

Disability's Costs and Coasts in Mombasa, Kenya

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Abstract

This project tracks the intimate and social dimensions of disability in Mombasa to explore the impasses people with disabilities face, and how they navigate and transform constraints for and before survival. It details socio-historical conditions that figure disability as a *cost* showing how people with disabilities face impasses within four ethnographic sites: Africa's largest disability school, constructed and managed by a cement company; a rehabilitation and education center for neurodevelopmental disabilities frequented by a Muslim minority of Indian descent; a "sheltered workshop" offering disability employment, housing, welfare, and activism; and itinerant sites an litigious insurgency group uses to lay claim on the sheltered workshop. Against these costs I highlights patterns of *coasting*, which are non-negative practices of living precipitated by, but irreducible to, these impasses. Coasting gestures to the ways people with disabilities work within, around, and at the limits of an impasse, movements made without wholly relying on power or resistance to what blocks the continuity of life. Four coasting patterns are detailed across the life course: *drifting* within institutional captivity, by which disabled children wander off from scenes of initiation and build other forms of life*; brooding* as a prospective orientation for parents charting paths around uncertainties*; oblique mobility* by which disability activists cunningly mobilize within development, state, and market discourses to open pathways and solidarities outside them; *and insurgent motility* which enables recurring aggressions against, and ingressions into, institutions that have disposed elderly people with disabilities and rendered them jobless and homeless.

Introduction

Disability at an Impasse, and Not Only

This project tracks the intimate and social dimensions of disability in Mombasa to explore the impasses people with disabilities face, and how they navigate and transform constraints for and before survival. I first present *costs* associated with disability within four ethnographic stories and a range of related sites that span educational and rehabilitation centers, a disability welfare institution and factory or "sheltered workshop," grassroots activism meetings and events, and a group convening across informal settlements to plan legal and extra-legal activities for demanding their "rights." I contextualize these stories, detailing the historical, material, and imaginative contexts and conditions that shape political economies and built environments in Kenya's Coast Region ("Coast"), and how they figure disability as a negative category, delimiting it as a biological and/or social problem to solve. At each site, unique stakes emerge when solutions of cure, containment, rehabilitation, and rejection create impasses that sever lines of social mobility and ratchet down present and future possibilities for people with disabilities. These impasses emerge differently across institutional and non-institutional sites, stages of the life course, and intersectionalities of class, gender, race, and religion.

Importantly, constraints also induce patterns of activity that move people with disabilities across, within, and around limit experiences. I call these practices *coasting*. Coasting neither defines disability as a negative nor an elegant category and instead follows the buzzing convergence of heterogenous referents that surface within practices of living. As such, coasting offers no ontological ground nor universal or particular claims about what disability is or is not. Rather, the term is composed through non-negative readings of everyday practice among people who identify as having a disability in Kenya. In this spirit, I spotlight how people with disabilities enact contrapuntal styles within practices that range from

microsocial exchanges achieved through the sparest gestures of intimacy to violent protests and prolonged legal battles. And I specify patterns of coasting within the four ethnographic examples, described as *drifting* within institutional captivity, by which disabled children wander off from scenes of initiation and build other forms of life (Section One); *brooding* or prospective orientations parents enact to chart paths around uncertain relations with their children, responsive to ethnoreligious tensions with kin and community (Section Two); *oblique mobility* by which disability activists cunningly mobilize within state, market, and development discourses to open pathways and solidarities outside them (Section Three); and *insurgent motility* which enables recurring aggressions against and ingressions into an institution that has disposed elderly people with disabilities and rendered them jobless and homeless (Section Four).

We might consider practices of coasting in metaphorical terms, like boats traveling on water. The given conditions of the environment and boats can be imagined as fields of power structuring social exchange, that help and hinder the crew—people with disabilities—to move through life in certain directions. Scenes of drift occur when the boat idles, when tools for initiating children into certain genres of common life, including "inclusive" rehabilitative and educational techniques, are impractical, unevenly applied, and resisted. What "drifts" in these scenes is not the boat but the children, who find other ways of inhabiting life at sea, disassociating from the spaces zoned and courses charted for them. In scenes of brooding, the horizon vanishes from view and there are no clear paths forward nor silver-bullet tools for navigation. Parents' efforts to marshal care for children with autism and cerebral palsy become uncertain guesswork, sometimes steering the boat in directions that disrupt sanctioned forms of religious and familial reproduction. But brooding also opens up forms of connection between parents and children, diverse caregivers, and diasporic networks that generate new prospective orientations, even across uncertain gulfs. By contrast, oblique mobility describes lateral actions

that occur as people adeptly harness the power of air and sea, moving in accordance with hegemonic, liberal development discourses. But the ship is sinking, and though the crew may work to repair its holes, enacting subject positions as concerned captains, oblique mobility signals other co-occurring, co-performative actions that subvert and redistribute resources, enabling some to build life rafts out from the doomed vessel. Finally, scenes of insurgent motility follow the lives of people who were thrown overboard and are fighting to wield and resist power on the ship. Motility is not a matter of power and resistance though, for these castaways never quite return on board and their demands become dragged out across a shapeless future. Motility instead emerges in the furtive movements that help those at sea work together to wedge open small footholds in the hull, critical leverage enabling them to continually resurge demands for inclusion.

Though helpful, metaphors track practices that are already happening elsewhere, adjacent to the concepts we rely on to understand them; "we" are always behind what we read too. In this way, coasting has shifting coherence, conceivable as a para-concept that signifies practices of living without representing them. Each of its patterns stress an aspect of movement and indeterminacy, the ways that particulars of life have curved off over horizons: growing away from initiation zones, appealing to unfamiliar genres of relation amidst uncertainty, playing development games both straight and slant, and reopening social space to renew demands, a two-step of perforation and enjambment. Practices do things in the world, tracing actions that transform texts that are not just indeterminant effects of (mis)reading. Across the four presented sites, coasting creates openings into, around, and out from social orders that otherwise reduce material and imaginative possibilities for people with disabilities.

Likewise, coasting practices are not merely produced by or resisting the fields of power and exchange that give shape to an impasse; an impasse may incite diverse practices that are readable as more and less than subject-effects. Most simply, coasting is defined as *movements*

that are made without relying on power, whether they feed back into it, or not. In Mombasa, this occurs within and against grammars of subjectivation, as well as those emerging in the surrounds of power where people endure protracted meantimes of exclusion. Coasting, therefore, refers to movements predicated on forms of life that are prior to the givens of social exchanges organized and activated by an impasse. They do not redeem suffering nor do people with disabilities "coast through life," as in an idiom of effortless movement. Coasting practices are marred with ambivalences and frictions as people with disabilities share aid and vulnerabilities. Social connections are generated nevertheless, coarticulating ways to make lives beside and with one another—even if only by disrupting overdetermined solutions that stage disability as a "problem," to reanimate questions of living not premised on loss and repair.

When I first arrived in Kenya to identify potential field sites, the sense that disability related to a kind of "impasse" took on firmer definition. On the one hand, disability has been shaped within the Coast's complex historical genealogies, which have created an uneven distribution of disability knowledge and resources. On the other, disability became an impasse through epistemological tensions related to how it is studied and understood on the ground and globally, which became a matter of practical concern when my plans to conduct research in Mombasa were met with early resistance. I found my footing in Mombasa through a series of accidental, snowballing encounters, due in part because I had few starting points for exploring the social dimensions of disability in Mombasa. Some of this difficulty was contingent, stemming from transnational categorizations of disability within medical models that have preoccupied policy and research with the causes and cures of bodily impairments, and in Africa, with an emphasis on improving population outcomes, predominantly for healthcare and medicine. As historian Fikru Negash Gebrekidan observes, "for Africanists, disability remains largely the domain of the medical profession, a topic more significant for social workers than for social historians" (Gebrekidan, 2012: 105). Seeking out relevant non-profit or other civil

society organizations in Mombasa also invited challenges. Most disability organizations are headquartered in Nairobi and create asymmetries with Coastal representation, which often serves as a thin capillary of capital-based initiatives. Contextualizing encounters en route to the Coast situates some of the sociohistorical conditions that give shape to the ethnographic examples presented, and the social activities within them. Specifically, I situate diverse Coastal activities within a context where people with disabilities, and particularly those residing on the Coast, are included in the nation as citizens through intersecting states of exclusion. Here is how the "field" was introduced to me, as well as a brief historical overview of disability in Kenya and on the Coast:

Upon arrival in Nairobi, I scheduled a meeting with the former Executive Director of a national Kenyan disability organization, under which numerous programs and projects had been organized across the country. We met for a Saturday afternoon coffee, choosing a location close to his new office to avoid an arduous commute with crutches or, a taxi expenditure in the absence of reliable access to Kenya's overcrowded *matatu* bus system. Our conversation spreads out across a variety of topics, from employment, education, and healthcare to disability policies like the novel 2003 Disability Act, which offered people with disabilities constitutional rights for the first time. "We celebrated that victory because we saw that people with disabilities were finally being respected as Kenyan citizens. But the government has not kept the promises laid out in those reforms. It has been almost two decades, and we still have no access to buildings, no access to healthcare, no job opportunities. The [2003 Disability] Act promises 5% of employment for people with disabilities but businesses do not hire us, and the government does nothing to enforce the new Constitution." I asked him if activism for disability rights has seen *any* success in leveraging the constitutional amendments. "Of course, we continue to fight, and we see small changes. But we have been fighting for our rights for a long time, even since Kenya's independence. We are frustrated; no one listens."

Kenyan disability activism may not be reducible to a history of "rights" as heralded in colonial metropoles and international bodies today (see Armstrong, 2009), though there is evidence of lobbying for variable notions of justice and human dignity as far back as the 1940s. Profound disparities for disability justice existed well before independence, emerging out of the paradox of colonial modernization. Under British imperial occupation, there was little interest in investing in native education, let alone special schools, outside a handful of missionary initiatives. Disability as a social category acquired definition through growing cleavages between rural and urban residents as urban wage labor and commercial and plantation agriculture expanded by the conscription of able-bodied men. On the one hand, "monetization conferred a market value on a productive healthy physique. On the other hand, the rural areas or the reserves, where most of the disabled resided, lost their communal safety nets with the influx of the able-bodied into urban areas in search of such wage labor" (Gebrekidan, 2012: 105). The first disability lobbyists formed union groups in the late 1950s, the most prominent being the Kenya Union of the Blind and the Association of the Physically Handicapped of Kenya, which had secured promises from anti-colonial leaders to include people with disabilities in their visions of post-independence Kenya. These inroads bore commitments during the early years of postcolonial occupation, with the 1964 Mwendwa Committee Report for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled acknowledging that the disabled "have a claim to that increase in human dignity which Independence brings" (Mwendwa Report, 1964). Nevertheless, the focus never strayed far from a cost/benefit analysis of investing in the disabled as citizens: "In considering costs, we will again point out that this can be justified, not only on humanitarian grounds, but for economic reasons. Most disabled persons are capable of being trained to do work of one kind or another. They are potentially a national asset, but without training, they remain a liability" (ibid). Several of my field sites follow patterns of schools, rehabilitation centers, and disability workshops first

created in the 1960s within this contextual tension of promoting "human dignity" for a population marked as a "liability" to nation building and sovereignty. Between the 1960s and early 1970s, employment-focused rehabilitation centers began to prop up across Kenya "where men and women could train as carpenters, tailors, artisans, and tanners" including institutions like "handicrafts centers, sheltered workshops, and agricultural schemes," but resources remained limited and the programs "served only a small portion of the targeted population" (Gebrekidan, 2012: 116-17). I detail these processes in Sections Three and Four, which explore tensions around people within and cut off from a sheltered workshop. Schools and rehabilitation centers for children also prepare them for vocational work as a primary objective, which I discuss in Sections One and Two.

Contradictions inherent to disability "rights" premised on universal equality and national emancipation, and on embodied liability and economic risk, blur the extent to which people with disabilities have been "respected as Kenyan citizens." Saturday coffee talk made clear that inclusion has been underpinned by a regulatory discourse predisposed to "obstructing or co-opting more radical political demands, or simply the most hollow of empty promises" (Brown, 1995: 1). Debates about citizenship over the past four decades have intensified as Kenya became dependent on international loans and foreign investments and other attendant effects of global capital restructuring between the 1980s and 1990s. Within this context, "competition over erratic income opportunities and decreasing access to land have exacerbated efforts to distinguish between ethnic groups, coastal and upcountry people, nationals and foreigners" in ways that have heightened anxieties around "bodily well-being, work, reproduction, and respectability" (Meiu, 2020: 580). Gross misappropriations and abuses of political and monetary influence under deregulation reached a fever pitch during the Daniel Arap Moi regime, rendering all manner of public resources "fundamentally up for grabs," giving "rise to a common perception of dissonance between the appearances and essences of

persons, goods, money, and other media of value and authority" (ibid). Today, monetary values attached to bodily capacities are intimately linked to anxiety and suspicions about private appropriations of public resources, unequal access to economic security, and the politicization of ethnic and regional patronage networks. These tensions have not only sharpened the stakes of inclusion for people with disabilities along awkward scales of national and bodily integrity but across divisions of regional access and representation vis-à-vis the central government. I introduce these conflicts in depth in Sections One and Two, which track how Africa's largest disability school emerged from entangled processes of land theft, ecological destruction, and political jockeying. On the other hand, I also show how private appropriations of land were fueled by colonial policies that usurped local authority and destabilized the reproduction of Islamic communities on the Coast, which now operate in ambivalent and conflictual forms (Section Two).

These divisions came to the fore most emphatically during the coffee conversation when I inquired about potential research sites on the Coast. My interlocutor said bluntly: "Don't go to Mombasa; there's no research to do there. There are no major projects, no organizations for people with disabilities. There are few resources for researchers. If you want to do research, do it in Nairobi." His retort registers Mombasa, and the Coast region more broadly imagined, in terms of "Coastal exceptionalism." Much of this dislocation can be traced to the 18th and 19th centuries when the Coast—then a part of the Omani empire—was signed into British colonial administration under a Protectorate. Most contentious is the area commonly referred to as "The Ten-Mile Strip," a territory running the length of the Kenyan coastline that was nominally controlled by the Sultan of Zanzibar (along with the Zanzibari archipelago), which was "never properly defined or mapped" (Willis & Gona, 2012: 49). Although this area has a long history that dates to 900 A.D., during which it integrated heterogeneous Indian Ocean trading populations with indigenous groups like the Mijikenda, the colonial period significantly

unmoored the Coast's operative social organization and exacerbated pre-existing (yet loosely lubricated) ethnic divisions between Africans, Arabs, and others (Glassman, 2000). The latter occurred through British racial categorizations which gave preferential access to resources like urban employment to the whiter spectrum of the colonial color line, including those who could claim (whether real, imagined, or invented) an Arab descent or were Southeast Asian settlers, at the expense of other indigenous groups. Casual and conscripted labor from *wabara* or "upcountry" and hinterland ethnic groups also created feelings of mistrust and anger about foreigners taking up jobs, land, and housing during this period, among those who had long resided on Kenya's shores. These feelings sedimented, rather than eroded, at the dawn of independence.

Tensions among Arabs, Indians, Africans, and "upcountry" groups continue to play out in the post-Independence period in complex and contradictory ways, enacted in reiterating claims to sovereignty, autochthony, and secession. Without detailing these intricate histories here, the "Coast" nevertheless coheres as a distinct social and political geography, in perceptions of its marginalization from the Kenyan nation-state. These perceptions intensified in the wake of Kenya's 2007/8 electoral violence when decentralization was proposed to curb ethno-regionalism, renewing debates around Coastal sovereignty. The devolved system of regional governance adopted nevertheless "left the structures of the central government (for instance, the provincial administration) almost unchanged" and has defanged the Coast's political power to mere service delivery (Chome, 2015: 306). But service delivery was also undercut under devolution such that "patronage politics and rampant informalization of the local bureaucracy constrain the development of 'efficient' and 'effective' county government institutions" (p. 300). Marginalization is "not only read from the low status of Coastal politicians in national politics but also from the poverty and the low socio-economic levels of those considered as 'indigenous' to the Coast" (Thibon, 2014: 248). One could also include

people with disabilities, indigenous or not, among the Coast's lowest socioeconomic margins, as they require greater political representation as well as social assistance, insurance, and access to common infrastructures available to the public, even if compromised.

A derogatory and divisive idiom "Pwani si Kenya" or "the Coast is not Kenya" can be heard in discussions on Coastal dispossession, sometimes linked to the distinctive Islamic population, including counterterrorism anxieties and priorities that further eat into budgets for improving basic services. For others, it describes how the Coast suffers increasingly unequal life chances, a zoning effect of poor political representation as well as uneven national resource distribution and investment. When I asked my interlocutor if his reaction to Mombasa was one of "Pwani Si Kenya," he replied, "No, only certain people say such things. People with backward views." Such is the irony of the "Coast" as a part of and apart from Kenya, materializing historically as a liability, a border, an impasse.

