the analysis of how the what is made [...]. Not even the simplest reporting or telling can avoid these maneuvers [...]. [W]hat is reported or told is also reported or told and thus entails a positioning of the subject. Further [...] anyone dealing with a report or a tale [...] can and must occupy a certain ‘I-slot’ in these dealings [...]. That history [or sociology] deals with real events (facts) and literature with imagined ones [fictions] may now be seen as a difference in degree rather than in kind [...]. What is called history (or sociology) will always seem more real to us than what is. (1987, p.243)

“Women are the givers of life,” Ibu Noreen tells me as we sit on rattan chairs on green tiles, listening to cars go by and rain patter.⁴³ But in spite of the traffic roar, a bubble of stillness encloses us as she speaks.

⁴³ interview, January, 2014, Ibu Noreen.

“Women are the givers of life,” she tells me 3 years later, as we sit on the still side of the Jefferson Memorial in Washington D.C. trying to negotiate nuts with an insistent breast-feeding squirrel. She speaks these words steps away from President Trump’s America and Jefferson’s hidden women. My journey through the how of researching and now, the shaping and storying of the research in the form of dissertation writing, has been a journey of both receiving and figuring out how to give and live life.

My grandmother died one month ago today. She was 101 years old. In 2015, she broke the tip off her hip and they put a metal rod in her bone and discovered she was anemic. “So they gave her blood,” my uncle tells me. My housemates also know my grandmother as “Grandma”, even though they met her only once. They know her because my grandmother dwells in my stories. I tell my students and my congregation in Lincoln City of her too. I tell my seatmate flying next to me on the airplane, “My grandmother is 100 today.”

My grandmother is a hero. She is a woman who survived sustained domestic violence, and brought forth life in the process. But life is defined in juxtaposition to death, and although my grandmother brought forth life, somewhere in me are bits of the death that she fought so hard to transform. In the quest of asking women in Papua about where they find their strength, I am attempting also to discover the story of a life that conquered the darkness that is in my blood, in my mother’s blood, and in my grandmother’s blood. I imagine the blood given her during her transfusion encountering her blood and jumping with glee at the power it found in her blood! My I-slot cannot divest itself of this blood-deep quest for the power to survive and transform violence that lives in my mother and my grandmother.

There is a popular phrase of uncertain provenance, “We are made of stardust.” The Mamas are made of stardust. I know that. I see them sparkle even when the power goes out. But

me? I am made only of dandruff and breadcrumbs—my own sparkle lost through sadness, through living the trauma of others’ stories, and through the helplessness of facing too many deaths I couldn’t stop. It has taken me 3 years to write this dissertation, but through this writing—of women working and laughing and loving and creating and sustaining life even through unbearable difficulty, I cannot write without also finding (oh so slowly) my own sparkle. Maybe, I too am made of stardust.

Methodology theories: decolonizing “I.”

In theorizing my methodologies, I used a combination of indigenous methodology, autoethnography, and feminist ethnography. In the process of an indigenous or decolonized research, we do not only decolonize the process of research, we decolonize ourselves. The very process of participatory and indigenous research changes the ways that we “think, feel and act” (Swadener and Mutua, 2008, p. 25). To put an indigenous “front” on research is simply a cooptation of indigenous voices. I don’t know if it is ever possible for a nonindigenous researcher to research in decolonized ways in indigenous communities. This is, however, the setting of my work and research, and I have tried to follow these guidelines. As researchers, it is important to enter with our whole selves into the indigenous way of knowing. This way of knowing is “fluid” and gained through experience (Little Bear, 2000). Decolonized research will change even as it is written because it is a form of knowledge that arises “from interrelationships with the human world, the spirit, and the inanimate entities of the ecosystem” (Kovach in Billy, 2009 p. 61).

Against my will, and in spite of myself, I brought my whole self into this process. From the selection of the research question to the carrying out of interviews to the writing, I live with

my whole self the transition from darkness to dignity. A process that my Mamas have already undergone. I am learning through writing their lives that maybe, I too can be strong.

I try, in the how of my research, to proceed with compassion and with a knowledge of my own and others' identities as subjects with voices and stories that deserve value and dignity. I cannot research dignity without also conducting myself in a way that sees the hidden dignities and honors them. I found these words written by Avery Gordon reflect the spirit of research that I want to have.

In order to write within a question concerning exclusions and invisibilities—a dead woman was not at a conference at which she was supposed to be—requires a methodology that is attentive to what can't be seen, but what is powerfully real; attentive to what appears dead, but is powerfully alive; attentive to what appears to be in the past, but is powerfully present; requires attending also to just who the subject of the analysis is. (1990, p. 486)

A dead woman was not in the dissertation in which she was supposed to be. There are two women. Mama Lula and Ibu Alice, who died before my formal research began (I wrote of Mama Lula in the introduction). It is their voices also that I listen to. When the hidden voices die...what can't be seen must be written. And so to misquote John Donne, a feminist indigenous methodology in a location of genocide must then be a valediction forbidding silence (Donne, 1633).

It is because of this valediction forbidding silence, and because I function in an indigenous setting, that I am trying to let tenets of indigenous ways of knowing lead me. These tenets of indigenous research invite researchers and communities into a new way of knowing (Muwanga-Zake, 2009). A new epistemology based in a number of underlying principles and ways of seeing the world and of being. These include connectedness, relationality, respect, and ceremony or wholeness (Ball & Janyst, 2008; Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Smith L. T., 2005; Wilson, 2009). Indigenous research as well as research conducted by non-indigenous

peoples in indigenous communities seeks to re-connect the knower with nature and the knower with the known (Dillard, 2008). Rather than the subject-object relationship, there is instead a journey towards, not only intersubjectivity, but multiple subjectivities (Flax, 1993).

Bourdieu's (1977) assertion of the perpetuation of inequality through educational structures reminds me that it is not only primary and secondary schools which convince minds and bodies that they cannot and should not change the prevailing system, it is also institutions of higher education. Although with notable exceptions, such institutions, along with the supporting institutions of church and government theorize and implement colonial encounters which maintain power imbalance (for example, see Spyer's (2000) discussion of Wallace's research methods in Aru). The separation of the knower from the known, of the colonizer from the colonized, of nature from human beings, combined with the theory of the evolutionary supremacy of one species through violent means emphasizes a hierarchy of being and of knowing where those creating the system are on top (Muwanga-Zake, 2009; Palmer, 1993). In this system, the colonized as well as the natural world are among the known, named, catalogued, and therefore owned by those know (Spyer, 2000; Vizenor, 1993).

A story.

I was once a victim of research, a recipient of my story retold. The facts were right—I could not contest. And the researcher, my friend, told me he had compiled my story with others to avoid revealing identity. But you could tell it was me. He was my friend and I trusted him—like my friends in Papua trust me. He caught me in my sadness. In my vulnerability, he came and asked me questions about my experience, with the angle, he said of critiquing my organization, the organization that I too wished to critique. When he published his thesis, he sent a copy to our organization, and I eagerly read it, skimming for my story, a story I somehow thought, because

he was my friend and because I trusted him, would be told in an empowering way. It wasn't. I wasn't anonymous. I could be recognized easily by anyone in that organization. Although all the facts were correct (valid, they call it in research parlance), I felt shame for the way my story was portrayed and used. I read the woman that he wrote, and she was broken and mocked, her secrets aired in academic language. In his research, my being and my story became proof of how that organization damaged its workers. My story became an object, and so did I. Although the way the researcher treated me was always friendly and kind, there was a disconnect between how he treated me in person, and how he wrote about me. His focus on objectivity made me into an object. I do not want to do this in my own writing.

Kovach states the importance of having a preferential option for those being researched, especially when researching in vulnerable communities (Kovach, 2010). And so I begin from positive regard (Farber & Lane, 2001), and from my own awe and wonder at stories of survival. And I honor the stories that are given to me, and tell them in a way that I hope will be honoring to the spirit of those who gave me the gift of their stories.

Self-location and social location of the researcher: the unruliness of research.

What I want to try to write about is not only how the method 'is never as simple as it purports to be' but how the focus of the question of method at the metadiscursive level allows us to quietly pass over the place least methodical in our work as intellectuals, the place where our discourse is unauthorized by virtue of its unruliness. (Gordon, 1990, p. 490)

Bethany Turner states in her study of the Zapatista movement that those experiencing violence can engage in interaction with others to express an interconnected message to a larger audience. This is known as the "Zapatista effect" (Cleaver, 1988); an effect in which "an international web of support can be effectively opposed and alternatives articulated" (Turner 2003, p. 5). I tell myself that my own presence as an outsider in this community in Lincoln City

offers a space of interconnection and witness to their experience and that I am uniquely situated in this context due to my language ability and my childhood in Indonesia, and an ongoing 12-year relationship with in this community of women. But the reality remains that I am an outsider—still an “I.” And although I endeavor to build participative and communal structures into my research design, it is not I who build them. Those structures are already there, and I as a white researcher, I am being inducted into them through my research. As I am invited into the we, I am also invited into the trauma of the violence that my participants, my friends, experience.

Colonization and the resulting trauma break things. It breaks relationships. It breaks identity—of both colonizer and colonized (see Fanon, 1965). Like other forms of trauma, colonization thrives on disconnection (Herman, 1992). Into this disconnection of meaning making characterized by colonial ways of knowing and objectifying, I was invited into a process of collective meaning making by women—in their ongoing battle to maintain their identity in the face of erasing forms of violence. In the desolate disconnections—demarcated by colonization, I have been invited into connection, and as I stumble my way between and (maybe) beyond the binaries of oppressor and oppressed, exploiter and exploited, subject and object, I too begin to slowly live the practices of liberation engaged in by the Mamas.

Autoethnography acknowledges that no research is truly objective by naming the subjective self directly rather than indirectly (see Tomaselli, Dyll, & Francis, 2008). I endeavor to do this, not to detract from the stories of the Mamas, but to note the processes of liberating connection that they invite me to engage in. From the trauma of disconnection and ongoing intentional removal of identity loss, they tell me their stories of strength and invite me into to their laughter. Within a colonization that works to disconnect, they invite me into their we.

On Becoming We

I am a soul who made the pilgrimage to Ghana and I am healing from the realization and recognition of my relationship to the ancestors both there and here. But I am an American citizen (my country) with an African heritage [...]. I am this flesh and bone and blood and mind and soul and spirit. I am this and so are we all. Connected. Whole. One (Dillard and Maya, 2012, p. 286).

Dillard and Maya, through their living model of endarkened feminist epistemology, invite feminist researchers into a fertile journey of identifying enlightenment epistemologies of neutrality and objectivity, and of walking their own path of spiritual, relational, and active research. In 1999, Linda Tuhiwai Smith challenged the traditional research paradigm in the academic arena, developing “a new generation of researchers who are critically engaged in understanding knowledge and power structures created by research and dedicated to doing research ‘in a good way’” (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012, p. 162). Her model of research was deeply participative, characterized by “The need to not only involve, but also collaborate with, communities through all stages of the research process was put forward as a way to address the colonial legacy” (in Ball and Janyst 2008, p. 33). Smith introduced a shift in preposition, a shift which Koster, Baccar & Lemelin also call attention to. A shift to know the world *with*, and *for* (2012) rather than classifying a human other as an object to be conquered through knowing (Derrida, 1966; Palmer, 1993). In these ways, Smith’s work began to break down the boundary, found in positivistic knowledge traditions, between the knower and the known (2005).

Stephanie Westlund identifies a form of positivist knowing grounded in Cartesian dualism upon which traditional research paradigms are built (Westlund, 2012). Such knowing is often violent, as it reduces the other to an object to be conquered through our naming and our knowing (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Derrida in Sandoval, 2000; Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012), as happened in my own story I shared about being a research object.

Traditionally the researcher determines a topic of interest to him or her, proposes this topic to the

academy and then conducts the research, returning the results to the academy. The researcher functions as a “snow goose” (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012, p. 175), coming for a season to answer his/her questions and then bringing his/her results back to their world. Indigenous scholars invite researchers on human subjects out of this knowing and into a collaborative knowing. Three questions capture the introduction of traditional methods of research into indigenous contexts.

- 1) *Who initiates research?* Traditionally, knowledge gained from research was brought back to the academy and to the culture of that academy (see Ellingson, 2001 & Freeman, 1996). The driving force is often a desire to better know ourselves, but this desire is hidden behind an objective academic gaze which uses the other to justify our own being (Cook-Lynn, 2008). Such research is often either negative or romanticized depictions of the other. But in both cases, the other remains just that, other (LaRoque, 2010). And the one who benefits is the researcher (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012).
- 2) *Who is conducting the research?* The loss of the subject “I” within traditional research paradigms allows the power dynamics which a researcher lives to influence research methods and practice without being named (Absolon & Willet, 2004). The traditional voice, absent of this I, is an omniscient voice, a voice which, when research is published, gains the credit of the research rather than the community also present in the research (Brown & Strega, 2005).
- 3) *What happens after the research?* Within the snow goose research paradigm, upon completion of the research objectives, the researcher leaves his/her context and returns home (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012; Smith L. T., 2005).

Literature on indigenous research paradigm responds to these trends in the following ways, offering another path.

- 1) *Who initiates the research?* Castleden, Morgan, and Lamb (2012) argue that the very choice of a research topic is an act of power. They propose instead a selection of topic grounded in relationship and conversation with the community where one researches. Even if an initial topic is brought to the table—a topic which is often required by funding bodies prior to the research—the authors advocate for a position of openness which allows for change in this topic.
- 2) *Who conducts the research?* By choosing a research topic in community, and by ensuring that the research project will benefit all involved, the collaborative participation of those present in the research space is vital (McIntyre, 2007; Nicholls, 2009). Such formalized roles as research assistants within the community is one way to do this (Castleden, Morgan, & Lamb, 2012), however, Koster, Baccar and Lemelin (2012) argue for a more integrated research, where participants engage as co-researchers, and are also credited as coauthors in publications that emerge out of the research. This involves participation at all levels of the research process, from planning, to implementing to analyzing. Such involvement can include not merely traditional research practices, but also affirms and includes traditional ceremonies (Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012; Muwanga-Zake, 2009). For example, the beginning of a research endeavour can be marked with a feast. And data analysis and dissemination of the results is often most successfully conducted through community meetings in an oral setting, where the impacts and implications of the research can be discussed communally (Christensen, 2012; Mutua & Wadener, 2004).

3) *Who benefits from the research?* Mutual selection of a research topic is more likely to result in mutually beneficial results for all involved in the research process (Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin, 2012). Koster, Baccar, and Lemelin document their journey in geography research where they went in with a plan and their plan was altered by a request from the community. The result was that the community was able to implement an action which improved their tourism revenue. One of the key components in an equalizing of the research process, they note, is the need to ensure that benefits are named and made explicit for all even at the beginning of the process, and that all parties are pleased with the potential outcome of the research.

Research grounded in these processes relies on relationship (Wilson, 2009) and even friendship, something that often occurs in traditional research but is not named (de Leeuw, Cameron, & Greenwood, 2012). This very relationality, Koster, Baccar, & Lemelin (2012) and Smith (2005) emphasize, does not end when the research project ends, for when this relationship abruptly ends with the separation of the researcher, a contract is violated. Samuels (2004) indicates that when this relationship is maintained, the researcher will be asked to do things and to engage with the community in ways that go beyond the traditional roles and time frame of the research. The researcher has become a friend. In this sense, that researcher has accepted responsibilities beyond the “snow goose” paradigm and has begun to merge his world with the world where the research is conducted. The researcher is beginning to become we.

A Story of Pronouns

Finally, this implies grappling with the risk of shattering the safety net of traditional academic writing [...]. Along circuitous paths, we enter into and exit out of our accounts, which are also willy-nilly, shot through with power relations and personal cross-purposes [...]. What would it mean to acknowledge ourselves as being in our accounts, to foreground those repressed marks, the contradictory, ‘autobiographical’ moments that must be circumscribed in order to produce the adequate version? (Gordon, 1990, p. 491)

As I wrote up my research, I tried to separate myself from the narrative. I felt as if I had to write using the words “they,” “the Mamas,” “Mama so-and-so,” or the people of Papua. But as I wrote, I kept unintentionally using the pronoun “we”. Then I would stop, read over what I had written, delete the “we”, and begin again, using appropriately objective nouns and pronouns. “The people of Papua, the Mamas of Papua, they” ... But my words stopped flowing. My writing sounded like a traditional anthropology text. The problem was I had not lived a traditional anthropology text. I had lived and learned in relationship.

Whenever I talked to my family or my friends to share what occurred during my research, the words flowed until my listeners’ eyes glazed over. But when talked, I used “we.” “We (*kitong*) did this. We went there. We attended an *ibadah* (worship service). We had a cooking contest. We went to the beach. We thought we had malaria, but in fact it was the flu.”

Because I needed to write, and using “we” was the only way my words would flow, I started to write using “we”, but then I would tell myself, “I do not have the right to write this experience as if I am a part owner of it, as ‘we’ implies. It’s not my story.” But because I needed to keep writing, I kept writing “we,” thinking I would change it later.

But as I journey in my mind back over the research process, I realize that from the time that “my” research questions began forming, I was being invited into “we.” German Poet Rainer Maria Rilke writes about the questions that define us—questions that we live and that we love (Rilke, 1993). In an individual world, curiosity drives the individual to ask a question out of his or her own interest (Palmer, 1993). But indigenous research seeks to be informed by the community, by relationship, and by mutual accountability. The questions are not separated from relationships, nor are the answers gained apart from these relationships. Methods must take into

account the creation and maintenance of relationship from the very beginning of the process to the end.

I learned the importance of relationality in the research process by doing it wrong. Upon one research trip to Papua several years ago, I knew exactly how I should execute my visit. I decided, for the safety of my friends, not to stay in with them in their home, as foreigners and those associated with them were being monitored. I booked a room at a local guest house, but when my friend Morgana picked me up at the airport, she refused to take me there, insisting that her family's hospitality was preferable.

So I stayed with Morgana and her family, but not wanting to be a burden, I tried to be as independent as possible by trying to take them out for dinner, helping with the dishes, and holding the baby. I caused offense because my self-sufficiency called into doubt their prowess at hosting, and I was gently chastised.

My independence taken away from me, I sat at the breakfast table, drinking tea, as I had been told to do. And I thought, "Ah! I will do something productive, I will ask deep questions which touch the heart of the Papuan experience." And so I asked, in the afternoon, instead of napping, afraid to miss even a moment of knowledge acquisition, "What do stories mean? What do they do?" My hosts sat up with me and told stories, gently ignoring my questions.

In *To Know as We are Known* Parker Palmer (1993) explores a new way of knowing needed in a just world. In his book, he invites people into a community of knowledge, where all know and all are known, and where this knowing takes place not through domination or possession, but through love. But it is indigenous methods of research that articulate more directly an invitation into these new ways of knowing in which relationship, resistance, and connection are vocalized. Although love is not mentioned in most texts, the relationality and the

wholeness affirmed by Wilson's *Research as Ceremony* (2009) and by Tuhiwai-Smith reaffirms a connectedness which has always existed, but which has not always been named and claimed (Anderson, 2001).

This way of knowing is, Castleden, Morgan and Sloan argue, difficult. It is difficult because it doesn't fit into the rubrics of time and finances still functioning in the academic world. Building trust and relationship takes a long time and the aberration and evolution of plans may not be accepted by funding bodies, and co-authorship may take credit away from the researcher—credit which the researcher needs in order to remain employed. However, this very process of knowing as we are known begins to remake ourselves and remake the world which has been unmade by so many of the structures which we live (Palmer, 1993). The very undoing of the colonial empire through the process of research requires, Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, concrete actions which promote self-determination and liberation. This remaking is not easy, but it is this remaking which can begin to liberate the research process, research participants, the researcher, and the world.

This then is the great humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves and their oppressors as well. The oppressors, who oppress, exploit and rape by virtue of their power, cannot find in the power the strength to liberate either the oppressed or themselves. Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free both. (Freire 1972, p. 21)

Becoming we, I think, is not so much a side effect of engaging in indigenous research, but a process of liberation for both the research and the researched.

Invited into “We”

I was first invited into “we” by the Mamas. They chastised me for going out by myself, saying, “You must *ditemani* (be befriended), Julian! There are girls from the girl's dorm, there is Mama Regina—you have no excuse for walking alone, Julian.” Driven by loneliness and the

danger of being a woman alone in a conflict zone, an introverted, independent, mostly American woman entered we, out of necessity.

These are some stories of how we and the traditional research process collided. We were so busy being we that interviews did not happen so much. Every time I brought up interviews, this is what they would say: “Ah, later, Julian. Let’s go play volleyball.” Or “Come, Julian, you don’t know how to cook. Come and cook with us, we will help you.” Or “Come, Julian, come have some tea with me.” Or “Come, Julian, we are going to a wedding celebration to eat! You will come.” It wasn’t that we didn’t talk. It was just that we were so busy living, that we had no time for “research” as I knew it. But this did not mean that I didn’t learn! Just the opposite. The very first week I arrived, Mama Koinonia came to my door. “Julian,” she said, “You must not sit alone. Your door must always be open. For anyone (except when soldiers come at night). Your heart must always be open.” So began a 12-year course in “we.”

In being “we,” I would go hungry, because I couldn’t buy food just for me. I learned that, in our community, everyone shared food, and everyone would get a little, and so did I. Children would come to play in my yard in the afternoon. Freddie would knock on the door, asking for a drink of water. His little niece Penny followed him and commented on how much she loved tangerines, and before I knew it the two of them and the seven other children playing with them were using my bathroom, racing each other on rolling chairs through the living room, and 12 tangerines, 4 liters of boiled water, and the 3 packages of biscuits I had bought to serve to guests would be gone. And I would be breathless with laughter! Mama Koinonia tells me “Julian, George and Justice (her grandsons), they come home and there are 10 children with them. They (George and Justice) invite them and they eat rice untiil...”. She laughs. I learned quickly that,

in Lincoln City, a surplus of food never stays uneaten, and pantries are always empty. But with an empty pantry comes many friends and so much laughter!

I was in Papua for 3 years, at first. As a young woman. I experienced my first gunfire there, and learned for the first time what it feels like to be certain that you will die in about 5 minutes (and then the wonder of having not died!). I experienced the longing for motherhood, the first time a child took my hand. As I grew older and kept living there whenever I could, I was called “Mama” for the first time, as well as *kakak* (older sister). I cannot write the stories of my Mamas and of my friends without also writing my own. I had not believed that my story had a place in this place where I was living. But it was my very story that had brought me to there. My childhood in the disappearing jungle of Borneo brought me to Papua, and my mother’s and grandmother’s lives of strength and transformation gave me eyes to see the power of the women around me in Lincoln city. The Mamas helped me realize that my story also had a place inside the “we.” And that one of the things involved in becoming “we” is love.

Love

De Leeuw, Cameron, and Greenwood (2012), although not speaking specifically of love, write with wonder of the power present within the spaces created by friendship which can begin to overcome the boundaries of colonialism. Indigenous and participative research paradigms are unequivocally imbedded in relationship (Wilson, 2009). And although not explicitly stated in the literature, I think that research imbedded in relationship cannot be divested of love.

Canella and Manuelito write of their experience of learning history as Dine women. In school, they never heard Dine stories. They learned instead of military hero Kit Carson, and of manifest destiny. But when certain words stirred memories hidden somewhere in these stories, they saw the elders weep. New Zealand educator Sylvia Ashton-Warner (1971) engages in these

spaces of deep memory and language. In teaching reading to Maori children, Ashton-Warner discovered that certain words were more real to her students than others—Ghost; Kiss; Love—and that these words unlocked categories beyond Dick, Jane and Spot. Categories where a deeper reality connects to relationship and to love. Categories often left out of objective epistemologies. In creating a framework to analyze data, Canella and Manuelito (2008) speak of the need to use these deep relational categories, explaining that “For the Dine, this point of reference for the interpretation of research is the relationship of Changing Woman to her children” (p. 51).

Immanuel Levinas writes of a radical ethics that realizes that with knowledge of the face of the other comes commitment and responsibility for that other. Could this be love? The researcher in the journey of seeing and knowing the faces and names of those who are ‘other’ begins, like Ashton-Warner, to listen to those deep spaces of meaning and to begin to become friends. Within this friendship, there is reciprocity—where the researched can also question and learn to know the researcher. Linda Tuhiwai Smith captures this in her question of the researcher, “Is her spirit clear? Does he have a good heart? What other baggage are they carrying? Are they useful to us? Can they fix the generator? Can they actually do anything?” (2005, p.10). Entering into a daily connection of friendship in the research process opens up “productive spaces within and through which research methods [and the researcher] may be decolonized” (de Leeuw, Cameron, Greenwood, 2012, p. 180).

Love and Anguish—Becoming We

I love Freddie and his easy laugh, and Mama Koinonia and her unending assortment of sister/cousin/family-in-law who are always staying with her. I love 7-year old Penny and the songs she sings outside my window. I love that for her, the yellowed cassava leaf is a flower. I love how she leans dreaming, twirling her yellowed cassava leaf/flower, against the cement wall

looking over the little ravine where the pig shit flows through the *kangkung* swamp into the boy's dorm's drainage ditch. I love the Mamas' aerobics exercise. I love seeing their grace as they gather on the volleyball court halfway up the green hill, their wide frames poised over delicate ankles encased in hello kitty socks.

It is because of this love that I hate. I hate the violence and murder. It is the love in my heart that causes me to be anguished and filled with rage that, because of poverty and a culture of violence, my student John strangled his beloved, Sarah. I hate the fear that drives me to apathy. I hate the military intelligence vegetable seller who comes to my house every day and peers in my kitchen window. But over time, our game of hide and seek becomes, to me hilarious, and I learn to laugh through my terror of the assassins who come to my house (they are the assassin's bosses, I am told by Mama Koinonia). They sit on my terrace giddily giggling through tea and biscuits, because they think I do not know who they are.

I hate that it's ok to beat Alia, and that she will not leave him (but she has left him now, with her child and wallops him ritually on Facebook. Hah!). I hate that Mama Josefina, my neighbor up the hill from me, does not take her diabetes medicine even though her blood sugar is 350 and her skin is losing its feeling and the burn she got from carrying the huge aluminum pot filled with cooked rice and aged *kangkung* to feed the pigs burned her leg through to her shin bone leaving her with a wound so big and a fever so high that she can't get out of bed. I hate that she refuses to go to the doctor because doctors are often from Indonesia and the medical system and care is often, she tells me, either ineffectual or outright damaging. I hate that her husband beats her and that she does not fight back because he will beat her more. I hate that she turns off her soul. But really, she doesn't turn off her soul. She hides it and keeps her soul safe, and this, I love.

I hate that sometimes I cannot leave my room because I am so afraid. I hate that in my helplessness, I can only lie in my room and watch the wind in the palm tree and listen to the chicken who cannot keep time (but then the Chicken and the palm tree and the wind make me smile and I feel a light inside my soul that I have learned to hide safely away). My soul wanders and weeps but my eyes are catatonically dry because I cannot stop Mama Lula from dying. Because I cannot go back in time and feed her and make her live. Because I cannot be with my grandmother and feed her and love her and make her live. I hate because I cannot conquer death.

Death

I have been to more funerals this year (2013-2014) than I have ever been to. The first was Ibu Delia's mother. She was in her early 80s and had been staying with her daughter in our community for several months. I didn't really know her, but without knowing it was she, I followed her once across town. I hastened in the pathway left by her feet (as I type, my fingers weave a pathway that my conscious brain does not know, and I follow Mama and her dignity and freedom). I thought she was Mama Koinonia. The woman I rushed to keep up with had grey hair and walked so fast! She carried an umbrella under the clouded sky and walked with conviction through the university campus. It was quiet as we walked in the almost rain and I was afraid, because my Mamas had warned me of the things that could be done to a woman in a quiet place. But I kept following her even once I realized it probably wasn't Mama Koinonia. I followed her because I was afraid to be alone.

I caught her finally at the gateway from the university into the outside town—a gate not often open. But on this gray day, it was open. As I came upon her and she turned her face and smiled. And I thought, 'How beautiful, you are. I do not know you but my heart does'.

The woman was Ibu Delia's mother. Ibu Delia who invites us into volleyball, who has 4 laughing daughters and one son. The next time I saw her was in Ibu Delia's stilt house as the women of the church sat together, suspended in her porch inside the tree tops—with its lacy curtains and yellow jacket hanging on the wall. The porch of many laughs where Ibu Delia often sits with her daughters many and her son one, calling to me as I pass by on my way into the world outside our neighborhood. She told me once, Ibu Delia did, "We watch over you, Julian. Everyone who comes into our neighborhood, we know. We see them from this porch." It was on that porch where I met your mother for the second time, dear Ibu Delia. At the women's meeting as we drank tea and sang together in between the red *jambu* and *matoa* trees.

The next time I saw your mother, my dear friend, she was still and resting in a lace-covered coffin. She had died. In your care. And your brothers, they beat you for it, as per tradition, Mama Koinonia told me. Your mother's viewing was the first time I ever saw you wearing trousers. Your mother's viewing was the first time I had ever seen, and you weep. I was so filled with fear of the police and immigration because of issues with my visa, that I could not be present fully with you. You could see how afraid I was, as we sat at your mother's viewing, you held my hand to relieve my fear even through your own grief. I was ashamed. But I know now why I followed your mother that day. I did not know her, but my heart did.

Mrs. Delia's mum's funeral was the first funeral I attended in the year 2013. Her funeral was on a hilltop overlooking the Pacific Ocean. We attended as a we, Mama Koinonia—our elder and our leader, Ibu Sumia—the neighborhood leader's wife, and Morgana—Mama Koinonia's daughter and our church's pastor. As we drove on to the funeral, Ibu Sumia spoke and spoke and spoke as if words had piled up inside of her and had been waiting two eternities to be free and I wilted into myself, afraid of arrest, of deportation, and of the recent assassin boss

visit. We stopped at the Church office on the way, to find the Bapak who managed visas. He was not there. “*Brengsek* (bullshit)” said Mama Koinonia.

We drove up the hill above the sea and Goodman, the young driver we had hired, parked facing up hill. He told us when we returned, that youth had placed nails on the pavement below him, and that another car, a gray SUV of Japanese persuasion, had punctured its tires. But Goodman, our driver, had seen the youth, and his tires were unharmed!

We could see the sea from the courtyard where we sat at Ibu Delia’s older brother’s house. It was 2 p.m.—the time of rest in tropical places. There was little breeze, and the flies visiting Ibu Delia’s mother came out to see us from time to time. About 100 people were there, present with the family and their dead. The worship service would not happen until evening. The family’s friends provided food and sweet tea for the visitors. The cake we ate was marbled. We sat with many others around Ibu Delia’s mother. I looked into her lace-covered face and I remembered the lace curtains covering the windows of her daughter’s porch, where I had last seen her when she was alive.

But this was, in fact, I remember, not my first funeral of that year. The first was Sarah. Her husband, her beloved, her partner, Theopholous, had a chiseled jaw and a vulnerable face. When I first arrived back in Lincoln City in July of 2013, I saw him on campus. It had been four years since I had seen Theopholous and Sarah and their classmates, and I was so happy to see them all after 4 years of absence. When I saw him that day, he had not yet killed Sarah. What if I had listened to his thoughts that day and somehow known to pay the rent on the room he shared with Sarah? Would they not have fought that day? And would he not have killed her?

But I did not hear the thoughts of Theopholous. I had just arrived back in Lincoln City and all I could see was light and color and a sun-skimmed sky. Two days later, Theopholous was

with his friend Kornelius, who wore a full beard in spite of college injunctions against it (full beards were associated with freedom fighters). Brave activist Kornelius, now married to his class-mate, Katarina, short with an effervescent smile and more balls than any man around her. The grass was green. Theophilous had already killed his beloved.

The next day was the graduation ceremony for the college. In the mid-day heat, I sat behind a family dressed in red matching *batik*. All the girls graduating had coiffed their hair in the Javanese style. Morgana was coordinating the graduation, running back and forth and putting out fires so that the graduation ran smoothly. Morgana was and is still one of my best friends, who I call older sister (*Kakak*). I tagged along with her that day. Just as the graduation ended, as families were taking proud pictures, and Mamas were handing out lunch boxes with rice and chicken and curried jackfruit, three young men came to Morgana. “Mama, she is dead.” They said. “She killed herself.”

That is what they thought had happened at first. Morgana’s face changed from rejoicing to horrified determination, and the horror slowly spread in whispers across the college courtyard where the graduands and their parents were having their pictures taken. Morgana went to Theophilous and Sarah’s rented room, and the police said there was a rope burned beside Sarah’s body. But they had fought often and violently, the neighbors said, and he killed her the police said. “Do you think he did it?” I later asked Katarina, and she paused and said, “You know, Ma’am, it is better for him to be in jail.” If he was out, Sarah’s classmates might have killed him. Katarina told me that there is a python that resides in the rafters of the police interrogation room and this python determines if the one being “questioned” is guilty or innocent. Theophilous is guilty, the python said.

Sarah's body had been in their rented room for three days. Theophilous had covered up his crime, alibied by the boys' dorm where he stayed for those three days, helping to prepare for graduation. I had seen him sitting, the day before, under the shade tree laughing with his classmates. Katarina reminded me, "Remember, Ma'am. You saw us sitting on the *para-para* outside the boys' dorm. I called to you. You waved, and you came over and shook his hand. He was there. He had already killed her by then."

Sarah's hands were frozen into claws, (she fought him, Mama Viki said). She was stiff. Her skin could barely hold the gasses leaking from her body. Sarah was not covered with lace like Ibu Delia's mother. Because her decaying body held more aroma than we could handle, a thick, clear plastic covered her coffin. I close my eyes and I am there again, in the open-air chapel. Her coffin lay on a wooden bed taken from the boy's dorm, that had held and would hold other students as they lay in state. The plastic could not lie flat over her coffin because her clawed hands pressed upwards. Her face was black (was that the strangulation?) and I could not recognize her, even though I knew her.

Mama Viki carried her grand-daughter Sandia to see Sarah. Her grandson John and his friends all stood on the pews, not wanting to get too close but still wanting to see. They were not afraid. They have seen more death than I have. Sarah was taken to be buried an hour and a half after her viewing began. This was not normal, but Bapak George said because her body was in such a state of decomposition, and darkness was approaching, they needed to bury her. She could not wait another night.

Jacques Derrida writes that there is a "work of mourning," by which we remember and to honor those who die (2001). That is why I write of Sarah here. This is my work of mourning. A work reflecting the celebration of suffering done by the Mamas in a community that sees much

death. The Mamas are strong not because they do not see the death. They are strong because they live it every day and still survive and laugh.

Research as Healing

In their article “Justice as Healing: Going Outside the Colonizers’ Cage”, Wanda D. McCaslin and Denise C. Breton (2008) explore the “complex, sometimes confusing, and often overwhelming” practice of healing from colonialism in intellectual, psychological, social, and political spheres. Through this process of decolonization as healing, McCaslin and Breton “seek to reclaim frameworks that create space for deep healing by transforming the roots of harm and to critique those frameworks that sabotage healing efforts by reinforcing colonial power” (p. 528). They define healing as communal rebuilding and entering into a “space”, not only of the physical space or framework of “tipis—or long houses, hogans, igloos, pueblos, wikiups, earth lodges, wigwams, plank houses, grass houses, or chikees,” but an intellectual, social, political and psychological space (p. 529). Building these spaces through collective actions of remembering and naming on all levels is a journey, a way of life—a tricky, but healing trajectory.

Red dust healing.

Healing to us is a spiritual understanding of self, identity, love, belonging, family, security, hurt, heartache, good times and laughter [...]. But mostly Healing is a grasp for hope and acceptance based on love and respect, of understanding of ourselves, our supports and being able to tell ‘our’ stories.

—The Red Dust
Healing

A healing trajectory of justice which implements participatory and indigenous research methods is carried out by Randal Ross and Tom Powell through Red Dust Healing, a process

designed in 1996 with the Department of Juvenile Justice in New South Wales to explore the disproportionately high incidence of incarcerated Aboriginal men (Cull, 2009).⁴⁴

The formation of the questions which guide Red Dust Healing are grounded in identity and dignity, as well as in the painful relationships which form the questions. Sophie Cull records founder Tom Powell's description of his inspiration to create Red Dust Healing:

For me, Red Dust starts back there. Growing up in Narromine, how we all grew up there together, there was no segregation, there was no missions...and the love and respect that Mum and Dad instilled in us was really special, really special...You look after the people and the rest will start to look after itself, Bub. People do more for you out of love and respect when they're treated with dignity and integrity, than they do out of authority. Some people just haven't learnt that yet. (2009, p. 34)

Tom and Randall began to explore and form a research journey of healing for those who experience the extended consequences of colonial violence.

The methods of Red Dust Healing are integral to its goal of healing of colonial violence through identifying colonial structures (Law) and of reconnecting with identity, dignity and land (Lore). Says Randall, "It's important that we try to teach them the tools through Red Dust Healing, so they learn to take care of themselves first, to heal themselves. The tools are simply just to help them maintain their own dignity, their own integrity, their own power and also their freedom" (Ross in Cull, 2009, p. 38). The tools bring participants through their own research process where they can analyze the cycles of colonial violence present in their communities, families, and in their own identity. For example, Red Dust Healing identifies participants as both

⁴⁴ Randall is a friend who brought healing to a potentially violent conflict at a conference in the Philippines this summer. I was curious about the source of his healing strength that he readily shared with all of us on all sides of the conflict, and upon returning to Winnipeg, I explored the information and resources he had given us. I offer deep gratitude to Randall for his willingness to share his community's healing and painful journey with me and with many from around the world who experience the repercussions of colonialism.

victims and perpetrators and works at the level of the “heart” to affirm both the hurt experienced by the victim and the pain caused when that victim becomes perpetrator.

Red Dust healing, as well as inviting participants to analyze patterns of colonial cycles of violence, invites men into a process of discovery of their own strength and tradition through offering them “tools to confront the problems that are relevant to their own lives” (Cull, 2009, p. 38). The tools are rooted in symbolism of land and community. The first tool is “The Tree”, where family is visually portrayed through roots, connections, as well as the grief of broken branches (p. 39). The next tool, “the Bird and the Fish”, is based on the grief and loss experienced by the bird and the fish who can never be together, and works to help participants identify and let go of the things which they can’t control (p. 40).

The third tool is LAW (Legalities, Attorney General, Westminster system) and LORE (Land, Origin, Respect, Elders) (in Cull, 2009, p. 41). Randall and Tom expand on this tool, explaining that LORE is rooted, not in the identity and power of colonial definitions of aboriginal men found in LAW, but in the identity and power which “represents again who we are, that dignity, that integrity, why we are who we are and... that power to model and guide our families through safe waters” (in Cull, 2009, p. 41). In maintaining the Lore, the Law no longer has control. Says one participant,

A lot of our people are in gaol [...] in detention for relatively minor offences [...]. If you abide by your own lore and make the right choices, you don’t get caught up in the l-a-w. You don’t want to give your freedom and power away to the law because if you do, they will make your choices for you. (in Cull, 2009, p. 41)

Through the introduction of another law (Lore), participants are kept out of the clutches of the law. Randal explains that “just by using this simple concept it gives [participants] the understanding that they still have that power, that integrity, that dignity in who they are, where they come from, the people they represent and they have their freedom” (p. 41).

