

THE YOUNG COSMOPOLITANS:
YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTERCULTURAL WORK IN AN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the cultural world of a group of young students who are navigating their late teenage years at Highland, an international boarding school in northern Europe, living and studying alongside many different kinds of people, both familiar and unfamiliar. Based on ethnographic fieldwork, I examine three interrelated phenomena. First, I analyze the formation of cosmopolitan practice in a school in which young people have sustained contact with one another under the aegis of strong institutional norms of intercultural understanding. The school has an overarching intercultural ethos, but little is known about the patterns of practice that emerge in schools that adopt such projects. Second, I examine how everyday cosmopolitanism coexists with everyday social division. This task is important because it involves looking at cosmopolitan practice as involving the development of a pragmatic orientation to life in diversity, rather than a commitment to abstract ideals of intercultural harmony. Third, I track the intercultural work that young people do, which highlights the specific norms, justifications, and practices that young people coming of age in diversity rely on and creatively produce. With a focus on meaning-making processes that young people participate in and produce, I argue that the relationships that take shape at Highland reveal the unevenly distributed labour and rewards of cosmopolitan practice.

for Bea

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Introduction

In October 2010, Chancellor Angela Merkel declared that the German experiment with multiculturalism had failed. Speaking about guest workers who had permanently settled in Germany but purportedly failed to integrate into German society, Merkel stated that “this multicultural approach, saying that we simply live side-by-side and happy about each other, this approach has failed, utterly failed” (Connolly 2010).¹ Merkel’s sentiment was echoed in early 2011 by British Prime Minister David Cameron and French President Nicholas Sarkozy, which heralded a wave of public discourse about the crisis of multiculturalism in Europe. Though Merkel made clear that Germany ought to be welcoming and offer opportunities to newcomers, she maintained that the “demand for integration is one of the key tasks for the times to come” (Connolly 2010). In the years following the pronouncement of such a “crisis,” however, integration in the West has given way to explicitly exclusionary ideas that entire groups are simply unfit for the task (Chin 2017). In Europe, and since the election of Donald Trump, in North America, the rise of far-Right populism and the racist sentiment that it perpetuates has firmly entrenched the notion that newcomers carry with them a set of values incommensurable with those that define the core of Western identity and that peaceable coexistence is impossible.

In Europe, cultural racism is the backbone of the spread of populism, positioning culture as a key explanation of difference. According to this logic, the continent has been too permissive with immigrants, allowing difference to proliferate to dangerous effect and unravel European identity and values. Though a major premise of far-Right platforms is an outright ban on immigration, the parties have won favour among a broader swath of voters by usurping the language of sexual rights and gender equality – once the terrain of the Left – and positioning themselves as defenders of these rights against the onslaught of minorities whose beliefs are incompatible with them (Coman 2015). Islamic terrorism in

¹ Merkel’s more current role as a leader in the migrant crisis that began in 2015 complicates the position she took in 2010, and raises the question of how an argument focusing on the inability or unwillingness of migrants to integrate bleeds into arguments that migrants ought not be permitted access to Europe. Germany received the highest number of new asylum applications in 2015, with more than 476,000 (BBC 2016). German officials have indicated, however, that over a million people have arrived in the country, which Merkel described as indicative of Germany’s *Willkommenskultur*, or culture of welcoming (McAuley & Noack 2018).

major European centres has strengthened xenophobia in public discourse, for it is explained as rooted in a hatred of European culture and as evidence of a “shared European crisis” wrought by ideologically unassimilable others (Lentin & Titley 2012: 124). In North America, these ideas are echoed, and now overshadowed, by a strain of populism that in part fuels its own xenophobia by citing crimes committed by immigrants in Northern European countries like Sweden and Denmark, which have historically accepted large numbers of immigrants (Becker 2019). It also draws on cultural as well as biological explanations of difference. White supremacy is key to this logic, positioning immigrants as invaders of the homeland, seeking to demographically and racially ‘wipe out’ white Westerners and replace Western culture with their own inferior people and values. The failure of President Donald Trump to condemn white nationalist violence (Thrush & Haberman 2017) is seen as a contributing factor to the increasing acceptability of intolerance and the concomitant rise of hate crimes in America (Hassan 2019).

This dissertation begins with the assumption that the backdrop of the ‘crisis’ of multiculturalism and the rise of intolerance has great bearing on schooling, which has been a core sphere in which organized efforts to foster cultural diversity have been proposed and put into practice (Chin 2017). Beyond curricular instruction, educational institutions have been at the forefront of projects oriented toward socializing people, when they are young and malleable, for life with diverse others, capable of living in the interplay between national societies and difference and aware of the histories of wrongdoing against marginalized groups (Adorno 2005; Giroux 1989; Fine, Weis & Powell 1997; Pollock 2009; Rizvi 2009; Stevenson 2012). Schools are test cases of organized efforts to sustain institutions that are committed to cultural diversity in a climate in which the value and very feasibility of the project is in doubt. For the people involved in these institutions, they are key social sites in which the everyday negotiation of difference takes place. In the particular educational site in northern Europe where this study takes place, we see on a microcosmic scale the constitutive elements of ‘crisis’ narratives and, extending beyond them, the everyday occurrences that come with learning, to use Merkel’s words, to “live side-by-side.”

The Study

This dissertation examines the cultural world of a group of young students who are navigating their late teenage years at Highland,² an international boarding school in northern Europe, living and studying alongside many different kinds of people, both familiar and unfamiliar. Between 2013 and 2016, I spent a total of nine months living and doing ethnographic fieldwork at Highland. Despite the current thrust to undermine the possibility that diverse people may live peaceably alongside one another, there are sites in civil society, like Highland, that are based on this very possibility. Thus, the main objective of this research is to examine Highland as an institutional site in which the everyday creation and negotiation of multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism takes place. My aim is to identify the collective meanings and practices associated with an institutionally sanctioned global citizenship and chart the ways in which diverse actors informally enact cosmopolitan principles.

My research questions are twofold, and are rooted in the pursuit of understanding the role that educational institutions play in shaping norms for intercultural life as well as how young people define and enact such norms. First, what are the norms of global citizenship in schooling contexts and how are they constructed? How do these norms provide actors with definitions of proper and improper intercultural conduct and personhood? Second, what is the intercultural work that young people do? How is this work shaped by intersecting forms of identity and commitment, and the responsibilities that form between actors who are called upon to get along in contexts of diversity?

The focus on cosmopolitan practice bridges inquiries of intercultural practice and inquiries of inequality. I take from Noble (2009b), who argues that cosmopolitanism is concerned with an ethics of cohabitation and, on the ground, involves the study of “situated and strategic practices of transaction in specific contexts” (46). I take a pragmatic orientation to the coexistence of a diversity of institutional norms, the forms of dialogue and intercultural engagement that young people do, and the continuing realities

² I take two measures to maintain the confidentiality of the institution. I have changed the school’s name (Highland is a pseudonym) and do not reveal its precise location.

of privilege and exclusion that result, despite efforts to avoid them. Cosmopolitanism offers a useful intellectual pathway through the narrative of the crisis of multiculturalism and the rise of far-Right populism which currently prevails, since it relies less on the question of clashing identities – which is at the core of arguments about immigrants’ ‘failures’ to integrate as well as more extreme iterations of white nationalism – and more on the ways that people spontaneously and strategically cohabit in contexts of diversity and the challenges that arise as a result. The pragmatic orientation of the study departs from the notion that cosmopolitanism is the reserve of elites (Calhoun 2002; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Maxwell & Aggleton 2016; Piwoni 2019; Weenink 2008) or a strictly normative project (Benhabib 2006; Delanty 2009; Held 2010; Inglis 2014; Papastergiadis 2012; Skrbiš & Woodward 2013; Todd 2016; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). It is informed by work that defines cosmopolitanism as discoverable in everyday practices of connection and conviviality (Harris 2013; Harris 2016; Noble 2009b; Noble 2013; Plage et. al. 2017; Wise 2016), as well as the meanings actors ascribe to their engagement with diverse others (Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Ho 2019; Piwoni 2019; Rovisco & Nowicka 2016; Skey 2013; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt 2018). The present analysis extends this work to examine: 1) the formation of cosmopolitan practice in a particular educational institutional site in which young people have sustained contact with one another under the aegis of strong institutional norms (rather than in urban sites of provisional contact between strangers); 2) how everyday cosmopolitanism coexists with everyday social division, and thus neither explanations of idealized solidarities nor exclusion capture what goes on and; 3) the intercultural work that young people do, which is important precisely because it posits cosmopolitan practice as an important response to discourses of ‘crisis’ at the same time that it highlights the possibilities and perils of intercultural life. I therefore seek to offer the groundwork for a sociology of cosmopolitanism as an everyday institutional practice.

I argue that the relationships that take shape at Highland reveal the unevenly distributed labour and rewards of cosmopolitan practice. How do we give substance to cosmopolitan practice and discover its components and conventions? I attempt to keep three intersecting parts in the air in this study: institutional norms, cultural backgrounds, and everyday practices. First, the messaging at Highland is highly effective, and

institutional norms loom large on Highlanders. I was often told that the biggest draw of the school was that it provided an opportunity to get to know people from all over the world, and young people frequently referred to the fact that their acceptance to the school meant that they were obligated to learn to get along with people unlike themselves. From the myriad institutional expectations about how young people must ‘show up’ as members of an international community, young people garner a sense of the values they ought to espouse. The school ethos of openness and intercultural understanding shapes how young people talk and act. It produces a collective impetus to demonstrate a willingness and ability to get along with diverse others as well as criteria of belonging and un-belonging. The task here is to ascertain what these institutional norms are, how they show up as explanations for certain forms of conduct, and to examine how the very definitions of these norms, as well as a person’s ability to demonstrate their commitment to them, vary according to one’s social position.

Second, young people make sense of the situations in which they find themselves at Highland by drawing on familiar ideas and patterns that are shaped by their social position. Highlanders come from somewhere – they are young members of a family that is itself embedded within certain linguistic, cultural, national and territorial traditions – each person with their own particularities and localities. Though life at Highland is new, young people’s responses are in part informed by ideas and behaviours that precede both the institution and the individual’s presence within it. Though the institution is meant to function as a site in which a nascent global culture takes form, this culture can only be understood as an admixture of meanings that are more or less accepted and acceptable, more or less expressed and permissible. The task here is to outline the coexistence of new and old cultural repertoires, at the same time as understanding that such repertoires exist within hierarchical relationship to one another. I therefore explore the contexts in which young people call upon particular ideas to explain their own behaviour and that of others, and demonstrate how these explanations reveal proximity to and distance from dominant norms. Such proximity and distance reveals one’s relative ease and ability to situate themselves alongside dominant norms. It is in this interplay of proximity and distance that a second dimension of the uneven labour and rewards of cosmopolitan practice is revealed.

Third, everyday practices and strategies for negotiating difference form at Highland. If young people are to become members of a global culture that has intercultural understanding as a core feature, it is necessary to assume that they are involved in creatively producing it. This study is concerned with institutional norms and cultural particularities. Yet young people are also agents, acting upon and responding to their environment in spontaneous ways. Their words and actions circulate within a stratified space of popular and unpopular opinion, of groups with different interests and values, and institutional constraints that necessitate the prioritization of one thing over another. They demonstrate an investment in certain narratives about themselves and the project of which they are a part, explaining themselves to one another in consistent ways, representing themselves with the use of particular conventions, disagreeing over things by appealing to certain ‘truths’. Together, these components require young people to act and problem solve. What tasks and concerns constitute the everyday labour of getting by in difference, and what patterns prevail? What about the difference of others do young people grapple with? The task here is to demonstrate the ways in which these strategies reveal the possibilities and challenges that are specific to young people’s nascent cosmopolitan practices.

A Brief History of International Schools

Broadly defined, international schools are fee-paying educational institutions that operate outside of national education systems (Hayden & Thompson 2008). It is estimated that in 2020, there are 11,451 international schools worldwide, having expanded rapidly since 2000, when there were an estimated 2584 schools (ISC 2020). Most of these schools are concentrated in the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. In 2019, there were about 5.8 million students, both foreign nationals as well as host country nationals, who attended international schools.³ International schools range from

³ Hayden and Thompson (2008) argue that international schools do not have an overarching definition or agreed upon set of characteristics, nor is there an authoritative international body that grants “international school” status (17). The variation comes from the fact that international schools can refer to those catering solely to expatriates and foreign nationals in a particular country and, more recently, to schools that are open to (largely affluent) host country nationals and non-nationals alike. The latter type of school is experiencing the greatest growth (22). One potential thread that unites international schools is that they do not offer curriculum of the host country (23), but that is complicated by the fact certain schools cater to their own nationals while they live abroad, such as French *lycées* and German *gymnasien*. These schools

kindergarten through to secondary grades.

International schools began their ascendancy to mainstream status in the schooling system in the years following WWII. The first international school, the International School of Geneva (also called Ecolint), preceded this period, opening in 1924. In the postwar years, however, international schools became part of a systematic effort to secure peace through the institutionalization of international cooperation (Jones 1998). Marked by the overarching liberalism of postwar restructuring in Europe and North America, this institutionalization operated according to a logic of a ‘society of states’ whose interdependence would foster shared interests and values and thus make war undesirable (Holbraad 2003; Jones 1998: 147). Some institutions were founded to promote a shared commitment to universal human rights and democracy, including the United Nations and UNESCO in 1945, UNICEF in 1946, and several international non-governmental organizations such as CARE International in 1945 and Oxfam in 1946. Others advocated for a global free market system whose integrative function would make conflict an economic disincentive (Jones 1998: 150). This last agenda saw the emergence of intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank and IMF in 1944 and 1945, respectively, and many other interstate trade agreements and unions serving to unify Europe, including the two largest, the ECSC in 1952 (European Coal and Steel Community) and the EEC in 1957 (European Economic Community).

International schools served a practical purpose at the same time that they established an ideological agenda that coincided with the postwar drive toward interdependence. With the development of transnational bodies, there came a globally mobile workforce with children who needed to be educated. As expatriates moved from post to post, so did their children. There arose a demand for schooling that provided linguistic and curricular consistency with the national systems these workers left behind and, for this reason, “education provided locally – perhaps because of language or a mismatch with university entrance requirements in the home country – was deemed unsuitable” (Hayden 2011: 214). At the same time, schools served a higher order tenet of the postwar Euro-American liberal imagination: international understanding and the

offer their own national curriculum, with a view to “easing transition back into the national education system at a later date” (25).

advantages of educating children from different places alongside one another. If it was blind nationalism that contributed to the ideological divisions of war, then education ought to transcend national frontiers. If war was fueled by the attenuation of one's capacity to see others just as oneself, then education could become an institutional foundation for teaching empathy and international-mindedness.

While there is no agreed upon definition of what makes international schools precisely "international," the diversity discourse of these schools is becoming more predominant at the same time that it is broadening its worldly scope. One study finds that of a sample of 67 international school mission statements, 82.1% made reference to an internationalist project, defining it as world citizenship, global community, ethical and moral universals, shared humanity, peace, multiculturalism, and tolerance (Hayden 2012). Another study that examines the mission statements of 46 international schools found that 32 schools made reference to an internationalist project, and defines it as world citizenship, ethical engagement, social responsibility, intercultural understanding, multiculturalism, and environmental sustainability (Bittencourt & Willetts 2018). The international component expounds a series of dispositional qualities that are other- and world-oriented, and emphasizes cultural understanding and diversity.

Little is known about the intercultural component that is becoming more prominent in international schools, though indeed further research is needed on just how prevalent this ethos is. This study contributes to currently existing knowledge of intercultural understanding by examining how one particular school defines a formal intercultural agenda and what young people do when they are called upon to enact and embody certain principles.

The School - Highland

Highland is an international boarding school in a rural town in northern Europe. The school accepts young people ages 16-19 and purposefully selects them based on their ethnic and socio-economic diversity and regardless of their capacity to pay tuition. Highlanders – both teachers and students – often reported that the school is distinctive not primarily for its strength in academics, but for its strength in immersing young people in diversity, teaching them lessons that no strict academic calendar can. Each year, 100 new

students enrol. In any given year, there are about 200 students. Highland adopts the International Baccalaureate's (IB) Diploma Programme, teaching the final two years of high school.

Similar to the international school trends outlined above, Highland operates according to an ethic of diversity. The mission emphasizes intercultural understanding as well as dispositional qualities of learning from others, compassion, and mutual responsibility. At the curricular level, the IB Diploma Programme has specific commitments to intercultural understanding and respect, and includes studying two languages, a "Creativity, Activity, Service" component, which involves carrying out projects that have global impact and significance, and the "Theory of Knowledge" course, which involves studying perspectivalism and diversity in ways of knowing. At an everyday level, dorm rooms are not co-ed, but are ethnically diverse. There are five students to a room and each year, administrators allot rooms on the principle that the more diverse the roommates, the better the chance that young people will learn in an everyday and intimate way what it means to live in diversity. There are also many extracurricular activities dedicated to cultural exchange and multiculturalism, where students take the lead in learning from one another and organizing events that showcase such exchanges. During my fieldwork I was told numerous times that the project of living together in diversity is what makes Highland valuable and unique, more so than its status as an IB school or as a pathway to university. It was made clear to me that Highlanders left the school knowing what was expected of them in terms of pursuing an international life – whether they fully ascribed to it or not, they had had practice in diversity in the most formative years of their young lives.

Young people learn about the school through a variety of avenues, which contributes to the diversity of the student population. Highland has stipulations that ensure that students come from a variety of geographical locations, listed here from most to least students in attendance: northern Europe, Asia, Africa, western Europe, Latin America, eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North America. In many cases young people told me that they discovered the school after a simple Internet search about studying abroad. Many others reported that it was a teacher who recommended that they apply. Still others heard about it through word-of-mouth or knowing someone who

attended, or became interested after seeing a poster or advertisement. The school also has working relationships with several charitable organizations and NGOs, and in some instances young people being served by these organizations are told to apply. In the latter case, it is often young people from situations of poverty or political conflict. Prospective students undergo a rigorous recruitment process in their home country, which involves a selection committee that reviews academic credentials as well as social aptitude.⁴ They are asked to write a test and submit their academic transcripts. They are also interviewed and observed in interactions that are meant to give the selection committee a sense of how they will fare in an institution in which characteristics of intercultural understanding and leadership are valued: does the person appear capable of being away from home at a young age, as early as 16? Is the person social, and do they elicit and participate in conversation with interest? Does the person appear to be open to others? I was often told that the latter aptitude is key to offers of admission. Thus, while ethnic and socio-economic diversity are important, Highlanders are meant to share an essential characteristic: their openness and demonstrable promise of getting along in a foreign and international educational context.

Highland has particular characteristics that make it possible to focus in this study on the intercultural work that young people do, including equalizing mechanisms and protocols on campus, as well as the school's overarching liberal culture and the aforementioned ethos of intercultural understanding.⁵ Highland employs equalizing mechanisms that make socio-economic divisions less visible during the two years. The school is funded by governments and donors, and students receive a full or, in fewer instances, partial scholarship that goes toward paying tuition, board, and flights to and from campus, which costs about 36,700CDN per year per student. Essentially, the majority of students receive a free education, hence the rigorous recruitment process. Laptops are loaned to students who do not have one, and money allowances for small purchases are given to low-income students. Students are discouraged from displaying

⁴ This latter point about aptitudes is the subject of Chapter 4, in which I analyze the dispositions and skills young people are encouraged to possess, revealing the formation of who belongs and who does not.

⁵ In this dissertation I do not focus on class and cultural capital as many school-based studies do (Weenink 2008; Igarashi and Saito 2014), but on the ways that young people manage getting along in diversity in an institution that calls upon them to do so. In Chapter 1, the literature review, I explore the preponderance of the former issue in the literature on international education.

wealth in any significant way, and are told only to bring the essentials in terms of technological devices, clothing, and money. It appears to be an effective strategy. It is a sign of status for Highlanders to boast about no longer caring about money and material possessions, or to make a point of the fact that their expensive clothing had been replaced with a much more casual look, since the time spent deciding on what to wear was now dedicated to something more important, like pursuing authentic friendships or learning about world affairs. The few who do insist on displaying wealth are, interestingly, discredited as not really belonging or committed to egalitarian values.

A typical day at Highland is immersive, varied, and long, but is marked by the amount of time that students spend together on campus. Classes run from 8am to early afternoon, when students disperse for their various extracurricular activities. For many a typical day is upwards of 12 hours. Highland's rural location means that students spend nearly all of their time together, either in the common rooms or dorms, in classrooms, or doing extracurriculars together, which involve planning cultural events, playing sports, organizing fundraising activities, or carrying out collective projects. In addition, the fact that students do not have access to vehicles means that they stay on campus for the majority of their time. It also means that wealthier students are not able to shop, eat out, or order in, since the nearest restaurants are too far away. Instead, students eat together in the cafeteria for three meals a day as well as a mid-day snack. At the end of each day, students must check in with their dorm supervisor, who ensures – as much as is possible with young people who find ways to bend rules – that students are in their own dorms at a certain late hour and not in each other's rooms.

Culturally, the school is liberal even as its population is diverse, a fact that will be significant throughout this dissertation. It is liberal in the sense that teachers and students place great value on open-mindedness and tolerance. Young people are generally liberal in their attitudes, conduct, and dress, and many reported that their experience at the school involved an opening up of their worldviews to beliefs and acts that were previously unimagined or unacceptable. Their experiences range from rather innocuous but characteristically teenage experiences with befriending new and unfamiliar kinds of people or experimenting with different sartorial looks, to more complicated issues like sexuality, racial and ethnic divides, meeting an openly gay person for the first time, or

navigating encounters that feel compromising to one's religious or cultural beliefs. The point is that Highland is liberal at the same time that it is driven by an ethic of intercultural understanding, so while there are experiences that feel uncomfortable and compromising, it is the case that some feel this more than others, and have to work harder to make their way and prove their worth as an interculturally-minded person.

Highland is therefore an interesting site in which to pursue questions of cosmopolitan norms and practices. The school has an overarching intercultural ethos, but little is known about the patterns of practice that emerge in education institutions that adopt such projects. While the school seeks to create a more equal educational field by diminishing economic inequalities and employing certain supervisory measures, it nonetheless exists within a particular culture that provides disproportionate advantage and ease to some young people and not others. The school exists in a time when the project of diversity itself is in question, and the kinds of interactions that take form reflect the difficulties and creative possibilities of living this diversity.

Chapter Overview

In Chapter 1, I situate this study in the literature on education, the sociology of institutions, cosmopolitanism, cultural sociology, and the sociology of youth. I detail how this study contributes a new dimension to currently existing research in the sociology of international education, which focuses heavily on class and elite status. This literature approaches international schools as reproductive bases for the elite, who find in international education the opportunity to augment their elite status vis-à-vis global forms of capital and the networks that form within international schools. I argue that the existing literature reduces an emerging requisite of international school mandates, intercultural understanding, to its service to market interests, and elides the theoretical and empirical insights we gain into the work that young people do to get along in contexts defined by their diversity. In response, I shift the frame toward literature on institutional logics, cosmopolitanism, cultural sociology, and sociology of youth in order to attune the analysis to how the school formulates multiple – and at times, conflicting – principles for legitimate standards of action, as well as how these standards enter into young people's practices, neither of which are singularly defined by market interests or

selfish ends. Drawing on these literatures, I outline an analytical framework for inquiring into the aforementioned intersection between institutional norms, young people's social position, and everyday practices and strategies for getting by in difference. At the centre of this project are young people's meaning-making activities, as well as inquiries into how young people explain how specific interactions unfold and justify their outcomes. It also involves an attention to everyday acts through which young people negotiate living alongside friends, classmates and roommates, who are sometimes very different than themselves, in ways that make sense to them. As I argue, a focus on meaning-making activities shifts the focus away from a reduction to material interests, indicating instead a more complex relation of the everyday coexistence of egalitarian intercultural practice and social division.

In Chapter 2, I set out my methodological approach, which involves qualitative content analysis and teacher interviews in Chapter 3, and ethnography and interviews with young people in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. I argue that this methodological approach accesses how formal institutional norms are articulated and how individuals adhere to and transform them in practice. Also, an attention to what people say they do in the formal context of interviews and to what people actually do in situated and informal contexts is a key methodological pathway to understanding the intercultural patterns and processes of everyday institutional life. If indeed the analysis in this dissertation is oriented toward meaning, a methodological attention both to what people say they do and what people do is a key route to the meaning-making activities that take place. I outline my own position in the field and how I became part of daily life at Highland. I define my approach to fieldnote-taking, which focused on members' meanings. In interviews, I took an open-ended approach that relied heavily on narrative and storytelling. The qualitative content analysis focused on documents released by the school, and is attuned to the rules and aspirations associated with what an international student turned global citizen ought to be. I outline how I moved from an adherence to members' meanings to establishing analytical categories, which became the building blocks of what everyday cosmopolitan practice looks like.

In Chapter 3, I examine the formal institutional norms at Highland that delineate the ideal features of young global citizens. Based upon an analysis of interviews with

teachers as well as a qualitative content analysis of public documents that are meant to either recruit new students or inform interested parties about notable events going on at the school, I argue that four distinct yet interdependent norms of global citizenship take shape: discernment, empathy, activity, and investment. The purpose of this chapter within the dissertation as a whole is to define the formal expectations that exist within institutional discourse and to demonstrate the centrality of character formation (Kendall, Woodward, & Skrbis 2009) to an institutionalized global citizenship within school contexts. The forms of subjectivity that make up the global citizen reflect a diversity of values and capacities. This diversity highlights the coexistence of multiple and at times contradictory institutional logics, in particular, of progressive and egalitarian principles and those more calculated and personally advantageous. The analysis therefore contributes to my argument that market interests are not necessarily the primary mode in which to understand these schools and their inner workings. Instead, norms of global citizenship constitute the groundwork for understanding the criteria that young people draw upon to assess their own progress and belonging and that of others.

The inner workings of the school, however, are characterized by practices of interculturalism and learning to get along across difference, not by a set of abstract norms. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 are ethnographic and based on observations and interviews with young people. They each contribute to the dissertation by detailing the strategies and practices for getting by in difference – the meaning-making activities to which I referred earlier. I will outline each in turn.

In Chapter 4, I examine how young people use strategies of speech and silence to navigate intercultural encounters. I explore three interactional challenges in which silence and speech are used: 1) the problem of immersing oneself in cultural difference given the ever-present existence of dominant cultural and linguistic norms; 2) the work of accommodating positions and identities that one disagrees with or finds intolerable and; 3) negotiating the belief that intercultural understanding means accepting all positions as equally valid – equating ‘understanding’ with cultural relativism – and, consequently, where the line is blurred between what is offensive and what is a legitimate, if uncomfortable, line of inquiry. Each of these components are interactional *challenges* because young people take them seriously, a fact that attests to the powerful

ethos of getting by in difference that characterizes everyday life at Highland. This chapter contributes to the dissertation by providing relevant dimensions to cosmopolitan practices that young people engage in. While such practices are often theorized according to norms of dialogue and openness, I demonstrate that silence and refraining from action, as much as dialogue and speech, play a central role in how young people negotiate difference.

Chapter 5 focuses on appeals to one's own culture and that of others to provide justifications for certain beliefs and acts. The appeal to culture that I refer to involves variations of the trope "in my culture," which young people employ to make sense of difference in an institutional setting in which they are called upon to do so. I argue that the appeal to culture provides a pathway into broader quandaries unique to intercultural encounters. I trace the pathways in three directions: 1) as a legitimating device, culture is imbued with authority that allows young people to normalize difference, exhibit camaraderie, and absolve oneself of personal responsibility by pinning one's opinion on a whole culture; 2) as a justification for hierarchical thinking, culture is imagined as placing demands on individuals, and therefore as circumscribing everyone's possibilities and; 3) as a device of antithesis, culture is inserted into narratives of growth, in which personhood and common humanity are seen to supersede culture's authority and are thus the logical next steps toward global citizenship. This chapter presents the ways that the trope of culture is "used" toward various ends, offering another dimension to the intercultural work that young people do. The appeal itself – reliant as it is on the mobilization of a static identity or national culture – normalizes and homogenizes culture into a monolithic whole, allowing it to be inserted into justificatory frameworks for certain acts or beliefs. Though using culture is a shared tool across lines of difference, the differential uses of culture illustrate the everyday strategies that constitute the possibilities and perils of liberal tolerance and understanding.

Chapter 6 explores how young people who come from contexts of political conflict manage multiple forms of belonging and commitment. One of the prized outcomes at Highland is the expanded sense of belonging that comes with an international experience, and the formation of multiple forms of attachment that traverse local, national, international, and global milieus. Yet political violence represents a sharp challenge to this expansion and its expression, since it involves the need for young people

to reflect on painful events “back home” and find strategies for representing them to an international audience. Using in-depth narratives of three Highlanders who provide accounts of political violence back home, I argue that practices of remembering and representing home reflect the simultaneity of young people’s “overlapping allegiances” (Robbins 1998: 250). Through these narratives, I examine how the experience of simultaneous and multiple allegiances cause young people to take on a number of roles that do not necessarily complement one another, express allegiances that are deemed ‘antiquated’ to a more cosmopolitan ethos, and participate in interactions that police for ‘good’ and ‘bad’ allegiances. The chapter contributes to our understanding of everyday cosmopolitanism as involving a “density of overlapping allegiances” (Robbins 1998: 250) by examining the substance of these attachments and their intersubjective construction, as well as problematizing the conditions under which they are expressed in the attempt to represent political violence.

In the conclusion, I reflect on the contributions that this dissertation makes. I summarize each of the chapters and reflect on their findings in terms of the insights we gain on international schools that seek to advance global citizenship and those we gain about the norms and practices that young people develop when they are called upon to learn to get by in difference. I conclude with future research directions.

Chapter 1

Literature Review and Conceptual Clarifications

When I first arrived at Highland, teachers and students alike advised me that if I wanted to know about how young people get along in the diverse context of the school, I would need to pay attention to the spaces outside of the classroom. I became convinced that there were two distinct but intertwined kinds of education going on at Highland - the one provided by the International Baccalaureate curriculum, which involved the work of earning numeric evaluations that would show up on university applications, and the one provided by daily life, where the school's call to be open and understanding toward difference was put to the test, and where young people did the work of intercultural engagement. No one I interviewed claimed not to abide by the ethos of the school, even when they had criticisms of it or admitted that they were not as successful as others at doing so. When I asked about their experiences of living with difference, they told me stories about unexpected friends and the dissipation of stereotypes, of personal grievances and affronts, about moments when they caused someone else's discomfort and what they learned to do better or why they believed that the discomfort was unwarranted in the first place. This told me to pay attention to two things: there was something to learn from the attempts to engage in difference, and that there were inequalities that appeared in such attempts.

Young people's recourse to such stories highlights the need to develop a conceptual and methodological framework for investigating how young people engage with and make sense of the intercultural work that they are called upon to do. To build this framework, I draw on literatures in the sociology of education, the sociology of organizations, cultural sociology, and cosmopolitanism. To recall, in the introduction, I outlined the fact that I base my analysis on three intersecting parts: institutional norms, the diverse social positions of the young people at Highland, and the everyday labour of getting by in and through difference. Using the aforementioned literatures, I argue that

the practices that take shape at Highland are a product of these intersecting parts. Together these elements characterize the nascent global culture that young people collectively create and participate in, a claim that places meaning-making processes at the centre of this analysis (Lamont 2000; Spillman 2020; Vaisey 2009). Meaning-making is attuned to the processes by which values, beliefs, evaluations, and norms that guide thought and action develop and are contested. It is attentive to iterations of shared meanings – the patterned ways in which people come to agreements – as well as to those that generate inequality and conflict (Spillman 2020: 13). Meaning-making processes are central to understanding how organizations, like schools, create norms of belonging that individuals use to understand what is expected of them, as well as how interpersonal relationships reflect aspirational commitments to openness and dialogue but also the persistence of orientations to diversity that uphold social inequalities. This task is important because it involves looking at cosmopolitan practice within the international school as including a pedagogical enculturation into living in diversity, as well as the development of a pragmatic orientation to plurality. A pragmatic orientation involves neither unitarily celebrating cosmopolitanism as “intercultural harmony” (Noble 2009b: 50) nor condemning it as a mere abstract or philosophical project. Rather, it begins from the starting point that meaning-making – the norms, evaluations, and diverse engagements with diverse others – is central to understanding the intercultural work that young people do. It is attentive to the fact that intercultural work in the institution is uneven across differently positioned individuals at the same time that it coexists with processes of exclusion and self-interest.

In the first part of this literature review, I outline the prevalence of class-based and structuralist analyses of international education in the education literature. I point out the consequent dearth of practical treatments of intercultural interaction in schools, and detail the need to investigate iterations of the international education agenda that are rooted in intercultural understanding, dialogue, and the qualities of openness and a willingness to engage in diversity. In the second part, I bring together considerations in cultural sociology and institutional logics to propose that what we are witnessing at Highland is an institutionally-sanctioned form of global citizenship, which has at its core particular qualities of the young international student that reconcile inherent tensions in

international schools, namely, the tension between educating young people to embody egalitarian principles, on the one hand, and the fact that they are allocated resources that promote self-interest, on the other. In the third part, I outline the relevant frameworks for the study of cosmopolitanism as practice. Specifically, I highlight the conceptual tools emerging from cosmopolitanism, cultural sociology, and the sociology of youth, which aid in understanding the simultaneity of expressions of association and division: in the intercultural work that young people do, we find the coexistence of engagements with difference and forms of inequality that traverse race, culture, religion, gender, and sexuality.

International Schooling and Global Citizenship Education

What sociological understandings do we currently possess about international education and the social relations it advances? Though the literature on international forms of education has expanded in the last decade, there has been a predominance of analyses of capital accumulation and class inequality, which orient discussions of international education toward the new forms of status distinction derived from schooling in a global context.

Bourdieu has been central to the emergence of research on international education (hereafter called IE). Much of the literature on international education, and the sociology of education more broadly, focuses on the school as a site of the reproduction of inequality and capital accumulation.⁶ Bourdieu's conceptual framework has driven analyses that seek to understand the forms of stratification that accompany the diffusion and desirability of IE, and examining the global dimensions – both material and symbolic – of the intersection of class and culture. Education systems have been central to Bourdieu's work (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Bourdieu 1996; Bourdieu 1988), which conceives of schools as primary arenas in which the production and transmission of dispositional and institutionalized distinctions in the form of cultural capital as well as access to powerful networks in the form of social capital takes place. The school is thus a

⁶ For IE literature, see Resnik 2012; Doherty et. al. 2012; Tarc & Tarc 2015; Weenink 2008. For accounts of state-based schooling, see Apple 2013; DiMaggio & Mohr 1985; Lareau 2000; Willis 1977.

locus for the examination of how struggles over status and privilege are worked out. A major starting point for the study of IE has been the ways in which economic capital has been central to gaining access to forms of distinction relevant to the international sphere (Resnik 2012). The basic argument of the literature on IE is that it represents a new arena in which to produce and attain status distinctions, investigating how appeals are being constructed to attract elites to IE and how global forms of distinction and capital are uniquely devised in IE.

The literature posits that IE represents a novel arena in which actors may pursue and promote strategies of social reproduction. IE is positioned as an emergent form of “school choice” (Ball & Nikita 2014; Doherty et. al. 2012), which involves competition among a variety of types of education, and which has heralded the hierarchization of school forms, where national systems of schooling and curricula are being undermined by the growth of private and internationalized school forms. IE becomes a choice in the global marketplace and, as a rare and costly commodity, is attractive to those who seek to solidify and improve their relative social position. Against functionalist claims that the growth of IE reflects certain needs, either those of middle class, globally mobile, or aspirational parents who want an education that translates across borders and facilitates their children’s entrance into Western universities (Bates 2011; MacKenzie 2010), or those of young people themselves, who must be prepared for the global economy (Bhanji 2008; Hill 2007; OECD 2000), it is instead examined in Bourdieusian terms as an expression of inequality, unevenly distributed and unevenly used across groups and space. Scholars have outlined how the promotion of IE (Doherty 2009; Whitehead 2005) capitalizes on the idea of choice by drawing on the logics of competitive advantage in a global context where the savvy/privileged few can opt-out of national education systems in favour of global alternatives (Kim & Mobernd 2019; Waters 2012). Here the International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum is a most central asset. As an institutionalized form of capital (Bourdieu 1986), the IB diploma acts as material evidence of the dispositions – linguistic skill, flexibility, and international mindedness – that constitute the requisites of transnational access and mobility (Cambridge 2002). Importantly, economic capital is needed to access the cultural capital offered through IE, which has meant the overrepresentation of middle classes and elites in IE (Igarashi & Saito 2014).

Other research investigates actors who pursue IE, and argue that such actors engage in a global iteration of competitive credentialization, and thus in new kinds of capital accumulation practices. Attending an international school is one practice, but there are an array of practices that promise distinction: studying within the context of the rigour and prestige of the IB (Keßler et. al. 2015; Culross & Tarver 2007); gaining access to an international network of organizations, friends, and future colleagues that indicates one's participation in a "transnational" culture (Brooks & Waters 2010; Moore 2012); learning one or more "economically useful" languages (Marshall 2011: 418; Song 2003); and studying and volunteering abroad, which indicate an aptitude for international service and the enculturation experiences it implies (Brooks, Waters & Pimlott-Wilson 2012; Baillie-Smith & Laurie 2011; Zemach-Bersin 2012).

From these practices, we have seen the proliferation of kinds of capital, including cosmopolitan capital (Igarashi & Saito 2014; Weenink 2008), reputational capital (Potter & Hayden 2004), international capital (Aguiar & Noguiera 2012), mobility capital (Brooks & Waters 2010) and intercultural capital (Resnik 2012), which are analyzed as material and symbolic expressions of one's achievements and skills, and which reproduce inequality because they can be converted into economic capital vis-à-vis powerful positions in global economies (Resnik 2012: 304).

Postcolonial critiques examine how the pursuit of IE signals the intersection of Eurocentrism and elite status in the global South and in Asian countries, where IE is growing most rapidly among the burgeoning middle classes (Gardner-McTaggart 2016; Tarc & Tarc 2015). IE therefore becomes the basis for exclusion in ways that have local, national, and global repercussions, not only reproducing inequalities and symbolic relationships between existing classes, but galvanizing new class cultures and hierarchies (for instance, in the case of the emergent middle classes of the global South or in the ways that IE attracts a new subsection of aspirational classes [see Weenink 2008]).

My data suggest that there is a globally-oriented project of intercultural dialogue and understanding at Highland that informs its daily life, a project that shares affinities with but is not reducible to strategic self-interest in the reproduction of social relations and capital accumulation. In the literature, globally-oriented forms of education are most often captured by the term "global citizenship education" (hereafter GCE). As Cambridge

and Thompson (2004) point out, there is a strong tradition of GCE within IE, comprised of pedagogical orientations to cross-cultural dialogue, mutual understanding, and fostering commitment to an international community. Yet, when placed in the context of my inquiry, which is attuned to young people's everyday work of intercultural engagement, two limitations of this literature become clear.

First, the dominance of class inequality that characterizes the focus of the IE literature extends to GCE, which is positioned as set against and hollowed out by the processes of commodification and marketization outlined above (Marshall 2010; Bates 2011; Gilbertson 2016; Tarc 2009; Rizvi 2009; Weenink 2008). For individuals, having studied in contexts of GCE becomes a marketable quality, and given that GCE is analyzed as affecting a series of high status signals and new iterations of elite status, it implies the subsumption of its more critical and egalitarian expressions to class reproduction. For organizations (i.e. schools), being aligned with GCE implies a certain cachet, an ability to access social capital and adapt to the social reproduction strategies of privileged classes. The organization itself is therefore explicable through the singular logic of the market, a point I return to in more detail in the following section on research that examines multiple institutional logics. GCE, like IE more generally, is reduced to its function as a mode of social reproduction and, consequently, the human relationships that are implied in values like intercultural understanding and dialogue are effectively reduced to forms of distinction or elided altogether. My study seeks to address the fact that more can be gleaned about globally-oriented education schemas by analyzing the norms of GCE in particular educational contexts as well as the people who define and take up these norms. Doing so positions the young people in this study as agents who negotiate and struggle over these tenets, rather than individuals who are singularly self-interested in gaining marketable skills.

Second, models of GCE tend to remain just that – *models* – and in this way a large subset of literature is based on abstract approaches that define what GCE ought to look like. A host of studies abound here, which align education with normative approaches to global citizenship: social justice pedagogies that address colonial histories and nationalist atrocities (de Andreotti 2014; Stevenson 2012); developmental models of sustainability (Huckle & Wals 2015; Grunsell 2004; Oxfam 2015); universalistic approaches to

common humanity beyond the nation (Roth 2007); and “cosmopolitan learning” of the aptitudes and social formations that global interdependence entails (Rizvi 2009). Here, the issue is a call for learning that is “cosmopolitan” in the absence of a grounded and pragmatic analysis, and a systematic effort to account for how GCE is actually done by people and institutions that, like Highland, are more explicitly focused on the egalitarian possibilities that GCE has to offer. This dissertation takes seriously the call for learning that is cosmopolitan, but adds to the literature by investigating the situated practices to which it gives rise. If, as I outlined in the introduction of this dissertation, educational institutions play an important role in addressing the surge of parochialism and insularity and socializing people into a life of global interconnectivity, a practical analysis is needed of the real challenges facing institutions that seek to implement GCE.

In the next sections, I draw on literatures in the sociology of organizations, cosmopolitanism, cultural sociology, and the sociology of youth to demonstrate that the study of what goes on in the sphere of international education reveals, contra the work on IE and GCE, that cosmopolitan practice ought not be abstracted as “intercultural harmony.” Rather, a contribution of this dissertation is rooted in its attention to *practices*. Because they are situated, cosmopolitan practices are uneven, require more labour from some than others, and do not exist separately from interactions in which social divisions take hold. There are ways to study international education outside of a singular focus on social reproduction, namely, through the norms it espouses on and the institutional supports it receives, which is the subject of Chapter 3. It is also necessary to study it in more pragmatic ways than abstract schemas allow, namely, through the everyday labour it involves and the practices to which it is tied, which is the concern of Chapters 4, 5, and 6. There are a wide variety of actors who are now participating in IE and in institutionalized forms of global citizenship. These actors initiate and sustain complex relationships that involve, as Harris (2013) argues, working “the hyphens” of their own identities as “members of overlapping and clashing networks organized strategically and loosely around culture, gender, age, religion, colour, geography, language proficiency, sexuality, taste and ability” (4). As a necessary focus of my work, these relationships provide the groundwork for a systematic analysis of the norms and practices of intercultural engagement in everyday institutional life.

The Cultural Work of Global Educational Institutions

Highland is structured as a “space of interdependence and habitual engagement” (Noble 2013: 165), where a collective ethic of getting along across difference is an institutional imperative that serves as a barometer for evaluating one’s belonging in and commitment to the institution. Highland is a school in which values are not latent but explicit, present and manifest on a daily basis. It is thus a space in which dialogue, openness, and an express willingness to engage are ordinary but essential features of social life, and presents an opportunity to track the formation of institutional norms and the evaluative practices that these norms produce.

Drawing on theories of complex organizational practices, I approach Highland as a pluralistic organization in which no single organizing principle dominates the ethos of the school or the actors operating within it. In assuming that Highland has an essential plurality, I seek to address the analytical cleavage left by studies of IE whose focus is to theorize the contradiction between market logics and egalitarian logics that pervade schools and their outcomes. When we are no longer looking for the dominance of one logic, or, in the case of Highland, the subordination of egalitarian principles to those more calculated and personally advantageous, we can inquire about the state of the copresence of principles and actors’ reflexive bearing on them. When we assume that principles coexist, a new set of questions opens up about the specific structure and content of each principle, the discursive and institutional methods that underpin the valuation of these principles, and the situated organizational arrangements that make the coexistence of multiple logics possible.

There is a strong precedent for studying the plurality of higher common principles that characterize organizations, whether it be through the lens of logics (Friedland & Alford 1991), heterarchies (Lamont 2012), or multiple and overlapping orders of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006). Recent organizational research has taken up Friedland and Alford’s (1991) institutional logics framework and Boltanski and Thévenot’s economies of worth framework to understand organizational complexity as a practice rather than an

expression of the influence of structural determinants on a macro scale (Cloutier & Langley 2013; Jagd 2011; Silber 2016; Thornton & Ocasio 2008). In this framing, organizations are plural to the extent that they operate according to multiple definitions of what is good and right, as well as diverse rules of appropriate conduct, that are more or less compatible with one another and which together produce different and sometimes contradictory forms of meaning and worth. When disputes arise over what is the right thing to do in a given situation, actors make their case by drawing on resources made available to them by these higher common principles, what Lamont (2012) calls “grammars of evaluation.” Such evaluative grammars are used to reach more or less durable agreements when no predetermined consensus exists on how best to proceed, a dynamic that reveals the recursive relation between organizations and actors: when actors draw on a plurality of grammars to advance arguments and produce ongoing arrangements, they enable collective action within the organization and thus reveal and transform how the organization itself operates (Cloutier & Langley 2013: 345). The idea that institutions can be explored from the point of view of the people who participate in them is not unique to this paradigm, and is echoed in institutional ethnography and the sociology of knowledge (Smith 2005; Campbell & Gregor 2002; Berger & Luckmann 1991). But the specific move that I take here – from an excessively deterministic framing of the market logic in IE to an analysis more attuned to multiple and provisional negotiations within a specific context – reflects the broader one in sociology from a Bourdieusian structuralism to the pragmatist position that assumes that organizations are complex and that people are active participants in and makers of their social worlds.

I argue that what we are witnessing at Highland is an attempt at the institutionalization of global citizenship and its central agent, the global citizen, within an educational context. Although Highland is an educational institution, it advocates for an intercultural project more than a strictly academic one. In order to theorize a way out of the impasse currently characterizing studies in IE, I draw on the aforementioned literature in the sociology of organizations (Cloutier & Langley 2013; Demers & Gond 2020; Dunn & Jones 2010; Jagd 2011; Silber 2016) to show that as a pluralistic organization, Highland has several logics – here defined as guiding principles that are seen to offer legitimate standards of action and organizational identity – that run through the school’s

project to build global citizens, which together constitute the material and symbolic norms that define a young student's international life. In Chapter 3, I suggest that such norms comprise the multidimensionality of the young global citizen, which seeks to reconcile tensions between market and egalitarian logics outlined above. In that analysis, we see the persistence of the tensions between market logics that promote self-interest and egalitarian logics that promote intercultural understanding, but through the figure of the global citizen, the tensions are held in place and discursively reconciled. In an era in which educational institutions are orienting themselves more toward openness and diversity than exclusivity (Khan 2011), but which nonetheless secure a large allocation of resources for so few young people, the perspective of multiple logics explains how the institution legitimates itself and comes to terms with its central tensions. My data suggests that it is important at Highland to align the school's identity with, and pin institutional legitimacy on, the development of certain qualities in young people. That some act was or was not characteristic of Highland was a common theme in my findings, and as I got deeper into fieldwork I tracked the various efforts to position the school through a set of ideas of what young people become and collectively identify with, as well as the array of discursive and material resources that were mobilized as instances of what it means to be a Highlander.