And yet, we should resist thinking of the Coast as only an exceptional border geography. In view of these socio-historical conditions, *coasting* again becomes an important dimension of social practice, and of reading. The ambition is not to merely avoid categorically pigeon-holing what "disability" is or means in this context, or resist perpetuating the politicized distinctions between who is of the "Coast" or "Kenya," as some of these identifications matter to people and have important consequences. Instead, coasting draws attention to how borders are constructed in the present and over time, foregrounding the always already discontinuous qualities of borders that enable people to move around them. This shift in emphasis requires reading historical archives and comments like "Pwani si Kenya" with and against the grain.

We may recall that purifying borders, like those between biology and culture, was central to colonialism, in which Africans were violently subjugated, cast out of human time, and made a disposable population, to make possible the plasticity and "constitution of the colonizer as subject par excellence" of the west's autotelic history (Mbembe, 2001: 188).

Managing the affective borders between nature and culture (and co-constitutively West/Rest) has moreover been a confluence of diverse global and historical projects, evidenced in American evolutionary science, eugenics, and reproductive control, which became interlinked with European colonial missions (Schuller, 2012; see also Preciado, 2017). Making culturally plastic and biologically determined populations *in*formed relational sentimentalities (of who and what is composed and decomposed, normal and abnormal, Man and man, for example), produced dominant ideologies and institutions of race, sex, and ability, and with them certain formations of subjectivity (ibid.; see also Mugabane, 2001; Wynter, 2003). It is from these processes that terms like disability and "Pwani si Kenya" have often taken on the boldest definitions too.

All concepts are aspirational though, not totalizing. Interlocutors like the director I spoke with in Nairobi do not necessarily intend to reproduce "the epistemic violence of such analogical gestures" of parallel political representations and formations (Arondekar, 2005: 245) by drawing out Coastal difference. What is needed is what Kwame Appiah (1991) refers to as "discursive space-clearing," which would make room for other reading practices, a move "away from the notion that discovering an object will somehow lead to a formulation of subjectivity—from the presumption that if one finds a body, one can recover a person" (Currier & Migraine-George, 2016: 291). As such, we may consider disability and the Coast as "ex-centric" categories (see Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012), which become readable through the complex interplays of agonistic and inventive practices people enact in the process of navigating their borders, moments when such sedimented historical abstractions become viscerally sensed or experienced as impasses blocking the reproduction of life.

(Dis)engagements: Anthropology and Disability Studies

I highlight these aspects of impasse and coasting to address three broader issues, which often restrict disability research within anthropology and disability studies, as well as policy and grassroots interventions in Kenya. The first problem is associated with the proliferation of disability "models" that have preoccupied academic, politico-legal, and development practices. Debates have been exhaustive (yet still ongoing) between the "medical model" of disability, which takes physiological "impairments" as disability's conceptual foundation, and the "social model" which focuses on disability as a cultural construction to identify barriers to equal participation and access in society. Many people who have impairments may not identify with or neatly fall within the category of "disability," and over-focusing on the biological dimensions of a disability can reductively elide how bodies emerge differently across contexts and interactions. But people with disabilities may not experience social barriers everywhere and all the time and may benefit from prioritizing impairments, both to improve access and care, as well as to expand understandings of how impairments shape embodied experiences, including ways of knowing and relating to people and environments. Efforts to escape the nature/culture divide have led to more models and theories than can adequately be taken up in this paper, ranging from political, economic, moral, and rights-based models of disability, among others. Common to many of them, however, has been a troubling reproduction of disability as a condition to eradicate and overcome. Namely, if biological impairments or social barriers were resolved, disability would disappear. Hence this project's preoccupation with how non-negative practices of living add up to the otherwise ambiguous category of "disability" too. In so doing, it also attends to the entanglements of biological, social, and non-human infrastructures as well as the socio-historical conditions shaping how they are brought into relation.

This is not to ignore that more nuanced discussions on disability can be found in the relatively young field of disability studies, which also includes "Critical" Disability Studies (CDS) and "crip" theory ("crip" operates similarly to "queer" in queer theory, by which theorists "crip" taken-for-granted ablism across concepts). This rich body of scholarship has nevertheless generated a second problem: research developed in participation with people with disabilities has been Euro-centric and disciplinarily divided. Disability Studies has made far fewer contributions toward the study of "southern" disability than in western contexts. Because disability studies became a discipline at the height of US and UK rights activism in the 1980s, it has been informed by western literary and cultural theory, which has contributed to an imbalance in the literature. But others, like Jasbir Puar (2017), observe more troubling trends, arguing that "the analysis of 'southern disability' is not simply 'left out' of disability studies; it is, rather, a constitutive and capacitating absence" in which "the emancipation of some bodies is related to the disposability of other bodies within historical contexts that nurture such disjunctions" (p. 89; see also Everelles, 2016). These arguments echo critiques from postcolonial disability scholars like Hellen Meekosha (2011) who have called for the field to be rethought, "taking full account of the 400 million disabled people living in the global South" (p. 677). Anthropology is well-placed to take up this project and reverse elisions that limit the pursuit of knowledge and better political idioms.

In an effort to bring disability into conversation with anthropology and recognize engagements on the topic to date, this project thinks in conversation with scholarship that has pre-dated disability studies as an independent field. Ruth Benedict's (1934) essay "Anthropology and the Abnormal" is an early example in which she proposes that abnormality is a culturally specific configuration. A little over a decade later, Jane and Lucien Hanks (1948) produced a pioneering (though ethnocentric) study examining the social status of people with physical impairments across cultural contexts. Other notable contributions include Margaret

Mead's (1953) public call to include disability into the study of human nature, Robert Edgerton's (1967) addition of mental impairments into disability research, Geyla Frank's (1984; 1986a; 2000) introduction of emic methodologies, including life history interviews and analyses, and Louise Duval's (1986-88) establishment of the Society for Medical Anthropology within the American Anthropological Association. The upsurge of research produced since the dawn of the transnational disability movement has been largely conducted within applied and medical anthropology, though there are prominent exceptions. Between the 1980s and early 2000s, Robert Murphy (1990) wrote an influential autoethnography on paralysis describing disability as a "liminal state," Ingstad & White (1995; see also White, 1995; 1999; Ingstad & White, 2007) edited a ground-breaking volume on the sociocultural aspects of disability, and Devva Kasnitz and Russell Shuttleworth (2001) newly took up intersections of disability research like sexuality, to list a few.

More recent scholarship has considered the ways disabilities impact forms of collective belonging, including kinship relations (Das & Renu, 2001; Kohrman, 2005; Rapp & Ginsburg, 2011a; 2011b) and emerging sensory socialities—whether as counter-publics redressing the minoritization of specific impairments or collectives forged through effects of biopower (Fjord, 1996; Nakamura 2006; Haualand, 2007; Blume & Hiddinga 2010; Friedner 2010; Friedner, & Helmreich, 2012). In African studies more specifically, Julie Livington's in-depth works on disability (2005; 2006; 2008) have been especially impactful, including her inclusion of the term *debility*, which links physiological impairments and social disabilities with historically informed, contemporary contexts of massified suffering (see also Puar, 2017). Likewise, Livington's (2006) work, "Insights from an African History of Disability," takes care to consider how the somatic and the social become intermingled within emic practices shaping embodied personhood and how "intuitive notions float just under the surface of overstatements and beliefs about individually bounded bodies and Cartesian mind-body dichotomies" in the

west (p. 4). These insights have built on important anthropological conversations in Africa, like Lynn Thomas' (2003) model of entanglement which investigates "how bodily 'struggles over wealth, health, and power' 'connected and combined the material and the moral, the indigenous and the imperial, and the intimate and the global'" (p. 5 citing Thomas, 2003). In these ways, disability research has continued to grow, inviting new anthropological insights over the last eighty years. It is in this vein that I present various impasses across ethnographic examples, taking inspiration and drawing out socio-historical conditions and other "entanglements" that hold up social practices, in both senses of hold up.

Despite these contributions, there has been a general neglect of disability within social anthropology. It is important to acknowledge that "anthropologists continue to produce penetrating ethnographies of great relevance to the study of disability which are not explicitly identified as works of disability scholarship" (Ingstad & White, 2007: 6). Nevertheless, anthropology has had few engagements with disability studies—a field which has produced four decades of scholarship. Some anthropologists question why "anthropology, a discipline committed to understanding alterity, has contributed surprisingly little to the study of disability" (Staples & Mehrota, 2016: 35) despite calls for engagement since the 1990s (Kasnitz & Shuttleworth, 2001). Instead, disability has been predominantly relegated to medical anthropology, which as Faye Ginsburg and Rayna Rapp (2013) note, is paradoxical given anthropologists' sharp critiques about the medicalization of bodies, health, and wellbeing. Anthropological work on disability also suffers from an ethnocentric focus—a criticism often identified with disability studies (ibid.). As such, this project seeks to contribute to knowledge on the social and intimate aspects of disability within an underrepresented geography in Kenya.

Others point out that anthropological literature on disability has suffered from recurring theoretical and methodological limitations. Kasnitz and Shuttleworth (2001) argue that in general, scholarship "1) fails to define its descriptive terminology, 2) overly focuses on the

exotic, fate and fault, cause and cure, and/or 3) takes an opportunistic view of past casual field observations of 'disability'" (p. 7). This project takes up their suggestion to focus research on the life courses, contexts, and understudied variables of disability, as well as compliment semiotic perspectives with phenomenological approaches to update and/or think beyond stagnant theoretical terms, such as liminality and stigma, which are pervasive in the literature (ibid.).

In view of the groundwork laid, this project reworks a number of cross-disciplinary texts and concepts through a range of ethnographic methods, materials, and archives, which provide texture to the everyday experiences of disability in Coastal Kenya. In this way, each iteration of coasting emerges through participant observation and discursive space-clearing to accommodate the various practices of living engaged. In addition to the particular fieldwork contexts explored in Mombasa, coasting serves as a valuable tool for disability studies in comparison with commonly used concepts, like liminality and stigma, and builds upon similar terms in anthropology, like wayfaring and navigation.

Contrapuntal Coasting

Coasting is a geographical term. In this project, it graphs social movements not reliant on power, in relief to those working within and against the criteria of an impasse. Coasting offers a diagram of social practices, figured through their displacement, that are both in relation and adjacent to power/resistance. Coasting is therefore "contrapuntal," the musical term Edward Said (1984, p. 172) used to describe the "simultaneous awareness" of multiple structural variations across historical and geographical dispersion. Scholars often misconstrue contrapuntal as referring to harmonic voices, missing that Said deploys it in postcolonial theory to de-center the principle (Western) theme of a given tonality (see Capitain, 2020). Said had originally preferred the term "heterophonic" not contrapuntal, writing in his second draft of

Culture and Imperialism, "heterophonic reading must take account of both processes, that of imperialism and of resistance to it, and that can be done by extending our reading of texts to note what has been forcibly excluded" (Said, Undated: 25; see also Said, 1993; Capitain, 2020). This excluded third or middle voice is central to the idea of coasting, which tracks the patterns of its "restless tacking back and forth from inside to outside, from macro to microscale, from emic logic to etic situation" (Vasantkumar, 2020: 1049). Most importantly, it signals adjacent practices which can provide *other rules for transformation*—something sorely lacking from the conceptual toolkit.

Goffman's (1963) concept of stigma is one such tool, and among the most cited concepts in disability studies. As Goffman writes, "the normal and the stigmatized are not persons but rather perspectives … The perceived un-desirability of a particular personal property, and its capacity to trigger off stigma-normal processes, has a history of its own, a history that is regularly changed by purposeful social action" (p. 164). Goffman's work has often been critiqued for its apolitical character which ambiguates how stigma differs from, for example, prejudice, discrimination, or dehumanization. Ingstad, Livingston, and Puar's works show that these distinctions are non-trivial for the role of recognition in biopolitics; how it motivates the distribution of harm and hope; and how it differently impacts affective, cognitive, and moral sensibilities and practices that figure disability in everyday life.

Goffman's dramaturgical rendering of stigma, as identity management among those who have been or are at risk of becoming socially discredited, would benefit from analyzing the "implicit command structures" of recognition that bracket difference within specific contextual configurations (Povinelli, 2002: 225). The discreditable marked, non-yet marked, and unmarked social roles and acts Goffman analyzes are historically contingent products of their time, compelling attention to stigmatizers as well as the stigmatized. Elizabeth Povinelli (2011, p. 30) has elaborated on this, exploring the "larger triadic dynamic of recognition-

espionage-camouflage" as modalities of governance under late liberalism which condition the terms of bargaining for life on the verge. And as Livingston's article shows, the manifold affective adjustments at play when historical processes are viscerally experienced in bodily encounters give form to such abstractions and extractions of recognition; they are problems with which people contend when making and unmaking sense of difference, whether expressed through caring for loved ones or moments of curiosity, disgust, and otherwise.

Scholars have rethought Goffman, especially with respect to how power is exerted by institutions and states rather than just individuals (e.g., see Wacquant, 2008; Wacquant, Slater, & Pereira, 2014; Tyler & Slater, 2018). Such inquiries raise questions about how heavy terms like identity, politics, and culture become enacted in meaningful and transformational ways (see also Stewart, 2012). Why, in a debilitated context might mobilizing through a stigmatized identity become desirable, other than resisting the state and institutional power? What third voices within Povinelli's triad might speak or tack in and out of these contexts? Francis Cody (2016) asks similar questions about modes of addressability and political action among Tamil activists, finding subterranean idioms of solidarity co-occurring with interpellation into late liberal discourses. Likewise, coasting patterns like oblique mobility and insurgent motility show the transformational potentials, grammars, and subjunctive positions of these third voices. They open spaces for inventive, non-sovereign, and emergent modes of sociality and political agency which may become enjambed within fields of power/resistance or furtively grow in their surrounds, spreading and activating possibilities in other contexts.

Liminality may also be reimagined in view of these multiple registers and structural variations, as well as how they unevenly reincorporate people into social contexts. Liminality became widely adopted in disability research after Robert Murphy's writings in the 1980s, finding it more useful than the deviancy framework. Murphy (1988, p. 235) writes that disabled persons have "an undefined status: they are neither ill nor well, neither socially alive and active

nor socially expunged and removed." Murphy's permanent liminality has little correspondence with its original use in Arnold van Gennep's (1960) *Rites of Passage*, however. Disability would precede liminality, a middle stage of tripartite rule-governed ritual practice that mends tears in the individual and social fabric through the passage and pivoting from the profane to sacred. Similar arguments have been made about contemporary Africa, in which youth cope with permanent "waithood" or being "consigned to a liminal space in which they are neither dependent children nor autonomous adults" (Honwana, 2013: 13).

Permanent liminality can be found in Victor Turner's writings (1974), which significantly revise van Gennep's concept. Turner understood liminality as a temporary state but made a brief exception in his writing on "marginals" (a position he later withdrew (see Turner, 1977: 36)). Marginals remain unresolved from ritual processes, described as

> the condition of being either permanently and by ascription set outside the structural arrangements of any given system, or being situationally or temporally set apart, or voluntarily setting oneself apart from the behavior of status-occupying, role-playing members of that system (pp. 232-33).

This underexamined aspect of liminality has led to critiques that Turner betrays the "darker, mechanistic 'steering' dimension residing in the processual model of incorporation" (Weber, 1995: 531 citing Rosaldo, 1993). Turner's focus on liminality's anti-structural qualities, its possibility for both free play and social critique, has made it fashionable across disciplines, creating "a hyper-emphasis on flux, instability, re-fashioning, margins, the transgressive, the protean" (Stephenson, 2020: 4). The result has been a paradoxical dichotomy between liminality as a conservative, even totalitarian "steering" force, and a celebration of transformation delinked from mechanistic rituals or norms, and a permanent condition either marginalizing the stigmatized or destabilizing social structures. Does liminality order, unmake, or defer subject creation? Is it a process (or an accident, a contingency?) that stabilizes, transgresses, or dissolves social structures? Does it create marginals and hold them in suspension or dissolve central orders of social life? Is permanent liminality, as a spatiotemporal

condition, a problem of African or Euro modernity, or of a specific population like youth and people with disabilities?

Similar troubles seep into Lauren Berlant's (2011) version of the term "coasting" too. Berlant is concerned with how liberalism wears out life and proposes that people create holding spaces in the ordinary, small desubjectivizing moments to self-medicate, like eating fast food. Berlant asks, "is 'life' as the scene of reliable pleasures located largely in those experiences of *coasting*, with all that's implied in that phrase, the shifting, sensual space between pleasure and numbness? Whatever we do to make a life is, therefore, not usually a project of making oneself or the world better, but instead involves attention to making a less bad experience: a reprieve" (emphasis added, pp. 116-17). As others note, this frictionlessness pleasure and numbness also relate to "a coasting that is enabled by privilege, such that the temporary side-step away from capitalist life does not speed up slow death but actually enhances one's chances of survival and success as a capitalist subject" (Blankenship & Hayes-Conroy, 2017: 190). Claudia Rankine (2014, p. 62) takes up similar problems and finds that reprieves from everyday racism are not "a cure for feeling" but "a clean displacement of effort, will, and disappointment." Pleasure, pain, and numbness are alloyed here, unlike Berlant's rendering. While disassociation may offer limited relief, Rankine also shows how racialized people become repeatedly interrupted and blocked from having these reprieves, forced back into violent subjectivation. Is a break from subjectivity under liberalism a privilege, a survival tactic, or slow death? Where, how, and for how long is one held in coasting's "animated suspension" (Berlant, 2011)? Between subjectivation and de-subjectivation, Moten and Harney (2013) part with the subject altogether. They ask, "why worry about the subject at all, why go through such beings to reach the general intellect? And why limit production to subjects, who after all make up such a small part of the population, such a small history of mass intellectuality" (p. 64)? If subjects are a "small part of the population," coasting is not a break from subjectivity but the centrifugal, ordinary

conditions of living in permanent liminality. Is coasting another waithood, or a potential site for mass emancipation?