Red Dust Healing, like the research that Manuelito, Cannella, and Parameswaran model, identifies colonial categories of oppression and then chooses traditional and existing pathways of freedom from those categories. The pathway of freedom found in Red Dust Healing is grounded, not in “Law” which results in incarceration of aboriginal men, but in “Lore,” defined as “our dignity, our integrity our power and our freedom” (Powell & Ross, n.d.). Lore is juxtaposed against Law (when said with an Australian accent, “Law” and “Lore” are homonyms). In place of the legalities of Law, Lore offers land. In place of Attorney Generals, Lore gives origin. And in place of Westminster, Lore brings “respect of elders. “The dignity inherent in the return to Lore touches the heart of lost identity in the aboriginal experience in Australia:

The psychological impact of [our] experience of dispossession, racism, exclusion, extermination, denigration and degradation are beyond description. They strike at the very core of our sense of being and identity. Many of our people assume any other identity than that of Aboriginal [...]. Many say, as I have done for years, I shouldn't be here in this world, I don't belong. Yet we are of the most ancient people in the most ancient land on Earth. (O'shane, 1995, in Cull, 2009 p. 2)

Randall writes, “all we have left is our dignity”, and he and Tom begin a journey into a healing space of justice which invites aboriginal men to re-search (Anderson, 2001) this dignity through reconnecting with their woundedness, their traditions, their land, and their pride in who they are.

Discussion: healing and research.

I hold these healing men in my heart with gratitude. And as I remember Randall, and as Sarah inhabits my dreams, another healing encounter in the Philippines comes to me. Al Fuentes, a lecturer and practitioner of Trauma healing from George Mason University learned his definition of peace from refugees in Burma. He shares this definition wherever he travels, and it is this: Peace is having enough to eat⁴⁵. As I hear Al's words, I remember my friend and neighbor, Mama Lula, who has recently gone away from this earth. As we sat on her porch in the

⁴⁵ Trauma Healing Workshop, May 2012, Davao City, Mindanao.

golden light of evening, watching motorcycles and soldiers and vegetable vendors go by, Mama Lula told me her stories. Her stories were as varied as the traffic passing by. Her first name (Xenia!), her son's sadness, her husband's death, and how they were once happy. I listened almost every evening, as Mama sat on her teal plastic chair and spoke. Her eyes on the road: pain and hunger and shy humor etched in her face. For three years, I listened, and then my friend Marta told me, "Julian, she tells you these stories for a reason."⁴⁶

As I write of Randall's healing and of Al's noble example, I remember the stories that Mama Lula gave me. And the hard questions of research and healing arise. In a reality of research funding, and of plenty, I face the basic questions, like Al did, of maintenance of body and of safe places to live. Of a surviving wage and basic health for Mama Lula's grandchildren. Relational research in colonial spaces of violence plunges me into the pain and courage of my friend who graciously gave me tea and stories. But after the stories, I return to a relatively safe bed, and Mama Lula dwells in the earthbound bed of her grave. Where does healing research take me from here?

In a period of 5 months, from December 2015-May 2016, I attended 4 funerals of those who didn't have to die. An effective method of annihilation is substandard medical care. On one Saturday, our community sat with two bodies. One a woman of 52 years, the mother of a friend, dead from complications of diabetes, and the other a 7-year old boy, dead from a heart virus. His mother had died 11 months before. They said the boy's heart broke.

During this time of writing and researching, my grandmothers Della and Dawn have died, and I have sat with the Lincoln City community as we have mourned 32 deaths, from age 0-82. Among those deaths, five were complications from HIV, three were complications from

⁴⁶ Personal Conversation, 2008.

diabetes, eight were murders by the military, one was a murder of a student (Sarah), two were murders committed by family members, two were murders committed by friends, one was suicide, three were direct results of medical malpractice, three were caused by alcohol related illness and injury, and the rest were due to cancer and malaria. My grandmothers and Mama Delia's mother were the only deaths that were due to age related causes.

During that time, I held puppies as their breath left them. As I buried one of them, the neighbor children had named Pizza, the two little neighbor girls came to observe and help me. Alia, the 4-year old, hollered at the ants when they tried to crawl onto Pizza's still little body, and Penny, her older sister told me, as I dug, how good it was that Pizza would be buried next to her sister J-Lo, so that they could keep each other company. Alia guarded Pizza and talked to her, keeping the ants away, and Nancy talked to me and asked me why I was crying and laughing at the same time. We buried Pizza and put flowers on her little grave. Even the death of puppies was conducted by a "we."

Invited into the we, I wear these holy sacred stories of the photosynthesis which transforms horror and pain and mourning into dignity. This is the path of research that the Mamas have drawn me into.

In explicating her endarkened feminist methodology, Dillard draws on the work of liberation theologian Gustavo Gutierrez to merge action for justice with Spirituality. She states, "Our methodology is our spirituality" (Gutierrez 1988, p. xvii in Dillard, 2008). This is a healing methodology which transforms consciousness, resists domination, and dwells in the presence of the one who creates us (Joyce King 2005b in Dillard, 2008). This healing comes through love, through "embracing compassion", through the search for reciprocity, and through engaging with ritual as a spiritual practice that transcends boundaries of time and space to approach the divine

(Dillard, 2008, p. 288). And finally, Dillard concludes, the practice of healing which undergirds an endarkened methodology is gratitude—gratitude for the chance to research and to be in the presence of friends.

Conclusions

When researching conflict stories and stories of strength and dignity in the face of insurmountable odds; when loving, and living for extended periods of time, and then returning and sitting in a room alone and writing, it is impossible not to feel. Thoughts come, and tears come, and the computer keyboard gets grimy, and sometimes one sentence of Mama Koinonia's story of courage and strength requires an hour of grieving and marveling and sitting with her story.

A healing methodology means bearing witness (Weingarten, 2003) in the place where unbearable pain and dignity collide. Where words of hope are whispered, where babies' bodies are cradled by their mothers, and where, as I write these stories, I fight to stay in the light. I am not a detached witness. I am a we—attached, loved, and a fellow mourner—and I write with hope and trembling.

As I speak about this process of writing with my friends here in Winnipeg, of how I am so very behind because, after my research, I spent months staring at the ocean and cooking, because I could not yet even touch the stories with my typing fingers, I see resonance in their eyes. They speak of their own experiences. Of the pain they feel when they write. Of the weight of bearing witness and of writing stories while far away from our "we's." Of choosing research topics that matter integrally to our own identity, and of the catalogues of the unspeakable that can only live inside of us.

In Papua, a friend once paraphrased Umberto Eco's paraphrase of the philosopher, Wittgenstein, saying "that which cannot be spoken must be told" (Eco, 1994). He meant, I think, that the unspeakable can be told and shared through stories and in community. I believe there is a photosynthesis that happens inside of us, somehow converting unspeakable darkness into the energy of hope and survival. This is, I think, dignity. And maybe, the deeper the darkness, the deeper the dignity. The journey of dignity is what I find myself doing as I follow the path of "we" the Mamas have invited me into. As I listen to and record their stories—I find I sometimes cannot go on because I am now so far away from them. It is harder to revisit the stories without being in "we," (although I am blessed with a virtual "we," and with new "we's" here in Winnipeg).

I once asked a wise woman if she knew how to listen to stories of sadness without absorbing it all. We sat at a plastic table in a cold classroom with a red barn painting on the wall evoking the prairie lives that neither of us had lived. The wise woman said she knew an elder once, and there was something with his eyes...He looked slightly away and down as he listened to unspeakable pain and he could keep holding each story that was given to him. I think of him as I relive the Mamas' stories in this writing, and I try to hold their stories of pain and strength and dignity. And for a moment, we are "we" again.

Chapter 6: I Can. *Sa Bisa*

Mama Matoa

I come out at night because I see a glow through my kitchen window. My neighbor, Mama Matoa, is burning leaves that have been piled between our houses for months. The fires grow bigger. She will build a *para-para*⁴⁷ where the leaves have been, she tells me, and enjoy the shade in the heat of the day. It is 9 o'clock at night when she begins, and she is there until midnight. I join her, raking the leaves into the fire. She is all muscle. Her husband died when she was very young, and she was left with two children. I only know her as the strong Mama. The one who can do anything. She can climb trees. She can fish and steer a boat. She can slaughter a pig. She is 60 years old. This is what she tells me about her story, although she herself does not call it strength.⁴⁸ “And so I built the house myself. I went into the forest and I cut down the trees. I made them into boards, and I sanded down the boards and built a house. It took me one month. We lived there, me and my son and my daughter, and I gardened.”

Amazed, I ask her, “You built the house Mama, alone?” She answers, “Yes, I did. I built several houses. It’s not too hard.”

I say “Wow (*Waduh*).”

The *Can-ness* of the Mamas

Durant, summarizing Aristotle, writes “We are what we repeatedly do” (Heron, 2013). Fausto Barlocco writes in his article on *kampungism*, that the community of the village (*kampung*) is a community of practice and imagination (Barlocco, 2010). Foucault says that freedom is something that is done, that is practiced (Fornet-betancourt, Becker, Gomez-Muller, & Gauthier, 1987). Any act of practice begins in a belief that the practice *can* be done. In *Logat Papua*, a dialect of Indonesian spoken in Papua and Papua Barat, there is the phrase “*Sa Bisa*”—

⁴⁷ A raised platform to sit on.

⁴⁸ Interview with Mama Matoa, December 10, 2013

directly translated as “I can” (the phrase in formal Indonesian would be “*Saya Bisa*”). This is the phrase and the theme at the heart of the stories of strength shared by the Mamas in their interviews and in the way they live their lives. Because of the prevalence of this phrase in the Mamas’ stories and daily life, I have chosen to begin my discussion of findings with a discussion of “I can (*Sa Bisa*)”. I have also chosen “I can” to begin this discussion, because further sections of the findings are based upon this spirit of *can-ness* present within the Mamas.

Dwelling in *Can-ness*: Nowela

The year that I was doing my research, Nowela, a young Papuan woman, was working her way up through the television show *Indonesian Idol* (Ulfa, 2014). The daughter of two pastors from another town, Nowela was articulate, talented, beautiful, and had what judge Ahmad Dani called a “Uranium voice” (Latuhihin & Antonius, 2014). Every Friday night, the show would air at 11 pm in Lincoln city (due to difference in time zones across the archipelago, the show, filmed in Western Indonesia, started 2 hours later in Papua). Filled with commercials, and with Nowela often the last to sing, most of the neighborhood, including children and elders, would stay up until at least 2 a.m. every Friday night. The community would appear bleary eyed the next morning, having stayed up to hear her sing. Mama Georgina, the girl’s dorm mother, says of her girls, during the show, “My girls go do other things, but when Nowela comes in, they all run in, ‘hi hi hi!’—until 3 in the morning.” I watch with them, dozing on the floor until Nowela comes on. The girls sit about 1 meter from the television, watching intently—recording her performance with their cell phones.

Nowela sings powerful songs. She sings Miley Cyrus’s “Wrecking Ball” (Idol, 2014), Alicia Keyes’ “Superwoman” (Idol, 2014), Rihanna’s “Rude Boy” (Idol, 2014), and R. Kelley’s “I Believe I Can Fly” (Spongbob616, 2014). Mama Georgina’s daughter, Uma sits in the car

listening and singing with Nowela. She listens to Nowela sing these songs of power over and over and over again. Up and down the hills of Lincoln City with Uncle Romi and Yuliana, Nowela sings Beyonce's "We Run the World, Girls" (Idol, 2014) "I, I am Superwoman", by Alicia Keyes (Idol, 2014). Over and over, Uma listens to Nowela sing. A soundtrack to her Papua.

As I shop for groceries in the store down the street, I hear Nowela's voice on pirated CD's from her television performances; she is singing, "I'm a super woman, yes we are!" The clerks bob their heads to her music. The pirated DVD seller in the parking lot at the grocery store—who Mama Teresa says has the one good version of a Nowela DVD in town—is swarmed by indigenous Papuans and Indonesians alike, all buying her music.

Nowela was a revelation of a Papuan woman's *can-ness*. A Papuan woman on the center stage (literally) of Indonesia. When the finals of *Indonesian Idol* were airing, and when she was on her way to winning, she sang R. Kelley's "I Believe I Can Fly" (Spongbob616, 2014). The next day (I fell asleep), but Mama Noreen told me, "When she sang, it was like we couldn't look away!" And on the replay on Sunday afternoon, I heard her voice singing from Mama Josefina's house and the girls' dorm and all of the homes in the neighborhood as I ran to my Mama Noreen's house to watch with her (my TV didn't work). The excitement of Nowela's *can-ness*—of her talent, eloquence, beauty, intelligence, humor, and compassion in the face of ongoing perceptions of Papuans as ugly, primitive, stupid, and aggressive was overwhelming. It was not until I went through the interviews from my participants that I found the narrative of *can-ness* that I saw in Nowela also reflected in the voices of the Mamas. With her songs and her spirit, Nowela reflected the *can-ness* of a Papuan woman.

Invited into 'Can'

When I first came to Papua as a young American woman, I was given a position as a lecturer in a college. I did not want to seem too big for my britches, nor did I want to take advantage the privileges accorded me as a white woman in a country with a colonial past, so I tried to downplay myself and my abilities. I had seen, growing up on a mission field in Indonesia, many instances of the white missionary coming in and saying “I have the best way to...” “Let’s do this my way...” Actually “Let’s do this my way!” sounds politer than what was often said. Generally, the westerners did not even recognize that there might be another way than their way. I had been a child in this setting, raised by my Dayak “older sisters (*kakaks*),” and also by my missionary parents. I did not want to recreate what I had seen, not from my parents, but from the larger missionary community. So, when I arrived in Papua as a woman of 25, I never stated my opinions. I listened. I tried to help. And I was generally hopelessly incompetent—afraid to show even my few small skills for fear of becoming a western know-it-all.

This backfired. The Mamas would sit, talking after a women’s worship time in one of our homes, and Mama Koinonia would look at me and say, “Speak! Julian! (*Bicara sudah!*)” and I’d blubber out a few words and she’d shake her head in resignation at my ineptitude at completing even such simple tasks. Other times, we’d sit in the kitchen, with all the Mamas cooking together, and they would say, “Julian, try, just try,” to some basic task like scaling fish or stirring frosting. I would hesitate, and then Mama Delia would say, “*Pasti bisa*, Julian (sure you can, Julian).” As I read the *can-ness* and journeys into *can-ness* of the Mamas recorded below, I realize that they are teaching me what it means to be a woman in Papua. A woman who can.

As I read the stories and interview transcripts, the phrase “*Sa bisa*” or “I can” or some variant thereof, appears throughout. “*Sa bilang.*” I say. “*Sa kata.*” I say. “*Menurut saya.*” According to me. “*Sa bisa.*” I can. I can bake. I can feed my children. I can teach them. I can

study. I can give life. And not just “I can”, but “We can”—bringing to mind Barak Obama’s “Yes, we can!” Obama’s “Yes, we can!” however, began from a place of canlessness. Obama dared us to hope in the midst of a worldview where we felt like we couldn’t affect change. He dared us to have what he termed the “Audacity of Hope” (Obama, 2007). A hope that invites us from disempowerment into empowerment.

I sense something different with the Mamas. “I can. We can. *Ya, saya bisa.*” Their *can-ness* begins in a space of empowerment. The idea of “Of course, I can” does not have to convince the self of *can-ness*. Rather it is a *can-ness* centered in the confidence of abilities known and tested. It is a part of living freedom—not that we are declared free (Hartman, 2007), but that we are already every day, living and doing *can-ness*, dignity, and freedom. Let me flesh this out with stories for you, so that you too may begin to feel the strength of the Mamas who can.

Mama Viki

Mama Viki is a widow, deaconess, and wise woman who lives with her sister Mama Tika in Lincoln City. When I asked her about her experiences of strength, she told me the following story.

My experience *kah*⁴⁹? Or my personal experience? Or generally about Papuan women? For me, myself, my husband left me. So, that’s my experience, you know (*toh*). My husband left me starting in 1994. I left our house then. I stayed with Mama Tika [her older sister]. I stayed there too. I truly felt hopelessness (*putus asah*). I felt despair (*kecewa*). But I always held to (*adakan*) God. I had to calm and comfort myself to ask for strength from God. You see, My experience is like that, *ya*?

My strength comes from God, because there is God inside of that time. So many people think that we, women, if we live alone, we can’t do anything (*tidak bisa*). I always say that God created us—with good hands, good feet—to work. We see a person who doesn’t have hands, who doesn’t have feet, but he tries to work. People who are just blind, they

⁴⁹ “*kah*” is a tag often used in *Logat Papua* indicating a question. It is at times, difficult to translate, and used more as a rhetorical device. I have included some *Logat Papua* phrasing due to the importance of *Logat Papua* for Papuan identity.

can still work to meet their needs (*mencari*). They know that they get their strength from God. So my thoughts are also like that. My eyes are good. My hands and feet are strong [...]. I know that God always helps me, because of everything that I face.

Yes, like that (*begitu*), Julian. So, staying with Mama Tika, I started [staying with her] in the 90s. It's been a long time [...]. From my own innermost heart (*hati kecil*), [...] I know that what I have for as long as I have lived with Mama Tika is extraordinary. Even though I live alone [without a husband], the blessing of God is always there for my life.

I came from the village. I didn't know anything. Even how to make cookies or cakes. I didn't understand [Mama laughs]. I didn't know. So the first time I baked bread, it was when Mama Tika told me to bake bread. I wanted to learn. I was from the village, you see. I didn't understand anything. So Mama Tika said, 'You bake!' And so I baked. At that time, Sister P and Sister M from the hospital in Sorrow City—Europeans—they came as guests to our house. Mama Tika told me to bake bread. I said, 'Oh my (*Aduh*)! I don't know how to make it.'

Mama Tika said, 'There is flour. There is yeast. There is butter. There is sugar. Please (*silakan*) work.' But Julian, I made that bread and the bottom was burned! I baked that bread and the bottom was burned, and the top wasn't baked! I said, 'What's with this (*bagaemana ini*)?!'

Mama Tika always gives me strength [...]. [She said] 'This is good. Later, tomorrow, you can do it again.' This is the way it always is. If I do something and it's wrong, I feel, 'Oh my (*Aduh*)!' But Mama Tika gives strength to me. And I...one more thing, when I have a recipe or have some knowledge from someone else [...], people ask me, and I say, 'I don't know, because I am from the village. I don't yet understand about the environment here.' But Mama Tika always gives strength. 'You have something, you must always share it [...]. You cannot just use it for yourself.' So I came and lived here for a purpose (*tidak percuma*), Julian.

I ask Mama Viki about the village, "What did you learn there, before you came?" Mama Tika, Mama Viki's sister had told me, "If you want to know about the village, ask Mama Viki." Mama Viki told me about her life in the village, and about her mother and the things her mother could and did do.

So Julian, we were small. We—we were 5 siblings. My Mom and my Father, they were fishers and farmers. So they, my Mama, they did not have education. But for reading, she already knew, when the tide would go out, at what time. Because every day, her work was there. A farmer, what do you say? A fisherwoman. So, if, in the morning, the tide was in, she would be in her garden—in her garden planting first, because she knows, if at 12, if there is a little bit of sun, at 1, if the tide is out, she leaves her work in the garden, and she comes home and immediately starts fishing (*langsung mencari*) in the ocean.

Mama searches for fish, salts the fish, dries it—so from there, Mama on her own, works to fill our needs. She passed this down to us, her children. So, if we want to sit still (*duduk diam*), we can't, Julian. We have to work (*berusaha*).

I ask, "Following Mama's example?" She replies, "Yes, following Mama." I ask about her father. Mama Viki says,

Bapak⁵⁰? Bapak was also the same. A fisherman and a gardener. The same. That was their livelihood (*mata pencaharian*) [Mama laughs]. They were sometimes in the same place. There were some who divided tasks, like that. So my Mama, Julian, she was a woman who was strong. If she came from the village to the city--from the city, she would bring sundry goods (*barang-barang*) from the city; clothes, kitchen utensils. She would bring them—bring them to the village. She didn't just bring a little bit. She would look at the neighbors, or relatives who were in need. She gave. Shared. And so when she died, Julian, when my Mama died, from the villages around our district, every person that Mama had ever given anything to—if it was a man, Mama gave a (dress) shirt—he came. And at the time my Mama died, he wore that shirt. Women, if she had given them a *sarong*⁵¹, they came. Wearing the *sarong* she had given them. So my Mama was like the story in the Bible. Tabitha or Dorcas. When she died, people came weeping, but wearing the clothing she had given them. This had never happened before. Mama was the first time it happened. Her heart was too good (*terlalu baik*) [...]. She was too kind, Julian. Even people that she didn't know came, and came to her home. She had to give them drink or food. They were not allowed to leave—they could not leave with hunger.

Mama Viki then shifts back to talking about her own move to the city from the village, and how she didn't know the new skills required for city life. "I myself did not understand, even sewing I didn't understand, from the village, you see (*toh*)?" I respond, "I see that Mama can do everything, I almost don't believe you." Mama Viki explains, "I can sew, yes. But what I have received I don't, umm (*apa*) develop it, because I'm afraid [...]. Before, in the kiosk, I can embroider (*bordir*). Because, if we work at one job—we work, then we can."

Mama Viki exhibits a *can-ness* in many things. She can live with the shame of a husband who left her, and thrive. She can bake. She can run a business. She can take care of many, and

⁵⁰ *Bapak* means father or dad or Mr.

⁵¹ A length of cloth used by women in Indonesia as clothing.

can tell the stories of her village. She passes along her mother's generosity and *can-ness*. So too does her sister, Mama Tika.

Mama Tika: "Sa bisa (I can)."

Mama Tika is Mama Viki's sister. She speaks here about her philosophy of work and money and shares some of her own story about living in the world of "*Sa Bisa*." I can.

So people who are growing/developing (*mengembangkan*) the college, are helter skelter! Helter skelter! Looking for money (*wang*), you know (*toh*)? [Mama speaks in a hushed voice]. I said, 'Bapak! Eech! We, as we eat and drink—as we eat and drink, you know (*kan*), we are making our own money right (*kan*)?' It is comfortable [...] Bapak for this time has taught at the college, *kan*? He just teaches. He does not receive a salary. But Bapak is happy with his teaching. So Bapak said, 'I teach full time, even when I want to or don't want to, but I feel badly for the students' [so he teaches].

Now Bapak is correcting full time, but Bapak is also at the Assembly, and there is a salary. From the Church Office, we also receive a retirement salary [...]. Before, when Bapak was at the Church Office, for one year he did not take his salary, so that the Church Office would pay other pastors [...]. At that time, Bapak was an advisor so he received honorariums. So that we could build a house from his honorarium. Mmhmm. If our house is sold, it would be 2 billion Rp⁵², yes. But because God helped us, it was given [to us] for 350 million Rp.⁵³

I say, "Oh my goodness (*Waduh*)!" Mama Tika continues.

Until many people who wanted to buy the house didn't. But I could (*sa bisa*) at 750 million [dogs barking in background]. Then we gave 10 million extra, because it was too cheap [...]. It's too nice (*terlalu bagus*). It's a blessing, isn't it? You see (*kan*), we have done many things. We are happy if we can do anything for others.

Mama Tika and her husband have a kiosk, a photocopy shop, a photo business, and a nutritional supplement business. They have between 20 and 40 people in their household on any given day, and they cook and house and feed them all with the proceeds from their businesses. Those guests are often students and young people from the highlands who help out around the house and then go to school in the city. Mama Tika and her family also provide for their school

⁵² About 200,000 dollars

⁵³ About 35,000 dollars

fees. Mam Tika's *can-ness* invites others in and provides for them. She follows in her mother's path.

Mama has traveled extensively. Here, she shares her first experience of travel and the *can-ness* that went with it!

So, before, when we, when Bapak used to be in the interior (we were once assigned to the interior). So we had worked in the city, then [...] we went to the interior. Just imagine being there! How much more to go to Indonesia, right? But then to go to other worlds, outside of the country, right? You can imagine, can't you (*toh*)?! It has become '*bisa saja* (can do).' What is important is that there is humility.

For me, from overseas, one time I visited family in Sorrow City. I had come back from studying in Java. I had finished, and I lived in a house with a European woman—a nurse, and a pastor. In the evening, we drank tea with their Pastor. Pastor Lena, and Ibu—we sat drinking tea, and Bapak Pastor asked, he asked, 'Why are you talking like that?' And I said, 'Talking like what?' He said, 'Usually, if someone has just arrived from Java, they say '*nggak*⁵⁴', they speak like a Javanese. You speak just like a Papuan.'

Mama laughs, and tells me, "He was so amazed! Usually people who just arrive use these other accents." She explains, "If there's a Javanese, I can (*sa bisa*) speak [with] a Javanese accent. We, from Papua, it's normal. So [yes] later, I will speak with a Javanese person like that. But with Papuans, I am as usual. Like a Papuan. I cannot (*tidak bisa*) make myself like a Javanese."

Mama Tika is an elder. She speaks and she can say pretty much anything. She uses what she can say to encourage and build up the *can-ness* of the young women around her. Here, she shares about how she uses her words for encouragement.

If now, Julian is pretty, I can say (*sa bisa bilang*) 'Julian is pretty.' It is Julian's right that I must say that, to receive praise like this, right (*toh*)? Why should I be embarrassed to say such a thing? Right (*toh*)? That is your right to receive, Julian. You must simply say, 'Thank you Mama.' [Mama laughs] Yes. If, according to Mama, Julian is pretty; Julian, you have a right to receive that.

⁵⁴ A Javanese way of saying "no."

I am embarrassed, and I ask, “So I can only (*sa hanya bisa*) listen?” Mama Tika keeps explaining how she views younger women in her sphere. She speaks of Ibu Georgina, a lecturer and community leader.

Like the female lecturers at the college, who I evaluate (*menilai*). They still have a strong culture. Georgina. Georgina. A good woman. I hope she can lead the college. Her politeness for elders, it is *heeebat* (amazing)! She is truly, she can talk (*bisa bicara*) to anyone. Even children. If they are walking in a state of listening, surely, she will respect and value them. But if they are wrong, she is also strict.

Mama Tika is one of the community matriarchs. She has mentored young women, including Georgina and me, and many others. She speaks truth to us, both hard truths and encouraging truths. What she can say builds and forms what we can do.

Although there is, within the Mamas, an inherent *saya bisaness*, an I *can-ness*, Mama Tika warns that this *bisaness* and the successes that come with it must not be accompanied by a highness of heart (*ketinggian hati*), but instead, with humility (*rendah hati*). She says,

Even though our educational status may be as high as anything, but we must have humility. Because that is what is yearned for by God himself. Because you know all sorts of things (*macam macam*). A high education. You have a title, and then consider others to be lower. That is not allowed (*tidak boleh*) [...]. So in all things, you must be humble (*rendah hati*). Yes, it's important.

I, myself, if I want to be [...] in my profession, a national medical worker, and a ‘go international’ medical worker, I can ensure that, wow (*wah*), I can be in first place (*saya bisa renking satu*). But I feel that this [is] an opportunity (*peluang*) that God has given. How much more so in Papua, here? I, myself, have an educational background that is quite disciplined. With nursing, you have to be responsible to your patients, etc.

Mama has an excellent education, but she describes happenings when she encounters other medical workers who haven't had as good of an education. When they don't understand directions or terms, they may feel like they can't do their work, and give up. Mama describes how she, or others should respond to this eventuality in order to elicit *can-ness* in those who think they can't.

Maybe another nurse sees a term or phrase, and he doesn't carry it out, *memang silakan* (please feel free), but I feel that many can carry tasks out. Because of this, it's impossible that I will just say, 'I have to do this.' We also have to look at others [...]. But don't say, 'That is wrong!' Say, 'Oh, you are confused (*keliru*). In fact, it is better if we do it this way.'

Anyone must not do that [say someone is wrong (*salah*)]. It indicates that we are better than others, you know (*toh*)? [Mama laughs] Yeees, like that already (*itu sudah*)! From the way they use language alone, you can tell that someone is arrogant (*tinggi hati*). 'You are wrong.' Maybe for children you can say that, but with other adults, you say 'You are mistaken. How about you try it like this?' 'Oh, *Ibu* was wrong.' Oh, don't say immediately that someone is wrong. You must understand that others don't yet understand, you see (*toh*)?

Mama Tika, affirming that we do not become too high of heart, then extrapolates more on *can-ness*. *Can-ness* is, according to Mama Tika, not an option. You have to can. You have to be able to. Whether you want to or not (*mau, tidak mau*), you have to be able to (*Harus Bisa*). There is no other option. This is how she tells it.

One example. Before, Elisabeth—Elisabeth wanted to marry. Her mother was very difficult (*sulit sekali*). Finally, her husband [Elisabeth's husband, formerly her fiancé] came here. George came, 'Mama Tika, I ask for help. Mama. Please go and speak to Mama and Bapak [Elisabeth's Parents].'

And I went down and *Bapak* here [Mama Tika's husband]. He said, 'Aaaaah, that's difficult.' *Bapak* said, 'I...see that you will succeed'. I sat quietly. I went forward. I spoke. Until, in a short period of time, I had arranged (*mengatur*) Elisabeth's wedding reception. In the house, there was someone who had a car, hmmm. We decorated it. And so, one thing that is important for women who really truly want to progress/move forward (*maju*), they must be able to create hard and innovate hard (*keras*).

Now we sit here, Georgina and Julian, and me. Before—we talked about money. How do we get money? Now, we also have to create. Just an example. Within the context of the Women's Church Group, the women, I stood in front to try to create [...]. 'You must be able to (*harus bisa*)!' That is just an example. With everything [...], look and see. 'Ah this is easy, this I can do!' You will of course be able to move forward (*bisa maju saja*).

Maybe others say they are ashamed, including Bapak [her husband] here sometimes. Yes, I go into an office of a pastor, ok, in an environment (*lingkungan*) of healthy people. Ok. We go anywhere. We must be able to (*harus bisa*)! And all of this happens only because of the grace of God. If not for the grace of God, all of this would not happen. I am happy every morning [...]. I don't pray too much, but I only ask God to use us in this day, just a brief prayer, 'Here we are. Use us. Bless all of us who work in this day.' Enough. Simple

[...]. Sometimes I say to Bapak, when we pray a lot it's like we're just forcing God... When we get on an airplane we say, 'God help us. Journey together with us so that this plane can arrive safely'... But actually we should say, 'God, we offer these our lives into your hands. Whatever happens in this flight is not my affair (*urusan*), but your affair (*urusan*).'

But if God says, 'Julian, Mrs. Tika, Maria, stop! Now you will come with me.' That is God's business [Mama laughs]. Ah, you mustn't be afraid. Yes, whatever happens [...] getting on a plane, I can sleep soundly. I don't have to think about arranging anything (*urusan*). The rest is the business (*urusan*) of God. Yes.

For my children who are like that, they have to [...], they have to do something. Like Ivan [her eldest son] and his wife. 'This is what I have done. You continue it.' Or, 'Ivan, what is important is you drive us, help out.' [...] That is enough. They can (*mereka bisa*). Just yesterday, I said, 'When you [...] make sales, you must be able to (*harus bisa*).' When people just come, we work to find money. In using capital, usually photographs—we just design them. Put them in a frame. Or this, we bring them for others⁵⁵. So we must learn from there.

When I was in High School, I had a desire to become a doctor or a pastor, so I pushed, and I studied harder. The result of my studies was that I was the only indigenous Papuan woman who moved, in my second year of high school, to the science major. I finished high school in three years.

Because of that, after I graduated, I tried to find information about furthering my studies. At that time, I heard that there was an opportunity for education at the ABC Hospital in Java. After I took the test at the Church Office, I was called [and told] that I had passed or been accepted as a student at the ABC Hospital. A number of friends and my family said to me like this (*bilang begini*), 'Hey! You must not to go to Java, because in Java, there are many muggers (*penodong*), and you could be mugged (*kamu bisa ditodong*).' I only listened to their words without giving a response. I kept to the principle 'You must depart (*berangkat*) to Java to attend the medical education. If I can't be enrolled in education outside of Papua, then I don't want to go to school again. I will go home to the village to help my parents to farm.'

After *harus bisa* (you must be able to!), which might, to some, sound difficult, even harsh,

Mama Tika talks about the joy of creation involved in living with can. She speaks of her family and her children. "And so my children... How I can show my grandchildren, how their grandma

⁵⁵ Mama takes, designs and edits photographs of people and events and then sells them to people. When people come to her for money, she gives them photographs to sell.

does her work? I always want to give an example.” I ask, “Sandia too?” Referring to her precocious 3-year old granddaughter. Mama responds, “She is funny.” I say, “Funny and the most spirited (*paling semangat*)!” Mama Tika laughs and begins to describe Sandia.

Spirited (*semangat*). She is always taking her own pictures. She puts her doll on her breast (*sus*), and I say, ‘Really?! Oh my! Your breast is dry (*Memang?! Aduh! Susu kering*). There is no milk!’

This is joy because truly there is no burden. Actually, there is nothing that makes us have to struggle, you know (*toh*)? Difficulty comes if we alone tell the story of difficulty. We perceive life to be heavy, but we are the ones who are heavy. But we consider that, if this life is something that we can carry out, that we can follow, then that means we can be happy. That [trouble] was yesterday.

I have visited everywhere. There are friends [on the trip]. Not all [...]. There are one or two among them, [who say] ‘Oh My (*Aduh*)! I am tired. Oh My (*Aduh*)!’

We eat in the restaurant. ‘Change the restaurant! Oh My (*Aduh*)! Why are we eating this? It’s not good. Oh My (*Aduh*)! Why is the food different from Indonesia? [...] There is no hot sauce (*sambal*)!’

And I said, ‘Stop saying it’s not good, *toh*! Value the culture and food of others, and value the people who prepared it. It must be respected. They will be disappointed (*kecewa*), if they hear that later it wasn’t good. You say, “Thank you sir, it was good.” If you want to eat good food, go home to your house! The food will be good. Now we are traveling—eat what is here! You can’t do that, if you are already like that.’ You see (*kan*), joy, that’s an example. Always I give examples. Ha ha ha! Whoever wants to come must create. Iayeee! hee hee!

Mama laughs.

Mama Regina: “Sa bisa, Sa Terak Bisa (I Can, I Can’t).”

Mama Regina is an older single woman who lives in a room made of corrugated tin and plywood. She is considered to be poor—without a husband, or solid income or a family that will take her in, like Mama Viki. But she too can. Mama Regina writes of how she can write on the board and how she can’t listen to anyone, because of a coconut that fell on her head about 50 years ago.

I'm afraid I will speak wrong [It's raining torrentially outside and sometimes it's hard to catch all her words]. Bapak followed Mama. Bapak went to the village, *kocok sagu*, *kocok sagu*⁵⁶, and fished in the sea.

So, when I was small, I started school. Back before. I started in first grade. Second grade until third grade, we learned, back before, to read, eh, to count. Count! Then we used, what do you call it (*apa 'ni*)? A slate! There was this, it was like a blackboard (*paŋbon*), like this [her hands form a rectangle]—so they, they would write. Then oooh! He [the teacher] would write, in front on the, what would you call it? The writing board! There [Mama points to the chalkboard in her story]. He would write something. Then, no. We erased it. In our book, we would write too. But we remembered the lessons and what the teacher taught us. In 3rd grade, I went to the tests, eh, in third grade, and I went on until 6th grade. 4th, 5th, 6th, to entering into *VVS*⁵⁷? Eeh, the village. Eeh! Then I went to school in the city of C. I went into my Junior High School.

Mama Regina then continues telling about how, in her class, she, a little girl from the village, was the one who could copy out on the board all the lessons from the teacher for the other students.

[In] Junior High School, I was not yet smart (*pandai*)—in C City. Junior High School. Ah! [...] Ah! We learned, we learned. When I was in first grade, I, *ini*, I wrote on the, what do you call it? Like, I wrote on the board. I sat. I just saw the book. I closed it, then the students would look and write in front. Then I wrote on the board, you see (*toh*)? Wrote on the board. So, I then wrote on the board. I held the chalk, the eraser. The chalk was a stalk (*batang*)—untiiiiil (*sampeiiii*) in the book, whatever subject it was [I would write]. Language, what was it? Religion! It was Religion. The teachers, then they called me, if not for reading, then after, 'So Regina, come already (*datang sudah*). Come sit in front, and write, eh, this for the students in this room.' Then, I wrote. When I finished, I gave the book to the teacher, in the office. I would borrow books, and I would bring them right home, after our studies, yes.

Actually, truly, I can (*sa bisa*). But because I fell, you see (*toh*)? What was this? The coconut fell on my head when I was still small in the village, you see (*toh*)? I was coming home from school, you see (*toh*)—primary school—and I came home to the house. My friends went into the jungle, looking for, what do you call it (*apa 'ni*)? For wood. But, wood. If not, there was a coconut tree—they could bring them. Yes. The coconuts. We climbed it—followed each other up. So, another had already gone up the tree and the rest of us were below on the trunk. The one up above had turned and turned the coconut, but it didn't fall to the outside, but followed its, what is it?

⁵⁶ *Kocok sagu* is a way of processing the bark from the Sago Palm tree into a starchy substance that forms the basis for many Papuan diets.

⁵⁷ The Dutch school before Papua became part of Indonesia.

I ask, “Trunk?” She continues.

Yes indeed (*itu sudah*). It hit me right in the head! That’s what. So my thoughts are like, I want to talk, but I can’t. So, it’s been like that. I can go far away, but now, right now, not this. So it’s like, if people tell me what to do, or order me [...]. I, now, there is someone who orders me, I want, um, I can’t, um!

Mama Regina laughs. She then begins to tell another story of what she can do and what she refused to do. Mama Regina worked for several months for an executive of the Freeport Mine in Timika Regency in Papua. I described the context in greater detail in the next findings section on *Strength, Berjuang, Work*, but I offer an introduction here. Freeport executives live in an American designed city in the mountains surrounded by jungle. It was a new environment for Mama Regina when she arrived to work there, and she was largely on her own. One step in gaining her independence in this new place was learning public transportation. Here, Mama Regina describes her *can-ness* in taking the taxi (a minibus) in the area of the mine.

I was there...one month, several months. But I went to church. I took the minibus alone. I went! I went to worship at the church. Even though, Aaaaaayiii! If, in the early morning, there was a minibus, I could do it, you see (*sa bisa toh*)? Of the two [minibuses] that went into, um, into the place where the bosses lived, their place. So I stayed there. If I was late, and there was no minibus, I would walk. It was far [...]. Mmm, but the road wasn’t straight. It turned, twisted, you see (*toh*)? And the road was in dense jungle. They [her bosses] used a car [...]. They tried to invite me to get in the car, to go with them in the car— ‘I can walk (*Sa bisa jalan*).’