To reiterate, the primary focus of this dissertation is an examination of the intercultural project at Highland, that is, of the enactment of norms and practices of intercultural engagement, openness, and dialogue. For this reason, though the class component is important to certain characteristics of the global citizen that I discuss in Chapter 3, Chapters 4, 5, and 6 present an examination of intercultural work as cosmopolitan practice, highlighting how certain institutional norms shape and show up in young people's understandings of failed and successful interactions and of the kinds of people and practices that belong at Highland. I turn to this question of cosmopolitan practice now.

Cosmopolitanism as Practice

In this study, I examine what the young people at Highland can tell us about cosmopolitanism as an everyday practice in school contexts. The idea that

cosmopolitanism must be studied as a practice more than an abstract ideal has gained attention from scholars who have found people learning to bridge differences in unlikely places and among populations previously excluded from the designation of “cosmopolitan” (Appadurai 1996; Clifford 1997; Ho 2019; Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Piwoni 2019; Skey 2013; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt 2018), as well as in the context of everyday life (Anderson 2011; Harris 2013; Harris 2016; Noble 2009b; Noble 2013; Plage et. al. 2017; Robbins 1998; Wise and Velayutham 2009). These scholars show that cosmopolitanism gains analytical edge when it is treated as a situated social category, something that individuals and groups make (and, historically, have always made, see Clifford 1997; Diouf 2000). Its pragmatic character is intrinsic to the particularities of places, trajectories, group life, and the interpersonal relations therein.

My approach to cosmopolitan practice is inspired by David Noble’s (2009b; 2013) argument that everyday cosmopolitanism is defined by an “ethics of cohabitation” (2009b: 46). Noble’s research preserves the value of the ethical foundations of cosmopolitanism by retrieving it from its overly philosophical iterations (Appiah 2006), recognizing that it need not be treated primarily as a “moral discourse” but as the development of “protocols for negotiating differences, [...] obligations, and reciprocities that facilitate an ongoing intercultural interaction” (Noble 2009b: 62-63). This is important for my research because it accounts for the fact that the young people in this study are interacting in an institutional context that has the ethos of openness and intercultural understanding at its core. This ethos produces both an authoritative *ought* in terms of how young people should behave and a strong personal commitment to demonstrate one’s belonging in the institution vis-à-vis acceptable articulations of intercultural interaction.⁷

At the same time, Noble points out that cosmopolitanism involves the study of “situated and strategic practices of transaction in specific contexts” (2009b: 46). Such practices, he argues, include an “openness to cultural diversity, a practical relation to the

⁷ The institutional context sets the present study apart from the provisional encounters with diverse others that are outlined in urban ethnographies (Anderson 2011; Hall 2012), which observe ‘ordinary’ negotiations in transitory urban spaces where people meet and disperse but which are governed by norms of civility and conviviality. The people we meet in this study are participants in an institution that is asking something of them, and who, meanwhile, live as roommates and classmates, and therefore become committed to more intimate forms of care, friendship, and connection.

plurality of others, and a willingness and tendency to engage with others” (2009b: 48). Yet these practices ought not be romanticized as “intercultural harmony.” I argue that because they are situated, these practices are uneven, require more labour from some than others, and do not exist separately from interactions in which social divisions take hold. This dissertation examines cosmopolitan practice from the grounded ways in which young people develop a number of capacities for expressing openness to and actually doing the work of negotiating cultural diversity, a study that involves both the inroads to and challenges associated with intercultural understanding. Because I begin from the point of the contextual, strategic, and improvisational ways in which practices emerge between individuals who are themselves situated in particular ways, my project contributes a pragmatic dimension to the literature that defines cosmopolitanism as an orientation of openness to the world, but which has not delved deeply into the socially-patterned ways that these orientations emerge and are contested (Skrbiš et. al. 2004; Woodward et. al. 2008; Hannerz 1990; Urry 2003; Vertovec & Cohen 2002). We do not know very much about how openness is formed and exercised amidst the improvisations of everyday life in institutional contexts and amidst the trends toward insularity and dialogical closure that underpin the crisis narrative that continues to pervade public discussions of multiculturalism in Europe (Lentin & Titley 2011). The analysis I offer in this dissertation is attuned to the notion that in practice, cosmopolitanism is always in the presence of (but not reducible to) everyday exclusion and inequality (Harris 2013: 3; Noble 2009b; Skey 2012), which together form the affinities and disjunctures that the young people in this study encounter.

To make sense of variability within the kinds of intercultural engagement that young people do, I draw on literature in cultural sociology, which is attuned to sense-making (Swidler 1986; Lamont 2000) and motivation (Vaisey 2009; Zerubavel 1997; Lizardo & Strand 2010). As previously stated, I argue that the intercultural relations that take shape at Highland are a product of an intersection of institutional expectations, the diverse social positions of the young people at Highland, and young people’s everyday strategies for getting by in and through difference. I approach this triad as constituting the core spheres from which young people pull the repertoires, norms, and motivations for action when they encounter and are asked to talk about cultural difference.

I am particularly influenced by the clarity of Vaisey’s “dual-process” model of action (2009), which is premised on the notion of coupling meaning with both justification and motivation, highlighting the need for a sociological account of both deliberative and practical consciousness. As Vaisey argues, “actors are driven primarily by deeply internalized schematic processes, yet they are also capable of deliberation and justification when required by the demands of social interaction” (2009: 1687). I take this dual process as the groundwork for what it means to get by in and through difference: when young people act in ways that come naturally to them, and provide explanations for these actions and their outcomes, it is possible to understand the intercultural work that they do. The dual-process model necessitates an attention to “routine moral decision-making” (2009: 1690) and to what Lizardo & Strand (2010) call “hot and fast choices,” and thus exhibits how internalized cultural structures show up in everyday life, in what people do.⁸ Young people are also part of an institutional project that has a strong set of norms of interaction, which calls them to account for interactional processes and set boundaries between themselves and others that accord with these norms. Thus, I contend that the intercultural work that informs cosmopolitan practice must reflect both influences. Importantly to this study, literature that is attuned to the diversity of repertoires, motivations, and resources that inform action (Swidler 2001; Vaisey 2009; Abramson 2012; Spillman 2020) demonstrates how intercultural work is socially patterned and therefore produces inequalities and uneven engagements with the requirements of Highland’s ethos.⁹

Throughout this study, I use the terms intercultural “work” and “labour” to refer to the practices that young people engage in as they struggle over and work through the

⁸ In relation to the study of cosmopolitanism, this corresponds to the distinction made by Kendall, Woodward, and Skrbiš (2009: 104), who posit that cosmopolitanism is “accidental” and “strategic.” In the former case, individuals come to possess cosmopolitan tendencies passively, through absorption, and can therefore internalize it in ways that may require little deliberation; in the latter case, it emerges as a “symbolic field of practices increasingly available to social actors – though differentially adopted – for use in multiple fields” (104). Taking from the work in cultural sociology that posits action as a toolkit (Swidler 1986), but also taking into account the ‘internalized cultural structures’ that indicate the importance of ‘hot and fast choices,’ I seek to understand the interplay of how young people learn to get along with one another in ways that come naturally to them and how they provide explanations for their actions.

⁹ Spillman (2020: 48) also articulates the co-presence of motivation and justification: “even though people bring particular cultural forms and ingrained experience as a background to each situation, and these predispositions are shaped by their social position, every situation also involves specific intentions and references which shape culture in action” (48).

differences that they encounter. What young people decide are acceptable forms of talk and inquiry, as well as exchange and interaction, are the products of several social worlds. What materializes in daily life is a composite of these disparate threads, which for some weave together relatively easily and for others represent an onslaught of thought and activity, since the threads involve weaving together divergent ways of approaching problems and relating to others. When I use the terms “work” and “labour,” I refer to the effort to manage the co-presence of more or less internalized cultural schemas, newer and already-existing forms of sense-making and motivation. It is my contention that negotiating this co-presence takes *work*. I am influenced by Hochschild’s (2003) use of the term “emotional labour,” which describes the gendered and often invisible management of one’s outward emotional performance in wage work. I contend that there is work involved in demonstrating and enacting one’s belonging in cosmopolitan contexts, where expectations that one be “open” and “understanding” run high.

To understand how young people do intercultural work, I draw on research in the sociology of youth that considers the dynamics of identity and social division that burden some social actors and make it easier for others when they devise ways of getting by in difference (Harris 2013; Harris & Karimshah 2019; Lareau 2003; Ho 2011; Ho 2019; Mansouri & Kirpitchenko 2016; Noble 2009b; Werbner 2013). This body of research is useful because it begins from the starting point that young people are creative labourers – and therefore agents – who navigate diversity in unique and complex ways, but extends an intersectional analysis of how such labour is shaped by age, race, class, gender, religion, place, and sexuality. When applied to the question of what young people’s cosmopolitan practice looks like, intercultural work as I define it here highlights the difference between those who do not have to labour very hard to be and be considered cosmopolitan and those who must labour to enact the intercultural ethos of the school and be considered by others as doing so. For Noble (2009b), the attention to the intersectional nature of young people’s “labour of intercultural community” is meant to counter the abstractions often associated with cosmopolitanism, giving it substance in the situated circumstances in which differently-positioned young people find themselves. Harris and Karimshah (2019) argue that young people’s practices of diversity involve the symbolic and material practices of “laborious self-presentation” (Harris & Karimshah 2019: 618)

that people undertake to be perceived as members of a group. Their work provides insight into the practices that young people engage in that seek to affirm their belonging in specific contexts. In contexts like Highland in which openness and understanding are norms, the question then becomes oriented to how intersecting forms of identity impact one's ability and willingness to acceptably interact, and therefore belong, in cosmopolitan contexts.

I contribute to research in youth studies by incorporating cultural sociological frames to examine the cultural frameworks that facilitate connection and division. To reiterate, my attention to the labour of intercultural engagement includes the practical nature of benefits and exclusions rooted in race, ethnic difference, language, culture, gender, and sexuality. However, these dynamics emerge in a context strongly marked by the need to get along and live peaceably despite divisions. Thus, in order to account for the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in such a context, the analysis must be attuned to the formation of complex pathways to their achievement: as we will see, being overtly prejudiced is grounds for exclusion from social and institutional life and for this reason, it is expressed in implicit, less overt, ways. Lamont (2000) argues that cultural sociology is a useful tool for studying inequality because it directs the analysis less toward focusing, for instance, on racism per se than on the "broad cultural frameworks that facilitate it, and those used to respond to it" (Lamont 2000: 604; see also Spillman 2020). Lamont's work is useful because it demonstrates that racism and anti-racism are driven by moral and market arguments, which are used to create boundaries between groups (Lamont 2000; see also Lamont et. al. 2016; Denis 2020; Rawls & Duck 2020). In this frame, inequality has cultural dimensions, and thus racism, xenophobia, intolerance, as well as efforts to demonstrate egalitarian attitudes, can be understood vis-à-vis the meaning-making processes that constitute them and make them durable. Spillman (2000) explains that inequality is articulated through cognitive categories and schemas as well as interaction, and understanding how inequality works involves an investigation into the extent to which these are more or less shared and more or less contested.

Using this attention to meaning-making, I focus on *how* racism and other forms of marginalization and exclusion form and are made to make sense at Highland. The analysis seeks to identify and analyze the frames and practical strategies that young

people in particular devise for getting by and through difference. A cultural sociological analysis of young people is therefore attuned to the spontaneous and social labour of creating intercultural community at Highland, rooted in the “hot and fast” decision-making processes of managing diversity as well as the performative and patterned work that young people do to show that they belong and are committed to the ethos of the school. I draw on research that studies everyday forms of marginalization and their intersections in contexts of diversity (Byrne 2006; Denis 2015; Frankenburg 1993; Hall 2012; Ho 2011; Ortega 2006; Wise 2016a). These studies find that there is “flexibility” to modes of racialization that make them more subtle and therefore more durable (Byrne 2006; Denis 2015; Denis 2020), which points to the need to examine how they meld in ‘commonsense’ ways with gender, class, and ethnic divisions; that in the ethnographic examination of people living in difference, we find “improvisation” and “insularity,” as people reveal themselves as both “spontaneously open to differences and simultaneously able to verbalise prejudiced views” (Hall 2012: 15; Harris 2013); that white, Western ignorance of the experiences and perspectives of people of colour can be “loving” (Ortega 2006), which demonstrates the importance of how certain practices may be well-intentioned but serve to perpetuate structural advantage (Frankenburg 1993).

Harris (2013) argues that while young people are often the focus of hopes for positive change with regard to diversity, “they are rarely seen as civic actors, creative agents or multicultural citizens in their own right” (5) who live out and find ways to manage complex realities. I take seriously young people’s creative labour and intentions (that is, the reports they give about what they mean when they do certain things) while also offering a critical account of the interactions themselves, which demonstrate the quotidian instantiations of exclusion that are present in “good intentions” (see Spillman 2020: 52). Like the work outlined above, which finds flexibility and subtlety in the formation of social divisions as well as the simultaneity of ‘loving’ and ‘insular’ modes of expression, this study acknowledges that while young people are attempting to engage in intercultural work for the first time (Harris & Karimshah 2019; Harris 2013) they are nonetheless perpetuating forms of exclusion and bridging difference that precede the specificity of their practices. For the young people themselves, the processes I outline in this study are in nascent form, and therefore must be read as always in relation to

processes of habituation (Noble 2013) into cosmopolitan practices, which involve making mistakes, improvising, and working and reworking boundaries of acceptable modes of action.

Throughout my fieldwork I observed as young people met challenges of cultural difference, whether it was the call to be open to others (Chapter 4), the tendency to use one's own culture and that of others to make certain claims and justify certain positions (Chapter 5), or the effort to maintain multiple allegiances to near and distant places and identities in times of crisis (Chapter 6). I observed them *engage*, as they sprang to action in ways that felt right to them while contending with pressures to think and behave in particular ways. Most importantly, I observed how the labour of these actions and explanations came more easily for some than for others, demonstrating what is a key contribution of this dissertation: the uneven labour of cosmopolitan practice that is borne of a commitment to institutional norms, young people's social identities, and the everyday practice and strategies for getting by in difference.

Chapter 2

Methodology

Ethnography and Qualitative Content Analysis

I employ two methods in different parts of this dissertation: ethnography, which includes observation and interviews, and qualitative content analysis. I elaborate on each in later sections, but will discuss here the usefulness of employing these methods in this research. Because this dissertation is based on the study of: 1) an educational institution and the norms it espouses and; 2) the ways in which young people define and informally enact particular norms in the intercultural work that they do, I use these two methods to access formal meanings at the level of the institution and informal or practical meanings at the level of everyday life. Qualitative content analysis is a useful tool to identify institutional norms and how they create particular expectations for young people to espouse, challenge, or reject, and ethnographic fieldwork details how norms appear and are taken up in the talk and practice of everyday school life.

Qualitative content analysis is a method for systematically describing the meanings that are present in data (Schreier 2014; Mayring 2004). I use qualitative content analysis of documents in Chapter 3, in which I examine the institutional norms at Highland that delineate ideal features of young global citizens. Qualitative content analysis is a useful tool for analyzing the documents I collected at Highland because it is a method for building categories that apply across disparate passages of texts, and therefore is attuned to “latent and more context-dependent meaning” (Schreier 2014: 173) rather than counting specific words that appear in a text. Highland is less likely to name in strict and certain terms who belongs and who does not; rather, the institution establishes such boundaries in implicit ways. In the case of the dispositional qualities I explore in Chapter 3, qualitative content analysis is useful because the four dispositions I describe are interpretive categories that capture norms that are made meaningful vis-à-vis narratives that celebrate certain achievements and detail the institutional supports that made such

achievements possible. In that chapter I also draw on interviews with teachers, who are relatively permanent fixtures at the school and who are responsible for enacting and disseminating norms of the qualities young Highlanders ought to possess. While teachers do not replicate exactly what is found in the documents, they do reflect and represent institutional expectations, offering everyday examples and accounts of the challenges of enacting particular norms. Qualitative content analysis and interviews with teachers therefore produce a rich characterization of institutional norms.

I employ ethnographic methods in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, which feature both analyses of interactions I observed among young people as well as accounts – via formal and informal interviews – that young people gave about their experiences at Highland. Ethnography involves a sustained effort to understand the everyday interactions and meanings that take form in particular social worlds, which necessitates both time in the field and immersion in the group one seeks to understand (Emerson et. al. 2011).¹⁰ I approach observation and interviewing as complementary methodological pathways to understanding the everyday intercultural work that young Highlanders do. As I detail below as well as in Chapter 1, I approach this research as an attempt to capture what people do as well as what people say they do. Ethnographic observation provides insight into interactions in real time, and is attuned to social dynamics as they unfold between social actors in particular contexts. Interviews access accounts of social actors' self-understanding and explanations of events that occurred or may occur in the future. I do not see these methods as separable: the combination of the two offer a pathway to understanding the meanings social actors enact within and attach to interactions, as well as the negotiation of institutional norms in everyday talk and practice.

¹⁰ Ethnographic methods have long been used in education research (Corrigan 1979; Khan 2011; Lareau 2000; McLaren 1999; Mehan 1979; Pollock 2009; Stevens 2007; Willis 1977), and at times institutional ethnography (Smith 2005) is used in particular (Gerrard & Farrell 2013; Nichols & Griffith 2009; Winton 2018). While this dissertation is based within an educational institution, it is not an institutional ethnography. Institutional ethnography seeks to expose what Smith (2005) calls relations of ruling, and is inspired by Marxist feminism. Relations of ruling are textually-organized and accomplished in the coordinated actions of people as they go about their everyday work. As such, institutional ethnography is attuned to texts, like policy and organizational documents, and the ways in which local and everyday actions and understandings are impacted by such 'texts.' Ruling relations are not the focus of this dissertation, nor are the policies that organize international education in general or Highland in particular. I do not examine how extra-local social relations organize people's everyday experience; rather I examine how particular norms, practices, and inequalities form and are reproduced when young people are called upon to get along with those who are different.

Data Inventory

Between 2013 and 2016, I spent a total of nine months living and doing ethnographic fieldwork at Highland. Over the course of these months, I spent approximately 8 to 10 hours each weekday with participants, eating most meals with them in the cafeteria, attending their classes, as well as participating in after school activities and spending time in their dorms in the evening. These weekday hours include the time I spent interviewing them, but because of busy school schedules, I often conducted interviews on the weekend. During fieldwork, I adhered closely to members' meanings and folk explanations of everyday life, a process that avoids the imposition of exogenous meaning on the context of study. My observations and fieldnotes include any students present during my fieldwork and all but one teacher (who opted out of the study). I conducted interviews with 43 students (21 boys and 22 girls; 15 of whom I interviewed more than once), and 16 teachers. The interviews were thematic and open-ended, and included a strong component of narrative and storytelling. Interviews lasted between 1.5 and 3 hours. I elicited explanations and stories on four thematics: institutional norms and expectations; experiences with diversity and cultural exchange; modes of self-representation; and conceptions of responsibility and obligation. When the fieldwork was complete, I shifted away from pursuing members' meanings, and coded and analyzed by taking what I had learned in the field as instantiations of cosmopolitan practice. To achieve this, I moved between data and theory, which allowed me to develop an argument about the features of cosmopolitan practice, and to advance an analysis of cosmopolitanism that is grounded in everyday processes rather than abstract approaches to interculturalism and belonging. I also conducted a qualitative content analysis of 29 documents, (totaling 455 pages, with each document averaging 15.5 pages) in order to chart the characteristic features of young global citizens.

Sample Selection

In any given year, Highland contains a high proportion, just over a third of all students, of Scandinavians, but also accepts students from Europe, Africa, Asia, South America and the Middle East, and North America (the fewest students come from North America). Students are aged 16-19. In Table 1, below, I detail the names and home countries of the people who appear in this study. I made sure to have a representative sample of boys and girls as well as young people from each region, but the Scandinavian students constitute the biggest presence in the sample. Indeed, part of what is interesting about this study is the way in which Highlanders negotiate the fact that the school is predominantly Western and European, both in terms of its culture and the majority population at the school. The unequal labour that young people who originate from outside these contexts is part of the story, essential to the patterns of privilege and disadvantage that take form. Everyone I spoke to was proficient enough in English that there arose no translation issues. I also made participants aware that they could retract anything they wanted.

<i>Participants</i>				
Boys (25)	Home Country	Girls (27)	Home Country	Teachers (15)¹¹
<i>Abelino</i>	Ecuador	<i>Adriana</i>	Venezuela	<i>Alex</i>
<i>Adil</i>	Jordan	<i>Amanda</i>	Sweden	<i>Charan</i>
<i>Ali</i>	Algeria	<i>Angie</i>	Uganda	<i>Duke</i>
<i>Dinh</i>	Vietnam	<i>Ayelet</i>	Israel	<i>Lucia</i>
<i>Dote</i>	India	<i>Beate</i>	Germany	<i>Gilles</i>
<i>Ernesto</i>	Bolivia	<i>Diana</i>	Belarus	<i>Gunvor</i>
<i>Francisco</i>	Colombia	<i>Dominique</i>	Côte d'Ivoire	<i>Isabella</i>
<i>Hamza</i>	Libya	<i>Dysis</i>	Greece	<i>Luka</i>
<i>Jan</i>	Poland	<i>Elenor</i>	Denmark	<i>Mathis</i>
<i>Jonny</i>	Norway	<i>Fen</i>	China	<i>Michael</i>
<i>Lionel</i>	Ghana	<i>Harriet</i>	England	<i>Ross</i>
<i>Loke</i>	Sweden	<i>Janna</i>	Sweden	<i>Sharmila</i>
<i>Malik</i>	Lebanon	<i>Kath</i>	England	<i>Stefania</i>
<i>Marinder</i>	Maldives	<i>Lois</i>	United States	<i>Tabitha</i>
<i>Nils</i>	Denmark	<i>Luisa</i>	Argentina	<i>Thomas</i>
<i>Oleksander</i>	Ukraine	<i>Mari</i>	Norway	

¹¹ I do not include the teachers' countries of origin in order to maintain the confidentiality of the institution. Because the teachers are a relatively permanent fixture of the school and are integral to its public face (teachers regularly appear in advertisements and social media updates, for instance), divulging where teachers come from may compromise the school's anonymity.

<i>Olle</i>	Denmark	<i>Monifa</i>	Swaziland
<i>Omar</i>	Jordan	<i>Nijah</i>	Yemen
<i>Oscar</i>	Denmark	<i>Noor</i>	Egypt
<i>Peter</i>	Uganda	<i>Petra</i>	Norway
<i>Tomas</i>	El Savador	<i>Reema</i>	Yemen
<i>Sami</i>	Madagascar	<i>Safiya</i>	Sahrawi
<i>Simon</i>	Lesotho	<i>Sasha</i>	Norway
<i>Vasily</i>	Russia	<i>Tuva</i>	Norway
<i>William</i>	Denmark	<i>Una</i>	Germany
		<i>Yael</i>	Israel
		<i>Yifun</i>	China

Table 1: This table contains the names of students who are either directly quoted or mentioned in the study and their home countries. It includes the 43 students and 15 teachers I interviewed. All names are pseudonyms.

“Who Are You and What Are You Doing Here?” A Note on Positionality

I borrow the subtitle above from Jessica Calarco (2018), since it captures two distinct challenges of doing fieldwork. The first involves what ethnographers choose to say when participants question the ethnographer’s intent, wanting to know why someone new is hanging around and what sorts of questions they want answers to. At Highland, I was in a context where the pool of potential participants was finite – the school has about 200 students in any given year, and the number of teachers and administrators remained consistent year to year. In such a small community, my presence was easily noted and word would get around quickly about what I was asking, so I answered the question in a general but inviting way: “I want to know how young people learn to get along with people who are different.” Akin to an elevator pitch, the statement both invited initial conversations (for it was often in these initial encounters that people would say something interesting that I would follow up on later) and attracted participants to the project, eliciting, I hoped, a desire to be observed and included in the study.

The second challenge requires that we interpret the quotation as a statement of suspicion or hesitation. Doing fieldwork in schools is notoriously difficult (Calarco 2018; Lareau 2000), both in terms of gaining access to schools¹² and assuring teachers that the ethnographer is not there to criticize their teaching or air the dirty laundry of the school.

¹² Except for the postsecondary context, school-based ethnographies involve minors and thus the requirement to gain permission from administrators and parents, who themselves are hesitant to allow an outsider in.

In the context of this study, I was lucky. A friend of mine from graduate school is a Highland alumnus. I wrote a letter stating my intentions and he offered to send the letter to an old teacher at Highland with whom he was still in contact, who then forwarded the letter to a school administrator. I was surprised to find that the response was immediately positive, and during my first meeting over Skype with an administrator, they indicated that they were keen to have someone study the intercultural component of the school. I was told that they had had researchers come in before, but no one who wanted to live at the school and examine everyday life. During the fieldwork itself teachers and administrators alike were kind and generous, inviting me into their homes, sharing time beyond interviews and formal events, and rarely pushed back on questions but answered with interest and sincerity.

Young people wanted me to spend time with them and not “use” them for information specific to the requirements of my study or, more rarely, “tell on” them. They would often comment on the fact that much of my time was spent just hanging out with them, that I was genuine with my inquiries about how they were doing and that I was patient when listening to their responses. What young people at Highland seemed to value most was my ability to be informal. One boy told me that I had been “doing well” interviewing him until I mentioned, two hours in, that the interview was almost over. What I thought was a polite indication that I was not going to take up much more of his time was for him a crash reminder that we were not having a chat, but engaged in an interaction that served an instrumental purpose.¹³

Overall, it worked best to shed the formalities of my role as a researcher and to take on a variety of more intimate roles. In terms of my social position (as a white, English-speaking, Western woman), my gender and my linguistic background permitted me to take on such roles in a seamless way. Among young people, I was perceived as an approachable and ‘cool’ big sister, simultaneously a confidante and sounding board, someone to whom they could reveal things that they could not to their friends or teachers, as well as tutor (many were ESL students, so I would sometimes chat with them while

¹³ This excerpt from my post-interview notes details the experience: “He said ‘I don’t see you as a researcher’ – which I think he meant as a compliment. He’s saying that I conducted the interview in such a way that he believed I was interested in him, as a kind of friend. He commented on the fact that I didn’t look at my interview sheet, that I didn’t say “next question,” that I was more conversational and less formal.”

they did homework) and mentor (I was often asked what I thought about universities in North America, and about different disciplines they were considering). For teachers, I demonstrated early on that I was primarily interested in how young people did things, rather than assessing the success or failure of the school or of their teaching in particular.

I believe that being a woman in this context worked to my advantage, as I appeared less threatening and could ask controversial questions with relative ease. As a woman I was also accustomed to the emotional labour involved in maintaining good standing in the field (Bergman Blix & Wettergren 2015), for instance, the skill of being a sympathetic listener to whom it is easy to talk, which precedes being in the field.

Take it Down a Notch: The Pursuit of Members' Meanings

In the tradition of some prominent ethnographers and interviewers (Hollway & Jefferson 2012; Lareau 2000), it is useful to acknowledge the false starts of the research process in order to outline more precisely one's chosen methodological approaches. Like other ethnographers who acknowledge having honed their skills in the field (Lareau 2000; Calarco 2018), I found that listening to the missteps in early interviews is telling for a number of fruitful avenues I then pursued as a result. The first interview I conducted for this study was in July 2013, with Celine, a Highland alumnus who graduated in 2002. At the time of our interview, I was living in Toronto and she in Kampala, where she was working in fundraising and development at an international NGO.¹⁴ The week before the interview I prepared several pilot interview questions (Hollway & Jefferson 2012: 4; Baker 1994) that I intended to use first with Celine and two other alumni, then revise them if necessary for subsequent interviews. I created these pilot questions because I knew very little about the school (its website was sparse and there was little documentation that I could refer to), and there was no way to visit before my fieldwork formally began. If any patterns emerged in these preliminary interviews, I would incorporate them into my study (van Teijlingen & Hundley 2001). I also wanted to test my proposed interview questions, which Baker (1994) suggests is a key way in which to evaluate one's proposed methods and identify how best to reword and reorder questions.

¹⁴ I was going to formally meet Celine at an alumni reunion that would take place at Highland in August, when I would arrive for my first field trip. But for now, we had to meet on Skype late Kampala time to accommodate her workday.

I organized the interview schedule around two basic frames for my research. On global citizenship and intercultural values, I had questions about a participant's understanding of the principles that Highland taught them and in what areas of school life they were most prominent. On barriers and challenges to the realization of these values, I had questions about participants' personal and work life and the disjunctures, if any, between where they thought they would be at that point in their lives and where they actually were. I aimed to get a sense of the institution, and how alumni, ten years on, might have been affected by their experiences there. After talking for a few minutes off record, I turned on my voice recorder and began the interview with Celine:

ELISABETH: One of the things with global citizenship is that it's not often named specifically in international schools. Was the idea of global citizenship or the global citizen ever mentioned at Highland?

CELINE: I'm having trouble remembering...I don't recall if I had heard about it before or not, like, using that explicit term.

ELISABETH: Do you feel like a global citizen today?

CELINE: I think you're exploring the definition of global citizenship because it's such a hard thing to define. It would be different things for different people. It depends on how you define global citizenship, because it can mean that you feel a one-ness of all humanity. Like you feel like you belong to the same type of society as someone from, like, Mali. And I think by that definition then yeah, I do feel like we're all in it together and affected by the same issues. And I think it's a good thing to feel like we're all part of the same family. If it means like, being an expert in all global issues, then no. Maybe when I was at Highland I did, like when I was 18, but now I feel pretty ignorant most of the time. So there's a limit to that kind of citizenship. But overall, yeah, I think I consider myself a global citizen. And then institution-wise, there's no global government, there's no global voting, most of the things we use to define citizenship in the traditional sense don't exist at the global level other than the feeling of solidarity and being affected by the same issues and having to cooperate to resolve certain issues. Feeling like we owe it to one another, I guess. Wait, what was the question again? Do I feel like a global citizen?

There are several important missteps here, which I recognized upon listening to the interview with the hindsight of deeper methodological reading and the practice of subsequent interviews. I developed very little rapport with Celine before putting her on the spot¹⁵ with a question that neither eased us into the interview nor told me anything about her as a person. I began instead with one question that tested her memory and

¹⁵ We had only talked a little about her job and the fact that she might need to pause the interview for a delivery person to arrive at her apartment with a new air conditioner.

another that seemed to test her knowledge. In my notes that accompanied the pilot interview, I wrote that I intentionally wanted to keep the term “global citizen” vague so that participants could provide a meaning for me, which would tell me something about how individuals who had gone through the institution may have oriented themselves as agents within and creators of a global way of life. But this strategy did not work and instead imposed on Celine a number of my own meanings and presuppositions, asking her to account for them. As a result, the interview went ahead as though it was indeed a test, with Celine often ending with a comment on whether the response she offered was “the kind of answer you’re looking for.” Ultimately, the questions come across as abstract and abrupt (Hollway & Jefferson 2012: 26), prompting first a single line answer (“I don’t recall”), then a longer response that both deals in generalities (“it would be different things for different people”) and seeks clarification from me (“it depends on how you define it”). As a last reminder that this interview had not started out well, Celine loses her train of thought while providing what seems like a textbook definition of global citizenship: something for which I do not need an interview with an alumnus of Highland.

Though the choice to devote the first half of my pilot interviews to the explicit category of “global citizenship” was somewhat misguided, it makes sense that I did so. When I drafted my interview questions and research agenda, I was heavily influenced by school-based studies about the reproduction of advantage and disadvantage (Apple 2004; Lareau 2011; Willis 1993; see also Calarco 2018) in educational contexts. I was interested in extending these ideas to the realm of international education, thereby examining what may be uniquely global forms of privilege and inequality. Methodologically, it therefore made sense that I ask the very questions to which I wanted answers (an approach that Hollway & Jefferson [2012] warn against). Celine was originally from Canada, had graduated with an IB from an international school and gone on to do postsecondary education in political science in France and the US, and was now working overseas at an international NGO: surely she had opinions about global citizenship? It was not until I began fieldwork with the young people who comprise this study that I was compelled to account for a much more central feature of daily life: young

people taking seriously the progressive project at Highland, and spending considerable energy talking and thinking about difference.

I explained the problem to Celia Haig-Brown, an experienced ethnographer and member of my dissertation committee. I told her that my questions about global citizenship and inequality were not meeting the challenges posed by what I was seeing. I was confronted with young people who were happy to be there, who reported wanting to be and having become more open, who explored the cross-cultural friendships they had made, and were discovering interesting ways of relating to and representing ‘home’ in a context of broadened horizons. Yet the questions I asked, oriented as they were to examining the presence of inequality at Highland, were not capturing young people’s reflections on these spontaneous and ever-present acts of learning and exchange. “I feel like I’m missing something,” I told her. “They’re very happy. They love this place. They can express themselves in so many ways here. And I feel like my questions are missing that.”

I gave her an example: “do you feel like you can express your culture freely here?” was a question that I had added to my interview schedule upon entering the field in an attempt to gain insight into the uneven nature of cultural exchange. I wanted young people to reflect on the possibility that some cultural expressions are shared more freely than others – perhaps those that do not fit easily within a Eurocentric or progressive ethos. Haig-Brown listened intently to my trials, and responded with advice that shifted my orientation to the work ahead. “Where do we ever express anything freely?” she asked. I understood that the question as I had phrased it was a leading one, with value-laden language about whether the participant “feels free” to express without first asking after the *how* of sharing – where it happens, when, and with whom, for instance.

I came up with simpler phrasing: “how is it that you express your culture here?” We agreed on this version and before we ended our conversation, Haig-Brown added: “take out the value-laden language. Get them to tell you stories instead,” followed by the reminder that I take “copious fieldnotes.” My job was not to impose meaning or evaluations on my participants (whether it be notions of global citizenship on Celine or of dominant and subordinate cultures on current Highland students), but to tap into a more familiar language and grounded level of inquiry through which young people could talk

about their experiences and provide explanations for their actions. In telling me to replace my own preconceived meanings and categories with those more rooted to participants' everyday realities, Haig-Brown was telling me, as a more experienced researcher does, to take it down a notch.

Fieldnotes Through Members' Meanings

Following the work of Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011), I adopted strategies that pursued "members' meanings" (129). As a cornerstone of sound ethnographic fieldwork, members' meanings are an assemblage of the things that participants say and do in specific contexts, captured by the ethnographer as an essential starting point of analysis. Such meanings stand opposed to the premature imposition of exogenous meanings, which employ categories and classifications that differ from – and thus fail to appreciate – those that participants actually use and which involve asking questions "rooted in an a priori research agenda or theoretical framework [that] pre-specifies the salience of particular features and events" (133). The missteps involving Celine and the leading questions in the student interviews are precisely this kind of exogenous imposition: with Celine, I started with a category that she does not remember ever being used, and put her in the position of having to define it; with the student interviews, I assume the presence of unequal relationships without inquiring about the activities that participants deem important, that is, what they actually *do*. Interpreting members' meanings, by contrast, involves a strategy of attending closely and in written form to the diversity of expressions and formulations members use and find relevant in everyday life.

When I began my fieldwork at Highland, I decided to forego interviews for the first two weeks and focus solely on orienting to the local scene. I participated in daily life, using my newcomer status to ask questions and elicit explanations of basic phenomena, and wrote fieldnotes of my initial impressions (Emerson et. al. 2011: 24) of the people I was meeting and what was going on around me. I went where the young people were: in classrooms, school clubs and fieldtrips, in dorm rooms visiting individual people or on invitation to a social gathering, and generally made myself available for the many spontaneous interactions that make up a given day. There were two major components of my fieldnote-taking. The first involved jottings (Clifford 1990). I carried a pocket

notebook everywhere I went and wrote down interesting or important exchanges, as well as things that struck me about the physical environment. I jotted whenever I could, and used a mix of open and hidden jotting styles, depending on the context. For instance, I would excuse myself to jot when I was in intimate contexts when stopping to take notes would be an abrupt intrusion. The ability to jot in private was important when some young people exhibited unease when I shifted roles from friend/big sister to researcher, asking me if I was going to “write down” what had just transpired (Emerson et. al. 2011: 23).¹⁶

Though I jotted over the course of my fieldwork, this method evolved. At first I recorded unique aspects of the physical and social environment, things that I would become accustomed to and begin to take as natural (and therefore potentially ignore) as I spent more time in the field.¹⁷ These included the makeup of classrooms, dorm rooms, and common spaces, the typical yet feverish pace of school, extracurricular and social life, curious turns of phrase that people used, and unexpected incidents that I wanted to follow up on or learn more about. The process of charting these initial impressions lent legitimacy, for instance, to the claim many Highlanders made¹⁸ that what happened outside of the classroom was more important than what went on inside it – a fact to which I quickly became accustomed but which I charted in detail those first weeks. I recorded observations about the kinds of intercultural encounters that were involved in the daily flow of life and what import young people gave to these encounters as they occurred over time and in different school contexts. Indeed, many of the narratives involving intercultural exchange that I examine in this study occurred outside of classrooms, since extracurricular spaces seemed to permit a more spontaneous and unmediated form of

¹⁶ It is important to remind the reader here that I consistently left the door open for participants to refuse having their experiences and exchanges included in this study. If, for instance, the question came up about whether I was going to write down what had just transpired, I would add a quick, “is that alright with you?” Most often, young people would explicitly ask me to include their experiences in my study, deeming them important enough to warrant my attention and reflection.

¹⁷ Emerson et. al. (2011) argue for the importance of preserving on record one’s initial impressions of the sights, sounds, tastes, routines, activities, and people in the field, since “observers tend to lose sensitivity of unique qualities of a setting as these become commonplace” (24). The unique details of a setting – the ability to describe social reality – lend authority to the research, bolstering what Geertz (1983: 57-58) calls an “experience-near” approach so essential to ethnographic writing.

¹⁸ When people inquired about why I was there and I responded with, “I’m interested in learning about how people who are different learn to get along,” the first thing many would advise is that I pay attention to activities and interactions outside of the classroom. This was one of the earliest patterns I recorded in my fieldnotes.

interaction, removed as they were from the evaluative pressures of teaching and learning and necessitating instead everyday strategies of talk and action across cultural difference.

As jottings evolved past my initial impressions, I used them in the pursuit of members' meanings in relation to intercultural exchange and representation, recording as true-to-detail as possible the verbal exchanges and visual and contextual cues that made up the range of things that participants did in their encounters with others. This included paying attention to how people introduced themselves, what linguistic tropes were used in particular contexts and emerging patterns therein, and who did what and how others reacted. As a detail below, I also used this method to jot down interactions that I then wanted to ask about in my interviews.

For this true-to-detail strategy, I used my smartphone's dictation feature, and if I witnessed something that I wanted to record verbatim, I would speak into my phone's microphone, and have the audio transformed to text. Since one can talk more quickly than one can write, this was a very useful way to "jot" the things that I wanted preserved. It was also useful because when using the dictation feature, I appeared to be talking on the phone, and was thus able to avoid the abruptness associated with whipping out pen and paper to record whatever had just happened. However, I used dictation only if the situation permitted, that is, if I was in a large group or witnessing a public event during which talking on a phone would not be considered rude or voyeuristic (Emerson et. al. 2011: 38). If I wanted to excuse myself to do written or verbal jots, privacy was easy to get at Highland: the school was made up of multiple buildings and there was always a classroom or bathroom I could pop into to record something. Often it would suffice to simply take a quick walk. A typical Highland day was also partitioned into scheduled components, with a before school, during school, after school, extracurricular, and social time, and I would often wait for the young people to part ways for their next scheduled event before I jotted.

The second component of my note taking occurred at the end of each day, and involved writing out full fieldnotes using my jottings, events that I had not written down in my pocket notebook, and reflections from interviews. In these full fieldnotes, I described the day's events alongside in-process memos (Emerson et. al. 2011: 123) and notes to myself on method and analysis. Because the days, especially weekdays, were so

full and frenetic, I learned that it was essential, though painstaking, to do this work every day to preserve the accuracy of details and the sharpness of my initial sense of their import. I took “end of day” to mean either the end of the school day, which provided a natural lull during which I could retreat to my room without fear that I might miss something, or late in the evening, when I would take an hour or more to write. As Annette Lareau (2000) points out in her own account of the daily work of writing full fieldnotes, it is easy and often preferable to be in the field, authentically engaging with people and participating in the things that they do everyday (207). The problem of leaving the field to write fieldnotes (which is distinct from the immediacies of jottings, during which there is less time for reflection)¹⁹ is that the researcher is reminded not only of their outsider status and the obligations of research – that we participate in order to write and critically analyze, for instance – but is also compelled to confront the uncertainties of where the research is going and whether one should trust that a project is taking form in the midst of the breakneck pace at which pages of observations are accumulated.

A major intellectual concern in my own fieldnotes involved the ambiguities and changing shape of my guiding research questions, which I can see myself grappling with in the description of certain key patterns and my initial analyses of them. For instance, one preoccupation I had in the first months of research was whether the school was doing what it claimed to be doing, a prescriptive – and, as I discuss below, erroneous – concern. I was fortunate at Highland not to encounter school administrators who pressured me to produce results that the organization deemed relevant or who foreclosed avenues of inquiry that were not explicitly in the pursuit of policy improvement or organizational efficiency. They granted access to any and all areas of the school, and spoke with me through provisional and exploratory questions whose “usefulness” was rarely scrutinized. Indeed, there is a strong precedent among organizational ethnographers of contending with the tension between academic pursuits (whose ‘deliverables’ are not always at the forefront) and those that may benefit the organization, a tension Neyland (2008)

¹⁹ I made a conscious effort to distinguish fieldnotes from memos, suspending judgment as much as possible in these fieldnotes, opting instead to stick closely to members’ meanings. Emerson et. al. (2011) argue that, “in taking note of members’ meanings, beginning ethnographers tend to judge the actions of people in the setting...by their own, rather than the others’, standards or values” (25). Assessing what the researcher him or herself thinks is going on is the purpose of memos, not fieldnotes.

describes as that between ethnography *of* organizations and ethnography *for* organizations (9). Delivering on the latter may even be a condition of entry to the organization, though again this was not my experience.

However, the influence of organizational concerns still came, showing up in my fieldnotes and memos. As I outline in Chapter 4, the school ethos of intercultural understanding is strong at Highland, and is referred to in the things people talk about and in their justifications for certain ways of thinking and acting. When I observed interactions that were relevant to my study, like people encountering and responding to difference, I would ask people to talk about it and they were able to do so at length and with interest, because the issues that were relevant to me were relevant to them. Like me, they wanted to talk about the stakes involved in diverse people learning to get along with one another, the importance of challenging implicit bias and exclusion, and of understanding tolerance. It was only when I began writing and reviewing fieldnotes that I observed a major difference between how Highlanders spoke of these issues and the most analytically fruitful way that I could speak of them: that between outcomes and process. Highlanders were oriented toward organizational concerns of outcomes, that is, toward the extent to which inclusion and understanding were occurring, and whether the school was fulfilling its mandate. However, writing fieldnotes revealed to me that the most interesting question I could ask as an ethnographer was not *whether* or *not*, but processual questions of *how*, *by whom*, and *in what context*. Let me give an example.

My fieldnotes describe a conversation I had one morning with a former Highland administrator, Mathis, who argued that the school need not exist if it was not producing people who could live anywhere in the world and who were willing to forego wealth for “being useful” and “open to difference,” serving their home country or the international community. I wrote:

Mathis worries aloud about the brain drain and whether the school may be causing or contributing to it. He talks about students he knows who came to the school from rural places in their home countries, getting the opportunity of a lifetime here and being able to have experiences that life back home would not permit. He mentions a girl from Uganda who went to a rural school that had no desks, just chairs and a chalkboard, who was “remarkable” in how quickly she adapted to life at Highland and how well she did. When he considers what happens when those people graduate and go back home, he says, “if people move from the rural areas and move to the city to become rich,

then this is uninteresting.” He says that the school’s true worth can be tested if they had information on what alumni are doing, what they choose to study and where they choose to work. He asks me if part of my research is finding out what alumni do after they leave Highland, and I say that I’m speaking to alumni but that current students are the focus of my study. He nods with interest, but doesn’t ask me any more questions.

We can see plainly Mathis’ concern with outcomes: what are alumni doing afterward and where do they go? Depending on the answer we may or may not legitimately call the school’s very existence into question. My notes then describe an interaction between two boys that I witnessed later that day. The boys belittle a fellow student’s artwork that is part of an exhibition on breast cancer awareness and women’s oppression. A placard taped up beside the artwork, which shows an image of a woman’s breasts, indicates that breasts are unfairly sexualized and that publicly displaying an image of breasts should not invite the “male gaze.” It is unclear whether the breasts in the image are those of a Highland girl or an image taken from elsewhere, and while people pass, they comment aloud on whose breasts they might be. One of the two boys, Gregor, is convinced that these are the breasts of a particular Highland girl and laughs loudly when he says, “This is how they’re oppressed?!” I assumed that he meant that if a Highland girl has the freedom to publicly display a nude image of herself, she cannot claim that she is oppressed or may even invite the sexualization she condemns. I described in narrative detail the interaction between the boys at the exhibition, then included a memo in which I reflected on the day as a whole:

Today I’m feeling like this whole Highland thing has...its ebbs and flows. I just wrote that “it’s a sham,” then erased it because I think it’s probably best to acknowledge that daily realities are simply kicking in, and old habits (people’s prejudices, laziness, apathy) die hard. Tonight was the big reveal of the breast cancer awareness campaign. Most people responded positively. There were others who were doing the very thing that the exhibition was challenging: walking by the images and trying to guess whose bodies they were looking at. Some of these were overtly sexualizing people, snickering and loudly denouncing the show, most of all Gregor. He laughed in a totally ugly way and so publicly that I could see it put a damper on the evening. I could see the girls feeling badly about it, so much so that when he left, the girls reiterated performatively that they were “very proud” of what they’d done. I’m not sure what to think about what Mathis said this morning. He talks with such weight about the school’s purpose and puts such an onus on what kinds of people are coming out at the end of these years. This is not my primary concern. Mathis is mainly concerned about what people are doing afterward, but expressed little interest in what’s going on now, in the school as a

site in which people are doing the very work of cultivating that openness and sense of duty he longs for. The best question I can think to ask is what is happening within it, what practices, what patterns, what activities are happening here. If you want people to be open to others, shouldn't it also be important to ask how they are devising plans everyday for how to do so?

As Lareau forewarns, writing fieldnotes can put one's project into question, but in doing so it can also clarify directions by acting as a holding place for nascent analyses. In the note above, at the same time that I contemplate whether the school is "a sham" – an outcomes-oriented assessment that is incurious about how and (unable to access) what goes on inside, or that takes what goes on inside as determining what happens after – I also acknowledge the school as a "site" in which significant cultural practices take form and are worthy of study.

Every second Sunday I reviewed my fieldnotes and memos in order to discern emerging patterns. It was through this process that I was able to see that the school *as a social site* is a productive lens that opens up avenues of inquiry, centred around the processual question of *how*; for indeed, if we reduce our purview to the question of whether policy matches practice, the answer will invariably be negative.