Liminality has us spinning in circles. How do people move away and out from centrifugal conditions? One response may be a turn to environmental metaphors, such as Tim Ingold's (1993) writing on landscape, which he describes as "congealed taskscapes" constituted by our understandings of life within them (p. 199). He advances the concept of *wayfaring*, which is not how people move across environments but how "they 'feel their way' through a world that is itself in motion, continually coming into being through the combined action of human and non-human agencies" (p. 155). But as Henrik Vigh (2009) points out, wayfaring is not a solution to "social volatility and opacity" (p. 419) because in social worlds, displacements between figure and ground move at accelerated intervals dissimilar from the temporality of landscapes.

Vigh proposes the concept of *social navigation*, a "motion within motion" that "affords a view to the dynamic co-creation of figure and ground, showing us that people act in and shape their social environments in constant dialogue with the way the social environment moves and the way it is predicted to 'act' upon them and shape the circumstances of their lives" (p. 433). In his vision of "motion squared" or mutual displacement, people harness power available to them in their social position to create figure-ground relations. Since no one has total control over the social environment, social navigation is not a mechanical steering but a harnessing of available power configurations. While this approaches the notion of coasting I present, my project is concerned with how people with disabilities navigate a social environment that *blocks* their movement, holding them up at an impasse. Using power and resistance to figure life in motion for socially discredited and "marginal" people can hinder them, sometimes rendering them imperceivably mobile like Ingold's landscape, against which others' social lives appear

in motion. Or the plasticity of adjustment itself becomes violent as people search for a reliable form to attach their lives. We need a third term, or to use Vigh's phrasing, a motion *cubed*.

Coasting has different patterns in Mombasa that affirm these diverse and sometimes contradictory theories, but it specifies them and locates what's plural about their possibilities. Some people with disabilities are held within mechanistic institutions that impose rituals for becoming certain kinds of subjects. Others face acute precarity and seek subjecthood and grounding. As a result, navigating may be less appealing than drifting away from structure, an excursion in contrary motion. Adopting a stigmatized identity in parallel motion with liberal discourse can become a cunning and oblique use of subjectivity, a tacking out from within. Brooding over the prospects of kinship incites continual efforts to steer relations into similar motion but adopting tools and techniques external to kinship's form of life can create threatening incursions. And efforts to escape the centrifugal plasticity of life at the margins of social mobility can spur vicious cycles of power and resistance. Against this repeating tone, insurgent and motile modes of action hold hope for finding a way into a reliable structure. Each of these four contrapuntal patterns moves in relation to an impasse but creates methods for transforming threatening conditions through criteria, practices, and voices adjacent to the present figure-ground relationship.

In these ways, coasting draws on elements of stigma, liminality, lateral agency, and wayfaring/navigation without substituting transit across social environments (whether by ritual steering or wayfaring) with liminal transformation (whether navigating its pathological or emancipatory potentials). Nor does it reduce complex social differences and differentials to abstract individuals/social wholes or collapse them into generalizations about power and permanent liminality. Under increasingly deregulated conditions, conflicts over structure and anti-structure absorb and oversaturate our attentions and our concepts, often at the expense of thinking about other infrastructures used for transforming and passing through blockages in the

continuity of life. People with disabilities carry out this work as a condition of being and becoming in worlds not built for them in ordinary practices of living. Coasting is a way to track their contrapuntal patterns to hear something else.

Coasting in Four Movements

Coasting develops in four sections dedicated to specific scenes of impasse and the patterns of motion described: drift, brooding, oblique mobility, and insurgent motility. They are summarized as follows:

Section One tacks in and out of the largest disability school in Africa, Sahajanand Special School, built and managed by Mombasa Cement. Sahajanand is one of Mombasa Cement's many philanthropic projects that otherwise obfuscate the harmful socio-ecological impacts of Coastal extractivism, including agonistic corporate and communal relations from mines and ports which have poisoned and displaced communities. Sahajanand emerges through logistical logics and histories of (post)colonial extractivism that ratchet down possibilities for disabled children—many who have been "rescued" from affected communities and rehomed at the school, which operates like a warehouse of unplanned survival. Its educational and rehabilitative services try to "correct" disabilities with a will to improve, but they are unevenly and erratically provided and indifferent to the children's unique modes of relating. Children who drift from sanctioned criteria of mobility and language are diagnosed as "backsliding." But children also drift into and out of relation with each other, and out from the school's hold, enabling them to invent new modes of communication and make meaningful attachments to stay put in a protracted meantime.

Section Two explores how children who drift generate stakes for families striving to bring them into the weave of kinship. *Brooding* occurs as parents care for children without reliable expectations for relatedness, both epistemically and subjunctively. I track brooding

patterns at a rehabilitative and educational center for autism, cerebral palsy, and other neurodevelopmental conditions. The center ambivalently provides "secular" educational and medical services alongside Islamic charity and *madrasa* instruction. Coupled with its ties to specific Islamic *waqf*s, the center attracts Ithna-Asheri Muslims, an endogamous, diasporic community with Indic and Shi'a discursive traditions which has become thinly dispersed, insular, and self-described as "endangered." Disability exacerbates kin and communal tensions as parents shape children's fleshly and spiritual capacities through differing techniques of the body and prospective orientations of care and cure, faith and hope. Conflictual practices and wishes of kinship can defer and peripheralize children's roles in families and produce unrelatedness. But brooding also offers prospective orientations that can string together moods and matters across spatiotemporal, social, and epistemological separations—spaces in which disabled kin bind bonds through grammars only intuited, surfacing between and out from multiple horizons.

Section Three explores a disability "sheltered workshop" with polyvalent functions of labor, welfare, and activism. I build on historical and theoretical frameworks for conceiving lives negotiated in this institution along axes of (post)colonial deregulation, welfare, and political representation, tracing liberal subjectivation and its (sub)versions. The workshop's diverse functions have come at odds and pushed it into a state of collapse, destabilized by the Coast's economic shocks and unattractive for state and donor funding goals. These impasses have induced repetitive lobbying initiatives that articulate ethno-territorial, religious, and ableist hierarchies among participating women, affording greater social and material capital to those who speak most charismatically in liberal development grammars. Activism also produces negative solidarities with excluded disability organizations and the state. But scenes of interpellation, in which activists make demands within liberal criteria for recognition, enable oblique practices for thinking and moving outside the collapsing shelter too. To this end, I show

how participants move around impasses to redistribute funds, stage alternative political idioms, and provide mutual aid among a milieu of women activists. Although oblique mobility often creates unequal divisions within the workshop and among external groups, it can also transform violent disability imaginaries and reopen foreclosed possibilities to initiate embryonic modes of social and political mobilization in the meantime.

Finally, Section Four follows a group called the Founders who were evicted from the sheltered workshop and disconnected from its lines of social mobility, however oblique, unequal, and compromised. The Founders are adrift without enclosure, brooding a form of life from its surrounds rather than steering from within, and acting obliquely to achieve interpellation into recognizable subjecthood, not out from it. For over ten years, they have used legal and insurgent modes of action to stay attached and stage their demands, scouting paths back inside and strengthening commitments to usurp the workshop's leadership. The Founders' demand-making is motile, attaching and detaching to many foundations of power and its criteria, which differently figure them as disabled citizens, workers, vigilante criminals, autochthones, and occultists. Each demand punctuates a small foothold toward the inside by puncturing blank spaces into exclusionary contexts. Although these acts can induce and protract hopeless cycles of (extra)legal retribution, the Founders' motility also enables them to forge unruly social and contextual linkages through oathing, espionage, and mutual aid that invite new third terms into scenes of impasse. As one face of their demand is deferred, one head of their many-headed hydra cut, the Founders leverage their unsettlement at the margins to unsettle their social disconnection, remaining disposed to the workshop and beholden to each other, practices which offer them temporary shelter for living on.

Methodology

Approaching the Field

This project draws on a year of ethnographic fieldwork on the Coast, primarily on Mombasa Island and bordering counties. It developed through two primary approaches. I first sought out disability civil society organizations as entry points to collect insights on related state bodies, other non-profits, and relevant service providers. This enabled me to pivot into a second approach, namely, participation and rapport-building with people with disabilities, their families, social networks, neighbors, and others. In what follows, I describe these processes and the general and project-specific methods adopted over the course of fieldwork, including ethical considerations for researching disability in postcolonial contexts.

I began sourcing leads for disability non-profits shortly after landing in Nairobi and grew connections from activist networks in Mombasa. As noted in the Introduction, I focused on disability non-profits as a way to collect insights on the social dimensions of disability, which has often been taken up as a subject for medical and healthcare research. I was also interested in how state and market priorities and provisions on the Coast impacted people with disabilities, including national policies, state, and development funding flows, and resource distributions at consumption, service, and clinical sites. Exploring this through civil society organizations brought into relief otherwise abstract concepts like "biopolitics" in observable ways, such as program budgetary priorities; funding pitches to the state, donors, and private sector partners; populations targeted for "capacity building," "impact," and "awareness-raising;" and activism on critical resource gaps.

Participant observation within these organizations enabled me to sketch the broader civil society universe of Disabled Peoples Organizations (DPOs), Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and semi-autonomous governmental bodies. Having an association with a development organization was helpful for accessing these and other sites, and for studying the

interfaces between civil society, state, and markets in the contemporary context. I often worked through introductions to build a research network and to lubricate discussions at state institutions like the Ministry of Health, public institutions including clinics and schools, private service providers, and, at times, more informal social connections. Establishing trust and legitimacy through social channels was valuable for making contacts, especially early on.

Most importantly, working through development organizations enabled me to meet and grow relationships with people with disabilities across a wide range of embodied conditions. I did not prioritize organizational affiliations or relationships based on biomedical diagnostic categories, or a specific kind or onset of an impairment/disability. I sought to understand how emic and etic disability categories emerge and travel rather than presuming them, as well as how people with disabilities interacted and organized through them, or not. It was a decision sensitive to the tensions and stakes of equating an impairment and a disability, and attentive to how people with disabilities may identify differently for strategic access to resources across/between organizations (see Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). In general, this project benefitted from suspending assumptions that finding a body means finding a kind of person or the networks in which s/he is embedded. As such, I have tailored my analyses on disability to the discrete fieldwork encounters and perspectives that arose. With respect to practical matters of beneficence and safeguarding, disability organizations provided access to health and social service professionals to support if any contingencies associated with certain impairments had arisen.

As I found footing in the field and developed relationships, I increasingly participated in the everyday lives of people with disabilities, following the places they visited (clinics, religious sites, state institutions, activist meetings, etc.), followed by "snowballing" (Cleaveland, 2005) to wider connections beyond disability non-profits. Disability emerges relationally across material and social infrastructures, which brought me far afield from

organizations specifically focused on disability. I engaged in field visits, conversations, and practices related to a wide range of spaces and issues, including transportation, architecture, health/social service events, consumption sites, production and industrial hubs, and religious sites, among others.

I had to prioritize some of these people and places, though my research routes tended to develop organically, based on issues people with disabilities found valuable and the shape my social network took over time. Although it would be impossible to present a comprehensive account of disability on the Coast, and unadvisable to attempt it, my fieldwork was highly diversified. I spent time with people across the life course, learning about issues affecting children in school; workers, parents, and activists; and more senior people with disabilities—in this case, an "insurgent" group led by people near and above retirement age. I engaged people from varying ethnoreligious backgrounds as well, including minoritized and understudied groups like the Mijikenda and the Shi'a Ithna-Asheri. These interactions cross-cut class divisions, ranging from people reliant on begging and the informal economy to socially mobile, middle- and upper-class families. I was also attentive to gender, sexuality, and related intersections, which at times were central to my fieldwork and analysis (e.g., see Section Three). Though I did not specify a "type" of disability to study, I engaged with people across many conditions identified with disability in these contexts, ranging from physical and mobility impairments, sensory impairments, neurodivergence, and spiritual impairments, like souls and limbs possessed/inhabited by ghosts and malign forces. To some extent, I also draw on aspects of non-human disabilities, like "impaired" water sources and intoxicated ecologies (see Section One.)

Though there are exceptions, the stories I present tend to focus on institutions. My fieldwork was much broader in scope and practice, but issues related to disability rights, resources, representation, and care made institutions magnets of interest and action. On the

other hand, institutions often blurred into numerous domestic, governmental, and market sites too. The schools I present in Sections One and Two, for example, attracted distinct questions and concerns despite both operating as educational centers: the first, a public school built and managed by a cement company, was entangled with matters extending from disability education, curricula, and therapy to aspects of disaster capitalism, port and mine politics, ecological destruction/conservation, and human-landscape interactions. The other school, a private institution, knotted questions around kinship with diasporic community building, Islamic discursive practices, and biocapital markets. As a result, my methodologies were equally diverse, continually adapting, and enacted in response to the scenes and situations that arose across this project's development in the field.

General and Project-Specific Methods

In general, fieldwork included familiar forms of participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, note-taking, coding, and analysis. I drew on collaborative, semi-structured interview and interpretation methods loosely inspired by three models, and responsive to person and context: 1) The Patton Model which subdivides interview questions into general categories of behavior, value, feeling, and knowledge (Patton 2014: 2) the Spradley Model which inflects description questions through aspects of tour, example, experience, and native language" (Spradley, 1979); and Langellier and Peterson's Four Entry Points of Analysis (2004) which interprets qualitative data based on embodiment, situated constraints, discursive regularities, and legitimation/critique.

It was important to reflect on research constraints that working with a non-profit imposed, as organizations had their own agendas and in Mombasa, many had uneasy relationships with each other (see Fetterman 1994). Participant observation sometimes required moments of working "obliquely—through gesture, subtle dialect usage, and quite simply

knowing when to shut up" (Herzfeld, 2009: 146). A wealth of information was gathered through observation and indirect methods, such as collecting materials, noting registers and modes of discourse, and identifying interests that organized service provisions. In Teresa Caldeira's *City of Walls* (2000), for example, she struggles with restricted access to property owners and gatekeepers in Sao Paolo's high-end neighborhoods and instead uses related materials like housing advertisements and newspaper displays as supplementary data and lateral field leads. Similar challenges associated with urban ethnography emerged in Mombasa and required adaptability, creativity, and resourcefulness. I have also relied on a range of supplemental archival sources and news articles to flesh out less obvious and historical aspects of the contexts in which I worked. In a similar vein, I also mapped the distribution of resources to and from certain civil society organizations, and the routes people with disabled took to access them (see Lee & Ingold 2006; Maman et al., 2009; Shortell & Evrick, 2014; Irving, 2016), a practice I have found useful in past projects.[1] Mapping further aided in tracking and contextualizing the opportunities and impasses they enabled.

My field positionality conditioned my relationships with different people and organizations, and not all of them were based on "trust" or "rapport" but became illuminating, nonetheless. I have lived and worked in East Africa for five years and have experience conducting fieldwork in Tanzania, including fluency in Swahili, which was beneficial for forging connections. On the other hand, I often needed to suspend assumptions grown through these experiences. Engaging people with disabilities challenges many commonsense notions about how the world works and requires active and ongoing unlearning. I tried to adopt a stance of positive naiveté, active listening, and reflexive thinking (see also Fabian, 2007).

1 Mapping was invaluable to my previous media project; following commodity routes from music vendors (*wachinga*), to distributors, factories, and intellectual property regulators greatly shaped and shifted my research inquiries (see Pierson, 2021).

Participating in the lives of people with disabilities often involved exploring overlooked aspects of disability: the "microsocial" interactions between intimate kin, friends, and partners that incite ordinary rituals (see also Hacking, 1992). Simple verbal and physical gestures had important consequences for the ways people were invited to tell stories or not, and how people positioned themselves in social interactions. For example, strangers will commonly, if not habitually, say *pole* or "sorry" when encountering someone who has an illness or an impairment, which can preclude extended discussion and place the addressee at the margins of a context (for an excellent description of this, see Macharia, 2015). Modes of passivity and recessive action could also generate dynamic reversals of social hierarchies. In addition to these observations, I drew upon sensory approaches similar to those used by anthropologists like Julie Livingston (2008) and Kathryn Linn Geurts' (2003) research to investigate aesthetic, "feelingful," and sensible aspects of disability as they arise between people, and in the ways people with disabilities voice their feelings and experiences across descriptions, modes, and moods.

This work required sensitivity to the depth of my relationships and the contexts in which interactions occurred when broaching difficult issues. Using and recording humor was often helpful for discussing topics that were more difficult or sensitive to express (see for example, Devlieger, 2018). This was an important dimension of Katrina Daly Thompson's (2017) fieldwork and discourse analysis on gender and sexual relations in Zanzibar which involved sticky talks about *popobawa*—an evil spirit that sodomizes men at night, which can be summoned if mentioned in conversation. In this respect and others, I needed to attune to a wider repertoire of social and contextual cues. It was important to observe how people respond in one-on-one versus group interactions and to address other intersectionalities (Crenshaw, 1991) such as religious and class differences, which often shaped social relationships around disability.

