PART II REFERRAL NARRATIVES AND ETHICAL DOUBLE BINDS

In the second part of this book, I explore how the need for a specialized form of mental health care for migrants has been discursively constructed in contemporary France through a range of stakeholders' motivations. In particular, I address obstacles invoked by state agents as motivations for their referrals to Centre Minkowska. During my fieldwork, I noticed their rationales tended to fall under two major categories: cultural or linguistic obstacles to care within mainstream institutions. At times, these obstacles were very real, but state agents also used these rationales as simple alibis to rid themselves of problematic situations. Sometimes referrals were motivated by structural obstacles related to a patient's precarious administrative status within government bureaucracy or to related constraints around institutional access and support. As I show in the following chapters, rationales around all obstacles tended to overlap—especially since structural obstacles are often attributed to cultural or linguistic difference.

In order to understand individual or institutional referrals and the moral subjectivities they express, I argue that referrals must be analyzed alongside broader moral economies that have influenced contemporary republican France. These include the state's anxious relationship to cultural difference, its history of hierarchizing populations during early industrial capitalism, colonization and the black slave trade (Mbembe 2016). In my analysis, I focus on representations of sub-Saharan migrants both because they have received particular attention recently from state institutions involved in the management of immigration and because they constitute a large proportion of the clientele presenting to specialized mental health centers. I show how nationwide political characterization of sub-Saharan migrants as culturally maladapted or socially deviant affects state agents' interpretation of their situations as pathological or requiring expert care. I pay particular attention to state agents' processes of differentiation based on