The Interviews

I did not have difficulty finding people to interview for this research project. As already stated, I started interviewing two weeks after my arrival at Highland. After only a few interviews, word got around quickly about the kinds of questions I was asking, and in many cases by the time I approached people for an interview, most were already willing to talk with me. In some cases, people requested an interview rather than wait to be asked, in which case I allowed them to begin how they wished, giving them time to tell me why they wanted to talk one-on-one. I often did one interview a day. If something happened that I wanted to follow up on right away so that it was fresh in the mind of the people involved, I would have more. With everyone we meet in this study, I did at least one scheduled interview. Yet there were also many spontaneous sit-downs, during which a conversation with someone ended up being an hour or more long. In order to be ready for such occasions, I carried my recorder everywhere. In total, I interviewed 43 young people, 15 of whom I interviewed again during my second visit to Highland or over Skype either between field visits or later on. I also interviewed 16 faculty members and 6

alumni. Each interview lasted between 1.5 and 3 hours. I transcribed each one in full, except for moments when we were interrupted by something happening around us at the time.

I conducted thematic, open-ended interviews that included a strong component of narrative and story-telling (Chase 2018; Hollway & Jefferson 1997; Leech 2002). My decision to conduct interviews and ethnographic observation together was an attempt to capture meaning-making processes alongside behaviour and interactions (Lamont & Swidler 2014: 157). I approached the narratives emerging from interviews as a major component of how young people order and value their experiences and therefore how they make them meaningful. Chase (2018) defines narrative as a type of social action (in her words, “as doing or accomplishing something”), and thus as both retrospective meaning-making – that is, a recounting and ordering of what took place – as well as discourse that reflects on present, future, and hypothetical situations (Chase 2018: 947). Lamont and Swidler (2014) add that interviews are necessary for cultural sociology because they access patterns in people’s imagined meanings of their activities.²⁰ How people categorize and represent their conduct and identity, how they define ideals in particular contexts, as well as how they draw and justify lines between themselves and others, are key components of explaining patterned social processes.

The temporal element identified by Chase and the cultural element identified by Lamont and Swidler were both relevant to my interviews. I was interested in how young people told the story of where they had come from and where they were going and how they mapped their dispositional and cultural trajectories from home to school. I was also interested in the day-to-day meanings they attached to certain realities and interactions, and how they tracked progress or failure within intercultural exchange. My most useful practice for capturing these everyday meanings was witnessing an event that involved particular people and then asking about the events in the interview context (Emerson et al. 2011: 136). Doing so allowed me to connect the action to the ways in which people

²⁰ To recall Geertz (2000), the study of meaning involves “discovering who [people] think they are, what they think they are doing, and to what end they think they are doing it” (15). Similarly, Lamont and Swidler (2014) state that, “for many people the *imagined* meanings of their activities, their self-concepts, their fantasies about themselves (and about others) are also significant, and we generally cannot get at those without asking, or at least without talking to people (159). Lamont and Swidler attempt to probe not behaviour but categorization systems...[and] what allows them to experience themselves as good, valuable, worthwhile people” (159).

explain and understand it (this is illustrated, for instance, in the vignette involving Fen and Mari in Chapter 6 – in which I move back and forth in time between an interaction between Fen and Mari and their respective accounts of what took place).

Most importantly, I focused my interviews on narrative and story-telling because it was the best way to open a discursive space in which the institutional ethos was not unquestioningly positioned as the main catalyzing phenomenon. At Highland, young people were accustomed to being interviewed: they had been interviewed several times during Highland's admissions process, by university recruiters, and at the time of my research, they were doing interviews with a psychologist who wanted to understand the effectiveness of the kind of education Highland was offering – to recall, a task that this project does not do – and the extent to which multicultural education elicited decreased outgroup bias. During these interviews there were plenty of opportunities to tout ideals of openness and interculturalism, and to frame the institution as a catalyst for the important personal – and often positive – changes young people were experiencing or hoped to experience. The interviews young people had been doing before I arrived had in common the need to verbally capture the impact the institutional ethos would have (in the case of those who sought admission to Highland) or has had (in the case of those graduating from Highland) on their dispositions and character,²¹ which relied heavily on self-reporting. The consequence is that little is known about what the institutional experience is comprised of and the institutional ethos is exalted as the catalyst of personal change. Personal experience is delimited to the question of how much one has changed (rather than taking experience itself as meaningful) without accounting for the processual and informal instantiations in which young people – brought together by the institution – are compelled to engage with one another and make a series of meaningful decisions about how to get by in difference.

In contrast, I asked young people to narrativize the experiential components of immersion in a diverse institutional setting that asked them to learn to get along: their

²¹ In the case of young people's interviews with university recruiters, it was also a *promise* to maintain these dispositions: *I am* like this, and I will *bring* these characteristics to your school, *and this* is why you should want me at your school. In very few cases, an interviewee and I could not reach a place of ease. Responses were given as if I was a similar kind of authority, and if I asked about conflict or challenges, they were hesitant to talk about them, offering instead more pleasant representations of their experiences at the school. It is possible that these young people believed that no challenge existed, but it is also possible they saw me as an authority figure with whom they could not be fully honest.

first culture shock and how they understood the potential disjuncture between the institutional expectation of openness and the shock of what was new; meeting and growing their circle of friends and explaining ‘types’ of people to whom they were drawn or not; defining strategies of understanding and self-representation that they used, for instance, when encountering the first openly gay person they had ever met or when stepping into the role of representative of one’s ‘home,’ respectively. Eliciting narratives tempered the weight of the institutional ethos and provided instead a series of socially significant accounts of its everyday life. Young people’s accounts were not restricted to before Highland and after Highland, where the former involves a state of intercultural and intellectual absence that the latter lays bare or redresses. They involved reflections on “firsts,” building and revising strategies for negotiating diversity, and the ambivalences and nuances involved in deciding on a course of action and the precipitating events for changing one’s mind. Thus, though the institution is ever present in this study, narrative inquiry is meant to orient accounts toward the subjective experiences of institutional norms and when analyzed across all Highlanders, the patterned and unequal nature of such experiences.

Interview Themes

Though the interviews were conversational, and therefore would each shift in unique ways over the course of a single interview, I wanted to have a corpus of interview data that would allow me to compare how young people talked and told stories about certain topics and themes. I broke my interviews up into four themes, which I devised based on the pilot interviews mentioned above, reading Highland documents that detailed the school, as well as initial observations and informal conversations with young people and teachers: 1) the institution; 2) interpersonal experiences with diversity and cultural exchange; 3) modes of self-understanding and self-representation; and 4) conceptions of responsibility and obligation. Each theme was broken down into several questions, some of which I asked in the exact same way across interviews,²² and some that would remain

²² One set of questions that remained the same was: “The mission statement of the school uses terms like intercultural understanding and the celebration of difference. Could you tell me what intercultural understanding means to you? How do you see it being practiced here at the school? Can you tell me about a time that you felt it happening?” I did this because I wanted a baseline for the common or divergent ways

close to the theme but would come up at different times during the interview or were articulated in ways more in line with the tone of that particular interview. The interview schedule is detailed in Appendix I.

I will elaborate briefly on each theme. The first theme involves my interviews with both teachers and students. I asked teachers about the school's expectations and how they understand it appearing in daily life. I focused on activities that they believe fit closely with particular school values and asked them to offer stories of students who represent exemplary cases of the successes and challenges of doing intercultural work. For students, I focused on how they define the institution and its expectations, and how their encounters with these expectations are narrativized and made meaningful. In what ways do young people believe themselves to be more or less prepared for such expectations? In order to get a sense of how institutional arrangements are negotiated and enacted in practice, I needed a strong sense of which institutional meanings existed at the forefront of their minds.²³ I asked how they came to know that Highland existed, which allowed me to gain insight into their background and whether they had experienced a similar kind of schooling (for those who had experienced diversity or gone to international schools in the past, their expectations of what would go on at Highland were necessarily altered, since challenges of interculturalism would have not been new to them). The questions were oriented toward defining the expectations they believed admission to the school involved and, once there, what expectations they had of the school: were they surprised about something? What did they believe they are there for, or to become? Such questions often led to some sense of promise they had about the school; becoming more open, meeting people from all over the world, and a sense of the possibilities and perils they feel are associated with joining an international community. Finally, it was a way into the question of firsts: employing the framing device of 'before Highland' and 'after Highland,' I was able to get young people to define what was different and new: the first time meeting a particular kind of person or a representative from an ethnic or social group.

that young people define a central feature of the school ethos as well as the different sites in which they believed it was occurring.

²³ As we will see in Chapter 4, openness and understanding diverse others are important values for the young people in this study, articulated in various ways as learning to get along with people who are different, meeting people from all over the world, and learning about their cultures.

The next three themes involved sets of questions about the roles young people see themselves and others playing, both as persons coming from a particular place and having and developing a set of capacities that are more or less fit for the roles. For the second theme on interpersonal experiences with cultural exchange, I asked young people to assess how well they were fitting in and to reflect on the first friends they made, and extended these considerations to whether they had been offended or felt they had caused offense to others, and how, if at all, they resolved such conflicts. The third theme on modes of self-representation focused on their role as representing a place (a whole town, city, country, or even continent, and in the case of Chapter 6, a political event) or culture, how they enact or resist it, and how their identity and sense of belonging changed as a result of their experience as a representative in an international setting. Fourth, on conceptions of responsibility, young people were asked to reflect on the duties and obligations that come with the experience at Highland. This included the kinds of roles they believed they were stepping into, and reflections on being more or less capable and willing to ‘make a difference’ – a maxim that was strongly adopted at the institutional level – and the attachments to home and the international community that emerge for different young people. What sense of obligation comes with the simultaneous pulls of opening oneself up to an international life and remaining tied in various ways to life back home?

Narratives of interpersonal and inner conflict were central to each of the four themes, and through them I gathered a diverse set of values and ideas that young people collectively use to make their actions meaningful and evaluate themselves and others: in Chapter 5, how best to be open to difference and to demonstrate one’s openness; in Chapter 6, the trope of culture itself, which serves young people on the international scene, allowing them to make sense of difference and find solutions – good ones or not – to the challenges of getting along in an institutional setting that deems it worthwhile to do so; and in Chapter 7, self-representation in times of political violence, which requires reflection on one’s sense of dislocation between an international setting and the pull of events back home.

At the end of every interview, I wrote memos to myself about what I thought were the most relevant themes, and tried to make connections between the interview and things

I had witnessed. These memos became essential starting points in the coding stage, when I brought it all together.

Document Analysis

I conducted a qualitative content analysis of 29 documents produced at Highland, totaling 455 pages, with each document averaging 15.5 pages.²⁴ Highland is an institution that seeks to recruit young people using a strong institutional narrative about the importance and promise of an intercultural education. I wanted to chart what kind of narrative is created and what kinds of promises are made about what students should experience at the school. For this reason, I chose documents that were “outward-facing,” that is, produced for public consumption and meant to either recruit new students or inform interested parties (students, parents, teachers, stakeholders, donors) about notable events going on at the school. As documents meant for the public, they represent the school’s public face, offering a series of promises to those who read them. I included all the documents I could retrieve that met the above criteria, equaling 29 documents in total.

I inputted the documents into Dedoose, a qualitative analysis software program.²⁵ I coded for normative statements of aspiration, of what should and ought to be, and tracked the activities and kinds of characteristics – both personal and institutional – that are celebrated at the school. As I did so, I found a series of idealized dispositions, which constitute the subject of Chapter 3: discernment, empathy, action, and investment. As Highland is a pseudonym and is meant to remain confidential, I only directly quote reports that are not available online. In Chapter 3, I offer an analysis of the meanings conveyed by the valuation of particular dispositions.

Coding and Analysis of Fieldnotes, Interviews, and Memos

I went through two rounds of coding after the fieldwork was complete. I began by reading the (fieldnotes, interview transcripts, and accompanying memos) from beginning to end. I drew heavily on memos and post-interview notes, which summarized the key issues in my data, and I used these to develop initial codes. In the first run of coding, I

²⁴ I did not use the school website as a source of data because, at the time of my research, the website was not updated often.

²⁵ Dedoose is similar in function to NVivo, but is available online, and is thus for use on multiple devices and operating systems.

created as many codes as I thought necessary, writing down where I saw potential themes that linked disparate moments in the corpus. The most helpful method for developing themes was to work with sequences and stories rather than keywords and phrases, since it was 1) in the unfolding of certain interactions and 2) in the relationships between observed interactions and the ways in which people subsequently accounted for these interactions that my most important themes were developed and fleshed out. A full picture of events as they occurred and were spoken about was necessary. To achieve this fuller picture, I used index cards²⁶: white index cards to write out themes and blue index cards to write out quotes and interactions.

The second round of coding consolidated themes in order to formulate a set of discrete problematics. Here, I departed from a strict adherence to members' meanings – the primary method in the field – and began my own interpretive interventions. The tension between members' meanings and analytic propositions is well documented in sociological literature (Burawoy 1991; Emerson et. al. 2011; Lareau 2000; Wacquant 2002). Lareau (2000) charts her own struggle with this tension in *Home Advantage*, describing it as between the largely descriptive mode of tracking life as respondents see it in fieldwork and the mode of presentation in a polished ethnographic text, which poses an intellectual problem and articulates an argument. I managed this transition away from the full pursuit of how young people sought to get along in diversity by taking everything I had learned from Highlanders as instantiations of *cosmopolitan practice*, which captures the intentions of the actors as well as the forces that shape how certain interactions play out and the analytic frames that help us understand their significance. As outlined in my review of the literature, cosmopolitan practice acknowledges that people engage in meaning-making activities that can be flawed for their immersion in power and inequality and, nonetheless, be sociologically significant as instantiations of the complexities

²⁶ I initially planned to use NVivo software for data analysis, but found real limitations with it and switched to physical index cards as a result. I found I needed to be able to do two things in order to develop themes. First, I needed to experiment with different configurations of data, which involved physically moving index cards around to think through what new interpretations might work. I found NVivo inefficient for experimentation, and was not able to easily move data around. Second, I needed to be able to see large amounts of data at any given time – fieldnotes, quotes from participants, and my own reflections on these things in order to visualize sequences and establish a sense of order. NVivo is effective at the level of keywords, but was not useful for offering this 'big picture' that I found most productive.

associated with doing intercultural work.²⁷ I believe there is value in preserving the concept of cosmopolitanism and finding patterns within interactions that exist between mutual understanding and misunderstanding, success and failure – sociology needs to be useful for capturing life as it is actually lived.

These analytical findings are more or less complex. Let me give two examples rooted in a question I used to guide my analysis: if most people at the school wanted to be interculturally-minded people,²⁸ what kinds of relations form vis-à-vis the work they do to position themselves as such and be seen by others as such? One of the most consistent themes was that young people reported becoming open to difference at Highland, and offered stories about how they expressed that openness at the school. In Chapter 4, we meet Lionel, who claims to be open to difference while holding views that are decidedly not open, namely, an anti-gay stance toward a friend who he suspects is gay. It was in the coding and analysis of my interactions with Lionel that I found evidence that silence and refraining from action are expressions of openness. The analytical intervention here was relatively straightforward: I extrapolated from Lionel's explanation that being open is not only an agentic and active practice but can also involve strategies of smoothing over and altogether avoiding differences that can cause relationships to breakdown.

A more complex analytical intervention stems from the fact that respondents are not always transparent to themselves, which requires analysis that departs more radically from members' meanings.²⁹ We can see this in an interaction between Mari and Fen, who we meet in Chapter 5. Mari, a white Swede, tries to help Fen, a Chinese girl, by asking that she consider using tampons so as to not miss out on swimming once a month. A self-proclaimed feminist, Mari feels that when Fen drops out of everyday activities because of her period, it is a sign that Chinese culture is too restrictive on young girls and that

²⁷ I approached data as windows into the real ways that young people get along. Very few situations I observed and recorded were mired in inequality and privilege; neither were there very many straightforward success stories of Highland's ethos put into practice. The task became finding a balance between the richness of the interaction and intention, and the presence of social divisions, as well as finding sociologically significant patterns in that balance.

²⁸ A fact confirmed in the data.

²⁹ Lareau (2000) calls these "folk explanations" (223). She reconciles the disjuncture between folk explanations and the ethnographer's analysis of them by arguing that while it is necessary for respondents to agree that the ethnographer has portrayed their lives accurately, respondents need not agree on the interpretation. As Lareau argues, "it does not trouble me if my interpretation of the factors influencing their behavior is different from their interpretation of their lives" (2000: 223).

convincing Fen to use a tampon is a matter of fairness and progressivism. As an analyst, I had to make a choice: first, I had to recognize that there is a disjuncture between Mari's intentions (to help her friend on what she considered to be a feminist principle) and the inequities that inform the interaction (one involving a white liberal feminist 'teaching moment' of non-white women). One way to represent this interaction is as an instantiation of white privilege, of a white woman telling the other that she is doing it all wrong. However, this captures neither the effect of the interaction – that Fen takes it seriously and is thankful to Mari for pushing her to rethink certain 'inevitable' – nor the intention behind Mari's actions. It also leaves little room for the starting point required by investigating cosmopolitan practice, which is constituted by fits and starts, trials and errors, as well as engagement in complex intercultural territory. The interaction informs how racialization is internalized and can show up between friends as well as how intercultural work takes form in the everyday. As I elaborate in Chapter 5, the analytical moment comes from discovering patterns of intentionality, practice, strategy, and meaning-making from what are always imperfect interactions.

A valuable component of this research is rooted in the fact that the conceptual and methodological approaches complement one another in terms of drawing attention to the coexistence of accounts and behaviour or, more simply, what people say they think and do as well as what people are observed to be doing (Jerolmack & Khan 2014: 180; Vaisey 2009). I have outlined how interviews, observation, and qualitative content analysis are central to understanding the inner workings of the school, and examining cosmopolitanism as an everyday institutional practice.

Chapter 3

How Should One Be? The Young International Student and Norms of the Global Citizen

Highland is identified as a school that offers more than an IB diploma. In the time I spent with teachers and administrators, I was often told that when it came to young peoples' most formative experiences at Highland, "so much happens outside of the classroom." I was told that Highland values qualities beyond the academic and thus should not be mistaken as a gateway to university, but as a place in which to cultivate particular qualities beyond mere self-interest that are recognized and desirable in an intercultural and international context. If indeed the young international student is characterized best by that which happens outside of the classroom, it is necessary to trace how such a person is defined and the activities that they engage in that are not strictly related to academic pursuits.

This chapter uses qualitative content analysis and interviews with teachers to explore the institutional construction of the young international student³⁰, who at Highland steps into the role of global citizen. The purpose is to introduce a typology of four qualities of the international student turned global citizen and examine how they are brought to life in institutional discourse and activity. I aim to demonstrate the centrality of character formation to an institutionalized global citizenship at Highland, as well as the kinds of norms that accompany membership within the school. For young people, being a Highlander involves circulating within an institutional culture that identifies the student body with certain qualities, as well as having access to institutional supports that encourage the development of such qualities. I define these qualities as discernment,

³⁰ My concern in this chapter is to categorize these norms at the level of the institution, not to assess the ways in which they play out in the lives of young people. This latter task will be the concern for later chapters. For instance, I outline the values that contribute to putting cultural knowledge at the top of the agenda of the school, but do not offer a full analysis of the many evaluations that teachers have about the effectiveness of these values. Indeed, many teachers pointed out the challenges with doing this work. But the central concern of this chapter is to trace the expectations placed on students at the school, and thus the focus is the imperatives that define the international student turned global citizen.

empathy, action, and investment. Discernment, in the context of the international school, is defined by one's knowledge of other cultures and the capacity to represent one's own. The skill of discernment is to understand the qualities that make one different from others, and to possess an interest and adeptness in the diverse cultural norms, practices, and beliefs that constitute the student body. The school encourages discernment through various formal cultural events, during which one can display one's own culture and share in the cultures of others. Empathy is defined by the development of a common feeling toward others, who not only represent other cultures, but personalize distant places and conflicts. Through the experience of living together with diverse others and sharing in common the challenges associated with the school's ethos of intercultural understanding, curricular demands, and extra-curricular programs, one learns empathy through the labour of transposition and the recognition of a common humanity. Action is defined primarily by what one does, and one's understanding of the need for personal service. Young people are given access to a rich variety of opportunities and networks in order to exercise their commitment to service. Investment is a future-oriented disposition that is cultivated primarily at the level of discourse, and thus does not function in the same way as the other dispositions, which have institutional supports and are an integral part of everyday school programming. Nonetheless, it is a powerful discourse. It is demonstrated by a commitment to carry on the values of the school long after young peoples' two years at Highland are over.

In order to account for the multidimensionality of the global citizen, I approach Highland as a pluralistic organization in which no single logic dominates the ethos of the school or the actors operating within it. I established in Chapter 2 that current research on international education has found a perpetual and ostensibly irreconcilable tension between market and egalitarian logics, in which the prevalence of the market logic determines and encourages particular outcomes of social reproduction and capital formation in individuals' pursuit of IE (Aguiar & Noguiera 2012; Brooks & Water 2010; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Potter & Hayden 2004; Weenink 2008), and the egalitarian logic is either hollowed out by market imperatives or remains a normative, and therefore practically unattainable, project (Davies 2006; Pashby 2011, Rizvi 2009). In this frame, conceptions of global citizenship serve the interests of one logic or the other. Missing

from this assessment are considerations of how multiple logics, here defined as guiding principles that are seen to offer legitimate standards of action and organizational identity (Silber 2003), coexist, as well as a practical treatment of how multiple logics are formed and made to make sense in everyday institutional life. Such an approach is currently being explored in literature in the sociology of organizations, which begins from the starting point that organizations are pluralistic, possessing rationalities or logics that not only coexist but which are often in tension or competition with one another. This research examines organizational pluralism by applying the institutional logics framework (Friedland & Alford 1991) to investigate how local organizational processes are shaped by shifts in prevailing logics (Thornton & Ocasio 2008; DiMaggio 1991) and, more recently, the economies of worth framework (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006)³¹ to examine how actors and organizational discourses negotiate and seek to reconcile multiple and competing logics by doing different kinds of “justification work” that seek to establish, in more or less durable ways, a cohesive organizational identity and organizational order and legitimacy (Jagd 2011: 347; see also Cloutier & Langley 2013; Demers & Gond 2020; Dunn & Jones 2010; Silber 2016). While both sets of literature examine how organizations are characterized by imperatives stemming from different, and sometimes opposing, logics, what is significant about this latter subset of research is its attention to a moral element in attempts to balance or reconcile multiple and opposing logics. In this frame, organizational discourses and actors appeal to what is the right and good thing to do in a given situation, and, when agreements between logics are reached, organizational

³¹ The literature in the sociology of organizations that I draw on here is useful for its attention to how pluralistic organizations introduce new terms that build and solidify organizational identity and legitimacy because they seek to reconcile, synthesize, or solve fundamental divergences in view. The present analysis is meant to advance our understanding of international schools like Highland because it reframes them as, in practice, doing the kind of reconciliatory work outlined in the sociological research on organizations. Thus, the tension between market and egalitarian logics observed in current research on IE need not be considered absolute or indefatigable, since on the ground schools are negotiating and devising ways of maintaining organizational identity and legitimacy despite the existence of these tensions. While the literature in the sociology of organizations draws on the economies of worth framing, I do not intend to precisely map my argument onto the latter frame. However, some affinities exist. The market and egalitarian logics at the heart of the tension in IE may be seen as akin to Boltanski and Thévenot’s market or industrial orders of worth and the civic order of worth, respectively. In a future study, there may be a fruitful contribution in pursuing an economies of worth framing, starting with a dispute at Highland (such as the kind that Gilles, detailed below, experiences when he is called to task over the amount of resources allotted to Highlanders compared to other students elsewhere, which was a common theme that emerged in my discussions with teachers and administrators) and examining how actors or organizational discourses appeal to ideas of the common good and tracing how they derive from different worlds.

stability and legitimacy are established and maintained or, when such agreements fail to be reached, various forms of organizational change or stalemate occur.

Such agreements are important because they indicate that organizations can achieve cooperation despite ongoing tensions by “introducing new terms” to synthesize or solve paradoxical conditions (Cloutier & Langley 2013; Jagd 2011). There are empirical studies, for instance, that examine the introduction of novel arrangements that negotiate between disparate logics within organizations, such as an oil sands company that takes on a sustainability strategy (Demers & Gond 2020), how prices are established for fair trade coffee within an organization that seeks to reconcile between the market logic of price-setting and fair-trade pricing (Reinecke 2010), or how committees overseeing medical practice guidelines negotiate the tension between evidence-based medicine and interpersonal relationships between doctor and patient that resist the imposition of technical standards (Moreira 2005). The research is useful to the present analysis because it is attuned to how competing logics can be “woven together” (Cloutier & Langley 2013: 370) and how pluralistic organizations – rather than falling apart at the seams of their inherent tensions or existing in perpetual struggle – can solidify organizational identity by building compromise between logics in everyday organizational life.

On the ground, there is an awareness among actors at Highland that in allocating such abundant resources to young people, the institution sets up conditions that can both realize and undermine the core values of the school; that is, there is an understanding of the possibility of bolstering market logics of self-advancement at the expense of the school’s egalitarian principles of intercultural commitment and common humanity. The global citizen, as an amalgam of discernment, empathy, activity, and investment, holds this tension in place, thereby providing a legitimating set of discourses that institutional actors can draw on to make their work worthwhile. If indeed international schools like Highland are marked by an inherent tension between market logics and egalitarian logics, then attention to how such tensions are negotiated and reconciled through the introduction of novel terms is a fruitful and necessary avenue of inquiry. In assuming that Highland has an essential plurality, I seek to address the analytical cleavage left by studies of IE whose focus has been to theorize the contradiction between market logics

and egalitarian logics that pervade schools and their outcomes. When we are no longer looking for the dominance of one logic, or, in the case of Highland, the subordination of egalitarian principles to those more calculated and personally advantageous, we can inquire about the state of the co-presence of principles and actors’ reflexive bearing on them.

Young people become *Highlanders* to the extent that they adopt and demonstrate a commitment to the work of discernment, empathy, activity, and investment. In this way, the configuration of the global citizen is not only central to understanding institutionalization processes but also the construction of criteria for inclusion and exclusion. As a process of defining who does and does not belong, institutionalization relies on boundary formation (Lamont & Molnár 2002) as well as forms of subjectification (Ong 1996). The discourses that are detailed in this chapter serve to construct these boundaries and identities, which are used to distinguish between those admitted and those not admitted to Highland, as well as among young Highlanders themselves, who may use them to measure their own status and that of others. I therefore aim to name and evaluate the categories upon which the school establishes its ethos and to reveal the kinds of ‘closures’ that appear in the making of such categories (Lamont & Molnár 2002: 172).

Table 2, below, summarizes the findings in this chapter.³²

Norms of the Global Citizen

Norm	Characteristic	Value in an International Context	Institutional Support
Discernment	Knows	Knowledge of and openness to diversity	Formal and informal culture-sharing
Empathy	Feels	Mutual understanding and common humanity	Residential life and physical proximity with diverse others in a rigorous environment
Action	Does	Leadership geared toward personal service and humanitarian work	Access to opportunities, organizations, and networks
Investment	Becomes	Giving back and self-actualization toward the fulfillment of formal values in the future	Discursive construction of the value of what has been given; attention to what graduates go on to do

³² As explained in Chapter 2, the categories defined here emerged from the coding process. While the four norms themselves represent the most predominant and celebrated qualities at Highland, their categorization and exposition are distilled from the coding.

Table 2: The dispositions outlined in this chapter are listed in the left column. **Characteristic** denotes the “active” component of each norm. **Value in an International Context** indicates the benefits that are gained from the presence of each norm in an international context. **Institutional Support** indicates what the school does to promote or encourage the cultivation of each norm.

Discernment

Highland’s mission statement places the development of intercultural understanding and the celebration of difference as central values of the institution. The school’s ethos is premised on the cultivation of what one report identifies as “the values we seek to develop in students,” who come ready to offer particular cultural knowledges but who are young enough to be open-minded and learn from others. Getting to *know* one another is indeed the very basic starting point of the school’s ethos, and constitutes the groundwork for the cultivation of discernment.

To discern means to perceive or recognize something, to be capable of identifying and distinguishing one thing from another. As a dispositional quality that the institution seeks to develop and support, the physical proximity of such a diverse group of people is seen to present an opportunity for the accumulation of knowledge about the world as presented through a single individual, who comes as a representative of a culture, a region, a country, and even a continent. Ideally, the cultural exchange would leave an indelible mark on young people, one characterized by a cultivated appreciation and understanding of difference. In this way, it echoes notions that contact between diverse people makes them more understanding (Allport 1979), and appears as a quality of intercultural sophistication that is set against parochial views (though indeed discernment can be an expression of parochialism and racism, which is precisely why the multidimensionality of the global citizen at Highland is important).³³ Discernment is a skill that is fostered by a series of institutional supports as well as through a series of requirements on the part of the student, which become criteria of performance and expectation that teachers have of students.

³³ It is important to point out here that racism can also be a form of discernment, if we think about it being used in the effort to distinguish differences, hierarchize them, and then use them as justifications and explanations for racial superiority and inferiority. However, discernment in the context of Highland is oriented toward an ethos of intercultural understanding, and therefore calls upon young people to learn as well as cultivate non-parochial forms of knowledge.

My research shows that discernment represents Highland's most celebrated quality. Discernment makes up 37.2% of total references in the corpus.³⁴ These instances involve young people happily participating in culture-sharing activities and exchange, which include presenting one's own culture (49.7% of total references within the theme of discernment), or engaging in that of others (50.3% of total references within theme of discernment), in the form of dance, food, celebrating national holidays, or wearing national costumes. Descriptions detail the nature of the cultural exchange – where it takes place and who is involved – and the enrichment to be gained from living in a place so diverse. Discernment appears as a trope that details the knowledge to be gained if one is open enough to the prospect: a Chinese girl leads a group of friends in celebrating Chinese New Year, and teaches them to greet one another and sing in Mandarin; a Danish boy bucks the rigidities of his Scandinavian roots and learns what is for him a sensual Latin American dance from his Venezuelan girlfriend. The young person is characterized by a processual immersion into ways of life that are different, and learns to speak about the habits, customs, ways of speaking and being, that make oneself similar to and different from others. True to a discerning person, the young person develops the knowledge and skill to distinguish that which separates one from the other and to move openly and willingly between different cultural spheres.

Central to discernment is the requirement of familiarization with difference. Set in the context of an educational institution, which claims to develop young people in particular ways, familiarization must be formal and operationalized as both an outcome that can be named and an expectation that can be placed on students. What institutional supports are therefore available? Daily life at the school regularly entails cultural exchange, including intimate gatherings to celebrate religious or national holidays, organized culture-sharing events with people and organizations outside of the school, and formal “Cultural Days,” in which students from a particular region of the world prepare for months to host a bazaar exhibiting the costumes, habits, political and cultural history, flags and foods of member countries. I attended “European Day” on a late autumn day, in which the classrooms of one of the main buildings on campus are transformed into colourfully nationalistic displays of young peoples' home countries. Each classroom is

³⁴ A breakdown of the qualitative content analysis can be found in Appendix II.

dedicated to a certain part of Europe, with one room dedicated to Eastern Europe, another to Scandinavia, another to Western and Southern Europe. I can quickly tell who has spent time on their exhibit and who has not. The exhibits range from sparse displays of a few fact sheets and an open laptop exhibiting a Google Images search of famous places in that country to elaborately decorated desks featuring posters, trivia, clothing, music, famous faces and, perhaps the most prized commodity, cooking and baked goods.

In exchange for food, it is polite for visitors to show interest in the spread before them. As I approach the United Kingdom table, a student is offered tea and learns that the UK boasts the longest place name in the world. Another laughs while the host explains the meaning of “bollocks” and “wanker.” At the Finnish table, I am offered *pulla* bread served on Marimekko place mats and watch as students talk about how the Finnish language is closer to Estonian than it is to Swedish or Norwegian. One visitor talks to a Finnish friend with whom she has only ever spoken English and asks her to say something in her native tongue. She clumsily tries to repeat it. At the Lithuanian table, the host points out where Lithuania is on a map. She discusses the popularity of basketball in the country while the smell of powdered sugar from the fried pastry, *ausukes*, fills the air.

The bazaar is followed by an evening show, during which students gather in the theatre and watch their European friends perform skits, showcase previously unknown talents, play musical instruments and perform national dances in ornate national costumes that they bring from home. The common sights that such days entail – the admixture of national costume, music, and language, the energetic teenagers who both sample each other’s cultures and are nationalistically defiant about their own, the competitive jostling over whose country has birthed the most famous athletes and who shows the greatest love of their country – are the stuff of popular images of the international school and, by extension, of the cultivation of discernment.

As actors who are responsible for articulating discernment vis-à-vis a set of expectations, teachers rely on narratives of youthful openness as a necessary requisite for gaining knowledge of oneself and others. When I asked them to explain what terms like the “celebration of difference” and “intercultural understanding” mean and how they believe such values are encouraged at the school, teachers drew on themes of

experimentation and malleability as sources of pedagogical optimism for the realization of these lofty ideals. The dominant discourses are about risk-taking, trying new things, and seeing things in a previously unimagined light. For Duke, part of the work of intercultural understanding is prompting students to “step out of their comfort zone,” with the ultimate goal of eliciting discussions about one’s unexamined preconceptions. He describes an exercise he conducts early on in the year that serves as a foray into awareness of cultural context and difference:

You have to make contact with somebody [...] so you start off fairly neutral with toes, but even for some people just touching toes with another person from another culture is an unusual thing. I mean there, our students are usually *willing to try* most things. But of course when you get to things like the neck – you’ve got to stand neck to neck with somebody – and you add a time element, so the last two are out sort of thing, then they have to do it really quickly. There’s no looking around much to say, “Well, I’m okay to put my neck against her but not against him” or whatever. And then the nose, because that brings you very close, they were giggling a lot and having a lot of fun with it. [...] It enabled us to talk about, I think from the student’s perspective, when you come here you surrender a lot of what you are, temporarily, you stop being the person you were at home in terms of your cultural norms and so on. And I’ve heard over the years a lot of students here say that they feel that their own cultural norms are often predicated on quite conservative things, quite conservative ways of being and acting, and that those are the ones which get eroded and abandoned quickest. So that hugging, and grabbing people and actual physical contact which they would never indulge in at home becomes quite normal here even after a couple of days. And then they have to remember to adjust back when they go home for their vacation. So they’re constantly sort of shuttling, it’s almost like a body language, code-shifting going on, as they go from place to place, context to context.

It is likely that for most young people, touching necks with another person, let alone one from another part of the world, is a new and fraught experience. Yet for Duke, this is precisely the point. By encouraging the risk of touching another person, he expects the student to be open to trying, and wants them to identify – and be willing to shirk – the cultural baggage brought with them, in this case, the gendered, cultural, and religious prescriptions of where one’s body may appropriately be in social space. For another teacher, Tabitha, this capacity extends crucially to learning who and when *not* to touch:

We all offend each other from time to time, but then we can stop and say, “Whoa, wait a minute, I was really upset when you said this” [...] “So, why were you doing that to him? In my culture that would mean, you know, that you were married.” “Oh no, we’re just friends. In my culture it means we’re just friends. Kiss on the cheek, this cheek that cheek, that’s what we do when we greet.”

But, “Oh no, in my country you’re a prostitute if you do that.” And this happens, people totally misinterpreting things [...] People assuming that something is happening but actually something very different is going on.

Discernment involves knowledge of the material ways in which one’s culture is distinct from others – the food, linguistic habits, and ways of dress that feature prominently on European Day. It also involves being open to identifying and negotiating one’s own culturally inflected norms and those of others. Learning the “codes,” as Duke calls them, and developing the capacity to name and shift between them is, by definition, a characteristic feature of discernment.

Without a certain flexibility to try new things as well as an ability to move between cultural contexts, one cannot acquire the skill of discernment. When asked about what makes her work worthwhile, Tabitha recalls one intrepid student’s performance in an annual talent show:

I think we give young people a chance to explore and make mistakes without being harshly judged. One of the reasons I think of this as quite a successful learning community is people fall down and they get up and they fall down again. We’re encouraged to try new things, to spread our wings, to do things we enjoy and share them with others. For the students, I think this is a great place for them to explore. An example: we have a Vietnamese student, he comes from a Communist country, and he’s always been very restricted in what he can do and in the first year show last year he was dancing on stage in a bikini. Flamboyantly! Obviously having the time of his life. And when I said, “Wow, that was really something,” he said, “You have no idea what it’s like to be able to try this stuff, to try something different. This is maybe not me, but I wanted to see what it felt like. I’ve never got a chance to do anything like it.” The students try so many new things while they’re here. And they realize maybe what’s possible, what they’re capable of doing, and how they’re capable of challenging themselves. And the whole multicultural thing, they learn a lot about other places, and other ways of thinking, and doing things. There are many possible ways of being right or living in a good way. They’re just exposed to so much that’s different. Many of them come from backgrounds where people [say], “in my community people do things this way,” but they’re just exposed to so much. It’s quite overwhelming at times. It’s just fantastic.

Tabitha articulates the requisite, if rather paternalistically through the language of the “we” who offer opportunities to “them.” If young people are going to become discerning, they must acquire the openness necessary for doing so. Young people who are open to engaging in difference stand apart from those figures back in the home community who rigidly insist that, “people do things *this* way.” What makes the Vietnamese student

remarkable for Tabitha is his willingness to un-self-consciously join in, and the “fantastic” result: the expansion and creation of cultural repertoires and the development of openness to previously unimagined ways of being.

Discernment is therefore characterized by an accumulated cultural trivia (I say hello like this, you say hello like that) that young people absorb as they expand their cultural repertoires. Culture is represented here quite like a set of things that can be mastered, a corpus of knowledge about beliefs, norms, as well as ways of being, acting, and doing that reveal one’s savviness in the ways of life of others. This also requires that young people perform their national or ethno-cultural difference in ways that may be clichéd and forced, performances with which they may not identify. Discernment also involves the cultivation of the skill of getting to know oneself and others, which involves becoming aware of one’s assumptions, knowing one’s own and another’s limitations. This move is not primarily concerned with how one feels about other ways of life – for how one *feels* is a concern of the development of empathy, which I turn to in the next section – but is attuned to the young person’s cognizance of diversity. As we learned from Duke and Tabitha, this cognizance requires openness and flexibility, qualities that serve as necessary starting points for the intercultural project taking form at Highland.

Empathy

Whereas discernment is brought to life in the ways in which young people represent their ethno-cultural differences, the discourses that constitute empathy are largely concerned with the development of a feeling toward, rather than only a basic knowledge of, the other. Discernment can be actively cultivated in a pedagogical context, and the effort to master cultural knowledge can be organized into the formal life of the school. The school can cover its “cultural bases” to encourage discernment: there can be days dedicated to particular parts of the world and there is ample opportunity to represent one’s own culture and learn about others. Empathy, however, is represented as something built over time and with difficulty, a component of character that cannot be entirely managed or measured, but one that the school can attempt to cultivate and be credited for nonetheless. The things that young people begin to feel for others are key to this set of discourses, which are upheld by the institutional effort to promote mutual understanding

and common humanity. Highland places value on the work that young people do to manage everyday life with diverse others and resolve the conflicts that ensue and, through this, makes claims about how young people develop meaningful relationships with diverse people, who personalize distant places and whose humanity confirms what is shared in common.

Empathy makes up 14.7% of total references within the corpus. The theme emerges primarily within discussions of the institutional supports that foster it. Within the references to empathy, 41% refer to residential life and 48.5% refer to extra-curricular programming, particularly those associated with travel and voluntarism, outdoor activity and engagement with environmental issues, or conflict resolution and learning about political conflicts around the world.³⁵ Discourses about these components of the school highlight how young people engage in activities that expose “deep prejudices” and “uncomfortable truths” about how others live, which ultimately change a person’s perspectives on people and places that at first appeared foreign. It is through the activities that young people engage in at Highland that empathy, as well as the labour of transposition that characterizes it, is defined. Let us delve more deeply by considering the institutional supports for it.

Living together is the first component. Highland seeks to be a “lighthouse” in a world that too often encourages intolerance and misunderstanding. As one report states it: “We bring young people from all around the world into this isolated little place [...] and this does something to us: the world becomes smaller, and you realize that you have a friend in almost every corner of the world.” Teachers refer to Highland as a “social experiment” and a “bubble” in which young people of diverse backgrounds may meet, hash out their differences, and ideally become friends. Tabitha explains that life in such a diverse community necessitates a more empathic stance:

When we come to a place like this, students come with expectations and prejudices, we all do, the staff and the students, and in a world like ours I think it’s absolutely essential that we can have places like this where people can meet safely, and in an environment where we’re saying, “just listen to each other.” You don’t have to accept everything you hear but just sit down and open your heart and open your mind and open your ears, and listen. And what you learn will probably

³⁵ The remaining references (10.6%) refer to empathy as a component of the school ethos, without mentioning the explicit contexts in which empathy is fostered.

surprise you, it may shock you, initially, but ultimately you're going to get to know people, some of whom are going to be your friends for life. And it will change the way you see things, it will rock your world and it may be uncomfortable at times. But it will enrich you enormously.

The conditions for empathy are seen as emerging out of the very locale of the school itself, a space simultaneously characterized by its existence as a global village and its rootedness as a boarding school in a rural setting where people must deal with one another. Such qualities are bolstered by Highland's commitment to make the dorm rooms as ethnically and geographically diverse as possible, which is meant to supply a space in which empathy is fostered through the multitude of negotiations that go into organizing the details of daily life together. For one teacher, Lucia, if young people live up to the requirement of living together, the reward is great:

What people learn for their life is in their residence, in sharing, in teamwork, and so on. In actually having to work and having to live with people from totally different cultures. Because for students, when you mention some country, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, they will always have a face in their minds. And not just one, probably two because they've been here two years. [...] They will know these political issues and know a face from here and a face from here. And in that sense it is a bit easier for them to be willing to see both sides [of a conflict], if they connect a country with a face, with a friend or somebody.

Young people become empathic because far-off places transform into the homes of friends and, as we will see in Chapter 6, conflicts taking place in the outside world become dramatic events on campus because they implicate the lives of fellow students with whom one lives. In the context of the international school, "having a face" to attach to a previously unknown or strange place is a practical step in developing empathy; the correspondence of a place with the particularities of a friend or roommate become intertwined with narratives of how bonds of friendship and solidarity form.

Young people are also asked to understand what is shared in common while carrying out the rigorous work required of them at Highland. The underlying principle is that experiencing difficulty allows a young person to acquire the capacity to see through the particularities of their own geographical and national contexts towards a common humanity, and understand what is shared across difference. There are reports that detail the work that young people do that elicit this stance. One girl whose family moved from Somalia to Sweden did volunteer work in a Somali community where young girls her age are not permitted to go to school and explains that, "I felt impotent, frustrated, and

extremely sad because many Somali girls my age cannot go to school and I just imagined that if we had not moved from there to Sweden I would have been one of them.” A boy who participated in a project that promoted Israeli-Palestinian cooperation describes a “moral spirit” that emerged from the experience, stating that “people are people are people. People and the different countries in which they live are not strangers to me anymore.”

Another component of empathy as common humanity is that shared trials and tribulations bring a recognition of the fact that, regardless of the things that make young people different, people rely on one another to get by. On residential life in the dorms, a report details how difficult it is to live alongside others, but that young people may learn to do so by recognizing that they are on “equal terms,” where daily life together can proceed smoothly only on the recognition of “mutual dependency in coexistence.”³⁶ The recognition of mutual dependence is echoed in a description of an outdoor expedition. One report describes an experience of camping in a snow cave that the participants built together. The narrative scene is accompanied by a photograph in which two boys, one from Lesotho and another from Western Sahara, lay close together on a mat in a small hollowed-out shelter. The Lesothan lays prone with his head in his hands, wearing several warm layers and tucked into a sleeping bag. He smiles as he looks on at the work of his Sahrawi companion, who lies before a silver platter that holds six small cups of tea. One can tell by the image that the boys are sharing in a ritual: Sahrawi tea is an intricate drink made by pouring sweet tea back and forth between cups and teapot in order to create a foamy top layer. It is a ritual of Sahrawi hospitality. The boys are notable because they are examples of empathic cooperation in action: the combination of the cold, the labour involved in building the cave, and the discomfort of camping outdoors means that working together is a “pragmatic necessity” that emphasizes common humanity “across boundaries” of language and nation, as well as the restrictive norms of gender, race, and ethnicity. According to this logic, in the face of nature, social divisions become immaterial and socio-historical specificities get stripped away or are viewed in their proper perspective: as less significant than what can be gained from shedding these

³⁶ It is important to note that the analysis here is to offer a typology of characteristics that constitute the young global citizen – and thus delving more deeply into how young people are indeed not on “equal terms” is beyond the scope of this chapter. This is a question that is taken up in later chapters.

distinctions and working together. Empathy is elicited by the recognition that people need one another to manage difficult circumstances and survive. Thus, putting young people in difficult situations is good for them because in working together, they recognize what they share in common.

Framed in Tabitha's terms, young people meet in the "safety" of the school and develop empathic qualities, which is akin to the requirement of openness at the heart of discernment: they must demonstrate a willingness to work together and understand one another, and to be changed in the process. We see here what empathy adds to discernment. As young people encounter conflict and adversity at Highland, it is intended that they come to possess not only knowledge of, but also an ethical stance toward, others. The limit of discernment is that it requires that people only be open enough to acquire knowledge about others; they need not accept diversity or transform their own practices. Empathy is meant to elicit acceptance and the development of a transformative feeling toward diverse others, but it, too, is not without limits. While empathy may elicit common and solidaristic feelings toward a *particular* person who previously felt like a stranger, it may not result in a capacity or willingness to see *any* other as oneself, whether it is other people in the group from which one's friend derives or other groups of strangers. As we will see in Chapter 4, so powerful is the norm that young people demonstrate understanding and tolerance, it creates concerns over what Duke calls "the faker," who pretends to possess these qualities while at Highland and for whom graduation from the school means no longer having to pretend. But these concerns over the authenticity of expressions of empathy only solidify its importance to the construction of the international student turned global citizen. Taken out of their home contexts, against which the "safe" space of Highland is contrasted, young people are freed up to face one another in a place where the challenge is not one's familial and national pressures, but everyday life with other young people who may do and say things that are foreign but who, with the help of some concerted engagement, can become friends who transform the way one looks at and experiences the world. Young people "have a face" to attach to all the diversity in the world, and can realize that more is shared in common than meets the eye.

Action

The norm of action draws attention to what the young person does rather than what they know or feel. The active young person is a *doer*, an agent who, as one report details, suffers not from “spectatoritis,” a condition that describes those who passively observe, but rather understands the need to contribute meaningfully vis-à-vis one’s capacity for personal service. The particular form of action valued here is neither self-interested nor equivocal in its ends. Rather, the definition of “good” kinds action – oriented toward personal service – is key to this quality, since it delineates a series of priorities, obligations, and commitments to pursuits that are deemed significant in an international arena.

Action makes up 29.4% of total references in the corpus. Included in this theme are descriptions of the qualities active young people possess (53.7% of references within the theme of action) as well as the kinds of activities that they engage in (30.3% of references within the theme of action). There are references to “being active” and “active participation” in events and projects, which are articulated alongside statements that Highlanders not only learn about social issues, they also act in relation to them. The valuation of “concrete action” over the comfort of “theoretical” engagement with ideas is important in the narratives. One report highlights a Malagasy girl who, from a young age, understood the need to help others. The report highlights the leadership she showed in an extra-curricular program that raised funds for a school in Madagascar, and concludes with a statement that, “More than ideas, if we want to make a difference, we need action.” Set against knowledge without action, young people demonstrate “initiative,” take “responsibility” and, as a result, begin to see themselves as “catalysts for change.”