I also spent time collecting life histories as they valuably highlight many taken-for-granted assumptions about disability (Kasnitz & Shuttleworth, 2001), which often benefitted from building rapport with recurring visits and interactions rather than short engagements (Atkinson, 2001). For example, Miriam Rabelo and Iara Souza (2003) argue that Brazilian working-class women's experience of *nervosa* (nerves) can only be understood within the context of their life histories. Life history discussions sometimes touched on intimate and difficult topics which required patience and sensitivity, at times changing topics or concluding conversations. I did not only rely on narratives to understand these stories, however. Solrun Williksens (2009), for example, observed during his fieldwork in Fiji moments of withdrawal, like silences and refusals, that were interpretable as "a noble act, a sign that one knew what the values were and [an] expression of dignity (Williksens, 2009: 117). Likewise, it was important to respond, reflect on, and record various non-verbal cues. As other anthropologists have noted, bodily modulations, as somatic modes of attention, shape the nature of the interpersonal relations described and dialogically enacted during conversations (Csordas, 2002; Coffey 2011).

These methods also invited sensory and phenomenological approaches to explore "forms of knowledge and knowing … normally not spoken, the invisible and the unexpected—those things that people do not perhaps necessarily think it would be worth mentioning, or those things that tend to be felt or sensed rather than spoken about" (Pink 2015: 54). Sensory ethnography was non-trivial for understanding disability in Mombasa's socio-historical context, recognizing that "other cultures do not necessarily divide the sensorium as we do" (Howes & Classen, 2014). As Robert Desjarlais (2010) notes, sensory ethnography compliments life history interviews because it spotlights bodily metaphors that can open insights into other people's everyday rituals, values, and worlds. Such metaphors can also suggest surprising connections between the senses and political and economic forces and

contexts too. For example, Nadia Seremetakis (1996) shows how embodied metaphors link the disappearance of a seasonal peach in Greek markets to forms of nostalgia emerging under shifting economic conditions. Casual market quips, complaints, and disappointments about the unripeness of new peaches begin to pattern an expressed yearning for the taste, eroticism, and history of lost sensory experience. Disability sensibilities sometimes uniquely linked aspects of uneven resource distributions with affective experiences.

These methods often had experimental elements that involved becoming a "sensory apprentice" through ongoing "participation in a practice" with disabled persons. Continuous engagement and practice were an ambition to "eventually achieve flexibility, resonance…and an attunement of the senses" (Pink, 2007: 103-7 citing Grasseni, 2007: 54). I find Pink's assessment of these methods a bit idealistic and overstated. Quite often, becoming a "sensory apprentice" involved a great deal of awkwardness and catching up—more an attuning than an achieved attunement. After several months of Kenyan Sign Language classes, I did not reach anything recognizable as "flexibility" with signing. But in other ways, I learned a lot about how the deaf instructors and students I met each day adapted to the aural world around them, and the ethico-moral dimensions and fault lines of inclusion/exclusion related to certain sensory acts. Despite being a poor apprentice, I was able to invent other ways of communicating to build relationships with many deaf interlocuters (e.g., the use of expression and body language, pantomiming, inventing signs/charades, drawing, texting, etc.). People with different embodied conditions had distinct sensory styles, needs, and approaches. Even small acts, like pushing a chair in under a table, could be inconsiderate and block a person with a mobility impairment from access. It was an ongoing and always unfinished pedagogical exercise to learn through the senses and to relate to different styles of knowing (see Hsu, 1999). Often sensory modes of communication were invented in-relation, with many rules made up on the go.

I had been especially interested in how disability may disorient affective, sensory, and emotional experiences in ways that impact how social relations emerge and assemble (Ahmed, 2007). Ordinary activities like eating and walking were highly impactful and revealing during fieldwork (see also Grasseni, 2007), and sometimes required greater imagination, care, and patience during social interactions. Many "ordinary" practices are foundational to my fieldwork and its analysis. They are highlighted and considered within each of the four sections presented.

Fieldwork was also informed by ethical recommendations for anthropological research more generally, including core principles of respect, beneficence, and justice (LeCompte & Schensel, 2015), as well as for specifically studying disability in postcolonial contexts. These recommendations were embedded at each step of the research design and guided my practice in the field. I found Gilroy and Donelly's (2017) guidelines particularly useful, which merge indigenous standpoint theory (Foley, 2003) with ethics for disability research. They propose nine key ethical guidelines, advising that research: 1) includes the indigenous community 2) shares an understanding that colonization is a social determinant of disability 3) works to promote social justice premised on principles and philosophies from local communities 4) reflexively acknowledges the cultural interface 5) attends to diversity within and between different local communities 6) develops an understanding of local knowledge systems from a macro and micro level including the physical, human, and sacred world 7) critiques western disability and impairment research epistemologies 8) uses methodologies that are accountable to local communities and 9) focuses on social inclusion and community participation. (Gilroy & Donelly, 2017: 531-66). Taken together, these guidelines underscore key elements of my fieldwork approach and methodology: participating in the disability civil society to understand social justice issues; tracking political and economic conditions, contexts, and circulations; acknowledging the diversity of disability within, between, and beyond the development

community; collaboratively engaging people with disabilities; and learning with disabled persons through mixed-method and multi-scalar approaches.

Taken together, this fieldwork design allowed for multiple ways to research broad concepts of disability across Coastal contexts, and it yielded provocative insights into how political economies and social value systems shape the lived experiences of disability. Though I relied on a number of well-worn ethnographic approaches and methods, I often learned most when they did not work and needed to be reinvented in relation. Fieldwork became an exercise in pacing, patience, improvisation, imagination, and reading social life within and against the grain, as well as under/outside/through/near/alongside the grain too, which is very much in the spirit of coasting.

Section One: Drifting in Zones of Unplanned Survival

Campaigning for Care

The real estate agent is edgy at the edge of the residential road, pacing in front of gated estates as her young daughter idly watches on. I am meeting her in "new" Nyali, a sub-county roughly five kilometers northeast of Mombasa Island. The name comes from a London finance company, Nyali Limited, which funded the Old Nyali Bridge in 1926. The bridge replaced a flimsy, floating pontoon that connected Mombasa Island to the mainland, which was considered a logistical impediment hampering plantation labor conscription and resource extraction on the Coast. By 1931, the imperial will to improve had sunk 4,000 tons of steel into the seafloor, instructing new movement and access to land, labor, and bodies. In 1980, a concrete, two-lane bridge superseded the old one, constructed to accommodate the area's exponential population growth and booming high-end, beach-side property market. In contrast with the updated bridge, the old one looks like a ruin today, dismantled for scrap and rewilded by the sea, a result of prolonged land tenure lawsuits vis-à-vis the central government. An epitaph is graffitied on a wall behind the bridge's spare supports, penned by the Swahili poet Muyaka bin Haji (known by the mononym, "Muyaka"), reading "Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow is not gone." The citation comes from a poem warning that foreigners who impose innovations on "Nyali Kuu" or the Great Nyali will be smashed in the legs and never again journey across the sea. As if foretold, the collapse of the British economy after World War II stranded otherwise short-term colonial administrators and settlers on the Coast. It also loosened regulations for private investors and other market speculators, igniting wide-scale land grabbing for tourist developments, residencies, and getaways. Like so many in Mombasa, the real estate agent has relied on Nyali's surging tourism market for daily bread. But its decline since the Global Recession has intensified anxieties as business dwindles year after year. The

agent's nervous movements almost betray her forthcoming sales pitch before its delivery; she really needs a commission today.

As I approach the real estate agent, I pass white-washed buildings lined with Egyptian blue paint—part of a "broken windows" campaign intended to give the area a Santorini-feel and an air of safety. Local property and business owners were threatened with penalties and police action if they refused or failed to comply with the renovation order. I find the urban renewal ironic since, only a few days previous, thieves had picked me off the main road and I became a captive in their renegade *matatu* bus during my morning errands. As if it would make a difference, I decided to move to a flat farther from the main road and contacted the real estate agent to set up a meeting. I explained that I was conducting disability research and needed a flat proximal to field sites in Mtwapa and downtown Mombasa. Now we meet on the shoulder of the road and her four-year-old daughter beams up at me through her legs. They both appear overheated, tired, and frail, more so since they likely walked here from a great distance. The agent is conscious of her appearance, joking about it with forced extroversion. "No matter how much I eat, I always look so thin!" she says in response to no question presently posed. We walk a few blocks and meet a man whom the agent identifies as her "friend," another real estate agent. Behind plumes of Portsman cigarette smoke, I find his eyes beneath a red cap embroidered with the words, F**KING PROBLEMS.

Initially, it seems that we had run into her friend by coincidence rather than design. But the agent introduces him with a demand that cramps any space for exchanging greetings, names and other pleasantries: "You need to help him. He needs help. He has a son. His son is disabled." Launched into conversation, I begin to learn about his son as we dodder down the road, sweat-soaked and second-hand smoking, headed to what I anticipate will be an exorbitantly price-inflated, pre-negotiated flat. Instead, we arrive at F**CKING PROBLEM's home. In the threshold between the entrance gate and the front door, a young boy is fingering

the air in his wheelchair. His mother stands at his side and scowls as her husband puffs smoke into her face. “He is so cute!” the agent exclaims as she facilitates another dissembling introduction.

The parents recount that their son had once been like any other child his age. But one day he suddenly fell ill with a high fever and lost consciousness after having a seizure. When he awoke, “he was never the same again.” The parents sought a diagnosis at several hospitals, but even today they do not know what happened to him, how to care for him properly, or possible ways to rehabilitate him. They decided to board him at a disability school for full-time, specialized care in Mtwapa, but withdrew him after discovering neglect and mistreatment. The staff infrequently turned him in his bed or changed his diapers, and he lain in excrement until his skin soured with sores. With cutting irony, the parents remark that the students boarding at the school are special, not because they have disabilities, but because they are left to die there. The conversation finally moves to issues impacting the boy’s welfare at home which further accentuate the parents’ plea for help. Their son’s care is anxious and exhausting guesswork, and they lack the means to pay for external support, especially since one parent must always be home to watch him.

The agent reinserts herself into the conversation to signal that she is “campaigning” for this ill-fortuned family to solicit resources for them. She is less than subtly requesting a financial contribution, and I loosely extricate myself from the campaign with a promise to visit the school and investigate the problems raised, and to connect the parents with any resources I find through my work. It is obvious that they had hoped for monetary support too, a “sponsor” as is commonly requested. An uncomfortable silence follows until the campaigning agent breaks in to ask, “What do you think is *wrong* with him?” I fail to reply. Even if a cause were posited, or a medical opinion proffered, would the diagnosis not restate the problem? Indeed, medical, and rehabilitative care are valuable and sometimes critical for many people with

disabilities, especially in contexts where these resources are made insufficient, inaccessible, and scarce. But "wrong with him" prefigures his condition as a problem to solve or improve as one might a logistical impediment, whether the imagined objective is akin to the self-possessed individual or a more syncretic expectation structure for personhood. There's no pill for that, no simple route from A to B. But "tomorrow is not gone" either and opens to other possibilities and modalities of care.

We leave to view the flats. Although the final complex we visit is above budget, it is the only unit that has a stove. It also features a pool because, like most properties intended for tourism in this area, it is a motel room, not a flat. The campaigning agent says that, of course, I love this place, that I ought to sign the lease now, that I ought to invite her over to use the fantastic pool. I laugh at her jest, perhaps as a threadbare cover for the felt hypocrisy of signing an overbudget lease while declining to sponsor F**KING PROBLEMS's disabled son. A salve of reflexive positionality may be applied as treatment, but the bad feeling would linger unchanged. Rather, the three of us form a strange congress, contending with the problems of dwelling in disparate and unspoken ways. I am another temporary settler taking up space in a zone stolen and whitewashed for outsiders, an index of and bridge to resources (with)held beyond. The campaigning agent seems to reside outside as much as she does inside, her mothering taken onto the road as she exhausts herself to make ends meet. And F**CKING PROBLEMS' son lives in an atmosphere where dwelling and death shape the relations above his craned head, breathing in the oxygen and smoke of words detailing his fugitivity at home. None of us seem to belong here or to each other and we stand beside each other, beside ourselves.

I return to the road with buyer's remorse and strike up a conversation again with F**KING PROBLEMS. He resumes condemning the special needs school his son had attended. He describes it as a "prison" where children are confined without food or regular

care. “They don’t feed the kids—they’ll leave them hungry until noon. They don’t walk them or exercise them. They don’t even change the kid’s Pampers.” Abusive neglect is concealed in the time between spare acts of care, unaccountably hidden behind the institution’s walls. That is, until the problem spills into the open with expletive profanity.

As our meeting draws to a close, the campaigning agent becomes increasingly agitated, asking I pay her 5,000 Shillings up front and the rest later. “No, there's no need to pay in part,” I counter. “We can stop at my flat and I will give you the sum.” She at first agrees and we hail a *tuktuk* [rickshaw] to my complex. But on the way she whispers, “I don't want [F**CKING PROBLEMS] to know the commission. He will take it all and there won't be anything for me.” We finally arrive and I prepare an envelope containing the payment. When I return outside, the campaigning agent has separated herself from F**CKING PROBLEMS, who is still seated in the *tuktuk*. She waits by the entrance to intercept me. On approach, she tugs my arm and pulls me into a shadowed corner, grabbing the envelop and hastily extracting several thousand shillings from it. The envelope and its remaining contents are then stuffed into a yellow purse. She rushes ahead to the street, tottering toward F**CKING PROBLEMS and calling through a smile, “All done! Let’s go!” As the *tuktuk* turns off the road, he yells back to me, “Don't forget about my son!”

The following day, I text several disability contacts to the campaigning agent, as I had not received F**CKING PROBLEMS’ number. She replies, “Please do more. Help his son find free treatment and a sponsor to pay his school fees. You can ask for American sponsors.” Who or what is the object of these demands? Will the contacts reach F**CKING PROBLEMS or disappear into the yellow purse too, once more leaving his son under-resourced and neglected? Answers or judgments resist simplification in this context, which can induce brutal competition for unevenly distributed resources.

I encountered similar disability "campaigns" throughout fieldwork, which were marked by mixed motivations, conflicting needs, and attenuated agency, and which intimately coupled care and cruelty as people sought routes through and beyond sites of dispossession. Efforts to forge new social and economic connections too often returned people with disabilities and caregivers to where they started, or else left them stranded and side-lined within or outside institutions charged with providing support. Mayuka's elegiac poem "Poor Man's Chicken" is apposite here, offering a prescient reflection on how colonialism made and unmade social relations supporting the reproduction of kin and community, which haunts and shapes the stakes of disability worlds in Mombasa today:

When she lays eggs, they're not nurtured even if brooding them succeeds.
They're surrendered to the vultures and the hawk will also snatch them.
In the end their claws have captured what will be shared by common thieves.
The poor man's chicken does not brood; if she lays eggs, she doesn't hatch them.

The poor man's shunned by everyone; his problems constantly renewed.
His decline cannot be undone, he's suffering thirst or craving food.
No friends for the forsaken one, no kin or brother to include.
The poor man's chicken does not brood; if she lays eggs, she doesn't hatch them (bin Haji, 2020).

In the following sections, I elaborate on these themes and threads with stories collected at public and private educational/rehabilitative institutions for youth with disabilities, research precipitated in the field from meeting F**CKING PROBLEMS and his son.

They develop in two movements. The first focuses on the school F**CKING PROBLEMS' son attended—the largest disability school in Africa, gifted by a philanthropist who owns a cement company in Mombasa. The school functions like a warehouse of "unplanned survival" (Block, 2020: S70), both overpopulated and under-resourced, and tied to destructive Coastal political economies and ecologies. I detail agonistic corporate and communal exchanges from mines and ports which have polluted Coastal communities and displaced children from extraction zones. These logistics organize, underpin, and ratchet down possibilities for "rescued" children held at the school. Children *drift* within this impasse, between zoned survival and hazy horizons predicated on adapting to common infrastructures.

Drift develops across two "scenes of initiation." The first shows a therapeutic session focused on correcting rather than understanding a girl with autism's modes of relation. Children who drift from sanctioned ways of using, exercising, and relating to infrastructures, both material and communicative, are diagnosed as "backsliding." Finally, I present scenes of initiation taking place during an excursion outside the school, in which children learn to drift in relation to each other and the landscape. Inhabiting displacement together enables students to build and disturb modes of connection and communication in ways that create meaningful attachments to life otherwise held in a protracted meantime.

But children who "drift" also generate risks and challenges for families and caregivers striving to bring children into the weave of kinship. *Brooding* occurs as parents care for children without reliable knowledge or expectations for relatedness, when appeals to disabled kin become appeals to kinship amidst uncertainties. In Muyaka's untranslated poem, he uses "brooding" (*haangui*) in two different senses – laying eggs and incubating them – a blurry approximation of both birthing and caring, perhaps. Muyaka relates brooding to concerned actions impacting the prospects of kinship's continuity, under threat from external predations. I draw on these themes in Section Two to explore how families grapple with care for children with autism, cerebral palsy, and other neurodevelopmental conditions. I focus on a rehabilitative/education center managed and frequented by "middle- and upper-class Asians" and detail different dimensions and registers of brooding, to reimagine kinship and explore its stakes for a specific ethnoreligious community.