I walked home again, in the same way. Later, I took a minibus. If I were shopping, a big shopping, because the church was near the shopping. What is shopping? A store! Shopping! I came from there. So if I had money, I went in, and looked for this, to see what I wanted to buy in the, in the store. Then I went out and took the taxi and went home to my house then cooked food [Mama laughs]—cooked! But they [her employers, the Freeport executive and his family] stayed around. They went out to eat out. They didn’t want to cook. As long as I lived there, they never invited me out with them, never.

Mama explains how, as her employers wouldn’t take her with them to the town of Timika (it is a 20-kilometer distance through dense jungle) and she was going stir-crazy in the American mining town, she eventually found a way to go out on her own with another house helper.

Until eventually, I went out on my own [...]. Aaah! Ha! I ran! I went out on my own! I took the taxi to Kuala Kencana, to Kuala Kencana. I went with this friend. There was one woman who lived next to me—a house helper. Her clan name was Fori. Yes, already (*sudah*)! I was invited to go. I got on the taxi in Kuala Kencana, went down to Timika. Ooooh! There. Farther even! Until, until the evening. Then we came home. Only at night, I worked in the house. I cooked. But for the others, the other foreigners (*bule*) [they would take their house helpers to town], but these were our own people [the executives Mama worked for were Papuan]! Didn't we call him Father?

Mama Regina describes above how, working for her own people who had become mining executives and did not show her the common communal courtesies of being Papuan, she was able to connect with another house helper and explore a new city on her own! She can!

Discussion: Living in the Structures of *Can-ness*

If I were to read these stories, I would not know that the Mamas are living in a state of terror. I would not know that Mama Tika's house was burned down. I would not know that Mama Regina had been beaten to within an inch of her life when she was a teenager, and that that is another reason, beyond the coconut, that she has trouble sometimes thinking clearly. I would not know that women are tortured by the military, and by their intimate partners (Hernawan, 2009). I would not know that bullets and raids have happened in this community numerous times. I would not know that the road from Kuala Kencana to Timika is one that has known many battles. I would not know these things, because I would just see the Mamas' *can-ness*.

The radical component of the Mamas' *can-ness* is that it exists in a state of intentional terror, some would say genocide (Brundige, 2004). The confident *can-ness* of the Papuan Mamas in terms of family, language, education, economy, creativity and connection creates an ideational space (Sandoval, 2000) where the Mamas engage in acts of humanity which include creativity, participation, speech, cooking, and play, to name a few. James C. Scott writes, "the essential

point is that a resistant subculture or countermoves among subordinates is necessarily a product of mutuality” (1985, p. 121). The power in the communal practices of *can-ness* is that they are creative and connective, allowing a rehearsal space for participants to “build capacity and analyze and transform their lives” (Kesby, 2005, p. 2039). Such practices allow participants, over time and through continued rehearsals to “outmaneuver more domineering forms of power” without becoming like those in power (p. 2039). The internal collective practices of *can-ness* create a reality, which through increased networking and internal empowerment, can begin to change structures in such a way that participants can create new structures which maintain the confident, creative *can-ness* with which they had begun (see Welbourn, 1998, and Weingarten, 2003).

In creating and living these structures of *can-ness* in a context which systematically disempowers Papuan identity, economy, and land ownership, the Mamas resist, and even more so, create their own structures of *can-ness*. Mama Tika can raise 3000 dollars in 5 minutes to send indigenous students to study abroad. She can build indigenous economy by teaching work skills and economic empowerment in a place that has experienced an economic inequality for indigenous people for over 50 years. Mama Viki can bake bread and sell it. She can build and run a kiosk. She can care for her grandnieces and nephews, and send many other parentless children to school with the proceeds from her baking and kiosk. Mama Regina can work for executives of a multinational company. She can explore some of the more dangerous roads in Papua, alone. She can then refuse to stay in a situation that does not respect and honor her dignity as a Papuan woman. She can choose to leave one of the most powerful people in Papua. “*Sa bisa*. I can.”

Even here, cooking with Mama Tika's daughter here in Winnipeg, we are learning to enter the structures of creative *can-ness*. Mama Tika's daughter, Ophelia, is teaching my housemates and I how to clean fish. As we try to scale the delicate piscis, we end up accidentally dismembering the fish. With shame, we hide our fish from Ophelia, but she comes, smiles and says, 'Good, Evelyn. Good! Good, Julian! Good!' And so we grin with sheepish pride at our disintegrating fish and keep cooking. Ophelia photographs the cooked mangled fish with pride and puts it on Facebook for her Mama and her Aunt Viki to see, and we feel pride in the *can-ness* of our cooking. Ophelia invites us into the *can-ness* that she has always lived in.

Uncannily Can: "I can" and The Art of Not Being Governed

Sa bisa. I can. In a place where survival is an act of resistance, where arguably there is a genocide, what does it mean to live in the ever presence of I *can*? I *can* build a house; I *can* build and run multiple businesses and invite others into them; I *can* bake bread when I've never seen flour before; I *can* travel dangerous roads in new locations. James C. Scott describes, in an interview with the McMillan Report, the region he terms Zomia—a mountainous region of the states of Vietnam, India, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Burma, China, he identifies citizens (hah!) who choose, and are helped by their isolated geography, to live outside of States (YaleUniversity, 2010). Living outside the boundaries of the State, the spirit of *can-ness* develops parallel structures of walking, working, fishing, storytelling, and law in Zomia. Living outside the boundaries of state in the highlands of the Southeast Asia mainland massif (Scott J. C., 2010, p. ix), Zomians create their own way of living, their own rules, their own methods of food production. So too the Mamas, under a government that takes away their land, the work of their men, and their economic opportunities, etc., dwell not in a broken, uncertain whispering of "We can't" but in a matter-of-fact declaration of "I can."

Although the economic apartheid and continual creation of economic and social policies which marginalize indigenous Papuan families and communities continues, through the spirit of “I can”, the community of Lincoln city is functional and thriving like Scott’s Zomia. Although poverty hunger, and an increasing development of formerly farmable⁵⁸ land decreases availability of food, the community where I researched, which includes 150-500 college students living away from their families, find work in the Mamas’ networks and are often fed by the Mamas at church gatherings and celebrations. In the segment of the parish where I lived—which functions as a community unit—there are 4 state funded jobs (which pay a living wage), 7 church sponsored jobs with unreliable pay (about 1/10 of a state wage) and 4 small scale business incomes. But each week, among these 13 households, at least 300 people are fed, averaging out to between 23 and 24 people per household.

Blessings (*Berkat*) and ‘I can’

When discussing can, it is not an alone *can-ness*. When Nowela sings “Superwoman”, at the very end of her song, she switches from “I am a superwoman, yes I am” to “Yes, we are” (Idol, 2014). The superwomen of Lincoln City, able to feed 30 people per household on little salary, create an oppositional functional world not just of survival, but of plenty. There is never almost enough, although the money and food available would indicate that this should be the case. Rather there is a bounty, from which there is giving and receiving of blessings. When a Mama or a family is able to feed another, and they are thanked, they say, “I received a blessing (*berkat*)” and so from that blessing, they are able to give food.

⁵⁸ Much of the community’s vegetables are grown in the swamps in a nearby valley, and many of the students are nourished from this *kangkung* (swamp spinach) grown and sold by women who have no other income. However, this land is being reclaimed by the state owners as it’s location has become more desired.

I walk by Mama Delia's house at 6 am for a morning walk, and Mama Delia, with five children and 3 other regular household members (a total of 11, including Mama and her husband, not including the occasional members), calls me over to her house next to a tree. I climb the stairs to her front door, and she hands me fresh donuts, saying, "Here Julian, I have just made these. Take some to your house." She prepares the donuts early in the morning, before her children get up to go to school, and sells them in two kiosks in the neighborhood for money for her household. Another time, she gives me rice, saying, "We have received a blessing, Julian. Here."

The combined philosophy of blessing/*berkat*/bounty and *sa bisa* is a powerful one. Although an outside observer and the government portray Papua as being a land of poverty and need, the spirit of 'I can' is reflected in the ability to feed many people from a place of bounty. When Mama Koinonia [her story will be explored in a later section] describes her husband's imprisonment during their first year of marriage and during her first pregnancy, she tells how her whole extended family (and his) came to live with them to show encouragement, and she had to feed all of them, on a frequently unpaid pastor's stipend. In addition to feeding her family, she also brought food morning and night to her husband in prison, and because she was the only wife allowed into the prison in the mornings, her husband asked her to feed all the prisoners breakfast each day. When I ask her how she is able to feed them? Where she gets the rice—she laughs and says, "Achk!" in her characteristic way. "Achk!" Then she says, "we received blessing (*berkat*). There was (*berkat*)."

There is in her words, this presence both of remarkable agency. "Achk! Of course I can feed 50 people per day on nothing!"—along with a deep, thankful confidence in *berkat*, in blessing.

When I go to my neighbors for tea, and they share with me fried *bete*⁵⁹, Mama Josefina tells me “there is blessing, (*ada berkat*),” and so we can eat. There is *berkat*, and so we can have sugar for our tea.

Conclusion

It has taken me a long time to write this dissertation. Sick leave, extensions, deadlines not kept—all of these combine to lead me into a cycle of shame before my advisors and committee members and before the Mamas who are so very *can*. When I have had the blessing/*berkat* of returning to Papua since doing my research, the Mamas and my colleagues and superiors in the college there ask me, “So Julian, are you finished yet? Are you a doctor?” And I shrink, hanging my head and muttering, “Not yet. *Belum*.”

I am back in Winnipeg now, and I have the gift of talking to friends from Lincoln City through various communication platforms. They ask me how it’s going, and then when I express my lack of confidence in any *can-ness* I might have to write, they say, “Of course you can, Julian. *Pasti bisa!*”

From this discussion of *can-ness*, we will move into one of the most manifest manifestations of *can-ness*, that is *berjuang*, or work. For blessing (*berkat*) does not mean that the Mamas sit and receive but that they work and receive, that they struggle and strive (*berjuang*) through suffering, beginning from their spirit of “I can. *Sa bisa*.”

⁵⁹ *Bete* is a tuber, like cassava or taro.

Chapter 7: Strength and Work—*Berjuang*

Berjuang: To strive with all your strength to attain something: to strive through difficulty and danger. (my translation) (ArtiKata, n.d.)

So I say this. Papuan Mamas (‘*Mama Mama Papua*’) they are strong. We are strong. So, we have to work. Don’t just stay and wait for others [...]. We have to work. God has given us strength. So come, join us (*mari*), mama mama Papua, are strong, Julian, they are strong.

—*Mama Viki*

This life is hard. If selling, starting a business (*usaha*), if others can do this, why can’t we? I help enough. I don’t want Cordelia to have a difficult life. Whatever way I can help, I work.

—*Ibu Loyana*

So sometimes people think that those who work in the office and those work at home are different, but I say, actually, the lighter work is working in the office. Being a nurse, actually that’s not too heavy, because you go to work, and your work is already arranged, but truly (*memang*), as a housewife who stays at home, does she look at the kitchen[first]? The washroom? The front yard, if the house has a yard? This is heavy. With these things, her time is already up, doing this work, doing the work of the home.

—*Mama Viki*

[If] We live without working, we cannot possess anything. But if we have hands, if we have feet, if we have eyes, I will never ask [for anything] from my parents.

—*Ibu Loyana*

In the previous chapter, Reverend Morgana spoke of *perjuangan* (“striving with all your strength to attain something; working through strength and struggle”), saying, “I am a product of my parents’ *perjuangan*.” She continues, “I am a product of my parents’ striving and this makes me what I am. If I am good (*baikkah*), if I am strong (*kuatkah*).” Reverend Morgana speaks of the inheritance of striving through struggle, of *perjuangan* that she has received from her parents and brings into her own life.

Perjuangan is a striving, a struggle through hardship to attain basic human worth for oneself and one’s family (Morgana 2017), but although it is a striving that may include suffering, it is not a striving centered in suffering. Rather, it is a striving centered in the idea of “I can.” In

the space between “I can” (*sa bisa*) and blessing (*berkat*), lies work. A work that receives the blessings that may come, but realizes that blessings (*berkat*) must also be accompanied by *perjuangan* and work.

The work described in this section by participants includes formal jobs such as teaching, pastoring, and civilly serving. But, although it includes formal jobs, the work participants describe is beyond these jobs. It also includes the informal Mamas’ economy of Papua, which I discussed in the literature review and which consists of selling basic goods and produce from small, homemade stalls and kiosks. Many of my interviews with participants took place at such ‘informal’ work locations, with people coming and going as we spoke. Often, the Mamas were too busy to sit down and talk outside of their work and family duties, so speaking during their ‘informal’ selling was a request that they made, and I realized that it was often the only time that Mamas had to speak to each other. While they were working.

As the Mamas do their work, while at the same time describing it to me, there is the sense in their words that Papuan women came to be through *perjuangan* and create and sustain life through their *perjuangan*, through their striving to care for their families. This *perjuangan* of women is described by Ibu Noreen in this way:

Berjuang means that we do not give in to the reality that we experience—that makes us experience discrimination from men, like that (*begitu*). But we must continue to be strong to face challenges because there are children, there are our husbands, who we must help, and there are others around us who we must help. That is the strength that must be held by a Papuan woman. That is the strength that *is* held by a Papuan woman. We have this strength in facing discrimination from men. It is difficult to comprehend, but this is the reality of a Papuan woman.

Below, I will describe the *perjuangan*/work/striving of 7 women, offering first a description of their *perjuangan* as I have seen it, followed by their descriptions of their work in their own words. I will end the *perjuangan* section with a conclusion composed of reflection and wonder.

Ibu Delia in Her Own Words—of Betel Nut and Feeding Children

Every afternoon and evening once she's gotten their 5 kids off to school, and even though her husband is a civil servant, Ibu Delia adds to the family income to feed, clothe and school those children by running a kiosk where she sells betel nut⁶⁰, fruit, cakes, cookies, and bread (*kueh*) that she fries or bakes. Several mornings a week she also deposits her *kueh* in Mama Viki's kiosk down the hill. After she built her kiosk, she and her son Franz (12) prepared a *para-para*⁶¹ in front of the small table where her products sit. She tells me that the *para-para* is for her family to come and sit with her while she works her kiosk, or for neighbors to stop by and chat with her while she works. When I walk by, sometimes her son Franz is there, sitting with his mother on the bench that he built. Sometimes Mama Regina is sitting with her, along with Mama Beka (they are both functional widows), and as I interview Mama Delia, I sit on the *para-para* too. It is a platform suspended over a ditch, with some pink flowers⁶² snapping underneath it. Her dog is to our left, lying next to the *para-para*, listening to Mama Delia as she speaks.

Mama Delia greets everyone as they walk or motorcycle past with “yo” (hello) or “*malam*” (evening). A young woman hiding from her partner/husband stands near us, peering down her mother-in-law's driveway, waiting to see if her partner will turn violent again. Ibu Delia knows her story and calls over to her throughout our interview—sometimes with gentle words for the young woman, sometimes with angry words directed at the young woman's partner.

⁶⁰ Betel nut, combined with siri fruit and lime powder is chewed by many Papuans and is a mild stimulant. It also has cultural and ritual significance, as well as being a core part of hospitality.

⁶¹ Para-para: a raised platform for sitting and lounging on

⁶² Snap dragons

From Ibu Delia, I learn that work means not just meeting her family's material needs, but daily connecting with community, listening to and sitting with widows, and bearing witness to the neighborhood goings-on. She knows everything that is happening in the neighborhood and acts as a source and purveyor of news. When there is danger, she alerts those going by. When there is celebration, she tells those passing by, inviting them to so and so's feast for a wedding or a funeral or a graduation. In the text below, Ibu Delia shares her narrative of work and strength

And so really, we women of Papua, we have our own strength. Meaning, we have husbands who work, [but] we don't sit and hope for our husbands to provide [for us], but we who don't work [formally], we strive (*berusaha*). We sell things, and we think about how to strive/endeavor (*usaha*) so that our children can eat. So that, if we have many children, we can use it [our money] well. We can have money for public transport for them to go to school. We can manage (*urus*) them so that they are healthy—they are not sick. That is the role of Papuan women. To be strong. So it's like that (*jadi begitu*).

So there are other Papuan women who work. Garden. Plant vegetables. Harvest vegetables. Bring them and then sell them in the market. So they don't expect money (*harapkan*) from their husbands. Even if their husbands don't help. Like the Mamas who are from the highlands who are on the market (*pasar*) road there, they plant kangkung (*batanam sayur kangkung*),⁶³ sweet potato leaves, and when it's time for harvest, they harvest and then bring them to the market. And they sit there, until the evening, and they buy fish; buy vegetables; go home; cook for their children and husbands to eat. So Papuan women, they don't sit and give in to what is, but they sacrifice and strive—work to the bone (*berusaha, banting tulang*)—work, to manage in the home (*di rumahkah*, outside the home (*di luar rumahkah*), to care for (*mengurus*) children, you know (*kah*)? Washing clothes, you know (*kah*)? Cooking, you know (*kah*)?

All, all Papuan women have a responsibility. It is truly amazing (*luar biasa*). It's not like others who have money and might employ a house helper, you know (*toh*)? For Papuan women, no. They work themselves. Sometimes there are some people who use a house helper (*pembantu*), but I see that it is not all. Maybe just ones whose husband is a Papuan, or wife is a Papuan. Probably the one who helps is a younger sister—a relative. That's all. So it's like that (*jadi begitu*).

So really, we, the women of Papua are very strong. We give birth to many children, and those children, how will we raise them and protect them until they walk [on their own]? All these things, we must think about. Think, and act in a way so that this situation happens in our family. That our children are healthy. That our children are strong. That our children can go to school well. Successful children are a responsibility of the mother, who encourages so that those children can succeed. If the mother is weak, the children

⁶³ Kangkung is a wetland green leafy vegetable ubiquitous through much of Papua.

will resist, go out. If mothers are not strict. Those people, the future of their children disintegrates. If mothers don't act (*berperan*), if they leave things be (*biarkan*), it is dangerous (*bahaya*). Then you can see, many Papuan young people who, yes, many Papuan youth who walk like that (*jalan seperti itu*), you know (*toh*)? There is no strictness (*tegas*) from their parents, like that (*begitu*).

Mama sums up her discussion of Papuan women, saying, "And so really [...], Papuan women are truly strong. Whatever we try our hand at, we can do [Mama giggles]. It's like that (*seperti itu*)."

She then expands on her discussion of work, describing how Papuan women work and pray. She uses the Latin, *Ora et labora*.

'*Ora et labora*.'⁶⁴ If you want to think on it, (*sigh*), yes, what can we do (*mau bagaimana*), eh?! But all of that is too new every day. You can say it's the word of God, you know (*toh*)? That this day is enough for this day; don't think about tomorrow, you know (*toh*)? The blessings of today are enough for this day. Don't think about tomorrow.

Tomorrow has her own blessings. Yes. It's like that. So, if you think and think, and also if you are outside of the word of God, if we are not able to be able, but because we are already here, with the word of God, so, we are strong, right (*toh*)!? Without there being refreshment from the word of God, to, to, what is it? Be busy/diligent (*sibuk sibuk*). 'Ah, I feel lazy. Leave it already (*Biar Sudah*).' But because we think, we have to be strong always in praying and working, right (*toh*)? It's not just through prayer that supplies (*barang*) come, right (*toh*)?! We have to pray and work! Work to the bone (*banting tulang*)! *Ora et labora*. Pray and work. So it's like that (*jadi begitu*).

Mama Kolala and Bapak Kolala

While Mama Delia describes the *perjuangan* of working to keep her children well fed, well clothed, and well-behaved, Mama and Bapak Kolala describe the challenge of raising a family across many different regions of Papua, and on very little salary, because Bapak was a pastor and paid humbly. Mama Kolala describes their *perjuangan* below.

Yes, what Bapak struggles with is the same as Mama⁶⁵. I, if I talk, Mama can know that (*Mama bisa tahu itu*), right (*toh*)? Like you too. Mama can know that. Like you too. It's the same. Because I and Bapak, we have worked with the church for a long time. Mmmm, already quite a while, for this church of ours, untiiiiil (*sampeeeei*), our children were born. From Farida, to Malia, Delila, Beatris, Fajar, Nataniel, Oscar. And Farida. She was born in A; Fajar in B; Delila, in C.; Beatris in D; Fajar in F; Nataniel in G; Oscar, he was born in Lincoln City.

⁶⁴ Latin: Work and Pray

⁶⁵ Mama refers to herself in the third person.

Yes. So Delila and Fajar and Farida, why did we name them (*kasih nama*) there? Because Farida was born according to that place, so we gave her the name of the Island of Farida. Delila, the ship Delila that Bapak, at that time [was riding on]. That village was not yet a Church district. Not like it is now.

Bapak went to itinerate [...], month after month. He came home, and Delila had been born. Bapak gave her the name of the ship. Fajar also was born. Bapak gave [her] the name of the ship that Bapak also had taken (*kapal yang sama juga yang Bapak ikut*) [...]. Mama had already come out [of that region] with them, and so Bapak said, ‘These children, because I was serving, we must give them these names, so that people know, and people can tell their own children to listen.’

Indeed (*memang*), Bapak and I, the two of us (*kami dua*), our journey has had quite heavy challenges. If I want to imagine other pastors. But for Mama and Bapak, we have experienced (*ikut*) extraordinary challenges. But like Mama Koinonia, Mama Koinonia knows [...], because we were together when Delila and Fajar were very small, like all of these [she gestures to her daughter’s children who surround us, listening to their grandmother’s story.]

It was quite heavy, but Bapak could face all of it (*bisa hadapi semua*). Up until that time, he had built the C Church district on his own. The A Church district alone. The B Church district, alone. Because of that, the struggle (*perjuangan*) of both of us—Mama always supported *Bapak* and many people think and ask, ‘Why? Why doesn’t Mama Kolala attend worship?’ I say, ‘I could, but I am not like you, because the journey of my work (*tugas*) with *Bapak* for this church has been quite heavy. I alone have experienced it.’ From D, we moved to a big city. *Bapak* studied for his bachelor’s degree with Bapak Bunia. Natalia was born there too. That also is another journey given to the two of us. There was one little one... [to be continued in the Death of Children and other Tales of Sadness section].

Mama describes, above, the work of her husband’s pastoring—his constant travels as he served numerous communities and her own work of bearing children and providing for them, often without Bapak’s presence. She describes how tired she is now, and that her past of work keeps her largely at home. But even as she speaks, Mama is surrounded by her grandchildren who she cares for and laughs with. They are precocious, they love school, and they are active in engaging the other neighborhood children in English classes, in neighborhood plays, and collective singing. They are a vital and living example of their grandparents work in striving for their family.

Ibu Loyana

For Ibu Loyana, work is a vital component of her own coming of age process and of her current, hard-earned self-sufficiency as a widowed woman. Ibu Loyana, in addition to her work as a civil servant, is a middle woman. She started out by buying washing machines in the city, and then selling them via installments to those who didn't have the capital for a onetime payment. She also has a chicken business, property investments, and a computer business. Her computer business failed massively. She was swindled out of thousands of dollars by a young man that she trusted, but she keeps going. She tells me that when she fails, she keeps trying and trying ("*berjuang*" and "*berusaha*").

I have a business (*usaha*) of t-shirt orders. I have a business of (*usaha*) computers, but there was one person, one person who I trusted, and he ran away with six thousand dollars [...]. He has only replaced one thousand five hundred dollars. I believed in him. But God understood in extraordinary ways. With this problem that we faced, others would certainly have made a big fuss (*ribut*), and brought the matter to the police, but we didn't.

We [she and her husband and daughter] only ate from our salary. Then I had a business (*usaha*) of chickens for 8 years in our house in T town. If I fell, I got up again. I sold pans. We rented for 11 years, one room with one kitchen, and we put aside our money and we bought land. And we built a house. There was someone in the city who had a store, and he trusted me. A friend took a percentage, and payed in installments to me. I had the trust of that store. For example, maybe someone wanted to buy a washing machine, but couldn't. I bought it and that person could pay Rp. 50,000⁶⁶ to me.

This life is hard. If selling and business (*usaha*) is something others can do, why can't we? I help enough. I don't want Cordelia [her granddaughter] to have a difficult life. In whatever way I can help, I work. When I was in junior high school, I lived in a dorm, I worked at the teacher's house. When I was in junior high school, I never went home. I ate from teacher to teacher. I lived with Grandma (*Oma*). My mother was far away.

"In Holland?" I ask. Ibu Loyana answers, "Yes. [If] We live without working, we cannot possess anything. But if we have hands, if we have feet, if we have eyes, I will never ask

⁶⁶ Today, about 5 dollars.

anything from my parents. I went through a struggle (*perjuangan*) that was very heavy.” I say to her as we sit together, “Ibu, your face has grown younger since I have known you.” She explains.

Yes, I went through a struggle (*perjuangan*) that was truly heavy. I have become younger. Each morning before I work, at 4:30 in the morning, in my house I have a room for prayer. I built the house, and that room for a room of prayer. It is an upper room. This life has no meaning unless we come to the Lord to give thanks. I always give thanks in everything.

Ibu Loyana is successful, living in a large house she built with the proceeds from her various businesses. She has worked hard and gives thanks for her success, sharing it with many others in the congregation.

Mama Viki

Mama Viki is a working widow whose husband chose to have two other wives while still married to Mama Viki because he thought she couldn’t have children. She left him over 20 years ago, and has lived since then with her sister and used her baking and cooking skills to run a kiosk. Open from about 7 am until 8 pm, sometimes staffed by nieces and nephews, often Mama Viki is the only one there. She sells *bakwan*⁶⁷ and donuts. Sometimes her niece-in-law prepares yellow rice with noodles, tempe⁶⁸, *ikan tri*⁶⁹ and a few green beans, and sells it there. Mama Viki’s kiosk has a fridge stocked with chocolate milk in 250- and 350-ml boxes, vitamin C drinks, Coca Cola, Sprite, Fanta, sealed plastic glasses of water, and large and small water bottles. Under a glass counter, Mama Viki stocks *Indomie*⁷⁰, eggs, rice, flour, condensed milk, salt, bags of sugar (often the sugar is sold out), various delicious cookies, both packaged and those Mama Viki has baked, along with other dry goods. Sometimes Teho, a neighbor child

⁶⁷ a delectable vegetable/flour fritter fried and dipped in mamas home made spicy sauce

⁶⁸ A soy product.

⁶⁹ Small dried fish.

⁷⁰ Instant noodles.

(aged 3) comes to shop on his own, as does Seraphina. They shop from jars of colorful candy which sit on the counter, choosing 3 pieces for Rp. 1000 (about 10 cents).

The kiosk trend has spread. Mama Warinuri and also Mama Bunia's daughter were inspired by Mama Viki, and have built their own kiosks in the parish, but the most well stocked and constantly open kiosk is Mama Viki's. It is a meeting place. As money exchanges hands, it is a place where students, children, and families can come and chat with Mama, and sit outside on the benches around the mini palm tree, drinking boxed tea or cold water on a hot afternoon. Mama Viki's kiosk feeds the community, but also keeps the money in the community, and Mama Viki and Mama Tika, her sister often feed and supply the community with food through community and campus feasts and meals paid for from the revenue of Mama Viki's kiosk.

Mama Viki describes her daily schedule to me as we stand next to the counter in the kiosk. She awakens at 4 am to start frying garlic and vegetables for her *bakwan*, and then cooks breakfast for her grand nephews and niece and gets them off to school. She then walks the few steps to the kiosk. I see her at times in the garden, behind her house, sweet potatoes leaves gathered in her hand like a bouquet, a young woman (one of the many young people from the highlands who live with her and help out as she helps them pay for schooling) gathering leaves with her. Here, she speaks about her philosophy on work and how she shares this with others.

I always say to young people. You must study. We older people, before, we didn't study. But now there are good opportunities for you to study—to study so that you can have permanent work. Because the situations now cause husbands and wives in families, if they are far from God, there are always troubles (*gangguan*). So you must have a strong hold (*pegangan kuat*), so that in families, if there's something, if he flirts (*main mata*, literally 'making eyes' at someone) in another place, you have a strong hold (*pegangan kuat*), because the first thing is to prioritize God in life.

We, in the past, we strove (*berjuang*), Julian. I and Mama Tika before. We walked from Faith Church. We lived there—went to school there. We walked, because at that time, there were not yet cars like there are now. In the rain, in the hot sun, we walked. We took off our shoes. The two of us walked. We lived with our oldest brother. The two of us

went to school. We didn't have money for transportation. We just walked. If we were hungry, on the side of the road, there were leaves that could be eaten. We picked them and ate. We strove (*berjuang*) at that time. Now, I say to the young people (*anak muda dorang*), 'Now, be happy because, for your food, everything is prepared. You have a good bed. We, before, we were half dead with striving (*setengah mati*).'

In sixth grade, I walked, then, Julian. We walked and drunk people always chased us. So we knew that they were drunk. If we ran, they would leave us be. The next day, it would be the same. Because before, on the road to school. There were not yet buildings. It was a big jungle (*Hutan Besar*). Only now are there buildings. On the left and the right. Yes, there weren't [then]. The houses of faculty also weren't there. Just the college, the junior high school. That's it. The school, everything is new. We were there in 19--. I was born in 19--, so now I am approaching 59 years.

So I say like this (*sabilang begini*). Papuan Mamas (*Mama Mama Papua*), they are strong. We are strong. So we have to work. Don't just stay and wait for others [...]. We have to work. God has given us strength. So come, Papua Mamas are strong, Julian, they are strong.

Mama then describes how this strength and work can be shared and learned. She says,

Just some younger brothers and sisters (*ade ade*) who come [to the villages]. There must be those who come there [to the villages], but don't come in and immediately want to change the conditions in the village. Don't. Like Julian is now doing here. What I mean is, if Julian just comes here and immediately comes and joins with us, we are happy [...] washing the floor, *kah*?⁷¹ Whatever. That's a good way for those who want to learn *kah*. We have to learn. We have to look for Jesus ourselves. That is how Jesus was, right (*toh*)? Jesus came to earth to [serve] [...]. We serve him, but he comes to serve us. So what do we do? We look around, like he did, we have to look around. We are human beings [...]. We can't just follow what we know. No, we have to learn/study, a little bit, and a little bit more.

Mama then describes her daily schedule. As she speaks, she refers to herself as "Mama," because she is talking to me, and I know her as Mama.

Mama, usually the first thing, just manages (*uruses*) the kitchen, and with that, almost all the time is used up. Cooking. If there isn't firewood, she must find firewood. If there isn't water, she must collect water, if there isn't taro (*keladi*), she must go to her garden and check. So the managing of the kitchen alone can take one full day, specifically for the kitchen. That doesn't yet include the bathroom, washing clothes [a baby cries in the background], and if she has many children, the children go to school and you have to wash and iron. For things like this, Ibu Koinonia is *jago*!⁷² She is the most *jago* in

⁷¹ *Kah* is a tag word used in the Papuan dialect

⁷² *Jago*, literally meaning 'rooster', means competent, able, tough, impressive.

managing (*urus*) the kitchen, the bathroom. The most *jago*. Yes, I admit, Ibu Koinonia is impressive. With all those children, she could manage (*urus*) them on her own.

So, sometimes people think that those who work in the office and those who work at home are different, but I say, actually, the light work is working in the office. Being a nurse, actually, that's not too heavy. Because you go and work—your work is already arranged for you. But indeed (*memang*), as a housewife who stays at home, does she look at the kitchen [first]? The washroom? The front yard, if the house has a yard? These things are heavy. With these things, her time is already up, doing this work, doing the work of the home.

Usually, we who are in the city, if the children from the village come. From the hinterlands (*daerah*), maybe they want to study. It adds people. Students want to study, so their parents just drop them off, without giving food. Everything, they leave to us. We will arrange everything (*urus*), but that's how it is. So the burden falls primarily on pastors' families.⁷³ Because they know that pastors, they are angels who can't become angry, even though the pastor has to work hard to feed them all.

Mama has had many of these young people living with her. She invites them into her work—in the garden, the kiosk, cleaning, baking—teaching them her skills. They call her “Mama.”

Mama Tika

Mama Tika, Mama Viki's sister, is the economic queen of the neighborhood, providing services through her photocopy business, her herbal remedy business, her clinic, her fundraising abilities (She once raised 2000 dollars in five minutes at the church. She dared the wealthy parishioners to out give each other. They did!), and her photography and calendar enterprises. She employs 5-7 people in these businesses with others employed on an occasional basis. Here, Mama Tika describes the how of her success.

So here is one example as well. For example, many people come and go, asking for money. They ask. Primarily students. When students come, when I don't have money, [...] I can't, right (*kan*)? People have to work. For me, people have to work before they have money, because here I myself have to work before I have money. I don't sit and just hope that Bapak's salary will bring me what I need, but I must work until...

Several times there have been students who come asking for school money or for taxi money. Ok. Like I give you a CD or a calendar. 'Bring this. Take this. Sell it. Just search

⁷³ Mama W's brother-in-law, in whose household she lives, is a pastor. Their household, at any given time, consists of about 30 people. I have also lived with them at different times.

for someone who has money. The cost for this is 500 or 200 but if you go and ask, he will give you 300, certainly more than 200. Do you want to do this?' 'Yes.'

So like that (*jadi begitu*), until it works. So help people who have difficulty as long as you don't make us have difficulty as well. If we who give run out, then [...] I am speaking without order, but Julian, you can arrange (*susun*) it well. But for Julian, because maybe shortly after, you will go. But if, for example, you stay a long time [...] Ibu Gerta, a German woman who lived in the city as a pastor, she came to my house and I storied (*cerita*). She said, 'Oh my (*Aduh*)! Ibu, I, I also must be like Ibu. Not to immediately answer by giving money, but I must teach people to work because usually people ask, and I give.'

We say if people come and ask, we give. We don't say that we don't have. According to the Bible, yes, those are right words. But not because we don't have it [money] and stop there. There must be a solution to help him or her to be independent and not to depend on others, because then he will be too much at ease, or maybe he will just use it to buy minutes for his phone?

And so, there are some, there are some older people that I also help, but I don't help with money. Those old people who are not strong, ok. I who am weak, but I am still strong, I say, Bapak, here is a photo, bring it, this is his photo, here, I am giving this to you, like that. So we train people to create from what they have, so that they do not just ask.

Mama Tika has created multiple businesses and inducts others into the task of creative income generation daily.

Mama Koinonia

Mama Koinonia—the one whose work ethic was heralded by Mama Viki—cleans her house, feeds her children and grandchildren and many other relatives who come through her home. At the beginning of her marriage, in the 1960s, she daily fed forty prisoners (her husband among them) along with her extended family and her husband's extended family for one year on almost no salary. She housed forty students and young people in her home when her husband was teaching at the college. Now in her retirement, she cares for her five to eight grandchildren, who daily bring at least 10 of their school friends home for lunch. Below is an example of Mama Koinonia's work of hospitality.

Here is a story of work. I come to her house, and Mama has just awoken from her afternoon nap. “Are you here for the practice Julian,” she asks?

“Practice?” I say, being generally out of the loop.

“I have the water boiling (*sa ada masak air*),” she says.

“How can I help?” I ask.

She doesn’t let me help at first, but then she starts washing glasses and I join in, under the water tank out back—the tank her son built to store water because water runs only once every three days on this hill where she lives. I wash the glasses—two different sets, squatting down. She brings me a stool, “You must not get wet, Julian.” I find small dishes for cakes and wash them, too.

Dusk is coming. The rest of the household is sleeping still. I come in from washing the glasses and Mama is bathing. (The heat and humidity dictate that, in order to be non-odiferous, people bathe in the morning and late afternoon). I dry the plates on a towel I find, and Mama comes in. “Ah! Julian, no no no! That is a dirty towel. We must wash them again.” And so I go and wash the plates and glasses again. I put the tea bags and sugar into a pitcher and Mama dips the water out of the pan on the kerosene burner—its yellow flame reflecting on the blue tile floor. She dips the steaming water into the tea. “I will do this Julian, it is too hot for you.” She says.

She arranges the chairs on the screened-in porch (the porch used to be screened only by potted plants and was remodeled by her oldest son, with peach colored floor tiles, brand new screens, and a Christmas tree!) The sun is setting. The coconut tree’s fronds are blowing. Reverend Morgana, Mama Koinonia’s daughter, awakens. I begin sweeping the floor of the

porch and living room in preparation for the practice, and Morgana tells me a story. The only way she will let me work instead of her is if I distract her with conversation and questions.

The tea is made, but not yet brought to the porch. Mama Bunia arrives. Mama Koinonia pulls up a chair next to her. They sit in quietness. Mama nods meaningfully at me. I blink, and then realize what she means, and I bring the tea in the cups we washed. Mama Delia comes, powdered freshly after an evening bath (one that I have not taken). I thought I was just coming to be in the presence of Mama Koinonia and her family, before I leave again for Canada, but I am brought into the middle of the preparations for togetherness. Even the very preparations themselves have togetherness! There is a solidarity in work. A tender stillness as we work in the cool early evening, while the household still sleeps. And then the Mamas come, one by one, and as they begin to sing. I slip away, to my American guests at my house, having been renewed by the work of washing glasses (twice) and making tea with Mama.

Morgana: Perjuangan

Morgana is my older sister and my mentor. As I have been writing this dissertation, I frequently email, skype, and WhatsApp questions to her. As I was writing this section on *Berjuang*, I emailed her, asking what the meaning of *berjuang* is for the Mamas. Here is her answer.

Dear Mama Julian,

The meaning of *berjuang* for the Mamas in our housing complex has its roots in their different educations. There are those who graduated from junior high school, from high school, from institutions of higher education. There are those who have jobs and those who are normal housewives. Those who are housewives have to *berjuang* or think about what they will eat, where the money for their children's education and their future will come from. Sometimes, they are quite (*cukup*) sad because they struggle (*bergumul*) alone, they strive/work (*berusaha*) to sell *kangkung* or whatever they can, so that they can answer the needs of living that are present within their household.

Among their husbands, there are those who work but also those who don't work. They then, as women, have to *berjuang* to strengthen their family's economy. Sometimes they are valued by their husbands. But some of the Mamas receive actions of injustice from their husbands, like domestic violence. But for their children, they *berjuang* to sustain (*mempertahankan*) their households.

The Mamas who work, they also strive (*berusaha*) to shore up (*menopang*) their households with the salaries they receive. They also sometimes *berjuang* to face their role (*peran ganda*) as a housewife and their work in the office or in whatever institution they work in. Sometimes they don't have any time to rest because they have to do two jobs at the same time, in the house and in the office. Because in Papuan tradition, it is women who must do the work of the household, and husbands don't.