A common denominator in discussions of action is that young Highlanders meet the conditions of “service” or “serving others.” What kinds of “service” constitute the actions that young Highlanders take, and what institutional supports are in place?

Highland requires young people to give their time to projects that range from service to the campus community to those involving the various partnerships the school has with local and international NGOs, humanitarian organizations, and charities. As outlined in the introduction to this dissertation, the school day runs from 8 AM to 2 PM each day. Each week’s agenda is consistently filled with guest speakers, special events, and

lectures, and there are announcements of initiatives beginning and ending, and visitors coming and going. For young people, each weekday includes at least one extra-academic activity, which normally begins 15 minutes after the school day ends and can last until 9 PM, at times making the day more than 12 hours long.

During my fieldwork, I was struck by the sheer level of participation that characterizes the young person's experience at Highland. The level of service is broad ranging: firstly, on the campus level, students take on certain responsibilities, which include cleaning classrooms and maintaining classroom equipment; carrying out various campus duties, such as lifeguarding, recycling, and servicing the communal campus bikes; helping staff with administrative work; and peer tutoring. Second, to graduate with an IB from Highland, young people must commit to be members of at least two student-led groups. In fulfilling this requirement, a variety of activities are available. Young people can volunteer at the local refugee reception centre where they spend time with asylum applicants; they can lead activities at a rehabilitation centre, leading parasports, yoga, dancing, crafts, and simply spending time with people with disabilities and those recovering from injuries. They may also participate in the charities and organizations that run within the school, including a local chapter of Amnesty International, a gender and sexuality group, a charity that raises funds for projects in developing countries, and another that raises funds to support children's rights and education in developing countries. Third, there are project-based learning weeks and "global concerns" days, which are annual events that vary in scope but which allow students to organize and engage in more than forty activities ranging from language and culture classes, Model United Nations, debating humanitarian issues, and learning how to maintain an eco-village. The kinds of service valued in this range of activities are oriented locally, at the campus level, where young people are expected to take care of the place where they live, as well as globally, where they may act on the world outside campus, serving others who are in need.

The prodigious array of projects with which young people occupy themselves is justified by the belief that action allows them to discover how to make meaningful change while they are young – the key antidote to "spectatoritis." Through action, young people learn to conceive projects from scratch and see them to fruition, getting important

training in fundraising, public speaking, interpersonal skills and leadership, lobbying and influencing, as well as “hands-on” experience (one report details a project during which Highlanders dug a foundation, poured concrete, painted walls, and carried supplies while rebuilding a school). One teacher explains that programs like the ones described above are meant to instill the pragmatic skills needed to see a project to fruition. She uses the example of a student-led charity in which members raise funds for specific projects in their home country:

Students get an idea, they go to their local community, they talk to people, they talk about what’s wanted, what’s needed. And they say, “Can [I] get a little bit of money for this, can I get labour,” so the local community is invested. They come back [to Highland], present a proposal, another skill there, make a presentation, get the money, take it home, do something with it, actually make it happen, take pictures, document it, come back, inspire others. Showing students that they can do more than they think they can. It’s not just something other people can do. So if we can send students out at the end of two years thinking, “I can do something, I can make a difference, I shouldn’t just sit back and wait for someone else to do it. I can do this! I have these skills!” We can empower students so that when they leave here, they’re not saying, “Oh, I don’t know how to do this,” or “That’s not me.” They’re young but they should have started learning some of these skills.

The ultimate success of the active young person – or more accurately, evidence of their formation – is rooted in the extent to which young people discover within themselves their own unique interests and potential for action.

Implicit in these discourses is the danger of action oriented toward instrumental self-interest. There are forms of action that do not meet the requirements of service, and are therefore devalued. The concern over what students do is revealing for the unique form that the global citizen takes in the context of an educational institution, where studying and certification goes on. A common tension that arose in the documents as well as interviews with teachers was that between the amount of time young people spend on coursework and that on the kinds of activities detailed above. As already mentioned, Highland prides itself on functioning as more than a gateway to university. This belief figures prominently in expectations placed upon young people, who ought not see the school instrumentally, as well as in conceptions of the school’s overall worth and utility

(for instance, in how to rationalize investing so much money on so few young people).³⁷ In one report that follows a hectic exam period, the principal describes complaints he received that, “Some students were not fully participating in the extra-[curricular] programs and focusing too much on academic study.” The principal then added that, “These are equally alarming signs for any school but especially [Highland].” In the time I spent with teachers, curricular demands were often represented as secondary to the broader interests of Highland, which supersede the singular goal of high academic achievement. In the documents, the subsumption of academic success to action and service to others appears in 15.9% instances of action. The value of the school is often framed in terms of what young people do *despite* the real pressures they face to achieve academically. In this way, evidence of action is a core logic through which the school legitimates itself. The active young person is active in particular ways and towards particular ends – not for grades, a competitive IB score, or university entrance, but an immersion in a network of relationships and institutions whose primary purpose is to serve and make change.

Action at Highland represents the activation of a broad range of networks in which the school is involved, which have material benefits for the young people who partake in them. This network is made up of local, national, and international bodies that Highlanders have access to and serve within, and include the United Nations, UNICEF, the Red Cross, and organizations that work with people with disabilities, the poor, and those affected by political conflict. There are scholarships to which the students have access that allow them to travel and study overseas; they may gain valued experience volunteering abroad, and may access exchange programs with organizations that work with vulnerable populations. Akin to the market logics well-captured in the literature on IE, becoming active means accruing capacities that are personally advantageous in terms of building one’s social capital and habitus (Bourdieu 1986). Young people build and are absorbed into a network of prestigious local and international contacts that they can call upon when looking for work or letters of recommendation; they become travelers, capable of moving to new and unfamiliar places with the notion that they have something to offer; they are trained in the work of leadership, accustomed to meeting and speaking

³⁷ This point will be discussed in the final section of this chapter, on investment.

with people in positions of power and with those they seek to serve; they gain a sense of entitlement, believing that they are capable of influencing others and deserving to be heard, whether it is to affect policy or elicit ever-needed funds; they learn to speak of the experience of all the things they have done and are doing, all of which set them apart in important ways from other young people who have not had such experiences.

What is important here is that action in the sense that Highland is constructing it is always in danger of being reduced to instrumental self-interest, reproducing the market logic described in Chapter 2. Like the two dispositions outlined above, whose drawbacks manifest in requiring little reflexivity (discernment) and having to ‘fake’ one’s way through (empathy), service to others may become an activity done only for one’s personal benefit. Yet because young people are subject to denunciations of certain acts, like too much studying, and are represented, as one report does, as foregoing their “own comforts” to serve others, the personal benefits that accrue appear incidental and are therefore elided. In the next section on investment, what young people ought *not* to be becomes more explicit.

Investment

A prominent component of Highland’s ethos is the power of investing in the young, who are believed to represent the future. In return, Highland expects its graduates to demonstrate an investment in the school’s mission as they go out into the world. As a characteristic that exhibits a young person’s ongoing commitment to the values that they learn at Highland, investment represents the successful internalization of each of the characteristics before it. Equipped with the tools of discernment, empathy, and activity, young people have a sense of having been given something valuable and having become something valuable. They are themselves an investment. The discourses of investment deal most with the question of what young people *become*, since they are concerned primarily with a future over which the school has little control, but which it nonetheless seeks to shape. I take the narrative of investment as manifesting itself primarily through a series of affective discourses that are meant to remind the young of the institutional supports that they have been given and which make an imperative of the obligations and motivations one should take with them long after the two years at Highland are over.

Investment makes up 18.7% of total references in the corpus. Investment operates through claims of the particular kind of graduate Highland produces and the anticipation of the particular returns that may be expected in the future. The nature of the investment is at times explicit (appearing in 17.9% of references within the theme of investment) and involves making a connection between the resources that are devoted to young people and the expected contribution in the form of social change:

[Students receive] scholarship support [...] with the anticipation that they will deliver a return on the money invested in them through their future impact, as citizens of the world who [make] their communities better, both large and small.

The generosity of the institution, adds another report, is “part of an investment” as young people “become international figures who will fight for fair societies based on [Highland’s] ideals.” The notion of how young people will be useful in creating a better future – which is here defined as one oriented toward intercultural understanding, peace, humanitarian service, and environmental sustainability – is prominent in the documents, making up 82.1% of references within the theme of investment, alongside explanations of how Highlanders in particular are fit for the task. Reports detail how Highlanders become global citizens, leaders, and ambassadors for a better future, who “give back” and thus demonstrate an “enduring commitment” to the institutional values. Profiles of the good work Highland alumni are doing demonstrate the centrality of this enduring commitment, since they are presented as evidence that young people understand that they have been given a “valuable asset” and have internalized the need to give something back.

In the narrative of becoming on which investment relies, much hinges on a young person’s ability to see themselves as capable of making change. A good investment is reliant on a young person’s aspirations and self-esteem, and the drive for self-actualization. Part of the work of investment is, as one report explains, “finding resources” in young people and making them “participants” in the relevant areas of social life, as well as encouraging young people to do the personal work of delineating the spheres in which they will exercise and deepen their self-worth. For some teachers, this work is in tension with the ideals of the school, which they perceive as somewhat abstract and difficult to assimilate. One teacher, Gunvor, prioritizes the development of personal attributes over the values of peace and environmental sustainability:

I think it is very important [...] that you discover yourself, and you get kind of self-respect and self-confidence. That you are something, that you can do something. And sometimes you are sitting with students where you are saying you have to – this is your chance. You have to fulfill this education, you have to leave home, you have to see yourself as an independent person. It is only that way you can help, for example, your mom out of misery. I think this is just as important as peace and sustainable environment. That you help these individuals to believe that they are something, and they can contribute in some way.

For other teachers, self-actualization and the realization of the lofty ideals are one and the same. In a remarkable conversation I had with Alex, a Black teacher from an African country, students from African countries are compared to African leaders who fought for political independence:

When Africa became politically independent, there was a group of [...] soldiers who met in the war and they actually decided no, if freedom is good for everybody else, freedom is good for us. That's how their independence movement started. So that was political independence. Africa now, the next stage is economic and social independence, and that's something [our students] must be able to see and work towards, and start working among themselves as Africans but also bring in their brothers and sisters from around the world who are also interested [...]. So I think this place is an opportunity to do this networking, to create opportunities on the continent, and also for other people outside.

Alex exhibits a strong conviction that his students can become great leaders. Because of its capacity to congregate students from around the world, he sees Highland as specially positioned to build young people up to aspire to make change: “I think our job is to get them to seize the opportunity, so with the African group it's to get them to think of, for me the big thing is entrepreneurship. Social entrepreneurship. That the world is richer than ever before [...]. We need to start working, form friendships, partnerships, that will let people know your countries and the continent better.”

There is an implicit yet imperative leap in both Gunvor and Alex's narratives. Investment is a precondition for the realization of the school's ideals, but one must possess the necessary confidence – as Gunvor says, to “believe that they are something” to aspire to become a leader of the future. Yet like the characteristics before it, the invested young person ought not to use their aspirations to advance selfish interests, but must manifest their self-worth outward, whether it is to help someone “out of misery” or to take their budding entrepreneurialism back home and “create opportunities” on a continent. In doing so they produce a positive return which, for the school, translates into

giving back in a variety of capacities, to one's family, one's community, one's country, and globally.

The valuation of certain pursuits over others, as well as the concern that young people ought not pursue self-interest, is a strong theme in discourses of investment. Nowhere is this more present than in discussions of what graduates go on to do for work. Teachers are aware that the work they do at Highland can be used in the singular pursuit of personal advancement and thus delineate legitimate occupations for alumni. When asked about what they would like students to do after graduation, teachers were initially hesitant to foreclose the possibilities for young people's professional lives. Yet when asked to consider types of work that fit with the values at Highland, teachers did reveal a hierarchy of roles. One teacher, Gilles, introduced for me the idea of students who go on "to do something Highlander-ish," which prompted a conversation about the professional roles that he believes deserve this designation:

I'll give you some examples [from alumni]. One is a researcher working on Human Rights Watch in China in quite risky situations. One woman works in Denmark, she was working with the Danish Red Cross, and now she's working for a private organization that works with unaccompanied minor refugees mostly from Afghanistan. One is working for UNICEF, another is in Dakar doing a project for the World Bank on health care reform there [...]. And then you'll have sort of grey areas which is like, doctors and teachers, which depending on what their motivation is and what exactly they're doing could be quite [Highlander-ish] or not.

Other teachers reflect on their most memorable students: one who "is a doctor at a private hospital in Addis Ababa that serves the expat community and wealthy Ethiopians, but he also donates 12 hours a week of his time to run clinics for free to the local people who can't pay." Another teacher offered a story of a student who was "really into Scandinavian mythology" and became a cognitive psychologist who is "wanting to work with heroin addicts," and another who "is poor but enjoys making abstract documentaries about aspects of the human experience." In contrast, it is the young person who serves the very language of investment, the investment banker, who represents the failed investment. The figure of the investment banker, situated firmly at the bottom of the hierarchy, appeared in my discussions with teachers as the ultimate expression of the young person's absorption into a future in which personal enrichment is chosen over service to the common good. What binds these roles together is that they are positively or

negatively assessed according to the extent to which they achieve an amalgamation of discernment, empathy, activity and investment in the school's values. It is this amalgam that constitutes criteria for the collective return and thus the good investment.

Investment is therefore both delicate and risky. One report articulates the concern as a choice that faces graduates about their academic path after Highland. In pursuing particular subjects over others, the report explains, young people may mistakenly believe that success comes from wealth, and this report mentions economics in particular as one such questionable path. The report ends with a cautionary note, asking young people to choose whatever direction they please but to interrogate their "deepest motives" before settling. This cautionary note highlights the tension at the very core of the institution: in an attempt to cultivate investment in young people, it introduces them to dispositions and cultures, such as a knowledge of and ease with diverse cultural practices, 'emotional intelligence,' as well as access to exclusive networks, that are desirable in the worlds of wealth and privilege (Gaztambide-Fernández 2009; Khan 2011; Van Zanten 2015). Yet the truly invested person is capable of scrutinizing their deep motives, and acting and choosing differently. Without a commitment to being invested in the school's values, young people pursue merely personal gains, rendering Highland and its central agent - the global citizen - a failed project. Yet without the stories of the self-actualized individuals who were touched upon here, the school loses the appealing narratives of those great leaders, change-makers, and ambassadors that they have in part created.

Conclusion

We may return to the central tension at the heart of the institution, and the ways in which the qualities of the global citizen represent a potential reconciliation of this tension. Gilles told me about an exchange he had with an Ethiopian secretary of education. After conversing with him about how Highland brings diverse young people from around the world together to study and live together, the cost of the school came up, and Gilles explains that, "you could see the numbers churning in his head, and he said 'do you know that what it costs, the budget for that school, I could run 25 schools here in Ethiopia for the same.'" For Gilles, the exchange elicited a need to justify the school according to the extent to which its graduates could manifest Highland's values in their

adult lives. In his words, “the value-added so to speak of a place like this, or what it could be, is it should help the student figure out how to put those lofty ideals into practice in their lives.” He goes on:

So that whole thing I told you about the Ethiopian minister, that’s one of those things I would always tell students, to make them think, oh, you know, am I worth it? But you don’t get that far with guiltting students and saying, ‘oh you should really have a sense of responsibility,’ or ‘you are needed so you better go do something.’ There’s got to be a passion behind it, right? ‘Cause that’s a really strong motivation, if somebody really wants to do something. You know how it is if you’re a teacher, you can help students to become motivated but you can’t motivate them, they’ve got to do it themselves. It’s got to come from somewhere, right? I want students to find their passion, and if I’m at [Highland] I want to get lots of students who are more likely to be passionate about Highland-type stuff. Once you recognize that motivation in a student, or that passion, it’s easy to work with, right, cause you’ve got something to work with.

The ideal Highlander is one who is “easy to work with,” since their motivations coincide with and can be fostered by the school. Rather than acting according to guilt or coercion, teachers may recognize a “passion” within young people that orients them toward “Highland-type stuff” and advance this passion by allotting a series of valuable resources. The young person turned global citizen is aware of what they have been given, and thus understands the impetus to give back and make change. It is only on this basis that the disparity between the opportunities afforded to Highlanders and those afforded to the majority of students elsewhere is defensible. The young person is told that they have been given something unique, something both financially costly and morally enriching. They must then ask, to recall Gilles’ words, “am I worth it?”

Though this question is beyond the scope of the current study, the extent to which this imperative applies equally to students from disparate parts of the world is an open question. If indeed it is true that young people are meant to see themselves as potential leaders who are capable of going home to produce positive change, who among them experiences a greater sense of urgency or pressure to see themselves as an investment, and who experiences the greater burden of debt? From Alex’s narrative above, it seems that young Highlanders from African countries experience such a burden of responsibility, which introduces the possibility that they experience it disproportionately to young people who are from places in which “opportunities” need not be created by

great leaders. The question remains: who feels most acutely the need to ask, “am I worth it?”

As mentioned above, there is an awareness within the institution that in allocating such abundant resources to young people, Highland sets up conditions that can both realize and undermine the core values of the school. Because of this tension between core logics, Highland advances novel discourses that constitute “legitimizing accounts” (Suddaby & Greenwood 2005), at the centre of which is the figure of the global citizen. Such legitimating accounts are necessary: the school exists in a contemporary moment in which national systems of schooling are being weakened by defunding at the same time that internationalized school forms, which are allotted much more resources but are harder to access, are growing (Resnik 2009). Gilles’ encounter with the minister of education is a case in point: Gilles is called to task by the minister and, in response, Gilles justifies the work of the school by asserting that his students are passionate about valuable institutional norms. As the minister churns numbers, Gilles recognizes the danger that the school merely reproduces privilege. In response, he evokes passion and commitment, values that are reflected in the four qualities highlighted in this chapter. As the analysis in this chapter shows, the institution reconciles the tension between market and egalitarian logics through the figure of the young international student turned global citizen, who is committed to discernment, empathy, activity, and investment, characteristics that they will take with them as they go out into the world.

This analysis adds to current understandings of international education as well as the organizational processes by which global citizenship is defined because it creates analytical avenues to understand how schools like Highland and the actors within them are, in practice, devising ways to reconcile central institutional tensions in more or less durable ways. The figure of the global citizen is a composite of all four characteristics, which together achieve an important set of correctives for the errant iterations of each characteristic. Discernment alone can be reduced to cultural omnivorousness, where myriad cultural artifacts and practices are on equal footing for engagement and consumption (Khan 2011; Emmison 2003). Nothing need be felt for such cultures, only what can be gleaned, learned, and enjoyed. In the worst case, they can be exploited (see

Kendall, Woodward & Skrbis 2009: 102).³⁸ Empathy as a norm of the institution raises the concern over those who might be “faking it,” pretending their way through relationships until they are no longer beholden to criteria of belonging that are in part premised on understanding difference. Activity and investment can serve self-interest if left unchecked, and can be oriented toward personal enrichment rather than egalitarian ends. However, in the mutual company of each, a formidable figure emerges: one who possesses the knowledge of what diversity looks like, who feels a bond with diverse others, who understands the need for service and knows how to get things done, and who is invested in the values underlying these disparate ends. Thus the global citizen serves as a legitimating and reconciliatory narrative through which particular institutional tensions are held in place and certain supports and resources are oriented and justified.

³⁸ This is also reflected in the work of Ortega (2006), who quotes Lugones on ‘agonistic’ world-travelling, which, even though it is about meeting and getting to know difference, is nonetheless tied to “conquest, domination, and erasure” (Ortega 2006: 69).

Chapter 4

Terms of Engagement: Speech and Silence in Cross-Cultural Encounters

This chapter is about the practices of speech and silence in cross-cultural encounters at Highland. For young people, representing oneself and finding out about others is preceded by the unsettling process of learning about the variety of ways to live. In the diverse context of the school, young people find themselves in situations where the terms of engagement – down to minute details of how to greet one another – are no longer given, in an institution that requires of them that they figure it out. There is a question that hangs in the often split decision about how and whether to engage with people who are different about their differences. If dialogue is the primary way in which young people get by in a multicultural milieu, what is permissible in the interaction? When to close one's mouth to keep the peace, when to speak and risk conflict? When to feign a kind of effortlessness, and when to acknowledge the discomfort of the act of understanding, to admit to the unsettling business of cultural difference?

Young people use strategies of speech and silence in the everyday negotiation of three interactional challenges: 1) immersing oneself in difference given the ever-present existence of dominant cultural and linguistic norms, and the existence of unequal competencies in each; 2) accommodating positions and identities that one disagrees with or finds intolerable; and 3) negotiating the belief that intercultural understanding means accepting all positions as equally valid and, consequently, where the line is blurred between what is offensive and what is a legitimate, if uncomfortable, line of inquiry.

I approach speech and silence as practices that are both intersubjective and culturally patterned, and thus as crucial to what openness and understanding look like and how recognition plays out in the context of the international school. They are intersubjective to the extent that they are social ways of figuring out how to get by with others. A person's silence in one context may be their topic of discussion in another, and the series of decisions and rationales involved in this kind of compartmentalizing process are central features of this chapter. Speech and silence are culturally patterned to the extent that they are asymmetrically employed and can tell us something about how inequalities manifest themselves in the subtle decisions of when to speak or remain silent.

Speech and silence are strategies chosen and obliged according to one's social position, cultural beliefs, and to one's distance from dominant positions. To speak is not necessarily or primarily a position of privilege, but it is chosen and enjoyed for particular reasons according to identity and capability.³⁹

This chapter contributes to research that identifies the dispositions of openness to difference and willingness to engage in difference as key components of cosmopolitan practice (Hannerz 1990; Kendall, Woodward & Skrbiš 2009; Noble 2013; Skey 2012; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt 2018; Szersynski & Urry 2006; Vertovec & Cohen 2002) and everyday multicultures (Ho 2011; Harris 2013; Wise & Velayutham 2009). These literatures qualify the development of an open attitude toward others as necessarily involving forms of sociability that are mundane, temporal (and temporary), and situated. Kendall, Woodward and Skrbiš (2009) discuss openness and engagement as grounded in everyday experience but “observable in people’s outlooks and practices” (100) as a set of competencies and dispositions; Szersynski and Urry (2006) locate cosmopolitan dispositions and practices in extensive mobility, the capacity to consume and be curious about places and environments, and a willingness to appreciate the language and culture of others (114). In empirically grounded and ethnographic analyses, scholars find ordinary people engaging with people and goods in ways that broaden their affiliations to distant others. Noble (2013) highlights the “performative” habits of cosmopolitan openness in an Australian school, detailing the collective effervescence elicited at an annual performance in which young people of Indian, Kenyan, and Chinese-Malay backgrounds parody white contestants of *Australian Idol*. Noble argues that the event, and the intercultural “togetherness” that it involves, can be read as what Amin (2008: 16) calls “solidarity in a minor key.” Harris’ (2013) empirical work in a multicultural town describes how young people immerse themselves in unfamiliar practices and engage in

³⁹ I analyze intergroup, rather than intragroup, encounters because there are usually only one or two people from each country at Highland. I analyze encounters between young people who hold different beliefs, and the dominant and subordinate positions that emerge as a result. In addition, young people learn about diversity through a variety of topics, including sexuality, religion, and encountering common teenage experiences with sex and drinking. But what unites all these ways of learning about others is that young people negotiate them in the moment they decide to speak or remain silent. I therefore focus on the *form* these interactions take, rather than on the specific *content*. I do this because I want to analyze the strategies that young people use to get by with others on matters that highlight their differences.

efforts to welcome people into an inter-ethnic fold in order to connect across difference. These “transversal enablers,” as Wise (2009) calls them, are people who “go out of their way to foster everyday relationships across cultural difference” (Harris 2013: 52), including intercultural knowledge exchange and the production of spaces of intercultural care.

While indeed the “positive” and action-based components of engagement are well-theorized in this research, the “negative” practices, like silence and refraining from action, are under-theorized. The existent research calls attention to everyday arrangements as well as to the coexistence of connection and social division, but often investigates these phenomena through the relative presence of positive actions of dialogue, solidarity, and enabling connections, which have at their core the decision to act in the cross-cultural encounter. I argue that forms of silence are equally important indicators of the presence of particular social divisions as well as how young people demonstrate openness to others. Existing literature in intercultural communication in education locates speech and silence within cultural practices of talking and find, for instance, that the preoccupation with speech is a notably Western one (Kim & Markus 2005) and that silence at school is often rooted in ethnic and racial traditions and resistance to dominant cultures (Bao 2014; Ha & Li 2014; Jaworski 1993; Kato 2010). But the institutional context at Highland is an important element in my analysis of the role that speech and silence play in negotiating intercultural work. I argue that young people use speech and silence to reconcile their social position with the edicts of the school, a strategy that allows them to continue to see themselves as open and as embodying the school’s goals at the same time that they exhibit behaviours indicative of their own marginalization or that of others. Speech and silence are integral to understanding how young people act in ways that contradict popular conceptions of openness by, for instance, ignoring or feeling compelled to ignore certain differences, but still considering themselves as progressive actors. In this way, patterns of speech *and* silence reveal the complex coexistence of cosmopolitan practice and the formation of everyday social divisions, and are indicative of the uneven labour involved in demonstrating openness and understanding.

I take from literatures that examine the meanings associated with leaving something

alone, whether it be silence and silencing that results from cross-cultural encounters (Harris 2013: 89; Noble 2009a), or the symbolic use of silence, indifference, and inaction (Goffman 1959; Goffman 1963; Zerubavel 2006) as pathways to allow others to live their lives and, for the individual employing them, to demonstrate one's ability or willingness to overlook "sensitive" issues. I argue that we need a greater theorization of the decision or pressure not to act in a cross-cultural encounter. What young people refrain from doing is just as important to cosmopolitan practice as are observable acts of engagement.

The Terms of Engagement

In this first section, I offer an opening illustration of the three interactional challenges at play. The event detailed here features a number of young people using speech and silence to manage intercultural interactions. I take three thematic landmarks from this narrative and use them to explore the three interactional challenges listed above. The thematic landmarks are: 1) the moment when Peter decides to speak even though he understands he is speaking against a majority; 2) the moment when Nils and Peter talk to one another and articulate the importance of silence in order to accommodate what they believe to be irreconcilable differences; 3) the warning that no one should offend anyone during the event and the moment when a girl is asked to leave because she says something that is deemed offensive. They are important because they highlight the simultaneity of the labour of taking action and refraining from action in the cross-cultural encounter.

Ekeby Hall is an auditorium inside the main building at Highland. The building sits at the bottom of a hill that leads to the centre of campus, and houses the cafeteria, some offices, the library, and Ekeby Hall. The building, like most on campus, has a saltbox exterior with wooden clapboard siding, this one stained a deep red. Next to the door of the building, there is a large plaque that features intertwined globes adjoining the Western and Eastern hemispheres, above them the words HIGHLAND, below them the words COOPERATION | HUMANITY | PEACE. The prompt is restated inside Ekeby Hall. Large flags from every country are draped around the upper rim of the room, about 200 seats affixed to the floor with fold-away desks descend into the lower bowl, where a

single lectern sits in front of a large screen. The windows look out over water, and the room is always well-lit. Together these things elicit the ceremony of diplomatic assemblies and the etiquette of university lecture halls. The room suggests that important things will go on inside. In fact, when I am invited there on a Friday night in October, it is for precisely this reason: I have come to Highland to learn something about cross-cultural encounters, and I am invited that night on the promise that regarding such encounters, “it should be good.”

The topic is abortion, the forum part of a student-led weekly series called *In the World* in which Highlanders get together to debate a current issue. *In the World* shows up frequently in the narratives that young people offer about living with difference. An American girl tells me that of all the events on campus it is here in Ekeby Hall at *In the World* that she can really see the differences among students, that like sit with like, as if differences of opinion become physically manifest in where people decide to sit. Another tells me that she is most aware here of the international community of which she is a part, and what she permits herself to say or not say is tempered by this awareness. A boy tells me that he likes it because he can give his opinion to the widest possible audience in one go.

When organizers of *In the World* anticipate controversy, they lay out some ground rules. This night the rule is that everyone should respect the opinion of others. When the organizers say that disrespectful or offensive comments will be shut down, there is confusion over what constitutes an offence in a discussion like this. Is it possible to ensure no offence when discussing something so loaded? One organizer clarifies that if you offend someone’s religion, you will be asked to apologize. Who the arbiter will be of what is offensive remains unclear. Whether or not someone is brave enough to admit that they are offended is an open question. The organizers do not talk at length, only offering a survey of arguments for and against abortion, which they display on the screen: on one side, a woman’s right over her body and to choose what happens to it; on the other, the belief, ascribed to religion, that life begins at conception, and that abortion is a deprivation of future life. They open discussion up to the floor.

Mari, a Swedish second year,⁴⁰ is the first to speak. “This debate shouldn’t be about whether it’s right or wrong, but about safe and unsafe abortions. They happen all over the world anyway, so we should be asking about how to make sure that women have access to safe abortions.” Most audience members wave their hands in agreement.⁴¹

There is some silence, some nervous laughter. Mari has already circumscribed the terms of engagement – abortion is right, now how do we go about doing it safely? – leaving the crowd to consider whether to address Mari’s comment or move in a new direction.

A Palestinian boy asks, “what if she didn’t want to get pregnant, but the condom broke? People might get abortions just because it’s easy.”

A few people laugh dismissively. “*Huh?*” one of them responds. In his imperfect English, the Palestinian clarifies that making abortion widely available might make the decision to get one glib. Another Palestinian sitting beside him named Malik speaks, trying to clarify on his friend’s behalf. “Yes, it shouldn’t be just for fun getting an abortion.”

A Latin American girl responds quickly, “I don’t think anyone would have an abortion for fun.” At this many wave their hands.

A boy sitting near her, also Latin American, raises his hand. “Education is really important, too. Abortion is not a contraceptive method. There needs to be sex education and people need to learn about safe sex. I learned all that stuff back home and there was no question. People are going to have sex anyway, so if there’s education, maybe the worry over abortion wouldn’t be so great, because women would know how to prevent getting pregnant in the first place.”

Malik speaks again. “I think why is it only a woman’s decision? There are two people who make a baby. What if the woman at first says that she’s going to have the baby, but then has an abortion later on? When does abortion become illegal? I think that abortion could be legal in the first two months, but after that, no. After that you could have both the man and woman agree that it is the right thing or not.”

⁴⁰ To call someone a “first year” or “second year” refers to whether someone is in their first year or their second year at Highland. It is a common way in which young people refer to themselves. In this case, Mari is in her second, and final, year at Highland.

⁴¹ Silently waving both hands in the air is a Highland norm that allows individuals to express agreement. Clapping is too disruptive.

There is a lull in the discussion. People lower their heads and fidget, and for a moment the weight of the topic hangs in the room. One of the organizers, an American girl, asks a question to the crowd in an attempt to revive the discussion. “In the US, we have something called the *Plan B* pill that you can take that prevents pregnancy. You can take the pill up to three days after you have sex and it prevents pregnancy. Do you guys think the *Plan B* pill constitutes an abortion?”

The question prompts a strand of affirmative statements by a few girls in the room. A Norwegian says, “everything that’s available to a woman, any method, as long as it’s safe, they should all be legal for us.”

Elenor, a Danish second-year sitting near the front of the room, stands to address the crowd – one of the first to do so – her voice evocative and booming. Everyone looks at her. “Of course women should have the right to abort. This is an issue of women’s rights. Women decide what happens to their bodies. So if they don’t want their bodies to go through that, to be pregnant and then have to give up the baby if they don’t want it – that can be very hard, right? No one can make them do that. No authority can make them do that. Women have the right to abort in Denmark since the ’70’s, and they can just get one with no question about her character at all.”

Nils, Elenor’s Danish co-year,⁴² indicates that yes, in Denmark abortion is widely supported. He glances down at his phone, having searched for information online, and says that a recent survey found that 95% of Danes agree that it was indeed a right. “But,” he went on, “what about the religious argument? The lack of religion in Denmark affects how people view abortion. So obviously this means that we don’t see it as a life until much later. So I’d be interested in hearing someone who disagrees with abortion on religious grounds.”

“Yeah, what do you constitute as “life?” Malik says.

Standing alone at the back of the auditorium is Peter, an 18-year old Black Ugandan. “I would say it’s got life, it’s a human being,” he says. “Where I come from we believe the child has a soul, and that soul exists at conception.”

Breaking with decorum, Malik and the friend he earlier defended clap

⁴² “Co-year” means that a person is in the same year as someone else. In this case, Nils is Elenor’s co-year, which means that they are both in second year.

enthusiastically.

The Latin American girl who said no one has abortions for fun replies, “Personally I don’t think there’s such a thing as a soul.”

Now the room is filled with the hum of hushed voices. “This isn’t a productive conversation,” I hear someone say.

Ignoring the comments, Peter speaks again, and the hushed conversations are drowned out by his change in manner. Like Elenor, he is suddenly impassioned, moving to the top step of the auditorium so as to be seen better. He puts his hand on his chin and thinks a moment. Then: “What I mean to say is there are ways to prevent abortion. I call it abstinence. I know that young people want to have sex, and that this is part of being young. And in some places there is no such thing as teaching abstinence. It is not taught. It wasn’t part of our sex education session last week. The main theme behind that was to just make young people aware of how they can have something like safe sex.”

A boy raises his hand. “The religious argument, okay, that’s fine. But we have to decide, should we respect the individual’s right to decide? The religious argument doesn’t respect the individual’s right to decide.”

The comment seems directed at Peter, so he responds without raising his hand. Again his voice booms. “I consider it important to say, you shouldn’t be having sex if you’re not ready to get pregnant. It’s quite simple. If you’re not ready to have a baby, don’t have sex.”

At this the room clamoured with voices. A group of girls beside me laugh at the comment. A Swedish girl, audibly enough for everyone to hear, says: “*What are you talking about?*” An organizer signals for her to leave the room. She complies, understanding that she is being sent out for breaching a ground rule not to offend anyone. She shakes her head indignantly on the way out, but no one protests. Intentionally or not, the door slams behind her.

Peter tries to continue, energized perhaps by the small victory, but laughs and shakes his head as he loses his words and his train of thought. “Okay, that’s all,” he says with a smile. Sensing that he is feeling awkward about his derailing, the room offers him sympathetic hollers and applause. The rest of the meeting passes.

In the dorms after the forum, a crowd gathers in the common room. Some people make toast with jam and set out glasses of milk. Several of the people who attended the forum are there. Nils, the Dane who earlier sought out the opinion of someone religious, approaches Peter with a smile and pats him on the back, thanking him for speaking his mind. “It’s good to be challenged sometimes and hear what other people think,” alluding to the fact that Peter’s was among the only voices of opposition in that room.

“I thought it was the right thing,” Peter says. “I want to be open with everyone. But I know that when I tell people something about abstinence, I know that most of them aren’t going to believe in what I say. I know the differences between the values of different cultures, and I know they won’t go in for it.”

This spurred a discussion that was repeated many times over the course of my fieldwork. Elenor, who earlier spoke so passionately about her belief that women have the right to choose, tells Peter that she understands his dilemma, and laments that discussions often end up being about the same thing, said over and over again. A Norwegian girl agrees that more diversity in opinion is needed at *In the World* and says she is glad to hear Peter’s point of view.

A Peruvian girl replies that it is mostly Europeans who speak in these discussions. “They have a formula answer for things. This is why it’s easier for them to express their opinions.”

A Swedish girl echoes the sentiment. Her solution to this is to admit fewer Northern Europeans to the school, who “go around being very comfortable” because they “already have the school’s values on their side.” She feels bored with the monotony of what she calls “liberal, left-leaning” opinion that dominates most discussions. Of events like the forum on abortion, she says:

It’s not like we have another week that’s focusing on anything that isn’t seen as traditionally liberal or traditionally left wing, you know? We don’t have any weeks for...this week we’re going to be discussing the benefits of marriage and monogamous relationships. Like, we don’t talk about that. Whenever we approach something it’s usually in a very liberal way, and we don’t talk about [...] alternatives.

The narrative demonstrates a key trend at Highland: it is a setting characterized by values that find their lineage in social-democratic systems that recognize and affirm

particular individual and cultural rights at the same time that it invites people with vastly different positions on such values to live and learn alongside one another. It is important to acknowledge the existence of this dominant culture because it tempers how speech and silence play out as acts of openness to diversity. In the analysis that follows, I break the above narrative down into three parts and use each part to examine the interactional challenges that are the focus of this chapter: 1) immersing oneself in cultural difference given the ever-present existence of dominant cultural and linguistic norms and the existence of unequal competencies and familiarity with each; 2) accommodating positions and identities that one disagrees with or finds intolerable; and 3) negotiating the belief that intercultural understanding means accepting all positions as equally valid.

Openness and Engagement in Dominant Cultures

In this section, I examine how young people navigate difference in the presence of dominant cultural and linguistic norms. Let us begin at the end of the narrative above. Peter says that he wants “to be open with everyone,” sharing his opinion even though he knows that the majority of his peers “won’t go in for it.” The Peruvian names this majority explicitly when she says that, “it’s mostly Europeans who speak,” and the Swedish girl echoes the criticism of the majority by lamenting the liberal outlook that most discussions take. Together these comments allude to a dominant culture at the school, one that forecloses both what can be freely articulated as well as the possibilities for exploring difference. Given the simultaneity of norms of openness and foreclosure, how can we understand the distance that some people must go to demonstrate their openness and competence to exist within cultural difference?

Yael Aaron, a 17-year-old Israeli in her second year at Highland, has taken it upon herself to show me around campus early in my fieldwork. She is soft-spoken and candid, and explains in the few seconds after I first meet her that I would probably like to talk to her because she is from a conflict zone, and because she has a lot of stories to tell about being here with Palestinians. She is among the school’s most openly gay students, and a lot of her extra-curricular time is spent in meetings on gender and sexuality issues. Yael is popular and hangs out mostly with Europeans, even though she resents how Europeans have it easier at the school because they know English – she started learning only when

she arrived at Highland – and can slide easily into the school’s progressive vocabulary, even if they do not really believe in progressive values the way she does. At lunch one day, we sit with a few of her friends, who by way of introduction reminisce about their early days at Highland, remembering how quickly they became aware of the intensity of social life on campus. This was due both to the school’s isolation, which meant young people become a dependable source of camaraderie for one another, and the packed schedule, which involves a daily bustle of constant and varied activity. You are never alone and there is always something to do, they explain. I mention that that kind of closeness must be hard for some people. Yael agrees: “Being sociable is crucial. If you’re not sociable, then you’re not the best student to be here. You’re not seen as the best one to be here. And if you are sociable, then you’re open, you’re open to anybody, any different thing, any different culture.”

The quality of being open is a characteristic Highlanders value most in others and the change they value most in themselves. When pressed to define what this value looks like, young people define it as a mode of engagement, a willingness to understand others in order to get along with them, and to accept something at odds with the familiar. Yael describes sitting down to talk with others with the intent of getting to know them, explaining that the “best” kind of young person has a unique capacity in a multicultural setting: “I see it in a sense of no prejudice about anything. So it’s about, I don’t really know who you are, I don’t know your religion, I don’t know anything about you, I’m just going to sit here and talk to you, just because you’re a person. Listening to others without judging what the other is saying. I would consider that open.” The sentiment was repeated time and again, described as a kind of a conscious flexibility, an opening of one’s mind:

It’s to recognize the way people live. It’s not that you have to agree with that and support that, but it’s just that you are open, that there is the other way people could live, and you deeply understand why it is this way. Of course I think if you have this understanding you’re probably more open, less antagonistic to other cultures.

One girl likens herself to “plasticine,” ready to be shaped by the unfamiliar; a boy says it has been important for him to not be “super closed about, ‘that’s the way, and that’s the only way.’ There are many other ways”; another boy reports adopting a flexible mindset because he knew “people would be really different. So I said okay, I’ll get to know it and

we'll live fine.”

The challenge of being open is articulated through stories of the labour involved in cross-cultural encounters, specifically, the labour of taking action in the encounter. Just as Yael says that she tries to sit down to talk with others, young people exemplify openness through stories about when and how they choose to speak with people who are different. A girl refers to the labour involved in opening up to others, describing the decision to speak as an agentic move:

I think it has to come from you, you have to decide that I'm going to talk to someone that is not really in your comfort zone, you don't understand each other, but [Highland] enables you to do that. You have to put in a lot of energy. And I feel I'm just opening up. I feel before I came here I was quite ignorant. I really didn't know that much. Of course I've been told about different cultures, but really when you're living with someone from that place, following that religion, with those beliefs, it just makes it real.

A white boy who comes from a predominantly white town sees that something new is required of him here:

I've become more open-minded. Back home there's no such thing as diversity so we don't have the ability to move around in diversity. We don't have any reason to understand how to talk to people, or to understand how to get information, or respectfully approach someone. You never need to use that.

Another boy explains that the value of interacting with so many different people is to “have open discussions and arguments, to challenge yourself and your opinions, and living up to the standards you put to other people.” Openness for these young people is evidenced in the moment they decide to speak, and taking action in the cross-cultural encounter is described as the central opportunity offered at Highland.

Yet enacting openness requires labour and compromise for some more than others. On a rainy Wednesday night, I am on my way to South Building for an event ironically titled “ask-a-gay.” The jest is meant to encourage visitors to ask any burning, possibly taboo, questions they have about what it is like to be gay or to question one's sexuality. The idea is that they can ask without judgment. As I walk up to the doors, Yael rolls up behind me on her long board, and we go inside the vestibule to get out of the rain. We look inside the room and see five empty chairs on a low stage, with pillows arranged around tables and floor lamps. The event has not yet begun.

Yael tells me that she does not agree with the whole idea of the panel. Yael, who

came out at Highland, had her first ever girlfriend there, and is one of the most openly gay students on campus, who credits her experience at the school for allowing her to question her sexuality in the first place, is angry not to have been asked to be on the panel. The girlfriend, now an ex, was asked. Yael says that it is unfair that it is mostly “Westerners” on the panel. “I don’t even know why I’m here,” she says. “Actually, yes I do. I want to ask them if being gay is something only Western people can be. They are mostly Europeans on the panel. Why? It’s absurd.”

People begin filing in, taking the spots on the floor first then the surrounding couches arranged off to the side. Yael and I stand near the back of the room. The panel begins with little introduction, assuming perhaps that the intent of the panel is clear and that most of the time will be reserved for audience questions.

A first-year asks the first question. “Do you think it’s difficult to hit on people because you don’t know their sexual orientation?” A panelist says that he prefers to just be friends first, this is the safest way, and that time is important in these matters. He murmurs something about “gaydar” to a panelist sitting next to him, and between them the two laugh. Next question. “How old were you when you realized your sexual orientation?” This time all five offered: 4, 15, 15, still questioning, and the panel’s “gaydar” wit, always. At this point Yael shakes her head, waits to see if anyone else has a question, then raises her hand: “I have a question,” she says loudly, and several people in the audience turn to look at her.

“Is being gay a Western idea?”

Several of the panelists wave their hands in agreement, then look at one another unsure of how to proceed. It is clear from Yael’s tone that she is dragging the panel somehow, her contempt showing through even with her inexperienced English. The panel indicates that no, it is not a Western idea. One of them in a vaguely scoffing tone asks, “What do you mean?” Yael rolls her eyes and sighs, frustrated. She leaves the room and I follow shortly after.

Outside in the entranceway, Yael is putting on her jacket. “Why do they wave their hands after?” she says of the panelists, “they’re mostly Europeans!”

Yael’s anger is partly explained by the fact that she sees her exclusion as an injustice, but her exit from the room also has to do with how her criticism was delivered

and how it was received. That the panelists waved in agreement is for Yael a condescension, a dismissal of her concern rather than an acknowledgement of it; she did not want agreement, she wanted to make a point. When she asks in a rhetorical manner whether being gay is a Western idea – and hints that her exclusion from the panel answers that question in the affirmative – Yael positions herself in opposition to those on stage and as the antidote to the problem posited in her question.

Her decision to speak is not taken lightly. Yael has been studying English since arriving at Highland, and is uneasy about public speaking. She admits that the only place she feels truly comfortable speaking English is in her ESL class, where making mistakes is part of the process. The criticism that she clearly conveyed to me in private just moments before – *I want to ask them if being gay is something only Western people can be. They are mostly Europeans on the panel* – unravels in the spotlight, and Yael remains silent when she is asked to explain herself.

But there is another reason that the decision to speak is not taken lightly. Yael credits her time at Highland for giving her the wherewithal to acknowledge her sexuality: “It was really here. I think obviously I would’ve come to this realization in Israel if I stayed. But I don’t think it would’ve happened to me when I’m 16, maybe it would’ve happened to me when I’m 19, ’cause I’ve grown so much here.” She believes she earned a rightful place on that panel, able to express a view of being gay left unrepresented on the stage. Overall her tone is one of disbelief: *do I really have to explain what’s wrong here?* Her righteous exhaustion is rooted in the sense that the panelists should have known to be more representative of the diverse perspectives on sexuality that are available at Highland.

Yael says that she is going to her dorm, alone. I go back to the event.

The questions go on: “how did you know you were gay?” Three panelists describe their first crushes as being of the same sex, yet thought little of it at the time.

One student, a Lesothan who is also an ESL student: “What words do you use to call yourself? Is lesbian only women? Is it possible for a gay man to be a lesbian?”

“Lesbian is usually only for girls,” a girl on the panel explains, looking at her fellow panelists for confirmation. “But it’s all only labels anyway.”

The Lesothan considers this and asks, “What’s a label?”

In a heedless turn, the boy who talked about his gaydar responds by using the term “heteronormativity” without defining it. The Lesothan remains silent, and does not ask for clarification.

Openness and navigating diversity involve labour and compromise for some, a challenge that is exhibited through the forms of speech and silence that appear in the narratives above. They feature a number of people with disparate levels of competency as they do intercultural work in a context in which a dominant culture prevails. The event demonstrates Yael’s subordinate position in relation to the panel: she is a non-Western gay person who has a unique perspective of what it is like to be gay but is denied the opportunity to give it, and she is effectively silenced.⁴³ It also demonstrates her dominant position in relation to the Lesothan: she has an understanding of the language of gay life that the Lesothan is only being introduced to. Yael takes the panel seriously because she credits Highland as the place where she was able to explore her sexuality. She takes seriously what for some of the panelists is a casual foray into discussions of sexuality. She speaks up, a brave move, but gets flustered and retreats. Yael and Peter share in their decision to speak, and are each met with the challenge to explain themselves, “*what do you mean?*”, an antagonistic question that in both of these instances halts, rather than opens, lines of inquiry. The Lesothan is labouring to understand, but the opportunity is missed because the panelists use terms that he does not understand and neither he nor the panelists follow up. The Lesothan attempts to delve into difference but gets overlooked: some are literally at the level of terminology in fulfilling the norms of openness.