Disability reshapes families in ways that interweave concepts of kinship as a biological given, production of relatedness, and an effect of power and inequality. I take a promiscuous approach to these concepts, rather than substituting or displacing them with another turn. But in the warp and weft of relating, children with disabilities disrupt expectations of kinship, such that what becomes given and made seems indeterminate, unfamiliar, and unrelated. I take up

these issues with parents from an endogamous Shi'a community, the Ithna-Asheri, who triangulate identity, dependencies, and kinships across the subcontinent, Near East, and East Africa. The Ithna-Asheri's transnational community is both thinly dispersed, highly insular, and now in population decline—a form of life they describe as "endangered." Disability exacerbates these tensions as parents shape children's capacities with differing prospective orientations of care and cure, faith and hope. As a result, conflict emerges between parents' expectations for kinship in ways that defer and/or peripheralize their children's role in the family. But brooding also offers other prospective orientations which can string together moods and matters across socio-historical and epistemological separations—spaces in which disabled kin may bind bonds through grammars still emerging and only intuited, surfacing between and out from multiple horizons.

Walling Off Education

The *bodaboda*'s exhaust pipe scorches my right calf, heightening the heat of direct sunlight that bakes the ground, absent shade from buildings or trees. My sweaty palms feel around to maintain a slippery grip on the motorcycle as it weaves along uneven red and ochre paths, avoiding sprouting patches of drought-resistant brush and shredded tires, rusted sheets, and other industrial and consumer litter. I am en route to Sahajanand Special School, the institution F**CKING PROBLEMS' son had attended. I sought a point of contact less charged than the fuming father and eventually found a disability educator through a contact at Young African Leadership Initiative. In the process, I met Dennis, a teacher at Mombasa Secondary School for the Physically Handicapped who runs a community-based organization for youth. He also provides sign language support to various institutions, services that are in short supply on the Coast. We had an initial conversation over lunchtime juice about education services for children with disabilities, which concluded with a promised introduction to Sahajanand's

Deputy Director for its secondary school section. Now I am headed to meet him at the school, one trip among many within a complex circuit of sites that shape this institution, as well as broader disability discourses and resource provisions on the Coast.

I learn that the school is in Mtwapa, a town infamous for its rowdy nightlife scene, dense with bars and short-stay guesthouses that invite frivolous and furtive exchanges of booze, sex, drugs, and money. We drive into and out of this compact urban zone after crossing Mtwapa Creek from Nyali and then brusquely turn east toward the sea. A few minutes from town lies a neighborhood of contrasting appearances. Sparse, scattered small-holder farming plots and crudely constructed settlements populate parceled-out, semi-arid land. It's difficult to comprehend how farmers grow anything in this dry and hostile climate but their efforts are visibly abundant. Most of the houses are constructed with mud and concrete blocks, some with corrugated rooves and others open-air and awaiting completion, if and when funds suffice. Sahajanand appears in dramatic relief behind these plots. Its white cement wall towers over homes and kiosks, running the width of the bordering community. The wall imposes an unexpected and alien boundary, built at such a scale that it induces an overwhelming, if not unnerving, gestalt effect as one nears. A uniformed guard cracks the gate when I dismount the bike and drags open a door at least three times his height, designed with thick black iron bars. He holds me outside the wall for several minutes until the meeting can be confirmed. Among other protocols for passage, I am forbidden from taking any photographs inside. I log my arrival time and details in a ledger and am at last granted entry to the site beyond.

Inside the school is a vast and spacious cement courtyard free of additional infrastructure, excluding a ramp that leads to a raised central platform. Students in wheelchairs are gathered there to watch football on TV. A walkway lines the perimeter of the complex directing movement to dozens of green metal doors with barred windows that open to classrooms, dormitories, and other offices. F**CKING PROBLEMS' description of this school

as a “prison” springs to mind as I take in Sahajanand’s uncanny likeness to Bentham’s panopticon, barring that the space is triangular rather than circular and stands just one-story tall. One woman called a “dorm mother,” sits on the perimeter walkway, busy apportioning porridge from a bucket into small pink plastic bowls and distributing them one by one to the children gathered for lunch. The children look to be about four or five years old. They are making a mess of the ground and themselves as they press handfuls of porridge to their mouths. Porridge has dried onto the chins, cheeks, arms, hands, and clothes of others who had taken lunch earlier in the day. This dorm mother seems to be the only staff member present and I wonder how the school manages to watch over so many children with a wide range of needs.

My eyes meet Dennis’ who beckons to me with a wave from the side of the central platform. He is surrounded by children too. When I reach him, he introduces me to two deaf students, a girl and a boy. The boy “wants to sign but he’s mental,” as Dennis puts it, free of the political correctness to which I am accustomed, “and he’s been injured,” gesturing to the boy’s bandaged arm. In a snap reaction, I glance back at the sole dorm mother, some performative presumption that this meagre supervision might, after all, have something to do with the boy’s injury. I remind myself to suspend judgments despite the incriminating stories I had heard. The boy returns me to his attention, taking my wrist to draw me nearer. He's excited to have a visitor, issuing sing-song-y sounds through a smile. He then lifts his injured arm with the other to fist bump me a hello. I gently reciprocate. Dennis has been busy signing with the girl, explaining that I am a friend of his, and had traveled to Kenya on a plane from far away. I had recently enrolled in courses for Kenyan Sign Language (KSL), a localized form of American Sign Language, so I perform only a simple greeting. I attempt signing my name but strain to recall the unfamiliar gestures, spelling each letter so slowly it becomes comical. The girl laughs, telling Dennis I remind her of a bespectacled white man who had visited last year. This school relies on a supply of foreign volunteers to carry out programming and daily care

as a critical supplement to its full-time staff. She misses dancing with the volunteer too, and twirls twice to showcase the moves she had learned—musical eurythmics that train perceptions beyond the ear. Then she signs a joke to the boy, which appears to be about me, and he too erupts in giggles. “What did she sign?” I ask, seeking translation. Dennis shakes his head. “You must understand, they are learning. They can sign something like this, but we cannot understand them. It is like learning a foreign language. Some of the gestures they make, they are the only ones who understand them, only the members of their community. So, can you imagine staying a whole day here? There are kids of all varieties, and you have to learn all of the languages they use.” “A whole day” would hardly scratch the surface if one appreciates the time and attention necessary for training oneself in these languages; to understand these children seemed to require experimental and ongoing pedagogical lessons in their knowledge productions and exchanges. As Dennis puts it, “We are both their teachers and their students.”

The Deputy is ready to receive us at last and our time with the children concludes. As we head to the office, which translates to a block’s distance away, I remark on the remarkable size of the school. “It’s so big it could be its own village.” Thousands of children attend school here, both with and without disabilities, including a large population of “severely” disabled students and orphans who board on a permanent basis. “This is only the secondary section,” Dennis qualifies, wagging his hand to the far end of the courtyard, “so you can see, the other side is the Primary Section.” But I cannot see it, the section blocked off by another of the school’s formidable walls, nor can I reconcile this with the children roaming about who are clearly too young to be in secondary school. The school is nevertheless described as divided into primary, secondary, and vocational units, all “inclusive” with exception of the severely disabled students. “How does the administration manage this number of students?” Dennis’ response is oblique, seemingly an answer to another question. “An Asian man built the school. He gave it back to the government, to the community. The government is the one running it

now, but [the "Asian man"] built the infrastructure." Dennis is referring to Hasu, the owner of Mombasa Cement—one of the largest local cement manufacturers on the Coast. Hasu, characterized in local media as a "shy billionaire" who prefers to stay out of the limelight, is a household name and almost universally celebrated in Mombasa. He is renowned for generously sharing his fortunes with those less fortunate in society, evidenced through frequent philanthropic donations and large-scale corporate social responsibility projects. Sahajanand Special School is but one of these philanthropic achievements.

Dennis and I enter the Deputy's office. It is pitch dark but not unoccupied. A voice control system sounds out operations on a smart phone, a built-in feature for users with visual impairments. We switch on the lights and find the Deputy, Charles, seated behind a cluttered desk, preoccupied with sending texts and emails. A white cane rests to his right. Our introduction is interrupted by a secretary who has returned to inquire about missing books. She also has a visual impairment but uses a tree branch as a makeshift alternative to a white cane. While we wait, I glance down at the desk in front of us and see papers listing numbers, likely to do with school funding. Without reading them, I nevertheless register the Mombasa Cement letterhead. The corporate logo is instantly recognizable, so ubiquitously encountered on the Coast, one can get the impression that the company owns the region given the number, range, scale, and frequency of public works it bankrolls.

A conversation ensues with the Deputy. Charles has worked at Sahajanand for two years, placed here in 2017 from Nairobi—part of the controversial Delocalization Act which has incited several teacher strikes. The Act was introduced as a feature of Kenya's decentralization initiative, made in response to the 2007/8 election violence in the name of "national unity and cohesion," an effort to prevent future divisiveness around ethnic power and patronage by socializing diverse citizenry. As if, with proper centralized planning, budgeting, and analysis, delocalization would achieve some average consciousness, some common sense

to come. So far, this hasn't happened. Teachers have been assigned to schools outside their counties, sometimes their regions, and mandated to relocate every ten years, which has raised a range of concerns: breaking up families, losing school legacy data, imposing ineffective performance standards and measurements, and exacerbating problems of acculturation as frictions arise between educators and unfamiliar communities. Hundreds of teachers have quit their jobs since the Act was passed, contributing to a concerning supply shortage. Likewise, Charles had only ever visited Mombasa for holidays. When he received his deployment letter posting him to Sahajanand, he did not know where the school was located and was unfamiliar with the local communities. Nevertheless, he enjoyed a "soft landing." A teacher residing in Kilifi had been his classmate at a primary school for the blind and facilitated his introduction to the school and surrounding areas. Charles, it seems, had a lucky break.

He then provides an overview of the school's history. Sahajanand had been a local primary school like any other, serving less than 20 students who resided in Mtwapa. But in 2014 a donor—Hasu—bought up surrounding parcels of land and began a megaproject purportedly to give back to the community, bringing to stand this enormous compound. With infrastructural growth came expanded services for the school's "impact population," to borrow the common development phrase, specifically those deemed most vulnerable: orphans, street children, and children with disabilities. Sahajanand's headcount has grown considerably over the last five years, from double-digit attendance to approximately 800 students today. The primary unit is where "all the severe disabilities requiring a lot of care can be found," students who need curricula designed for individual learning abilities. "We have students with physical impairments, albinism, mental impairments, learning disabilities like dyscalculia and dyslexia, and more severe learning disabilities like cerebral palsy. We have sign language interpreters for deaf students too. So, all these students must follow special curriculums if they are to have a chance at vocational training. Students receiving the national curriculum are primarily

students with a hearing impairment who can sit for national exams. But most others cannot benefit from a regular curriculum."

The classes are also integrated with non-disabled students. As I had observed in other inclusive public schools, classes are meant to mix and move between the national curriculum and curricula tailored for disabled students. Kenya has had an unexceptional uptake of "inclusive education" in the last ten years, a global product sold and consumed as a progressive policy based on "best practices." Every teacher with whom I spoke lauded inclusion for socializing disabled and non-disabled learners alike, thereby mitigating early experiences of exclusion and curbing disability stigma. While this may bear some truth, inclusive education also traffics ableism into disability policy, premised on habituating disabled children with "normal" students to facilitate their transition into "mainstream" society, as one might a fish with a tank. Like the Delocalization Act, approaching a frictionless social average to improve "national unity and cohesion" frames disability policy as working best when and where it reduces disability as difference. Persisting, chronic demands may become viewed as entitlements or personal politics impeding social good.

Inclusive education has a bigger price tag too, requiring that schools recruit teachers with special education training, paraprofessionals like aides and interpreters, and other specialists like physio- and occupational therapists alongside general educators. Government funding and performance targets for justifying budgetary expenses add to these costs, pegged against national examination results developed for non-disabled students. Teachers often disproportionately focus attention on their best and brightest students in a context where higher scores correlate with higher funding—compounded further by labor scarcity and increasing class sizes under the Delocalization Act. Where tailored curricula for students with disabilities are provided, they lack state-recognized metrics to evidence unambiguous returns on investment. In effect, inclusive education conserves national grading standards that degrade the

quality of education for most learners, and most dramatically among students with different learning requirements. Instead, it reproduces the pathological will to improve, not education, but funding and performance standards at the (higher) expense of transforming them.

Given the quantity and diversity of learners at Sahajanand, our conversation turns from curricula to staff capacity. The school has approximately 15 teachers for its 300 secondary students and 45 for the 500 primary students. In the secondary section, only three have special education training despite teachers' integral role in designing special needs curricula. "We have a teacher deficit. If you look at the recommended ratios for teaching children with severe autism, for example, education should be 1:1, and other needs are 1:9, 1:10, and so forth. The student ratio is very high, and it becomes a quantitative issue. So, we have some teachers employed by the government and others by the school." Charles continues,

"It's disturbing because the problem is basic. You cannot have all these learners without basic services. There are many challenges in the education system even before you raise the issue of special schools to the government, you know, so it is assumed that regular schools should receive care first. You even feel like the government and those in charge don't understand what special education means, that they don't think it's very serious. And they don't understand what's required because… For example, I came here in 2017 and the school had run for how many years? Three? And there was not a single government teacher here. It was run by the principal from the primary section, so when I came, I had to make sure lessons were taught despite the staffing crisis."

Charles has been pleading for government teachers since his arrival with little success. School demand is set against decentralized county quotas too and Sahajanand caters to students hailing from counties across the Coast. Its expansion renders it unsustainable within the contemporary policy context unless it can secure dedicated extra-governmental support.

Charles details these changes to education funding from his experience over the last 20 years:

"There was a time when we were paying KSH 300 for school fees but by 2005 the primary school I attended was charging KSH 12,000. And it was on the rise until the government finally produced an official fee structure for general education. But there is no certain figure for learners with disabilities—only that they are not supposed to pay more than KSH 10,000 a year, including boarding, which is a small amount of money compared with some private schools that charge more than KSH 60,000 a year."

The government has responded to donor funding cuts and rising costs by creating the National Council for People with Disabilities in Parliament which, like so many disability victories in Kenya, has been mostly a paper victory. Theoretically, schools for people with disabilities can receive grants above the cash allocated per student as well as packages to build accessible infrastructure. But, as Charles notes, "most schools are not receiving the amount needed if any. They make proposals, but the funding we need never comes and it's difficult to pay for basic things, like a school bus, for example. You know, most of the donors who still give money go to Nairobi. Investors want to own real estate in the city and now you find many advanced schools there. Mombasa is just a resort town in people's minds. We have relied on casual labor and there was a time when everyone thought they could work at the port. But those jobs have been snatched up and the economy has stalled. All of this makes our dropout rates very high." Budgets are moral documents, after all, and their effects leak out of project parameters designed to improve the roots and routes of educational infrastructures in the name of nation-building.

Sahajanand is registered as a public institution but must independently contract teachers and raise funds to overcome staff deficits. "Okay, now, it's been publicly owned through and through. But it has had a unique funding arrangement with a private company. The donor environment is different today." Charles has been navigating the transforming special education system since the age of two, relying on education services for blind students. He attended primary school in 1995 when public schools for people with disabilities hardly existed. "Most special schools were started by churches and by '95 most were receiving charity from the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army. The Salvation Army started the first high school for the blind in East Africa. If you meet any blind person over the age of 25, we all went to the same high school in Thika. So, I think to some extent the government has felt that with or without their support everything will continue running." As is now a familiar story, donor fatigue has grown since the 90s as development models shift to "sustainability" achieved with

market solutions. Initiatives supported through charity are increasingly abandoned, often without succession planning, and hike up the costs for services already overlooked on government budget lines. Aid budgets are susceptible to the shifting economic and financial climates of industrialized countries, now audited for defensible funding impacts, both of which condition future aid pledges.

Given these scarcities, I turn the conversation to Mombasa Cement's role and motivation to create a school so conspicuously out of proportion with others, whether compared with "mainstream" schools in Kenya and other disability schools on the continent. What purpose does this school serve and who is meant to benefit? Charles' answer is partial and reiterates the common tale of Hasu's unimpeachable philanthropy. "The donor is not the richest man in Kenya, but he is doing what the richest people don't do. Very many people come here, the ministers, senior ministers, and everyone is shocked to see what he has done to give back to the community. [Mombasa Cement] does not benefit from the school, but as a social responsibility project, they are investing more than usually expected." Charles elides something I learned later during fieldwork—that Mombasa Cement had recently suspended its funding to the school (see also Katana, 2015). The suspension was not, however, another example of donor fatigue or generosity reaching its limits. Mombasa Cement's starkly variable support implicates broader issues of political economy, land ownership, environmental degradation, and community health outcomes. These issues also generate and ironize the educational provisions Charles details, underscoring contradictions between the aims of disability inclusion and decentralization and those of Coastal politics and industry.