In addition, they also sometimes receive unjust treatment from their husbands because they are considered not competent/complete (*becus/beres*) in managing (*urus*) their household, because they prioritize their careers. Sometimes, these Mamas are tortured deep into their marrow (*tersiksa secara batin*) because of the pressure/force (*tekanan*) of their husbands. Their husbands feel that they have the right to pressure/force (*menekan*) their wives because they have paid in full with bride price, but they don't see that a woman also has rights. So many women then are tortured (*tersiksa*).

These all happen among the mamas in the Lincoln City congregation complex. They are *berjuanging* to see a good future for their families, but sometimes they themselves are not able to express it because they are ashamed.

Mamas who are widows also have sadness because they *berjuang* to bring life for themselves and for their children.

This then, Mama Julian, is it. Hopefully this can help!

Peace,

Mama Morgana

Mama Regina

The first time I came down [from my room], iiiih! I came down. It was early evening, I stood, it was quuuuiiiiiiet. No one was going by.

—Mama Regina

The lost city.

There is hidden city, Mama Regina tells me. On a mountain, in the jungle, where only employees and authorized visitors are allowed. Kuala Kencana. Its website declares it Indonesia's most beautiful and well-crafted city (Expat Living Freeport n.d.). It is the only city in

Indonesia with underground sewage and water systems, a model given by the company for Papua and Indonesia to follow. Superior in its design, efficiency, and cleanliness, it is where the Freeport executives live.⁷⁴ There are houses; a golf course; a school; and an American supermarket.⁷⁵ When I search for it on the internet, I find blogs of expat living—rating the medical care, school, shopping, along with other exotic services such as garbage collection. But the first time I heard about this hidden city was from Mama Regina. She described her entry into a new world, a world she negotiated with wit and insight. This then is the mighty Kuala Kencana, told through the narrative of the insurmountable Mama Regina, house helper (*pembantu*) to one of the Papuan Freeport executives. How the mighty are renarrativized...

“Mama Regina is a person who works (*dia orang yang kerja*),” Mama Koinonia tells me. Mama Regina is known across the neighborhood as one who works for others. And work she does! She begins a typical day by washing dishes, muttering to herself. Then she scrubs screens with a toothbrush, balancing on a chair which she has placed on a desk to reach the screens above the doors, muttering to the screens (or to the dirt on the screens?). She has worked for an executive of Freeport, for her brothers, for her sisters, for missionaries, for a women’s newspaper, for me, for Mama Koinonia, for Bapak Garibaldi. She cleans, cooks, organizes books in alphabetical order, places each dish in its place, washes and cleans under cupboards, not stopping until even the unseen dirt is annihilated. She herself does not use the word “work” (*kerja*), but she is known by the community as one who works. Here is her story of working in the home of an executive of the largest gold mine in the world.

The dirty dishes were left until Monday [Mama Regina had Sunday off]. Only then did I go in to work. We used a rotation (*ronda*). Aaaaaayiii, in the evening, I was reading, and someone came in. I had been cooking on my own. Before, we ate together [...], but when

⁷⁵ Eben Kirksey, in *Freedom in Entangled worlds*, writes about the mine and the events that happened there, mainly the death of Rick Spiers and two other American teachers at the international school (find their names dek)

Ibu [her boss's wife] asked me, she said 'Regina, do you cook on your own?' I said 'Yes, I cook on my own.' She got out a kerosene burner (*komfor*), she gave me a pan and a plastic plate, a spoon. There was no wok (*kuali*). So, if I wanted to cook vegetables, I used the saucepan to cook the vegetables. I cooked water first, then I put vegetables in [...]. I didn't have a kettle (*cerék*), you know (*toh*)?

But there were neighbors. There were neighbors who had a house helper (*pembantu*), a person—where was she from, eh? —Manado? And she saw me. She said, 'What are you cooking with?' I said, 'I don't have a kettle, I don't have a wok, I'm using just this pan that I use to cook my vegetables, cook the vegetables, then everything. I cook my rice in this pan again. In this one pan, I cook the vegetables [...]. I don't know. What is with that Ibu (*Ibu itu bagaemana, eh*)?'

She, this friend, this house helper, she went and brought a kettle, she went and brought a pan, [...], and she gave me a knife. So I'd already gotten a kettle, a pan, combined with the pan from before. So I cooked with the one to make rice, and the other to cook vegetables [she smiles]. A kettle to fill with drinking water. I ate alone. I didn't eat inside [with the family] again. I bought fiiish, bought chicken, bought riiiice [Mama Regina draws out her words with pleasure]. One time I cooked. I put on [my food], then I cooked inside [in the house] for work.

Aiiii, [I worked] until afternoon, [then] I rested. If I rested, at 3, *Ibu* came home. I was praying. She could see me in the window, through the window glass into [my room]. This was the time to rest, and she asked, why wasn't I working? This is three o'clock, right (*toh*)? For the foreigners, at 3 pm, the house helpers don't work anymore. She spied on me (*lurlur*) inside my room. How is this (*bagaaimana ini*)? I got up, I picked up the clothes and I sat and ironed again. I ironed until they were finished. Then I brought them up, I put them in the closet [...]. I went in, I went home [to my room]. Enough (*sudah*)!

Then I went out again. I gardened. Planted vegetables. Planted bananas, with my friend—the one woman from F City, Andia. The two of us planted and planted. We mixed them [...] then we planted vegetables and our garden was in the yard of the house. There was one who was my friend. One other friend. He planted taro (*keladi*) at the house facing us.

The first time I came down [from my room], iiiih! I came down. It was dusk. I stood. It was quuuuuuuuuet. No one was going by. At first, it was like there were no people in the houses. It was quuuuuueet. I heard just the birds, and the big trees. This was the jungle. The birds—cockatoos (*kakatura*)—all who offered their voices from above. They were speaking in the trees. Iiiiii! One day, I wanted to go home. I imagined going home to Lincoln City. I said, 'Oh My (*Aduuuuh*), I don't want to stay long here.' I cried, I wanted to come home here [she gestures to where we are, in Lincoln City].

After a long while, I saw, there were white women (*Ibu Ibu bule*)⁷⁶ early in the morning. The bus would come and pick them up early in the morning, you know (*toh*)—the school children. For Junior High School and primary school. Here were mini albinos (*bule*

⁷⁶ Literally, albino women.

kecil), little children. Some used their bicycles. They went far to school [...]. Their school was in Kuala Kencana. I um (*ini*) quickly, I went out. In two minutes, there was a car that came.

Aweee! [her voice is hushed] It did this—it made this noise. So I went out. I pulled the garbage can. I used a cart (*gerobak*), eh? I pulled it there. That garbage truck, it had a device that came down below and lifted the can up. Then, then [hushed], emptied the trash, then put it back down again, brought it down below again, washed it clean. The plastic bag stayed inside, inside what do you call it? The trash bucket. Placed it in, closed it. There it was. Cleeeeean!

Early in the morning, employees [from Papua and other parts of Indonesia] from Tembagapura, employees from Tembagapura, they came and worked in Kuala Kencana. Some worked outside, men specifically, you know (*toh*)? It was the men specifically who worked in the outdoors. The women were inside, to sweep. Cutting the grass, that was the company's responsibility. But here, there was no company, you know (*toh*)? The men worked outside, and the women just worked inside. To come, to iron, to wash dishes. Cooking, that was on your own. The white people (*bule dong*), they cooked on their own. Iiii! They were the ones who cooked, not we who cooked. We just cleaned the house, dusted, but each cooked on their own. Then if there were dirty dishes, then we were the ones who washed them. That's it (*itu sudah*). We worked there untiiiiil...

Eh, one time, I [Mama's voice grows quiet and she leans forward], I forgot, you know (*toh*)? I went out. I went out to hang the clothes. Mamaaaa! I forgot, and I closed the door. Eeeeh! It locked itself⁷⁷ and I couldn't go out, eh, go in again. I realized I had boiled water—plugged in a kettle. I was afraid, and there was a young man, a Timorese man working. I called him. I forget his name. Mamaaaaa heeeeci! 'Come here!' I, oh my (*Aduuuuh*)! This, I, this, wanted to open it but I couldn't, um (*ini*). The house was locked. The door was locked. I couldn't. Aaaa! Its key was inside. I wanted to open my bedroom door. I had also locked it, and I hadn't brought the key. I thought the doors like this, it meant, ohhhh myyyyyy, it's over (*aaaaduuuuuh, oh sudah*)! I had already gone there, I already...but I was afraid. I ran [she whispers]. Oh my (*Aduuuuh*)! How do I do this? He [the Timorese man] ran and told this to the yard technician.

The firetruck came. The firetruck! *Addduuuuh*⁷⁸! It came and stopped in front of the house. Everyone in the houses came out and looked at this. This is the executive of Freeport's house, it is!!! Yes, Mamaaaaa! I was afraid, untiiiiil (*sampe*). 'The house help (*pembantu*) just arrived and um, what? The president's house burns down [she laughs].'

Auuu! And Ibu was still at school. They were called, they like to call, call, and the firetruck comes already. The firetruck is outside, on the road, at the house! People were surprised. The albinos (*bule bule*) were surprised. They came outside, 'What is this?' The young man who helped outside, he came running. He ran there and brought a key. He

⁷⁷ Self-locking doors are an American building product found in the mining town

⁷⁸ An Indonesian exclamation meaning 'Oh My!'

came and opened the door. There was one albino (*bule*) who had the same key. Finiiisssshed (*Sudaaaaah*)! I opened it and immediately unplugged that kettle.

I was afraaaaid! Afraid. Afraid untiiiiil (*sampeeee*)! [she whispers] I said, ‘When Ibu comes, she will be angry with me, *kah* or what? ‘Oh my,’ I thought. I said, ‘This big house maybe would be burned, *eh* what? And everything would be gone. The papers would all be gone.’ And then [...] they would take me to a cell. No, they would fire me, tell me to...no. I said this. ‘The house burned. This house helper from Biak, ahiii ahiii [she laughs].’ In fact, no, the house didn’t um. We’d opened the window, right (*toh*)? I already went in, unplugged [the kettle]. I saw there was still water. It was inside! Ooooh! Enough (*sudah*). The house was ok. There was one albino [who said] ‘Oh my, that mama!’ Mama!

I stayed several days and I went home. I felt sick. I went home. ‘Ibu, I want to go home to Lincoln City, I don’t want [to be here]. I want to go hooome.’ I went home in, what month is this? Maaay, June, July, August, September. May, June, July, August, September. I came back to Lincoln City five months in advance. They weren’t angry, no. Because I had already, already, not, not—but I had already opened the door. If it had burned down, then yes, I, oh my!

Next time, I said, ‘Every time I want to go outside, and dry Ibu’s clothes outside—she didn’t want to use the machine, just swish them in soapy water (*kucak kucak*), then dry them. Dip them, then rinse.’ I dried them on this, on a stainless steel wire. The clothing outside. Finished (*Uuuudah*)! So, every time I went outside, I wanted to work outside, this, I got, I brought the keeeey! I was afraaaaid! I was afraid the door would lock itself again, you know (*toh*)? [That] I couldn’t open it again. Iiiiiy Mamaaaaa! Until finally, I arrived here [in Lincoln City], worked again, helped others.

So, still now, I go I help out. All this time. I helped at an office. They called me to work at the office—to cook in the kitchen, *toh*? To clean the building. To cook for the employees and the reporters (*wartawandong*) to eat. I worked there for several years, [...] then the office—I didn’t work, I left [because] their office closed. It’s still closed. I haven’t come into work. I’m still waiting. Right. I go around, just helping out. But there, I was full time, there it was comfortable (*enak*).

Mama Regina describes above her experience working for a Freeport executive. Her descriptions are filled with wonder at “the birds who offered their voices from above,” at the “mini albinos,” at the “quiet,” and at the car that empties trash and cleans the cans. She describes her work, her tasks, in detail, but she also describes the negotiation of her rights with the community where she works.

She cooks for herself, and her employers did not show that they valued her by providing the appropriate supplies for her cooking. Mama then made a connection with another house helper who saw her cooking and immediately noticed that Mama Regina was not provided for well. This woman then went and brought Mama Regina the supplies she needed, without Mama Regina even asking. It is a remarkable story because her employers were freeport executives, some of the richest Papuans in the world, and they could not or would not provide her with the basic, dignifying supplies for her to prepare her food. Mama Regina then reveals in her narrative, how it is not the wealthy ones, or the albinos who give her the gift of self-sufficiency, it is another woman who works as a servant.

In Papua, some people speak of their hope for their children “to become human (*menjadi Manusia*)”⁷⁹, meaning, Ibu Noreen explains, that they will have an education, and that they will have self-sufficiency and worth and dignity. Often the most human, by this definition, might be Papuans such as the freeport executive. But Mama Regina, a woman classified as a widow, a servant, who lives in a corrugated metal shack, tells the story of how the one who helped her to become human was another servant. Mama Regina is constantly turning categories upside-down with her insistence that she as a widow, and as a house helper without a steady income, is worth just as much as the powerful.

Mama Regina closes her story with an ultimate act of dignity. She sees through the trappings of wealth to an ungenerous spirit. She spent her time working for them asserting her creativity—planting a garden, finding cooking utensils, forming connections of solidarity with other house helpers and yard workers, learning about the accoutrements of American self-

⁷⁹ Ibu Noreen, Personal Conversation, December, 2015.

locking door technology. But in the end, she felt sick in this model city. And Mama Regina chooses to leave—to search for work that will afford her dignity. And she finds it.

Conclusion: Thinking about Work

The words that the Mamas use are difficult to translate, because they carry within them so much more than what I think of when I think of the word ‘work’. *Usaha*, *berjuang*, and *urus* are words of positive, creative struggle, characterized by the strength and determination of the doer. They imply, what Mama Tika describes above when she talks about how to encourage others to work, “To create from what they have.” To strive (*berusaha*), to struggle with all that they are (*berjuang*), to manage, handle, make sure everything works (*urus*). All for the sake of caring for family and those around them.

Work, for the Mamas, is a constant journey to create something. A struggle. But not just a struggle. It is a state of strength. Ibu Loyana says, “We have hands, we have eyes, we have feet, and so we work.” Mama Viki, says the same, and then says, “Papuan women are strong Julian, they are strong, so they work.” Mama Regina doesn’t speak of her work, she just works and lives in wonder. Mama Koinonia says of her, “Mama Regina, Mama Regina, she is a person of work (*dia orang kerja*).” When I was a new woman, a young woman, entering into the community in Lincoln City, Mama Viki told me that the way that I can be accepted is to work. To be present. To sweep the floors. To work.

The Mamas’ work is not a self-sacrificing work. Mama Regina says “No!” when something is not what she wants. She quits the most prestigious of jobs if they do not treat her with respect. Mama Koinonia sits down when she is tired. Mama Delia naps and leaves her children with siblings and her husband for choir practice. Work, for Papuan Mamas, is a work which also upholds rights. Mama Regina describes her bosses expecting her to work all the time,

peeking into her room when she is resting. In response, she stands up and irons and folds all their clothes, but she gets the last word when she leaves them five months early.

And so, I wonder, what happens when they are working? When Mama Viki describes a day, the gathering of firewood, cooking, getting children ready, I observe that there are daughters and nieces and invitees who come and aid in the work and partake of its benefits. Work in Papua is something that draws people together. But I think it's more than that. Work is something that draws people together in a creative act of caring. Women's work is as the guardian of their families, of their community, often directly through feeding them. Examples of this can be found in Mama Viki's early rising to prepare her *bakwan*, a food which she sells to feed the entire neighborhood. For Mama Regina, the tools of her work, her dishes, her kettle, her kerosene burner, the making of food for herself and for others, the growing of food, the meals she prepares—are a vital part of her story.

Work, for the Mamas, is a creative, life-giving work. However, it is not easy. It is, as Mama Delia tells it, heroic, in that her *perjuangan* saves her children. Morgana speaks of being a product of her parents work/struggle/*perjuangan*, and that this has prepared her for anything that she might face in her future. Mama Tika says work is a task of empowerment and creation. A gift to be shared with others to invite them into work. Mama Koinonia says it is something that we do with our hands and with our bodies. This then is the work of the Mamas: if I may combine their definitions. It is a fierce, creative, endeavor that feeds and provides for families and for others, and that draws people together doing and receiving life-giving care.

I have described here these women and their work, the things that they do to strive for their families, for their communities and for themselves. "*Berjuang*." We have read their own words about *berjuang* and work. As I write, and now, as I read their words, I lose patience. I

don't want to simply type the stories, I want to jump into the colors and sounds, and lose myself in the communal, life-giving struggle of work with them. But here I sit typing. Morgana, my sister, my mentor, and my friend, told me just last night, "Your writing is your struggle (*perjuangan*), Julian. Have spirit!"

I find, as I contemplate these stories, that new questions arise that I wish to ask Mama Viki. "Where do you find your renewal? You are always giving? Where do you find your strength?" As I record these work stories of these amazing women, I find myself wondering again about my core research question, "Where do you find your strength?" Where do you, Mama Delia, find your strength to wake your children up, cook for them, get them to school, cook lunch, clean the house, cook for church functions, run the women's group, cook again for your children, and then run your kiosk and listen to community needs as members sit on your *para-para* and chat? And when I asked once, you told me that there is this "overflowing of love" inside of you, that tells you that you must do your work, and that you can't do anything else. And that this overflowing of love sweeps you up into its path.

And as I write about all of these things, all of this *perjuangan*, this struggle, this creative kiosk feeding, doing, and as I wonder where the Mamas find the strength to live this constant, creative, life-giving struggle without wearing out, I realize that what they are telling me through these stories is that their strength comes from the doing.

There is another *perjuangan*, not just for work, not just for life, but a *perjuangan* that faces and lives death. A *perjuangan* that walks through the darkness. The next section explores the most unfaceable of hardships, the death of children, and other tales of deep sadness. It listens as the Mamas describe the process by which they journey through the death of children and other deep sadnesses, and keep guarding life.

Chapter 8: The Death of Children and Other Tales of Sadness.

Perjuangan, the struggle and striving to keep going through unimaginable suffering, betrayal and disappointment includes, by definition, suffering, betrayal, and disappointment. The *perjuangan*, the striving of “I can” that we’ve already seen in the Mamas’ stories risks being read as all light, all strength, all *can-ness*. But the Mamas’ *perjuangan* comes out of the deepest darkness and suffering that I can imagine. That we may not take their strength and *can-ness* lightly, here are their stories of their suffering.

One day, during my research, my colleague and housemate Alice was sick and the Mamas of the college, Ibu Georgina, Reverend Morgana, and Ibu Noreen brought us to the hospital. Alice lay on a bed in the emergency room, surrounded by sick children, elders, men, and women, who were all accompanied by at least 3 family members and friends. As we waited, others who knew us came and stood by us, helping to hold our box of tissue, our bottle of water, and our vomit bucket. Reverend Morgana stood with them while I went to the pharmacy to pick up Alice’s medicine. When I returned, I reported back in haste to Rev. Morgana, not noticing that the entire emergency room was focused on something happening. I turned and there was a young Chinese Indonesian doctor—from the big city, fluent in English—breathing into the mouth of a small child, maybe 3-years old, and pumping on his chest. With all our eyes upon him, the doctor pumped and breathed; pumped and breathed; pumped and breathed. Our breaths in unison with his, we watched him breathe for the child. The child’s mother, small and young, stood at the foot of the bed. The doctor stopped, and our breaths stopped too. He said “It is no use. He was gone before he got here.” With everyone watching, he became brusque and said, “Prepare his body.” The doctor left, and the child’s mother stood with the body of her son.

Berjuang and Suffering

Strength is not strength unless it has known suffering. This is what has always awed me about the Mamas. Their strength through suffering. *Berjuang* can also be defined as strength through suffering. Laughter in the face of the darkest darkness. The Mamas explain below some of their own experiences suffering, interspersed with their tales of strength. I have gathered them here that we may hear them together, and as you read, perhaps you will see, like I did, the pathways by which the Mama's journey and *berjuang* through suffering to strength. A journey of *perjuangan* that travels through pain and survives.

Below, the Mamas describe their own processes of *berjuang* through suffering. Mama Josefina and Mama Kolala speak of the death of a child. Mama Josefina speaks of the loss of her husband. Mama Koinonia speaks of her triumph through the imprisonment of her spouse and poverty, and Mama Bunia tells of her experience of sustained illness and despair. Rev. Morgana speaks of her agony at the lack of self-worth within the young Papuan women around her, and Mama Tika closes the set of stories with her advice for how to face suffering.

Mama Kolala: "So we took her from the city and brought her home."

In previous sections, Mama Kolala has spoken of how she and her husband and their children lived in faraway places while her husband worked as a pastor. She will share in further sections about her daughter Delila's shooting and about her visions of dead Dutchmen. Here, Mama Kolala shares something that happened when she and her young children lived in a big urban center while her husband was completing his studies.

Also on that journey we two [Mama and Bapak Kolala] were given a little sister to Beatris [...] She was six months old. If she stayed she would have been with Jonathan⁸⁰, the same age. She was sick. People call her illness *muntaber*⁸¹ [...] She was small, she died at Dora hospital, already (*sudah*). At that time with Beatris, together, they went into Dora, and Beatris' sister died. Her older sister [Beatris] went home.

⁸⁰ Mama's younger son.

⁸¹ An abbreviation for '*Muntah*'—vomit and '*Berak*'—bowl movements

We buried her the next day, and so we went to Papua. Bapak went and took her body, because she was six months, so we took it [her body] from the city and brought her home. If we hadn't taken her, you see, it [her body] would be thrown out. So we had to bring her home to Papua.

Response.

It is a brief story that you tell, dear Mama. Beatris's younger sister is never called by her name. It is her death that you tell. Not what she was like in life, and not your own sadness. She was sick. She went to Dora hospital—the one that is trusted by Papuans, the one where Beatris is admitted now, sick, even as you speak to me, dear Mama. It is the hospital where Delila lived for many months after she was shot by soldiers while standing in your front yard. Dora hospital tells me how much you cared for Beatris's sister. It is private and expensive. It tells me that you tried to do everything that you could to save your daughter. You speak of your baby's death and how young she was, saying "She died because she was six months old," and you spend the most time telling about what you and Bapak did with her little body. How, if her body remained in the city, it would be thrown away by Dora hospital. "So we had to bring her home to Papua," you explain. To our city. Later you again visit this story, and you describe how Bapak kept writing his thesis, how he wrote through Beatris's sister's death, and how his professor marveled at his composure and commitment. You carry us through the story, not dwelling on her death, but on bringing her home once she was dead.

Mama Josefina: "The first time I set foot in the city of Sorrow⁸², it was embracing the corpse of my son."

There is another story of the death of a child—*Kakak Oliver*, the elder brother of Oliver. I thought for the longest time that Oliver was Mama Josefina's only son, but she explained otherwise one Sunday afternoon as we sat on a screened porch eating bananas and drinking hot

⁸² I have changed all place names to protect participants identities.

chocolate. We will meet Mama Josefina again, when she will share her vision of Jesus with the little children that brings her comfort in moments of difficulty. In another section, Mama will tell of her adventures in traveling to Europe and of how she found strength and confidence to travel alone and speak new languages. But here, she tells of another journey. An earlier journey, when she tried to save her sick child and ended up holding him dead to her chest as she waited for her ship to arrive in port. Here is her story.

Yes, Bapak⁸³, at that time was also at the University, but in the English [department]. But then he moved to the College. He studied at the University first [...]. I had already graduated from the University—already received a letter of assignment to be a teacher. I had already left for the city to teach high school.

At that time, Bapak was still in college. Em. Ya. I taught there for 5 years, until he finished his vicarship [...]. Then he was [sent] to another district and was placed there. I had already brought Oliver's older brother, stayed there [in the city] alone. Maybe there was also stress, or what, and those thoughts/burdens [*pikiran*] came. Because my mother had an operation [then she had died], you see, so when I was pregnant, I just thought, always my thoughts flew there. And so then it was like I was surprised, and I felt I wasn't ready. And so Oliver's brother he was born, but he only lived just one month.

And then he grew ill, a hernia, I think. I called his father, 'What do I do?' The pediatrician was in another city. They gave me a referral and I brought him by ship. We intended to go to Sorrow city [...] to the pediatrician, you see. But he died on the ship. At that time, Ibu Tatalatty—we were together on the ship. Ibu Tatalatty, because my child was sick, brought us to the ship attendants [and Mama Josefina was placed in the infirmary with her child]. Not with Ibu Tatalatty.

Finally, the little one, he died. I was alone with just him there. And so the first time I set foot in the city of Sorrow, it was embracing the corpse of my son.

And so the passengers disembarked on one gangplank. One gangplank was kept for me—to go to the ambulance that they had already called to come. But where would I go? It was far, and expensive. But, there was a younger brother of my husband. He has passed away now. Ahh, his [her husband's] birth brother (*adik kandung*). But he saw me sitting in the ambulance, and he ran. He chased us, because in the city of Sorrow, the hospital and the harbor are near, and so he chased the ambulance. When he arrived, he saw that I was the one getting out [...] and he wept. The child was already dead.

They [her husband's younger brother and family] prepared their house, and we went there. After he died, I was like, itching, and had a white discharge, and stank until I

⁸³ Her husband.

couldn't handle it—because of that, you see. But when I went to the city, to Sorrow, I went to the gynecologist. I had been checked. He gave me medicine. I took it, and finally it [pregnancy] was able to happen again. But [...] the journey from Sorrow to the village—the road was muddy, and I had another miscarriage. Mmmhmm. But that time it didn't hurt too badly [...] And so I went down to the doctor who said, 'Next month, come again.'

And I had Oliver. Oliver was still 5 months when his dad had to get ready to go abroad to study again. He came to a city to study English and whatnot—everything. I stayed with Oliver alone in Sorrow. I taught in the city. I found a home near the school, and lived there. There was a friend who was a teacher, who said, 'There is a room that is empty.' I stayed there.

I wrote about it—my experience with Oliver's older brother when he died on the ship—some of it in the form of poems, some in the form, in the form of regular descriptions [...]. Before, when Oliver's brother died, I returned from Sorrow to City B by ship. From there, I wrote poems about that story. But from then until now, I write poems. Because those ideas that I share, it's important that I write them.

Mama discovered her love of writing through this experience and shares her dream for her future where she can continue to write, and where she can live simply.

But more or less (*kira kira*), I want a small house—just a small house. Just [go] to the market, or to church, or to wherever [...]. Quiet and calm in the home. Sometimes I talk like that. Bapak also agrees. He also wants to write. He has already prepared his materials. He has taken pictures with a photographer and has brought them, and I invited him. I said, he must try to find a house, because I want to work. Where if I'm finished [writing], I will work in the kitchen and things will stay where I put them. I put this here, lift this, move it this way. This or that. Then we're finished. Oh yes, in the future. I am tired of managing everything [for Oliver and Bapak]. I am weary [...] and my brain is also weary. I am tired...

Reflection.

Dear Mama,

I imagine you in your small house. As we sit on my porch overlooking a small ravine and Penny's mango tree. As your dog whines for you outside the screens, I am haunted by this image of you holding the corpse of your baby, waiting for the ship to arrive in the city of Sorrow, alone in the ship clinic. This image has come to me at different times of day, over many months. I double over, and inside I scream, although it is not my pain and I am not the one who bears it.

Dignity—walking through the darkness and molding it into light...you take the darkness and hold it inside of you. You keep walking, keep working, keep loving, keep holding a dead child on a ship going somewhere once, nowhere now. They prepare a special gangplank for you and the ambulance meets you and your child is taken away from you, and you are alone in a strange city, with empty arms.

I cannot imagine your pain, dear Mama. You tell me about the ship ride home, and how you wrote poems. You have a book of them that you wanted to share with me but in the haste of my leaving, I did not get to read them. You write poems now. You wrote one when I left, and your dream is to write. Not to think about cooking and caring for the yard and for the pigs, but to write in a small house by the sea or on a mountain. I dream that your dreams will come true.

Mama Bunia: “If we are without faith, we cannot go on.”

Mama Bunia weeps as she describes to me her *perjuangan*—through chronic illness and an unnamed suffering. “You know Julian, you know,” she tells me, regarding this suffering. Ivan, who lives up the hill and has known her for 30 years, calls her “a sweet woman. Ibu Bunia is good. But she suffers (*menderitanya*).” “She has been sick for many years,” says Mama Koinonia. “In and out of every hospital. But she is strong.” Here is Mama Bunia’s story.

So we search for God in our prayers of praise and in reading that Word⁸⁴. There, our faith will begin to grow and strengthen. So that from the faith that is in us, we, when we face challenges in life that are heavy, like what Mama⁸⁵ already spoke of, about illness and all kinds, if we are without faith, we cannot go on. We are not able any more, for us, to live and face the heavy challenges of life. That are so heavy. Maybe others who live healthily, they can’t feel what I say—the extraordinary bitterness of life. But I never give up.

⁸⁴ The Bible

⁸⁵ Mama refers to herself as “Mama” in her stories.

She pauses. “It is so very heavy.” Mama is weeping, but she keeps talking, “True, yes yes, that is it. Everything is because of God. It’s very very--my God, He is...” Mama is weeping and pauses, “The Lord Jesus is so good, so very good.”

I say to Mama, “I can see it—in the interview, when I see your face, I see Jesus is also there.” Mama glows whenever I see her. Even now, as she weeps, she glows—not with happiness, but with an inner light that I cannot describe. I hold her hand, and she continues:

God is so very good. Until sometimes Mama says, ‘Why is it just Mama who is like, like that—who has been given the hand of life with such suffering?’ Like, yes, we don’t know the plan of God for his world. Maybe this suffering, maybe it will be... [We] know the plan of God for our lives, our individual selves.

But yes, I know that God’s own are beloved by me. He sees me like this because he loves me. So I keep giving thanks to him. But I feel, if people who are not strong like me, I don’t know how, in the future, how people... [her words trail off] Sometimes I am, oh my (*aduh*)! Until I despair and lose hope...

Mama and her family love to sing and she and her daughters recorded a CD.

There is a recording with us. So we must always keep giving thanks and accepting what God wants to give to us. Because of trials, our faith will grow stronger and sturdier, and our faith will grow more. But if people don’t have faith—if a storm of life comes just one time like suffering, we will be destroyed [...] But if a person who is strong has faith, whatever life’s challenges, however heavy, she will keep walking through—even through suffering. There is [pain], but she keeps smiling. She keeps smiling even though she experiences suffering. But she keeps smiling because everything is God. Because of God, she can smile.

Yes. So that is Mama’s experience. It’s like that (*seperti itu*), what Mama is saying here. From where does faith come? Faith comes and grows when we read the word of God. We know many things about what is in the Bible, so that we are even closer and have more faith. It grows and strengthens. If we forget God and the Bible, this life is [...] empty. How do we feel, eh? There is nothing left in this life, so it’s like we feel, if there are problems, oh my (*wah*)! [...] This life, if it is with God from His word, only then can she face her problems from the past, and keep strong. We will not be easily shaken.

But if there is a person who is already strong, even though someone causes a problem with her, she will be calm and all she must do is offer all of her life to God. God will determine if it is I who am wrong or the other person who is wrong. It is God alone who will [...] deal case by case, with each person.

Response.

Dear Mama,

We sit in the sunshine in your green house, on chairs that look like airport chairs, everything immaculate—door curtains billowing in the air from an electric fan. Through the afternoon, as you speak, quiet, tall, beautiful, adult children quietly walk in and out of those billowing curtains. You speak to me of your faith in God; of how God gives you strength; of how He helps you smile, of how you sing to Him. And as you speak to me, you weep. I know your secret sorrows that everyone whispers, but that we cannot, must not name, and I marvel at your strength, at your joy, at how you sing in church, barefoot. You are extraordinary, Mama. Extraordinary (*Luar biasa*). You are known for your kindness, your *terlalu baikness*⁸⁶. Your smile lights up any space, shining through your tears.

Your faith is God. Your strength is God. You speak in the third person, calling yourself “Mama.” You speak so quickly, words pouring out; and as you weep, you allude to the incredible heaviness, although not to the specifics of what is happening. What I see is that God is always with you. Always near you. Always hears you. Always gives you strength. God is your survival. You speak God’s name and you are strong. But maybe, I think, dear Mama, you were already strong.

Mama Viki: “It’s like this Julian, I face it with peace.”

I hope you find your peace, falling on your knees, praying.

—Musician Ke\$ha singing to the man who abused
her

We have met her before. Mama Viki, a widow who runs a kiosk, who lives with her sister Mama Tika, and who cares for her nieces and nephews and many others. Mama Viki is also a

⁸⁶ Terlalu baik literally means ‘too kind’ or ‘too good’.

deaconess at the church and quietly and humbly cares for many parishioners in this role. Here is the story of how she became a widow. This story was whispered to me years before I heard it. When I was told of it, people explained to me that Mama Viki was more than good. More than kind (*terlalu baik*). More than loving (*terlalu mengasihi*). Here she tells her story.

My husband before, he was like that [...] There were no progeny (*turunan*), you see? There were no children. So my husband tried to find a way to—we had already been to the doctor. We had gotten it checked out. He—we didn't have descendants. His sperm was weak, but he didn't realize it. It was just that he didn't want to admit it. He didn't want to admit. And maybe the story will go out or not, but this is just my experience. What I mean is that he understood more [over time]. Maybe we take what we can take.

So my husband, he brought another woman [...] I said to him, 'We got it checked out and it was revealed that you are the cause of us being unable to have children. But if you want, ummm (*apa*), if you don't want to admit it, [if] you want to bring another woman, please do, but don't bring in another man's wife. Or make sure you find someone who is free. But please.' I invited him, Julian. 'You two come in from the front of the house, I will leave from there. When she comes in, I will go out.'

He said, 'No. We mean that you will stay in the house.' I said, 'No. I know my hands. God has given strength to me. For what reason do I want to sit in a family with many problems, like that (*seperti itu*)?' My head ached. 'I know that God has already, in His word, has already said that what is joined by God must not be separated. If you have already done that, it's better for me to go out.' I didn't want to wait in the house with [the woman]. 'But I ask you first. Is that woman free or is she someone's wife?' He said, 'She is someone's wife.'

'Eeeeeee! It cannot be (*tidak bisa*)! You have to finish with that.' So it was me who chose to leave. And I said (*sa bilang*) 'I will go, but I want to know, is it you who are right or is God right? I want to see.'

I went out. I left, Julian. I left. Because that woman, she said that she was three months pregnant. He thought it was true. For 7 years, they had no children. I stayed with Mama Tika.

They were in the city. He was a junior high school teacher. She lived there for 7 years. There were no children, so they split. Then he went and brought a new woman. It was just the same. A man's wife. Enough (*udah*). I stayed [with Mama Tika]. But he stayed with another person. If his food wasn't [enough] [...] if he was hurt, [if] he needed to go to the doctor (*berobat*), I always helped him. I said to Mama Tika, 'I want to help.' Mama and Bapak were amazed...'It's ok (*tidak apa apa*).' Revenge, you see, is in the hands of God, not in our own hands. We must not immediately bring it into being. In the way we act, he [her husband] can, can what, can become aware.

For 15 years, then he was ready to die. He was sick, and I heard news that he was very ill. That was [...] with Bapak Bunia [a pastor at the church]. I asked Bapak to pray for me. I asked for peace with my husband. So [...] the second woman, I didn't know because they lived in the village. 7 years. After 7 years, I didn't know that woman, her face. And I asked Bapak Bunia. He said, 'Let's pray a moment. 'Bu⁸⁷ Josefina, you go. Call the deacons. If you don't it's ok too. Ibu, you yourself go.'

When I arrived at the village, I contacted the deacons. From there, it was the first time I met her, the woman⁸⁸. He was sick. He was very sick. He was sick maybe because of being stressed out with his situation. I called. And we went. God give me strength. God strengthen me so that something does not occur. With Papuan women, [...] they hit each other.⁸⁹ I asked for strength from God to help so that I don't...

We went. My husband, he used to be handsome, but his stomach was large, like this [Mama gestures], like a pregnant woman. His liver. When I finished praying—finished, the woman said, 'You stay, I want to go home.' I said, 'I'm sorry, I just came to [...], I just came because I also am a deacon, and in my congregation, if I speak to others, but in my own family I have a problem that I cover up,' [...] then I cared for him.

Mama then asked for his forgiveness. She said, "I finished asking, I want to go home. I went home, and two months later, he died."

Hmmm. It's like this Julian, I face it with peace. Many [...] even Ibu *Pendeta* [women pastors], they fight in the road. I am embarrassed if anyone sees. My strength comes from God until this day. I, when Hector⁹⁰ asked me, 'Grandmother, why did Grandfather die, and Grandmother didn't marry again?' What answer shall I give for this young child?

I said, 'Oh my (*Aduh*), Hector, Grandma wants to tell you, if Grandma marries again, Grandma won't be able to take care of Hector here. Grandma would follow Grandpa, and go far away, and couldn't take care of Hector like I do now.'

Hector replied, "Oh it's like that." Mama laughs as she tells me. It was settled. Hector didn't ask again. Mama continues,

Papuan women, they are not all the same. There are those who are strong. There are those who are not strong. Those who walk without carefulness (*jalan sembarang*). They know, in their situations, they cannot be afraid because they are far from God. If God comes in this life, it's good.

⁸⁷ 'Bu is an abbreviated form of *Ibu*, Mrs.

⁸⁸ This was his 3rd or 4th female companion since Mama left him.

⁸⁹ Papuan women are known for their battles over their men—often physical.

⁹⁰ Hector is her grand-nephew. He calls her grandmother.

Because they don't want to share. Their thoughts and feelings, you see, are hidden. They must tell stories, but the stories are the same. We see people who *can* (*bisa*), and we tell our stories, and they help us, and give us a path, right? But don't tell your stories to someone who hears and then immediately tells someone else. All of this, it is also something that, in our home, our thoughts can become a burden, you see. So I go out. I gather with other women. For worship. We walk together. Don't stay alone. With your burdens (*pikiran*) [Mama laughs...]. If there's a problem, don't hold onto it yourself. We must learn much. Papuan women learn many things from others. Don't stay silent. Don't stay silent and alone. Where will you learn?⁹¹

Mama's phone rings. She unzips her purse. It is one of her foster children calling her from college on another island. Mama's face lights up. She answers, "My beloved, how are you?" Our interview ends.

Response.

Dear Mama,

You are described to me as one who loves—who loves too much (*terlalu mengasihi*). Who loves beyond what others can comprehend. You paid the medical bills for your ailing husband, even when he was living with another woman. One who cooks for the church, who raises your nieces and nephews and grand nieces and nephews, and other children who come into your life who do not have caregivers. You are known as someone who loves, dear Mama.

When I ask the other Mamas who *Bin Syowi*⁹² might be, Mama Koinonia says, "Yes, Mama Viki can be called that (*boleh*).” You are the only one that she can identify as *Bin Syowi*, among the Mamas. Mama, I remember in 2009 when I shared with you my broken heart, and you stood in the doorway to the living room where your grandnephew Hector watches soccer and you told me, “Julian, love, real love, hurts. You must be patient.” That room has just burned down, dear Mama. But your small house remains. You found peace in yourself and you share it with us.

⁹¹ Taken from an interview with Mama Viki, February 17, 2014.