When getting along in diversity is premised on a widespread norm of openness and engagement, there must be an acknowledgement that young people are more or less prepared to take on and exhibit these norms. Recall that Highlanders report that openness is a tendency that involves acceptance and a willingness to listen, and that the best people

⁴³ Though it was not explicitly present in this Yael’s case, there is also a gendered element to consider here. Research has established that girls tend to participate in public speaking less often than boys (Aukrust 2008; Baxter 1999; Pellegrini & Blatchford 2013; Sadker & Sadker 2010) and that girls tend to wait to be “given the floor” to speak (Aukrust 2008) while boys tend to take opportunities speak up (Lindroos 1995) and men interrupt more often (West & Zimmerman 2015 [1978]). This research raises the issue of the gendered nature of staying silent and being silenced, especially for second language speakers (see Julé [2004] for an analysis of gender and second-language learning). In this case, Yael’s retreat may be read as rooted in her perception that she failed to get the words *right*, a frustration not necessarily or obviously shared by the Lesothan boy.

to be at Highland are those who seek to engage with unfamiliar people and practices even if they are different and troubling. Yael herself says that it is about being “open to anybody, any different thing, any different culture.”

At the same time we see several young people who are engaging in this very kind of openness, contending with unfamiliar or personally challenging beliefs, but who are made to feel excluded and marginalized, effectively silenced, by the predominance of a Western, Anglo, and progressive mode of discourse that renders Peter’s opinion backward, Yael’s challenge fractious, and the Lesothan’s unfamiliarity trivial or beside the point. In all instances, these young people’s interventions are treated as unacceptable and legitimately excluded. Harris (2013) identifies the same problem within diversity projects that have at their core the appreciation or celebration of diversity and overcoming stereotypes. Her research on the everyday practices of living in diversity in several communities in Australia demonstrates the danger of premising intercultural communication on models of cohesion and getting along because they overlook the important role that conflict plays in the cross-cultural encounter. She argues that while multiculturalism initiatives often focus on harmony and obscure structural inequities, inter-ethnic conflict or discord is an outlet that allows for “legitimate feelings of frustration and anger and expressions of entitlement to emerge” (88). Conflict is therefore a phenomenon that can bring to light how young people grapple with the effects of racialized inequities and the divisive practices that arise when groups are unequally positioned. As long as forums like *In the World* rely on avoiding conflict (as the warning not to offend people hints at), it runs the risk of silencing the productive place that conflict can occupy.

Conflict is essential to understanding the risk of speaking and the recourse to silence in the narratives above. In forums meant to air differences and provide young people with an opportunity to learn from them, we see evidence of disagreement and discord and therefore of the opportunity to contend in practical ways with the fact of dominant linguistic and cultural norms. But this does not happen. While some young people on the margins take a risk to speak – whether it be because they disagree or because they are only now becoming accustomed to how to speak in the majority language – differences are silenced and productive forms of talk are avoided. This

demonstrates that intercultural work does not happen in a vacuum but always in the context of particular hierarchies, which privilege a particular set of capacities and particular modes of speaking and thinking. Openness and engagement are inflected by dominant linguistic and cultural norms, and one's ability to be 'open' and to be perceived by others as 'open' is distributed highly unequally amongst social actors.

The Dynamics of Accommodation and Inattention

At Highland, silence and speech are strategies used to accommodate difference, especially differences that one finds unacceptable or irreconcilable with one's own position. In this section, silence is theorized as essential to understanding how openness and accommodating difference plays out. In practice, being open to others and allowing them to have their opinions means knowing when to refrain from action in the cross-cultural encounter. The challenge is deciphering where to place a prescriptive limitation upon oneself – when to hold back – in order to get along with others. This section will also examine the inequality in the decisions young people must make about what to pay attention to and what to forgo in order to get by with others. For some, silence is a strategic 'minding of one's business' so as to not cause waves in a setting so directed by a commitment to progressive values; for others, it is an act of avoiding offense. From this we can theorize strategies of accommodation of difference, and how the labour of accommodation is performed and distributed.

The second thematic landmark, the interaction between Nils and Peter, lends insight into strategies of accommodation. Nils, a white Dane who identifies as atheist, thanks Peter for sharing his opinion, which is rooted in a Christian perspective that opposes abortion. Nils can choose whether to reflect deeply on Peter's opinion, and he need not worry whether his own position reflects the majority. Rather, Nils' privilege means that it is simply "good to be challenged sometimes," whereas Peter's comments are so unpopular that they are met with audible derision, which ultimately causes him to decide not to continue with his argument against abortion. I interviewed both of them after *In the World*, and asked them to talk about their role in the event. Nils explains his response to Peter as an act of empathy, rooted in a longer process during which he has learned that it is better to be withholding in his interactions with religious people:

He's a very religious person, and [when I first got to Highland] I was like, 'oh you believe in God, that's so stupid.' And in the end [after the abortion discussion] we were talking, many people together, atheists, Christians, we're not really fighting, but we're arguing about believing. And I sat back and listened and I realized that when I put myself in this situation, this guy suddenly has to take the decision of whether he's going to talk to me because I'm going to hell, in his perspective. Like, I'm forcing him to have those feelings towards me. If I talk about God in that way, he knows I will be judged when I reach the gates of heaven. So I'm forcing him to say ok, I cannot associate myself with this guy or he's saying ok, I'm going to forgive him. I put him in a very difficult position by just talking about that. And back in Denmark even though I would talk to someone about this, I would see them the next day in school and it'd be normal because [religion is] not a very important thing to them. And I just realized that's the difference. [...] I'd always say, 'you have to do it like *this* because look at my country. You can see that we don't associate religion with politics and you do, and that's why you have this problem, and we don't.' And he was like, 'our whole society is based on religion, it's our ethical code'. I think if I had the same conversation with someone that religious, I would feel the temperature, I would feel if there's anything there. Because if this person is just completely rooted and you know, rock core in his belief, if I'm not going to change anything *there's no purpose in me sitting here trying to convince the world that my way is right* [emphasis mine].

Nils realizes that he is “forcing” Peter to have negative feelings towards him, so decides that the best way forward is to place a limitation on subsequent encounters. He describes this as the ability to “feel the temperature” and not overstep certain boundaries, the keeping of which will allow him to get by with others and avoid ill feeling. For Nils, accommodating others means that he no longer needs to “convince the world that my way is right.” His decision to withhold manifests in a tactful silence in this and subsequent interactions.

Peter describes going through a similar realization about the differences in how people think, and like Nils decides to seek and place boundaries on subsequent interactions:

I was trying to compare the kind of sexual health education that is given here and the kind of sexual health education that I had back in my country. And I realized that in a setting like this [...] the main theme or the values behind this is safe sex. But things like, you know, they did not really touch the dangers of having sex before marriage, they did not talk about having sex with very many partners. This was none of their concern. They only believed that as long as you're having sex in the right way, then the others are none of their business. And to me, I felt if I was really this kind of person who didn't have the values I stick by, then I would simply believe in this. [...] But the kind of sexual

health that's taught in an African setting or in my country, it's really got religious values [behind it]. The education goes hand in hand with some values, not just giving young people these protective measures. So if I didn't have my values, I would simply believe that this is something normal. Going to sleep with any girl I feel like is something normal and it has got no impact on me as long as I have sex the safe way. [...] So what I learned was the difference in information that's being given out here compared to what I had before.

When I ask him how he manages these “differences in information,” Peter explains that it is important for him to employ what he calls a “filter system” during discussions in which opposing views are aired, a logic that allows him to continue to see himself as open to cultural difference at the same time that he places boundaries on interactions by ‘filtering’ out anything that fails to comply with his values. For Peter, opening his mind does not mean changing his mind. Rather, he says it is about, “opening my mind to understand the differences and then learning to tolerate them, but still sticking with my own values.”

Nils and Peter demonstrate the strategic use of avoidance and refraining from action in encounters with difference. Goffman understood the importance of tactful inattention and “not seeing” to the development of etiquette and civility in particular contexts (Goffman 1959: 230; Goffman 1963; see also Zerubavel 2006: 29-32).⁴⁴ Tactful inattention refers to the difference between *noticing* something that is “delicate” or “sensitive” and *publicly acknowledging* the delicate and sensitive thing that is noticed, saying it out loud and forcing it to be reckoned with, and risking a failed interaction. Tact is therefore noticing and deciding not to acknowledge what is noticed. While both Nils’ and Peter’s strategies can be seen as forms of tactful inattention, they take on a particular character in the intercultural context. They point to the importance of verbal, and not just visual, forms of inattention, an etiquette based on skirting, or more precisely, carefully engaging in particular topics of discussion in a context in which there is a collective

⁴⁴ Goffman is writing about civil inattention in public settings, and thus about a different interactional context than the one referred to here, which is marked by norms between acquaintances, friends, classmates and roommates in the institutional context of the school. In the context of public settings, Goffman (1963) writes that inattention is tactful: “one gives to another enough visual notice to demonstrate that one appreciates that the other is present (and that one admits openly to having seen him), while at the next moment withdrawing one’s attention from him so as to express that he does not constitute a target of special curiosity and design” (84). While what is happening with Nils and Peter is not *civil* inattention, it is informed by Goffman’s insights since both boys decide that tact is an appropriate and preferable expression of intercultural work.

understanding that there will be fundamental disagreements between people who nonetheless are being asked to learn to live alongside one another. Both Peter and Nils report that they interact about sensitive topics up to a point: either when a 'filter' is needed or when there is the potential for causing ill-feeling in the other. Silence can be seen as a decision to prefer tact over the potential for hurt feelings, alienation, or outright animosity. In an institution that asks people to learn to get along, but which does not strictly prescribe what getting along will look like, young people develop strategies that are underpinned by an implicit understanding of the boundaries of tact in order to make their way peaceably. Tactlessness, in this case, is reserved for those who cause ill-feeling (recall that Nils is concerned that he is forcing Peter to think about him in hell) and those who insist on convincing someone of particular beliefs and positions that cannot be reconciled with one's own.

Yet there is a difference in the reasons that each of these boys use silence as inattention, which demonstrates that the labour of enacting silence is unevenly distributed. Silence is a strategy chosen and obliged according to one's social position and to one's distance from dominant positions. Nils keeps quiet to avoid causing offense or ill-feeling and Peter, who knows that his views are different from those taught at Highland and which the majority holds, uses silence to carve out a space in which to preserve his values. Thus, the practice of silence in intercultural contexts also has an ethnic and racial component, and reveals hierarchies between minority and majority cultures, which differentially employ silence as a useful strategy for getting by in difference.

Lionel, an 18-year old Black boy from the Gulf of Guinea, illustrates this point well. Lionel describes how his ability to coexist with anyone is due to the fact that he is not easily intimidated by different opinions. He loves playing sports, and can often be found at the soccer field after school. He takes his inspiration for how to live from the Bible, and often has to balance his religious beliefs with his experiences at the school, especially the fact that gay people are openly out and that homosexuality is a topic people are comfortable talking about. Lionel explains that, "I knew that there's the possibility that I would be friends with gay people, because it's been happening all over the world. I knew that this was the perfect opportunity to have that experience." Lionel suspects a

friend that he has played soccer with since his first year is gay, though he has never asked him directly. “There are so many interesting things I can talk about. All the other beautiful things except this. Not because I’m not comfortable, but I think it’s just unyielding to talk someone else into what you believe in.”

When prompted to explain why he has never talked to his friend, Lionel describes how he feels a pull between the expectations to be understanding of difference that come with being at Highland and the role of religion in shaping his beliefs of right and wrong.

LIONEL: I think there would be tensions, and this is one of those cases where there’s an exception where you should know the limits and not outstep your boundaries. That would make it easier for you.

ELISABETH: What is the exception? Try and define it for me.

LIONEL: Okay. Basically you’re supposed to accept everyone the way he or she is and all that. And you’re a religious person who believes that something is just wrong and you should never think of it and you should never see it being practiced. These are the two things that are conflicting. Is it that you just say because of intercultural understanding and all that you just overlook everything? Or is it [that] you say, this is wrong, you should stop doing it, or you don’t do it when I’m around, and try to be commanding with that? So it’s about just understanding why people do what they do, while still holding your beliefs because they are the core part of you. If you just overlook all those things and don’t apply what your beliefs say it makes your beliefs seem faulty in their interpretation. So it’s just about, you know, what you believe in and how it applies to you. Just allow people to do what they want to do as individuals. You don’t feel you need to come out so intimidating that people need to stop doing all those evil acts. So it’s about how you play those two cards...I can’t take anything away from you, because that’s what you think is the best for you, and I can never say, this is the best for you if you’re not happy doing it...

Lionel pauses for a long time and I do not interject because it is clear he is thinking.

...So I think it’s unyielding and it doesn’t do anything on behalf of the person practicing it or on behalf of you who is not. Although I find it a very evil thing to do – I can put it that way because that’s what my religion makes me believe of it – I would not chastise someone who is practicing it, because that’s not why I came here. They’re perfectly comfortable with what they’re doing and I would not encourage them either, but I would not criticize them. So I would not speak about it at all.

For Lionel, engaging with his friend on the matter of his sexuality is a disturbing prospect on a number of fronts. Engagement about the delicate topic of his friend’s sexuality could get Lionel entangled in his friend’s affairs in a way that makes him appear weak and lacking moral certitude, for indeed he runs the risk of equivocating on his position about

homosexuality or witnessing an act that he should “never see practiced.” Engagement could also mean that he clashes with his friend, chastising and criticizing him for the error of his ways, which diminishes the edicts of intercultural understanding that young people at Highland are called upon to do. Not speaking is a way out of the impasse: he neither has to engage in his friend’s personal life nor does he have to take on the role of talking other people into what he believes to be right. He chooses a thoroughgoing introspection instead, focusing only on his own conduct. Lionel demonstrates his commitment to the edicts of the school by recognizing boundaries, knowing his place, and as he says, “playing the two cards,” which in this case involves playing soccer with someone who is different but not confronting them about their difference. Lionel does not see any other way. Tactful silence helps him get by in difference.

In a school of about 200 people, it is unlikely that Lionel’s friend is unaware of his views on homosexuality, given especially the unpopularity of the opinion that being gay is “evil.” For this reason, perhaps the work of accommodation is for Lionel made of a tacit agreement between he and his friend. Let us think through this scenario. Lionel’s silence ensures that no conflict occurs on his soccer team or with his teammate, and reaches a tolerable middle ground between what he feels he is expected to do at Highland and his personal beliefs. And though we cannot know for sure, there is also meaning in his friend’s silence: never forcing Lionel’s hand, he grants Lionel permission to never have to say out loud what he believes, an opinion that could antagonize and ultimately alienate their relationship.

The particular reason that silence is useful depends on one’s proximity to the majority culture at the school. First, ‘minding one’s business’ is most often expressed as a necessity by minority cultures, defined here as those who hold beliefs that differ from the progressive values that characterize Highland life, like those that are unequivocally in favour of a women’s right to a safe abortion at *In the World*. I found that some young people from the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America who held particular beliefs or religious values used silence, as Lionel and Peter do, as a way to carve out a space in which to preserve such values while not evoking tensions with their peers or ostracizing themselves. A Yemeni Muslim girl explains that she works to “stay out of people’s business” in order to get along with people with whom she disagrees, a strategy akin to

Lionel's view that silence allows him to "play two cards." A Muslim girl from Sudan recalls walking out of an event in which some boys were semi-nude, and reports that she did not say anything because the overall culture at Highland requires that "you're game" – up for anything – and sees her retreat as a mode of self-preservation, namely of saving herself from having to talk about the fact that she makes compromises in order to exist in a place that runs by norms so unlike her own: "these people are making compromises that you don't see [...] you don't see the sacrifices because you don't sacrifice anything yourself. You're so used to being in this place and this environment is very natural to you, it's very similar to the environment you had back home, and you're not required to make any sacrifices, so you don't see any other people's sacrifices." The challenge for people like Lionel, Peter, and these two girls is deciphering when it is in their best interest to hold back in order to get along with others. Like Peter, who preserves his values by applying a "filter system" in his encounters with those he disagrees with, young people can continue to think of themselves as open to others, but only to the extent that they view accommodating difference as *refraining* from action.

At the same time, I found that white Europeans (and North Americans, but there are not many at the school) whose beliefs coincided more seamlessly with the progressive culture at Highland tend to speak about friendships and avoiding offense as bases for deciding whether or not to engage. These young people legitimate their silence about differences by referring to whether or not someone is a friend and, by extension, whether it is worth the risk of causing offense. Nils explains that, "[i]f [my opinion] hurts someone that I see potentially as a friend, I think I wouldn't. I would not share." A white American girl explains that "I was not okay sharing my political opinions because I didn't want to offend people. I didn't want to get into a debate, I didn't want to ruin my friendship over something as miniscule as a political issue." For others, friendship is the precondition for venturing into risky subjects. A white British boy says that, "I would never [challenge] someone who wasn't my friend. I only do it to my friends. I challenge my friends a lot I think, and they challenge me, [but] I would never challenge anyone who I didn't know well enough, so then afterwards [...] we can move on."

Accommodation is exhibited in the labour of withholding, which reveals a hierarchy of meaning associated with silence. When it is employed to accommodate

difference, silence is a form of hesitancy borne not of doubt in one's own position but of disinclination. Unlike those who engage in potentially uncomfortable conversations, these people are disinclined to do so, whether it is to protect one's own position, preserve the feelings of others, or to live up to the expectations of intercultural understanding. While they do not preclude the possibility of sitting down to talk to others who are different, there are discernible limits to where they will allow that talk to go.

There is a legitimate form of intercultural work being done here, which highlights the need to avoid romanticizing cosmopolitan practice as intercultural harmony (Noble 2009b; see also Noble 2013: 166). This section has detailed the moves that young people make to allow for the legitimacy of the other person's presence within social space. As scholars of multiculturalism have argued, everyday life with diverse others means that leaving someone and their opinions alone, as much as engagement, is a form of recognition (Ho 2011: 614; see also Valentine 2008). The need to get along, to preserve one's own values, and to avoid causing offense offer insight into how the socially expected and socially patterned strategies of silence and speech, of attention and tactful inattention take form in the intercultural work that young people do.

The Limits of Accommodation and Tolerance

The final thematic landmark is the moment at the beginning of the forum, when organizers stipulate that no one should offend anyone else, and that offenders will be asked to apologize. There is confusion over what offense means in a context in which divisive topics are often discussed among people who hold very different opinions. The threat of offending and being offended hangs in the air for the duration of the *In the World* forum, and culminates in the organizer ejecting the Swedish girl from the room for saying to Peter, "What are you talking about?" which, presumably, exceeds the limits of polite intercultural interaction.

The fear of offending people is a strong motivator for action and inaction at Highland. Even though young people like Nils use silence to avoid causing offense, some resist and resent the pressure to remain silent, and argue that the call to be understanding of differences is misinterpreted as a call to cultural relativism, an approach that assumes that all positions are equally valid. In this case, offending someone is seen as an

expression of the offender's intolerance, rather than rooted in an experimental dialogue in which clashing opinions meet, and which is a legitimate, if uncomfortable, consequence of intercultural inquiry. It raises the issue that young people use silence as a recourse to avoid the negative social consequences that come with being offensive, and that silence is a response to the pressure to be open "to anybody, any different thing, any different culture," to recall Yael's words.

Diana's experiences lend insight into this particular interactional challenge. Diana is a 17-year old white girl of Russian-Swedish descent who resists the idea that the top priority in the cross-cultural encounter is not to offend. Diana and I plan to meet in her room after school one Friday. On my way up the stairs to her hallway, I meet Diana's roommate, Safiya, a brown Muslim girl from Morocco. We greet each other as she opens the door to let me in. Diana is inside fixing her bed and says hi to us both as Safiya goes into the bathroom and I sit at Diana's desk. Diana has just come back from lifeguarding duty and is taking the wet clothes out of her bag to hang them up. Safiya comes out of the bathroom and, with a loud sigh, flops down on her bed with her book bag still on her back. "Hard week, and a test in maths just now," she explains as she throws her bag to the floor. She turns to Diana, "How was swimming?" The two talk about how Diana is teaching Safiya's second year, Ali, to swim.⁴⁵ Safiya smiles at the thought of Diana keeping him afloat while he paddles his way up and down the pool. Diana wonders aloud if he feels uncomfortable being held afloat by a girl, and describes how Ali had once been the subject of a Highland cautionary tale: a girl hugged Ali goodbye in early September when everyone was still getting to know one another. An innocuous gesture for her but not for him, the hug became a crush and then a handwritten note declaring as much. Diana tells us that the girl politely let him down, not in a mean way, and that a lot of girls learn similar lessons about the cultural boundaries of greeting people because mistakes like this happen all the time at Highland. Safiya nods and hints at Ali's new hard-learned strategy: "He'll do high-fives."

We talk a little more about what we did that day. Safiya begins removing the clips that secure her hijab, loosening the bun she wears underneath.

⁴⁵ When a person is someone's "second year," it means both people are from the same country but in different years at Highland. In this case, Safiya, a first-year student, is from the same country as Ali, a second-year student.

“Can I ask, why do you wear this?” Diana gestures toward the fabric that now lays on the bed.

“It’s just something we do. It’s easy for me.”

“But why...why is it important to cover your hair?”

“Because it’s my religion. It’s normal for me to wear.”

“It doesn’t really make sense to me. Do you think it’s bad towards girls? Girls wear them but not boys. Why is it okay for me to touch Ali in the pool but it’s not okay for you?”

“I don’t really think about these things. Not that much.”

“It’s okay for me to teach swimming, I can go to the pool when I want. But like, Noor [a Muslim girl who is also a lifeguard] can’t go in the pool when there are boys.”

“Oh,” Safiya says, pausing to think about it. “Maybe it’s okay for her.”

After a short pause, Safiya arranges books on her desk. Not looking up, she asks, “Any other questions?” When Diana indicates that no, there are no more questions, she asks me if I want to go for a walk.

Outside, Diana shakes her head. “Her responses are completely irrational!” Diana has had a few iterations of this conversation with Safiya in the past. The subtle resistance from Safiya this time – any other questions? – indicates that today no new ground would be gained, or that Safiya is tired or unwilling to engage in Diana’s line of questioning. I ask her to talk more about what happened in the room.

ELISABETH: You want to get her to admit that she’s being irrational?

DIANA: No. And I know that I’m implying that what she’s doing is wrong. But it *is* discriminatory for women. I’ve seen her jump up and run into the bathroom to get her headscarf when a boy comes into our room. It’s so stupid. My roommate was even afraid to ask [Safiya] why she was wearing this. She had this minute-long prelude, like, “would you mind if I please ask, like I don’t mean anything, I was just wondering why are you wearing this? I mean, if you feel comfortable answering?” I was like, what is this?

ELISABETH: What would you have preferred? Like, what would be the best way to ask?

DIANA: I would do the same! Like, I feel it’s necessary when I refer to this person. But when it is a discussion of something, then people refrain because they don’t want to insult anyone. Which in fact if you’re insulted when I say something is stupid, it’s your problem not mine, that you are in a way narrow-minded to not open yourself to critique. I feel like people don’t have this border anymore of what is not insulting but just a rational and normal conversation, a question, and what

is actually insulting, like *really* is. Everyone is just accepting things as they are, not willing to insult anyone, and everything is closed. It's not that you are not free to do this, but for your own sake you don't want to start a fire.

ELISABETH: Okay.

DIANA: But when I'm not saying, "this is stupid," I feel like I'm pretending. Because I'm like, "la di da, okay, it's fine."

For Diana, a dilemma arises in the expectation to be open at Highland.

Accommodating the edicts of intercultural understanding means that at times, she chooses not to say what she really means. Unlike Lionel, who reports a sense of comfort with the prescriptive limitation that silence imposes – indeed finds it as a duty necessary to get by with people who are different – Diana feels muzzled and disingenuous.

From my background this is something that I would attribute not to the person, but to the culture. And I would point out that certain things in this culture are not okay. Or I would say that I do recognize this as a certain culture, and it's great that it exists and everything, but I would prefer to have my culture and I would say reasons why that is wrong and this is right. And this is not the kind of approach people tend to have here. Like they tend to say, we love diversity and this is equally great as this.

Diana must fake her way through touchy subjects, when what she really wants is for people to be better at discerning insult from legitimate lines of inquiry. The expectation to understand others translates too easily into an approach that all perspectives are equal. If we follow the logic that cultural diversity means that all positions are acceptable and good, then Diana's hesitancy to say, "I think this is wrong" – and to offer an explanation as to why it might be so – makes sense. She resents the relativization that seems to stifle her capacity to explore right and wrong, and to ask uncomfortable questions. Her position is that the call to be tolerant of diversity has limited her right to freely express herself and that the call to be open ultimately falls into a cultural relativism that closes dialogue off.

In her words:

The idea is that you just open yourself too much to other cultures that you just have this perspective on culture that everything is great and equal and wonderfully right. And I feel like it doesn't really work so well. So it's like people are closing themselves to normal and rational thinking, and they just put cultural diversity into some column that is *there*. So in a way I feel that some people have something to say or they might put something into criticism but the whole idea [of respecting cultural diversity] doesn't permit them to do that.

Diana's interaction with Safiya reflects broader public debates in Europe about the

limits of multiculturalism and the dangers of migration, which highlight the ostensibly irreconcilable differences between Europeans and Muslims. Their interaction reflects these broader issues in terms of integration, where it is incumbent upon minority cultures in Europe to symbolically prove their willingness to integrate (Lentin & Titley 2012: 124). If we examine Diana's position as expressive of a certain privilege to ask others that they *explain* themselves, her way of thinking also inhibits her ability to place any value on her encounter with Safiya. What would it look like if Diana took seriously Safiya's claim that she is comfortable with her choices, or explored with Safiya how wearing a hijab feels "normal" for her, which would itself be the kind of uncomfortable conversation Diana wishes for? Diana's approach to ask that Safiya explain herself ultimately misrecognizes Safiya as a kind of pawn or victim, rather than an agent expressing sartorial choice. Diana reiterates this misrecognition when, as we part that day, she admits that the interaction was ideal in some ways, since Safiya "seemed comfortable not to question these things," thus solidifying Diana's position as the only rational actor in the interaction. Diana is comforted by the assertion that it is Safiya's irrationality, not her own resentment about not being able to have a rational conversation for fear of offense, that explains the divide between them. All Diana can see is what she cannot say.

Like Diana, Luisa from Argentina believes that a need for silence takes hold in the cross-cultural encounter, but for her it is experienced not as pretending, but as superficiality. She is a member of groups that seek social change, including a gender and sexuality group on campus, and has done activist work back home. Diana feels the need to engage in an unnatural way in order to get by in an acceptable way with others, and thus feigns ease ("la-di-da, okay, it's fine") and friendliness in order to adhere to the norms of the school. Luisa, however, reports that she came to Highland in order to really get to know people, to have difficult conversations about difference, to get down to the nitty-gritty with others. She reports feeling an initial disappointment with the school: "Everyone is just saying 'hi, my name is _____, I am from _____, I want to be your friend!' It was all this fakeness and hypocrisy about, 'I don't care where you come from, we're just going to be friends'. I thought it was such a huge lie. It was really not about this engagement from people towards people that I expected." Diana and Luisa share in

the desire to get beyond the threat of the offense to something more meaningful.

When asked to talk about what engagement looks like, Luisa refers to how difference is generally understood as something “untouchable”:

I think we fall too much into respect for the other’s culture as an untouchable thing. So it’s like the other’s culture is the other culture, you have to respect it, but what does respect mean to you? Because if it means [...] that it’s something you can’t change, it’s like that forever, then I don’t agree with it. When we’re talking about sexism and different religions or cultures, and it’s like, you have genital mutilation in Africa, but that’s their culture, so you respect it. And then it’s like, no. Alright, it’s their culture, alright they’ve had it since the beginning of their civilization, but it doesn’t mean it’s alright. It doesn’t mean you don’t have to talk about it.

She goes on to say that there is too much protection of cultural sensitivities, because she believes that if uncomfortable conversations are not going to happen at Highland, an institution that exists in part to give young people a space to explore difference, then where?

If you’re here and you’re not going to talk about politics and if you’re here and you’re not going to talk about religion, and you’re not going to talk about difference between cultures, then why are you here? If you’re going to be here just to have fun, I don’t see the point of that. And then that’s why celebrating difference is not really working. Because celebration in what sense? Celebration about not talking about difference? Celebration in the sense of “you’re different, good. I’m different, good.” That’s it? Then I think that’s totally pointless.

Luisa draws a line between people like herself, who are willing to forgo friendship and amicability in favour of understanding and engagement, and people like Lionel, who are seemingly comfortable with the fact that certain topics are “untouchable.” It is also a difference between those who interpret the edicts of the school as involving risk-taking and engagement in difficult conversations and those for whom it involves inattention and what Luisa sees as indifference.

Luisa and Diana demonstrate an important problem that arises in the enactment of cosmopolitan practice, which indicates the limits of tolerance as the primary goal in intercultural interaction. Silence is not only rooted in the tendency to turn the other cheek to get along with others. It is also rooted in the pressure to avoid talking about difficult issues because it transgresses certain social norms in contexts of diversity, which are themselves premised on a moral and cultural relativism that prescribes the need not to offend and to tolerate all forms of difference as the foremost priority. Luisa and Diana

interpret the call to understand as a call to talk and engage; not, as Lionel does, as an expectation that some things are best not brought to light. Yet the threat of being seen as intolerant pressures Luisa and Diana to avoid certain issues. As Zerubavel (2006) and Geras (1998) show, there are consequences to silence. They argue that silence and inattention can justify inaction in the face of violence and atrocities, and can legitimate indifference where action is the necessary and moral course. Zerubavel argues that while there are tactful forms of inattention that allow for polite conduct, there are also forms of power that compel people to know what they ought to ignore, as was the case for German citizens who learned to avoid asking “unnecessary” questions during the deportation of German Jews (2006: 40). Though indeed this is a very different case, Luisa and Diana are tapping into similar ideas about the consequences of keeping the peace and avoiding certain kinds of talk. As Luisa questions, is she to remain silent about genital mutilation because it is someone’s cultural practice to do so? She feels that the consequences of silence are too great, and that the call to “celebrate difference” can devolve into dangerous and counter-productive forms of indifference.

In a similar way, recall that Diana feels that there is no discernible line between what is a “rational” conversation and what is insulting. So great is the fear of insulting others that “everything is closed,” and Diana understands that it is in her best interest not to “start a fire.” Yet like Luisa, Diana sees herself as progressive. For instance, she is a feminist, believes in the value of diversity, and wants to protect the environment. So what does it mean when she wants to explore difficult issues, but feels she cannot say what she means (or is afraid to make a mistake) because she is worried that she will be seen as intolerant, or racist, and reports feeling silenced by the threat of causing offense? This is important because it renders young people unwilling to engage in risky behaviour or explore the rocky territory inherent to understanding others because the silencing force is powerful. If Highland is an institution that has the potential to inculcate young people with a progressive outlook towards cultural difference (and to make them aware of the labour involved in understanding others), then what can we make of the feeling that people have that they cannot speak, which can encourage the very indifference that Zerubavel and Geras warn against and thus can heighten antipathy?

Conclusion

Young people at Highland are managing multiple truths, some of which are difficult to accept. The analysis offered here demonstrates that some are more or less able and willing to delve into that difficulty. Speech and silence are key to understanding how young people encounter difference and how far they are willing to allow talk of difference to go, as well as the social divisions that emerge in the series of decisions about whether to speak or remain silent. Speech is a way of demonstrating one's openness to others, but this is distributed unevenly. For some, speech is risky because it exposes one's distance from dominant linguistic and cultural norms, and the recourse to silence is experienced as the silencing of potentially conflictual interactions or as outright marginalization – one is simply disallowed to say what they believe to be true. Silence is also an expression of civility, as tactful inattention toward matters that are perceived to be divisive and which can cause peaceable intercultural relations to break down. At other times, it is used in response to what some young people report are the impositions of political correctness. An important point here is that silence is not the same as silencing (see Dotson 2011). The two need to be analytically separated in order to understand how, for instance, silence is represented by some as a useful strategy for getting along with others, or how some young people feel silenced by the tendency to view the act of challenging certain beliefs as a sign of one's intolerance. The main insight here is that the freedom to speak, to be inattentive and express non-interference, is shaped by one's social position and one's distance from dominant positions.

There are insights to be gained from acknowledging the mundane character of cosmopolitan practice, which trouble what are normally taken to be “displays of engagement” (Harris 2013: 54) that signify getting along across difference. For instance, the argument can be made that the kind of silence that allows Lionel to reconcile his personal beliefs with his friendships is actually *uncivil*, because it is ultimately rooted in a refusal to engage in the matters that matter most. Yet young people can continue to think and feel cosmopolitan (Cheah & Robbins 1998) by exhibiting behaviours that have not entered into the corpus of practices that are normally associated with getting along across difference. In this chapter I have made room for the practical importance of “negative”

strategies (Zerubavel 2006: 29; see also Geras 1998: 39)⁴⁶ of silence, non-interference, and inattention in explanations of how everyday cosmopolitanism plays out. Given that everyday cosmopolitanism coexists with everyday social division, silence – as much as speech – is part of the corpus of practices that young people use to do intercultural work. When we acknowledge what Christina Ho (2011: 604) calls “mundane acts of reciprocity” as key mechanisms for negotiating difference, it is possible to create accounts of intercultural work that move beyond “intercultural harmony” and dialogue as primary proofs that understanding is going on.⁴⁷ As Ho and others suggest (Noble 2013), countering harmony models, mutual recognition can be based on the simple acknowledgement of the “legitimacy of the other’s presence within social space” (614), and therefore leaving someone alone, as much as engagement, is a form of recognition.

⁴⁶ Geras (1998) discusses the liberal foundations of negative rights as “those rights also called ‘negative’: rights to be left alone by others, not to be harmed, not to be interfered with when pursuing one’s legitimate ends” (39); see also Zerubavel (2006: 29) on “negative politeness.”

⁴⁷ Noble (2013) argues that: “I don’t want to romanticize this conviviality: the everyday virtue of living with difference is neither automatic nor guaranteed – spaces of cultural diversity can also be marked by conflict and ambiguity” (166).

Chapter 5

The Uses of Culture

It is customary at Highland to talk of “culture” as a way to understand difference. Young people regularly trade in stories about where they come from as a way of telling others who they are. They are asked to bring objects from home that will help them in this story-telling, and most arrive at the school bearing food, national costumes, and memorabilia that they use when they introduce friends to their cultures or when it is time to celebrate a national or religious holiday. Young people are also saturated in the institutional language of intercultural understanding and bridging difference, a task that places talk of culture at the centre of discussions about why someone does something in a particular way, or has a particular set of preferences or prohibitions. Membership at Highland involves the development of the skill and habit to talk of culture, elevating the phrase, “in my culture, we...” to a normal and legitimate basis for exchange and explanation.

In this chapter, I argue that talk of culture is a meaningful tool for young people in the global context of the school, and examine what talk of culture permits young people to accomplish in their interactions with diverse others. My findings show that when “culture” is used, it elicits three unique effects within intercultural relations. First, as a legitimating device, culture legitimates an actor’s claims and particular ways of thinking and acting, and thus allows young people to exhibit camaraderie and friendship, normalize difference, and to absolve oneself of personal responsibility by pinning one’s opinion on a whole culture. Second, as a justification for hierarchical thinking, culture is employed in arguments about global hierarchies between distinct national cultures, and thus allows young people to position it as placing demands on individuals and delimiting possibilities. Third, as a device of antithesis, culture is represented as grounded in particularity and provincialism and, by extension, as antithetical to global citizenship. In response, personhood and common humanity are seen to supersede cultural particularity and thus as the logical next steps toward global citizenship.

This chapter contributes to research that examines how young people fall back on essentialized expressions of identity and culture in their everyday interactions marked by

diversity (Noble, Poynting & Tabar 1999; Baumann 1996; Harris 2013; Ho 2019; Pollock 2004). It is important to clarify that there are two main ways in which “culture” appears in this chapter. It appears in terms of how young Highlanders talk about it, in the anthropological sense, as a shared set of beliefs, values, practices, rituals, and rules of behaviour that bind and distinguish groups (Benedict 2005 [1934]; Kuper 1999; Ortner 1984). At Highland, talk of one’s own culture and that of others functions as a shorthand for beliefs, values, and practices that are different and which are being negotiated and reconciled in talk and interaction. When culture is employed in such talk and interaction, it appears in essentialized ways within discussions of prescriptive limitations or ontological statements of what one can and cannot do, or what one is and is not – of what one’s culture permits one to do and to be.

In another sense, drawing on Alexander’s Strong Program in cultural sociology (2003; 2010), Swidler (1986), as well as Berger and Luckmann (1991), I focus on how talk of culture involves both solidarity and conflict in the intercultural encounter. In essence, I argue that talk of culture is a symbolic resource that young people draw on to justify certain positions and take action in their encounters with diverse others. Talk of culture functions as a symbolic structure that legitimates boundaries between oneself and others and is a useful resource for young people who are asked to come up with reasons for their beliefs and actions or who must explain themselves in the intercultural encounter.

The Strong Program’s approach to culture is useful for its attention to symbolic social relations, and the ways in which culture can be investigated for its internal meanings and codes. Alexander and Smith (2003) call for an analysis of the relationship between situated meanings and wider cultural structures, that is, of “who says what, why, and to what effect” (14) and the kinds of binaries that are mobilized in discourses and narratives in particular contexts. For Alexander and Smith, culture itself is an “ideal resource” that possesses relative autonomy from structures of domination, neither explained by nor reducible to ‘hard’ variables of social structure, including capitalism and market-oriented self-interest.

The argument for the relative autonomy of culture represents an important departure from Bourdieu, whose work, as I outlined in Chapter 1, has been used within

the sociology of education to advance a position on international education that foregrounds its role in reproducing relations of power, and frames the inner workings of schools as oriented toward capital production and accumulation. In the context of the present analysis, a Bourdieusian (1984; 1990) frame would involve an attention to how certain activations of talk of culture become more or less accepted as plausible, more or less legitimate, based on the relation between the set of internalized dispositions that constitute one's habitus as well as the uneven distributions of capital and the relational positions of each actor in the field. The intercultural work that young people do would be understood as a strategy for positioning oneself in the global field of international education (of which Highland is a part), which is received as a site of conflict over valued resources. Action in the field, or the varying forms of intercultural work, would be more or less rewarded based on an actor's proximity to and ability to enact consecrated forms of cultural capital recognized within the institution. For instance, it makes sense, as we will see later in this chapter, that a white, Northern European boy feels constrained by the cultural prescriptions of his non-Western counterparts while representing himself as coming from a culture that is freer and more open, since he has been immersed within dominant symbolic systems of the West as at the centre of toleration and is thus enacting forms of cultural capital recognized as legitimate at Highland. Bourdieu's framework of the relations between habitus, capital, and field therefore explain why some must labour harder to be and be considered interculturally-minded than others, since some are more or less prepared for the task.

Yet the findings in this chapter show that the everyday uses and negotiations of culture, vis-à-vis talk of culture, are not reducible to epiphenomena of an actor's position in a global field of "opposition between dominant and dominated" (Swartz 1977: 85), whether it be Western/non-Western, secular/Christian, white/non-white. Culture is not solely explained as embedded within a power-laden field in which strategies of domination unfold and are ratified, nor is it the case that young people, like the boy described above, is perpetually interactionally dominant because he has been socialized within dominant cultures. Rather, symbolic systems arising at Highland are made up of discourses, narratives, and codes that shape social reality and give meaning to the intercultural work going on there. In this sense, culture not only legitimates certain

consecrated forms of cultural capital by presenting a misrecognition of the privileges associated with it; it legitimates a series of dominant symbolic codes and, by Alexander's insistence on the autonomy of culture from the processes of social structure, a space in which to examine how talk of culture, as a symbolic resource, also exhibits indications of how dominant frames can be and are subverted by the young people in this study.

A Strong Program approach involves an empirical examination of what talk of culture is imagined to be, and the meanings that are constructed in its use (Alexander 2013: 535). At Highland, young people come to strongly identify themselves and others as *from* a particular culture, and use this essentialist mode of identification as a way of enabling a variety of actions and justifications. Young people learn to use "culture," a style of talking about oneself and others that comes with being thrown – for most, for the first time – into a context marked by diversity as well as an institutional call to get along across difference and a practical need to explain and manage differences with relative ease and success. An attention to the meanings of talk of culture points to the conditions for solidarity and division, as well as the affective and moral meanings that are evoked in talk of culture. This perspective enables one to grasp that what is at stake in one of Highland's most central discourses – talk of culture – is a struggle over the extent to which it constitutes the potential building blocks of solidarity or is a convenient and more palatable instrument of social conflict. I add to this perspective an attention to how such evocations have both solidarizing and conflictual potentialities.

What does it mean to use culture, and what happens when it is used? The title of this chapter, the "uses" of culture, alludes to Swidler's (1986; 2001: 11) approach to culture as a toolkit of resources that people use as they make sense of their social worlds. Swidler (2001) argues that resources and repertoires can be learned and expanded upon when individuals are confronted with "a new scene" (33). As a musician adds to his or her repertoire, so too do individuals add "a cultural style, mood, or justification of action to [their] repertoire" (2001: 25) to orient themselves to new phenomena. My findings show that at Highland, one of the 'tools' that young people quickly learn to add to their intercultural 'toolkit' is an *essentialized* notion of culture, in which young people mobilize variations on the trope "in my culture" to get along with or justify divisions among those who are different.

In order to understand the essentialist character of talk of culture, I take from Berger and Luckmann's (1991) definition of reification as the process by which human phenomena are treated as things, bestowing on them an "ontological status independent of human activity and signification" rather than apprehending them as matters of "ongoing human production" (107-108).⁴⁸ Berger and Luckmann suggest that "man is capable of *forgetting* his authorship of the human world" (106; see also Pitkin 1987: 274), which implies that there are social circumstances that favour, or compel, reification. Akin to Swidler's approach that entry into new social arenas involves adding repertoires to one's toolkit, Berger and Luckmann locate reification as part of human initiation into and understanding of "man-made" realities, including institutions, roles, and identities, and outline how the intersubjective meanings that are central to these matters come to be seen as objective and unchanging. For instance, in their reified form, roles and identities take on a givenness over which individuals have little control, and are therefore "apprehended as an inevitable fate for which the individual may disclaim responsibility" (108). Thus what is in fact social and relational is stripped of the character that makes it social: both agency and the ability to change the thing in question are subsumed by a logic that one has no choice in the matter.

Berger and Luckmann's approach is useful for this analysis because it highlights how reification allots the thing being reified "epistemic authority" (Zerubavel 2016: 71).⁴⁹ When young people enter the international scene and learn to talk about culture as though it is natural, discrete, and unified – as a thing acting upon the individuals that it describes – it constructs particular realities and thus has implications for claims-making and knowledge-formation about self and other (and about the beliefs and practices that

⁴⁸ Lukács' (1972) approach to reification starts in the same place, in which a relationship among people is treated as a thing. However, it is human productive labour, via commodity fetishism, that is treated as a thing. For Lukács, reification is essential to understanding how alienation works and how people lose awareness of their own agency. Workers understand their activity as contained within products, which are themselves subject to market forces; thus, workers understand themselves and their work, too, as subject to impersonal forces. This cycle is what allows the exploitation of the capitalist mode of production to go on. Reification for Lukács is thus what Pitkin (1987) calls a "misapprehension" of the human world. Berger and Luckmann are more useful for my analysis because they expound on the epistemological consequences of reification, namely, the authority with which it is imbued and the forms of knowledge it creates.

⁴⁹ Though indeed essentialism and reification are different processes, I ascribe to Zerubavel's (2016) framing here, which includes essentialism under the broader process of reification. He argues that essentialism is a process by which "we come to experience the merely conventional as *absolute, objective*, and therefore also *inevitable*" (70), and is thus an "epistemic fallacy" that is central to reification.

are considered to be part of one's "culture"). I argue that when talk of culture is imbued with epistemic authority, it shapes how things are classified (Zerubavel 2016: 70), how boundaries and justifications are established, and how solidarity and social control are asserted.

This chapter therefore contributes a global perspective to research in the sociology of youth and everyday multiculturalism, which has outlined the significance of actors' reliance on essentialist approaches to identity in intercultural encounters (Noble, Poynting & Tabar 1999; Baumann 1996; Harris 2013; Ho 2019; Pollock 2004).⁵⁰ Harris (2013) finds that, in Australia, the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender, and youth are important factors in how essentialist notions of identity are mobilized, and locates these both in culture-sharing events that let young people express pride in who they are, as well as in responses to conflict. For instance, a Lebanese/Italian/Brazilian boy asserts a singular ethnic identity in defense of his friends, saying that he will "turn Lebanese" to defend them, and thus uses ethnicity to harness an image of a "strong, angry, hard-fighting masculinity in the face of racism" (74). Noble, Poynting, and Tabar (1999) argue that with the rise of anti-racist and anti-essentializing conceptions of race and ethnicity, little attention has been given to "the ways a popular essentialism is crucial to not just racist constructions of others, but to the ways communities mobilise their senses of identity in specific circumstances" (31). They find that young Arab boys in Australia mobilize their Arab-ness in response to instances of racism (both racism directed at them as well as their own racist ideas that are directed at others, for instance, racist conceptions of Aborigines in Australia) but also in explanations of their inter-racial friendships (what characteristics they have that allow them to get along with diverse others), and conclude that the drawing of a boundary around a community is a relational and strategic act, one especially important to young people, for whom identification is a volatile process. In the US educational context, Pollock (2009) finds that a diverse array of young students use simple race categories in their understandings of inequality and social hierarchies among groups, while adults, vis-à-vis public policy, are 'deleting' race words from inequality discourse and replacing them with a colorblind approach.

⁵⁰ This aforementioned research draws on Spivak's (1990) notion of strategic essentialism, which defines how minority groups and women position themselves as unified and sharing something essential in common in order to advance their interests and take political action.

Like this research, my findings suggest that young people rely on essentialist approaches to identity as they navigate intercultural relationships, but extend these considerations to consider “culture” more broadly in the Northern European and international schooling context. I build on this literature by analyzing the mobilization of simplified and static categories to the Northern European context, one marked by “wider public culture structures” (Alexander & Smith 2010: 21; see also Alexander 2013), namely, the crisis of multiculturalism discourse, which has played out on an imagined binary between European ‘culture’ and its Others, who are perceived as unassimilable in certain culturally racist frameworks (Lentin & Titley 2011). Yet, at the same time, these essentialized mobilizations are also occurring in the institutional context of the school, with its guiding principle of intercultural understanding and the everyday relations between friends, roommates, and classmates who come from vastly different places, and thus by a set of values that encourage the formation and mobilization of intercultural ‘tools’ (Swidler 1986) that allow young people get by peaceably with others.

As I demonstrate, an essentialized approach to talk of culture is itself a repertoire of the international scene at Highland. It establishes forms of solidarity and justifications for social division, and does so by denying or invoking individual agency in relation to ‘the culture’ from which one derives. Positioning culture as a thing that individuals are either inextricably linked to or independent of makes it possible to mobilize the three effects outlined above: to make arguments that ‘cultures’ engage in particular beliefs and acts and others do not, and to use such universalistic language to bestow legitimacy on the belief or act itself; to speak of whole cultures as being ‘free’ or ‘restrictive’ and therefore as ‘freeing’ or ‘restricting’ the people who adhere to it; or to suggest that the weight of culture is too stultifying, and that in order to cultivate global forms of citizenship, individuals must cast it off. I take from the above mentioned research by attuning the analysis to the ways in which race, religion, gender, national culture, and age play a role in the unequal distribution of who is positioned agentially in relation to culture and how they are constructed as such.