Building on my conversation with Charles, I grew to understand during fieldwork how Mombasa Cement hedges and pawns the institution for its political and economic interests and, in turn, shapes the conditions of possibility for students learning and living at Sahajanand. The human and non-human costs of Coastal extraction, organized in logistical patterns from mines

to ports, reiterate a familiar story of (neo)colonial exploitation and Africa's perduring resource curse. But not only. Other unplanned relations emerge within, around, and beyond walled zones too that run off in other directions and cause infrastructures to leak and warp. Infrequently they give rise to melodramatic events, hero/victim dramas and traumas that take hold of imaginations through mass publicity and moral outcry. But stories and observations of lives led at Sahajanand may be less on the verge of some revolutionary rupture, good or bad, than composed of creative work carried out to live on and make meaning in a protracted meantime. Minor histories are sometimes fetishized as indicative of some line of flight that could open to radical futures, if only these potentials were harnessed. I do not disagree with the ambition and possibilities of such visions, but caution against readings that reproduce social life at Sahajanand as mines of hope condensable for exchange at other nodes or "ports," to which only a few may access. Rather, students build and disturb modes of connection and communication that do not necessarily index bondage or freedom but nevertheless help them stay put in the present. In what follows, I begin with darker stories of social and ecological destruction stemming from Mombasa Cement's activities at ports and mines and then return to how they impact life at the school. Although the "mine" and "port" are archetypical structures of logistics shaping the organization and possibilities for people with disabilities on the Coast, in the end, I suggest another figure for understanding social activity: the beach.

Porous Problems

Mombasa Cement's role in social service provision at Sahajanand and more broadly cannot be disentangled from the longer effects of industrialization introduced under colonial rule. Beginning in the 1930s, colonial geological and mining surveyors reported abundant marine and terrestrial limestone deposits in the Coast Province, stretching from fossilized sea rocks to Jurassic formations in Shimba Hills (see British Foreign & Commonwealth Office,

Mining and Geological Department Annual Reports 1933-1963). These raw materials, in addition to shale, gypsum, and other minerals identified in Coastal strata are valuable ingredients for cement production. Over the next 20 years, the first cement markets were established in Kenya, beginning with the East Africa Portland Cement Company, named after the Portland stone of Dorset, England that shared the color of coralline formations on Mombasa's shores. By 1957, the colonial cement industry was booming, and operations became centralized in three extraction and processing sites of importance today (ibid.). The first is the Kilifi coast, a county just north of Nyali, where manufacturers first began blasting, quarrying, and crushing large deposits of coral stone, shale, and gypsum through open surface mining. The cement industry also expanded to the Athi River in Machakos, a county bordering the Coast region to the west. Large deposits of gypsum pozzolana are mined at Athi River, a blue stone used to fortify otherwise water-porous coral limestone for building materials, and a final stage ingredient in grinding cement. The Athi River is connected to the Coast through the Mombasa-Nairobi highway, accessed through the Changamwe suburb. Given its location, Changamwe has become an industrial hub, populated with numerous refineries and processing plants, and headquartering cement companies to triangulate logistics between Kilifi, Athi River, and the nearby Kilindini port to the south. Although Mombasa Cement did not begin operations until 2007, it has quickly outpaced early competitors like the Portland Cement Company and has become the leading supplier of locally produced cement with a 20% market share. Like its competitors, Mombasa Cement has operations at each of these three sites, including a plant and quarry in Vipingo, Kilifi, less than 20 km north of Sahajanand, a plant in Athi River, and a corporate headquarters in Changamwe. Each site is marred by conflicts linked to deleterious industry impacts on land and livelihoods which has given rise to corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects to offset and compensate local "stakeholders" for the hazards of industry.

Even less cynical observers acknowledge that CSR from extractive companies risks window-dressing, greenwashing, or distracting from otherwise destructive, unregulated, and/or illegal social and ecological impacts. There is no shortage of stories about the evils wrought by these industries, exposed on local and international news, and dramatized in Kenyan documentaries like *Choking City* and *Toxic Flow*. And yet, so little of this public paranoia attaches to Mombasa Cement. Quite the contrary, the company is considered one of "the most technologically advanced and environmentally friendly cement producers in East Africa" (Okubasu, 2021). Hasu's philanthropy has also won hearts and minds in Mombasa through the company's numerous and extraordinary endeavors. To list a few: In 2008, Hasu started the Sahajanand Feeding Centre to provide over 40,000 meals to low-income communities every week. Mombasa Cement also built concrete fences around public schools and police stations free of charge, the latter receiving a fleet of new police cars. The company renovated the iconic Mombasa tusks, a famous elephant tusk monument and tourist photo destination that arcs over Moi Avenue in downtown Mombasa. In Changamwe, the company sends several trucks to slums daily to provide free water (Odit, 2021). In 2019, Mombasa Cement settled over KSH 2.2 million in unpaid medical bills for 52 patients at Coast Regional Hospital (Mwakio, 2019). It has also embarked on several green projects, partnering with the government to build a regional waste management system as well as constructing a wind farm in Kilifi to run its cement plant. Most publicized among these green ventures was the Kibarani dump which the company "rehabilitated" after President Kenyatta decommissioned the 50-year-old waste site, expressing outrage that mountains of public garbage had accumulated inexplicably on privately held plots and severely polluted marine ecosystems. In its place, Mombasa Cement created an eco-tourism green park, where it extends its food distribution charity to thousands of residents (Murathe, 2020). Despite being a private company too, and Hasu's continuous refusals to run for public office, Mombasa Cement became a partner in the National Land Commission's

investigation into the dumpsite, which led to the revocation of seven illegal land allocations to private developers (Hassan, 2019). News about the site, shared on social media, received hundreds of comments describing Hasu as Christ-sent and worthy of a Nobel Peace Prize. Land connected to the Kibarani site will also house a new bridge development contracted to a Chinese company that is likely to purchase its materials from Mombasa Cement.

Apart from its high-profile charity and public works projects, Mombasa Cement is deeply engaged in Coastal politics. Unsurprisingly, Hasu denies his involvement with the government. But whenever and wherever political strife arises on the Coast, usually surrounding Governor Hassan Joho, Mombasa Cement is never too far behind. During fieldwork, national headlines were inundated with a scandal at Likoni Ferry—the quickest way to travel between Mombasa Island and South Coast in the absence of a bridge—when a mother and daughter, who were parked in a car and awaiting ferry transit, slid off into the sea. The mismanagement extended beyond ferry operators, who had failed to secure an already flimsy rear gate; it implicated the former Prime Minister, Coastal candidature favorite, and recent-presidential hopeful, Raila Odinga, who had personally appointed the Kenya Ferry Services Chairman. Worse still, tensions grew as the Kenyan Navy struggled for several days to retrieve the car from the channel's 60 km deep underwater trenches, which are shark-infested, brackish, and murky, and enlisted the support of South African deep-water diving specialists. To underscore his prioritization of human over economic costs, Odinga proposed stoppages to dredging and other work at the port, claiming they would impede the search. Speed became thematic among moral outrage as the incident dragged on, raising it from an example of greed and corruption's intentional inefficiencies to a general representation of the nation's and especially the Coast's impeded development.

The outrage began to subside when the car was retrieved, credited to the efforts of the Kenyan military. The government sought to shift the narrative by sacking the KFS Chairman

and airing a broadcast in which Joho compensated the victims' family with KSH 2 million. I watched the event conclude from a friend's sofa as new agencies reported what was described as the end of a harrowing human-interest story. The mother and daughter's bodies were recovered from the car, found in an embrace, purportedly still arm in arm nine days later. My friend, who was involved in the vehicle search, had just returned from the scene and watched on incredulously. The car had been spotted several days earlier by a private diving company, but its retrieval was delayed so it could be dragged through the channel to shallower waters and transferred to the Kenyan military for retrieval on live television. The family's compensation came from Mombasa Cement, but the sum was only KSH 1.8 million because KSH 200,000 had disappeared as it changed hands. Across such incidents, Mombasa Cement has been able to align itself with key power brokers, especially at the port and land authorities, and strengthen ties with the Coastal political elite post-decentralization without attracting public condemnation.



Commuters boarding the Likoni Ferry to South Coast

Mombasa Cement's harmful social and ecological impacts are more difficult to track than the company's philanthropic achievements. The difficulty arises in part because Hasu owns two other companies that feed into Mombasa Cement's supply chain, which lack the same proximity and brand awareness. The first company is Corrugated Sheets Ltd, based in Changamwe. It produces clinker—a ground-up mineral mixture used in cement production—and transports it to other production sites, including Mombasa Cement, which is listed on its company website as a client. In 2018, Motrex Transport and Logistics Company, which houses Corrugated Sheets and supplies it with forwarding trucks to transport clinker, emitted enormous amounts of toxic dust (Cornel, 2018). The affected community resides in Owino Uhuru which had been awarded USD 12 Million for lead poisoning from a company smelting recycled lead-acid batteries (Kenya, 2020), at the same time Mombasa Cement exposed them to deadly clinker dust. The former story drew more attention than the latter. Still, at least 10 people have died from the emissions since 2010 and dozens more have been hospitalized with costly treatments; some 600 employees and 3,000 residents have been exposed to the dust, which causes silicosis and other lethal respiratory diseases (Global Cement, 2018). The second of Hasu's lesser-known companies is Tororo Cement in Uganda, which has coated the local Tororo community—its trees, gardens, and open-air food markets—with dust (Nampala, 2009; Okoth, 2020), eroded the earth through quarry blasting until fatal floods swept away downhill homes (Muhame, 2020), and damaged public roads with overweighted trucks (ICR Newsroom, 2017). Because Tororo is operated in Uganda, it is almost never linked to Mombasa Cement's work in Kenya.

Operations at Athi River are also grim. The river has become a fraught site for cement companies competing over land and cheap labor to extract pozzolana rock (Nation, 2011). As a result, the Athi has become heavily polluted with industrial sewage, heavy metals, and other toxins (see Mueni, 2019). The Athi River flows through a basement of complex rocks in semi-

arid and drought-prone areas, eventually joining the Tsavo River and the Mzima springs in Chyulu hills. Mzima springs is a capacious underground aquifer that serves as the primary, vital water source for over four million people in Coastal counties of Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, and Taita-Taveta. Mombasa is prone to drought because it has shallow water tables, and increasingly so as the region contends with climate-shocks and stress from industry. As the documentary *Toxic Flow* reports, communities lacking alternative water sources cause residents in these counties to "continue consuming the water and with it all the heavy metals that are known to induce cancer and other serious ailments" (Toxic Flow, 2020). People managing drought elsewhere in Mombasa often rely on bore holes that have become salinized, contaminated by industrial run-off, and breeding grounds for *e coli* at levels considered unsafe for consumption. Communities in Kilifi experience these effects acutely, unable to yield crops or find viable irrigation sources. It is unsurprising then that when poor piping infrastructure caused water stoppages from Mzima springs, Mombasa Cement provided it to the already dust exposed Changamwe residents for free. Or that thousands of Coastal residents living on unreproductive land now rely on weekly distributions from Sahajanand's Feeding Center. The poor man's chicken does not brood; if she lays eggs, she doesn't hatch them.

Mombasa Cement's activities feature key logistical processes associated with mines and ports, which "represent zones of extraction and zones of condensation" respectively (After Globalism Writing Group, 2018: 25). There are several primary operations and effects connecting these figures. The first movement, from the mine to the port is most obvious, in which "extracted materials, data, and financial value are shuttled to the centers of condensation. Little returns to the mines" (p. 27). These matters condense at the port, concealed in accumulating containers and global financial networks reliant on tax havens, special economic zones, and regulatory loopholes, or the "displacement of the network outside the boundaries of the nation-state, or at least outside of its systems of taxation, customs, and immigration" (ibid.).

Port activities traffic in regulatory loopholes that privilege access to only a few. Those with access like Mombasa Cement, may enjoy political invisibility to suck more liquidity from Coastal life, while retaining an image of care, arm-in-arm with communities. Those without access are exposed and disposed to the demand for the blood of the circuit. Neferti Tadiar (2016, p. 75-6) describes this as the "liquidity of livelihood activities of the urban poor" which depends on their "fungible, distributed bodily, and rhythmic capacities to absorb the friction, shock, bumps, and drag that delay value-producing circulation of uber-urban life, or that create interference for the lifestyles of *mobility*." Pawnship and predatory patronage become concealed in locally determined mine to mine activities that "fall outside the network and often outside the eye of the law" (After Globalism Writing Group, 2018: 27), like those between communities affected by Mombasa Cement's mining fallout. In this sense, liquid livelihoods spur perilous migrations from sites of capture and containment, efforts to stay afloat that are ever at risk of drowning if one's hold slips at uncertain borders—even the arduous and sweaty journey to sell real estate can attest to such conditions in Mombasa. Likewise, the liquidity of communities impacted by Mombasa Cement tends not to solidify or aggregate. On the other hand, Mombasa Cement's capital "cannot fully or quickly enough absorb, recycle or channel back into its own high-value platforms the surplus liquidity that it has 'freed'" (Tadiar, 2016: 80) and creates toxic tailings to be processed, securitized, and channeled once more through various rehabilitation and waste management practices, whether at Kibarani or Sahajanand.

Sahajanand Special School materializes through this discontinuous network between mines and ports and figuratively takes on homologous functions as a mine for potential vocational labor, a port or portal for straightening out frictions of value production, and a warehouse for rehabilitating surplus lives. Its material, moral, and political "walls" emerge through these processes of liquefication and containerization, the discursive admixtures of labor, land, and water. Walls become materially and meaningfully constructed through

disparate empirical events, flashing up through contemporary conflicts and rearticulated historical fragments, what Walter Benjamin (1999, p. 463) calls a "constellation." Stars within this constellation began to shine during my conversation with Charles when he explained the local response to the school's construction: "The community members didn't want the special school built here. The perception is: 'Disability? We don't need to talk about it.' When you bring a special school to a community, you are bringing disability to the community and making it a reality." But what does it mean to "bring" disability to a community? Had there not been people with disabilities in Kilifi before the school was constructed? What perspectives and proximities might make it more a "reality" now?

Some expressions gather around drought and specific disabilities, informed by cosmological, political, and medico-scientific forms of knowledge production. "Many people believe that disability brings drought," Charles later specified. "Especially those children with rare disabilities who live here. We have many children with microcephaly, and people see that as a curse to the water supply. When the rains do not come, they say, you see, it is from that school." Indeed, I had spoken with neighboring farmers who approximated these claims, and my relationships with several Mijikenda elders offered some additional color. Environmental disruptions are connected to occult forces, especially those that affect trees and plant growth (see more discussion on the occult and Mijikenda cosmology in Section Four). Most suggestive were understandings of *mapepo*, which literally means "winds" but also refers to occult spirits that invisibly inhabit water, especially stagnant water. Pregnant women are advised against using wells to prevent these spirits from transferring to gestational water. Rainmaking rituals too, particularly among the Giriama (a Mijikenda sub-group), have historically involved appeals to sacred trees and the spiritual forces of life and death—*mapepo*—contained within them. These examples are suggestive of cosmologies in which forces of life take form through agreements of proximity and pacing. When the Mijikenda become unable to mediate social,

spiritual, and ecological relations, impaired human and non-human bodies become threatening, not necessarily because they may breach or contaminate other permeable bodies, but because they index a loss of control over generativity, new emergent realities that crowd out other reliable forms and flows of life (see Section Four for an analysis on these aspects of the occult). But why might disability be thought to bring on these types of disturbances? Why specifically refer to microcephaly?

One possibility comes from the high number of students with microcephaly at the school. These students are frequently featured on news broadcasts and other media when politicians and senior businessmen visit Sahajanand. Although I was prohibited from taking pictures inside the school, other power brokers, like those with unequal access to Mombasa's ports, are granted permission if it is in the interest of Mombasa Cement's political and economic goals. Media visits are often episodes of virtue signaling as politicians make campaign promises and perform their commitments to community outreach and development. On at least four of the broadcasts I have seen, leaders proclaimed intentions to protect those most vulnerable, voiced over video footage zooming in on these children's uncommonly small heads. In effect, the children's bodies become sized down to fungible "things," images imbuing leaders' character (*tabia*) and campaign promises with efficacious moral force—what Joseph Tonda (2021) calls "the violence of the imaginary" (see Section Three for elaboration). Microcephaly also garnered broader national and international attention during the 2016 Rio Olympic games when a staggering 2,347 infants in Brazil were born with the condition during the Zika epidemic (Gathura, 2020). Reports described microcephaly as a causal cascade beginning with environmental disruption, then increased mosquito swarms, and finally, developmental tragedy. The news nearly resulted in Kenya withdrawing its athletes from the games. In recent years, 2% of children in Kilifi have been born with microcephaly. A Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) study reported that prevalence in Pernambuco, "one of

the most severely affected states in Brazil, was estimated at 0.15 percent, almost ten times lower than that observed" in datasets taken from Kilifi (ibid.). Researchers have been unable to correlate the high incidence of microcephaly on the Coast with Zika, however. Experts have hypothesized other contributing factors like malnutrition, infections during pregnancy, heredity, and exposure to certain toxins like heavy metals. Residents in Kilifi might also include *mapepo* to this list (and thereby complicate it), but the farmers and Mijikenda I met have no part in these international consensuses. Scientific experts and politicians discuss disability in terms of prevention, protection, and cure, which frame disability as a loss and trigger preservation and conservation practices. From an emic perspective, however, the arrival of disability to the community signals unresolved issues about its ceded control over the organization of human and non-human relations, unresolved by political promises or scientific facts and interventions; they are instead addressed by recurrently placing emerging socio-ecological forms under new management.