⁹² *Bin Syowi* is a concept from the Biak and other coastal Papuan regions referring to a woman who loves, and gives herself for the wellbeing of those around her (Wospakrik & Reed, 2016).

You speak of learning from each other. Of sharing with each other. Of forgiving. Of loving. Of those around you amazed by your love. I am too.

Mama Koinonia: "We were married one month when Bapak was arrested."

Mama Koinonia is the heart and leader of the Mamas, although as she is aging, she is delegating that role to younger women she has mentored. We met her before in the section on work, where she and I washed glasses together as she was preparing for the Mamas to come to her home for singing practice. Here she describes her first year of marriage, when her husband was imprisoned while she was pregnant with their first child.

Yes, maybe let's start from there, when I married Bapak. I married Bapak in the year [...]. We were married one month when Bapak was arrested (*ditangkap*). Yes, it was not yet one month. But Bapak didn't, didn't [...] that was the, what do you call it, the political situation that was not OK. At that time, we were just married, then just pregnant. One month pregnant.

Achk! [Mama laughs] It was heavy. But I faced it with laughter, and every kind of difficulty that we face. But we must face it with peace. Yes, and what I always like to say is that we must smile. That's what Boeting wrote in one song that eh, how do you say? [...] If I'm not wrong, 'Put your difficulties away into a box and smile'⁹³, wherever you go...or whatever...'

This song often, Mama...Ackh! But always, eh, whatever your difficulty, like that—Mama remembers, eh, the song that was in—it was in what do you say? Written by Rev. Boeting. You see, there is meaning there. So we face everything but have to smile [...] You see, at that time, I truly felt heaviness facing that. So Mama journeyed through it (*jalani*). From when I was pregnant until I gave birth [...] alone in the hospital—in the house, not in the hospital, in the house. Bapak was still in prison. Noel was 3 months before Bapak came out of prison, because he had done no wrong (*tak bersalah*).

I ask Mama about how long Bapak was in prison. "More than one year?" Mama answers, as a siren sounds in the distance, "Yes, one year." Mama's two grandsons come in and speak to her for a moment. I think, and I say, "When I hear this, Mama, it's too heavy (*terlalu berat*)."

Mama responds, "Yes, it was truly too heavy, but achk! Finally, what? [...] They say there were many,

⁹³ be in a state of smiling—*tersenyum*

like that (*begitu*) [...] Yes, in facing the situation, we the wives of the prisoners, we were strong. Achk! We were strong.” She laughs.

I ask Mama, “Where did you live?” when this happened. Mama answers, “In City C. We started our assignment in City C.” Her grandsons, age 9 and 11, come to ask her something. She tells them, “Go inside first! Ehiii! Norman, so how is Grandfather?” Norman tells her, “Grandfather went to...” Mama laughs “Iih!!!” Grandfather is always going on walkabout. He loves fish, so she tells them, while laughing, “Ah he he! Go buy fish for Grandfather.” As I listen to them laughing, I tell Mama, “When I hear, when I type, and I listen to what you say [when I am far away in Canada] I will cry.” Mama continues with her story.

So, that’s it (*itu sudah*). You have to be strong in everything. And at that time, our salary was 50 Rp, 150 Rp [her grandchildren’s voices and a motorcycle sound in the background]. Yes, how do we manage (*bagaimana itu*)? If there’s money or there isn’t money, we give thanks because we are not alone. But all our parents, our siblings, they were in our, eh, house. In our house. Ah. In City C. Our house was in City C. Enough [...]

Ahck!? We were not alone. I had my parents, my Bapak, Mama, yes, and Oree’s father was still small. My father-in-law, [...] the father of Bapak, Bapak Mura and Teresa, the children now [...] the whole big family was in the house. Ah! [she smiles] Truly, if Julian hears this, maybe it’s too heavy [...] but for us, pastors at that time, we rejoiced with what we had.

He! Heii! [Mama laughs] When we are not just us alone, but everyone who comes—a pastor, even those without food, we must put them up in our house until they go [...] Our work—there are, what do you say? Pastors who come. We give them food and they don’t pay, no, but we who have a house, it is we who must be responsible.

I ask, “Where did the food come from?” Mama tells me,

Yes, the food came from—yes, we bought rice. There were congregation members who came and gave us bananas, or vegetables, and so for pastors, those who come are extraordinary! They give vegetables, or bananas, or meat, so every day there is a blessing [...] Ah, even though Bapak was detained, there were relatives, what do you say? Younger siblings who were newly in the theological school, who came.

I wonder, and I ask her, “Did you go and see Bapak?” She explains,

Yes, every day at 5 in the afternoon. All the prisoners' families, wives, children, visitors would be teeming around, bringing food and clothing at 5. The police opened the cells so we could go in, at about 4:30. At 5:30, we had to go home.

Mama clarifies that, because her husband was a pastor, she was let in to see him and give him breakfast. But Bapak saw that the other prisoners were hungry, because no one was allowed to go in and see them in the mornings, so he told Mama that she should feed them every morning. She did. For a year. Newly married, pregnant, with almost no money, she fed all the prisoners [about 40] breakfast every day. She explains how this was possible.

But there were some police who were kind. And because Bapak was a pastor they usually—in the morning at 5 am, they could open [the cell] for me to bring coffee with milk, fried bananas. My mother fried them. A big *jeriken* (jerry can) [of coffee] for all of the prisoners because I brought coffee milk in a big pitcher. At 4 am, we were already working [to prepare the food]. At 4:30, we had left the house. The police opened the door. Bapak sat for a moment, then we went into the prison. When in fact, that was forbidden. But there were policemen who had a heart...eh.

Mama did all this, while all her family and Bapak's family were staying with her. She goes on,

There were my relatives, and all were in our city. Mama *Tuah*⁹⁴, just about everyone in our extended family. They talked and talked. Rice—I felt the heaviness of the burden but there were parents who were always there, and that was the time that Noel was born. It was—my hemoglobin was 6 [normal is 12]. It had gone down to 6. I remembered, but maybe it was a burden of worrying (*pikiran*), worrying for a first child. So my hemoglobin was low, low, but I gave birth at home. He wasn't even 1 kilo. But, he was liiiittle.

He was so small, smaller than a basin for washing dishes. He was smaller. So at the house, my Mama kept (*tahan*) him, and she cared for him with fire and warm water, ash. And he was able to be strong. She said in the hospital he would die, so he must be at home so he could be well cared for.⁹⁵ Because my milk, you see, when I gave birth, Noel, eh, drank it, but he wasn't strong. So my breasts were swollen until there was pus. It was operated on, and there was a hole, in my breast. So for 6 months, milk came out of that wound, that wound, until it was dry. But Noel didn't drink, [...] so I usually gave him, what do you say? Canned milk [...]. But my two breasts which were auuhhhh! He he he.

Mama laughs.

⁹⁴ Her oldest sister from her Father's previous wife, before Mama Koinonia's mother. Mama Koinonia and her other sibling's children call the oldest sister, "Oldest Mama" or *Mama Tuah*.

⁹⁵ Her son is a large muscular man now. A school teacher with two children of his own.

Response.

Dear Mama,

You father negotiated with General MacArthur during the Pacific war to feed his people. You have met and spoken to President Sukarno, to the U.N. representative when Papua was under U.N. protection. When you speak of him, you call him by his first name. You learned to use a gun. You trained with the Indonesian communist party. You were chosen to be a civil servant in the new Papua. You grew up exploding World War II bombs for fun, and living in a house with orphans and widows because your mother and father would turn no one away.

When you married your husband, you told him, “I am a woman of many people. My father has many people. If you don’t want to marry me, it is ok, but you must know that I have many people. They will come and be with us.” Then when your husband was arrested, those people came, and he brought the other prisoners into your care. Pregnant, newly married, feeding 10 or more family members and 40 prisoners every day on almost no money—you laugh as you tell me the story. I ask how you did it, you tell me, “Achkh! There were blessings, Julian. I just did.” And you laugh again.

When Morgana was growing up, there were 40 people, students and young people, living in your home. For one of those young women, you delivered her baby in the ditch. That baby now comes and helps you cook, and you advise her young lover in the proper care of her because you see that he has beaten her.

When I am lonely, I come and sit and watch *Masha and the Bear* with your grandchildren, and you feed me tea and tell me a story, and we laugh together. What has given you this strength Mama? Have you ever wept? What keeps you smiling? Is it laughter? Is it your many people? Is it simply being open to all, being *terbuka*, as you told to do when I first arrived?

That if your door and your heart are always open, people will care for you, just as you care for them?

My words are not enough, Mama to capture your smile. And you tell me to put away my troubles (*susah*) into a box and smile (*bersenyum*). And you do. To *Berjuang* in hardship for you means what eh? Open your door. Receive many people. And face whatever happens with a smile. That is what I hear from you as I listen to your story.

You tell me about Mama Lula's death—your good friend, our neighbor, who starved in the house next door. You describe how her granddaughter Bella found her and started screaming, and how you ran over, and your friend was lying in her room, her Bible on the floor near her, open to the Psalms. She had been there since the morning, her family thought. You called the Mamas, called Mama Maybel, and asked her to buy clothes. The Mamas came down, and you sat in her room and bathed her, but her body kept falling over as you washed her and you said, “Xena, I need you to do this one last thing for me, I need you to sit up here and help me, eh Xena. You will be so beautiful!” And you laughed as you described to me your dead friend's head lolling to the side as you laughed with her one last time. Maybe that is your way. Maybe you share, live, speak, and laugh even with the dead.

Rev. Morgana: *“I get so sad when Papuan women don’t want to berjuang for their own lives”*

Mama Koinonia's daughter, Rev. Morgana speaks about the challenges that she *berjuangs* through. Her frustration is the plight of young Papuan women who do not stand up and fight (*berjuang*) for themselves. Rev. Morgana uses her work as a teacher and a pastor to inspire and encourage young Papuan women to work hard for themselves and finish their education. She speaks of this here. First, though, she shares her own family's journey of struggle.

We have, what do we say? Well we have—we have a house. We can go anywhere easily. Before, we couldn't go anywhere, because we had to go by ship—a ship that was called a

perintis ship, where you could be *en route* for one week. Which, if you had gone by plane would only be a few days. But we enjoyed life, and actually we were just happy [...] That became an experience for us [...]. We, all of us in our house, we knew that we began from something that was fought for (*diperjuangkan*), so we didn't want to cause our parents shame. We wanted to—we had to do something that also brought joy to our parents. Because they *berjuang* so amazingly [...] which for us, their *perjuangan* was there [...]. Today it is very amazing, like that (*begitu*).

So I, for me, yes, we just enjoy what we have, now, without position, or no [...]. It's not like Julian calling me 'Bos.'⁹⁶ I feel I have lived always in the same way, from before until now, I am the same Morgana. Maybe others can judge me—that I am a woman who is maybe a bit arrogant. They are welcome to it, but I am the same. I am my very self. I don't want to become someone else, because if I become someone else, I deceive [...] with what I am doing.

I don't think this is a new dress [she points to the dress she is wearing], because this is an old dress. Because I was not brave enough. Because I haven't done laundry. I—that's what makes me—I always remember that life...life has to be fought for (*diperjuangkan*). Until I get so sad when Papuan women don't want to strive (*berjuang*) for their own lives. They only think [...] it's enough if I meet a boyfriend and it's finished. Education that is high enough has to be striven for (*diperjuangkan*) in their lives [...].

I find myself a little bit angry (*sedikit perasaan*) when they, what do you say? Date (*pacaran*). And they, who are so young. What is it for? Yes, they get married and sometimes it's strange for me because they don't *berjuang* for themselves to have a future.

And every time, I really don't agree when Papuan women are always called backwards, etc. But that's what makes me frustrated (*jengkel*). Actually, they have to *berjuang* also. But there are many things that are a little strange, that...people think that Papuan women are arrogant [...]. Yes, because they know that, if people have gone to college, and have high degrees, they don't, they don't want to forget their culture. Women, they have to stay more often at home, work, do activities, but...for many Papuan men, you see, they assume that [women will do that].

Therefore (*makanya*), I can understand if people say that Ibu Georgina is arrogant, they say that Ibu Noreen is a little bit arrogant [both are women with advanced degrees]. But it is the principle of Papuan women who must change their situation. Because if not, we will keep holding to the principle where we are perceived as [...] not having any ability whatsoever.

At the college, students are not allowed to marry before they graduate, but female students are becoming pregnant. This is viewed as a problem (*masalah*) by the leadership (mostly men,

⁹⁶ I jokingly call Rev. Morgana 'Boss' because she was academic dean of the college at the time.

except for Morgana, and often it is the female students who are blamed for the ‘problem.’

Morgana addresses this issue.

Even though she [a woman] has been highly educated, [...] she will come right back, and work in the home, washing clothes, etc. Like the example from the other day, in the meeting, at the College. They said they have to reduce the number of women who are studying. Yes [...] they say that women are creating the problems (*masalah*), etc. But I think that it is actually the women who have the very good grades [...]. Actually, both cause the problems. People come together, not because the woman tempts, but both of them are involved in that event. But maybe it is that a man does not give birth, but the woman is the one who gives birth, so it shows.

I am very much like that (*begitu*). If, for example, Ibu Noreen and those who strive (*berjuang*) for, yes, who say that our striving (*perjuangan*) is for women, I am very much in agreement. And I long for the women of Papua to plan for their good future [...]. I don’t speak of other things. No, but specifically for Papuan women. Because I regret (*sayang*) if they only just finish, without a future, it is too bad (*kasihan*).

What’s difficult is for them to accept that women can also express their opinions [...]. Men in Papua, they are safe. They always hold to the principle that the head of the family is the man. Women are only there as housewives. Moreover, when people speak, they don’t speak to the woman but to the man, because as Papuan men, that’s how it is. But for a number of other Papuan men, in quotes—and I think this is what is not done for many students—yes in fact I am the one who is helping them all [...]. If they receive or don’t receive anything, they are all regretful because they have been expelled because of the rules...⁹⁷ They never become graduates, and they cause heartache for their parents.

For example, a number of people in the dorm experience the same thing. As a result, their children are never brought anywhere and finally they die. Yes, they hide them because they are afraid their parents will know. So they [...] indirectly, they kill them...many. [...] That is a result of the rules that are given.

Response:

Dear Mama Morgana,

Berjuang. I think you use this word more than anyone else. *Berjuang*. You tell me, and your two sons, “Life is hard, life is a struggle. We have to strive. *Hidup itu susah. Hidup itu perjuangan. Kita harus berjuang.*” You describe your childhood travels—one week on a *perintis* ship— as *perjuangan*. Mama Koinonia describes traveling on the ship deck with all of you

⁹⁷ Students are not allowed to marry while studying and pregnant students are expelled.

covered with a tarp, the same tarp she brings to the beach so that we don't have to pay for a shelter with a roof which costs more. You describe the real struggles of Papuan women, your students. You mourn for them when they simply attach themselves to men; or when they try to hide their children born out of wedlock, and those children die.

You speak about friends and relatives of yours who are considered arrogant because they have a degree. You tell me they are considered to have forsaken their culture if they are educated and work outside the home. You describe how educated women must prove, doubly, triply, that they serve their husbands. You stand up for those who have *berjuang*, who have worked for their careers, and who others sometimes call arrogant. Because they do not live for their men like their culture dictates. You know the dark underbelly of being a woman in Papua, and I see you yourself have changed the church and college system and your family through your own striving and struggle (*perjuangan*). You *berjuang* for others, for your students, for your sons, for your congregation, for the neighbors and their children, and for the Mamas. That they may respect and value themselves.

Mama Tika: “We must continue to be prepared.”

Mama Tika, businesswoman extraordinaire, and Mama Viki's sister, often receives others when they are in circumstances of difficulty and walks with them through journeys of sadness.

Here, she explains some of her philosophies on suffering.

If you talk about difficulty (*susah*)—difficulty. For example: if a husband dies, for example. From now, you have to be ready. Every day, you have to be prepared that some day [...] there will be widows. Why was there widow Lula for example, or widow Winona? Certainly. Like them. They can live. It means—the phrase is—being mentally prepared. We must begin now and continue to be prepared. Why did that person's child die? Why did their grandchild die? [...] We must be ready.

There will come a time when...it is done. It will be our turn, in the rotation (*giliran*). We must be ready. We are together in a line. I am in one line, and ah, here comes my turn.

Here comes my turn. Chock! [long pause] So we must always be ready! Always! I [...]. the children and Bapak. ‘Ah! Mama is always ready.’

Mama explains how she has told Bapak and her family,

If I die, I remind you that when the time comes, when Mama dies, just kidding here, but please, eh? [...] People bring flowers, I don’t want those flowers, the flowers—flowers that say ‘our condolences’ (*turut berduka*). If you bring live flowers, it’s ok [she laughs]. Fresh flowers. Fresh flowers [Mama draws in breath through her nose and smells the air as if she’s imagining the fresh flowers]—instead of buying arranged artificial flowers. One arrangement is 100 thousand. Now, they are expensive. Some are 500—the fancy ones. Just put the money in an envelope [...] And later for example, if I die, I ask you to be ready, to prepare a donation, and there write ‘a donation for widows and orphans.’ Aaaaauhaaa! [Mama cackles]

I am also like that. Bapak says like this, ‘Oh, and if you’re already dead, what will you care (*mau tahu apa*)?’ So it’s like that, we have to talk, you see, Julian, even about the place where we will be buried, we have to talk, right?

I, in the past, invited the family, Mama Viki, everyone. All of us who are in Lincoln City here. I said let’s buy land in village A, buy land in village A [...]. I wanted to ask them to buy land for our future. A place for us to be interred. I was motivated by the Chinese place of burial in village B, there. I saw it. Ah, we—I wanted to ask for land in village A. My older brother, you see, lived in village A, and now received land in village A. My one older brother from before was already retired. His family was raised, here in village A. Oh yes yes. So, in the house, on the edge of the school there, he was the principle there, so I said, ‘Buy land instead of the graveyard in Lincoln City being too full. Then, when we die, we will have a place. Our family can gather.’

And so I always think of that. I had already thought about it. When I said before that we must be mentally prepared (*siap mental*), that means that we must be strong. So that in the future, in facing difficulty, we perhaps won’t need to be too sad. Because we were already sad and we have to become a *perjuangan*, and become an example for others to see us, right? ‘You believe in God, don’t you? Why do you have to be so sad? There is no point in being sad. And strength, it comes from God.’

I ask her, “You are not sad, Mama?” She replies,

Sadness as a human being, ok, but it can’t be for loooong. Yes. Because when you are sad for a long time, then what else can you do? All of your time is lost sitting being sad. Before when Mama was stationed in village C⁹⁸, my father was sick in our village—tonsillitis. Buuuut, the people in the village, they didn’t know that it was tonsillitis. He couldn’t swallow. I heard in villager C, and wanted to come, but I couldn’t come down because I didn’t have the money to pay for the ticket. How much is a pastor’s salary?⁹⁹

⁹⁸ A remote region only accessible by a 4-6 seat plane.

⁹⁹ Pastor’s rarely even received a salary at that time.

Finally, I heard that my father had died, and I couldn't come down, when in fact from village C, to here, [then] to our village is near. I couldn't have gone home. I would have had to force *Bapak*. Where would *Bapak* get money? At that time, the salaries were just barely enough. It was not like now [...], because we have greater ease with business, etc., we can (*masih bisa*), we are able. It's like that. So, so—if our parents die, we don't have to force others to make themselves busy with us (*bikin orang lain ikut sibuk dengan kita*).

So talking about, 'facing difficulties'—when Julian said 'difficulties (*kesusahan*)' you see, it's like that. You can 'face difficulties.' There is a way out. There is a solution. You can't experience difficulties and immediately close your eyes and close out the world (make the world dark). You must open your eyes and look this way and that, and then see where the door is. And so I will give an example of the widows, just an example.

One time, we the pastors' wives, gathered here. The year 2000. [...] We were many. Pastor's wives. Female pastors. Then, one time I said to these friends, 'I want to remind us, yes, we must think about how [...] our husband's may die.' Our friend from Australia, Penelope, Penelope is from Indonesia, and she jumped up and said, 'Ibu Tika, I don't want to, I still want to live with Edward [her husband]!' And I said, 'No, I didn't mean that you are hoping for your husband to die, no, but we must be prepared mentally, in the event that—this life, you see there is a rotation.'

Penelope answered, 'Ok. I can do that.'

It was the year 20--. I went—we the managers of our health organization—went to Australia and came home. I stayed with Penelope in Australia, and she was alone. When she arrived in Australia, her husband divorced her. Divorced her and married an Australian. She lived alone with a congregation, a congregation—and at night, we would retire, and she said, 'Ibu Tika, before, I resisted you when you spoke. Now I am the one who feels it.'

Mama Tika replied, "Ahch! Let it go! Marry again! So, I, when I spoke, she [Penelope] said,

'Aiyooh!'" Mama Tika continues her example.

But now, dying does not mean just by age, but also divorce [...] right? One time, there was a Mrs. Doctor who came—the wife of a doctor. She came here because her husband, the doctor, had re-married another woman, and she came here, and so what should I say? 'Julia'—her name was Julia—'just assume that Mr. Doctor over there has already died already. If he is dead, do you want to force him to rise again. Really? That's impossible. Just consider that the doctor is already dead.' In this situation, we have difficulty knowing what to say, so simply say he is already dead...So I say, 'Enough! Your husband is dead! Mr. Doctor is dead! Do you want to tell a dead many to rise again? Impossible, right?'

Ah, that is, you see, her husband is the director of the Lincoln City hospital, Mr. Doctor. He left her from then on. I met the doctor, and I told him, 'I told your wife, I said, just consider that Doctor is dead.' Hah! The doctor was surprised. I said that the doctor was already dead!

They already had 2 children, or was it 3? But people's lives, yes. They meet, they do things. People, if they're already like that [...] No. Oh! and then, what more can you do?

Mama tells me that if someone comes to her, she says, "Oh, what is your business with me? We can talk." She then continues, "But I say, 'if we talk, we have to think first, yes?'"

Mama Tika explains that she could have said, "'Oh My, that doctor isn't good. Why would he leave you like that?'" But then she clarifies, I she said that, "Maybe I would increase her pain. So no." Instead, Mama says to Mrs. Doctor, "'Consider simply that the doctor is dead.' Just an example. An example. Just [Mama laughs] examples of people facing difficulty."

Response.

Dear Mama,

As I write this, I have just heard the news that your house has burned down. The house where you spent 30 years, building several businesses. The house where you displayed your pictures with presidents and queens, appliances from your travels, and a television where everyone would come to watch the World Cup. A house with two kitchens, indoor and outdoor, and smaller houses for your daughters and their friends. Your yard with your plants. Your wall of vines and flowers which kept your porch cool. The table built around the mini coconut tree painted with symbols of your culture where students like to sit.

Your daughter tells me you are staying in the Pearl Hotel with your grandchildren. I call her, and she tells me that she wept about her house burning down until she spoke to you and you gave her strength. The neighbors tell me that your husband collapsed because all his books had been burned, but you came home and encouraged him, telling him that they are only things.

I remember how I would come to you in my own *perjuangan*, when I was so lonely I could barely stand and when my heart was broken, and you told me about bamboo. You pointed to the bamboo that you had planted at the corner of the driveway 40 years before, and you told me, “Julian, consider the bamboo. The taller and taller it grows, the more and more it bows its head and the lower it gets to the ground. We must be like that, the more and more we grow, the humbler we must become.” You told me another time, when I came to you in tears. “Consider the banana tree, Julian. How every part of it can be used—the banana fruit, the heart, the leaves to wrap our food, the stalk to roast food in and for children to play with.” I told you that when I was a child, my friends taught me how to make noise makers out of the stalk of the banana tree. You smile and tell me that the whole tree is useful, and that we also must be like that tree, every part of us can be useful.

You tell me here in this interview, that we must be ready, that we must be prepared, for death, for burial, for whatever hardships will come. That we must work hard so that we are ready. You tell the story of what you want for your own death and I imagine Bapak rolling his eyes, and saying, “So you even want to plan what will happen after you die?” You prepare so that even in death you will be with your family. I am too (*terlalu*) thankful Mama, that in the fire, you and Hector and Sandia, and Mama Viki, and Bapak, and Carl and Sarah and Kevin and everyone were not harmed, and I marvel that even when your house has burned down, still it is you who gives strength to your daughters, your husband, and those around you.

A woman, Julia, comes to your home and tells you the story of how her husband left her. If I had heard that story, dear Mama, I would say, “Grrr, the bastard!” or “Oh, you poor thing!” And I would commiserate with her and rile her up. But you tell her, “Alright, it’s done. Consider him dead. It would be smelly if he were to come back from the dead.” In my mind, as I hear you

say this, I imagine a zombie heading up the Lincoln City hospital—confused because he did not quite realize he was a zombie until you came to him and told him that you had told his wife that he was already dead. You repeated it twice to him and he was silent, confused. The wife he thought he'd left behind had someone speaking for her. I love the look on your face as you tell me this story, dear Mama. I wish that I could be so bold and defending of those who are fucked over by life. What I read from you Mama, in how-to walk-through sadness and struggle, is the importance of being prepared and acceptance.

Discussion

Dear Mamas,

I cannot—do not have words. I read your stories and, due to the demands of a dissertation, I draw a few small conclusions here while I marvel at your strength. From Mama Viki, I learn that telling the story helps reduce burdens (*pikiran*), and lightens loads—sharing the load with others so we are not alone. From you, dear Mama Viki, I also learn that forgiveness is a choice, and that betrayal can be overcome resulting in even more goodness and blessing than before the betrayal. It blows my mind!

From Mama Tika, I learn the importance of planning, being ready, in effect, being sad beforehand and then when the time comes, being reasonably sad, but not letting the sadness overpower you so that you can do nothing. Of planning and sharing with each other. And between the lines of your story, dear Mama, I read of togetherness and sharing of troubles—of coming to trusted people and telling of sadness and inviting each other into laughter.

From Mama Josefina, I learn courage. How someone can travel the most unimaginable pain possible alone and survive. And I learn how sharing through writing, even in loneliness is

one way to pass through the darkness. I have no more words, Mama. Your strength is beyond my ability to prosate.

From Mama Koinonia, I learn laughter. Laughter even when washing the no longer living body of your friend. Laughter when your husband is in prison. Laughter when you have milk coming out of a hole in your breast. It's not that you don't feel the pain, but you put it away and you laugh, like the song from Rev. Boeting. From you too, dear Mama Koinonia, I learn the importance of having my door always open, even in suffering. Sharing my life with others—with friends, with family, and with strangers—even when I seem to have nothing to give. And I learn from you, Mama, that there will be blessings, and that I will end up having things to share, even when I think I have nothing.

From Mama Bunia, I learn how strong faith can be. How knowing firmly without doubt that I am loved by someone more powerful than I am, someone from outside my reality, can give me the strength to survive. I learn of the ability, from Mama Bunia, to exude love and kindness, even when experiencing the most unbearable pain of heart and of body.

From Rev. Morgana, my friend and mentor, my sister, I learn to fight. I learn to fight for myself. For my right as a woman to have an education and a job, and also for the rights of my students to live as strongly and successfully as they want to be and sometimes more. From Morgana, I learn unceasing fight, unceasing *perjuangan*, from early morning until late every night, a *perjuangan* that sees clearly the challenges that Papuan women face and gives those challenges the finger. Is it right? I don't know. I wish I were there, or you were here so we could talk instead of me having an imaginary conversation with you on this computer.

And from Mama Kolala. Mama Kolala. Mama Kolala. You have been always brave. Your life has been a series of *perjuangan* to feed your family. Bearing your children when your

husband was away—they are named after the ships he was on when they were born—and then following him to the big city where your youngest girl goes into the best hospital you could not afford and comes out no longer living. I cannot imagine, dear Mama, *sa tra bisa*. You took her body, and prepared her for travel, and you wouldn't let her small self be thrown away in the center of the Indonesia's kingdom. From you, dear Mama, I learn respect and love for what I have lost. Love so great that death does not end it. From you dear Mama Kolala and from you dear Mama Josefina. It is you who haunt me, carrying your dead babies across seas, holding them when they are gone. Your *perjuangan*. Is too much.

Terlalu.

Conclusion

When the stories are at their most heart-breaking and most profound, as in this chapter, I find I have the least to say. I want to share these stories with you, that you may walk through them and find some small piece of the strength that the Mamas have. I feel that any addition of my own words and analyses would take away from the power of their stories. But I will write a few things, because even though my words don't work right at this level of depth, the Mamas' stories deserve my attempts at articulating awe.

Perjuangan through the death of children into light. *Perjuangan*—carrying light and laughter and strength and hope and a certainty that you will survive. *Perjuangan*—carrying a dead child across a sea, alone. It is this *perjuangan* where I see a practice of freedom, a practice of dignity, a practice of survival. It is the practice of being a guardian of life.¹⁰⁰ Of holding to the body of a baby even after its life is gone. This practice. This walking through darkness and surviving. This survivance, not in shadows¹⁰¹, but in real life—through laughter, through

¹⁰⁰ Ibu Noreen

¹⁰¹ See Vizenor, 1993.

planning, through openness, through faith—these are the practices of dignity and of strength.

These are the practices that maintain and hold life.

In my humble opinion.

Chapter 9: Dreams and Stories of Dreams

Whose Reality is Real?

[t]hey wanted to know what it meant to understand the real as an affect (as something produced) and as an *affective relation* (as not simply rational and conscious). They wanted to know how the real could be a powerful fiction that we do not experience as fictional, but as true. (Cixous, Derrida, & Bennington, 2001, p. 6)

There are times, when reality does not give birth to the spirit of *can-ness*, that we turn to the surreal to bring strength, comfort, and power. Although my western mind calls this ‘surreal’, my wondering self acknowledges what Robin Kelley reveals, that “real” is defined by the powerful, often in ways that exclude the experiences of the marginalized as being unreal or surreal (Kelley, 2003). In this section, I base my understanding of surreality on Robin Kelley’s discussion in his book *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (2003). He defines surrealism as not merely a phase in the Western history of art but “an international revolutionary movement concerned with the emancipation of thought” stemming from colonized and “semi colonized” peoples (2003, p. 5). He describes the surrealists as purposing a “total transformation of society [...] new social relationships, new ways of living and interacting, new attitudes toward work and leisure and community” (p. 5). I write in this section of the new and transformative social relationships and ways of living dreamed of by Mama Kolala, Mama Josefina, Mama Bunia and Mama Warinuri.

The stories from the Mamas that I share below are stories of the unreal. Some would call them fantasies. Some would call them dreams. As I hear and read these stories, however, I am struck that living in dreams is not separated from reality in Papua. Rather it is *berkat*, blessing, a lens of empowerment and of purpose which gives the Mamas and their children and grandchildren strength to keep on continuing.

Living in the Mamas’ Real

For a moment, let's pause. And enter into dreams and stories of dreams. Visions. I have been carrying within me for these last few days the thought (the reality?), after attending a poetry slam and having tongues tickle my brain, that whimsy is a serious business, as Dorothy's suave and wounded sleuth, Lord Peter reveals (Sayers, 1923). Whimsy. Acts of imagination. The journeying into and creating of other worlds. Worlds which, in our western positivism can be deemed 'imaginary, unreal, escapist'. What would happen if we traveled into these worlds?

Benedict Anderson (1983) posits that all communities (can we also say identities?) are imagined. And so, when a reality is unimaginable in its anguish, in its powerlessness, in its sometimes horror, can we create/imagine another one? And might this other one, this one that we have created, that has less horror and more strength and hope and empowerment than the strictly 'objective' reality, possibly be real? Who is to say it is not real?

I am most awed by Mama Regina, who when she was 7, a brilliant student—always the one to copy the teacher's lessons on the chalkboard, always the one to read at the front of the class—was hit by a falling coconut and suffered complications in thought and speech as a result. These have stayed with her to this day (she is about 60 years old now). The coconut changed her life, others tell me, leaving her struggling with school and with processing information (coconuts falling from 100 feet in the air are not kind to the human head), but Mama Regina herself, speaks of it as the reason for her inability to follow the orders of others. In my paraphrase, she says, "Because of the coconut, I seem unable to do what people tell me to do." As I listen, to Mama Regina and Mama Kolala, to Mama Josefina, and Mama Bunia, dreams are told. As we sat on porches blown by breezes sometimes cool; as children play and guava trees die—dreams are told. As we drink coffee on the moonlit terrace with the last of the lightning bugs (*kunang-kunang*) which are disappearing (I don't know why), dreams are told.

I see Mama Josefina in the morning, in her purple batik Mumu (*daster*) gathering moss and ferns from the concrete between our houses for her diabetes. The moss and the ferns are her weapons against this disease that has struck so many Papuans; her purple batik Mumu, her armor. There is a hole in her Mumu below her left arm. She firmly grasps the hole to her side to conceal her bosom. She is my neighbor, and often we see each other—in the yard, in the garden, in the driveway, and in our homes. She comes, and we talk about Australia, dictionaries, and catching fish. She shows me ferns and moss and brings pumpkin cake that she has made. Her movements are deliberate and steady with power. Her eyes are far away.

I live next to Mama Josefina, in the center of a community of Mamas, in a jungle that fights to remain. I believe that I live in magic. One night, I am coming home with a friend and her husband, and we see Mama Josefina's husband. He is sitting in a worn rattan chair, storying, under the *ketapang*¹⁰² tree with Uncle Cesar, the bus driver. Bapak goes into his carport and returns with a chainsaw that is running. Bapak often fixes things, and I think nothing of it, until he yells of the disrespect they (I later discover 'they' are the boys from the college dorm) showed Uncle Cesar, their elder. Then I watch as Bapak and the chainsaw go racing down in the direction of the Boy's dorm. I look at my friend and her husband, both pastors and lecturers at the college, and at Uncle Cesar. There is a studied calmness, accompanied by the moon, the empty rattan chair, and the fading sound of *Bapak's* footsteps. "Go home, Julian," my friend's husband tells me. And I go down the steps just vacated by *Bapak* and his chainsaw into my dark house.

I hear yells—fury—from the direction of the boy's dorm. I call the dean, my friend Morgana, and I explain in a panic, "Mama Josefina's husband, chainsaws, Uncle Cesar,

¹⁰² A large leafy shade tree with edible nuts.

disrespect, boys' dorm." She says, "They will be all right, Julian. He is a good man." Months before, he had broken down the door of a classroom during the visit of an accreditation committee. The whole campus was on their best behavior, and he came, with his chainsaw, and broke down the door of a classroom where Prof. ABC was teaching. He then went to the girl's dorm, sawed through a bed, and went home. I was returning from the airport, walking up the campus hill, as he was heading towards the dorm. He greeted me, nodded, and then went into the dorm with his chainsaw.

We live in what seems surreal—what I imagine a midsummer night's dream might be. But here in our neighborhood in Lincoln City, the magical night of midsummer is every night. There is an Ambonese electrical genius who lives in a shack made of the neighborhood's broken appliances. His electrical shack of wonder lies just beyond the trees from my house. Uncle Sylvester, everyone calls him. Uncle Sylvester's 90s power ballads ring out through the trees at 11 pm from his repurposed speakers. The slow loris (*kus-kus*) sways in the bamboo above his gadgeted abode. The bearded nephew of Mama Tika, Jonah, occasionally lives with Uncle Sylvester. Next to Uncle Sylvester's house, Alexander, Mama Tika's one-and-a-half-year-old grandson, sings Brazilian dance tunes into the night; "bara bara bara, bara bara bara." Mama Viki, Mama Tika's sister when she was laid low for six months by an incurable illness, was cared for by her cocky, 11-year old grand-nephew, who washed her dishes, saying "Here, grandma, let me wash these (*ini, nenek, sa cuci*)."

Fireworks sound from November to February, set off by Alexander and his friends to celebrate the Christmas and New Year's season. My five-year old neighbor, Penny, guards the mango tree next to Uncle Sylvester's house, twirling yellowed cassava leaves and singing. Mama Josefina's dogs bark in their nightly symphony.

The crickets come on at 4 p.m., so loud that you cannot hear the person next to you talking (although the crickets are quieter in recent years. There has been, for two years, a plague of frogs). The ribbets of the frogs come out after the crickets subside, bookended by the sighs of amorous cats. As darkness fully falls, out come the sounds of Mama Josefina's husband's sometimes drunken friends, singing and laughing under the *ketapang* tree. He sat with them each night until he ran out of money and prestige, and now all he has is Mama Josefina, purveyor of ferns and dreams.

Mama Josefina's Vision

Mama Josefina had a vision and she describes it here. It is a vision that gave and gives her strength.

And so, one [vision] that was my strength came when I first went to Sunday school, from the stories from the Sunday school teacher (*pengasuh*). And it came to be, that, sometimes without consciously realizing it, sometimes, I sat alone and day-dreamed (*melamun*). But in my thoughts, I was telling the Sunday school stories...I had just memorized the Our Father prayer, that's all. But I knew that there was strength.

I saw [...] a green tree. There was a small voice that praised the Lord—that made it amazing. From here, I could see those leaves. They are different from my leaves. How great are God's activities! [...] How many ideas to shape this tree, to make this tree like it is! But it is from there. I get my strength from there [...] I didn't want to listen to others. I was busy with my own thoughts. I was there because I didn't want to talk, but then suddenly they would start talking. I had my own imagining, and I was so happy.

There was a picture that Jesus gave us, that the children would sit on the stone [with him]. That picture. That's what I saw. Oh my! If I could also be there on that stone, among those children. There, leaning against the Lord Jesus! [...] Sometimes I imagined that I was there, but as that imagining happened, I had a feeling—a feeling of closeness, you know? And that feeling of closeness alone is what has become my strength.

Response.

Violence threatens the spaces in which we interact with each other. The spaces where we create and co-create our interactions, both with each other and with our world. Writes Michael Jackson,

Because, violence, like storytelling, occurs in the contested space of intersubjectivity, its most devastating effects are not on individuals *per se* but on the fields of interrelationship that constitute their lifeworlds. This is why violent threats against those one loves, or the loss of family and homeland, can be more damaging than any assault against oneself, and why a person's powerlessness to speak or act against such events is so terrible; for in violence one can act only under the threat of pain, of degradation or of death—and speak only to debase or incriminate oneself, or assent to the other's will. In such situations, recovering one's freedom to speak and act becomes a matter of life and death, for, as Hannah Arendt puts it, a 'life without speech and without action...is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be a human life because it is no longer lived among'. (1958, p. 176 in Jackson, 2002, p. 39)

When these spaces are threatened, then the creation of stories, realities, and relationalities that contest the threat, that contest the descent into violence, are acts of liberation. In such contexts where alcohol, lack of work, and subsumed anger cause Mama Josefina's husband to descend every so often on the campus with his chainsaw, Michael Jackson writes, "Recovering one's freedom to speak and act becomes a matter of life and death [...] life without speech and without action [...] is literally dead to the world; it has ceased to be human life" (Jackson, 2002). But in the Papuan context, speaking directly to the underlying causes of the violence will mean death, and so the Mamas speak around and around and around. And they dream.