The Legitimizing Function of Culture

In the first two parts of this section, I offer two vignettes involving Jonny and Marinder, and Mari and Fen. Each vignette demonstrates how young people realize talk of culture is persuasive and helps legitimate particular claims, beliefs, and acts. I examine how these interactions function, in the interactional zone between friends, as instantiations of solidarity, producing intercultural connection rather than disconnection. In the third part of this section, I offer an alternative interpretation of these interactions, and demonstrate that if we examine how they play into racial, ethnic, and gender divisions, the legitimating function of culture can entrench, rather than challenge, inequalities and absolve individuals of responsibility for the claims they make in the intercultural interaction.

Stereotypes as Expressions of Camaraderie

I first examine how talk of culture emerges via humour and stereotypes, where reified representations of culture are used to affirm camaraderie and distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of interaction.

Jonny and Marinder self-describe as “cutest roommates,” and became best friends despite what Marinder initially saw as a great divide between them. “Jonny, when I first saw him, it was when I first came into the dorm room, and all I was thinking was, *Danish*. Danish people are probably super European and they only talk to European people.” Together the two formed an eccentric duo, with Jonny, a white, muscular and tall blue-eyed blond, who prides himself on the discipline that his athletics and his piano practice bring, and Marinder, a slight, brown-skinned pop-culture nerd who laughs as he talks about shopping in the junior’s section of the department store back home. Marinder so relies on pop culture that he claims it helps him to not be so intimidated when meeting different kinds of people at Highland: “Anyone who becomes my friend I try to familiarize as much as possible. I try to relate them to something I already know, a stereotype or a character from a TV series, because that helps me. That’s my way of making friends, I connect them with characters I already know.”

Marinder used this reliance on stereotypes to understand a conflict Jonny had with another male roommate. Jonny reports having spent considerable time with this person in

his first year at Highland, since they had a shared interest in lifting weights and playing sports, things that Jonny describes as “very typically manly.” But over time Jonny started to feel a disjuncture between his capacity to do the physical things of teenage boyhood and his desire to explore what he says are his “natural tendencies” to be more feminine. “I’ve much more clearly taken...not a stance, but become clearer about what kind of person I want to be.” Jonny explains how this change impacted his friendships with male friends who refused to get it:

They were very much these types of guys, who were very manly and didn’t understand why I did the things I did here at the school, like yoga, and sometimes I tried ballet. They were against it, which I think is really bad. I want to be open and stuff, in terms of being a bit more feminine. I find it much easier to talk to girls, to talk about feelings and stuff. Because it’s actually very few guys that you can go deeper with talking.

Jonny reports that first a distance, then outright hostility, took hold between him and his friend, who no longer knew what to do with him, where to place him. The hostility manifested itself first in passing comments about Jonny having too many girl friends and making none of them his girlfriend, comments which later became the groundwork for gay jokes, and after that for a tense confrontation when the friend brought home a picture of a girl in a bikini and suggested that Jonny should not look at it because he “wouldn’t be interested.” Jonny understands the dissolution of their friendship as inherently related to how it began: “Last year I was responding to their behaviour, I was like them. They think I’m like them. Maybe they did it because last year I was really fitting into that environment, I was also a bit like, manly, like typically manly with them. So that’s why they might of thought of it as funny. But I didn’t find it funny at all. It was really disrespectful.”

While Marinder was present when the bikini picture incident happened, and was also often the target of this person’s jokes, he was not impacted in the same way as Jonny, perhaps because he was not invested in the friendship, but more importantly because he had an entirely other approach to the conflict than Jonny. I sat down with them one day and asked them to tell me what happened, and it became clear that Jonny is still angry about the incident.

“That day I wrote down just how I felt at that instant, that I really just hated that roommate that did it. I still think about saying something to him. Really getting in his face and confronting him about just how stupid he is.”

As Jonny speaks, Marinder’s eyes dart back and forth, a smirk forming on his face.

“What?” Jonny asks.

“Well... you *are* Danish.”

Jonny looks at him and laughs, “What?”

“The gayest culture in the world? To some cultures, you know, Danish people look gay because you care so much about what you look like.” Marinder pauses a minute, then continues. “At least you have a reason. What’s my excuse? I come from a culture where people think gay people don’t even exist. Like Muslim cultures have no gay people. I shouldn’t exist!”

“It’s just weird to see that he has a very different view of homosexuality than the normal, like Scandinavian, view of homosexuals.” Jonny says of his ex-friend.

“But what do you expect? He’s Eastern European!”

“How’s that important?” I ask.

“People know that some Eastern Europeans are extremely isolated. Not extremely isolated but they are sticking to their own culture, they’re sitting, they’re talking. And they’re against homosexuality,” Marinder replies matter-of-factly.

It is clear that Marinder is joking around and does not fully subscribe to the ideas he sounds off on, but his approach has an effect on Jonny, who relaxes into his chair and laughs for the first time about the whole thing. Marinder uses culture – specifically, jokes based on three distinct stereotypes about Danes, Muslims, and Eastern Europeans – to differentiate between legitimate and illegitimate forms of intercultural interaction.

Let us follow the adage of making the joke less funny by exhaustively explaining it. The original offense that Jonny “wouldn’t be interested” in looking at a naked girl has nothing to do with culture; that joke is offensive for Jonny because it is coming from someone who perceives Jonny’s behaviour as strange and unacceptable. It is Marinder who interjects and makes the whole interaction about culture, transforming its meaning entirely, from a personal attack to an unavoidable transgression, and thus making it more

palatable for Jonny and the offense more diffuse. Research shows that jokes and humour serve an important function in interpersonal interactions, including consensus, conflict, and control (Burns 1953; Martineau 1972). Consensus can be achieved by using humour to build solidarity among disparate members of a group (letting someone in on a joke, or mutually understanding an in-joke, for instance) or by constructing boundaries between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ (Holmes & Marra 2008). In intercultural interactions in particular, there is growing evidence – largely emerging from research on workplaces – that humour plays a central role in how people get along across difference, whether it be through performances of gender (Fletcher 1999; Holmes & Marra 2002; Holmes & Schnurr 2006) or of racial and ethnic identity (Wise 2016; Winkler-Reid 2015), and that these forms of solidarity-building rely on reified and essentialist representations of both gender and race.

Key to the use of humour in intercultural interactions is the fact that essentialized differences are used by actors to undermine potential conflict and disunity even as they are mobilized in the joke itself. In the case of Marinder and Jonny, the mobilization of stereotypical approaches to ethnicity, gender, and sexuality play an important role in solidifying their connection. Marinder takes Jonny, whose gender and sexual expression is in question at least for a non-friend, out of the equation, and jokes about his people – a good-looking Dane cannot help but exude ‘gayness.’ Jonny is not an agent, but, humorously, merely a product of his culture. In a similar way, Marinder neutralizes the offender by saying he cannot help but offend – what *did* you expect from an Eastern European? The ex-friend got the joke wrong: it lacked the depersonalizing function of culture and was in the end too personal. The joke is not on Jonny, but about Jonny’s “culture.”

Talk of culture performs a legitimating function here. When it is clear that Jonny accepts Marinder’s joke and that they will continue to be friends, when it is clear that Marinder knows something about the nature of joking that the ex-friend does not, the two affirm the role of jokes and stereotypes in the formation and expression of cross-cultural friendships and camaraderie. Marinder uses humour to shift the focus away from the personal elements at stake, taking the focus off Jonny, Jonny’s sexuality, Jonny’s feminine manner, and makes it a joke about the ineluctability of the stereotypes that

precede him. That is the most acceptable consensus, and that is what makes Marinder's joke productive and useful, since it both distinguishes between legitimate and illegitimate forms of intercultural expression and because it secures his friendship with Jonny.

Normalizing Difference

The legitimating function of culture can also be used to justify a belief or act by positioning one's "culture" in relation or opposition to "others." Here we turn to Mari and Fen, two roommates who enter into an interaction in which culture is used, in a similar way as Marinder and Jonny do, to transform what can be seen as a personal liability into a cultural inheritance.

On a weekend morning, I meet Fen at the pool. I arrive as she puts away the kickboards people have left behind after a swim. Fen grew up near the Yellow Sea in China, but discovered a skill for swimming at Highland. She greets me with a small cellophane bag filled with red dates, which Fen tells me are good for the blood, and which are a gift from home she had promised me when she found out that I was vegetarian and probably did not have good blood. She tells me that she plans to become a lifeguard, and wants to train for competitive swimming. We walk together to her dorm, where her roommates are preparing waffles and tea.

The room smells of batter and Mari, a white, Swedish girl, has made a plate of thin heart-shaped waffles. Fen mentions to Mari that she did not lead swim today but does not say why, but it is clear that the two have had this conversation before, because Mari knows why Fen did not swim.

"I use OBs all the time when I swim, it's a nice thing, it would give you so much freedom." Mari brings a box of tampons from the bathroom and hands them to Fen to look at.

Fen is not shy, but it is clear from her handling of the box that she does not know how to use them. Mari thinks for a second then stands to get a pen and paper from the desk and starts to draw.

Mari slides the drawing toward Fen. It features a large U-shape with two tube-like passageways splitting the centre of the U: an anatomical profile of a woman's

torso. “You use it, you put it in this hole,” Mari explains, pointing the pen at one of the passageways. “You should sit with a mirror and see where it’s gonna go.” Fen picks up the tampons and the drawing and makes the girls laugh as she trudges toward the bathroom, as if toward a battle. The door shuts and we eat waffles and give Fen some privacy.

Fen is in there a few minutes when we hear talking from the other side of the door. Mari pauses and puts her hand up to signal that we all stay quiet. Fen is speaking Mandarin to someone on the phone. There are long pauses that suggest that whoever she is talking to is doing most of the talking. Fen comes out and does not say anything for a minute.

“I tried a bit but I don’t think I’ll use them for swimming.”

“Okay,” Mari says after a pause. “Were you okay in there?”

“I was okay. I was talking to my mom.”

“Your mom said no?”

“She didn’t say no, she just thought it would be better if I wait. I don’t know.”

“It’s up to you.”

“I know,” Fen considers it, taking a bite of her waffle.

Mari ventures gently. “You said you want to swim, remember? It’s such a nice thing, Fen. It gives you so much freedom, so why shouldn’t you use it?”

“Who showed you how to use them?”

“My sister showed me. My mom was okay with it, but my sister showed me because I was so nervous at first.” Fen raises her eyebrows with interest, and Mari clarifies. “This is normal in my culture. It’s okay Fen, right? This is normal and this is the way other people do it and it’s not such a horrible thing. This is your choice, this is your life.”

What is Mari trying to accomplish in this moment? The difference between Mari and Fen is normalized via talk of culture, and serves to depersonalize and neutralize the potentially damaging interpersonal affects of intercultural encounters. In the work of drawing the anatomical model, of explaining how tampons work and how common they are to use, of waiting outside the bathroom door and then inquiring about what happened behind it, of working through reasons for Fen’s hesitance, Mari seeks to legitimate her

position and Fen's, a labour that for Mari has culture at its centre. Mari is positioning her own culture in a particular way. Mari normalizes the use of tampons by anchoring her claim to the authoritative weight of culture, which is here an authority derived from experience and tradition: out there is a critical mass of Swedish women who have used and will continue to use tampons with no doubt or injury. Her claim that they are "normal in my culture" is meant to let Fen rest easy, her worries unfounded, and more, should open a space in which Fen can consider trying something out of the ordinary. Culture is the experiential buffer Mari thinks Fen needs. For Mari, the homogenizing approach to culture is useful: that a whole culture is behind Mari's experience affords Fen the space to recognize her own liberty to make a choice, free from the strictures that follow her to Highland. As Mari says, "This is your choice, this is your life." In what is for Mari a solidaristic move, Mari reifies her own culture in order to 'unburden' Fen from the precepts of her own.

What can be seen as Fen's childish objection to trying something new, a personal liability, is elevated to the status of a legitimate problem, since it is Fen's culture (encapsulated at the moment of the phone call in the figure of Fen's mother) that does the prohibitive work. Like Jonny, Fen is positioned as affected by certain prescripts. Separating them is not Mari's refinement and Fen's stymied imagination, but a difference more meta – a difference of *culture* – beyond both their control. In fact, this is precisely how Mari sees it:

I just think come on, it's such an easy thing, why don't you just want to do it, it will give you so much freedom over your own life. But for her whole religion or culture to just say no, you cannot do that before marriage or having kids or something like that, I don't get it. I wanted to show her some other way.

It is thus not just a difference of opinion, but a difference of inheritance: Mari has inherited the experience of women who use tampons with no qualms at all and Fen's is an ill-advised inheritance in Mari's estimation. Mari's intention is to maintain Fen's dignity, transforming a potential character flaw into something external to Fen, something that Mari can make sense of and a challenge that will likely compel her to try again with Fen someday. In Mari's words, "I don't feel like I completely failed. I'm happy that at least she learned about it, you know, and who knows what will happen after some more time with her."

Absolution and Exit Strategy

Each of these interactions carries a risk, which suggests that talk of culture does not unambiguously correspond to solidaristic acts. The legitimating function of culture can also be used to absolve individuals of responsibility in the interaction and thus is a powerful exit strategy from conflictual situations. As a symbolic device that lends legitimacy to particular claims, young people may use talk of culture to evade criticism when and if there is pushback or conflict in the intercultural interaction. Talk of culture therefore possesses within it a means through which to prevent interrogation of the person making the claim as well as the act or belief itself, and can thus be used to exit conflicts through the rhetorical force of “it’s *just* my culture.” Let us begin with Mari and Fen.

What are we to make of Mari’s claim that Fen’s culture is one that ‘says no,’ which implies that Mari herself comes from a culture that ‘says yes’? Mari’s position can be seen as patronizing since it seeks to impose a belief and practice on Fen under the guise of a whole culture that believes and does a certain thing. By pinning the use of tampons to a whole culture, the act itself becomes unquestioned and implicitly justified. Thus, while reified forms of culture can be used to legitimate a belief or act in intercultural interactions, they also justify the act or belief itself, preventing interrogation of the act as true (would another Swedish woman make the same claim as Mari?) and just (would Mari consider no longer using tampons, given that from the perspective of Fen’s culture, it is too early in life to do so?).

In addition, by preventing interrogation of the act being justified, the legitimating function of culture absolves individuals of the responsibility to account (and be held accountable) for the claims they make. In this interpretation, turning a belief or act into one held and practiced by a whole culture enables Mari to engage in symbolic violence⁵¹ while purporting to be caring, a relation that echoes those deriving from the “loving, knowing ignorance” of white women toward women of colour (Ortega 2006). Ortega

⁵¹ Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) write that symbolic violence represents “every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force (4). In this case, the symbolic systems mobilized by Mari, that a whole culture is behind her in claims that Fen ought to rethink her position, are concealing the particular racialized and gendered power relations the underlie Mari’s authority and Fen’s deference, which are here veiled in an ostensible expression of care.

(2006) argues that even expressions of care can still be “arrogant,” since they involve making knowledge claims about women of colour that are inaccurate and homogenizing of their experience (61). Fen’s agency is subsumed by her culture, and Mari takes it upon herself to find ways to free her from it. White women – especially those who identify as feminist – tend to be more aware of the oppression of racialized others than of their own privilege (Frankenburg 1993) and, as such, Mari need not be held accountable for the homogenizing approach to either her own or Fen’s culture, nor does she have to consider seriously why non-Western cultures are those from which individuals need to be unburdened, leaving her own Western culture unexamined.

In a similar way, jokes and humour in intercultural relationships carry an implicit exit strategy, which allows young people to evade consequences of potentially hurtful and damaging interactions: “I was just joking!” Jonny does not take offense to Marinder’s joke not just because they are friends, but because proof of their friendship is in the capacity to joke and to take the joke. Jonny says so himself: “he’s just kidding and messing with it. He’s said before that all we care about is our hair or that we dress a little *too* sharp, but it’s just fun. No one says it seriously and no one understands it as not a joke. It’s just fun.” Yet within the value placed on being able to take the joke, there is an expectation that the interlocutor – the butt of the joke – will exhibit a certain graciousness toward those who joke.

Young people, especially the boys in this study (see Wise 2016⁵²), position themselves as capable arbiters of where the line exists between joke and offence, assuming either that they and their interlocutor are in mutual agreement about the kind of interaction going on or that they are astute enough to know when to stop. One boy explains that “I know it doesn’t offend my friends because we’re just doing it for fun. And that’s the thing with mean insults, I guess. I try as much as possible to keep them a joke, rather than make them offensive. So I make sure that the person knows that I’m just kidding.” Wise (2016) suggests that humour in intercultural interaction is Janus-faced, a central feature of social intercourse as well as expressions of intolerance. I argue that so

⁵² My focus in this section is on the legitimating function of culture in intercultural interactions, an interactional form in which jokes and humour using cultural stereotypes play a role. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine more deeply the relationship between masculinity, sexuality, race, and humour, but this is well-established in the research in schools and the workplace and, more specifically, the “shop-floor” (see Kehily & Nayak 1997; Korczynski et. al. 2013; Willis 1977).

too is the legitimating function of talk of culture. While Marinder uses cultural stereotypes to establish a space in which Jonny can feel at ease about the changes in his life, we can nonetheless see how ‘making fun’ can reinforce, rather than disrupt, normative understandings of the intersection of masculinity, sexuality, and race. After all, what is the Eastern European’s joke that Jonny “wouldn’t be interested” in looking at a girl in a bikini, or that he is not capitalizing on his friendships with girls, if not a comment on Jonny’s masculinity, a note on his sexuality? Moreover, in entering talk of culture into joking relationships, one need not take responsibility for causing offense because one “knows” where the line exists between joke and offense and, if the listener insists on hurt feelings, that it was “just a joke.” While cultural stereotypes legitimate certain beliefs and actions, they can also secure an exit strategy from having gone too far in the jest, that is, a means through which to evade criticism for causing offense.

The legitimating function of culture is not always so ambiguous; at times, it facilitates absolution from much more explicitly hostile positions. Take for instance a conversation I had with Diana, the Swedish-Russian girl in Chapter 4 who was frustrated that she could not say what she wanted with Safiya. Diana talks about what it is like to illustrate for people just how much Islamophobia she sees back home. She believes that the perils of Islamization in Europe is a conversation worth having, but not one she would ever take responsibility for because she knows she will be marked a racist. She has come up with a strategy to avoid this outcome:

DIANA: My culture back home if you read the news, there were protests that Muslims held in France, and then you read the comments, 95% of the comments would still refer to Breivik, and say that this was a great guy, he did a great thing, and yes, we should prevent Islamization of Europe. And people here, it’s out of the question, people don’t even try to look at the position. My personal opinion of course is that what he did is horrible, but I think there is some grain of rationality in his thinking as well. I do think that certain things regarding Islamization are not the way I would want it to be. And there are certain things which I don’t think are right because when Muslims come in Europe, instead of assimilating, they want to preserve their culture and they want their culture to sort of spread and grow. And I don’t think this is the way it should be. But then I don’t feel like I can stand up and say, no actually I think he was right in some ways. No, because this is just out of the question completely.

ELISABETH: But would you say Breivik is right or would you say I think that there are problems with Islamization. Because those are two very different statements, right? Like, Breivik was a killer. So if you were to say...

DIANA: I would take the second one, definitely. I would take the idea, and not refer to the person at all, and I would put it forward. So I could *cheat* and say, you know, in Russia people think this and this. And this isn't personal, I am in a safety zone, I'm just saying that people *there*... and this is what I do most of the time if I feel the necessity to say something. I would just say, yes, you know, 'people back home.' I kind of impersonalize myself and just say the opinion of my culture. If I raised this sort of discussion and impersonalize it, saying 'people back home,' I would play devil's advocate by stating the opinion of my culture.

Speaking across difference can feel unpredictable when there is no guarantee that one's opinions will be met with approval and, as we saw in Chapter 4, deciphering what can and cannot be said is a risky endeavour. When it comes to talk about Islamization in Europe, the stakes of the conversation are especially high, and Diana knows that her opinion will be unpopular and border on appearing racist. By mobilizing particular reifications of culture, Diana, like Mari, becomes the author of its contents, a strategy that simultaneously allows Diana to construct in her conversation with me a whole culture of people who think like her and, if she is challenged in the interaction – if, for instance, someone asks whether she shares the opinion of the people back home – to absolve herself of responsibility for having said it at all, distancing herself from the comment and from her people. If someone objects, Diana can simply say, "It's my culture that believes that, and I'm just stating what I know." All stakes and risks are emptied out into the authority of culture, allowing Diana, to use Berger and Luckmann's words, to disclaim responsibility. "Back home" performs the legitimating function, in Diana's words, offering a "safety zone" from which she is able to submit for collective consideration a highly controversial opinion without bearing any of the consequences: a whole culture is worried about Islamization, should we not take it seriously, consider and discuss it in this international setting? While she knows she is interacting within a liberal institution where discriminatory opinions are not publicly tolerated, this symbolic resource is one way to continue to include them in conversation with impunity.

Young people realize talk of culture is persuasive, possessing rhetorical force to legitimate particular positions and allowing them to make claims about the roots of certain beliefs and acts in shaping behaviour. Talk of culture allows young people to

exhibit camaraderie, normalize difference, and to safely voice divisive and prejudicial opinions all the while possessing a means through which one can absolve oneself of personal responsibility for the claims that are made and the beliefs and acts that are legitimated. In all three cases above, culture is used to take the focus off the individual, making certain acts, beliefs, and practices traceable to whole cultures. While in one interpretation, this can be used with the intention to bring people closer together, in an equally powerful interpretation it can be used to bolster wider symbolic systems of race, gender, sexuality, religion, and national culture which appear through talk of culture and therefore in more implicit, less overtly divisive, ways. As I have demonstrated, in the context of the international school, talk of culture is a useful symbolic resource because it legitimates potentially controversial positions and interactions while still adhering to the intercultural principles of the institution in which young people operate.

Culture as Explanation for Hierarchical Thinking

In Chapter 4, I explored the claim that young people become more open at the school and learned about how the value of openness translates into decisions to speak or remain silent. Left out of that analysis is the other side of openness, those who do not fit the definition or abide by the value. When I inquired about the other side of openness, I found narratives of incapacity, the inability of some to shed culture and its prescriptions. I found narratives about the enjoyments one has to forgo in order to satisfy the precepts of someone else's culture, understood here as a thing placing *demands* on individuals who are either unable or disinterested in refusing them. Culture here is described as thoroughly interior to a person, explaining their behaviour and their shortcomings as well as providing the basis for hierarchical thinking about why divisions exist between people. As such, talk of culture is employed in arguments about global hierarchies between distinct national cultures, and thus allows young people to position it as placing demands on individuals and delimiting possibilities. To the extent that culture is seen as a burden, this form of talk of culture conceives culture as a burden that others have because they are conceived as inextricable from it. As we will see in the narrative that follow, it is most often articulated by those whose beliefs and actions coincide with the dominant norms at Highland, and most often by white, Western, English-speaking young people.

Word had gotten to me one Tuesday that some Highlanders were drinking on the weekend. Teachers had busted a bush party at the outer edge of campus but only a few people were caught, drunk, and had spent Monday explaining themselves to the administration. There is a no drinking policy on campus, and the violation was serious enough to warrant rumours about who had been caught and whether they had informed on the others, and about who possibly could have told on them, the main suspect being one of Nils' roommates who everyone knew was opposed to drinking. Nils, the white Danish boy who avoided conflict in Chapter 4 by settling on a tactful silence with his religious friend, talked to me a few times about drinking on campus, and when I meet him inside Ekeby Hall for the weekly school meeting, he rolls his eyes at the thought that just minutes before, 18-year-olds were being asked to explain why they were drinking even though they were of legal age. What is there to explain, whom does it harm? We talk about the timeline of the night, whether drinking took place in the rooms, a detail that was important because for those who do not want to drink and do not want to watch others drink, it becomes a matter of having to excuse oneself from the party, marking oneself as pietistic and 'uncomfortable.' In Nils' mind, if those who do not want to drink were not forced to witness it, then the rule to respect each other was upheld.

The meeting was likely going to be a scold for the weekend, Nils explains, the closest thing to discipline that those who were not caught drinking would get. When the principal stands before the group and outlines the students' responsibilities to one another, Nils gives me a knowing look: we were already well into the school year, why would the principal reiterate the school's values unless he believes that the school's values warrant repeating? "We must learn to live alongside each other," the principal says. "And of course there will be tensions, in your rooms, in your dorms, but actually how do we work together and work through that?" Nils nudges me to indicate that the principal's words are actually about the weekend's events. The principal goes on: "I expect students to demonstrate international and intercultural understanding. We celebrate differences here. We don't persecute people for their differences here." The rest of the meeting passes and I walk with Nils to his next class.

As we talk, Nils likens how the weekend's events were handled to another instance with his girlfriend's "very religious" Latin American roommate, who told his

girlfriend that she does not like when they kiss in front of her. Nils and his girlfriend no longer kiss while the roommate is nearby, but sometimes still do if they shut the curtain that encloses the bed from the rest of the room. Even though they found a fix, he resents having to hide what he feels is normal teenage stuff just to ease someone else's discomfort.

NILS: We had a big discussion in the room. The idea of why should the three other roommates, who have boyfriends, why should they change their behaviour to fit this one girl's...you know, she was feeling uncomfortable and kind of insulted when the kissing happened. The school tries to take a stand, you know, we're going to value the uncomfortability, if that's a word, of this person in the room, and that's more important than the frustration that the other roommates might feel.

ELISABETH: What frustration?

NILS: I think it comes down more to tolerance. We talked about tolerance at this place and why is the Nordic culture the one that is least tolerated. Because we don't have...it comes down to because in the Nordic countries we don't have very strong values close to our identity, they're kind of not linked, like, to our emotions. We won't feel bad at heart or offended if something that goes against our values is presented to us. Like if we see someone stealing at a bank, we wouldn't feel sad or shocked, we'd be more judgmental saying why would you ruin our society by stealing our money and using it for yourself. But it's just like here in discussion, because we're from a Nordic region or, more generalized, the Western region, we're not considered...we're not looked at as...we are the tolerators, not the ones that are being tolerated.

I nod for him to go on.

NILS: And if you come from a culture, like, if I would go to Saudi Arabia, I wouldn't go there and say, you should all tolerate me, it's understood that if I go there I need to understand their ways. But that's not how it works when we all come here, it looks different here. In here we have to tolerate, you know, they pray 5 times a day, even though I might be uncomfortable in the room with that, if someone is praying, because you have to be quiet for 5 minutes if you're talking to someone. You have to tolerate that halal people get better food, the meat is much less processed.

While the principal can sum up the events of the weekend with a call for more intercultural understanding, Nils cuts right through such delicate constructions: he sees in the call to understanding the inequality between those who must do the understanding and those who must be understood. He makes a statement about two reified forms of culture, which stand in opposition to each other. In one, the "we" who are "the tolerators" have no particular strong emotions about what to believe and the ideas to invest in, and are expressly rational in the judgment of wrongdoing, a people more likely to condemn crime as a detriment to society than experience personal dismay about the avarice of bank

robberies. To be the tolerator, one must be free enough from one's own culture to accommodate the requirements of others. Nils imagines himself a traveller to Saudi Arabia, prepared to adapt to conditions there, knowing that it would be unrealistic to expect that the people behave more like him. In Nils' description of the other culture, there is a nebulous "they," which can include anyone likely to get uncomfortable – religious Latin American girls, Muslims who want to pray and eat, or his unnamed roommate who may or may not have informed the teachers that drinking was going on. Unlike the measured nature of Nils' Nordic roots, there is little distance for these others between values and emotions, which means that wrongdoing is a personal affront and the risk of offending is high.

For Nils, the burden of accommodating the needs of others is a role specific to the privileges he is afforded by his Nordic culture. When I asked Nils why he feels he is the tolerant one, he speaks matter-of-factly about the role he is defining and the duties it implies.

I've thought about it a lot, and it's hard to come to a definite answer. But I think one of the cases is that we have it very good, we have already the surplus of energy, surplus of money. I'm talking about personal energy, we're the happiest people on earth, we don't have a strict culture, we have enough money to buy flat-screens, we can drive bigger cars...privilege. And therefore they see, well therefore they see, now they shouldn't *also* be tolerated, they have to let us... I get the feeling that there's some kind of implied arrogance in a discussion, like something you give off without knowing it, if you're from a country that does well.

It is through the prism of his own privileges – the "implied arrogance" he mentions – that it makes sense that Nils' duty is to "value the uncomfortability" in an institutional context defined by intercultural understanding. He is not alone in thinking this way. One girl describes a tense encounter with a few friends when she wanted to have her boyfriend sleep over, explaining that nothing was going to happen but that she just wanted someone there for comfort. When her friends, one of whom is a Christian, point out that some might feel uncomfortable having a boy in the room the whole night, the girl explains to me that she felt ganged up on, and uses culture and religion to explain the gulf that revealed itself that day:

It's more important to have a religion and culture behind what you want than to not have it. So it's like those are protected, those are not. All the rules for the school are for protecting *them*. They have a justification. It's their culture, so I will not do it. But we don't have anything. It's just

because I think that way, it's because that's my life, that's my comfort. But I'm not really having something beyond that, it's just what I want, it's what I believe.

In this framing, it is arrogant for Nils and this girl to think that they can come to a school that advocates intercultural understanding and rightfully have sleepovers, or drink when they want, for within this other culture is a central resentment: “they” believe the likes of Nils and this girl *shouldn't also be tolerated*.

What is happening to culture here, what is it being used to do? There is a familiar construction going on of a dynamic between the West and a set of inchoate Others, filled with resentments and erasures unique to the experience of white, Westernized, English-speaking young people.⁵³ The dynamic is this: at the same time that Western culture is constructed as free, it is also constructed as burdened by the demands placed on it by other, more restrictive, cultures. This was repeated several times by white, Western, English-speaking young people, who describe some cultures, as one girl, Lois, does, as suffering an “automatic block” when it comes to religious and cultural differences, whereas her own culture makes people like her specially equipped for the work of getting along across differences because, “culturally, [we] don't really clash with anyone...so there's this completely free-flowing thing.” Not only then are the inchoate Others restricted and limited – they cannot watch kissing and drinking go on, for instance – but so powerful is this restrictive force that it bleeds into the conduct even of the unaffiliated.

Being the “tolerator” appears as a contemporary framing of the “white man's burden,” which charges the West not with a civilizing mission (Lentin & Titley 2011: 49), but with a mission of tolerance, since it is positioned as enlightened and free, and thus as standing above the fray and fixity of cultural particularities. What actually gets reinforced, however, is a belief in the non-assimilative tendencies of “others” and, by extension, a denial of the limits of views like Nils' and Lois', which is just as dangerous as the supposedly closed and rigid cultures against which they position themselves. When Nils says that his culture is the least tolerated, he ignores the distinct centrality of norms, values, and modes of conduct most familiar to him as a white, Western, English-speaker in the establishment of the institution and the everyday ways that people deem it correct to speak and interact. When Nils says that he is the tolerator, he and people like him can

⁵³ Not all respondents in this section are white, but rather are young people who are Westernized, or are identifying strongly with the progressive and liberal norms at the school.

sensibly claim a neutral position at the centre of the work of toleration, measuring all Others by their deficiencies or by their proximity to Western norms (Hage 2000: 18-19).⁵⁴

We are thus reminded of just how important essentialist forms of talk of culture are to functioning hierarchies, calling up and bolstering dominant symbolic systems that name and rank static group characteristics. In Nils' case, he finds a suitable explanation for his position, which, to borrow from Gilroy (1990), identifies culture with race and religion and thus expounds a "culturalist conception" of difference (92). As Modood (2015) argues, culturalism helps to explain what happens with increased interaction between white and non-white individuals. Coexistence, he argues, has not done away with consciousness of group difference but has led to the rise of culturalism, representing irreconcilable differences as rooted in "upbringing, customs, forms of socialization and self-identity rather than to biology" (156). What young people see in drinking and other common experiences of teenage behaviour is the need to make broader appraisals of the cultural impasses that exist between them. If people do not want to drink, they do not want to drink for cultural reasons, thus "culture" becomes a target – both a target for repair (we can address underlying tensions by focusing on intercultural understanding, hence the principal's talk about respecting differences, since a kind of sensitivity training is an institutional response to dealing with having so many different kinds of people at Highland) and a target of derision (the source of tension between us is your strong-to-a-fault ties to culture, which I resent because I have to accommodate the limitations it causes). Culture appears as the root cause of divisiveness, and instigates hierarchical thinking.

For Nils and the young people described above, it makes sense that culture is a hindrance because in its reified form, it is identified with irreconcilable difference from

⁵⁴ Talking about culture as placing limits on individuals (which I have argued is essentially a denial of individual agency in relation to one's culture) is not unidirectional, as a phenomenon of the West targeting the non-Western world. If we re-read Peter's narrative from Chapter 4 in light of this analysis, he too relies on the reification of both his own "African culture" and that which is predominant at Highland in order to hierarchize them and ultimately place more value on his own. Peter talks of his culture as guided by morals and values in teaching sex education, and of the dominant culture at Highland as teaching safe sex, which simply presumes that young people will have sex and thus ignores "the dangers of having sex before marriage" or "having sex with very many partners." In Peter's mind, the culture at Highland is limited, and he believes that his own upbringing is more valuable and helpful for figuring out how best to live than what he is currently immersed in at the school.

which individuals cannot free themselves. In a similar way to Mari, there is evidence that these young people are developing an understanding of the various permissions and restrictions that others live by, albeit in a simplified, ‘they can’t, we can’ way. To the extent that the people in this section share with Mari a focus on what ‘they can’t,’ do, they do not go where Mari does with Fen to conjure a space in which alternatives can be imagined. Rather, in a hierarchical logic that serves resentment and exclusion, culture is talked about as placing unreasonable demands on those who adhere to it (and even those who do not) and thus makes them unfit for the intercultural work of the school. As we will see in the final section of this chapter, given the reputation that culture comes to possess, as something divisive and filled with qualities antithetical to the intercultural work of the school, it appears in narratives of the collective need to overcome it altogether.

Culture as a Device of Antithesis

Young people at Highland make arguments for why culture should lose its relevance, deeming it a vestigial force that constrains and makes difficult the work required of them in an international setting. In this section, we will see culture represented as grounded in particularity and provincialism and, by extension, as antithetical to global citizenship. In response, personhood and common humanity are seen to supersede cultural particularity and thus as the logical next steps toward global citizenship. Young people therefore construct a commonality between people who are different, a commonality that supersedes culture. They do not, like those in the second section, condemn others for being too stuck in their difference, but do the work of imagining what ties exist beyond culture, and find those ties in personhood and common humanity. It is therefore an aspirational and normative form of talk.

One November morning, I wake up early and head to the cafeteria for breakfast where I see Una, a second year student, standing expectantly in the doorway. I look past her into the room and see that the tables have been re-arranged. Normally the room is arranged with a few banquet tables close to the door and several round tables in the centre and along the far wall of the cafeteria, but now the room takes on a pleasing symmetry, with the banquet tables dispersed at different angles throughout the room and the round

tables organized around them. The tables have a fabled existence at Highland, and are spoken about as revealing grim limitations of the intercultural project that the school sets out to do. All I have to do is pay attention to where people sit at mealtime, and I would start to know something about how insularity prevails, and that familiarity, not risking the unknown, is the most natural common denominator. I need to look at how young people assemble, with the Black and Asian kids sitting at the long banquet tables on one end of the room and the white kids at the round tables on the other end. I would then know that at their most unaffected, people prefer not to have to work too hard, or worse, reveal their underlying racism and their true unwillingness to stumble across language in order to discover what is in common or revere what is different. I would see that the formal intercultural work of the school is overshadowed by what people do in the more authentic, if ordinary, act of sharing food.

Una is among the young people who would not accept this reality. A German girl who grew up near the Hague and whose parents work with the International Criminal Court, Una explains that she was always internationally minded, and tries to sit with different people because she feels that it is her duty to do so at a school that encourages everyone “not to stick to their own group.” She tells me that early in the school year, the cafeteria is always buzzing with small talk unique to an international setting. People from all around the world talking to each other, sitting wherever they please, asking strangers how to say hello in their native language, exchanging bits of information about the food, dress, and life back home, and demonstrating a curiosity that, Una explains, is not easily sustained.

“I pictured the school being like all of us sitting around the table talking about the differences in our lives and our culture and stuff, and sharing all the time. But eventually people start to sit with their own groups. People tend to stick with their cultures.”

I had heard this same lament before, and knew what Una was up to in the cafeteria that morning. It had been described a few ways, as a social experiment, as a test that proved how discriminating people were, and as a legacy handed down from previous generations of Highlanders, who would conduct the same experiment when it seemed that the seating plan was getting too stale. But the result was always the same. The new

arrangement might work for a while, people would sit elsewhere and get a thrill from talking to someone new, but patterns would eventually show up again.

Una leans against the wall with her arms crossed, observing her work. People start streaming in and Una greets them, making light of what she has done by bowing as they enter the threshold. A few people stop to talk and Una explains that she thought it was time to shake things up.

“How will you know if you’ve done the job?” I ask.

“I’ll be happy if I dismantle the Nordic table. Everyone speaking [their own language] and they don’t even switch to English if someone else comes,” Una says.

“That happens with everyone though. People just sit where their language is spoken, even though we’re supposed to all speak English,” a British girl explains, commenting on the fact that English is the language of instruction at the school and the one everyone is asked to speak.

“The Nordics are the worst at that I think,” Una says. “I just eat and leave super fast when that happens. I don’t even try to make conversation.”

The group is in agreement that there is not a good mix of people in the cafeteria, and that whatever Una is trying to rekindle is going to be short-lived. Nonetheless, they all participate, dispersing throughout the room after they get their breakfast, saying ‘bye!’ to one another as they part. Una stays behind with Dominique, a talkative Senegalese girl. She is pacing, clearly wanting to say something. Una speaks first, asking where Dominique is going to sit.

“I don’t know. I noticed that when Norwegians are sitting together and speaking Norwegian, nobody is going to say anything. But I noticed that when Africans are sitting together, they’re going to point it out. Like we sit together, and people call this the ‘African table.’ Why when Nordics are sitting together, they’re not called on it? And when we sit together, we speak only English, because we have so many languages. But if you go to the Norwegian table, they’ll be speaking Norwegian for sure.”

Una agrees. “This is why I’m doing this!”

Dominique continues:

But I don’t think it can last. You can think like a super multiculturalist, and have no restraints or no negative thoughts whatsoever. But I think the reality of the world is that cultures are not equal. Here people say ‘oh, why do Africans sit at one table and Europeans at the other? This is such a

prejudice. It's wrong.' I don't think it's a prejudice, I don't think it's wrong. Because I know if I have to choose between a table with Africans and a table with Europeans, yes, I might sit at the table with Europeans a few times just for fun, to see how they're doing things. But having experienced that, I think that no, I would rather sit with Africans most of the time. And it's not that I'm not open to their culture or that I don't like them. No. It's just that I accept that this is the culture that I feel more comfortable with.

Una looks disappointed, as though Dominique is commenting on the futility of her project. Una shifts her gaze to the cafeteria, as it becomes more abuzz with talk of where everyone will sit given the new arrangement. "I wish there wasn't this huge wall between..." She pauses a moment, then adds, firmly, "Something like culture should not come between our personalities. There's more to us than that."

Even though Una and Dominique disagree about whether to be concerned with people sitting or not sitting with those who talk and look different, they share in common the idea that culture – here a stand-in for comforts and familiarity, for language and race, and for a real or imagined sense of kinship – stands in opposition to the intercultural project at Highland. Where Una makes a move to shake people out of this pattern in the name of some higher order, Dominique is confident that culture will prevail, and is fine with the idea that it is not in her best interest to try to sit with those whom she sees as unlike her. Even though Dominique resents the uneven negative attention given to the insularity of the "African table" (which echoes the previous section's findings that there are racialized conceptions about who is and is not capable of achieving a cosmopolitan outlook, which Dominique recognizes and resists by withdrawing from the intercultural project altogether), she does not, like Una, recommend that the answer is to shed the pattern, but accepts that differences exist and that people's comforts are naturally more insular. Una is committed to overcoming culture, Dominique believes that exploring outside of her close ties is not worth the price of being "super multiculturalist" or "having no restraints or no negative thoughts."

What exactly is this higher order that Una wants and that Dominique withdraws from? How do young people believe it is achieved, and how is culture represented as being left behind or overcome in the act? Young people believe that being too close to one's own culture poses an ethical risk, causing one to miss out on the fulfilling relationships that the school experience promises. In this frame, being attached to one's

own culture leads to closure and the creation of in-groups and out-groups, and is therefore talked about as undermining intercultural work. It makes sense, then, that it appears within arguments for its collective disavowal. An Italian boy says that he will have an enriching experience if he makes way for other cultures: “I feel you can get a lot out of this place if you don’t identify too much with your culture, you can learn from other cultures and you can get along that way.” A Colombian girl says that, “it’s important to suppress your culture, to not come with your culture, to suppress and kind of learn about new things.” A Yemeni girl named Reema says that she is excited by the diversity at Highland, and reflects on how best to take advantage of it:

I don’t want to be closed, to already know what I think, I don’t want to have a clear picture of what I believe and who I should be with. I really want to figure it out here with less past... things from the past that influence the present. So I feel like I need to stay with the minimum of what I brought from home, because what I brought from home, my own culture and my beliefs, it’s more difficult to fit in here.

In its reified form, culture is talked about as “brought from home,” and thus poses an interactional risk since it imposes, as Reema describes, too clear a picture of what to believe and with whom one should appropriately spend time. Young people express this capacity to suppress as a necessary disposition in their interaction with diverse others. They express it as a matter of fitting in, of understanding others and making friends. Intercultural understanding become possible, but at the necessary cost of the closures elicited by a strong attachment “culture.”

Highlanders identify a processual development initiated at Highland, and describe the ways of evolving past ties to culture – their own or those of the people they meet – toward a “next level” state of interaction, which involves attaching value to personhood, or to the recognition that we are all human and thus share an essential sameness. Young people minimize culture by arguing, as Una does, that “there is more to us than culture,” and thus that it is an inconsequential part of those with whom they interact, and claim instead that they get along with those unlike themselves because they are able to see ‘the person’ behind ‘the culture’. A popular Ghanaian boy who is indiscriminate in his friendships says that culture ultimately does not matter to him, and attributes his diverse friendships to his ability to overlook it in his interactions:

When I talk to people I'm not thinking about culture or where they come from because it has a very little fraction to play in what the person is made up of. [...] It makes up what, 2%, of what the person has accumulated over a life, and what really defines the person is the relationships that person has had, the experiences, who are their friends, what he or she likes or doesn't like personally, I think those are more pertinent things you should focus on. Not necessarily culture. A girl explains the process plainly, "You have a distinction between individual people and their cultures and you understand that they're affected by it but that it's not the only thing they're affected by. There's also individual personality and on that basis we can find what we have in common."

Personality and the search for an essential sameness are positioned as core universalisms, salves against the unpredictability that is introduced by culture, weighed down as it is in difference and stereotypes, and in strange or confusing practices. Yet talk of culture is here differentially employed. The focus on strange or out of place beliefs and practices is key to understanding *why* talk of overcoming culture is useful in intercultural contexts, and how it is differentially employed. For those whose beliefs and practices coincide with the dominant culture at Highland, often white, non-religious, or Western(ized) young people, talk of culture as something to overcome is a necessary component of understanding the beliefs and actions *of others*, and a strategy of including these others in shared personhood. For those whose beliefs and practices do not fit into the dominant culture at Highland, often those who are racialized, religious, or come from the global South, talk of overcoming culture is a necessary discourse in relation to *their own* beliefs and acts, and is thus a strategy of including themselves within the realm of shared personhood.

Take, for instance, a Venezuelan girl who identifies strongly with Western culture, has a white Danish boyfriend, and whose ultimate goal is to get educated and settle in the United States one day. She describes herself as a strong animal rights activist and tells me that she was nervous to learn that she was assigned with a Chinese roommate, and that it was just a matter of time before the issue of the treatment of dogs in China came up. When the roommate admitted to having eaten dog, the girl explains that she had to work to see the roommate as a person removed from an offensive cultural practice and eventually as a friend: "You have these strong beliefs, but you actually love the person whose culture you hate. I hate what she does, but I love her as a person, you

know? I would always be nice to Chinese students here. And when I'm talking with one, I'm not thinking about the different cultures we have and I'm not thinking about my beliefs." A white boy who identifies as atheist recounts how he learned to get along with people who are devoutly religious: "It's only through knowing each other that you can see we're all the same. When you overcome it's a different person, when you overcome it's a different culture, when it's just about: "you're that way, I'm that way", we're both not alright with it, but it doesn't matter anymore where you come from, your culture and religion doesn't matter anymore because we're just the same."

Noor, a brown Egyptian girl who wears a hijab, discusses the need to overcome culture as a way of understanding her own practices. Noor initially perceived a Swedish classmate as brash and disparaging when she commented on girls who are "forced" to wear the hijab, and eventually learned that she could understand this person beyond differences in how they grew up and what they were taught:

NOOR: What I realized is that culture doesn't really matter. The opinions are not that important. [...] I can understand her values, and she can see what I mean when I speak. And I think our relationship is not that much based on cultural opinions, but there is something more. Like an interpersonal relationship that doesn't really come from culture that much because we've gone past that. I feel like we're good friends and it's normal.

ELISABETH: What made that possible you think?

NOOR: Her values aren't that strange to me anymore, like what she thinks of hijab, it's just as normal as any other value. I've seen people that belong to whole cultures that believe I shouldn't wear hijab, but now they're my roommates, they're my friends. They're not weird people anymore. We're equally weird and that makes us the same.

Under scrutiny here are Noor's practices, and the realization of her friendship with the Swedish girl is contingent on Noor's ability to pardon those "whole cultures" that see her practices as strange, as well as her ability to conclude that everyone shares an essential 'weirdness'.

Though she makes light of the situation, Noor demonstrates the need for racialized young people to devise defensive strategies to include themselves as 'people' in intercultural contexts. In their study of the ordinary cosmopolitanism of black and white American, French, and North African workers, Lamont and Aksartova (2002) find that black workers make a variety of appeals to personhood that white workers do not. The black workers establish equivalence between themselves and whites by appealing to

naturalistic arguments of their shared value as human beings, that “we all have red blood,” or by appealing to “personal goodness,” which involves “abstracting oneself from one’s race/nation/religion in order to show that a member is not necessarily defined by the group to which s/he belongs” (13). Lamont and Aksartova attribute this to the fact that because black workers are the targets of racism and thus experience devaluation of their personhood and suspicion of the groups to which they belong, they develop strategies to disprove racial inequality and provide different kinds of evidence of their worth.

The narratives above show that discursive strategies of personhood and the need to abstract ‘the person’ from ‘the culture’ are used among a variety of differently positioned young people. As we saw with Una, they can be used to simultaneously condemn the closures that result from a close attachment to one’s culture and celebrate the possibilities of the kinds of intercultural relationships that may ensue from leaving behind what makes us closed. For those who see the need to cast off culture in order to make way for the global connections offered at Highland, culture appears as antithetical to the realization of global citizenship, here defined as common humanity and an ability to see ‘the person’ behind ‘the culture.’ However, young people use this strategy for different reasons, reflecting intersections of race, religion, and national culture and, thus, it is a difference between being in a more powerful position of including the strange beliefs *of others*, as with the case of the Venezuelan girl and her Chinese roommate, and a subordinate position of having to find ways to include *one’s own* beliefs and practices within the realm of acceptability in the intercultural context, as was the case with Noor and her hijab. For those whose beliefs and practices are furthest from the dominant norms at Highland, talk of overcoming culture may be a defensive strategy to secure their own inclusion in the global community. Overcoming culture is a key to understanding how young people get along across differences, but there is inequality in whose beliefs and acts need to be overcome.