It's perhaps unsurprising then that bad feelings about disability arise in Kilifi. Charles echoed many stories I had already heard about vitriolic and, at times, violent community responses to people with disabilities. "There are instances when people tie these children to trees or they beat them if they appear in public. Some people run away from them when they see them. You also find parents abandoning these children or hiding them away to protect them from neighbors. Many of the children we bring here need to be rescued because they were locked up at home or left to die on the streets; these children would not survive outside. But even though people fear them, the school has been helping to change perceptions in the community. We are seeing that progress too. It will take time." Charles concludes with a tinge of hope. Not everyone has such overtly negative reactions to children with disabilities, after all, and anger can function as a response to a range of injustices, a translation of mixed sources of pain into knowledge, and produce information and energy that exceed disability as anger's

primary or only target. Indeed, there are other historical fragments that flash forth alongside these contemporary tensions too.

Historically, children have been disfigured, kidnapped, or killed during periods of drought (see Willis 1993; Willis 2003) linked to patterns of predation and recursive anxieties about shadowy accumulation practices on the Coast. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Arab-Omani ruling families like the Mazrui took indigenous kin captive as pawns and slaves for plantation labor in exchange for food with Mijikenda hinterland groups, especially during drought periods (Benjamin, 2009). Zebulon Dingley (2022) draws on ethnographic and archival sources to explore connections to Coastal moral panics that erupted in 2013 when politically connected gangs, called *mumiani* (lit. mummy), were rumored of abducting and killing children to extract their eyes, tongues, and genitals. As he notes, the "rapid spread of these rumors coincided with a regional drought, parliamentary election campaigns, and the apparent discovery of 'devil worship paraphernalia' inside a shipping container at the nearby port of Mombasa" (p. 133). Dingley argues that the 2013 scare and related episodes since the late precolonial period are figural histories of "famine survival strategies, predatory patronage and occult speculation" in which rains and their absence served as idioms of the "hidden sources of wealth and power in this world" (ibid.).

Likewise, conflicts with communities in Kilifi, including those surrounding Sahajanand Special School, ignited after the construction of Mombasa Cement's plant in Vipingo. Resulting court battles raised familiar issues of "extraversion," or the "processes by which individuals or institutions consolidate power locally through the cultivation of connections to more powerful outside entities" (p. 136 citing Bayart, 1989) More specifically, the Vipingo plant was built on 1200 acres apportioned to Hasu from Mazrui descendants, who continue to lay claim to over 9,000 acres of land. Over the last six years, Mombasa Cement's land battles have put 10,000 people at risk of becoming squatters (The Standard, 2014). The court cases

have been punctuated with moments of violence and protest, leading the Kilifi government to demolish one of Mombasa Cement's factory walls (see Standard Reporter, 2014; Oketch, 2020). Questions about the company's title deeds also brought forth investigations on the land purchased for Sahajanand's expansion, allegedly secured through dubious title transfers. As a result, Mombasa Cement decided to cut its funding to the school, despite publicizing Sahajanand as a great philanthropic achievement. Fortunately for Mombasa Cement, projects like Kibarani's rehabilitation have strengthened relationships with the National Land Commission's leadership, who ultimately supported them during the lawsuits. Like the Kibarani dumpsite clean-up, which environmental commissioners claimed cleared trash by pushing it into the sea (Otieno, 2016), much of Mombasa Cement's controversial social and environmental impacts have been pushed out of public view. Structural violence resurfaces, however, dredging up human tragedies in renewed efforts to scale other spectacular projects and stories to mythic proportions. These events underscore the hollow promises of decentralization and delocalization policies, which have deepened and redistributed rather than dissolved ethno-territorial conflicts over patronage and power. Taken together, they help illuminate constellated histories of ecological disruption, disability beliefs, pawnship, and land theft that figure Sahajanand as "bringing" disability to communities with bolder definition.

Geology also feeds into expressions of disability at Sahajanand. In hydrology, a depleted aquifer that can no longer access rivers, streams, or other bodies is described as losing its "reach" (Taylor, 2019). Likewise, rivers and streams diagnosed with unsafe levels of pollutants are known as "impaired waters." These are not merely metaphors, but semiotic and material relationships within nested issues of environmental and disability justice (ibid.). Anthropologist Andrew Ballestero (2019, p. 35) examines legal, bureaucratic, and scientific epistemologies of water (mis)management in Costa Rica that perpetuate ideas of aquifers as subterranean "containers" or "tanks" to be properly measured and analyzed against

communities' infrastructural needs. These imaginaries disentangle how aquifers also "communicate" porously in complex relational webs of human and non-human ecologies (Ballestero, 2016: 51). Scholars have begun drawing provocative connections on how imaginaries of ecological health prefigure medical and social disability frameworks that meet at the fault lines of care and cure. Trans disability activist Eli Clare (2017, p. 210) highlights the ethical tensions and political stakes that emerge within entanglements of disability and ecology: "How do we witness, name, and resist the injustices that reshape and damage all kinds of bodies—plant and animal, organic and inorganic, nonhuman and human? And alongside our resistance, how do we make peace with the reshaped and damaged bodies themselves, cultivate love and respect for them?" Put another way, how can people expose and take to task ideologies of disaster capitalism and settler colonialism, like those of Mombasa Cement, while resisting questions framed as "what do you think is *wrong* with" X embodied condition? What is the work of restoring, looking after, and/or loving bodies shaped within toxic geographies? What modes of communication might open new ways of reaching for relation?

Answers are not unambiguous at Sahajanand given the structural conditions outlined thus far. Horizons of frictionless progress continually feed interrelated operations and effects of capital that displace and dispossess communities and ecologies in Kilifi; feed into regional ethno-territorial conflicts undermining the purported aims of decentralization; exacerbate anxieties about the children residing in the school; create unfavorable present and future conditions for reintegration into families and public life; establish curricula and performance standards maladapted for children with disabilities; and focus educational success on vocational training. Mombasa Cement has further cut off Sahajanand's funding, despite designing a school above standard educational carrying capacity to paper over social and ecological harms with charitable publicity in the service of circulating value-production. It becomes difficult to distill administrative neglect from debilitating structural conditions in this

context. From this vantage, children warehoused and sheltering in the school lead captive lives as opportunities beyond become further reduced and farther out of reach.

But Sahajanand may not be as determinate as these conclusions suggest, nor can it be singularly understood as an epiphenomenal effect of capital extraction and condensation. Life at the school oscillates between aspects of both shelter and prison, creating conditions of unplanned survival. Though this can read bleakly, "the difference between zero and one is larger than any sum between one and infinity" (Berlant & Povinelli, 2014: 9). Consider, for example, that administrators often complain about parents refusing to bring their children home for term breaks, and that children too, protest leaving the school, preferring to remain than return to their previous lives. In these ways, otherwise carceral walls can buffer parents from overwhelming exposure to vulnerability and enable children to refuse what has been refused to them at home. On the other, fortified cement is liable to crack, leak, and warp; its solidity is always an aspect of temporal contrast. Logistical improvements remain vulnerable to contingency in much the same way, as the Likoni Ferry incident shows albeit in the genre of tragedy. These contextual vulnerabilities and "failures" of preservation and improvement can create apertures in which students with disabilities (and other potential "toxic bodies") may recede, disassociate, and sit apart. In the process, they may forge new connections and pathways of relation under constraint, sometimes through outings that are less overdetermined and instrumentalized by the terms and conditions of political and economic power brokers. Too heavy an emphasis on mine and port archetypes risks rearticulating landed zonal enclosures and uncharted waters in ways that overlook the ins and outs of the life enduring in spaces between. To this end, I consider two "scene[s] of initiation" (Cavell, 1989: 113, on inheriting language as a scene of initiation; see also Cavell, 1979: 177-78)—a rehabilitation session and a beach excursion—ordinary activities which, respectively, show how possibilities are narrowed and opened for students at Sahajanand.

Cementing Language, Reforming Life

Everyday life at Sahajanand holds together through relational movements that precede and surround its walls and spaces of instruction. Students ordinarily connect across the compound in ways that compose neither a wholly disorganized crowd nor a well-ordered assembly, generating a multiplication of forms on the go. I return here often, either to join structured lessons and speak with staff or simply to watch children in loosely monitored free play, my skimming gaze absorbing innumerable, minor activities unfolding all around. Today I cross the expansive compound to sit in on a rehabilitation session and again encounter this diffusion of shifting intimacies. A few boys are holding races near the central platform in which runners accelerate giddy children in wheelchairs back and forth, as fast as possible. Abrupt changes in velocity lurch the passengers forward, and the boys must restrain them against the g-force to prevent their flight from the chairs. Other children are stationary and idling along the walkway, seated in wheelchairs, or lying on the ground. Some are watching the games and cooling off under shady overhangs, while a few seem stuck wherever the dorm mothers had placed them, less mobile and waiting for something to happen. There are also several children who appear altogether disassociated or disinterested in their surroundings. Most, however, tend to drift between states of affairs that animate and suspend intimacies with others, and become attracted to and repelled by unfolding scenes without directly engaging in them. A small crowd has been circling the wheelchair races like a smoke ring, becoming dispersed as my crossing disturbs attention. A procession of students grows into a tail behind me, while others become voyeurs from the perimeters.

When I arrive at the office, a young girl diagnosed with autism is making a scene too. An aide and physiotherapist are giving her a battery of exercises to improve her strength, coordination, and vestibular balance as well as her speech-language skills, both motor and cognitive. Sahajanand is meant to provide these services once a week, but the demand at the

school is high and funds are not always available for specialists. The full-time teachers had only received their salaries a few days previous, after working three months without pay. Concerns about the girl's "progress," which punctuate the exercises, are therefore not unexpected. The exercises seem to begin well enough despite her lapsed treatment. I join the therapist and aide to chant, "*RUKA, RUKA, RUKA!"* [JUMP!] to encourage the girl to hop up and down on a small trampoline. Her hops are slow, short, and uncertain at first, but she seems to enjoy taking to the air and feeling the weight shift in her body. Eventually, she finds a rhythm. Then the girl is tasked with blowing bubbles to strengthen the muscles around her mouth. She struggles with this exercise more, straining to simultaneously regulate her air and purse her lips. Her efforts are rewarded when a few ethereal spheres lift off and transfix her attention, with her eyes tracking their course until they burst.

The fun dissipates as soon as the therapist attaches weighted bands to the girl's arms and legs. He wants her to walk up a cement staircase without holding the wall or the banister. Her motions are trying and awkward, and she cries out whenever she is prevented from reaching to steady herself with a support. I grow concerned that she may fall and hurt herself and feel relieved when she finds a way around the instruction; the girl lobs herself forward to connect her hands with the 90-degree edges and takes to crawling upward. The therapist does not share my relief and corrects her, reinstructing her body into a bipedal position. To be rehabilitated, the girl must master balance figured on solid, upward, and stepwise ground independent of lateral support. But her infrequent exercises create a suspended state between short-term gains and muscle atrophy—a process the therapist refers to as "backsliding." I wonder, however, why the therapist might not start her on a more accessible surface, perhaps one that is level rather than upward, or earthen, to better absorb the shock of steps and falls. "It will help her build muscle faster if she climbs," I'm told, "and it will help her walk anywhere once she has those muscles." The therapist suggests that this combination of cement, self-

possession, and verticality provides the best speed and utility for accessing the common world beyond Sahajanand's walls. He continues to correct her movements against these criteria of posture, pose, and poise until the scene's crisis of consent sounds out with screams. The girl has had enough. She's sitting on the floor wailing in protest and refusal, taking her time to recover before the next exercise.

The final activity focuses on language acquisition. The therapist produces a deck of flashcards which are illustrated with a variety of plants, animals, and household objects. The exercise is intended to help her connect the pictured objects with words, sounds, and associated motor functions to improve cognitive recall, build her speech skills, and habituate language use. The girl is first presented with animals to which she responds by issuing faint, onomatopoeic sounds. The sounds are not Swahili words (e.g., *mbwa* <> dog) nor do they mimic the animal's sounds, as a child might during the call and response of Ol' McDonald. But they have synesthetic qualities that affect me, haptic sounds expressing the feel of fur and softness rather than the reference "dog." My reading and response of her behaviors are uncertain, perhaps only a measure of my sensory relations to these objects, but I imagine that she has companions with whom these utterances make sense too. Her behavior does not similarly spark the therapist's imagination or curiosity. Instead, he holds the girl in suspense, repeating the names of the animals slowly while tapping on the pictures again and again. She responds by reiterating her syllables, but the sounds still evidence only gibberish to him, which he reports as "making noises." He goes on to say that "She was beginning to identify animals last time but today she cannot remember them. This is a regression, and she needs more practice." But is it really the case that the girl cannot "identify" the animals or that she has lost the words? Or has the therapist lost his way, unable to respond or acknowledge the girl's behavior as denoting or connoting anything at all?

Some attunement occurs when the girl is shown a teacup. She replies, "drinking tea," naming an activity associated with the object's use. "Good, that's closer," the therapist responds, finally perceiving a thread with which to weave the girl into a text of life. This is the closest "us" the therapist has reached so far with the girl. But the success is short-lived as he turns to a picture of a four-leaf clover. The girl silently stares at the picture. The therapist concludes, "this girl must be brought into nature to see plants. Being in nature will help her connect the pictures to the words." Clovers of any kind do not grow in Mombasa, but the therapist is onto something—language, like plants, grows within context. But the therapist again notes that "her language skills are very poor, and she is struggling to identify the pictures." This, I am told, is part and parcel of slower language and motor skill development among autistic children, hampered by "hyperactivity and poor focus" and sensory abnormalities such as taking in too much and too little detail, or seeking out forms of rhythmic or repetitive stimulation. "Sometimes she repeats words without knowing what they are, so you think she has learned the word, but later, you discover that she hasn't. It is also very hard for these children to focus. So, the pictures are a very good tool, but they need a lot of practice with them," the therapist concludes.

But the girl *had* focused during her vestibular exercises, despite struggling to orient herself on the alien technology. Nor was the girl without language, though it had been grown within a different perspectival and sensory context. Her communication has been built within a life lived among 800 lightly supervised students, many with diverse disabilities, who are both exterior and intra-acting with the ways "autism" shapes her interior capacities. There are few plants within the compound and fewer animals to contribute to these processes, which are even more remote to students who have boarded full-time from an early age. But the students do drink tea together every morning, which may contribute more to understanding their use within the students' daily rituals than as isolable objects. Manifold communicative styles moreover

co-produce inner and outer grammars by which students build their lives in the school. The aural word for "teacup," for example, is unintelligible to deaf students who denote it by pantomiming the activity itself. Learning foreign languages occurs through extensive engagement, practice, and emersion with others. These praxes starkly differ from the brief contexts in which the girl encounters the therapist's language games under the presumption that language itself is foreign and/or inherently unforthcoming to her.

What is a diagnosis if not a restatement of the problem? Or more specifically, how is autism made into a problem in this scene? The therapist, guided by his knowledge of autism's biocentric traits, made few efforts to meet the girl halfway; he sought to initiate the girl into *his* language by repeating the pictures, terms of address, and vestibular habits without acknowledging nor responding to any criteria emerging from within the school context. The exercises drummed up activities ordered and valuable within the therapist's episteme, by which he became the constant in their measurement. The therapist, unfocussed on the nuance in the girl's behavior, picked up too little of its significance and too much of its deviance from his own. He made few responsive adjustments to the procedures when deviations were perceived, and mechanically repeated the names of objects which are different to how the girl ordinarily refers and relates to them, if at all. The therapist's orientation to the girl could provocatively be described as autistic by his own measure. The girl's "autistic" body emerges, in turn, as a derivative of the criteria that organizes the therapeutic intervention. The diagnosis similarly structures rehabilitation through procedures that stabilize a kind of body according to its traits, imposes and inscribes contextually foreign discipline, and explains disorderly behavior as deviance. The scene's autotelic logic denies and deems excessive behavioral derivations that resist diagnostic models, including how "autism" is co-constituted through practical activities patterning life at Sahajanand. In effect, autism signifies nothing about the girl's practices of living in common and represents only unshared infrastructures common to the therapist.

All infrastructures, whether cement stairs or bridges, describe and enable the ways people use and move through the world together. Anthropologist Ara Wilson (2016, p. 260) explains that an infrastructure is both "an object in itself and as a rubric to describe the construction of that object." Moreover, it is "constructed (real) techno-material-symbolic assemblage that, at least in intention, underpins, enables, and conditions the context for more visible enactments, some intended by explicit norms and some more or less transgressive appropriations" (p. 274). Infrastructures can become more or less sensible to use and practice, and may be constructed or deconstructed, abandoned, or reanimated. Following Berlant's (2016) analysis of infra/structures, *structure* organizes the transformation of life, but lacks a universal, intractable, or static principle to ensure it perdurance and continuity across time and space. Rather, structures are constituted by the converging values and forces of their infrastructures, which appear solid from a certain temporal, spatial, and conceptual distance, "a projection effect of interest in a thing we are trying to stabilize" (p. 394). There is, therefore, no absolute rule or criteria which exhaustively explains or justifies why one infrastructure ought to organize life as opposed to another; which bodies, vehicles, and other prosthetics best bind and orient our movements through them; nor why conventions or habits indicate practically better patterns of movement and use.