A girl, shot by soldiers, dreams messages and prophecies from dead Dutch church men. Her mother tells her story, sitting on a crumbling cement porch, tracing bullet paths in the air. Here is Delila's story, told by her mother, Mama Kolala.

Delila's Vision: The Singing Dutchman

Delila is the hero in this story. Delila, who was shot by soldiers when she was in her teens in her front yard, channels the founder of the college and speaks prophesy and truth into the important decisions made by old men and rulers. Delila is now in her 30s and a mother herself. Her children play as Mama Kolala tells the story. Mama gets out the photo album of her

shooting. “We had to send her to another hospital,” Mama tells me, “so no one would know that she was shot.” If they had known, she explained, they may have tried to silence Delila.

6 little girls and a boy gather to see the photos of their mother’s shooting. As she shows me the pictures of Delila’s recovery, Mama tells me more. Delila dreams of Boeting: Mama tells her grandchildren, and me. She says, “Nature (*alam*) is still strong here in this house. He invited us to sing *Songs of Faith*¹⁰³ in Dutch. In Dutch!” Delila stands in the living room just through the screen door, listening, silent, as her mother tells her story.

We had a guest. We told him to sleep here. He was afraid. He did not want to. He said, ‘I cannot sleep there again, I have seen what is there...’

At that time, also, it was when Delila, she was shot. After the happening (*peristiwa*) of the church general meeting in City H, it was then that there would be a problem. Mama Tika told Bapak to come up [...] before they went up to the mountains [for the meeting]. I have never told this to others. Mama Tika knows. Mama Tika said at that time, if they had brought something like this [gesturing my phone to record what she spoke].

And she [Delila] spoke of the happening (*peristiwa*) of the meeting in City H. Her younger brothers and sisters all know. That was when Beatris was still here. They all, Delila and Fajar, that’s what Mama [Mama Kolala refers to herself as Mama] said. Truly all people know about this. We ourselves, who live in this house, we know.

He came in. He came three days before the meeting in City H and came into Delila and he spoke, using Dutch, but we didn’t know the language. We can speak English, but he spoke in Dutch. But only Bapak alone could know. He told us to call Bapak Tika, ‘George Tika, George Tika.’ We were confused. Oh My (*Aduh*)! The one here who can speak the Dutch language is Bapak Koinonia, but Bapak Koinonia was out. We called Bapak Tika to come, but Bapak Tika came and sat in our house. Bapak couldn’t understand because he [Boeting through Delila] was speaking Dutch. He spoke about the issues of this church, many problems/issues for the happening (*peristiwa*) in City B. We didn’t know what he spoke of.

He sang. And when he—Delila—finished speaking, he invited us to sing the *Songs of Faith*¹⁰⁴ in Dutch. Mama was so surprised because he said, ‘Sing *Batu Karang yang Suci*,’ and he said ‘That’s Boeting’s song that he wrote in the village [where Mama is from], you mustn’t change the songs from the *Songs of Faith*.’ So Mama says one time I told the Women’s group, ‘Boeting has already told us, he is dead, but he came to give us

¹⁰³ A book of songs translated by Boeting.

¹⁰⁴ a song book translated by Boeting himself

knowledge that we must not change *Songs of Faith*. *Songs of Faith* must be used because he was the one who put together *Songs of Faith*.’

So he told us to sing *Batu Karang yang Teguh* (Rock of Ages). We sang the songs of Boeting. Eh! We used Dutch. Two o’clock in the morning, we alone sat quietly inside, when he told us to sing Boeting’s songs. Mama was amazed! Mama was surprised. How could he tell us? We alone know Boeting’s songs [...] He told us to sing that song using Dutch, and he told us to sing. I was so surprised, I said, ‘Oh, sing Boeting’s songs, Boeting. Songs that the students sing, how can he command us to sing those?’

There are many things that were spoken of. He said, ‘Soon there will be a happening (*peristiwa*) in City H.’ And it was indeed true. Bapak and the others, they said it. Bapak Tika went up (to City H) to help. Bapak Elia and Ibu Seripa. Mama slept until 5 pm, and Bapak called from City H. Mama said ‘I have already seen. The one who will rise there is not Bapak Tika. The person who will rise (*naik*), he has this.’ [Mama gestures to her chin] That was Bapak Elia. ‘Later, he will be the one who wears the jacket, who will stand in the front. And there will be one woman who stands there.’

At 5 pm, Bapak called because Bapak Elia and Ibu Seripa [were chosen]. We said that what we had seen was true. ‘Bapak, what the children have seen, it is true, and we do not doubt. Boeting himself came and told us [...] The church will have a happening (*peristiwa*) and soon if Elia leads the church, it won’t be long, he will pass away.’ True, when he—and he died. Mama went up [to his home for the funeral].

What Boeting spoke of was indeed true. The children at home all say, ‘It was truly true, what Boeting said.’ He was a person dead, but he could come. It is the people of the church, all of them, everywhere. Soreri [a founder of the college who has long since passed away] walks from the front of campus. If there is a problem on campus, in this house, we can see. He comes and speaks here, and he is angry, and he says, ‘Angry angry, *overdomen*’. You see, in Dutch, you know (*kan*), that’s how they say angry. They (*dong*) were angry, and he was angry at this school at that time. Until [...] he spoke and said that many students would die. Would die. And Mama said ‘What?’

Mama Tika, they know, I can’t tell this to anyone because this is our secret in our family. Only Julian knows.

I ask, “May I write about it Mama?” Mama answers, “You may.” I clarify, “I must ask first

because if it’s a secret, I ...” She jumps in and explains further.

Truly (*memang*) because others don’t know. Bapak came down from, came down from among the others. Bapak himself was surprised. So the happenings (*peristiwa*), like Bapak Elia dying, we already knew. When it was Ibu Seripa who went up (*naik*) [to lead, they knew]. When Bapak Bernard went up (*naik*) [to lead, they knew]. We saw also when [...] people called Bapak and said this, ‘There are people of [a certain region] who say

that they would rise (*naik*) to be the Church leader,’ but they called Bapak, ‘Bapak we now want to lift up (*angkat*) Bernard to be the Church leader,’ [Bapak answered] ‘Yes, you just follow.’

Sometimes we all go there, to the chairperson [of the church], and truly it was right. I said to Bapak about what we saw in this house, ‘We already knew. That’s what Mama had already said.’ Mama doesn’t often go to the Women’s worship, but this is something that Mama knows, truly (*memang*).

Reflection.

Mama is housebound. She does not leave her house, except to go to the market (although in the last 4 years, she doesn’t even go there). She tells me, “I get dizzy if I leave the house, Julian.” The church deacons bemoan how hard it is to get Mama Kolala, herself a pastor’s wife, to attend any church event. Some say, “Achh! Mama, she never leaves home. Ah Mama, she’s a closed person (*tertutup*).” With frustration, they say, “Why won’t she come?”

But Mama Koinonia spins Mama Kolala’s relational connections differently, offering a positive reading of Mama’s seeming isolation. She says, “Mama, she focuses on her family.” On feeding her 8 grandchildren, and her 3 daughters and two sons and their friends. “She works too hard,” continues Mama Koinonia, “She is someone who works (*orang yang kerja*). She cleans the house. She washes clothes. She hangs them up to dry.” And when she grows weary, she sits on her porch, and watches the campus go by, she and her house knowing everything that is happening on and around the campus.

Mama Kolala’s home becomes her world from which her truth originates. Although some would call that truth simply dreams. Michael Jackson (2002) writes,

the range of these modes of symbolic re-empowerment is infinite—from ‘imagined communities’ that provide a quasi-familial, fantasised sense of collective belonging, through forms of madness in which one imagines that external reality is susceptible to the processes of one’s own thinking, to ‘techniques of the self’ in which consciousness and the body are subject to all manner of symbolic manipulations. (p.35)

What Mama Kolala and Delila speak of could be termed madness—a fantasized sense of collective belonging to dead Dutch men and faraway meetings determining power—but Mama’s dreams give her freedom of movement. When various experiences, some of them involving the underlying violence of Papua, have trapped her in her home, in her dreams, she flies across time and space.

Mama Kolala tells the stories of her dreams to her children and grandchildren as she feeds them and washes their clothes. I most often see her hanging the little clothing of her 8 grandchildren who range in age from 1 to 13 years. And as she does this, she gives them her dreams. And in her dreams, she, their mothers, and their grandfathers, are heroes.

Mama’s Kolala’s Dreams

Mama, you also dream. You sit, on your porch. You wash clothes for your children. I see you behind the small flapping shirts. You speak only ever of your husband and of Beatris, your daughter who will be great, and whose education you give your money to and sacrifice even basic necessities. Your grandchildren are happy. They know love. I think that they know love because of you. You dream, and your dreams change your world. You are stooped and too narrow for health. Your t-shirt has holes. Your feet are worn. You are powerful, dear Mama, and you know it. I love you.

Michael Jackson writes,

I propose to focus on the ways in which storytelling mediates between them, providing strategies and generating experiences that help people redress imbalances and correct perceived injustices in the distribution of Being, so that in telling a story with others one reclaims some sense of agency, recovers some sense of purpose, and comes to feel that the events that overwhelmed one from without may be brought within one’s grasp. (2002, p. 36)

Mama Kolala’s home and dreams become her world from which her truth originates. In Mama’s dreams, she is not housebound. She travels through her dreams, across time, into the moments

where history is made. Although she cannot travel far, she knows and sees, from within her home. She sees what is true, although many would call it simply a dream.

As Mama Kolala spins her tales of visions and dreams, she creates her own truth. Although perhaps she didn't create it, but it was given to her in her dreams. She speaks her dreams into my telephone recording device on a windy afternoon under her guava tree (Why are the guava trees dying?). Frida Kahlo once said, "people say my paintings are surreal, but I only paint my reality". This is Mama's real.

And I saw, in Mansinam, in the water of an ancient well. There is a unit (*sebuah air*) of water. And it was like he rose [...] a person wearing white clothes—he rose, until he was up high, and he gave his hand like this [she holds out her hand, her eyes looking into the distance] and he said, 'You must.' He called Bapak's first name (*nama kecil*), 'Konrad must write this book, Otto's¹⁰⁵ book for the Papuan people. He must, so they can know how the gospel came in (*injil masuk*).'

Immediately, I woke up, and I spoke to Bapak, 'Bapak you must write this book,' [...] It was through my vision and my telling to Bapak [...]. Then Bapak said 'Yes, truly (*memang*), I can write.' And we went, and Bapak searched for the people who there. Our elders who know how the gospel came in [...] It was only Bapak who could ask, and the people gave [their stories]. Only Bapak wrote this in a book. So this next year that is coming, [the book] has been built (*dibangun*). It remains only to be published [...]. So Bapak immediately wrote this book.

Bapak brought it [the book] first, at that time, to where? To Mansinam. All the people gathered there. The book [copies] came, and people bought them until they [the books] were gone (*habis*). So now his second stock is coming out [...] and Bapak said [...] all he had to do was lift it from the bottom of the sea (*tinggal ambil dari dasar laut*), and it was the brightness of the light that came up (*dan sinar terang yang naik*), and Bapak wrote it all down.

So, at that time, we had already lived long, and his [Otto's] son's, son's great-grandson came—came to City N at that time. Bapak still directed (*pegang*) the school. At that time, Ibu K was also there—although later Ibu K grew a bit forgetful (*Ibu sudah agak lupa*). They were all there with Bapak together, so they (*dorang*) know.

Response.

¹⁰⁵ Otto and Geisler were missionaries who brought the Gospel to Papua in 1855.

Mama Kolala loves to tell stories on her porch when I stop by, and she can speak for hours. Mama Koinonia, her neighbor, told me of living in a faraway city with Mama Kolala, when she was just married. “She was so quiet, Julian, soooooo quiet. She never said a word. And she was beautiful.” I say, agreeing, “Her daughters are beautiful.” Mama Koinonia responds, “Her daughters are nothing compared to their mother. Her hair was long. But she was soooo quiet. She never spoke (*Tidak pernah bicara*).”

Now as we sit, Mama Kolala talks for three hours, without a break, without a drink, without standing. Her stories bubble up and pour out. Surrounded by her grandchildren and I, she is no longer silent.

Mama Warinuri’s Dream

Dreams and visions can empower in disempowering situations. Here, then is Mama Warinuri’s dream which she had as a 17-year-old girl, when she was forced to choose between marriage and being disowned or possibly killed by her family. She and her husband sit on their porch, tiled now since Christmas, as they tell the story of her dream. Muli, their *kusu-kusu*¹⁰⁶, is in her cage. The large tree in the corner of their yard has been cut down, and their porch is brighter as the sun is setting. They have shared coffee with me and with others countless times on their terrace, storying as the darkness comes. Almost all their stories are cloaked and infused with laughter. Even this one.

Bapak: So they said they had decided it would be the month of December, but she could give an answer. She was 17, getting married. 17 years old. Meaning until that time, she had not yet given a response. They asked her if she wanted to, didn’t want to, wanted to, didn’t want to (*tanya tanya dia untuk dia mau, tidak mau, tidak mau, tidak*)?

Mama: [Laughs] Aha aha ha ha!

Bapak: Ah, already, don’t force her, you must not! It is her right to choose. They gave her one week, didn’t they (*kah*)?

Mama: One month.

Bapak: One month to weigh,

¹⁰⁶ A variant on a slow loris or tree kangaroo.

Mama: [Laughs] Ha ha ha!

Bapak: Human rights.

Mama: Ha ha ha...

Mama: But maybe that's also, hmm, what do you say? I indeed received a sort of vision/prophecy, like that (*begitu*). In a situation like that, I was uncertain (*bimbang ragu*), what would you say? Deciding between 'yes' and 'no'.

But in my sleep, I, until this day, it is my one and only, what would you say, witness, for me. Maybe if I tell people, they won't believe me. But I saw it truly in a dream. I was between sleeping and sleeping—and I was still, I was sleeping. But I saw in that one night, I slept, and it was almost, was almost one month before I would have to give a response, and I asked Him or Her for one vision, for one vision and that vision pushed/moved me (*mendorong saya*) so that I had to give an answer. But I slept at night, slept on a night like this [Mama gestures to the darkness around her]. It was like I was at our house in Lincoln City, you know (*toh*)? I was, like a light came down from the opened sky, and shone down (*tembus*) directly upon me (*langsung kena saya*).

Light...he he! Light from this sky! It was like the picture of what, eh, of Jacob sleeping by the river, right (*kah*)? Jacob sleeping beside the river. What river was it? Perigi?

Bapak: Not Jacob, you know (*toh*).

Mama: Perigi.

Bapak: The ladder came down, you know (*toh*).

Mama: Ya, that's it already (*itu sudah*). Like there were angels that came down also—went up and down on that ladder, but in this (*tapi ini*), there were no angels, just the light. The light was round, like this. It only encircled just me in that light. And then it was finished, and the light disappeared. I was sitting on a horse, upon a beautiful horse. It had been decorated so beautifully, and there was light. A full moon. A full moon. I sat upon the horse and my brother who died, he held that horse at the neck. He held it *toh*. I sat upon this horse, and my brother held it and I, it was like I rode around, like I was riding and riding on a sandy beach. On the sand. On the sand.

Before, in my village, when there was a full moon, we liked to play upon the sand [Mama coughs]. And he held that horse with a chord that was tied to the horse's neck. He held it, so I sat upon the horse. He held it as we rode around on that beach. I awoke, and it was almost morning. I talked to my older sister who was married to this Josef. [She said] 'God has given you a very good sign, so you must bring an answer,' and that was it...Enough.

Yes, and then I was—yes, maybe, ok. Yes. I said 'Maybe. Ok.' That was a sign for, because I was in a situation, yes, it wasn't, I was, like, confused. How do you say? [...] I still, still wanted to enjoy my freedom. My time. Yes (*Iyo*).

Bapak: [Laughs] Bihihiheheee...

Mama: I was confused, until my brother (*sapu sodara*) said, 'If you don't....' He gave an ultimatum to me—had given a strict decision to me. Finally, I thought and thought about it. I slept and I saw that it was like that (*seperti itu*) [...] He said, 'If you don't, don't

decide to receive *Bapak*, it means you can no longer call me brother (*ko tidak boleh panggil sa sodara*).’

Bapak: That was wrong, it was.

Mama: ‘Your relationship between you and me will be broken. You can lift your feet out of my house (let your feet carry you out of my house), and don’t call me brother.’

Bapak: Heh! heh eh.

Mama: I thought, ‘My parents, both of them are already passed away in the village. Where will I go?’ And that night I was sooooo confused (*binguuung skali*). I saw one vision like that one that I told my sister [...] and she then gave this answer to me that ‘It’s a sign for you (*Itu tanda untuk ko*).’

Bapak: Her final semester exams [for high school], she didn’t pass them (*tera lulus*).

Mama: Ha haha.

Bapak: Yes, talk, talk (*bicara, bicara*). I too was [...] wrong

Julian: So it was mama’s family that...?

Bapak: So at that time, I’d asked that she go to school, and finish, and then continue with high school [before she married him] ...

Mama: [Breaking in] Because, because the school that we went to, our school, had its continuation in another high school. The other high school was in the afternoon and we studied in the morning.

Bapak: So that when I came back from Java [...]—everyone thought that if I went to Java—I would get married in Java, so they wanted me to marry first. In 6 months. And so that became my struggle [he had wanted to wait to marry until she was older and finished school]. Until I arranged for her to go to Junior high school [...]. At that time, there was a school in the afternoon, so she finished that school, and I arranged for her to go into training for teachers of religion [...] From there, I put her in the college for her Associate’s degree. And now she’s back there again.

Mama: [Laughs] Ha ha ha ha! But I put forth my forms to run for office. To be a legislator—and they went through my diplomas for primary school, junior high school, and then several years before I finished teacher’s training, and they asked, ‘So Mama, for these years, what were you doing?’ [Bapak laughs] ‘I had been married, so...’ I explained, and they laughed. Yes, it was like that, but I had a strong desire (*kemauan keraaas*). Finally, I, I finished, and from that [teaching income], I could help, could help my family, like that. So not just from a pastor’s salary, but I could still have a profit for the life of our family. It was not in vain.

Mama has told me the story of her dream many times. She links it here to her success as a teacher and her ability to make money to supplement her husband’s income and care for her family. From an orphaned teenager with no choices, Mama became a woman with an education, a job, and a salary. From a woman threatened with death or marriage, she has transformed her marriage into something that brought her education, laughter, and a career.

Robin Kelley writes of how he sees surreal authors and artists such as Aimé and Césaire give “some of the most imaginative, expansive, and playful dreams of a new world I have ever known” (2003, p. 5). Mama and Bapak’s telling of Mama’s dream, is like most of their evening coffee tellings with friends, filled with laughter and awe at the way the world can be transformed. Mama dreamed a visually rich and vivid world where the moon shone, where a ladder came down and circular light surrounded her. Where she sat upon a horse and her dead brother led her around on the beach of her home village. Dead brother, a village left in childhood, biblical and lunar radiance, an animal not dwelling in Papua; all these elements blended to give Mama courage and strength to assert her right to exist, no matter what her prescribed circumstances were. The terms “real” and “surreal” or “real” and “imagined” emerge out of a duality of European enlightenment centered thought, embracing (bless him) Cartesian dualism so beloved. Evenings sitting by the light of the lightning bugs, drinking coffee and listening to Mama and Bapak’s stories complexify any duality still lurking in my American brain, inviting me into a wonder and a real that is *nyata* (real and evident) in the light of the lightning bugs.

Mama Bunia: Faith, Songs, and Living in Praise

When I left Papua, the car taking me to the airport stopped on the way out of the complex. Mama Bunia was sitting in her wheel chair, on the edge of the hill where the old American army base used to be. She was taking in the sun. Her husband was standing beside her, shielding her body from view with a woven mat (*tikar*). Only the sun and the vista could see her. She had been ill for many years, been to every doctor they could find. She couldn’t keep any food down and so was unbearably thin and unable to walk. I went to her and shook her hand and said goodbye: I have heard just last month that she is getting better and able to leave the house.

In her story below, Mama Bunia describes her faith. She tells me that she lives in her songs of praises. Religion is an opiate, says Marx, but what if religion, and faith, is not an opiate, but is the food that keeps Mama Bunia alive? Mama explains that her faith allows her to speak and to sing, in a place where she cannot otherwise be heard. She speaks below, first about her experience in a singing group in Church as a young woman, and then explains further the power and importance of praise and faith in her life.

When they heard our praise, and if a person heard, he would surely feel touched by the song that we sang—the preparation that we could feel, we who hear can touch and feel the power of God that He bears witness to [...] because God is enthroned on our praises, eh? [...] Because finally we, all people, will, when the hand of God and all people are received (*disambut*) into his kingdom, it will be in praises without knowing day or night...So only praises will we hear.

Amen, yes, so that is what we can't forget. Praises are very important for us. We work, or whatever we do—we, we must have songs that come out of our mouths. [If] we sing, it feels like the work that I do, like I don't feel it...it's [the work] all finished, and I don't feel tired and such (*begitu*), because we sing. Because those praises give us strength, freshness, like that. Give passion for us to work. That's what Mama sometimes—sometimes at home, while I am working, I sing if I'm not tired. Sometimes I don't feel like I am alone when I am working.

I ask her, “What is your favorite song?” She answers,

Song...Do you mean a spiritual song? There are so many songs that I love to sing! Yes. But what I like, you know (*toh*), is the *Grace of God*, yes. [She begins to sing]. ‘The grace of God is able, for me.’ [...] Oh my (*Aduh*)! That is a song that reaaaaaly...mmmmhmm. Yes, even more if it's sung in English. Oh My (*Aduh*)! Really...That is, if we want to pray and lift up praises, it is very amazing. And, and don't forget the name of God.

And there are still many songs that are very beautiful. The words, yes. And people who make the lyrics of those songs, also people gave them wisdom (*hikmat*), grace to write them, those words, the text. Because, surely, those words will praise God. And what does God give, eh? Wisdom for them to be able to compose that song, so that all people will hear it and be encouraged, strengthened, like that. Yes, it's very amazing! Mmmhmm. I, even though I'm tired, I am ok if I hear a song. Wow! Immediately! I receive strength! All of my pain and my tiredness, it disappears. Mmmhmm. That is what I experience. I don't know if [it happens] for others, because for me, only praise songs, yes, only those strengthen and encourage me.

Mmmm, medicine, yes, that's it, so when I am sick I say, 'Yes, my medicine is only prayer, and songs—those, those are my breath of life. Prayer and praise songs. Only those.' Outside of those, now. Maybe eh, medicines and all those things are number two. But the first is prayer—prayer is medicine, my primary medicine. And my breath of life is that, and praises—those are what give me healing and strength [...], strength is there.

So, almost, I, for a long time, Mama, Mama usually is sick, even with just a stomach ache. I can't go on, and the medicine was not given to me [...]. I was confused. I was given the prescription, but I didn't want to take it. Just prayer [she laughs], that's all I ask for. That I can live until this time in strength is only because of this. Yes. Praise the Lord. Everything is because of Jesus Christ. I give thanks every day to God, every day, each day. I have never not given thanks to Him. Every day. Yes. Morning, and evening, we always pray—our family. We pray morning and evening, yes, we give thanks. Because, for the days of our lives, who is it who guards us, if not God?

Oh! I'm so happy—so happy! Because we, what eh? We can talk, and if we talk about the word of God, Mama is someone who is the very most happiest (*paling senang sekali*) doing this! It is better for us to sit, what do you say (*apa eh*)? In a chair, or what (*kursikah apa*)? With the word of God. It is more beautiful, and we don't feel tired or hungry and [...] no. If we tell stories about it, we can go for one full day. We can go from morning until night. We don't feel hungry or thirsty if we speak about the word of God. It is so beautiful [...]. Not just now, but many times, we, if we sit and speak about this, we forget eating and drinking... We don't feel hungry and thirsty, no. For hours too, there is no feeling of hunger and tiredness, and what do you say (*apa*)? No. And so we are refreshed (*disegarkan*), strengthened [...]. We won't want to stop talking. We will want to keep talking about God.

Mama Bunia weeps as she speaks—her praises and her songs juxtaposed against a great and un-named sadness. Every praise, every song, every moment of giving thanks is a part of her war against her burdens and her constant illness. If she did not sing, she would not still live.

As in the stories from the chapter on the death of children and sadness, when it comes to the hardest and deepest stories, like Mama Bunia's here, I run out of words. My memories of her and of that conversation are deeper than the categories that my words inhabit (I am sorry, I know I have exhausted this topic). But maybe, just like she lives in her songs and in her praises, I can be with her for a moment in the space of memory that her stories bring me to.

My construction of words usually comes from my brain, through the tap tap tap of my fingers out onto the screen of Microsoft word (is it soft and small? Micro-soft?). But my memories of this day and this story from Mama Bunia are not in my brain. I remember this day in my body. A warmth that I cannot distinguish from grief swells beneath my sternum, down into the wondrously complex expanse of my gut, and up through my shoulders and down and out through my arms, into the keys and onto the small and soft screen where words tell Mama Bunia's steel courage.

With every word she told me, every song she sang to me, Mama Bunia fought back tears. From some lapse of feminism in my upbringing, I perceive tears to be soft. A sign of weakness. Something that comes from our eyes when we (usually women) can't cope with the hardships life throws our way. Mama Bunia's tears absolve me of this notion. Tinctures of concentrated courage, her tears show the chasms from which her strength emerges and then sources. These are the words that come from under my sternum and my complicated gut, up through my shoulders and onto this small soft screen when I remember the day that Mama told me her stories.

Conclusion

What then is the blessing, the gift, the power—of dreams and stories of dreams. Is it that they allow the Mamas to construct a reality? It would seem as if I should say that dreams give agency. But do they? Or do they simply give a space where the Mamas have a voice? Where they are important? Dreams create a reality where we are real, and where we are agents in our universe, where we create our universe. If I explored the functionality of these stories from the Mamas, I would say they are empowering, world-changing narratives, rooted in a colonial past and transforming the colonial present. That is what I would say, were I to analyze their functionality. But there is more than functionality.

What do I learn here from you, dear Mamas? From Mama Bunia, I learn what courage means. How you can create a way of being where you are free from physical ailments, where you feel refreshed, even though your body lives in constant pain and weakness. Mama Bunia, you commune with another world, with the God of the Universe, and channel his power, and healing love to all those around you, even while you remain in constant pain.

Mama and Bapak Warinuri, you tell me the story of Mama's marriage choice while laughing. As we sit in the darkness on your porch. It's a story you've told me before. Mama, you describe the process whereby you come to accept marrying Bapak, but still I hear in your words that describe that time, the fear of a young woman. It is as if that fear is still real.

Mama Josefina, you had a vision of Jesus. Where you were sitting at his feet and he would listen to you. You go into that vision, into that reality, whenever you need strength. And you find peace, strength, and comfort there.

Mama Kolala, you are the only one to speak almost exclusively about your husband. I see this, at first, as a sign of weakness. I ascertain to myself that maybe you are oppressed, that your husband goes galivanting around making a name for himself, and your only worth/merit is in the stories of him. I get this impression when I analyze your stories and realize how many times 'Bapak' is mentioned in them. But when I think back on you, not on my analysis of your story conducted thousands of miles away, but on sitting with you, listening to you, you are as far from oppressed and disempowered as I can imagine.

Mama Kolala is, by the accounts of her neighbors, not powerful. Mama is frustrating, closed, alone. She isolates herself. The violence of Papua has broken her connections, shot her daughter, and threatened her family. But in her stories, she is a player in Papuan and Colonial politics. In her dreams and visions, she is powerful, an agent in creating her reality and telling

history. She is mighty. Perhaps she tells these stories for power in a powerless situation. But these stories happened. I believe that they did.

Chapter 10: Traveling with Mamas—Where Adventure and Welcome Collide

Papua is one of the most isolated regions in the world. An island considered to be in the stone age until its “discovery” in the 1930s. Now catapulting into the digital age, Papua remains one of the most expensive regions of the world in which to travel due to its isolated and extreme terrain. Often chartered boats and planes are required to travel. I lived in Papua over a period of 12 years, and only traveled to a few locations because of prohibitive costs. I assumed that those around me had had the same experience, but as I listened to the stories of the Mamas, I discovered that many of their stories are chronicles of travel. They are tales, often of relational travel, always, somehow finding and meeting family and friends (new or existing) through adventures that span oceans, continents, and languages. From Biak to Wamena to Australia to St. Petersburg to Jakarta, the Mamas wander the earth, making it their own.

The Mamas’ travel is characterized by family. It is reciprocal traveling, reflecting the spirit of Malinowski’s Kula Exchange (Malinowski, 1920), or the familial connections formed through marriage alliances which always allow people to find a family member’s home where they can lay their head (Wospakrik & Reed, 2016).

The Mamas’ stories reveal a state of eternal welcome. I remember first arriving in Lincoln City, a city of over 300 thousand people, and going to the beach with the Warinuris. Upon returning, we passed a stadium just as a soccer game was getting out. Thousands of people dressed in red were walking, driving, and hailing transport on the street, as the Warinuri’s car crawled along the main road. As we crawled, Tanya Warinuri opened her car window and said “Eh! *Ipar* (in-law)!” She had seen a relative, and they proceeded to converse through the window. As our car kept crawling through the crowd, we passed another. And another. Having

only lived in Papua for a few months, this was my first realization that, in Papua, wherever you go, you are known.

Traveling to Serui, Wamena, and Raja Ampat, I was always sent by my Mamas with connections. People to see—the oldest son of Mama Koinonia, the woman who in her free time runs a guesthouse in Wamena, *Kakak* Bernard, this cousin, that sister. And these people welcomed me in my travels—meeting me in airports and at ports, helping me find tickets, laughing with me, letting me stay in their homes when a flight didn't show, or a ship was late.

Participating in this reciprocity that spans distance, I brought oranges for Noel Koinonia from his mother's tree, hastily gathered at the last minute so that I would have something to give him as I met him in the airport in City A. He had a taxi waiting for my friend and I and rushed us to the harbor—physically throwing us into a boat as we tried to thank him. The other travelers on the same flight arrived at our destination the next day. But our family connections and Mama Koinonia's oranges allowed us to reach the island a day earlier with friendly faces along the way.

Mama Koinonia and Mama Warinuri tell me of their traveling strategies on board the cross-country ocean liners in Indonesia: make friends with people on the ship, have a few women that you sleep near so that you can take turns guarding your things, always get to the bathroom to bathe early in the morning (It has been known to flood later in the day, Mama Koinonia tells me). When I travel together with Mama Koinonia and her family for Christmas, I learn more about how to travel. Walk gently in the hallways that are filled with people sleeping. Greet many, as in Papua, you see people you know everywhere. Bring your food, and a thermos with hot water (I do this now whenever I travel by bus or by train), so you always have tea to share. Keep your valuables on your person. Be kind and be friendly. Mama Koinonia brings a

biography of Abraham Lincoln and she reads as the ship travels. I sleep next to her, without waking for eight hours.

I have shared here some of my own travel experiences with the Mamas. Below, they will share their own stories of travel.

Mama Regina: Widow Adventuress

Dear Mama, your travel is your choice, but also a result of gift/blessing (*berkat*). Mama, we sit and drink ginseng tea and Mama Tika's hot chocolate, and you tell me about your trip to Jakarta in a hushed voice. You sit across from me. You are known as a widow, but you are an even rarer commodity in this marrying land. You are like me (I am like you!). A woman never married, but in lieu of a better word, Bapak Garibaldi refers to you as widow (*janda*). You are prayed for and given aid in the family worship gathering, along with the others who are *janda*, whose husbands' have left, or died.

You are considered a woman alone, living by helping. Mama Koinonia says, "Mama Regina is someone who helps others." You are labeled widow—a category of disempowerment—but you are a traveler. An adventuress! You have been to Wondama, Timika, Kuala Kencana, Jakarta, Manokwari, Ransiki, Biak, Serui, Numfor, Jayapura, Makassar, and Sorong, to name a few. You have been offered permanent jobs, working in a mayor's office, being the housekeeper for a Freeport executive, but you choose something other—more temporary work that allows you your freedom to wander about this archipelago. The mayor of your town offered you a secretarial job when you were young. You worked for a few months, then you said. "*Sa tidak mau* (I don't want to)." Instead, you went with your father on his fishing expedition into the bay for many months. Your voice grows hushed as you tell me of the fishing

journey, the stars at night, the waves, the crocodiles—that you chose over being a secretary in the Mayor’s office.

Your adventures have taken you many places in the 40 years since you left that job. Here, you tell me the story of your journey to Jakarta.

Yes, there was a woman, a woman who told us to depart (*berangkat*)! Even though I was a maid [...] To depart with her work children, *toh*? With them (*dorang*). One time she told us to *berangkat* to Jakarta [She whispers the word Jakarta], in the month of—in the year—I departed (*sa berangkat*).

Her son’s graduation. She told me to come along to Jakarta. She asked, she asked her, our treasurer, ah Ibu Barbara. Usually there *toh*, they call me *Mama Tuah* (Elder Mama), because my younger relative, her child calls me *Mama Tuah*, Elder Mama, *Mama Tuah*. At first, you see, they called me older sister (*kakak*). But they heard her call me *Mama Tuah*, *Mama Tuah*, so they called me *Mama Tuah*. Ibu came to the office. She asked, she said to our treasurer, ‘Ibu Baaaarbra!? Here, *Mama Tuah*, do you already have a ticket?’ So Ibu Barbara said, ‘Already (*sudah*). She already has it.’

You continue, dear Mama, sharing how Ibu said,

‘Yes, get ready already.’ And we *berangkat*! At that time, we *berangkat*. What month, eh? We were several days in Jakarta, but I had never been there. I stayed in the AB hotel, in Jakaaarta. I stayed in the Hotel AB. Of those of us who came up from here (*naik*), we came by what is it? What kind of plane, eh?

Then, in Jakarta, there, in the place where you drive in a circle, there, we were picked up, and brought to [the hotel]. When we arrived there, we went in. Two people per one room. Two people, one room. Two people, one room. And the two men, those who liked to chew betel nut, eh, smoke, they two were together. So they ate, smoked, chewed betel nut.

Early in the morning was the time to wake up. I woook up, right? I checked to see if there was water in the tap. I...I...bathed then I took my cup; went out; I filled it with hot water; I made tea; I drank it. Then (*trus*), I went and sat in front [of the hotel]. I sat in front. There was the train. I could hear it! From Jakarta to Bandung? Bandduuung?! Eh, [the train] going there. I sat. Eeeeeei! And I saw, I saw that the train was going every day, like that.

So we walked out to the front and we ate breakfast. We ate fried rice. We ate, but we already had drinks. They had prepared a dispenser (*galon*) with hot and cold water. Other friends, they just had their morning drinks down below, not [in the room]. I didn’t want to. I said, ‘Ah! It’s just hot water, if we want to go down [to the restaurant to order] it is wasteful.’

Inside there was also AC. Bathing—I bathed, and I washed my clothes immediately in [the bathroom]. But my friend didn’t. She gathered them, then she put her clothes and washed them in the laundry [...]. She washed them in the laundry. They came asking about my clothes. I said, ‘My clothes, I already gave them.’ Even though my clothes, I still had them. So I just washed them right away, in the bathroom [Mama laughs]. I said, ‘Later, will she be angry? Or not?’ Not at all (*teraaada*)!

Mama continues her story, “Later, each time when we (*kitong*) wanted to go, they went, and I stayed [at the hotel]. There was one big store [in the area]. I wanted to go (*jalan*). I told my friend, ‘*Ini Ibu* [gave me money].’” Mama’s friend answered, “‘Yes, you go there so that you can see (*supaya ko lihat*), but remember the place that you’re staying here.’” Mama continues with her story below.

I said, ‘Aaah! I’ll just walk on one street.’ If I had wandered around, you see, I would have lost my way. Oh my (*Aduuuuh*)! Then the next day, Ibu says, ‘Come, you all to my house.’ Her son was going to graduate, what do you say? So we were called there. We didn’t go to his [graduation ceremony], but we waited at home, then went to the school, then we ate, then we were finished. We went back to the hotel again, then (*trus*) Ibu said that later, in the evening, we would be there, and um, feast (*makan makan*) on a rice meal in the restaurant, this restaurant. What do you call it (*Apa ‘ni*)? ABC restaurant. A biiiig restaurant! Ok (*sudah*)! We went there again. All the of the heads of the organizations who before had been in Papua, who had already moved to [Jakarta were there] [...] One of my relatives *saudara*, was his [one of the men’s] wife.

We came back to the hotel. We (*kitong*) bathed again and wore our clothes that we had worn again. Mamaaaa!! We hadn’t yet gone there. It was her child’s graduation! Then there were some who were wearing hiiiiiiigh heels. Some made their hair tall, you know (*toh*). They went to the salon; straightened it. Mamaaaa!

When we arrived at Ibu’s child’s house, Bapak came. Eh! Iiiiy!!! Because of us (*kitorang*)! My clothes were just simple, but the others were really put together (*rapiii skali*). Ibu, before we went there this day, she told us to go to a biiiig store. Where? In which part of Jakarta, eh? The biiiig stores there [...]. We went there. Ibu gave us money (*wang*). Then one *Toraja* woman, one woman with her, she said, ‘This afternoon, today Ibu told us to go pick out some clothes.’

Very very nice clothes. Fancy. Nneeeeeee!!! We walked. I said, ‘Mamaaaa!! The clothes are expensive!’ There were none that were 100 or 90 or 59 or...¹⁰⁷ More like 400, 500,

¹⁰⁷ About 10 or 9 or 5 US dollars.

300.¹⁰⁸ Mama!!! I didn't want to buy clothes, a dress. Ibu Fanny said, 'You buy something already, or Ibu will be angry. I [said], 'Oh My (*aduuuuuh*)! Not this! These clothes are so expensive! We are just making Ibu spend her money.'

Ibu gave us money. She ordered us to look for clothes for us to wear. The men also were looking for pants and a shirt. One wanted shoes, a watch. I said, 'Ah! Enough. Just this.' A dress. My dress. After that, I've worn it to worship just twice [...] A woman came, and she said, 'Your dress is so very nice.' Even my Ibu who was in the office, she always enjoyed my dress, 'Iiiih! Oh My! Your dress is the wonderful one.' 'Yes, I wore it that day.' I was already happy [...]. This dress was so nice.

Yes, we ate there, in ABC restaurant. We went home and ate again. Then we ate there. Aeiii!! The people, there were many! Then we feasted (*makan makan*). They had prepared several tables. We sat, and they drank beer [Mama whispers] at the table. We ate and then when we were finished, we drank. Drraaaank. Oh My (*wahduuuu*)! The men (*dorang*), there were some who were sharing their secrets [Mama claps, and laughs as she says this]. I um, I didn't drink. I'm afraid of drinking. I sat, watching them (*dorang*). We went home; they [the men] went home to the hotel. They were so loud [Mama laughs]. We arrived there.