Conclusion

Talk of culture is filled with meaning. We have seen in this chapter that when culture is used, it is essentialized, and enters into narratives about people’s inheritances

and real and imagined conduct and possibilities, forming particular inevitabilities about who people are and how interactions will go. First, we saw that culture is used as a legitimating device that renders an actor's claims as well as their ways of thinking accepted and acceptable. I outlined the legitimating function in its everyday uses, namely, in expressions of camaraderie, the normalization of difference, and as a strategy that absolves actors of personal responsibility because one may pin a claim to a 'whole culture' or express controversial opinions under the mantle of 'culture.' Second, culture is used to justify the establishment of hierarchies between national cultures, since the intercultural space of the school represents the collision of cultures whose adherents are more or less burdened by prescriptive limitations rooted in beliefs, values, and traditions. In its everyday use, this form of talk of culture positions those from the West as free to enjoy what are considered normal teenage experiences and be truly open to difference, while others are beholden to the demands and unfreedoms of their cultures. Third, culture is a device of antithesis, constructed as encouraging closure and provincialism and thus rendered the inverse of common humanity and global citizenship. In its everyday use, culture becomes too burdensome for the requirements of global citizenship, and young people draw on discursive strategies through which to imagine an essential sameness. A key component of these elements of talk of culture is that young people are positioning themselves and others in relation to culture as either agents, able to free themselves or being free enough from cultural precepts, or as determined by cultural precepts, unable to or disinterested in conducting themselves differently. This is the essence and essentialized character of talk of culture at Highland, which tends to be appear in reified form and thus both refutes the internally contested nature of culture at the same time that it allows actors to make and legitimate claims.

We may now answer the question implied in this chapter's title: why is talk of culture 'useful'? It is useful because as we have seen throughout this dissertation, the existence of institutions like Highland, which espouse values of openness and intercultural understanding, does not eliminate the achievement of domination and social division within them. Rather, it makes such divisions more difficult to discern, since they are embedded in quotidian contexts between friends, roommates, and classmates and often articulated in ways that are not explicitly exclusionary and which actors accept as

legitimate forms of talk and interaction. Bourdieu understood this quality of power and domination, which is important in a context like Highland where young people are being evaluated on the basis of not only their academic aptitude, but also their ability to demonstrate the skills of global citizenship. In this sense, talk of culture becomes a useful symbolic resource that one can employ to demonstrate such skills, but is actually a form of domination through which young people may position themselves in the global field of international education to reap the rewards - being seen as interculturally-minded, for instance, and having that result in positive university admissions letters - of knowing the 'rules of the game' (Bourdieu 1990). In this sense, individuals like Mari, who attempts to convince Fen of the rightness of her Swedish ways, and Nils, who laments his position as the tolerant 'tolerator,' and the Venezuelan girl, whose work it is to love the person but hate the culture, can be seen as exercising this very knowledge of the game, since they are able to maintain a position of dominance while at the same time exhibiting an acceptable position on culture. Because of their social position as Western, English-speaking (and in the case of Mari and Nils, white) young people, they have been brought up in dominant symbolic systems that have prepared them to employ a most consecrated form of cultural capital recognized at Highland - talk of culture - with ease and acceptability.

As I have shown in this chapter, however, talk of culture is not only useful for the powerful, nor is it reducible to an epiphenomenon of actors' struggles over the scarce resources in the global field of international education and their subsequent attempts to position themselves favourably within it. Talk of culture is useful because it provides a window into what I referred to in Chapter 1, drawing on Lamont (2000), as the study of inequality through the "broad cultural frameworks that facilitate it, and those used to respond to it" (2000: 604). Here, I have drawn on Alexander's Strong Program to theorize a more autonomous space for culture at Highland, to approach it as just such a symbolic framework that, as Lamont suggests, offers a complex view of how solidarity and division are formed through meaning-making activity. In this framing, essentialized approaches to talk of culture are a symbolic resource that young people add to their intercultural 'toolkit' (Swidler 1986), not in the interest of securing their positions in a power-laden field, but because they are part of an institution whose norms they take

seriously and within which they develop relationships with others that they wish to maintain. If we follow Alexander and Smith's call to treat culture as an "ideal resource," we see the enactment of various broad symbolic systems in one of Highland's most central discourses, talk of culture: those that call upon crisis of multiculturalism narratives, reliant as they are on binaries between European 'culture' and its unassimilable Others, and those that call upon cosmopolitan forms of common humanity and an essential sameness. In this frame, inequality and equality have cultural dimensions, and thus racism, xenophobia, domination, intolerance, as well as efforts to demonstrate egalitarian attitudes, can be understood vis-à-vis the meaning-making processes that constitute them and make them durable.

It therefore matters, as Alexander and Smith (2003) suggest, "who says what, why, and to what effect" (14), since the social positions of the speaker and the audience are revealing of the symbolic structures that are likely and legitimately to be drawn upon. In one interpretation, as a white feminist who intends to express 'care' for her friend, Mari seamlessly adopts the position of advisor, and seeks to offer alternative possibilities for her Chinese friend, who at Highland is a representative of a culture that needs to be taught. Similarly, it makes sense that Nils is fatigued by the need to tolerate, since his inheritance renders him privileged and free in relation to his non-Western counterparts who are burdened and limited in their views.

An autonomous view of culture also permits an analysis of how the young people in this study use talk of culture to subvert dominant frames. Among friends, roommates, and classmates who are tasked to get along at school and are thus working out quotidian and nascent ways of doing so, talk of culture represents a narrative structure that young people lean on to creatively negotiate difference. Like those frames that support domination, the narrative is constructed vis-à-vis the "epistemic authority" (Zerubavel 2016: 71) allotted to reified culture. We see how, for instance, Marinder empties out all emotion and offence into the idea of culture and uses that to unburden his friend from hurt feelings, and the ways in which this occurs through an intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and national culture as well as Marinder's reliance on stereotypes and essentialist notions of difference. Una makes culture discursively meaningful when she likens it to a "huge wall." In rearranging the physical space of the cafeteria she refuses to

accept that culture should determine who to spend time with and get to know, and thus draws on broader narratives of the virtues of a global citizenship that is based in personhood and essential sameness. It is therefore no wonder that when young people talk about “culture,” it is filled with meaning. Talk of culture is a prominent and complex symbolic framework in the intercultural setting of the school, and is an important component of intercultural engagement precisely because it is useful for young people.

Chapter 6

Between Home and Away: Multiple Attachments in the International School

In this chapter, I examine how young people at Highland provide accounts of political violence at home in a context marked by the formation of “simultaneous” (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004) and “overlapping” (Robbins 1998) allegiances to near and distant places and people. Highland is a context in which young people are called upon to be representatives of a place at the same time that they come to identify with expanding milieux. Yet, there are events in the lives of young people that activate particular forms of connection and loyalty (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007: 138), events during which the impetus is strong to declare and construct certain allegiances and forgo, or even condemn, others. I suggest that political violence and the pursuit of education abroad are two such events, and investigate how three young people provide accounts of political violence at home while managing norms of openness and understanding. I seek to contribute to our understanding of the articulation and relational character of simultaneous allegiances, and how they uniquely coalesce for young people who provide accounts of violence at home as well as their own position in relation to it.

I draw on research on transnationalism, and argue that attachments are characterized by simultaneity, a term used by Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) to define the capacity to be both rooted and open and thus to develop attachments that are based in multiple national, institutional, and relational contexts. I argue that simultaneity is borne of multiple contexts and normative schemas, but this very multiplicity means that for some, loyalties to near and distant places need, in practice, to be laboriously negotiated and renegotiated since they enter into relationships in which certain attachments are more or less costly, and are even seen to undermine the cosmopolitan imperative of the school. Thus the narratives in this chapter reveal that, when analyzed in situated contexts in which there are norms of openness as well as unequal power relations, certain attachments represent a tension between cosmopolitan practice and events that ‘call people back’ to specific locales. This analysis contributes to the study of the transnational practices of young people who pursue education abroad, which, as outlined in Chapter 2, has often taken the attachments that such young people form as economically motivated,

serving the interest of upward mobility either through the development of global connections or to secure forms of global capital that are valued ‘back home’ (Aguilar & Noguiera 2012; Brooks & Waters 2010; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Moore 2012; Resnik 2012; Shahrokni 2019; Tran 2016). I align myself with scholars who analyze young people’s experiences within schools (Harris 2013; Maira 2009; Noble 2009), and examine how allegiances form and are articulated alongside complex power relations and intercultural norms and relationships. The young people in this chapter are articulating their attachments for the first time in a context not marked primarily by economic interest, but by intercultural norms of openness and understanding.

I examine the experiences of three young people who engage in interactions in which their allegiances are, often for the first time in their lives, formed and articulated. They are torn between doing justice to their ideas about home and the commitment to express allegiances beyond its particularities. Their narratives shed light on the ways in which attachments are rooted to multiple contexts, as well as the relational character of the formation of attachments, emerging as they do from laborious efforts to provide an account of home. First, Malik is a Jordanian-born Palestinian refugee who enters the international sphere and develops a newfound commitment to recovering a Palestinian state. He must contend with certain hierarchizing sentiments in his interactions, which position certain attachments as incommensurable with a cosmopolitan ethos. His narrative demonstrates the notoriety of state-based loyalties in a context in which territorial nationalism is reputed as an antiquated idea that ought to be subsumed by more ‘enlightened’ attachments. Second, Ayelet is an Israeli girl who comes to Highland seeking a new perspective on her connection to home, but must negotiate how others attribute culpability to her in relation to the Palestine/Israel conflict. Ayelet’s experience is indicative of the way in which some forms of membership involve young people in relations of perpetration and blame, and in negotiations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ allegiances. While allegiances coexist in simultaneous and overlapping ways, some are marked, and thus subject to reprimand and censure. Third, Noor is an Egyptian girl who wants to narrate the Egyptian Revolution in an authentic and nuanced way, and tries to achieve this by oscillating between different roles that are rooted in newfound allegiances. I show

that there is interactional risk involved in maintaining multiple allegiances, namely, that staying true to one can feel compromising to others.

The expansion of one's sense of belonging is characterized by a paradoxical condition of rootedness and openness, a condition that has been taken up within research on transnationalism. This body of literature has debunked the assimilationist assumption that transnational migration signifies a shift in loyalty from one locale to another, as well as the idea that transnational attachments and incorporation into a new state are binary opposites (Faist 2000; Glick Schiller & Fouron 2001; Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; Levitt & Waters 2002; Vathi 2013; Waldinger & Fitzgerald 2004; Yeoh et. al. 2003). Moreover, this literature has established that transnational movement does not necessarily produce openness or a cosmopolitan outlook (Levitt & Glick Schiller 2004; Ong 1999; Vathi 2013), challenging the notion that there is a linear or sequential progression from one's roots to more worldly attachments, either to host countries or to international life more broadly. Instead, transnational migration involves "simultaneous" processes of boundary maintenance and openness (Glick Schiller et. al. 2011), and migrants themselves maintain various ties to homelands at the same time that they develop modes of belonging in host societies (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007). Scholars recognize the imaginative and practical components of attachment to a homeland (Anderson 2006; Rumbaut 2002), but advance sociological inquiry beyond its traditional focus on the nation-state. They thus begin from the starting point that there are transnational ways of being, in which actors engage in social, political, and economic relations that cross borders, as regular features of everyday life.

I am influenced by Dahinden's (2017) call to take a transnational "perspective" in the study of the activities of people across borders, which focuses on occasional practices and sporadic events through which multiple attachments are formed, articulated, and negotiated. The attention to periodic practices is intended to include within the transnational perspective articulations of attachment that have been excluded from "core transnationalisms," which involve regular and sustained contact over time across borders, and which is a focus reflected in the work of Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt (1999) and Guarnizo, Portes & Haller (2003). In contrast, drawing on the work of Levitt (2002) and Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004), Dahinden suggests that transnational ways of being are

“done and undone in transnational space [...] and they are closely linked to local contexts which provide constraints and resources” (2017: 1478). I take this attention to practices and argue that actors can be observed “doing” transnationalism, and that the formation of attachments is shaped by possibilities and constraints deriving from multiple national, and, in the case of Highland, institutional and relational, contexts.

The expansion of what is taken as transnational practice is especially useful in the study of young mobile people, who engage in “different levels of intensity” (Levitt 2002: 125) of transnationalism at different periods of time and whose initiation into transnational ways of being is precipitated by sporadic but nonetheless life-altering events.⁵⁵ In short, attachments can be triggered, even as they are shaped by the “constraints and resources” allotted by situational contexts. There are recent works, for instance, that have elaborated on the formation of young people’s practical attachments in relation to present and past crises (Maira 2009; Rumbaut 2002), activism (Ayyash 2013; Mustafa 2016; Nijhawan & Arora 2013), seeking education (Olwig & Valentin 2015; Tran 2016; Valentin 2015; Vathi 2013) and labour opportunities away from home (Webb & Lahiri-Roy 2019; Kim 2011), and which investigate how media technology (NurMuhammad et. al. 2016; Wilding 2012; Robertson, Wilding & Gifford 2016) and familial ties (Levitt & Waters 2002; Reynolds & Zontini 2016) play a role in these endeavours. This literature advances notions of transnational practice because rather than focusing on *outcomes* – that for instance, complex attachments are indeed made, and that norms governing family and life “back home” are reproduced, subverted, or negotiated in tandem with nascent attachments – they go further to emphasize the *processes* by which such practices are formed, and the material and symbolic flows that contribute to these processes.

The young people featured in this chapter find themselves at the cross-roads of two such life-altering events: their relocation to a school in which they are called upon to be willing representatives of a place, and the existence of political crisis that compels intense forms of reflection about “home” and their connection to it. From this cross-roads, I examine the practices associated with the production and negotiation of certain kinds of

⁵⁵ This is especially true for those young people for whom transnational practices are not part of the “family habitus” (Reynolds & Zontini 2016: 383), including second generation children of migrants.

attachments. If we place the aforementioned attention to simultaneous processes within a cultural sociological frame, we can see young people as struggling over and managing various cultural repertoires at once – those that are consistent with their ideas about ‘home’ and those associated with their roles and relationships at school – and activating these in spontaneous and deliberative ways in situated practice (Lamont; 2000; Levitt 2009; Swidler 1986). I contend that multiple and “simultaneous” attachments emerge from young people’s work to manage diverse and sometimes divergent cultural repertoires that uniquely emerge within the institutional experience itself.

I take the insights gained from the transnationalism literature and extend them into Highland’s institutional context, in which cosmopolitan norms of openness to diverse others exist and take form. As outlined in Chapter 2, I define everyday cosmopolitanism as an ethics of cohabitation, which is founded upon moral principles that there are ideas and practices that demonstrate one’s belonging within and commitment to intercultural contexts. Central to these principles at Highland, as outlined in Chapter 3, is an ethic of openness and understanding, which young people strongly internalize. At the same time, however, political violence is an important instance in which “emotional attachment to place” (Turner 2002: 55) runs high. The impetus is strong to declare (Luft 2015: 149) and construct (Gilroy 2014: 232)⁵⁶ allegiance: to take sides, to express nationalist sentiment or condemn it as an incitement to violence, to call for justice for kin and nation (Minow 1998). It is also a situation in which the nature of one’s attachments bears scrutiny. It is a time to process feelings about just what one feels about home, to demarcate boundaries between victimhood and perpetration and determine where one exists on that continuum, and to ascertain one’s own tangential or intimate connection to the lived reality of violence. In the international context of Highland, young people contend with these allegiances among a group of outsiders who are interested in how a person is personally affected by violence. They are, after all, there to learn about the lives of others and advocate for peaceable solutions. The young people in this chapter therefore find themselves in a situation of naming and upholding particular allegiances in a context that

⁵⁶ Gilroy (2014) argues that such constructions can be pernicious, and used to construct imagined allegiances as a response to increasing diversity: “some groups and interests seek to invent, cultivate, distribute and manage the sanitized, official recognition of past conflict as a way of bonding a plural, divergent nation and of synchronizing national life judged to be imperiled by multicultural’s dilution of the essential sameness that is necessary if we are to remain secure” (232).

advocates strongly for the formation of ‘worldly’ attachments, based in an ethic of the cessation of violence and the impetus to peace and common humanity. Providing accounts of political violence in the international school illustrates how developing and maintaining multiple allegiances can be laborious and challenging rather than ‘overlapping’ or existing “simultaneously” in unproblematic ways.

Self-Discovery and ‘Antiquated’ Attachments

In this section, I examine the relational quality of simultaneity through one boy’s newfound loyalties in the context of an institution in which coming from somewhere and having knowledge of place is a valued skill, but where national ties are sometimes considered misguided and antithetical to a cosmopolitan ethos. Malik, a 17-year old Jordanian-born Palestinian refugee develops strong ties to Palestine only when he is immersed in an international milieu, where he discovers the ties his family has to the history of political violence in that region. When he attempts to tell the tale of political violence through the lens of a nascent diasporic commitment to a Palestinian state, he is challenged and met with disapproval. I show that Malik’s nascent nationalism is challenged, since it is seen as both an antiquated attachment and a demonstration of his failure to inhabit the edicts of peace and common humanity.

Malik did not spend much of his early teenage life thinking about his Palestinian roots. Malik knew that he did not have a Jordanian passport but a refugee’s ID, and that his grandparents on his father’s side left Palestine for Jordan many years before he was born. In Jordan, questions about his identity did not really come up. Though he understood that Palestinians experience discrimination and exclusion in Jordan, he was never treated unfairly. He and his family lived well there. He went to a private school that he liked. He had everything he needed. He had never even been to Palestine, so his connection to the place was not something he felt he needed to question. It was not until entering the international setting of Highland, where having knowledge about the place that one comes from is important, that Malik begins to labour over his identity, initiating a process of self-discovery of his lineage and the political circumstances that led him and his family to Jordan.

Of his identity, Malik admits that “I’ve always been confused in my country about, am I Jordanian or am I Palestinian? But here [at Highland] it was the first time I called myself a Palestinian refugee.” Malik credits a few friends he made, one from Germany and the other from Lebanon who are also Palestinian refugees, for inciting his interest in finding out who he is. They both knew a lot about their own political trajectories and how their families had been impacted by violence and the Palestine/Israel conflict in particular, and Malik wanted to be able to place himself and his family the way they could.

Scholars of transnational modes of belonging have documented how entry into cosmopolitan spaces can involve a heightened attachment to a national place (Levitt & Waters 2002; Molz 2005; Noble 2009; Rumbaut 2002; Vathi 2013). The present analysis adds to this an attention to the labour associated with establishing one’s simultaneous rootedness and openness. Malik’s initiation into the international milieu involves an inward turn to his roots, puzzling together pieces of his own history and the violence that characterizes it. Late into many evenings in his first year at Highland, Malik spent hours on the internet, following links to richer histories and more confounding contexts of the Palestine/Israel conflict. He learned that when his grandparents left Palestine for Jordan, it was not by choice but by force, triggered by a war in 1948 and commemorated as a mass exodus called the Nakba. He realized that his grandparents were among the lucky ones, having the means to flee the violence for Jordan, while many poorer Palestinians stayed behind. He learned that it was likely that his grandparents’ land, left abandoned, was revoked by Israeli law and used for Israeli settlements, a fact that was confirmed when he went home for summer break and asked for the first time to see his grandmother’s papers that confirmed her ownership of a piece of land in West Jerusalem. He learned that in his father’s youth the Palestinian Liberation Organization was created and conducted much of its tactical organizing in Jordan, and wondered if his father was swept up in some way in the violence that ensued. Though his father did not talk much about his early life in Jordan, Malik felt that he finally understood why, despite being born and living his whole life in Jordan, his father was adamant about his Palestinian identity: he came of age over the course of intense political instability, was born in the

wake of a violent uprooting, and had untold personal memories of the events that Malik could only glean from details on the internet.

For Malik, transnational movement elicits a strong link to a homeland and an awareness that he has been protected from the violence written into his own family history. “I’ve been so comfortable. I’m living a nice life in Jordan, but you can’t imagine what my father has been through to give me this life. He suffered in his life. I can’t even describe it. I understand now why my father was born in Jordan and doesn’t consider himself Jordanian. That’s something no one would understand except if you were there.” Malik goes on to explain how his feelings changed about Palestine.

MALIK: I learned that that’s the Palestinian situation. We have this kind of nationalism.

ELISABETH: What kind of nationalism is that?

MALIK: It’s about getting back to that land, going back to Palestine. Our identity and our land are the same thing. I have a Palestinian ID, for example. I wouldn’t go and ask for any other citizenship because I don’t want this. I will stay as a Palestinian refugee all my life until I reach something.

The process of learning the history of the conflict – and internalizing the sense of injustice that his family must have felt about living in a time in which militaries could be mobilized and laws could be rewritten to displace and expel people – awakens within Malik a loyalty to the collective ‘we’.

Malik’s experiences reveal how diasporic identities are inherited and negotiated in particular contexts (Lacroix & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2013), and while the international context affords a space in which to discover a collective ‘we’, it is also the context in which he must negotiate challenges to his newfound allegiance while continuing to engage in the labour of global citizenship. Though knowing one’s background is a valued skill on the international scene, Malik learns that certain articulations of one’s identity are less tolerated. His conviction of being part of a collective ‘we’ is challenged in global politics class one day. The teacher asks the class to reflect on the extent to which individual identity is subsumed by the interests of the social group, especially in times of violence. He raises the issue of ‘the mob’ and the loss of inhibition and increased aggression when individuals are part of groups.

A Swedish girl responds, “I feel like mob psychology is a fancy term for nationalism. It’s effective to use nationalism to convince people to fight. National anthems were created to motivate people to fight for their nations.”

The discussion goes on like this, with the idea of nationalism coming more under fire as an idea no more useful than for explaining how it falsely binds certain people and divides others.

Malik speaks up. “This stuff about group pressures...no one told me to be a nationalist. For me if you’re a nationalist all it means is returning to that land, it’s an idea that makes it clear that we need this land, that we belong in that territory. There are Palestinians all over the world, so I think nationalism is what brings us together even though we don’t live together.”

The teacher confirms that in certain cases nationalism did indeed contribute positively to revolutionary wars and wars against colonization. A boy from Russia speaks next. “The Israel/Palestine thing is complicated, and I know that nationalism is a Palestinian thing. But a nation doesn’t have to have a country. And with the stuff going on in Israel and Gaza, nationalism goes together with the idea of both sides deciding, ‘we don’t want to have anything to do with you.’ It’s sticking with the past, sticking with your own, and not thinking about how to resolve the conflict.”

That Malik was capable of defending himself against the remark that his nationalism was a continuation of the stalemate between “both sides” was a fact about which I was certain. I had several discussions with him by that point that revealed the scope of his knowledge and interest in the topic. But in response to the boy’s remark, Malik shrugs. “You’re saying your opinion and I’m saying my opinion, that’s all.” The class passes and when I talk to Malik later, I ask him for his thoughts on the class.

“I don’t like talking about it here,” Malik starts.

“You mean about how you feel about the conflict?” I ask.

“Yeah. Everyone has an opinion about the Palestine/Israel conflict. [...] They feel like they know everything about what to do. And even if I would say I’m nationalist, some people would be okay, but I think some people would look at me like a sucker, maybe a person who doesn’t want peace.”

The expectation that Malik come as a representative of more ‘enlightened’ attachments is accompanied by an interrogation of his inability to inhabit a more ‘detached’ position. In late December, I have dinner with Malik, Omar, Malik’s Palestinian-Lebanese friend, and Petra, a Norwegian girl. They had written a test that

day, and as they reflect on how worried they had been about it, Malik says that back home in Jordan no one worries about tests because everyone cheats, a sign of the poor education he received there. When Petra challenges him for not doing something to change this fact, Malik explains that the state of education in Jordan does not bother him, and that he has no interest in trying to change it because doing so would mean getting “the Palestinians in Jordan involved in the Jordanian situation.” For Malik, being a change-maker - a disposition that we know from Chapter 3 is an important component of the kind of global citizenship adopted at Highland - in Jordan veers too closely to making “everyone Jordanian,” even the Palestinians, which would undermine Palestinians’ ties to their homeland.

“If I go back to Jordan and I try to make people aware that we should change the education, and say, ‘We all live in the same country!’ What would happen is that, the people like me, my children, my grandchildren, okay, they will stop thinking that we belong to Palestine, and I don’t want this,” Malik explains.

He goes on. “If you change the education you make it better, everyone’s happy. The Palestinians in Jordan, they won’t even think of going back to Palestine. People don’t want to just forget about their past because they think Palestine is their place, not Jordan.”

At this Petra challenges him. “I guess I don’t see why identity needs to be so connected to a country. I don’t feel that way at all. I would still have an identity without Norway.”

“Uhh, wait, wait. You don’t consider Norway as part of your identity?” Malik asks. Petra answers with a resolute no. “Because whenever someone comes to me and says, ‘Identify yourself.’ I say ‘I’m Malik. I’m Palestinian.’ It’s something, you know, related.”

Petra now draws on a school discourse of common humanity that I often heard. “But that’s the point. We’re all human beings. Every God has said we all come from one God. What’s written in those books is that we all come from the same place.”

“I don’t believe that’s right.” Malik replies. Omar jumps in, visibly anxious to get a point across.

“When it comes to war it’s not about Quran, it’s not about Muslims and Jews, it’s about Palestinians and Zionists, or whatever. Some people in my family were living east

of Jerusalem in the past two years, and then Israelis came and destroyed their house with...how do you call them? These big machines that demolish the houses. And when you ask them why, they say because the house didn't meet the requirements of safety. And my family was waiting for the letter from the Israeli government to say yes, to agree that this house has all the requirements. And although they have everything to make a safe house, they kept them two years waiting for the paperwork, and it didn't come. So they destroyed the house and they took the land. And that's what's happening. We're losing parts of Jerusalem everyday."

Malik nods and turns to Petra. "Maybe whatever you're thinking about would apply, but not in this generation, not now. You still need like 100 years to reach whatever you're saying. Because my grandma, she's still alive, and she'll show you the papers that, okay, I have this land, this is mine, I have these photos. We would never forget about that, you know? You need a lot of time. You need more than 100 years."

Steadfast in her position, Petra insists. "I just think that it shouldn't be a problem, like, we're all humans."

Omar slams his fist on the table, sending the cutlery in the air and down again with a loud clatter. He leaves, exasperated. Malik shifts to the edge of his seat, signaling that he too is about to leave.

"I'll tell you something," Malik says, hesitating, "we're all humans, okay, I don't have any problems with Israel or anything. I don't like speaking about this because sometimes people misunderstand me. And now I know I'm going off my values, my Highland values. But the thing is it's wrong. Israel has done something wrong, and something not fair, and it's not fair."

As a process of simultaneous rootedness and openness, attachments involve maintaining multiple 'frames of reference' that are appropriate and meaningful to one's allegiances. At Highland, Malik is prompted to discover his rootedness to a fraught history and begins to derive meaning and a sense of belonging from a nascent commitment to a Palestinian identity and a territorial state. Yet attachments are not only individually experienced, but also socially constituted, and once Malik articulates his commitments, he must negotiate between multiple frames because his attachments represent, in the cosmopolitan context of Highland, divergent and incompatible

commitments. The disapproval he experiences causes him to modify how he relates to his commitment to a Palestinian state, namely, worrying that it is indicative of a person who “doesn’t want peace.” Here we see the nature of Malik’s specific experience with simultaneity: one attachment that appears, interactionally, to be antithetical to another. For the Swede in the global politics classroom, nationalism is akin to mob psychology; for the Russian, all “both sides” need is to stop “sticking with the past” and find ways to solve the conflict. Malik’s nationalism is, in this framing, symptomatic of an unwillingness to move forward and a stubborn clinging to outdated sentiments. Petra asks how it is possible that Malik’s identity is so bound to a specific territory, suggesting that a more detached position makes it possible to see that “we’re all human.” Malik refuses to imagine making change in the place where he is a refugee because making life better in Jordan means solidifying his fate there and consequently letting go of his attachment to Palestine, since for Malik Palestinians made comfortable in their host country means that “they will stop thinking that we belong to Palestine.” Instead, Malik needs to see the situation as “temporary,” a position that allows him to reconcile his current status in Jordan with an imagined future for himself in Palestine. In a context in which people behave as though “they know everything about what to do,” Malik’s nascent sense of belonging and the nationalism to which it gives rise risk being reduced to a mere instantiation of the stalemate, or worse, of allegiances targeted with suspicion because they are indicative of radical, and potentially radicalized, attachments (Maira 2009: 13). Nationalism itself is positioned as the antiquated and blinding factor, antithetical to the cause of peace. In an international setting in which a commitment to peace is a key virtue, anything less than a representative of a peaceable solution will be at best only minimally tolerated.

Petra, a white, Northern European, adopts a position of being unattached, inhabiting a “view from nowhere” (Calhoun 2003: 532) from which she is able to see all as human and thus can legitimately question why Malik is unable to do so himself. When she argues that she has a sense of identity without Norway, she can condemn Malik’s ties to territory. Importantly, this exchange and that in the classroom should not be read as a condemnation of all forms of nationalism, for indeed in Chapter 3 we have seen the relative ease with which a celebratory multiculturalism of sharing food and music plays

out at Highland and thus is not seen to undermine but rather enrich its ethos. It is Malik's identity that is seen to undermine certain universalist values, an assumption that erroneously posits nationalism against cosmopolitanism when, in fact, forms of each have been found to coexist vis-à-vis "both/and identities" brought forth by migration and mix (Calhoun 2008: 438). Malik also seems to play into this myth: he posits the conviction that "we're all human" and the criticism of Israel as opposites, and says that he's "going off" of his Highland values by admitting to the unfairness of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Malik's position falsely entrenches the notion that to be cosmopolitan is to be relativistic, able to adopt a view from nowhere.

As a representative, Malik is arguably negotiating a racialized trope of the young "militant Arab nationalist" (Maira 2009: 59) that continues to occupy media imagery in the post 9/11 era, and whose surveillance is justified on the basis that alienation from Western values and subsequent radicalization may have taken place. Here, the Swede, the Russian, and Petra occupy a most moderate position of cosmopolitan liberalism: the ability to see that any strong attachment to place is problematic (Maira 2009: 13). On the other hand, Malik represents a beleaguered and displaced population and, at Highland, can contribute insight into the prolonged conflict of Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. Thus, while part of Malik's work is occupying this space of interest and sympathy as a Palestinian refugee, the labour of his simultaneity is drawn into relations of suspicion and surveillance, which serve as checks for 'antiquated' attachments that are antithetical to peace. As Maira (2009) suggests, just as there have been "cultural constructions of outsiders – embodied in alienated Muslim youth – to North American and European societies, so too are transnational spaces characterized by cultural constructions of outsiders who are seen to threaten norms of intercultural openness and peaceable coexistence.

Good and Bad Attachments

In this section I examine the experiences of an Israeli girl who expresses a desire to use her experience at Highland to gain perspective on the Palestine/Israel conflict, as well as her own position in relation to it. For this young person, simultaneity is characterized by the pursuit of one attachment in order to gain perspective on another. Unlike Malik,

whose entry to Highland leads to a discovery of a sense of belonging to home, this young girl seeks a deliberate detachment from a territory tied to political violence and, by extension, an opportunity to wrest a certain self-understanding from the distance afforded by the international scene and to interrogate one's attachment to a place while being free from its commitments. I demonstrate that interactions within the international scene do not permit such freedom, but rather entrench the idea that there are good and bad attachments to Israel, making her accounts of political violence, as well as her efforts toward self-understanding, geared toward negotiating how others attribute culpability to her.

Ayelet is a 17-year old girl from the suburbs of Tel-Aviv. Even though she grew up in one of Israel's more liberal cities, Ayelet has always felt like an outsider in Tel-Aviv. Her parents are progressive people in a country where Zionism largely goes unquestioned, and make sure to keep the family's Jewish cultural traditions alive while at the same time being critical of Israeli politics. They ensure that their children are present during conversations around the dinner table where they and friends of the family discuss their opposition to Israeli settlements and keep each other abreast of news from Gaza. They are conscious of protests when they break out, reminding the children that there is likely always a reason why there are protests and to be suspicious of those who brush off Palestinian resistance as mere aggression or illogical violence.

In defining attachments to home *at home* as constraining, Ayelet characterizes the pursuit of attachments to the "international community" as freeing. Being at Highland represents an opportunity to free herself from the available identities within Israel, limited as they are to strict and divergent sets of beliefs and obligations. The environment back home is too intense to develop a sense of thinking independently about the conflict. Coming to the school feels like an opportunity to separate herself from the divisions that characterize political life in Israel, and from what Ayelet believes are the bad attachments – resulting from totalizing and homogenizing tendencies that come with naming one's affiliations back home – held by people she encounters there.

If I say that I'm religious, then in Israel it implies so much like, being religious is also relating yourself with a certain social environment and a certain political environment, not only with a certain religious environment. And if you're secular,

then you really don't want to associate yourself with religious people because they're weird and they're conservative and they are dark in a sense, like they totally support the IDF, and they're so right wing.

Tired of the ready-made beliefs that accompany membership on the Right or Left in Israel, Ayelet wants to shed the ideological and moral prescriptions that come with choosing a side. At the international school, Ayelet wants to cultivate undecidedness about her identity, expecting that stepping into an "international community" will teach her something new about who she is.

I want to know what my genuine opinions are. As an Israeli I feel like I wouldn't be able to see the country I come from so holistically if I was still in Israel, because the discourse is so limited, and you're so involved in the situation. So I think it was very vital for me to change my environment but still be 'the Israeli'. So having an opportunity to look at my country while not being in my country, it's very precious for me. I want to ask myself difficult questions that I almost certainly wouldn't ask myself if I stayed in Israel. So I think the value of being an Israeli here becomes, rather than representing Israel in an international community, it's more being an Israeli who got an opportunity to live outside Israel and figuring for herself what does it mean for her to be an Israeli.

In search of these genuine opinions, Ayelet wants to make her attachment to Israel more strange, less unquestioned and natural: "I don't want to feel too local, I think, toward Israel. I think I'm more deliberately detached from Israel." Importantly, in framing home as a place of limitations, Ayelet imagines the international sphere of the school as a space in which better, more critical, attachments may form, disinvested as it is in political conflicts and the ideological impositions that follow.

Yet like Malik, Ayelet's labour of simultaneity involves interactions in which attachments are evaluated and hierarchized. Ayelet realizes that she is routinely at risk of presenting herself on the wrong side of the divide between 'good' and 'bad' Israeli from which she so badly wants distance. The line between good and bad forms in her interactions with others, what she reports as a test to which she is consistently subjected. Only a few days into her first year at Highland, Ayelet was feeling good about the fact that she had made four new girl friends, and an international group at that, with the girls

coming from Belgium, Singapore, Slovakia, and Venezuela. Ayelet found that despite their differences, they shared the same jitters of having just arrived in a new country, and the pressures of meeting so many new people who knew nothing of where they come from, their country's reputation in an international setting resting solely on their shoulders. Just as she was starting to feel her inhibitions fall away, one of the girls asked, "So Ayelet, do you hate Palestinians?"

When reflecting on this experience, Ayelet reports feeling that people look for the moral failures in her character, and unwillingly engaging in interactions that seek to confirm her culpability. Ayelet describes the shock she felt about realizing that people may assume that by virtue of her identity, she hates a whole group of people.

AYELET: [...] Did she think I was a bad person? And if not, then why would she think that I might hate a nation, like a specific nation? And then I thought that maybe that's what people think. I thought this is really concerning because if she asked it, that means that people don't know anything about what's happening because this might be the most irrelevant question you could ask. And this is concerning because all the world is talking about Israel, all the time, but what do you know about it if you ask me this question?

ELISABETH: What answer do you think she was looking for?

AYELET: It was a test! [...] If I don't match exactly some image of a good Israeli that some people have then they'll show very explicitly their disappointment. If I'm going a bit out of this type, I'll get this look that kind of devalues me and my opinions. They see me as a Zionist, they see me as pro-Israeli, as an IDF supporter, which I'm not any of these things.

Although Ayelet initially articulates a mode of simultaneity that is composed of a harmony between old and new attachments, interactionally, the distinction between good and bad attachments to Israel mark her experience. Ayelet learns that fellow students ask her close friends, and not her, what she "really thinks of the conflict," and understands that there is suspicion that she is hiding something of her true attachments, realizing that when people seek her opinions by proxy, it means that they believe she holds opinions too pernicious to admit. At dinner one night a boy claims that Israel is an apartheid state that will never allow peace and that the settlements are prime evidence of this. Ayelet condemns the settlements but also casts doubt on the idea of Israeli apartheid, and is met with disapproving silence. She understands that the young people at the table are operating on strict boundaries between the Zionist and the self-critical Israeli, and that any deviation from that – or the introduction of a more complex view – has little place in

the sphere she initially imagined as disinvested from the conflict and the ideological leanings that are so prevalent back home. Ayelet senses strict limits on the extent to which she can explore her own attachments to home, a far cry from the harmonious interplay that she believed her international experience would involve.

When Ayelet experiences political violence firsthand, she understands that her personal connection to it is altogether an impossible story to tell. She finds that the school is not a neutral territory in which to discover her position as an Israeli, but a space in which her attachments are monitored and qualified. In the vignette that follows we see evidence that Ayelet modifies her behaviour in relation to the culpability that others attribute to her, which reveals that in practice, simultaneity is inflected by norms and interactional dynamics in situated contexts.

On June 12, 2014, three Israeli teenage boys were kidnapped while hitchhiking home in the West Bank. On the suspicion that Hamas carried out the kidnappings, Israeli security forces initiated a simultaneous search and rescue of the boys and a sweeping arrest and interrogation of Hamas members in the West Bank, arresting hundreds of Palestinians and killing five (Beaumont 2014). On July 8, after the boys were found dead 25 kilometres south of where they were kidnapped, Israeli forces launched an operation in the Gaza Strip. For seven weeks Israeli airstrikes and ground offensives in Gaza were met with Hamas rocket fire in Israel (BBC 2014). The toll in Gaza was much greater than that in Israel, with estimates of over 2,000 Palestinians killed and 18,000 homes destroyed by the end of those seven weeks (Amnesty 2014).

Though the toll was deeply uneven, Hamas fired just over 4,500 rockets into Israel (BBC 2014), some of them reaching the area where Ayelet lived. Ayelet reports that rockets were heralded by air raid sirens that blared through the city, a sound that she had never heard before. While her fellow Israelis continued on with their lives, going to the beach during the day and to bars at night, seemingly undisturbed by what became a daily reminder of a war happening just 70 kilometres away, Ayelet started weeks early to ready her things for her second year at Highland, counting down the days to her departure and feeling aversion toward those around her. “People were so casual. And it was a really big shock for me. It was like, there are sirens! What is going on? Why is everyone being so

normal about it? For me it was a very dramatic experience and I couldn't wait to get out of there."

The conflict officially ended on August 26, 2014, but for Ayelet the consequences lasted, demonstrating that the manner in which she narrates political violence in the international school ought to reflect 'good' attachments to Israel. Ayelet pre-emptively modifies her behaviour according to this perceived expectation, internalizing the sense that others will attribute culpability to her if she reveals a particular understanding of the conflict.

"When I got here I was too loaded with my summer. I didn't know how to talk about it," Ayelet reports. "I would never talk about my summer here. Because I would feel it's so distasteful to say, as an Israeli, you know, *I had a difficult summer.*"

She goes on. "Being an Israeli is considered to be a very privileged position here, which it is. But we also, I also, face hardships even if it's a very privileged position. So it means something when I say oh, actually I'm having a difficult time with this."

On one occasion she sits before a map of Israel after someone pulls it up online, and is asked how close the rockets came to where she lived. It is obvious to Ayelet that she cannot speak of the fear she felt during those weeks back home – for indeed, it is "distasteful" at Highland for an Israeli to admit to hardships – and hesitates to point out where certain landmarks are on the map.

When a girl asks where the capital city is, Ayelet points to Jerusalem and wonders what the group thinks of her as she does so.

"I point to Jerusalem," she explains, "and it's inside Israel. So people will think, 'Ah! You think Jerusalem should be only for *you!* But technically it's inside Israel. Maybe at some point it won't, but right now it's in Israel. So there's no neutral facts, everything is political."

"What is a neutral fact?" I ask.

"There is no fact that is considered neutral, it's always political. Like, Gaza Strip for me is facts, what rules there are, there's a terror organization, and I know that they send bombs like, consistently, to the area that's close to the border. But I didn't want to tell them that because I felt like...they would think oh, she lives in a crazy place, where

does she come from? Or maybe they would think that I'm trying to say how poor I am or how bad the other side is, and I don't want to say it."

Let us recall that Ayelet enters the international school wanting distance from restrictive modes of belonging in order to come to a more "genuine" understanding of herself as an Israeli. Yet Ayelet does not find a neutral or free space in which to consider more deeply her attachments to Israel. What Ayelet experiences are interactions that compel her to occupy a particular position in relation to Israel, and thus a reinscription of ideological and moral prescriptions from which she sought reprieve. Far from enjoying distance from her identity and the political violence that characterizes its complexity, she must contend with it more fully, and feels held accountable for the global reputation that she, as an Israeli, embodies and typifies. Her labour of simultaneity, vis-à-vis her accounts of home, are therefore rooted in the fact that, in the international sphere, she represents a violent regime, and must answer for it.

Ayelet experiences consequences to announcing herself as part of the 'we.' Like Malik, whose nationalism is seen as inciting further violence and antithetical to a common humanity, Ayelet's attachments are scrutinized for signs that she too is unfit to enact norms of openness and understanding in relation to the Palestine-Israel conflict. When she claims that people are looking to classify which Israeli she is, 'good' or 'bad,' she identifies how small gestures like admitting that she had a difficult summer can signal what are 'good' attachments (the self-critical anti-Zionist) that may get included in cosmopolitan spaces, and what are 'bad' attachments (the IDF supporter, the racist) that deserve expulsion and reprimand, both from the international community and from within Ayelet herself. Every interaction – even pointing to where a place is on a map – can be used as evidence of an errant attachment in relation to the conflict. When she says "it means something to say that I'm having a difficult time," she refers to the fact that admitting to her fear at the sound of the sirens risks affirming her culpability as unaware of her privilege and, as such, erasing the suffering of those across the border in Gaza.

Though they come as representatives of different "sides," Malik's and Ayelet's experiences entering into the transnational space of the school are similar to the extent that they each demonstrate how evaluations and hierarchical treatments of attachments play a role in constructions of belonging to multiple locales. Under question here is the

very definition of cosmopolitan modes of belonging in the situated context of Highland, which is characterized by unequal power relations as well as norms of openness and understanding. If the extent to which simultaneous attachments are maintained is, as Dahinden suggests, deeply rooted to contexts that provide “restraints and resources,” we see that, as a young person, Ayelet’s first experience with developing a different relationship to Israel is deeply impacted by the norms and social divisions that characterize life at Highland. So too is Malik’s nascent attachment to home deeply impacted by the interactions in which he articulates them. In this sense, we see an expansion of “communities targeted with suspicion” in such a global context, beyond the racialized threat that Malik poses and including those deemed unfit to abide by a cosmopolitan ethos. Thus while attachments may be simultaneous, they are not unproblematically so, and enter into unequal and hierarchized relations in which it is more or less costly to hold particular allegiances.

The Difficulty of Doing Justice

In this section, I analyze the experience of a 16-year old Egyptian girl named Noor who returns to Highland following the Egyptian Revolution in 2013. I detail Noor’s articulation of her newfound allegiances, which stem from her role as a witness and budding activist as well as a representative of a whole country and the political violence that characterized it at the time. I demonstrate that there are difficulties in maintaining one’s commitment to multiple locales because social actors can experience it as inauthentic and as mere spectacle. While Noor appears free from evaluations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ attachments that characterize the experience of Malik and Ayelet, I argue that with simultaneous allegiances come particular roles that individuals play, and when narrating political violence in a context in which relations of privilege take hold, these roles can prove to be conflictual and even contradictory. Noor is not experiencing the kind of surveillance that Malik and Ayelet do, but instead a kind of voyeurism, which hollows out the complexity of ties not only to the international milieu but also to those which ‘call’ Noor back to home.

On August 14, 2013, in the wake of the Arab Spring, Egyptian security forces raided and razed two protest camps in Cairo that for weeks had housed demonstrators

who were calling for the reinstatement of deposed President Mohamed Morsi. Using ground troops and bulldozers, security forces burned makeshift shelters and shot those trying to enter or flee the camps. The raids, which lasted only a few hours, led to the worst mass killing of protesters since the Egyptian Revolution began in 2011, with numbers ranging from 817 to 1,000 dead (Fahim & Sheik 2013; Human Rights Watch 2014), and to the declaration of a state of emergency and nightly curfew that removed any limit on police action on those who defied the edicts (Human Rights Watch 2014). As unrest spread through the city, neighbourhoods were barricaded and more pro-Morsi protests planned as images spread through the news of burned out streets and tense standoffs between police and civilians.

On August 20 and thousands of kilometers north of Cairo, in the quiet morning hours in her dorm room at Highland, Noor was glued to her laptop, refreshing the news and her Facebook timeline, and messaging family and friends for updates about what was happening in her hometown. Just a week before, Noor was in the midst of this violent scene, leaving Cairo for her second year at Highland. Her father suggested that they leave early for the airport to beat the curfew that had been imposed after the raids. As her father navigated the newly barricaded streets manned by armed guards, Noor was instructed to sit in the back and get down low if they heard gunshots ring too close to the car.

Noor was scared, but the feeling was not new. She had been an activist since the Arab Spring arrived in Egypt in early 2011, coming of age in a time of intense violence and unrest, but also on a wave of hopefulness and political optimism that spread through the country after Hosni Mubarak resigned. Noor had gotten in with a strong network of activist friends, a group made up largely of young people who were supportive of neither the military nor the Muslim Brotherhood, but rather a more democratic and secular form of government. She was active on the streets for as many demonstrations as her parents would allow. She had seen violence firsthand as she learned the security forces' favoured methods of crowd suppression and armament, culminating in an event that she would refer to several times in my conversations with her: witnessing a girl's eye shot out with a rubber bullet and scrambling to find help for her among a mass of other injured protesters.

During her first year at Highland, Noor had found ways to feel close to the cause even if she was physically distant, using Twitter for political organizing and to spread information that was censored in official channels. She stopped when an uncle warned her that even though she was away from home she must not forget that her presence online was being monitored. Noor fiercely wanted to be useful, and in that summer of 2013 in Cairo, even though she could always be beckoned by her parents' rules and her family's warnings, she was satisfied by being there among the demonstrators, adding another body to the mass of citizens out on the streets, showing that she supported those close to the centre of the action and risking their lives.

But now, as her schoolmates slept and her friends back home were waking to another day of protest, Noor felt a deep ambivalence. The pull of her loyalty to the activism she was engaged in just days before was strong, but so was the sense that she had escaped a bad situation, trading in the volatility of political organizing for the happy tedium of intercultural sharing, going to class, and late-night study sessions. The troubles of home could for a time be someone else's.