Several days, eh, the next day, there was an Ibu who, here, Alina. Do you know her? Yes, she told us this, we were invited, ordered to her home. But (*trus*) no one wanted to go, because they wanted to sight see (*jalan jalan*). So, I and one [other], who was a Papuan woman; she [Alina] told her driver to come and pick us up. The others didn't want to go. I, with this, the one, I don't know her name. Gania!

She [Alina] wanted to bring us to City Y. Oh My! We went (*pergiiii*), and all along the road, the cars were in a traffic jam. It was a Saturday. Mamaaaa!! Hours!! We sat until I said, 'Oh my!' Um, if we were dying to urinate and poop, only then would we run there for a moment. There was a fee, you see [...], there were fees in the middle of the road.

When we got there, there was another fee [...]. It was jammed, jammed, jammed (*macet macet macet*) until Park A! Until we wanted to leave [the road] to go to the zoo, there. Only then could we go through. We went there. We got out of the car. We hadn't yet entered the park, and then we got out at a gateway and we had our pictures taken. We'd taken our pictures, I got back in because we had already bought, this, what do you say? The animals' food. There were many carrots. I bought carrots and then gave them to the animals. We held them in our hands, and they came to the car. They ran, and we what? Gave them the carrots and the animals (*dong*) ate. There were hooorses! Well, and all kinds of animals [...]. We went there, and then we went to Park B eh, to City Y.

Oh my (*Aduh*)! It was wonderful [Mama laughs]! Aweeee!! We went sight-seeing! Until there was, what was it? In this place, for specifically Papua, there was the *Nuri* bird. What do you say? In their houses, right. There were Papuan animals also there. They showed us the Bird of Paradise. We went there. There we took pictures before the tour

¹⁰⁸ About 40 or 50 or 30 US dollars.

[...]. We rode a cable car. We payed 40 thousand [Rp].¹⁰⁹ Alina payed for us, all of us to go—Alina with four people. Me and Gania, one other woman, Alina’s relative? I went. She paid. We were four people. We were so afraaaaid! Iiiiy! We went all the way to the top! We were running around, Eeeeeh!!!

This one woman, here, Alina, we sat on one side. We were afraid of going over. Iiiiy!!! [...] She was afraid. She screamed, ‘Help uuuuuusss (*Aaaaampuuuuun*). Lord Jesus! Oh nooooooooo (*adduuuuuh*)!’ Until we went down, we went around again, we went down to the place where we had gotten on. Ayiiii!!! There were all kinds of games there! There were people siiiiiing! There were people doing *dangdut*¹¹⁰! There, it was a wonderful park. There, every Sunday, everyone goes there, for entertainment. Iiiih!

We went back again. We went up to City Y. In Park B, it was still a lower altitude. But to City Y again. Aduh! It’s coooold, cold cold cold cold! So people were selling there. I bought two pairs of clothes. Um, a shirt, sunglasses? What else? They sold everything there! Then we saw down. Eeeeeei!!! A biiig city! Trees, what do you call them? Tea leaves! There were so many! Auuu! We see these, these aren’t trees. These are tea leaves! All of them.

It was cold, so Alina, she bought warm clothes—sweaters, jackets. She gave them to me, but my friend, the reporter didn’t, because she was already wearing hers. So Alina bought it for just me and her relative. Several people, two men and a woman and me—we all got them. Ok, then, when we reached there, I went home. When we arrived at her house, we feasted. She had told someone to roast with rocks (*bakar batu*)¹¹¹. There they also have *bakar batu*—not in other places, but in the market? Bought in the market.

So they roasted, these, um, sweet potatoes, taro and pork. We had eaten there. At the Park, we brought rice and vegetables and we ate in B Park. And then, at what time? At Alina’s house in an apartment, in Jakarta. An apartment, an apartment is big, eh? We could bathe. While we went up to her home. Then she told the driver to bring the two of us to our hotel. We brought the food from before. We brought it, and there was more at home, you see. So we brought it to the other friends at the hotel and gave it to them to eat. Hiiiiii!

Mama Regina laughs, pauses for a drink, and asks me, ‘Is it enough?’

Response.

Mama, your journey is one of constant blessing, from when the ticket was purchased, and the invitation given, through the hotel stay to the food (oh the food!). Each meal you describe, I

¹⁰⁹ About 4 dollars.

¹¹⁰ *Dangdut* is an Indonesian musical style.

¹¹¹ *Bakar Batu* is a traditional Papuan way of cooking pork and vegetables and tubers. It involves burying food in a pit with heated stones. Soooooo delicious!!!

feel as if I am there tasting the food and your wonder (perfectly warranted wonder!) at its provision. You are prepared for your journey, a traveled traveler—washing your clothes in your room, discovering the water dispenser in the hallway, making your own drinks, exploring on your own. I love your thriftiness, how you don't want to take advantage of Ibu's generosity. I just wish I could have traveled with you!

I remember being with you on a small island for the 100th celebration of the coming of the gospel. There were so many of us, we almost sank the island. I arrived at dusk with Mama Warinuri after two days of traveling, and then, all of a sudden, there you were in front of us! I was travel worn—my hair unkempt, my clothes smelled of exhaust and long-expired deodorant. And you were perfectly coiffed—your face powdered, your clothing un-creased. There you were on the almost sinking island.

Your perfect appearance comes from your preparation—your travel know-how. Whenever a travel possibility begins unfolding, you wait in quiet, being present and then somehow, you receive a ticket and off you go. To the mall, to the beach, to dinner, to Jakarta, to City B—and then you come back and share with me the story of your journey. My favorite story is when you worked full time at the mayor's office, as a typist, and your father was travelling by boat to the Bay, and you quit your job and went with him. I taste the night caught fish that you ate. I see the stars and hear the sound of the ocean waves too big to let your boat leave. Your life of adventure was just beginning.

Mama Josefina: Linguist

Mama Josefina is a teacher. She is precise and measured in her speech. A quiet but trusted leader in the Church and in the community. Here she tells the story of her first international travel.

I had been teaching at the ABC high school for one year, when the Church office sent a telegram that I was chosen to also be part of their delegation, together with Ibu Noreen, to go to Switzerland. And Germany. But there was a conference in Switzerland. I was like...haaa? The Church office, indeed, they knew me, because I had been at the Church's center for women's empowerment, you see. But really? Me? Truly (*pantaskah*)? Me?

The problem was [...] I thought that this was very heavy (*berat*). I had to try to take it all in. I met with a Church family in City D, and that man, he was a professor at the University, and now he was the one who would arrange everything.

Ok. Yes. Everything was happening. I had to depart to another city and Ibu Noreen and the others would transit in Jakarta. I would join them. And the three of us would leave and, and, and, etc.

Mama then explains what she was doing at the time she was called to be a part of the Church delegation. She was one of the early indigenous Papuan teachers, and one of the first group of teachers to have a bachelor's degree.

At this time, I was not yet a civil servant, just a candidate, [...] but the man who was the head of the National Department was a church person. His child was also studying to be a pastor. As long as I was in City D, if people asked, how can this be? I didn't want to beat around the bush. I said, 'I have an intended,' so that men were not handy with me (*macam macam*). Where does your intended work, they asked? I said, 'He's a pastor!'

And so I was safe there. They weren't going to bother me. Yes, I knew myself (*saya tahu diri...*) I already had an intended, iiiih! If not, eeeeeheeeee!!! There was a Mr. teacher, who was already old also [...], but he was handy (*macam macam*) with everyone. Mmmhmm. There, everyone was older and had worked for a long time, but their diplomas were from the teacher's training school, not with a bachelor's degree, you know (*toh*)? I was the only one with a bachelor's degree. For the first time. So I became fodder for resentment (*bahan singgiran*). But I thought, 'Ah, it's ok. Indeed, the times are changing, and in times to come, the teachers will have to have a bachelor's degree.' The proof is now. If you don't have a diploma for a bachelor's degree in education, it's not accepted. There must be that degree.

One month, I lived in City D. The principal was an Ambonese man. The teachers were also Ambonese. Many Ambonese. There was one person from City A, some people from City B, but most teachers at the Church schools were Ambonese.

When Mama and Ibu Noreen and one other person traveled through Jakarta to begin their European delegation, they met Bapak Joe, an elder Papuan pastor and lecturer who had traveling experience. Mama tells the story of their travels:

When we stayed there [in Jakarta], Bapak Joe said that we couldn't bring the bird of paradise and cassowary out of the country. They would take it from us at the airport. So we went with Bapak Joe, [and] I sewed the material to make their dancing clothes. So at that time, Ibu Noreen and the others were practicing for the dance, and I was the one who sewed. One day, Bapak Joe brought me to see a woman, a Batak woman, Javanese.

In her home was a sewing machine, so I was the one who sewed, sewed all that they used. Hheeeheeee! Oh my (*Aduh*)!

But the surprise, the surprise was one I couldn't ever have imagined! I will tell you about what happened in Switzerland now. We went to a city. That is a city on the edge of the CD lake. And in the month of April and May, the flowers were already everywhere! I was with one pastor from [another island]. He was a theology professor as well. We also got an allotment. They divided us up. I was with him. We went to a village near the city, a village in the mountains. There, I had a chance to touch ice. And what did it feel like? Ah, it was dry, like salt, like that. And there it was very coooooold. We went to the church and had to speak in front, you see (*toh*)? [...] Finally, one woman, she brought her big coat, and she draped it around me.

That man [the other delegation member with Mama] brought an *angklung*¹¹², and he taught the children. His English was already good. He taught them. They played a song and they were veeery happy! And I from Papua, what was I going to do? Finally, I sang. I sang *Jouw Jouw Manfoun*¹¹³. Aaa haah [Mama laughs]. In a state of coldness.

In the house where we stayed, [we were] with the pastor of their congregation who had been in Java and was able to speak pretty good Indonesian. There was a sofa that could be opened to become a bed, you know (*toh*)? There [...] I was near the reading room. But this man, he was with the family upstairs. They gave him a room, and they were in another room. And I thought, 'Achh! Why couldn't this man, ah, be down here? And I could be given the room.' It was very strange [...]. But I just went with it. I didn't problematize it. I bathed first, and went right in. We attended meetings there, went sightseeing, until finally we went home. It was like a dream.

One time, I went from Switzerland, from a city, where I met Ibu Ana, Ibu Ana. We met there. But before that, I had already known Ibu Ana here [in Papua]. On the day of Pentecost, I went to City B in West Germany [...]. I boarded a train. They prepared a ticket, and said, 'At 9 o'clock, be here, but don't get off. When you get off, there will be Ibu Tori, an Indonesian who will meet you.'

¹¹² A bamboo instrument, traditional to Indonesia.

¹¹³ A traditional Biak song about seafaring and the coming of Koreri.

Mama interrupts the tale of her train ride to West Germany with a story of her speech. She tells how she was able (visions of can dance in my head as I write this!) to create a speech in English even though she had never studied English. As she spoke, a Russian woman who lived in the village translated her words into German.

And I had to speak about something. Mrs. Nellie Yu, she was the one who managed everything. And she said ‘You, ma’am, will then speak about something in the church.’ What will I talk about? I had never been. When I was contacted by the Papuan Church Office, I was told to do this, this, this, but that, never. There was no English course. No...I thought, and I thought—what? Pentecost in the Bible was where? Until I got it! I was able to create a small devotional, just written by hand, untiiil, I got it (*sudah*)! [...] I translated it to English, because they said [...] ‘that person has been to Russia, so his wife knows English. So she will translate it from English to German.’ There, they didn’t want it in English, they wanted it in German.

Mama returns to her tale of her train journey to West Germany where she was going to meet back up with Ibu Noreen and the rest of her group.

And so, at 4 a.m., Nellie picked me up. She brought a sandwich, brought supplies, and I left the house. At 5, 6, I was brought by car to the train station. Ok. I got on the train. She gave me a piece of card. We entered with proof of payment. [...] I hadn’t brought *Rupiah* or *Deutschmark*. No. Just a 50 Rp. coin. A 50 Rp¹¹⁴ coin only. I wasn’t aware.

When I arrived at one village, named ABC. I fell asleep, because I was sleepy, right? And the train suddenly stopped. The door went ‘ssssshhh.’ Ah?! We exited, and immediately waited. I got off at the door. ‘Sssshhh’. Eh? Up above there was just a grass path. Uuuuh?! I was in a village!

And the taxis were down below. The windows, one door, and there were stairs going down, so I went there. And they said, they said, ‘Go back! Go back! Go back!’ Ah! It means I was wrong. I went down, and down there it was busy [She coughs]. Young people were everywhere. Eh, like that. I arrived down below, and everyone turned around to look at me there. I was aware that I was the only black one among white.

Aaaaahyiiii! [Mama laughs] Oh My (*Aduh*)! Hunh? [...] They turned around to look at me. I pretended to look at the schedule on the wall, and...aaah...there in that situation, I didn’t understand the German on the schedule. Five more minutes until a train came. It was heading to City B. And in those five minutes, everyone got on. They also perhaps

¹¹⁴ About 5 cents at that time.

wanted to go to City B. I thought, ‘Ah! I will look for the oldest [person].’ There they say ‘*Oma, Opa*,¹¹⁵ you see? Yes.

Mama found an older woman and asked, “Can you speak English?” The woman answered,

“*Nein*.” Mama continues her story.

German, it’s difficult. She [the older woman] sat. We sat facing each other on the train. Reading books, *Oma* was, you see. While looking around. Ah, what is important is that I felt safe with her. We arrived in City B. We, in City B, there were all different kinds of humans from the world were there. The city, it was a city! Curly-haired, black, Chinese, Japanese, and whatnot. Everyone was there! People also walked quickly. No one walked slowly, you know (*toh*)? Everyone walked like that.

So where is the woman whose name is Ibu Tori? In the middle of all these people, there appeared to be no Indonesians! No one looked Indonesian, Julian. Oh! Parked outside, there was a bus, right? I went outside to the bus. And there was a man who looked like he was from Papua, like that, but maybe he was African. [...] So, with him, I thought maybe he could speak English. I wanted to ask, *toh*. Because in Germany people spoke four languages. German, English, Spanish, and what else? I don’t know. Ah! I... Oh!

There was one place, like a post, but surrounded with glass. Rayban glass. I went around it. I wanted to see where the door was. I wanted to knock, you see, but in fact the people inside saw me, *toh*. They saw. It was about this big [Mama gestures with her hands to show the size], so I went around and around. When I found the door, I wanted to knock. This man, he came outside, he opened the door.

“*Sprechen* speak English?” Mama asked the man from the Rayban building. She then explains to him her schedule. “‘At this time, I have to be in the church. At this time, here.’” She was speaking to him, she explains, with “German that wasn’t really English. I understood, in that situation. It was like I had special understanding (*hikmat*), like that. He said, ‘At this time, if you go to the *kirke*, the church. No,’ he said, ‘You can’t go to the church now.’”

Mama responded to him,

‘The door can’t be closed up because there are people like me at that church. Ibu Noreen and the rest of them. With Ibu Tori. [...] There was a young woman, they are the dance group.’

¹¹⁵ Grandmother and Grandfather

I--finally, he went and opened up his squad car, that car, and [he said] '*Bitte*.' I entered and sat down, and he brought me—the church was there. There were several churches—a Catholic church, but he pointed to the tower, the tower, '*Dat is kirke*.' I wanted to get out, but how would I pay him? I opened my wallet, and I showed him my coin.

He said '*Nein Nein*.'

'*Dankeshein*.' I walked, he waited. The point is he wanted to make sure that I was inside. I walked, and I looked—he was still there. I drew near the door. The doors, you see, used numbers. If you weren't right, it wouldn't open. By coincidence, there was a woman walking by.

'Is kirke?'

'*Ja*'

'The door?'

'Yes,'

With English, and German, ah, finally, she turned around. She pushed the buttons. The point is, she knew, and immediately, there was a sound, 'Krrruk!' And we went right in! That first door was a steel door. We went inside. There was one door, but just like this. We went in again, that door, and the people, were speaking. There was a deacon or a staff person, at the front, in front of the door. I told my story. He said, 'Ah, they were wrong. Now you must bring lots of coins, so you can telephone.' At that time, you see there were public telephones.

Entering the church, Ibu Norene and the others were singing. Some were dancing, some were playing the hand drum (*tiva*). There was a ukulele. Iiiiyy! I was so sad! I heard those sounds. I walked, walked, to the front. Immediately I hugged, uhh, Ibu Nellie [...] I had gotten off at the wrong place, so Ibu Tori who was supposed to pick me up had already gone home.

Enough. We finished that, and went to eat first, eat lunch. And they, umm, accompanied by one woman, a German woman, but one who had been in Sulawesi a long time, so her Indonesian was fluent [...]. I had to bring coins this time, so I could call. They brought me to the train, and I continued my travels to the village. It was already late afternoon, 4 o'clock. They picked me up.

Response.

Even now, as I listen to your stories, dear Mama, your life continues to be a catalogue of experience, and of wonder that any would find you worthy. Every story is a victory over challenging circumstances. A victory of your own wit combined with a mystical wisdom given you in difficult circumstances.

Dear Mama, somehow, I thought you would be stationary, that you would live in your place, but you are a traveler. The summer I arrived, you went to Wamena. Before that, you had just gotten back from months in Bali, and in October you went to Australia. You were invited as a judge, principal candidate, student, teacher, presenter, learner. Your traveling began during your childhood of travel, when you traveled with your grandmother to stay with various relatives around Papua. You are a traveler. Why am I surprised? The countries and cities represented by you and by Mama Koinonia, Mama Tika, Mama Matoa, Mama Regina, are multitude. Germany, Basil, Switzerland, Dumaguete, Philippines, Dubai, Cairo, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Tembagapura, Jakarta, Serui, Merauke, Jogja, Australia, Canada, the U.S., St. Petersburg. You are travelers. You see new places, make new experiences, and bring them back into your community.

Mama and Bapak Warinuri: Going to Java

Mama and Bapak Warinuri sit on their terrace, drinking coffee and telling me about their traveling lives. Bapak speaks of his family's location, while he was working as a pastor in various places around Papua and later traveling in Indonesia to study. He says, "In '75, '76, '75, they were here [in Lincoln City]. '76, they came with me to the village, because the airfield was finished. In '77 we went to Java." They tell me together about their travels.

Mama—We took a plane from here to there. The plane took such a looong time, and arrived, it arrived.

Bapak—It [the plane] had a propeller (*pakei balik balik*). In Makassar, Makassar, Surabaya. We got off in Surabaya.

Mama—We took a train.

Bapak—We took a train, theeeen, we went to City Y.

Mama—Three years there.

Bapak—'77, eh?

Mama—I also moved [to Java]. '77, '78, '79, '80. July '80 was when we came home.

Bapak—We came back [to Papua] with Isaac. Because he was small, so

Mama—Everyone could speak Javanese.

Bapak—So in City Y, it was very *dalem*¹¹⁶

Mama—The Java dialect

¹¹⁶ *Dalem* refers to the Javanese accent and way of living.

Bapak—Because we stayed several years. So our neighbors carried her [Nora—their toddler daughter] around. So she [...] put a cloth on her head and prayed [Bapak laughs].

Mama—She came home, and she prayed in the house [In the Muslim manner]. Hai!

Bapak—The neighbors brought her everywhere (*bawa dia kiri kanan*).

Mama—Yes, it was because we were like—we became foreigners there, different from everyone else. Hai!

Mama—Ya, it was like that. 2 years yes? It was--my uncle in Lincoln City, when he came to visit us, it was like he was amazed. Amazed! And it's funny to remember. What he said, well, Uncle asked, 'Nora, where are you from? And your Mama, where is she from?' Then 'We're from Borobudur¹¹⁷.' But her Javanese accent! The point is, it was true Java (*Jawa betuul*)!!! A Javanese accent (*Medeng Jawa*). 'Neng...Borobudur.' He he ha ha ha. Her uncle always remembers that, and when he comes here, he looks at Nora and says 'Borobuduuuur!' Oh my! Ihiiiiiii!

Mama and Bapak Warinuri later travel to another country for Bapak to study. They come

home after about a year, but one of their children is born there. Mama's daughter Nora now lives between three cities, navigating her husband and little daughter, her work, and her parents.

Mama and Bapak still often travel, but it is Mama who especially loves the act of berangkat—

traveling to conventions, celebrations, and weddings around Papua and Indonesia. I have

traveled with her numerous times and she is unstoppable. Borders, lack of tickets, lack of visas,

no car—none of these stop her. She always ends up where she means to be, taking us all with her.

Morgana: 'All of That Became Strength for Me'

I traveled once with Morgana—well, more than once, but once that I will tell of here. She called me on a Saturday morning.

'Julian are you doing anything today?'

'No, not really.'

'Ok, come.'

So I went to her house. Her sister was there, visiting from another city, and we were to go and visit some students doing their practicum, about 4 hours away. And so, after sitting and drinking tea as Morgana prepared, she and her sister, and I departed. We were in the back of the minibus

¹¹⁷ Borobudur is a large Buddhist temple complex in Java and a popular tourist attraction.

going to D town, then in the back of another minibus going to F town. Morgana taught me a song as we traveled—*Jouw Jouw Manfoun*—the song that Mama Josefina sang in a cold church in Switzerland. Somewhere along the way, Morgana’s sister got off to go see their uncle, and Morgana and I continued.

It was December, the season when wind blows and seas are unsafe, and when we arrived at the harbor, not many boats were there. There was a small *Jonson*¹¹⁸, with a young driver, not more than 17 years old, and Morgana negotiated with him to bring us to the village where the students were doing their practicum. We then stopped in the harbor town to see her cousin. She said, “I think my cousin lives here somewhere, where was his house again?” Her uncle had come to City F as a young man and had married there.

As we looked around, a quiet man who looked like her mother came and she spoke to him. As we left, she handed him 50 thousand rupiah, folded. He had given us some *rambutan*¹¹⁹ from his tree, and as we traveled and the waves grew choppy almost tipping the boat, we were terrified, and so to calm ourselves, we sang a song her mother taught us, “*Perahu yang Dijaga Yesus*”¹²⁰ frenetically and consumed *rambutan* and an ever-increasing rate.

We arrived finally at the village with a big rushing wave, pushing our boat onto the beach, and were greeted by the church elders. We traveled to see Andrew, a policeman who had been placed in an area of independence activism, and Morgana spoke with him and the church elders. We met another of Morgana’s relatives as we were leaving. She invited us into her home and fed us sweet potato greens, meat broth, and papeda, watching with glee to see if we could

¹¹⁸ A wooden boat with an outboard motor.

¹¹⁹ A sweet fruit similar to lychee in a hairy shell.

¹²⁰ “The Boat that is Guarded by Jesus.”

figure out that we were in fact eating ground rat. She only told us once we had consumed 2-3 portions each.

The church elders told us we could not go home, that the seas were too heavy. Our boat driver refused to go. The elders said we'd have to walk out, hiking for a day to get to the road where we could catch a minibus. But finally, the deacon's boat came and took us first to B village, to visit another student, and then back to the harbor town. Wet, bedraggled, and full of ground rat, we dozed in the last minibus back to Lincoln City.

I've traveled with other lecturers and pastors—people who hold similar positions to Morgana. Usually it involves renting a car and eating nice meals in restaurants along the way. Morgana traveled more simply than they often do, but what she and the others have in common in their traveling is relatives. In Papua, traveling is not a journey of strangers, it is a journey of connection.

Somehow, over the years, as I travel from Vancouver to Iowa, to Winnipeg, to Jogja to Jakarta to Wamena to Raja Ampat to Chicago to Thailand to Colombia to the Philippines, I feel as if I am always coming home. Rarely do I feel alone, in my travels. Wherever I go, there are connections. Even if I know no one, I sit in a train station with my thermos and my tea bags, and people see me creating a little home around me, and they start talking to me. This is something that I have learned from Morgana and the Mamas.

We still tell stories of that trip—Morgana and her family and I. Mama Koinonia, Morgana's mother stifles her cackles as she tells of Morgana and Julian inhaling 3 portions of ground rat without a clue what it was. Morgana laughs as she remembers her queasy stomach shuddering at rambutan, but eating it anyway to keep her mind of her terror of sinking in the

waves. Morgana's sons, Nero and Freedom, lie on the cool tile floor listening to their grandmother tell their mother's stories.

Morgana has her own stories of traveling from when she was a child. She tells them here.

My family. Yes because, to [...] my parents who, with their moving from one place to the next in Papua. You can see, from when I was born starting in A. A, then we moved to B. B, we moved to C. Then from C, we still went round and round. Sometimes there was food. Sometimes there wasn't food. And there were many things that I learned from it.

So all of that became strength for me, now with my experiences. What I mean is, those became, what, eh? [...] They became experiences that can raise me up so that I can walk forward, like what? All things that I do, I learned from the experiences that we had in our home. From something that we didn't have. We were fought for (*diperjuangkan*), until we were all able to go to school. Until you could say that in our house, 'we can.'

We all can. How is that possible? We can have an income—at least we have results from our work. Our parents can feel that they did not work in vain. You see, that becomes strength. So that I can walk in this place [...] with the experiences from my parents.

Yes, so if you say stories, yes. I think I have a lot of stories about, ah our family. Yes, like that, maybe. From when I was small actually. One time, it was, we were at home. When Bapak was stationed in C. Achh! And you see, he didn't receive a salary. So we were all small, hmm. We were four people [children]. Starting with the oldest, Noel, then Martin, me and Leona, who had just been born in 19—. And at that time there was no food at all, and we were forced to, there was this, what was it? Ah! Cassava that grew wild next to our house. And Mama told Noel to pull it up and when he pulled it up, we boiled it, and at that time we were told to pray so that we could eat, and that food was blessed. But, you know what?!! [Morgana laughs] After we ate, we were all poisoned!

Because that was, in fact, poisonous cassava. But afterwards, Mama told us all to drink water and pray once more. And everyone went to sleep again, and finally we were healthy again without going to the hospital, etc. You see, but, achh! With that experience, it feels like people say they like this or that food, etc., but for us, there is no problem, really. We will eat anything! There is no problem. Because the experience that we had in our past began to mean that now, whatever we have, we accept it...

Response.

Morgana, you speak about experiences that *bangun* you. That grow you. You say, "All things I do, I learned from experiences with family." From those traveling experiences, you say that you are able to walk forward. As we travel, you tell me stories of your travels, how you and

your brothers sold jackfruit at the C city port to get money for the rest of your ticket to Lincoln City. Your Mama describes the rain of the journeys, how Bapak would travel by plane, and the family would travel by boat, with only a tarp to keep off the rain.

Each of your siblings was born in a different place. To me, as a result of the travels, I see freedom, and an ability to know and see many people. I remember your Mama telling me of the seafaring of her father and her relatives, and of how they could always find a place to be welcomed.

Now I realize that it is not only you who travel, but your home is always full of elder Mamas, younger Mamas, Aunties, brothers, and cousins of all stripes. One came to get her son settled in college, another came to marry off her daughter, others come to go to hospital. There is always someone in your home, so you are not only a traveler, you are also a recipient of travelers. Like the appellation of *Binggong* that Dr. Wospakrik (2013) describes. *Binggong* is a woman in Biak culture who stands at the crossroads—a woman who marries into another town or village, but whose home is always open for her clan to eat in and stay in, wherever they come from. Your mother, Mama Koinonia has many people (*punya banyak orang*)—and those many people visit her, as she also visits them.

Mama Koinonia: 6 Children Born in 6 Different Cities

Morgana's mother, Mama Koinonia, describes some of her own travels before she was married, and also some of her family's travels. She starts with the story of when her first son was born, and then shares about her children's births during the course of their travels.

He almost looked like Ferdinand [Mama's 6th and youngest child]. Ferdinand and Noel. Yes. His body was biiig. When he was born, he was smaaaall. Only after one month, could I bring him to be weighed. He was one kilo. Just one kilo. But not yet. He ate and then only when he was six months old, was his whole body big. Eh, the only thing, eh two things. The what do you say? Ash from the kitchen, that was what saved him [...]. I

gave birth in the home to my first child. My second child, Moses's father, he was born in B City. At the hospital. When we had moved from A to B.

From B, we moved to C. Morgana was born in C. Yes, she was fat when she was little. From C, we moved to D. And Leona was born in D. From D, we moved to F. From F, we moved to another island for Bapak to study. Leo was born on that island.

Then, after Bapak had finished his study assignment, to Lincoln City when Bapak as a pastor of a Congregation. Then Ferdinand was born at the Lincoln City hospital. Each place we lived, someone was born, except F. F didn't have any births because we only were there 7 months. We came from D, 7 months, then we and Bapak departed (*berangkat*) for the other island.

I ask her, "Mama, didn't you feel tired? Weary?"

Yes, Julian, if you are married to a pastor, you have to. Eh. Before. Now, it's different. But we who were before, we who married a pastor, we left our work. Even though I was a civil servant, I, I, at first, I worked for the church. Yes, I was in the women's ministry. The church chose us also to work with children and youth—that division.

Yes. Then I was [...] in literacy. We taught children how to read. The government and social programs [including teaching] *tunanetra* [to] those who are blind. We were seconded to the church, but we taught blind children again in C city. I was in C city, eh, from the year -- until achk! When we entered the year '60. After that I entered the Church's center for women's education.

Eh. CSE. The Center for Social Education. Yes, it was in the same place. That house behind there, iiii, Lora Lala, the deceased Lora Lala, it's still there. [The phone rings]. When in fact I had already wanted to continue to this. They read, there was a letter from the Church, asking me to come and, truly this place, they opened a school for what? Um, for all the wives of pastors and evangelists to come to do what they would have to do, to marry a pastor. Why would she marry a pastor? For what? So all of those friends who are pastors wives [now], there are civil servants and teachers.

There, we learned many things. That if we wed a pastor, that, what. So before, it, it wasn't the same as today. Those who are fancy like this or like that, who, what do you say, follow their jobs. The church back then, it educated the wives of pastors. They studied to be a civil servant, to be a nurse in where, in Papua, like Cuthbert, Mrs. Golan, but she wanted to marry a pastor. Yes after one year, she had to enter CSE so that she would prepare herself to be a pastor's wife. So pastors' wives, before, they were strong.

Whatever her salary might be...whatever, if you say stay, yes, she will stay. Those who are here now don't do that. She is a civil servant, so her husband is sent to pastor there, but she stays, to care for her children in school, so she stays. Before, no. If the hand on the clock, it was there, and we had packed to eh, for the children to go in a class...everyone went. Even though we had no money for traveling. [...]

In 19--, we had already moved to C, C. Bapak, in 19--, 19--, Bapak was moved to be stationed as a military chaplain. And that...we asked...they said it had already been decreed from the department of Defense. For Bapak to be a military pastor. Because he was tough. He was brave enough to challenge eh, what I spoke of before [...] We were married, then there was prison. And so they assigned him to be a pastor for civil servants in the military.

But Bapak looked at me, at me, and what? He couldn't, eh. 'Everything is there, but it means my feet, these...I can't leave the work if these two feet are strong for the work of the Lord, but no! It, it means I would deceive and do what is not good. Oh, so I would deceive, even though there I strive for my work, but no.' So Bapak, one time, Bapak said, yes.

One night, Bapak was praying to the Lord, 'If you want me to become a military pastor, give me a sign.' Because Bapak...the students from the Junior High school in C had a handicraft of wire that they twisted around a knife and a chain. And Bapak hung this up, and Bapak prayed. There was no wind, there was no earthquake, but that chain, it swayed like there was an earthquake and Bapak said 'Thank you [...] I would have become the military.'

Bapak gave this to us and said, 'Look, here is a sign. If it is yes, we must stay [...] Yes, our salary there would be big, we'd have a house and a car.'

Finally, Bapak placed it away [the offer], placed it, and said, 'Give it [the position] to another person. [To] Pastor G, a Batak person.'

And we moved to D. From D, to E, we were moved to E for Bapak to teach, to be the school principle. Of the school for young people. Yes, it was in E.

Bapak George at the school in E, because Bapak was a religious teacher in high school, Bapak George, he was a very naughty child! He liked to jump out the window! And Rev. Ola said to Bapak, 'Your people are too mischievous! So we two trade schools.' So Bapak moved to the high school, and [...] Bapak taught them religion. Achk! [Mama smiles] Finally, Bapak punished those two, that they couldn't pass Religion! Bapak George came with [his friend], and finally they were able to listen. Oh ihihihui!

In that class, the two of them easily overran that class, oh ihuuu! So, yes, from 8-, to 8-, Bapak was still chosen as the head of the dormitory. But Bapak said 'I am not a religious teacher, I am a pastor.' And Bapak asked me, I have received [a letter of assignment] from the Department of Religion. So, I want to be a pastor.' Bapak asked again. When in fact, the letter of assignment had already been issued to be a civil servant.¹²¹ Bapak said, 'I am not a religious teacher, I am a pastor.'

¹²¹ Teachers of religion in schools are civil servants in Indonesia.

So, before, the first [offer], what do you say, the first one, the military, Bapak refused. The second, to be the principle of the --school in --, to be a civil servant, Bapak refused. And Bapak demanded the Church at that time, 'I had hoped to get a bachelor's degree. I must become a graduate.' Yes, then Bapak removed himself from the church office, the church office, eh of the East part of the city.

In that same city where Bapak was teaching, Mama had worked as a civil servant before her marriage to Bapak. She tells the story here.

When I finished from the Dutch school, I was chosen to become a civil servant. I mentioned this before. For the women's ministry? For what? The young people and children for us—the women, the young people, there were many.

[We worked] with the Sunday school. But, there were male pastors whose wives were not so happy with us. We young women. They were always asking, 'What are those women doing for this church?' Ahhhahaha! So they no longer had patience, yes, ok. Yes, it was, the older pastors. We became employees in the office. Ah. So, I became an employee in an office. Yes, with my three colleagues. One in commerce, I was in agriculture, and one friend, she got married, so she didn't work. Her husband was a policeman.

They made letters of request and attached our diplomas [saying] that we would go there to become teachers. Not to Jakarta [where the civil servants were centralized at that time], but we were immediately accepted because they already had our diplomas. Immediately. Now, everything goes through, eh, to Jakarta. Before, no. Finally, it went to the governor's office.

Mama then went to Jakarta and met then president Soekarno, and was trained in small arms for about a month. She was one of a small group of Papuans chosen by Indonesia to manage the fledgling province. Others still mention her in hushed tones. "Did you know, she was chosen to be a civil servant (*pegawai*)? One of the first? That she met president Soekarno?" It means, they tell me, that she was one of the most capable and talented Papuans that was to be found at that time. Mama laughs it off, but others tell me, "You know, she gave up her *pegaiwaiship*. If she hadn't she would have gone very high in the government. But look at her children. They are teachers, surgeons, pastors, bankers, engineers. All of them have finished college, and several have gone on for more study. Her daughter is currently getting her Ph.D." They whisper with awe, "It was Mama who did that."

Conclusion: Adventure and Welcome Collide—Traveling with Papuans

There is a myth about Manarmakeri who took a boat and traveled into the west. As he moved, he brought the Biak language along the coast. Many joined in his journey, traveling and making new connections and relationships along the coast. Although Manarmakeri traveled in the mythic past, the coastal peoples of Papua are still seafaring. The family connections from Manarmakeri's time remain and they are travelers connected by bride price and kinship, all along the coast (see Kamma, 1972; Wospakrik & Reed, 2016)

Mama Koinonia tells me how to travel on a ship. She says, Julian when I took the ship to Jakarta (7 days), I made friends with three women. I was alone. But we made friends, and if I went to bathe, they would watch my belongings. And I would help them. We shared food. We were friends.

In N City, on an island far away from Papua, Mama Koinonia's children tell about how all the neighborhood children would come to their home because their mother had food and would welcome them. The traveling of a Papuan never seems to be a hungry or a lonely travel. It is a travel with food and friends, with stops of succor and storytelling. A travel with welcome in strange lands. Like Mama Regina, who went to Jakarta, and ate and ate, and traveled with Alina. And saw many sights. Adventure and welcome collide for Papuan Mamas when they travel.

Mama Koinonia has lived in 9 places and visited 5 countries, but she holds onto who she is. She brings herself to her travels. She brings her agency to the travel and uses that agency to be in community, whether in Jordan, Egypt, or the next neighborhood over. The journey, the new place, and the journeyer are intersubjective. They affect and create each other. And the travel is always infused with wonder.

Mama Koinonia describes her travel in terms of being a good pastor's wife, which in a Western Evangelical tradition would indicate subjugation. But Mama explains that being a pastor's wife means not selling out to a reliable salary. To illustrate this, she tells of her own and Bapak's refusal, twice, to be a civil servant—which would have offered housing, a car, and a steady salary. To Mama, being a pastor's wife means going to the farthest places with joy and *can-ness*. It means bringing children and opening your home and learning about people and loving them. It means choosing community over certainty. It means risking, but always having many people eating whatever food you have with you. It means you always have many people from everywhere who are your people.

Travel seems to reify the concept of having many people (*punya banyak orang*). Travel and receiving travelers become the shuttle that weaves connection. And even in places where you may have nobody, you find people who become yours. Like Mama Josefina in Germany finding a policeman and miraculously ending up in the church where her people were, where she was welcomed by the songs of Papua. Can you imagine?! Finding the one right church in a large German city on your first try?! Getting in a locked door because a woman just happened to be walking by?! And then stepping past the locked door in the huge cold German church, and hearing Papuan music! Mama Josefina came home in the middle of Germany, even though she didn't speak German and had no idea where she was going! Even in her terror, she lived in wondrous welcome.

The Mamas in these stories are in places they are not supposed to be. And they don't care. Mama Regina, a house cleaner, explores one of the biggest cities in the world. She brings her home to it. She has her cup. She makes tea. She scouts out everything. She washes her clothes and then lies about it, so the laundry lady doesn't feel hurt. Then when she goes with

Alina, everything she sees elicits her wonder. The traffic. The huts in the middle of the road that collect money. The cold cold coldness of the mountains! The trees that are not trees, but acres and acres of the tea! The strangeness of new places does not seem strange to her. Rather, with her traveling companions, she faces the newness around her with wonder.

What I don't hear in the Mamas' stories is fear. Why? Morgana speaks of the travel as a *perjuangan*, as a striving. As something not easy but something that has made them strong, not with suffering, but with delight. Even when being poisoned by cassava. Strangers become community. Poison becomes laughter. Newness becomes adventure. The Mamas travel flanked by wonder and welcome.

There are other itinerating Mama stories of travel that I have not included here. Over the years, I have opened my Facebook and found Mama Tika in St. Petersburg, in Brisbane, in Japan with the cherry blossoms, in Jakarta, even in England posing next to a wax-work Elizabeth II. She brings her wonder wherever she goes. Maybe this is what it means to be a Mama.