Yet in the weeks that followed her return to school, Noor learned that her identity as an Egyptian was, for others, the most interesting thing about her, a reality that elicited a sense of responsibility to do justice to what she saw back home in her role as an Egyptian in an international context. Before the revolution she was tasked with the occasional and rather enjoyable work of riffing on the pyramids, the Quran, and detailing what visitors could expect of Cairene hospitality, but now a new series of allegiances were activated as she faced a deluge of questions about the political situation at home, taking on the role of expert and eyewitness of the revolution as it unfolded.

Research has examined the ways in which transnational migration represents a shift in roles that young racialized people take on in order to live peaceably in host societies. These roles have included that of cultural translators between family and host society (Park 2005), representatives of a misunderstood or marginalized group (Maira 2009; Noble 2009) or, moreover, that of the successfully assimilated (Vathi 2013). The young men in Noble's study, for instance, lament the fact that in their interactions in an Australian school, they are unable to escape their roles as representatives of a whole group – Muslims – and a whole region – the Middle East. Noble argues that these 'over-

racialized' roles effectively compromise the recognition of more complex and meaningful forms of identity and allegiance and, by extension, the extent to which young people garner a sense of belonging in particular settings. Unlike the school contexts in which these young men find themselves, which are characterized by racial homogeneity, institutions like Highland operate on a logic of simultaneous rootedness and openness. In this sense, Noor sees her role as a representative as a necessary part of the work of belonging at Highland:

I get here and it's like, "So, what's happening in Egypt?" Like, that was the main question. And I found it stressful having to represent the whole country's situation to people. [...] I always felt it was a big responsibility, coming here, and I'm the only Egyptian that 300 people would meet. And it was hard to find a balance between talking about the situation in the country, and at the same time...like, I love Egypt, even though I passed all this horrible stuff there. I think it's an amazing country. I love the culture, I love the ancient stuff. So I wanted to find the balance. I wanted them to think good about Egypt, I wanted them to visit Egypt sometime so I can meet them. And at the same time, I can't just show them Egypt as just amazing, nothing wrong is happening there. *That's not why I'm here, and it's not what I saw* [emphasis mine].

With the sudden onset of these roles, Noor begins articulating the nature of her loyalties to multiple locales. There is, as Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) affirm, a simultaneity to the formation of Noor's attachments, which stem from her role as a representative in an international context as well as an expert of and witness to a significant political event back home.

Such simultaneity does not exist unproblematically, but rather is filled with conflicts between disparate roles that accompany Noor's entry to the international scene. As a representative, Noor speaks of her responsibility to make others 'think good' about her home at the same time as not painting too rosy a picture of the events that transpired that summer. As a witness and budding activist, merely talking about what she saw in the comforts of the school appears to be a hollow gesture, complicated in Noor's mind by the pull of loyalty to the situation at home, where her activist kin are daily making sacrifices.

NOOR: At the demonstrations I don't do anything, I just walk around, or chant with them. But at the same time I feel like I didn't do what I'm supposed to do, whatever that is. I feel that I haven't done enough, even though I don't know what enough is. I feel responsible, even though I don't know what I would change.

ELISABETH: And telling people [at Highland] about what's happening back home doesn't feel right either? It doesn't make you feel that you're doing something?

NOOR: It just sometimes makes me feel horrible, because I'm sitting in my nice room in school, hiking, hanging out with my friends, feeling totally safe. While I know that most of my friends, at this minute, the police are attacking them or whatever. And it made me feel guilty, like why am I not in the horrible situation that my friends and family and country are.

Underpinning Noor's ambivalence – the feeling that she ought to make others 'think good' of her home at the same time that she feels her energies are better spent on the streets of Cairo – is the pull of her multiple loyalties.

Simultaneity can be a conflictual process, and while Noor senses the tension between her newfound attachments, she believes she can hold them in tandem. For Noor, multiple loyalties can be reconciled, made to coexist, on the condition that she is able to provide Highlanders a nuanced account of the revolution.

Like, I went back to the street where many people demonstrated, and there was a wall with graffiti of the names of people killed, and lots of paintings of motorbikes to remember the people who'd drive people who'd been shot to the hospital, because ambulances couldn't get in the squares because they were so packed. And the military would keep covering over this wall, but protestors kept redrawing it. And it sounds like a stupid thing but it really hurt me that they destroyed this wall. It was kind of a symbol for me, and they just destroyed it. And at the time I was getting all kinds of signals that the revolution didn't succeed. People go home. The graffiti with the people's names who had been killed gets washed off. People forget. But the fact that they would delete it and people kept drawing it back on was amazing. It gave me hope that people still wanted the revolution. So you want to talk about that with people, to talk about what it's like to live through that.

When prompted to think about her experience of returning to school, Noor explains that a worthy use of her time is the work of capturing the complexity of what she saw for an international audience. She views herself as capable of undermining the polarized media images of the Egyptian context, which oscillate between euphoric flag-waving or frantic running from the police, and doing justice to the waves of hopefulness and disappointment that characterized her experience participating in a mass movement.

Like Malik and Ayelet, Noor's experiences lend insight into young people's labour of enacting and maintaining newly activated attachments in particular interactional and institutional contexts. She too struggles to engage in the labour of simultaneity, since it comes up against a dominant way of relating to 'otherness' at Highland, as well as her own expectations of what ought to be possible in her role as a representative. Indeed, though Noor imagines a useful role for herself at the school, one that bridges the pull of

multiple loyalties, when she recounts ‘what it’s like to live through that,’ Noor learns that providing an account comes at a risk, hollowing out the complexity of her experiences for something corresponding less to good representation than to inauthenticity and spectacle. In her Amnesty International student group, fellow students are eager to take action in some way since the violent images began taking up headlines, and decide on a letter-writing campaign to the Egyptian authorities. Noor is asked to give a presentation, and takes it upon herself to trace Egypt’s involvement in the Arab Spring, and to be ready when students inquire about what Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood want and how it came to be that the military overthrew them. Noor works out timelines and the longevity or transience of political leaders throughout Egypt’s history, and collects information about violence across the country. She also tries to find a name for the kind of politics she herself is involved in, researching where the young activists she came to know that summer align themselves and which leftist parties they might stake a claim in. Such work requires that she spend hours at the laptop, navigating between the numerous tabs she has open for research and her PowerPoint slides, a labour that for Noor is always juxtaposed to the pressing reality coming through text messages and social media from her activist friends on the ground in Cairo.

While she successfully delivers the presentation, the labour of hastily packaging and presenting the information as though she were an expert seems to clearly demonstrate that she is unprepared for such representational work. The sense of confidence Noor had built up that summer in Cairo – the daily work of organizing, spreading information, and activist camaraderie – is compromised under the weight of this new role as representative, which seems to demonstrate most clearly that despite her commitment to do so, she cannot do the kind of representational work that she imagines, and can never give an expert account. She reports that whenever she is asked to provide an account of the situation at home, she feels inauthentic: “I’m just now learning these things for me, I’m just a teenager! What if I’m giving the wrong picture of Egypt, or of what’s happening, or of the people? How can I describe what’s going to happen, as though I know all about it?”

The feeling of being an inexperienced witness is followed by a sense that her experiences are treated as a spectacle, which reveals that in situated contexts like Highland, one’s

attachments are subject to unequal relations. On one occasion Noor is talking with a group of European friends about the demonstrations, when the conversation turns to whether Noor is related to anyone that was killed. After replying tersely that she does not know anyone personally who was killed, but that those who were killed are related to someone, she reports becoming aware of how limited the possibility of telling her story had become, a fact made worse when she looks around the room and sees that her friends are looking at her “as though they were watching an action movie,” with their heads in their hands, as if collectively they await the next shocking detail.

The value of eyewitness accounts is rooted in having others hear them, and thus in having them heard, the experience of bearing witness itself is validated by an audience that is willing to listen (Cobb 2013; Kurasawa 2007; Minow 1998; Weine 2006). The inclusion of eyewitness accounts, especially in contexts of injustice and violence, acknowledges that wrongdoing has occurred and has borne personal consequences for the witness (Minow 1998: 147). In the cosmopolitan context of Highland, an eyewitness account is meant to enrich the encounter between strangers, disclosing the specificities of difference and subjective experience in order to legitimate them, though indeed because certain relations of privilege and power take hold, such encounters can also alienate people from one another. Patricia Hill Collins (1993) describes power differences like the one Noor experiences as rooted in ‘voyeurism,’ in which “the privileged become voyeurs, passive onlookers who do not relate to the less powerful, but who are interested in seeing how the ‘different live’,” and who are interested in these lives for “entertainment value” (37). If the value of representation stems from its role in enabling outsiders to understand and empathize with a situation they may never experience, then Noor’s accounts of political violence – characterized as they are by the drama of revolution as well as racialized relations – risk dissolving this possibility altogether, replacing solidarity with spectacle and understanding with estrangement.

Again, attachments are not purely “personal” but rather shaped by the interactions and contexts that elicit them. As a witness to dramatic events, Noor herself senses this, and explains that she is disappointed sharing her experiences from home because they seem valuable to her friends only to extent that such experiences will thrill them, reducing the conflict to “something cool” and her experience to “something crazy.”

NOOR: Let's face it, when I try to talk it's really hard for most of the people here to understand what the conflict is like or how it is like to live through. Most of my friends are European, and many of them have a problem with seeing conflict as something cool, or interesting, because they've never seen this before.

ELISABETH: And your European friends are the ones asking you if you knew anyone who'd been killed?

NOOR: Yeah, and they're asking about someone dying but it's like they're asking about something they just haven't seen before. Like if someone told you, 'I went to Niagara Falls and jumped over,' it'd be something crazy. And you'd be like 'oh my god, how was it? Did you hurt yourself?' It's interest in something just crazy and exciting. Like you see Egypt in four years changing three presidents, governments, the parliament gets cancelled three or four times. And so many people out on the streets. It's a lot of cool things happening quickly. And when my friends hear the word revolution, they only see the nice photos of people holding flags, singing songs together. They don't understand the fine part of it, for normal people like me wanting to be a part of it and support it. When the media talk about it, they show the beautiful side, people giving food for free, people getting haircuts for free, people giving free space to charge their phone. Or they show the chaos, people getting shot, the military marching through the streets.

Telling the tale of political violence when one has multiple allegiances is a difficult task, since providing an account is an intersubjective process and can therefore be shaped by opposing impulses and unequal power relations. While Noor develops certain attachments, the interactional practices associated with their articulation hollow out the complexity of her experiences at home and reduce her role as a representative to one of managing the voyeuristic interest of others. Her attempt to be as knowledgeable as possible feels inauthentic because she's "just a teenager"; her attempt to provide an eyewitness account feels spectacular because her experiences are treated as something merely 'cool'. Rather than doing justice to the work she did that summer – and to her newfound relationship to her home country – and expanding her audience's understanding by offering an account of the hopefulness and despair she felt when she returned to the freshly graffitied wall, Noor's accounts feel tailored to the interests of others, verifying or dismissing their presuppositions, corroborating what they had seen in the media or satisfying their naive curiosity. Far from bringing Noor and her schoolmates to some deeper level of understanding or respect for the complexity of a personal experience, remembering what went on in Egypt feels for Noor like a practice that separates them from one another.

Conclusion

If indeed we advance a cultural sociological position that simultaneity involves managing diverse and divergent repertoires at once, repertoires which are rooted in multiple material and symbolic attachments, we see the dynamics that characterize the formation, negotiation, and contestation of one's allegiances, which makes the study of attachments inextricable from the specific contexts in which they arise. The development and articulation of simultaneity is influenced by social norms and interactional dynamics in specific contexts, as well as commitments to diverse forms of belonging. While it appears from the narratives above that simultaneity is fraught with relational hardships, the young people in this chapter are nonetheless engaging in self-discovery as well as the labour of forming and sustaining multiple allegiances, whether it be with the use of digital technologies, researching their own relationship to home, and, even though there are unequal relationships, clarifying in their interactions, as well as the interviews I conducted with them, the nature of their loyalties. Malik discovers his identity by researching his familial links to political violence, calling himself a Palestinian refugee for the first time and aligning himself with the kinds of commitments that the name implies. He puts together and articulates important pieces of his familial and national past in the absence of kin but in the presence of an international audience, including fellow Palestinians who know a lot about their roots and elicit a desire within Malik to know his own, and diverse others who harbour views that are antithetical to his. Ayelet is disabused of the myth that at Highland she would find a neutral territory to discover herself, and becomes fluent in her own position of privilege, learning to negotiate the subtle indications that she is more or less aware of this privilege in an international context that is characterized by unequal relations as well as norms of peace and intercultural understanding. Noor had been so absorbed in the details of the revolution that she had to adjust to telling the story from afar, explaining from a peripheral stance what had been happening to the collective 'we,' the mass of Egyptians bound together by political timelines, military decisions, and uncertainties about democracy and elected government. Though she experiences disappointment in the labour of representation, she nonetheless does the work of naming and locating her affiliations within a historical and

political context, and comes away with a greater understanding of herself and the role she plays in an international milieu.

Though each of these young people experiences relational hardships, we can see that their hardships emerge in part from their struggle to sustain the simultaneous roles and responsibilities of local and global attachments. If Malik did not care how he was perceived by his international audience, he would not have reported worrying about being perceived as someone who “doesn’t want peace,” or someone who does not take seriously Highland values. If Ayelet maintained her commitment to treating Highland as neutral territory, she might avoid engaging in discussions that highlight her privilege, discussions during which she might admit to having a difficult summer in Tel Aviv and which might appear to neglect the suffering of her fellow students, like Malik. If Noor was not simultaneously committed to being a good representative as well as a witness to a significant event, she would not struggle to offer a narrative to an international audience. Each young person demonstrates their sense of responsibility to near and distant places, navigating the rocky territory even as they encounter resistance, racialization, and social division.

In this way, the young people in this chapter are engaging in practices that are not dissimilar to those found in the transnationalism literature, which tracks how young people maintain multiple loyalties to near and distant places when away at school via technology and story-telling (Olwig & Valentin 2015; Tran 2016; Valentin 2015; Vathi 2013). What distinguishes this study is that young people enter into Highland with interests and responsibilities that exceed those seeking to secure economic mobility at home and abroad, and instead enter into an international context in which young people are called upon to be simultaneously rooted and open, a context in which there are norms of openness as well as unequal power relations. In such a context, therefore, it is more or less costly to hold particular allegiances, and the labour associated with simultaneity is indicative of greater or less forms of belonging in the international milieu.

I have shown that when we speak of multiple and simultaneous attachments as an element of everyday cosmopolitanism, attachments themselves must be understood as always present within interactional processes and institutional mechanisms. As Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) state, neither cosmopolitan orientations nor multiple attachments

come naturally, an obvious consequence of mobility or exposure to difference. Rather they are constructed through symbolic labour and, precisely because they take their substance from old and new social relationships, they reflect the pull of home as well as global movement and expanded meaning.

Conclusion

In 1993, Stuart Hall predicted that “the capacity to live with difference is [...] the coming question of the twenty-first century” (361). Today, the urgency to develop this capacity is heavily influenced by dominant narratives that frame diversity as problem or possibility. I have shown in this study that Highland is not immune to these divisive frames. On one hand, the institution exists in a moment in which crisis narratives permeate public discourse on cultural difference. The discourse relies on the logic that difference has been permitted to proliferate to dangerous effect, causing the unraveling of Western - and more explicitly, white - identity and values, which are simultaneously homogenized and set against an array of vilified outsiders. My research has also taken shape against the backdrop of scholarly critiques of official multiculturalism, which problematize multiculturalism’s promotion of cohesion and idealized forms of contact across difference at the same time that it discourages discord and conflict (Harris 2013), as well as its agenda of tolerance, which leaves majority cultures at the centre of the work of accepting diversity into the fold (Hage 2000; Lentin 2014). On the other hand, the institution operates on a logic that engaging with difference is a good in itself, and is tethered to a multicultural ideal of accepting that there are a variety of ways to live and that the role of the individual is to thrive in that knowledge. Idealizing the malleability of youth itself is part of this logic of possibility, where the school as well as public defenses of diversity more broadly place their bets on getting young people exposed to difference early in life, thereby shaping a future in which diversity is a routine and even celebrated fact. Schooling, too, is imagined as a site of hope (Chin 2017), representing a promising base from which to explore the complexities of diversity. In this frame, young people at school are at the centre of efforts to secure the appreciation of diversity and the survival of diverse societies.

My findings show that everyday institutional life reflects these complexities. There is a productive space between narratives of diversity as problem or possibility, in which young people learn to inhabit and enact particular norms of interculturalism and develop strategies for getting by in difference at the same time that there is evidence of social division.

In Chapter 1, I situate my own contribution at the intersection of the need to move away from idealized and abstract versions of cosmopolitanism and multicultural life (Anderson 2011; Ho 2019; Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Wise & Velayutham 2009) and toward the open question of what goes on in the school, in terms of the lived experience of diversity as well as the provisional arrangements that bridge difference or uphold division (Harris 2013; Ho 2011; Noble 2013; Resnik 2012). This has involved wresting the study of international education from its most prevalent framing: the subsumption of the egalitarian possibilities of international schooling under market imperatives and class interests (Aguilar & Noguiera 2012; Bates 2011; Cambridge & Thompson 2004; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Marshall 2010; Waters 2012; Weenink 2008). The problem partly arises from the fact that the current literature in international education and the sociology of education more broadly makes rather deterministic use of Bourdieu (1984; 1990) to examine what goes on in the school, especially with reference to the pursuit and production of capital via education. As I have argued, this deterministic and economistic frame is limited because the pursuit of international education is seen primarily as an arena in which the elite can produce and attain new forms of status distinction and secure powerful positions vis-a-vis their global credentials. Engagement with difference is understood as reserved for the elite, for whom learning to engage in diversity signals the formation of new forms of capital (Bourdieu 1984), which manifest in an ease with and mastery of intercultural conduct in diverse settings.

I have presented an alternative framework in Chapter 1 for the study of international education, with the goal of developing a way to examine the inner workings of Highland that neither reduce them to their reproductive role nor their abstract and normative elements. I have maintained that abstracted, economistic, and market-oriented framings of international education dismiss the meaning-making processes that unfold in everyday practice as well as the development of young people's pragmatic orientations to living in diversity. I have sought to advance a sociology of cosmopolitanism as an everyday institutional practice and to build a framework for examining intercultural work as embedded in practices of connection and division. In order to foreground these meaning-making processes, my study has involved the consideration of three intersecting parts. First, I have accounted for the existence of strong institutional norms at Highland

that define how young people must show up as members of an international community. Young people take these norms seriously, defining and enacting them in various ways and using them to assess their own level of belonging and that of others. I have drawn on literature in the sociology of organizations (Cloutier & Langley 2013; Friedland & Alford 1991; Jagd 2011; Silber 2016; Thornton & Ocasio 2008) to examine the multiple and coexisting logics, or guiding principles that offer legitimate standards of action and organizational identity, at play at Highland. As I explain in more detail in the summary of Chapter 3, this approach focuses on the multidimensionality of the global citizen, which is important because it challenges the prevailing view advanced by current studies that pin global citizenship to economic interest and self-advancement.

Second, I have shown that young people make sense of and act upon situations in ways that are partly rooted in their social position. An attention to social position has informed an analysis of one's proximity to and distance from dominant norms, which reveals how some must labour harder than others to be and be considered interculturally-minded. Third, I have demonstrated that young people are not merely brought into the fold of Highland's global culture, they are involved in creatively producing and shaping one of its core features, intercultural understanding. While one's social position is important, young people are also agents, acting upon and responding to their environment in spontaneous ways and developing everyday strategies for negotiating difference. Literatures in everyday cosmopolitanism (Lamont & Aksartova 2002; Noble 2009b; Rovisco & Nowicka 2016; Skey 2013; Wise & Velayutham 2009) cultural sociology (Alexander & Smith 2003; Bourdieu 1990; Swidler 1986; Lamont 2000; Vaisey 2009), and the sociology of youth in diverse contexts (Harris 2013; Harris & Karimshah 2019; Ho 2019; Noble 2013) have helped advance these second and third components.

Using the frame of everyday cosmopolitanism, I have sought to contribute a grounded analysis to studies that conceive of cosmopolitanism as an overly abstract or normative principle (Appiah 2006; Rizvi 2009; Stevenson 2012) toward a more situated "ethics of cohabitation" (Noble 2009b: 46; see also Skey 2013; Wise & Velayutham 2009). At Highland, everyday cosmopolitanism highlights elements of the school experience that are often subject to elision. Schools are often "black boxed," which limits scholarly inquiry to inputs – such as the identities of those who enter the school – and

outputs – such as the impacts of educational models – and therefore abstracts the internal processes and complexities within them (Resnik 2006; Rizvi & Beech 2017; Sobe 2015). In the realm of international education in particular, this problem is especially pressing given the nascency of studies of intercultural and cosmopolitan forms of education, where scholarly inquiry has been occupied with the important work of outlining its curricular agenda and ethical value (Goren & Yemini 2017; Rizvi 2009) and examining the organizational actors involved in establishing the legitimacy of these agendas (Ball & Nikita 2014; Resnik 2006; Resnik 2012). While setting the agenda is an important step in legitimating a field of study, the problem of idealized or abstracted versions of cosmopolitan education remains. Yet this research is moving out of its nascency: in recent years, there is a recognition that studying international educational institutions from the perspective of everyday life and cosmopolitan practice is a necessary and worthwhile endeavour (Rizvi & Beech 2017). Thus, this dissertation has involved a push in this direction, opening the ‘black box’ of international education to ascertain the patterns and practices that emerge in the intercultural work that young people do (the details of which I outline in the summaries of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 that follow).

Literature in cultural sociology has been an important frame for a grounded analysis of cosmopolitanism as an everyday institutional practice and for the meaning-making processes that accompany it (Alexander & Smith 2003; Lamont 2000; Swidler 1986; Vaisey 2009). Because of the predominance of economistic approaches to international education, an important element of my analysis has been an attention to the ways in which thought and action reflect, but are not reducible to, their socially reproductive function. Instead, what young people do and say they do constitutes evidence of intercultural connection as well as division. I have shown that being overtly prejudiced and self-serving is grounds for exclusion and reprimand at Highland. Yet neither do the relations that unfold there map onto harmonious and consensus-based relationships. Cultural sociology offers an inroad into making sense of this meaning-full middle ground, attuned as it is to actors’ evaluations of and justifications for their engagement with diverse others as well as the spontaneous choices they make in their interactions. I have drawn from Vaisey’s (2009) “dual process” model of action, which directs us to look for evidence both of routine moral decision-making (1690), which

reflect deliberative and justificatory schemas, and “hot and fast choices” (Lizardo & Strand 2010) which reflect internalized cultural structures that inform what young people do. In this sense, both what young people intend to do in the intercultural interaction and the effects of their actions are important, since they lend insight into the extent to which they are aware or reflexive of the forms of solidarity and division in which they take part, which itself lends insight into the nature of unequal power relationships. The question turns from seeking evidence of domination to looking, as Lamont (2000) suggests, at inequality through “the broad cultural frameworks that facilitate it, and those used to respond to it” (604; Swidler 1986; Alexander & Smith 2003). This perspective has enabled me to analyze the uneven labour and rewards of cosmopolitan practice, since it is attuned to the uneven availability of certain frames of action and justification, and how, on the ground, particular interactions are informed by broader cultural structures outside of the school itself, including binaries of Western/non-Western, religious/secular, and particularism/universalism.

Literature in the sociology of youth in diverse contexts informs the final element of my conceptual framework (Harris 2013; Harris & Karimshah 2019; Ho 2019; Noble 2013). One aspect of my findings pertains to the fact that young people develop pragmatic orientations to diversity in the context of an international school in northern Europe. Thus a reductionist approach to their conduct – that they are self-serving or ‘faking’ their way through life at Highland in order to gain favour in terms of university admissions or career prospects – is severely limited, but as explained above, one that is suggested in the currently existing literature in international education. Harris (2013) argues that while young people are often the focus of hopes for positive change with regard to diversity, “they are rarely seen as civic actors, creative agents or multicultural citizens in their own right” (5) who live out and find ways to manage complex realities (see also Livingstone & Sefton-Green 2016). Ethnographic and empirical treatments of young people’s creative labour and participation in diverse contexts are emerging, but these are largely situated in Australia (Harris 2013; Ho 2011; Noble 2009b, Wise & Velayutham 2009), in contexts of diverse urban centres (Harris 2013), in higher education (Bennett et. al. 2017), or among migrant (Colombo 2010; Mansouri & Kirpitchenko 2016) and minority youth (Harris & Hussein 2018). This study contributes

to these treatments a geographic, institutional, and cultural specificity, tracking the creative labour of young people in a northern European context in which: 1) there is a dominant culture of liberal, traditionally Western, values and thus evidence of social divisions that lay bare the unequal labour of cosmopolitan practice and; 2) there is a strong institutional ethos that calls everyone to task to be open to and understanding of diversity. I have shown that within this institutional context, young people devise ways of thinking and acting from the position that diversity is a given reality with which they must contend. This is significant because crisis of multiculturalism narratives tend to regard diversity in terms of whether or not it is ‘good’ for societies, or whether or not incorporation is possible (Alexander 2013; Lentin 2012), leaving out the question entirely about the quotidian ways in which actors – especially young actors coming of age in diverse societies – act in ways that represent the formation of nascent cultures of life in diversity (Tilleczek 2011). Thus, an intersectional approach to intercultural work at Highland adds the question of age to the analysis, recovering young people from narratives of “hopefulness” for a better future. To this end, I have centered Harris’ (2013) call to take young people as creative producers: at the same time that hierarchies and challenges emerge, there are also discernible strategies that young people rely on when they are both learning to get along and dissuaded from ‘opting out’ of intercultural relationships or express overtly divisive views – for indeed, opting out or being overtly divisive is a signal that one does not truly belong at Highland.

Together these conceptual elements have provided an intellectual pathway to the study of the multidimensionality of educational institutions like Highland as well as the complex forms of cosmopolitan practice that form within them. In response to predominant approaches in the literature on international education which focus on the reproduction of economic and class relations, I have brought the sociology of organizations, cultural sociology, and the sociology of youth to the centre of work that seeks to open the black box of schools and discover the patterns of their inner workings.

Closely related to the conceptual framework is the methodological approach outlined in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3 of this study, my analysis is based on qualitative content analysis of formal documents, and interviews with teachers. In the rest of the study, including Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the findings are based on ethnographic observation

and interviews with students. I have advanced a methodological approach to the study of international education that captures the norms that are espoused at the formal and institutional levels, as well as the ways in which young people define and enact these norms in creative ways in everyday intercultural work. Ethnography, interviews, and qualitative content analysis have complemented one another: while the school espouses a set of norms that this study defines via qualitative content analysis, such norms are not handed down to young people in an unmediated and passive way, nor is there necessarily a harmony between what people say they think and do and what people are observed to be doing (Jerolmack & Khan 2014), an insight that highlights the importance of combining an attention to young people's reflections in interviews with the ability to observe what they do through ethnography. While I have studied life in diversity, the institutional context of this ethnography sets it apart from the provisional encounters with diverse others that are tracked in urban ethnographies (Amin 2008; Anderson 2011; Hall 2012; Harris 2013), which observe 'ordinary' negotiations in transitory spaces where people meet and disperse while demonstrating greater or lesser norms of civility and conviviality. The young people we have met in this study are not meeting on provisional grounds, but are participants in an institution that identifies the ability and willingness to get along with diverse others as part of the requirements of membership and belonging. The necessary question, then, which I have taken up with qualitative content analysis, and interviews with teachers (who act as representative of the institution and evaluators of whether or not young people exhibit particular norms), is what the norms are and how they are defined at least at the formal or institutional level. It is also distinct from school-based ethnographies that, as I have discussed above, tend to focus on the reproduction of advantage and disadvantage in the relations that form at school (Apple 2004; Calarco 2018; Lareau 2011; Willis 1993). Instead, I have asserted that intercultural work is not reducible to its reproductive function. In this sense, given that part of the conceptual framework has involved an examination of evaluative and justificatory schemas and spontaneous action (Vaisey 2009), as well as the repertoires and patterns of evaluation that emerge in young people's intercultural 'toolkits' (Lamont 2000; Swidler 1986), the methodological approach in this study contributes valuable inroads to cultural sociology in institutional settings, since the study tracks the mix of institutional norms that bear

upon young people's thoughts and actions at the same time as it tracks behaviour and accounts about past and future intercultural conduct.

In Chapter 3, I examine how Highland is an institution that operates not on an ethic of social cohesion, which runs the risk of positioning conflict as problematic (Harris 2013: 141), but on qualities of the young international student turned global citizen, which produce conditions in which to examine how young people define and enact these qualities in concert with one another and in more or less contested ways. I have shown that the norms of global citizenship generate a multi-dimensional figure, one that possesses capacities for discernment, empathy, action, and investment. Foregrounding this multidimensionality has lent an under-explored perspective on international education than what is currently pervasive in the literature (Aguilar & Noguiera 2012; Brooks & Water 2010; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Potter & Hayden 2004; Resnik 2009; Weenink 2008). As I have outlined above, while there is an important Bourdieusian element to this research, which discovers the habituation of new forms of capital and status distinction among those who have access to international education, it extends this frame to the institution itself, which is positioned, often singularly, as an official producer, distributor and arbiter of global forms of capital. In contrast, I draw on literature in the sociology of organizations (Cloutier & Langley 2013; Friedland & Alford 1991; Jagd 2011; Silber 2016; Thornton & Ocasio 2008) to examine the co-presence of principles that constitute the guiding institutional norms by which young people must 'show up' as members of an international community. The coexistence of discernment, empathy, action and investment represents an alternative frame through which to examine the international school. I have also shown that, as the constitutive elements of the global citizen, these qualities reconcile – at the institutional level at least – the central tension between market principles and egalitarian principles at play at Highland.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, this ethnography has tracked the creative labour of young people as they make their way in diversity in an institution that requires them to get along peaceably with others. While Highland exists in an atmosphere characterized by divisive pulls, its internal workings convey a rich world in which young people are initiated into and contend with significant challenges of diversity and intercultural life. One of the central claims of this dissertation is that young people develop a vernacular that reflects

the formation of abilities and strategies for getting by in difference. This insight contributes to our understanding of the practices of ‘ordinary’ or everyday cosmopolitanism because while much of this work is attuned to practices and symbolic frames that are oriented toward consensus-making and the formation of more or less harmonious - if provisional - relationships (Amin 2008; Anderson 2011; Hall 2012; Harris 2013; Lamont & Aksartova 2000; Noble 2009b), young Highlanders’ strategies do not map easily onto such relations, and can reflect hierarchical constructions that demonstrate the inextricable link between everyday cosmopolitanism and everyday social division. I have claimed throughout this dissertation that the intercultural work that young people do is characterized by this inextricability. As such, a key contribution of this study is that inequality can emerge out of the very practice of intercultural work itself, rather than from deviations from it. Young people have uneven and unequal access to the language, actions, and norms associated with intercultural work. While existing research acknowledges that young people perpetuate exclusion even as they engage in everyday conviviality (Harris 2013; Noble 2009b),⁵⁷ I add that it is not only deviations from intercultural norms that elicit social divisions, but that social divisions exist in the very fulfillment of these norms themselves. I focus on these dynamics in the chapter summaries that follow.

In Chapter 4, I examine patterns of speech and silence as one iteration of this aforementioned vernacular. As I argued, the quality of being open is a characteristic Highlanders value most in others and the change they value most in themselves. It is interpreted by young people as a mode of engagement and a willingness to understand others, an interpretation that echoes definitions of openness as based in “positive” and action-based engagement that are found in the literature (Ho 2011; Kendall, Woodward & Skrbiš 2009; Plage et. al. 2017; Skey 2012; Skovgaard-Smith & Poulfelt 2018; Wise 2009). Yet, my study finds that while there are “positive” iterations of openness at Highland, expressing openness is complicated by particular interactional challenges that highlight the ways in which young people continue to see themselves as “open” at the same time that they hold divisive and prejudicial views. I have argued that speech and

⁵⁷ For research not strictly focused on young people, see Back & Sinha 2016; Karner & Parker 2011; Neal et. al. 2019; Nowicka & Vertovec 2014.

silence are central to understanding how this most ambivalent expression of openness is achieved. Existing literature in intercultural communication in education locates speech and silence within cultural practices of talking and find, for instance, that the preoccupation with speech and talking is a notably Western one (Kim & Markus 2005) and that silence at school is often rooted in ethnic and racial traditions and resistance to dominant cultures (Bao 2014; Ha & Li 2014; Jaworski 1993; Kato 2010). In contrast, I find that young people across ethnic and cultural lines use speech and silence to reconcile their social position or beliefs about others with the edicts of the school, a strategy that allows them to continue to see themselves as open and as keeping with the school's goals at the same time that they exhibit behaviours indicative of their own marginalization or that of others. Rather than being a direct reflection of one's ethnic tradition or national culture, young people's speech and silence abides by more or less explicit norms of intercultural engagement that are considered in some sense sacred in Highland's institutional context, such as the need to avoid offence and conflict, and to avoid being perceived as intolerant, xenophobic, or homophobic. In this sense, I contribute to current understandings of the role of speech in encounters with diversity (Ho 2019; Pollock 2009) but also the decision or pressure not to act or speak in the cross-cultural encounter, adding that silence, as much as speech, is a constitutive element of the intercultural work that young people do. Thus, I add to the literature on cosmopolitanism as "openness" that there are degrees of expressions of openness and understanding, which are more or less valued and recognized, and which are more or less accessible to differently positioned young people.

Talk of culture, outlined in Chapter 5, constitutes another element of the vernacular forms of intercultural work that young people do. In this chapter, I have drawn on literature on the relative autonomy of culture (Alexander & Smith 2003; Lamont 2000; Swidler 1986), which opens a space in which to examine talk of culture as a symbolic resource that allows young people to legitimate claims about particular ways of thinking and acting, justify hierarchies between distinct national cultures, and make arguments about the importance of personhood and common humanity in building global citizenship. Because the relative autonomy of culture advances a frame through which to study the inner workings of the school as irreducible to epiphenomena of an actor's

position in a global field of “opposition between the dominant and dominated” (Swartz 1977: 85), it contributes to the aforementioned need to propel the study of schooling beyond its predominantly Bourdieusian leanings. I have claimed that the relative autonomy of culture perspective represents a fruitful pathway for studying the broader symbolic structures that make talk of culture powerful, namely, its connection to crisis of multiculturalism narratives that pit the West against its unassimilable ‘Others’ (Alexander 2013; Lentin & Titley 2011), to culturalist discourses that identify culture with race and religion and which are used to underpin arguments about irreconcilable group differences (Gilroy 1990; Modood 2015), and to discourses of particularism, in which the possibility of global citizenship is pit against the closures that accompany attachment to one’s own culture (Lamont & Aksartova 2002). While “culture-sharing” activities are often central to the ways in which young people are encouraged to demonstrate their openness and intercultural-mindedness - and that indeed the act of sharing one’s culture is itself a vernacular form of everyday cosmopolitanism - my findings show that essentialized conceptions of culture make possible the expression of both solidarity and conflict. This attention to solidarity and social division contributes to research on the ways in which young people rely on essentialist expressions of culture in encounters with diversity (Noble, Poynting & Tabar 1999; Baumann 1996; Harris 2013; Ho 2019; Pollock 2004). In my work, a key component of talk of culture is that young people position themselves and others in relation to culture as either agents, able to free themselves from cultural precepts, or as determined by cultural precepts, unable or disinterested in conducting themselves differently. Thus, when essentialized expressions of culture elicit discord, it points to the need to address the racialized, gendered, and sexualized uses to which certain vernaculars are put: for instance, when ‘culture’ is mobilized as an explanation for why someone is limited in their ability to be ‘worldly’, it obscures the racialized assumptions that underlie such claims.

In Chapter 6, I examine the dynamics that unfold when events arise in the lives of young people that are seen to compromise cosmopolitan and worldly attachments. Highland is a context in which young people are encouraged to be both rooted and open, and thus to develop simultaneous attachments and loyalties to multiple contexts. Simultaneity has been theorized in the literature on transnationalism (Levitt & Glick

Schiller 2004; Levitt & Jaworsky 2007). I have drawn on this literature to argue that when events, such as political violence, arise while young people are at school, they are symbolically ‘called back’ to specific locales, reflecting on home and articulating, sometimes for the first time, nascent ‘local’ and ‘global’ loyalties. I have demonstrated that the eruption of political violence in an institutional context that advocates for the formation of worldly attachments is a case in which to examine how ‘simultaneous’ loyalties need, in practice, to be laboriously negotiated and renegotiated because they enter into relationships in which certain attachments are more or less costly, and are even seen to undermine the cosmopolitan norms of the school. I offered narratives in which three young people are torn between doing justice to their ideas about home and the commitment to express allegiances beyond its particularities: first, attachments to home are represented as antiquated and as needing to be subsumed by more ‘enlightened’ attachments; second, certain formations and articulations of attachments may enter young people into negotiations of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ allegiances to home; third, simultaneous attachments can involve entering into and performing a set of oppositional and what are perceived to be mutually compromising roles. Because these narratives highlight the everyday forms of labour involved in the formation, articulation, and negotiation of simultaneous attachments as well as the continuing existence of inequalities that render certain attachments more or less acceptable, I have contributed to a growing body of research that highlights the importance of occasional and quotidian practices and sporadic events (Dahinden 2017; Levitt 2002) that constitute the particular iterations of simultaneity that young people are likely to participate in and experience (Maira 2009; Olwig & Valentin 2015; Reynolds & Zontini 2016; Rumbaut 2002; Vathi 2013). At the institutional level, these young people have left home to pursue an education at a school that expects that they will come as representatives of home, and are confronting the possibility of beginning a life of global mobility that an international education permits; at the interactional level, they are coming of age away from home and living alongside friends, roommates and classmates from around the world and, when political crisis erupts, they become more or less willing representatives of a place *in* a place that is characterized by norms of openness as well as unequal power relations.

For future research, I would like to follow up with these young people in the next year and again in 5 years to reflect on their trajectories since graduation. I have kept in touch with most of the participants, and have taken an interest in their trajectories since they graduated from Highland. Depending on the path they chose, these participants are, in 2021, finishing undergraduate degrees, entering graduate programs, entering the labour market, starting creative projects. In some instances, they have settled somewhere in the world, gotten married, or have spent the last few years travelling and taking on odd jobs. Some are unsure about where they are heading, having started, but not completed, undergraduate programs or experimented with living in various places. Some have returned home. Drawing on methods in longitudinal qualitative research on young people moving into adulthood (Hermanowicz 2013; Saldaña 2003; on youth in particular, see Neal & Flowerdew 2003; Weller 2012), I believe that a potentially fruitful line of inquiry involves three key elements: 1) formation of capital and access to social networks; 2) meaning-making processes; and 3) cosmopolitan practices. Each of these elements are oriented toward tracking the trajectories of the participants as they enter into and establish themselves in adulthood.

First, I am interested in how the school has been instrumental in the educational and occupational positions participants hold and have held, and tracking the lineages from Highland to the roles that they have taken on in various parts of the world. I am interested in tracing the ways in which social networks formed at Highland have been mobilized and converted into opportunities, and how participants' status as Highland graduates helped in the formation of these social networks. What kinds of opportunities - whether it be educational, occupational, creative or in relation to travel - have arisen as a result of these networks? With this research direction, I may contribute to literature outlined in Chapter 2 on the formation of cultural and social capital as a result of international education (Aguilar & Noguiera 2012; Brooks & Water 2010; Igarashi & Saito 2014; Potter & Hayden 2004; Resnik 2009; Weenink 2008) but do not assume - as many of these studies do - that such capital, though fostered at school, is converted into opportunities later in life. Rather, Highland may be studied as partly responsible for the development of a particular intercultural habitus and the formation of a particular kind of cultural and social capital. It is therefore possible to examine how these elements have

enabled young people to perform in the fields in which they have found themselves since their years at Highland. I could use surveys and interviews to track the opportunities and networks to which participants actually have access, and therefore contribute to an emerging body of literature on international schools that examines them from the perspective of the trajectories emerging from and opened by them (Belal 2017; Wright & Buchanan 2017). Are these opportunities and networks concentrated in the West, in the US and Western Europe? Is there evidence of the concentration of opportunities and networks in emerging economies in Asia and if so, what kinds of opportunities and networks? Are they different from those taking form in the West? Is it the case that Highland graduates from developing countries have left their home countries to take work and opportunities in places that are seen to offer a greater wealth of opportunity? To what extent are young people from the West moving to non-Western countries to seek opportunities (Hof 2019), and what opportunities, if so? These questions would re-centre considerations of class and socioeconomic opportunities and outcomes in my research.

Second, I want to sustain the attention to meaning-making processes as I move forward. While one part of the research could involve tracing discernible links from Highland to wherever these young people have ended up, such links do not tell us about how young people attribute meaning to their experiences. I am interested in how young people understand their time at Highland, as well as how they account for their trajectories and experiences after graduation. In asking participants to reflect on their trajectories since graduation, I am interested in the ways in which they narrate the people they have become, their orientations to the world, what they have accomplished and where they see themselves in the future. How do they make sense of their time at the school and construct their personal narratives as actors who were, even for a short time, considered to be budding and competent intercultural actors and global citizens, and who were institutionally validated in their efforts to inhabit these roles? Using interviews as well as asking participants to listen to the interviews I did with them – giving them a window into their former selves upon which they can reflect – how do participants account for the continuing impact of their time there? For instance, how do they account for their academic careers (and the volunteer opportunities, internships, or jobs that opened up as a result), given the emphasis on the important things that they would go on

to do and achieve after Highland? To what extent is their experience at Highland important to them in a continuing way, and how do they evaluate their current position in social life and the labour market in ways that do and do not reflect an attachment to Highland? Are they evaluating themselves in ways that reflect the discourses of the teachers in Chapter 3, as having been given something valuable and therefore choosing more or less acceptable kinds of work and interests, making them a ‘good’ investment? Do they, to draw on Gilles’ words from Chapter 3, consider themselves as having been “worth it,” and what frames do they rely on to build their case?

On the intercultural component, to what extent do they consider the skills that were fostered at Highland important in their development, in terms of types of work they have chosen, the friends they have made, the partners they have chosen, the places they traveled, the projects they have taken on, and their ambitions and valuations of good ways to spend their time? Do they consider themselves to be tolerant people, and how do they account for the friendships and other kinds of connections they have made and the challenges they have faced? How do they draw connections between the experiences in diversity they had at Highland and their contemporary situations, predicaments, and identities?

Third, there is an opportunity to examine how the values, habits, and skills developed at Highland are put into practice in adulthood. If, as I have argued, young people cultivate nascent cosmopolitan practices at Highland, how are these orientations reflected in their everyday life as adults, for example, in their ‘choice’ of occupation, in the kinds of friends they have and the friendships they maintain, in their intimate partnerships, in community engagement, and in social movements? To the extent that practices for getting by in diversity have been internalized and rendered valuable, we would expect to discover that former Highlanders continue to build such practices into their intimate and public lives, whether it be via close relationships across diversity and the cultivation of knowledge and curiosity about their friends’ and intimate partners’ experiences, or by participating in more public cultivations and defenses of cultural difference.

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Appendix I - Interview Schedule

Interviews were organized around four themes: institutional norms and expectations, specifically, what the participant believed Highland would be like, what about the school compelled them to apply, and how they describe certain institutional norms in terms that make sense to them; experiences with diversity and cultural exchange, including meeting particular kinds of people for the first time and befriending them or experiencing conflict with them; modes of self-understanding and self-representation, including how they learn to inhabit the role of representative of a place or people; and conceptions of responsibility and obligation, including the extent to which they feel the need to go home and imagine the future horizons that might come after graduation. Below, I have included the interview schedule organized by theme.

Institutional Norms and Expectations

1. Could we start with you telling me how you decided to apply to Highland?
2. How did you first hear about the school?
3. What was it about the school that made you want to come?
 - a. Was there something about the school that you liked?
4. Do you remember being surprised by anything when you first got here, or shocked by anything?
5. Think back to when you first got here or even before you got here. What were some of the expectations that you had for what the school would be like, or what kinds of experiences you'd have?
 - a. Were there things that happened that you didn't expect?
6. The mission statement of the school uses terms like intercultural understanding and the celebration of difference. Could you tell me what intercultural understanding means to you?
 - a. How do you see it being practiced here at the school? Can you tell me about a time you felt it happening?
7. If you were to describe this school to a new person who didn't know anything about it, how would you do it?
 - a. How would you describe the students to a new person?
8. One thing I've witnessed a lot is someone will do something or say something and another person will say, "You're such a Highlander!" Or if someone is acting in some other way, they'll say, "that's not very Highland of you." Can you tell me what that means?
 - a. What do you think a person is doing when they're called a "Highlander" or not being very "Highlander"?

Experiences with Diversity and Cultural Exchange

9. Who is the first friend you made? How did you become friends?
10. Did you become friends with someone that you were surprised to become friends with?
11. Did you think you'd get along with someone that ended up not working out?
12. Have you ever offended anyone? Have you ever been offended?
13. Do you feel like you're fitting in?

14. Do people ever make assumptions about you based on where you come from and what you look like? What are they?
 - a. Do you feel a sense of responsibility to set people straight when they make assumptions about you or when they make assumptions about the place you come from?
15. Can you think of a time when you've had a cultural conflict with somebody? How did you resolve it?
16. Have any of your beliefs been challenged or even changed here?
 - a. Have you changed since being here?

Modes of Self-Understanding and Self-Representation

17. How do you express your opinion here?
18. How is it that you express your culture here?
 - a. Do you feel free to do so?
19. How would you introduce someone to your culture?
20. You are (insert whatever ethnic/national background interviewee identifies with. Has being here made you feel differently about being _____? Or being from (place of origin)?
21. What's it like to be associated with an entire group of people, an entire country, an even an entire continent?
22. Do you act differently here than you do back home? How so?

Conceptions of Responsibility and Obligation

23. Do you ever want to go back home?
24. What do you think you want to get out of this education, what are your hopes for where you'll end up or what capacities you'll have?
25. Do you feel a sense of responsibility to go home?
 - a. Do you feel like you want to go back home and make use of whatever you've learned here?
 - b. Do you feel like you should go home?
 - c. If you feel responsible, who or what is that responsibility to?
26. What kinds of contributions do you want to make after you leave here?
27. Do you think your experiences here will influence how you act in other places, in other countries, other parts of the world, other cultures? How so?
 - a. Do you think your experiences here influence how you act or what you think about if you were to travel or live abroad?
28. What do you think your education will do for you when you leave?

Appendix II – Qualitative Content Analysis

NORM and SUBCATEGORIES	Percentage of Total Coding References (N=449)	
<i>Discernment</i>	37.2	
		Percentage of Coding References within Theme (N=167)
Cultural Self-Presentation		49.7
Engagement with Others' Difference		50.3
<i>Empathy</i>	14.7	
		Percentage of Coding References within Theme (N=66)
Living Together as Catalyst		41
Extra-Curricular Programs as Catalyst		48.5
Other, non-specific		10.6
<i>Action</i>	29.4	
		Percentage of Coding References within Theme (N=132)
Valuation of Personal Service		53.7
Service Activities that Young People Engage In		30.3
Subsumption of Academic Success to Service		15.9
<i>Investment</i>	18.7	
		Percentage of Coding References within Theme (N=84)
Value of the Education Young People are Given		17.9
Expectation or Exposition of Future Contributions		82.1