Chapter 11: Concluding Thoughts: Banqueting through Terror

Introduction and Summary

In this dissertation, the Mamas have spoken of their strength. They have shared about their dreams, their can-ness, their work, their grief, and their adventures through travel. Their stories are suffused with strength and often with delight and laughter. In summary, then, we have read the Mamas' stories that they told in answer to the question, "Where do you find your strength?" The answers were given in the form of lifetelling (see Cariou, 2016), of story—an act whose very form reinforces and carries self-determination and identity. In order to give the dissertation shape, I, in conversation with participant adviser, used five categories to organize the Mamas' stories. These were 1) I can, Yes I can; 2) Strength and Work: *Berjuang*; 3) The Death of Children and other Tales of Sadness; 4) Dreams and Stories of Dreams; and 5) Where Adventure and Welcome Collide. These categories do not capture all the stories, nor are they comprehensive, but they have helped provide structure to my writing.

I have included the Mamas' stories in as complete a form as possible so that their stories can speak for themselves. I feel inadequate to the task of analyzing them, as analysis can also be an act of colonial violence. Instead, I have tried to meditate upon and dwell in the stories, responding in the style of Weingarten's (2003) "compassionate witnessing." I have had no choice but to respond with wonder to what the Mamas shared. Their strength. Their power. Their ability to walk beside death and still laugh. The "work of culture" (Obeyesekere, 1990) that they do, the work of identity under conditions of erasure.

I remember when I first started thinking about Papuan Mamas, their strength, and the role they play in maintaining dignity, peace, and life. I knew that there was something in the Mamas that held the world in which they live. I was living in Vancouver after returning from three years

in Papua, and an anthropologist who studied Papua New Guinea came into the bookstore where I was working on Christmas Eve. “Only the lonely come in on Christmas Eve,” my manager told me. He knew this lonely anthropologist, and he said, “He researches Papua, Julian. You should talk to him.”

The man asked me, “What are you studying? What is your thesis?”

And I said, “Women and peace in Papua.”

He said something along the lines of, “Women have nothing to do with peace in New Guinea. You should really get your facts straight. Peace is men’s purveyance in Papua.” I felt humiliated and confused. He had been introduced to me as a prominent academic. I am ashamed to say that I let myself follow his words, wondering if my image of Mamas and peace had no place in academia and its objectivity-driven knowledge. But still I knew that the Mamas held peace and strength and life in their hands.

What I want to say, really, is that what the Mamas do, who they are, matters. They are the guardians of life in Papua who hold annihilation at bay. In this concluding chapter, in a brief attempt at consolidating themes and information. I see within their stories and from having lived with the Mamas for many years, the following sources of life and strength.

Concluding Thoughts: “I can. *Sa bisa*”

I have written this already in the section of the same title. “*Sa bisa*” imbues the Mamas’ work and outlook. I will repeat a few of their words here and reflect on some takeaways from their words.

Mama Matoa—“And so I built the house myself. I went into the forest and I cut down the trees. I made them into boards, and I sanded down the boards and built a house. It took me one month.”

Takeaway—The Mamas can and will do what is needed for survival, learning on the job. They are really hard to stop. Mama Matoa is strong. Tough. She can always do what needs to be done, even if she has never done it before.

Mama Viki—“So many people think that we women, if we live alone, we can’t do anything. I always say that God created us—with good hands, good feet—to work [...]. My eyes are good. My hands and feet are strong [...] I know that God always helps me, because of everything that I face.”

Takeaway: *Can-ness* persists in loss and pain. Mama Viki experienced her husband’s taking of another woman because he thought Mama Viki was barren. She was given a category of shame, discarded barren woman—and she chose dignity. She chose to leave her husband’s home instead of caring for him and his new woman. She not only dwelled in *can-ness*, creating a home for herself, learning and excelling in the occupations of baker, cook, and businesswoman, and caring for children and young people who need love, she shocked the community by forgiving her husband, traveling two days to his village to pray with him and forgive him, then returning to the life she had built.

Mama Viki shows not only the *can-ness* of creating a livelihood and a family through adversity, but also the *can-ness* of dignity and healing down to the level of her heart. The community says of her “She is too kind (*terlalu baik*). Too kind.”

Mama Tika—“One thing that is important for women who really truly want to progress/move forward, they must be able to create hard and innovate hard [...]. We must be able to (*harus bisa*).”

Takeaway—The Mamas, whatever they face, must be able to. Mama Tika is known as a strong, determined woman. Her phrase “*Harus bisa*,” could come across as heartless, coming

from a woman unable to sit with pain and failure. Instead, Mama Tika laughs as she speaks and describes how this “*can-ness*” that we have to have as women is grounded in the joy of creation and innovation. And lest we who come to her¹²² feel too small or too powerless to do anything, Mama Tika has multiple strategies to invite us into innovation, into her own methods, but also encouraging us to create our own. If a broken, frightened person comes to Mama, she will sit her on the terrace, feed her spiced coffee and cake, listen, share stories, and give her a small task of creation and empowerment that she can do.

Mama Regina—“I can walk.”

“So, it’s like, if people tell me what to do/order me...I, now, there is someone who orders me, I want, I um, I can’t, um.” She says, while laughing.

Takeaway—The Mamas can say no. Mama Regina is never married. She makes her living by housekeeping for relatives and church members. She expresses that she, at times, struggles with clear though because of her head injury as a child. She was also beaten very badly by her brother when she was a teenager. Mama Regina doesn’t have the status acquired through having children. She is dependent on the good will of her extended family who do not always pay her well, instead using her services because they know she needs food and shelter. But Mama Regina insists on her autonomy in small ways, like walking, instead of riding in a car with a family who did not treat her well. And in larger ways, like leaving them—who she called father—who did not give her the dignity and respect she deserved. Mama Regina exhibits her *can-ness* by saying, “I won’t.”

Strength, *Berjuang*, Work

¹²² I have often been one of these.

The Mamas work. Hard and long. Their bodies and minds are exercised frequently in the striving through difficulty, poverty, and violence.

Ibu Loyana—“This life is hard. If selling, starting a business, if others can do this, why can’t we? [...] I don’t want Cordelia to have a difficult life. Whatever way I can help. I work.”

Takeaway—Papuan Mamas create business opportunities and will try many things. Ibu Loyana worked hard—through hardship. She was abandoned by her mother, but she refused to live on the charity of her relations, beginning work in grade school for her teachers and for anyone who would have her. She attended school and university and tried any business she could, striving (*berjuang*) through a difficult marriage, through the betrayal of a business partner. She has built her home now, a place of safety and plenty for her daughter and granddaughter. She’s still working.

Ibu Delia—“So Papuan women, they don’t sit and give in to what is, but they sacrifice and strive, work to the bone, work to manage in the home, outside the home...”

Takeaway—Papuan Mamas work to protect and provide for their families and communities. Ibu Delia works. She rises at 4 a.m., bakes chocolate filled bread to sell to the neighborhood for their breakfast, cooks for her family, gets her children off to school, woman’s her kiosk, goes to the market to shop for her family, her kiosk, and Mamas’ cooking events, comes home, cooks for her family, greets her children, helps them with their homework, contacts all the Mamas for volleyball, sets up the volleyball net with her son, plays volleyball, brings out water and tea for the Mamas, goes home, gets her children bathed, then receives the Mamas to cook most of the night for a fest the next day. She works. She works to help her family, to keep them safe and strong, and she works to hold her community, to keep them safe and strong.

Mama Morgana—“I am a product of my parents’ striving and this makes me what I am, if I am good, if I am strong.”

Takeaway—Striving through hardship is an inheritance. Morgana’s inheritance is the joyful striving, struggling through hardship, through service, through illness, through movement of her parents. She carries their strength inside her marrow—it holds her up and makes her strong. Her parents strove to keep her and her brothers and sister fed, schooled, kind, and laughing. They strove to joyfully house and feed 10, 20, 30, 40 people at any given time. Their children helped them. They strove to find community in new locations, new islands—feeding neighbor children, making connections across race, language and religion. Their children did this too. They strove to keep dignity, through beatings, imprisonment, the death of heroes who were their friends. They sent their children to put flowers on martyr’s graves. Morgana is the product of her parents *perjuangan*. She is strong. She is kind. She is alive. She laughs the laughter that knows the darkness.

Dreams and Stories of Dreams

The Mamas tell stories of dreams, visions, and faith that give them strength through illness, sadness, loneliness, and powerlessness.

Mama Josefina—“I saw a green tree [...]. From here, I could see those leaves. They are different from my leaves...How many ideas to shape this tree? To make this tree like it is?! But it is from there. I get my strength from there.”

Takeaway—The Mamas gain strength from dreams and visions. Mama Josefina is a mystic. Deeply spiritual. While the other Mamas talk and laugh and tell stories, she sits, watches, listens, and dreams. I don’t know how to articulate the depth of her presence. She sits with others, dwelling simultaneously in wonder and in the physical reality we see. Being with her

means visiting her wonder. She keeps hope, wonder, delight. Holds them. Feeds them. So that dreams survive.

Mama Kolala and Delila—“So he told us to sing *Batu Karang yang Tegu* (Rock of Ages). We sang the songs of Boeting, eh, we used Dutch [...]. Mama was amazed!”

“There are many things that were spoken of. He said, ‘soon there will be a happening in City B.’ And it was indeed true.”

Takeaway—Dreams give voice and power. One of the Dutch founders of the church inhabited Delila’s body, spoke Dutch through her, predicted the future, and invited Mama Kolala and her children and a terrified houseguest to sing. Mama was the prophetess who relayed these happenings to her husband and the powerful church leaders in her community. In her daughter’s visions and in Mama’s telling, they prophesied the world that was to come. The Church serves as Papua’s parallel government, elected and representative. Mama Kolala and Delila, through their vision, participated in the outcome of the election from their home. They had power.

Mama Warinuri—“But in my sleep, I, until this day, it is my one and only, what would you say, witness for me.”

“I was sitting on a horse, upon a beautiful horse. It had been decorated so beautifully, and there was light, a full moon...I sat upon the horse and my brother who died, he held that horse...I talked to my older sister...[she said] ‘God has given you a very good sign, so you must bring an answer.’”

Takeaway—Dreams and visions offer choice in impossible situations. Mama Warinuri had to choose, at 17, whether to marry Bapak Warinuri as her family had arranged, or be cast out of her home and possibly killed with a machete. In spite of the impossibility of her decision, she refused, held out for over a month. She wanted to finish high school. To see the world. Finally,

her brothers forced her to choose. Facing possible death the next morning, she dreamed. In her dream was indescribable light, a horse, a beach, and her dead brother come back to life. But the dream didn't tell her what to do. She still had to choose. Her sister told her she had been given a sign, and she must answer. She chose to marry Bapak Warinuri, but she held onto herself and to her agency.

Mama Bunia—"Yes, it's very amazing. Mmmhmm. I, even though I'm tired, I am ok if I hear a song. Wow! Immediately! I receive strength! All of my pain and my tiredness, it disappears."

"Because those praises give us strength, freshness, like that. Give passion for us to work."

Takeaway—Mama's faith, her songs, her praises, give her both physical and emotional strength. Even when she is very ill, Mama still comes to the church, stands barefoot, and sings praises. When she is housebound and the other Mamas tell me her husband won't let them in to see her, she sings praises. When she is well, she gathers others and invites them to sing with her. When the others are tired and ready to go home, when their voices are hoarse, Mama is still singing. When I left, she was in a wheel chair and weighed less than 75 pounds (She is about 5 foot 2). Now she is better, and she is singing again with her daughters in Church. Mama sing herself well.

The Death of Children and Tales Forms of Sadness

The Mamas face sometimes unbearable pain, death, illness, poverty, lack of hope. Their stories of these experiences share some insight into how they keep persevering through these experiences.

Mama Kolala—“Bapak went and took her body, because she was six months, so we took it from—and brought her home. If we hadn’t taken her, you see, it [her body] would be thrown out. So we had to bring her home to Papua.”

Takeaway—Both Mama Kolala and Mama Josefina speak about bringing their dead babies home. Both are not called by their names. Both died far from home, and their mothers carry their babies with them still, in their thoughts and in their stories. They brought their babies home. I am not a mother. I do not know how to write more.

Mama Koinonia—“Yes, maybe let’s start from there, when I married Bapak... We were married one month when Bapak was arrested.”

Takeaway—Mamas care for many during times of political violence and upheaval. Mama Koinonia tells the story, interspersed with laughter, of how her new husband was imprisoned when she was one month pregnant. How her and his families came to live with her and how she fed their families and all the prisoners on her husband’s pastor’s salary. How her baby was born prematurely and how her mother rubbed ash on his body, to warm him and keep him alive. How her broken breast spurted milk from the nipple and from a wound.

With her mother and father, her in-laws and other family members, Mama, her baby, her husband and the other prisoners survived. It is a tale of violence, of illness, of near death. Mama tells it as a tale of joyful victory.

Adventure and Welcome Collide: Traveling Mamas

The Mamas tell stories of epic adventures and travels, around Papua and around the world. These are some of the lessons that I have gleaned from their stories.

Mama Josefina—“I was chosen to also be a part of their delegation, together with Ibu W...I was like...haaaa?....But really? Me? Truly?”

Takeaway—Papuan Mamas are creative and resourceful travelers. Mama Josefina got lost in Germany, and a strange city, without speaking the language, she was able to put her few words together, befriend a policeman, talk her way through two locked doors, and find her fellow Papuans in one of hundreds of Churches in the city. This may sound miraculous, but having traveled frequently with Papuan Mamas, I can attest that this is pretty normal.

Mama Koinonia—My second child, Moses’s father, he was born in B City. At the hospital. When we had moved from A to B. From B City, we moved to C City. Morgana was born in C. Yes, she was fat when she was little. From C, we moved to D town. And Leila was born in D town. From D town, we moved to F. From F, we moved to another island for Bapak to study. Leo was born on that island. Then, after Bapak had finished his study assignment, to Lincoln City when Bapak as a pastor of a Congregation. Then Ferdinand was born at the Lincoln City hospital. Each place we lived, someone was born.”

Takeaway—The case of the traveling Mamas is not a new phenomenon. Mama Koinonia describes traveling before and during her marriage, for the last 50 years. Her daughter, Morgana describes traveling from her youth. In other conversations, Mama Koinonia also describes her father traveling with the villagers across the sea, to various villages, trading sago and other supplies. Mama Regina describes accompanying her father on months long fishing trips. And of course, there are anthropological texts of the past which describe extensive sea-faring networks of trade, reciprocity, and exchange (Argonauts of the South Pacific, Kula Exchange). Further study comparing traditional networks and motivations for travel with current patterns of traveling Mamas is needed.

Mama Regina—“Yes, there was a woman, a woman who told us to depart (*berangkat*)! Even though I was a maid.”

Takeaway—Papuan Mamas can travel frequently even without having the money for it. Papuan Mamas can be parts of delegations, celebrations, religious events, and (I still haven't figured out how) can travel without having any money on them. I can't explain this more. I've been trying to figure it out for years. I have deduced that it includes family and communal connections. In a culture where generosity is valued, and celebrations are frequent, wealthier Papuans will often pay for their family and community to attend the celebration. Mama Regina, however, is even more proficient at this than most. I find myself at multiple events, having bought my own tickets and asked her, the day before, if she is going. She tells me, no, and then I see her at the event. She usually arrives before me and has acquired better accommodations. I can't explain it. All I can say is that it is very advisable to travel with Papuan Mamas. Speaking of events! One thing that draws many of these takeaways together is celebrations or banqueting. I would like to include a discussion of that here because it pulls so many parts of the Mama's stories together.

I am separated now from them, but I am still with them. I conclude here with a picture of the life they have taught me to live. I didn't do as many interviews as I had hoped, mostly because we spent most of our time hanging out, playing volleyball, cooking and feasting. What might be termed an everyday banqueting. We were so busy being together, telling stories, laughing, talking, celebrating Sandia's birthday, Ibu Delia's birthday, and Mama Tika's anniversary, that my interviews kept being pushed back and back. We were still together all the time, we just weren't engaging in formal interviews. Later, I realized that so much was decided and resolved during the preparing and experiencing of banquets and celebrations. I want to, in this concluding chapter, provide an elaboration of the celebrations which illustrate the space of safety and plenty that the Mamas create for their community.

Banqueting: Creating the World

“He brought me to his banqueting table. His banner over me is love.”

—Song of Solomon.

The merry triumphant encounter with the world in the act of eating and drinking, in which man partakes of the world instead of being devoured by it, was profoundly congenial to Rabelais outlook. This victory over the world in the act of eating was concrete, tangible, bodily...in this image there was no trace of mysticism, no abstract idealistic sublimation. (Bakhtin, 1984, p.)

When I ask the Mamas what they do every day, they describe something like this: first, we wake up earlier than everyone else and we prepare food for the children for school. We care for them first, get them up and bathed and fed and off to school, then we cook for the rest of the house, then clean and sweep and wash clothes, then cook again later. Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) says that the victory of banqueting is a victory of partaking of a world which tries to devour. However, the Mamas not only partake of the liberating alternative space of banquet such as Bakhtin describes, but create it! Mama Tika spoke in Chapter 6 of the need for women to create hard and innovate hard. Create economic opportunities, create ways to feed their families, create businesses, create gatherings. I will describe here the reality the Mamas have created through banqueting and celebration by both using and expanding upon Bakhtin’s discussion of banqueting.

Bakhtin’s banquets and the Mamas.

Banquets in Papua revolve around celebrations of life moments—birthdays, confirmations, funerals, worship gatherings, practices, holiday parties, and so on. In *Rabelais and his World*, Bakhtin notes the importance of banqueting in creating a counter space of being. He writes, “But the banquet is even more important as the occasion for wise discourse, for the gay truth. There is an ancient tie between the feast and the spoken word [...] the tradition of

festive speech” (1984, p. 283). The banquet is a space, not only for celebration, but for discourse, and for truth; (among Papuan Mamas, it is often a celebratory, laughing truth).

Marvelous Mickhael writes,

Behind the sanctimonious seriousness of all exalted and official genres, Rabelais saw the receding authority of the past [...]. In the eyes of Rabelais seriousness was either the tone of that receding truth and doomed authority, or the tone of feeble men intimidated and filled with terror. The grotesque symposium, the carnivalesque, popular-festive or antique ‘table talks’ provided him with the laughing tone, the vocabulary, the entire system of images which expressed his own conception of truth. The banquet with its variations was the most favorable meal for this absolutely fearless and gay truth (1984, p.).

If such fearless gay truth would be created, partaken of around the table, of those men partaking, imagine how much more it would be experienced by the women creating this life-giving food!

While Bakhtin describes the banquet as a place to “partake of the world” (1984, p.), Mamas in Papua, as guardians of life, do not only partake of the revelry and celebration of banquet, they create it. Through their work selling betel nut, teaching, pastoring, selling *bakwan*, the Mamas are often the ones who create the ways to find the income to feed their families and their neighborhood. When they have created the ways to get the income to buy the food, they then are the ones who prepare the meals, the banquets, for the community. Writes Bakhtin of banqueting, “Here we have a representation of highest art/this beautiful image shows us the principle/of nourishment, on which the entire world relies/ and which penetrates all nature” (1984, p. 278). It is the Mamas who are nourishing the world—performing their work as guardians of life in its most basic form—feeding people and bringing them together. It could be said, where man partakes of the world in the act of eating and drinking, woman creates the world in the act of cooking and feeding. As Ibu Noreen says, “Women are the guardians of life. Men hold power, Julian. Women hold life.”

Creating and Preserving Life

There are words that carry more than meaning. Words like love and dignity, extraordinary. Words that begin to paint what it means to be dignified. Ibu Delia says that she what makes her strong, what makes her able to laugh and feed her family and bring her community together is a sort of “unending flowing of love inside my heart.” I borrowed Bakthin’s banqueting imagery in the discussion above to embody the creating and guardianship of life expressed by the Mamas.

When I was young we used to sing an Evangelical song, straight from (this I did not know at the time) that book on love, the Song of Solomon—known for its fertile, food-based imagery of a woman’s glorious body. We would sing, “He brought me to his banqueting table. His banner over me is love.” It was the first time that I had ever used the word banquet. Banquet—feeding, celebration, delight, laughter. Not simply of we who sit under a banner of love and partake, but of those who create that place and banner of plenty, who guard my life through their love! This banqueting, loving, guarding, dignified banner hangs over me as I write.

Ibu Noreen says,

Men worry about upholding their dignity. Women don’t give a damn. They are the guardians of life. Life comes from here [she gestures to her abdomen], the womb. Even those who are not our children, we consider them as coming from our womb. So what do we do with the men? Well we know that we are equal with them because they come from our womb too. We are not afraid of them. We are not less than them, because they come from our womb. (personal communication, January, 2014)

Women are the guardians of Life. This is where their dignity resides. They work. They are mothers. They learn from their mothers, carrying the acts of feeding and caring across boundaries of time and generation. Mama Tika tells of this inheritance as she speaks of her mother.

Yes, ok Julian, good evening. Good evening to those who are listening. Ah, yes [Mama laughs]. So, eh?! About the matter of strength. What is already certain is that strength comes from God, even when we are not aware of it, not aware. But it comes from God, indeed, truly, it is God...And the second, it is already certain that it comes from parents, it is already the foundation from parents. Our parents, primarily our mothers. We always see how strong a mother is in this life. To bring life to her children, like that. A mother, why was my mother strong? But I can't—Ah! That's hard. And Mama also had ethics, social care, social care, that must be passed on. Ah, it's like that. For example, Mama, she was strong in finding food, finding life. Even if we had no food at all, Mama always had ideas.

Mamas travel. They work to find food. They *berjuang*, and they dream...They use these strategies to create life in one of the most tangible possible ways--through feeding their families and the community. The practice of dignity and strength is a creative process of sustaining and guarding life. The creating and purveying of food is a living breathing, symbol (Smythe, 2017). Banqueting is the very act of life itself. The reality of this act of life is more complex and real and vibrant than anything black on white on paper can capture.

I have three cavities—gained in one year. From sweet tea. I went from house to house, drinking tea. At Christmas time and Idul Fitri, children visit all the neighborhood houses, drinking and gathering cans of coca cola, heavy in their bags. Dressed in their best, they pass from house to house collecting delight in a can, *incandescence*!

Banqueting in Winnipeg.

I find that the more I write this dissertation, the more I cook. Ophelia, the daughter of one of the Mamas, comes from Papua, and we go to Lucky Supermarket. We buy frozen tilapia, frozen unrecognizable fish, we scour the shops for fresh turmeric root and some sort of starch that can be used for *papeda*. We buy *indomie* and *ketjap manis*¹²³, Thai peppers, galangal. We look for basil, but we are not sure what the leaves are when we cannot smell them through their clingwrap prison, so we leave them. Ophelia weeps at the lemongrass, vowing to bring it with

¹²³ Instant noodles and sweet soy sauce.

her on the train back to where she lives. We arrive home, rest for 30 minutes and we cook. As we cook, Ophelia tells Farida, Kelly, and I what to do, how to cut, always telling us we are doing well. Even when Farida and I desiccate the fish as we descale them.

We make *ikan kuah kuning*, and *papeda*¹²⁴, Ophelia photographs it and puts it on Facebook. Each day we wander the city, seeing the Museum of Human Rights, the Nordic Spa, the university, but the highlight is our evenings. When we come home, Ophelia orders us, and we create a banquet. Then, weary with our efforts, Ophelia takes a picture of our creation. We sit down to eat, we story, we stuff our faces. And then we get up and sing to Sam Smith while washing the dishes together. It is our celebration. Papua brought here to this Winnipeg winter. Ophelia sighs, and says, “Now I feel at home.”

Banqueting in Papua

Celebration.

Even for the authors of the antique symposium, for Plato, Xenophon, Plutarch, Athenaeus, Macrobius, Lucian, and others, the link between eating and speaking was not an obsolete remnant of this past but had a living meaning. (Bakhtin, p, 284)

One day, I came home, hungry and tired from staying with a sick friend at the hospital. It was a Sunday, the day of confirmation. I walked up the hill to my house the hot sun, at the hour that most people are napping on a Sunday afternoon, and I met Mama Josefina and Mama Delia traveling to Ibu Noreen’s house. “This is our third banquet Julian!” they said. “Are you coming?” From house to house, from Ibu Noreen, to Ibu Xenana, to Ibu Delia, the Mamas traveled eating and celebrating the confirmations of their children. Even though many of them had themselves been cooking all night, they handed over serving duties to their daughters and nieces and traveled to banquet after banquet. Ibu Delia had prepared her banquet for her own

¹²⁴ Fish in yellow broth and Sago pudding.

daughter's confirmation, and was now slipping away to join in the others, freshly powdered, putting me to shame in my sweaty, hospital smelling clothes. I went home to sleep, but the next evening there was another banquet and I attended. (I realized that, living alone, if I wanted to, I could banquet my way across the neighborhood and get most of my nutrition there, only eating little bits of food at home. Many students in the neighborhood do this). I ate three helpings, while the other Mamas sat and groaned, having attended 5 banquets the previous day.

Feeding a mountain.

We live on a mountainside once co-opted by the Allied army. Some of its bones are still buried near (or under) our houses, I've heard. Perhaps they dwell beneath the mango tree,¹²⁵ the one now colonized by one thousand red ants. The one planted by Mama Viki and guarded by 7-year-old Penny. The one which drops mangos onto the tin roof of our homes, sounding like bombs and waking us from our slumber. The one whose mangos feed the community bats and whose mangos Penny gathers and shares with the mountainside's children.

It is the residents of this mountain whom the Mamas feed. They feed Penny and Freddy, children of the neighborhood recluses, who come to all community events even though their parents and grandparents are housebound. They feed Nicholas and Amos, students from the highlands, who stack the chairs afterwards and cut the neighborhood grass with an orange weed-whacker. They feed the 8 grandchildren of Mama Kolala, always thin because all their money goes to keep Beatris, their third daughter, in graduate school, so that she can come back to teach where her father taught. The grandchildren come with their grandfather, Bapak Kolala, sitting on the church's red plastic folding chairs which Nicholas and Amos put up, take down, and carry from house to house for whichever banquet comes next. They eat *ikan saus*, *papeda*, *kangkung*

¹²⁵ Maybe the mango tree grows and feeds the mountainside's children because of the fertility of dead colonists...

bunga papaya, keladi tumbuk.¹²⁶ Below is an example of the creation and partaking of a Banquet with Papuan Mamas.

The Cooking Competition.

Keladi Tumbuk Recipe: Peel it. Boil. Or steam. If you want it to last longer, steam. Then, give it a little salt. Pounded Sago. You can! You can! Use a fork and desiccate it. Then give it sugar. It's about like that. Julian, I'm on campus. I am being called into the classroom. So, that's about it.

—Morgana

To reiterate, the element of banqueting not addressed in Bakthin's marvelous read of Rabelais is the preparation. Women as the guardians of life, as bags that are always full of produce (*inoken faduru*)—women prepare banquets (Wospakrik and Reed, 2016). The process of preparation is also fraught with companionship and laughter.

I am sitting in my room one Saturday morning, hiding from life, when I hear Mama Regina walk by calling my name, with Mama Lonita. I look out my window into Mama Josefina's garden, and beside the vining sweet potato leaves, Mama Regina is walking, waving her knife. "Julian! Julian! Come! We will help Ibu Delia cook!" It is a cooking contest. A healthy cooking contest the church women have arranged to raise money for the church and for the women's group activities and feasts. Moses's mother was the master cook, but her grandmother passed away on another island, and so she rushed the recipe to Ibu Delia, and the cooking shifted to her house.

The menu was banana heart satay; spiced, stir-fried bitter melon with dried mini sardines; pounded taro with coconut; and fruit shishkabobs. If the Mamas knew that I was trying to describe their cooking here to you, they would dissolve into laughter. I am a lackey in the kitchen. The one who slices swamp spinach (poorly) and pushes the button on the blender

¹²⁶ Fish with sauce, sago pudding, swamp spinach stir-fried with the flowers of the papaya tree, pounded taro.

borrowed from Moses' mother to grind the garlic, shallots, fried peanuts and other spices for the peanut sauce which will embrace the banana heart satay. They also let me do dishes. The Mamas story as they cook.

Mama Regina has been asked by Ibu Delia, Mama Regina informs me, to make her renowned pounded taro coconut cake, and when I arrive, Mama Regina is finishing it. She sends me back to my kitchen for some cling wrap, Mama Regina she moves her hands so that they smooth the taro cake. I can only find aluminum foil, and she scowls at me as the cakes marvelous smoothness is hidden.

Mama Delia, whose kitchen is occupied by Mama Lonita, Mama Delia, Her niece, Teresa, Mama Regina, and me, with constant inspections from Mama Josefina and Mama Koinonia, coming and going from their own kitchens where other preparations are underway. As the morning wears on, I am sent on errands—to get a cutting board, a key, a knife, a wooden spoon. Teresa, Ibu Delia's niece, is given dish duty and I am set to trimming water spinach for our lunch that we will eat as we are cooking. Ibu Lonita fries 4 small fish to go along with the veggies. Ibu Delia *putar papeda* (mixing sago starch with warm water to make sago pudding), and we use the broth from the water spinach and the 5 of us take a break from cooking to sit and eat.

The banana heart satay ready, I am sent over to Mama Josefina's house to check the progress of the fruit shish kababs. Mama Josefina is still cutting up the fruit. She has just come home from the school where she teaches. It is about 1.5 hours away by public transport. Mama Josefine calls us into the back of her house. Her niece Dorcas is helping her. They've just finished cutting papaya, green melon, and pineapple, and Dorcas and I place the fruit on the satay sticks ("Fruit satay and banana heart satay," laughs Mama Josefina). Mama Josefina

oversees us, taking away the cut pieces of fruit ones that to me are shaped just fine and trims them, eating some that are not quite right. She has made a centerpiece with betel nut and siri flowers, and as I carry the tray with tricolored fruit down the steps, past the sweet potato garden and the banana tree from whom the heart came, she stops me. “Julian, it’s so beautiful, I must take a picture first.” We are photographed on her phone, and then she moves me forward again, and poses me and the fruit for the photo. Dorcas is carrying the betel nut centerpiece.

We arrive at the open-air pavilion that is the church, followed by Mama Josefina’s dog. Someone has brought stemware. We set the table that our team was given. Dorcas is sent up to Mama Josefina’s house to get the table cloth. We sit and wait in wooden chairs which had been made 50 years ago for the first students in the college. We lean on the desks with our feet up. The other teams of Mamas come by car—with stuffed taro in coconut milk, fish, pork roasted in the earth with hot stones, milk served in fine china, and many more heavenly dishes. All the teams explain their dishes and why they are healthy (As they speak, Mama Koinonia leans over and tells me that team 5 always wins, because they spend more than the allotted budget on their menu). The judges (Mama Tika and Ibu Georgina) walk back and forth, photographing the set tables and examining the food. We come in 2nd place out of 4 teams (teams 1 and 2 are always combined because their neighborhoods have fewer people).

Afterwards is the meal auction to raise money for the church, but it is nap time on a Saturday afternoon, and no one (other than the Mamas who cooked and the children who are watching) is there who can buy the meals for about 100 dollars or more each. So mama Tika calls her husband and a prominent (and wealthy) widower in the community, and they come and outbid each other on the meals to much cheering by the Mamas. The meals are purchased, and the ones that aren’t are sold by portion to the Mamas. My money has run out, so I watch, and Ibu

Loyana bought a portion of our satay and shared one with me. We ate off of toothpicks leaning over plastic bags, laughing. The beauty of the table settings was for the buyers, not for us. Giggling, licking our fingers, tasting the banquet we had created. Everyone fights over the stuffed taro in coconut milk. There is only one portion left for Ibu Noreen to buy, and the Mamas of team 1-2 say they will make more and bring it the next day, Sunday for the Mamas who have ordered it. The Mamas then bring home the food and feed their families. Mama Tika, whose husband has bought one full feast, invites the neighborhood to her house to eat it.

The feeding of the ten little children every day, Mama Koinonia.

When I lived in Lincoln City, I kept running out of food. Cookies, sugar, tea, eggs, rice-- whatever I had stocked up on, kept running out. It was because we were banqueting, I think. Events held at everyone's houses every week—we took turns feeding the neighborhood. I had to explain to the NGO that was funding my expenses why my food budget was three times more than a single person's household allowance. It's because everyone was feeding each other.

Mama Koinonia sits next to me as we wait for the worship service to start. "I'm feeding lunch to ten children a day." She says, laughing. "They all come home with George and Justice (her grandsons) who tell them to come." The next day Morgana tells me, "When I get home, there's no rice left, I have to cook more. All the little children have eaten it." I tell Mama Koinonia that evening what Morgana said, and she laughs. "Yes, George and Justice invite them all after school. 'Come, you can eat at our house.' Yes, if they come, we feed them." I ask, "How do you have enough to feed them?" She laughs and says, "Well, if we have food, we all eat."

Conclusion

Terror does not discriminate, nor does annihilation. And the Mamas of Papua, the guardians of life, create banquets for their community in the face of terror. Out of their dreams

and visions, they strive (*berjuang*) through darkness, bringing their families and communities with them, in the spirit of I can. They do not simply feed their community, but they carry them into their creative *can-ness* of living.

Eben Kirksey (2012) discusses the tremendous agency of Papuans in collaborating and engaging with colonial forces. Such an agency is further discussed in *From 'Stone-Age' to 'Real-Time': Exploring Papuan Temporalities, Mobilities and Religiosities* edited by Martin Slama and Jenny Munro. Munro and Slama write,

This volume explores the real-time, mobile, social and cultural aspects of contemporary Papua, including historical trajectories that collapse notions of the past with visions of the future...In this interconnected age, Papuans may position themselves anew offline and online, as they explore often heterodox religious and political visions, engage in Christian and Muslim networks, renegotiate intra-Papuan relations as well as their relations with non-Papuans, develop forms of resistance in a highly militarized space, and critically question prejudices directed against them. In short, Papua is being remade. (2015, p. 16)

With the Mamas, Papua is not being just remade. It already was made, and they are using the skills and connections of their past which were already there to hold their world together. The Mamas are not only living the “gay truth”, “wise discourse” and “festive speech” of banquets, they are creating them, as their mothers have been doing for generations. The Mamas are using their agency in banqueting, in dreams, in work, in *can-ness*, in feeding and making life possible to face the systems of suppression. This is not new. This has been happening for a very long time.

Further Research

Further research into the Mama’s strategies of strength from a historical perspective is vital, taking oral histories from across the archipelago to trace the strength and dignity of the Mamas. I have only interviewed a small community of Mamas in one neighborhood in one town. Most of my interviewees were from the coastal areas. Papua possesses hundreds of cultural and

linguistic groups, and women in these groups carry great strength and need to also be listened to. The resilience and strength of Papuan Mamas in retaining identity and survival under conditions of annihilation is an invaluable resource for other areas of violence and conflict.

The other core element of Papuan Mamas stories elucidated by the Wospakrik sisters in their research is the connection to the land that is found in Papuan Mamas. Heather Eaton (2005) writes in her book on Ecofeminist Theologies, “a further goal is to support ecofeminist theology, or theologies, to be more effective in preventing ecological ruin, in assisting women’s struggles for freedom and in sustaining the flourishing of all the earth” (p. 2). The structure of the church as a parallel organizing body within Papua and the involvement in both the Church and the land by many Papuan Mamas demands further research into the connections between Papuan Christianity, the preservation of Papuan identity and dignity, and the importance of the land and the sea in Papuan identity.

Mamas Hold the World Together

Color explodes on my vision as I open my eyes during the prayer for the people on a Sunday morning. I see an open-air church, a roof with a star in its pointed center, geckos vibrating with the speakers when the electricity does not go out, painted birds of paradise on the wall, orange and red tailored matching blouses and skirts, hair in a *konde* adorned with shells and rattan, a broach made of plastic beads, youth groups. I am surrounded on all sides, by color—husbands and wives, often in matching Papuan batik (made in Java but with Papua’s cultural motifs); children sometimes matching their parents.

Mama Tika stands after the service. “Our young people are going to Australia, she says, and they need money for their tickets. Who will give?” And then she begins calling on those members of the church who are known to have more than enough money, “Bapak Tika, how

much will you give?” “Bapak Gregori, how much will you give?” “A ticket!” Says the thin tall university professor. Then Bapak John, also a professor from the university, a new widower, whose wife was mama’s dear friend, who had bid on the Mama’s banquets, offers another ticket (each ticket costs about \$2,000). In awe, I watch, as Mama, with her microphone, asks family after family, but only those that she knows have something to spare. And in a society that values generosity, each family offers something. \$50! \$100! And then there is silence as I sit, watching the sea of colors, marveling at Mama Tika’s audacity, watching Bapak George’s toddling grandson pawing candy off of Mama Talula, glancing at his grandmother, who tries to keep him away from sugar, and suddenly, I realize that everyone is looking at me, and that Mama has asked me how much I will give. I mumble an answer, cheeks as bright as the sea of clothing around me, and she continues. In five minutes, she has raised \$2,000 plus two tickets to Australia for the young people from the congregation. She is living her creativity and innovation to make sure that her young people have a chance to learn and grow.

When Mama Lula died, Mama Koinonia went to prepare her body for her last time with her community. She sat with Mama Lula, and tried to hold her up as she washed her in her room with water in a plastic tub. Mama Koinonia tells me the story, saying that she said to her old friend, “Now Xena, we will make you beautiful now. I need you to cooperate here. Sit up Xena. You can do it!” Mama Koinonia called Morgana who called Mama Delia who called Mama Maybel up the hill (who happened to have, the Mamas knew, a little extra cash hanging around) who stopped in town on her way home from work to buy a beautiful white blouse and black skirt for Mama Lula to wear. All the Mamas came to Mama Lula’s house and Mama Koinonia dressed her friend and Mama Delia brushed her hair and they put her in her living room on a bed for her family and all the mourners to see. Mama Delia arranged for the Mamas to bring food to

feed the mourners, and the boys' dorm came with their guitars and ukuleles to sing. Then Mama was taken to a boat, with her Mamas around her, and buried on an island in a lake.

I remember, today, her face, etched by the faces and stories of Papua. Mama lived the darkness and sang. She was a sentinel, sitting in her teal plastic throne on her bare cement porch, gazing, head held high, at the roaring motorcycles going by. At the convoys of soldiers and at the water spinach farmers selling on the street-side because Papuans do not merit market space. At her sons, lost to themselves, and her granddaughters who are forgetting how to smile. Carrying the grief of her land in every muscle of her face, Mama Lula sat and stared down the darkness.

And I think she won.

Attachment

Oral Consent Script

Indonesian: *“Mama, saya sedang meneliti kekuatan Mama Mama untuk sa pu studi dokter. Bolehkah saya wawancara Mama untuk sa pu penelitian ini? Kalau Mama bersedia, saya akan rekam Mama pu cerita dan sesudah itu, saya akan mengetik dan menterjemahkan kedalam Bahasa Inggris. Sa tidak akan pakei Mama pu nama. Apakah ada nama khusus yang Mama ingin sa pakei?”*

Translation: “Mama, I am researching the strength of the Mamas for my doctoral degree. May I interview you for my research? I will record it, if you are willing, and then I will type your story and translate it into English. I won’t use your name. Is there a specific name that you would like me to use?”

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