This is not an argument for relativism but rather a proposition for thinking about other infrastructures, like ordinary language use. As Stanley Cavell (1979) writes, there is no universal rulebook for language that authorizes what is common about its use, some rationale that could shore up all inscrutable signs of togetherness with a collective shifter, an indexical "we," once and for all. Ordinary language has "frictions" (Tsing, 2004: 4) those "awkward, unequal, [and] unstable" qualities that viscously attach people to forms of life and open space for other possibilities and transformations. Its viscosity can arrive at language rubbing forms of life the wrong way or into erasure too. To extend this conceptual analogy, it is as if tripping

up the stairs, mismatching blue and black socks, waving to the wrong person in public, mispronouncing or misusing a word, and so forth—all quite ordinary mistakes or errors—can add up to patterns which terrifyingly throw into question one's grasp on and part in life. Cavell (1962) generatively examines how life emerges on this miraculously groundless ground, through ordinary infrastructures and their breakdowns:

> We learn and teach words in certain contexts, and then we are expected, and expect others, to be able to project them into further contexts. Nothing insures that this projection will take place (in particular, not the grasping of universals and not the grasping of books of rules), just as nothing insures that we will make, and understand, the same projections. That on the whole what we do is a matter of sharing routes of interest and feeling, modes of response, senses of humor and of significance and of fulfilment, of what is outrageous, of what is similar to what else, what a rebuke, what forgiveness, of when an utterance is an assertion, when an appeal, when an explanation — all the whirl of organism that Wittgenstein calls ''forms of life.'' Human speech and activity, sanity and community, rest upon nothing more, but nothing less, than this. It is a vision as simple as it is difficult, and as difficult as it is (and because it is) terrifying (p. 74).

Communication with others always contains uncertainty irrespective of one's inner capacities. Reaching the limits of language incites questions ranging from mundane contextual ambiguities to profound threats over the continuity of a given system of valuation, its heritability, and the life it reproduces. For Cavell and Wittgenstein, the figure of the child represents this problem acutely because language acquisition always already places the child at the limits of language. Children are initiated into language through pedagogical practice and play in which teachers share, arrange, and mold desires, material objects, and movements to instruct children on life organizing principles. "Dissonant" children, like children with disabilities, may raise epistemic, political, ethical, and spiritual stakes in which time becomes a friction over the continuity of forms of life rather than that which gives ground to exert control over forms of life (see Johansson, 2010); these back-formed reactions can collapse *re*habilitation and education into indistinguishable murk. How ought one invite a child or an/other into a form of life? What pedagogical practices might loosen or extend initiatory objects without compromising substances that hold a world together? These are questions around how to braid translation, care, and improvisation together to forge relations

responsively. It is all the more difficult at the edges of language, where rules for agreements fray, permissibility becomes unreliable, and consensual play risks freighting more than an inchoate relation can bear.

Likewise, Cavell points to the ways in which the uncertainties of ordinary language build incredible dangers into our relationships—something anthropologists like Veena Das explore with great ethnographic and analytical depth. Wittgenstein too wrote about the danger of being held captive by a picture, which can oversaturate one's ability to imagine and share in life within and beyond its frame. Ordinary scenes of initiation can culminate in decisions that extend and intensify impacts across a plurality of lives, local and planetary. Frictions over projecting a form of language onto life can slip into frictions over life itself, including who and what counts as life. This vertical edge arises during the girl's rehabilitation session when the therapist's language is made to stand in place of hers, when the girl is made to stand and move as he, against which her progression to inclusion is measured, and her efficient uptake rendered valuable. Small shifts of nuance in the scene snowball into greater ethical claims: people unlike her develop, climb, and speak. By contrast, the girl regresses and backslides to the thresholds of animacy, perceived only as "making noises." The girl's gestures, sounds, and words become drained of voice and echo alongside pedagogical practices that resonate within other scenes, where life lived otherwise has been impatiently zoned and occupied, contained and liquified. Fred Moten's (2019) ecopoetic musings resound through these pained harmonics, when the projection of language became the colonial project of captivity, when the icecaps began melting in the hold of the slave ship.

Although ordinary scenes have dangerous edges, such therapy sessions make up only one dimension of everyday life at Sahajanand. Moten, after all, plays on other meanings of "hold" outside the ship and shipped—the ways hold denotes a surrounding support, as in a scaffold like Winnicott's (1953) "holding environment" and the maternal matrix, the

transitional, interstitial spaces between people. These supports are also in the making at Sahajanand, and not only for keeping life on course within a dyad of home and exile, but through small excursions in the ordinary. Along these paths, I take up another perspective in which the roots and routes of survival at Sahajanand become blurrier and amphibious: the beach. In the following sub-section, I examine a trip to the beach with Sahajanand students that both relates and contrasts with rehabilitative and logistical logics, which seek to speed up movement and access to all matters of life, and with the school's carceral dimensions that tend to put possibilities on pause. The beach does not then become a sublime horizon of unbridled potential or radical social activity. But it does offer an abundant scene to which students may differentially attach and play with the pace of relations, in turns, in waves.

Intertidal Drift

My alarm startles me into wakefulness between twilight and dawn for a beach excursion with Sahajanand students. The beach is quieter and cooler in the morning, which makes it an ideal time to bring students to the seaside. The timing is off this morning though. After readying myself, I blearily arrive at the motel entrance gate and find a transformed scene. *Tunahitaji daraja leo!* [We need a bridge today!], I hyperbolize to the still-reposed guard, gesturing to a moat of rainwater blocking access to the street. He nods drowsily, saying that sudden rains came again. Another unseasonal storm. I vaguely recall being awoken by its familiar din. These rains seem as biblical as they are brief, coming in terse, torrential spells. Erratic weather patterns have become ordinary in recent years. And mundane, yet non-sequitur weather expressions among Mombasa residents have proliferated too, akin to the arrhythmic temporalities of "sudden rains came again." Everyday weather-talk has an "anticipatory and retroactive" tone that still bristles with surprise. Gazing at the moat, I call the school to ask if the beach trip is proceeding as planned. The administrator acknowledges the rain but affirms

that the trip is still on, quoting a sunny forecast for the day. I am minimally optimistic, unmoved by the extra-terrestrially modelled prediction, and slip into defensive activities. I cancel my usual but riskier motorcycle ride, grab a jacket from my flat, and wade out to hail a *tuktuk*.

As the driver takes off, muddy water sprays the rickshaw's zipped plastic panels, which drivers roll down during wet conditions. The makeshift protection obscures my view of the road, its plastic window opaque with scratches, so I turn my attention to missed calls and texts. There are new messages from teachers reporting delays and describing flooded homes that need to be drained with brooms and buckets. A viral, sensational video has also circulated on a WhatsApp group for the sign language institute I attend. It shows a pedestrian sloshing down a road under streetlights. The road has become a river. Zooming in, I see a woman struggling to maintain balance against rushing currents, arms skyward as turbulent updrafts steal away with her umbrella. She suddenly falls, not down from losing balance, but *into* something, perhaps a concealed construction or drainage hole. She does not resurface, seemingly swallowed up in the watery depths of the road. A man who witnessed her fall shouts and waves at drivers stopped at an adjacent traffic light. Perhaps the drivers had not seen the incident, did not understand the man, or did not want to get involved. No response comes. The light turns green, and traffic resumes as if nothing had happened. The camera pans from the man to the open umbrella, showing it drift away as a surreal and ghostly trace of its disappeared user.

Beneath the video, people are trying to make sense of the footage, isolating fragments to attach with deeper causal connections. Some comments send prayers and appeals to God, and others blame failures of the government, infrastructural regulations, public indifference, and climate change. A monstrous immanence pulses through the cracks of these sense-making messages which cannot articulate who or what is ultimately responsible, thereby keeping alive the scene's haunting and unresolved questions. It wells-up Freud's (1925, p. 223) unhomely sense of the uncanny which he describes as "a buried spring or a dried-up pond. One cannot

walk over it without always having the feeling that water might come up there again." The deadly weather footage not only metaphorizes but meta*mor*phosizes into what Christina Sharpe (2016) calls a "total climate" (in her iteration an unhomely anti-black climate) that brings into uncanny proximity forces desiccating social and ecological bonds. In this way, the scene's moral and ethical questions do not sit outside the spectator but become an intoxicating shared atmosphere.

The video's recirculation also endows it with viral qualities and projects the threat into other contexts. Sense-making both strives to identify the threat and importantly, to create a critical distance from its potential ingression. Judith Butler (2009, p. 171) puts it this way: "The struggle against violence accepts that violence is one's own possibility." In this way, sense-making, as a defensive practice, composes temporary and ambivalent collective-making formations to push away and endure what's incoherent and violent about an inextricably threatening object. Pushing it away involves the projection of language from one context to another, and therefore involves both viscosity and friction. To extend another metaphor, or with a finer edge, its transformative movements, a "viscous friction" occurs when an external force contacts and projects into a suspended fluid. In physics, viscous frictions are turbulent fluid motions that form smoke rings, whirlpools, and similar vortices. Fearful and outraged comments are activities that anxiously circle and entextualize the woman's subjugation with aspirations to identify the powers at play. Spectators become in the process, not necessarily subjects, but *carriers* of these powers, capable of recirculating the anti-relational atmosphere. My proximity feels too close and dizzyingly overwhelming, so I turn off my phone to give myself some breathing room. I let my thoughts drift from focus, gazing blankly at the opaque, flapping window for the remainder of the trip.

I arrive at Sahajanand still somnolent and unsettled, my mind wandering in the slack time of the journey's Kafkaesque, dreamlike state. But I am snapped into wakefulness again

before an exoskeleton hardens, jolted into attention by the school's harried activities. The weather delays have disrupted the beach preparations and I am pulled into the efforts, directed to pack supplies onto a bus. The bus had arrived late, and the staff are short-handed from the teacher absences. Everyone is scrambling to make up time boarding the thirty or so students in attendance, who had been selected on a rotating basis. It's labor-intensive work and many of the children have specific access requirements. Several children are protesting, like the autistic girl I had seen in the therapist's office, and it takes time to patiently cajole her onto the bus. "Sometimes they will cry if we wake them up early, and the autistic children cry a lot because they do not like when we change routines," a dorm mother explains in passing, without pausing her work. She moves down the line to the remaining students, all in wheelchairs, who need to be boarded last and seated closest to the door. She and two others dorm mothers lift the waiting children from wheelchairs and carry them up to their seats.

Meanwhile, the lead volunteer joins me at the back of the bus to load the final supplies. He is one of Hasu's relatives and had been assigned to help at the school. We strike up conversation and I learn that his volunteer role emerged through a twisted *kula* with Mombasa Cement, the family and its business, and the school. He remarks about being stationed here rather than at Mombasa Cement after hitting a rocky period, but I let the comment dangle. Despite my feelings about Mombasa Cement, the volunteer is clearly devoted to the students, and has made concerted efforts to increase affordable student activities since joining. "There were no structures when I arrived here," he explains, "no plans for improving any of the conditions for the students. [Hasu]'s only goal was to ensure these children stayed alive." He concludes reflectively about today's trip, stating "It's not much, but it's a step in the right direction. The trips are good for the kids. It's good for them to go outside and they love going to the beach. As you can see, we have our hands full, but if it makes them happy, it's

worthwhile." On this encouraging note, we join the others on the bus and set off on a short journey a few kilometers east, and soon reach the shore.

The children are fed breakfast and tea from thermoses to build in time for bringing supplies to the public beach—food, utensils, games, towels, diapers, mats, and other items to set up camp. Because it is a bit later in the day, there is more activity on the beach. Fishermen are returning glumly from dhow boats with meagre catches, one man carrying only a single octopus in his hand. Commercial overfishing has damaged reefs and marine ecosystems, pushing viable fishing spots into deeper waters which are often too far and out of reach for fishmen's boats and tools. Perhaps last night's rains contributed to the foul looks on these returning faces too. Curios and masseurs have begun roaming the shoreline, some setting up temporary shops on kangas, and others hunting for buyers by foot. Some traders are selling coconuts whacked down from beachside palms, trees introduced hundreds of years previous by the Portuguese which now blend into the landscape and economic activities. I deflect traders ceaselessly as we stake out a location, presumed to be a tourist with limitless cash to spend. Proximities to marketing, pollution, and crowds, as well as mobility constraints from bus to shore pose accessibility problems, so we search for spaces both close-by and freer of disturbing matters. We finally settle on a spot and clear away seaweed and trash. Startled from its temporary shelter, a white crab runs over my hands and falls with unbroken speed toward the turquoise waters.

The beach is a contradictory landscape, at once a paradisiacal leisure space to break from the routines and pace of urban orders, and a public commons put to work through the commodification of landscapes and habitats, including the pressures of carbon-based capitalism and leisure industries that mine, pollute, and parcel up littoral zones, intensifying the spatiotemporal scales of harmful human impact. On the one hand, transient intimacies converge at the shoreline's malleable borders and generate provisional and multisensory

interminglings of human and non-human life forms. Roland Barthes (2002), for example, describes the slowed-down diffusion of sensory experiences as a kind of elixir that generate a "beach effect" (p. 509). This sensory after glow resonates with 18th century cure-takers who journeyed to the shore seeking revitalization and "coenesthesis," or "a sort of undifferentiated sensation, a generalized feeling of aliveness irreducible to any particular region of the body" (Heller-Roazen, 2007: 249; see also Freed-Thall, 2021). Marine biologist Rachel Carson (1955) similarly describes the beach as a dynamic transition zone between land and sea in which tender and tenacious micro-life forms and inhabitations endlessly emerge and mutate, awash in metamorphotic processes. In Carson's miniature and textured writings, intertidal life writes elusive languages wherever rock meets sea, leaving ciphers in which "microplants have written their dark inscription" (p. 121), "hordes of diatoms, flashing their microscopic lights in the night sea" become a "message signaled" (p. 219), and wet sands speak through the "careless scribblings [and]…strange insignia" (p. 207) of creaturely perambulations (see also Freed-Thall, 2020 on Carson's "close reading" of ecologies). Her work was instrumental in spurring early environmentalist ideas and interventions to safeguard the teeming lifeforms she so meticulously documented.

On the other hand, the beach is also a site of terrifying possibilities. Becoming awash in bodily flux and mutation can feel depersonalizing or a source of terror when life is absented, exposed, untranslatable, cast away, or drowned. The beach from this perspective is entwined with revitalizing and death-dealing forces. Anthropologist Marc Augé (1997) argues that the beach is both a spectacle and an "immense waiting room" (pp. 38, 42), teetering between protracted survival or finitude, or "a space of boredom or of impending doom" (Freed-Thall, 2021: 139).

Michael Taussig's (2020) research on mimesis and climate change provides a way to think outside this survival/finitude binary. He contends that the ability mimic, imitate, and

become other forms of life is both a motor of climatic change and a site for other socio-ecological mutualities to emerge. To this end, he draws out mimetic practices in art, chemistry, and politics that crosscut nature and culture, to show "an inbuilt propensity to provoke a chain reaction in which things become other things in a process of mimetic fission" (p. 44). Under contemporary order, "global meltdown amplifies mimetic and animistic impulses as never before" (p. 5), by which colonizing life at the beach and elsewhere, strives to master and instrumentalize mimetic functions, which nevertheless double back and bring haunting consequences. These ideas complicate Augé's "waiting room" by rejecting its metaphysics of survival, something which grips the ecological sense-making practices of extractivists and environmentalists alike. The former hedges limitless horizons of capitalist growth on the fantasy of life's ever-enduring resilience and the latter belatedly "saves" ecologies already in reach of capitalist finitude in hope to salvage whatever possible for a post-carbon world just beyond. Taussig gestures to intimacies outside these temporal frames, other affective fluxes of the bodily unconscious and their planetary interconnections—something he calls the "metamorphic sublime" (pp. 44-53).

In this spirit, the beach becomes conceivable as a space to transform with and against its shifting potentials and perils, at different spatiotemporal distances. Camping on the coast opens to play less tethered to sheer survivalism—which in addition to extractivist and environmental imaginations also structures Sahajanand's functions, intended only to keep "rescued" disabled children alive. Camping is still responsive to the limits of the beach's transitory fields and is therefore distinct from romantic associations of the seaside as a place of boundless freedom, vitality, and self-extension. Improvisatory and careful practices take shape in ongoing efforts to (re)make temporary shelter as well as in distal interplays used for drawing the landscape nearer and farther from the children's sensory field. Various socio-ecological formations emerge and dissipate receptive to the ways in which the beach becomes inaccessible

and creates frictions among students. These drifts into and out of form throughout the day enable disabled students to access interstitial relations between land and sea, human and non-human communication, which incite and extend modes of care and attention less abundant within the school.

Back at the bus, the dorm mothers and volunteers begin the first of many efforts to bring the beach and students into relation. The children with mobility impairments are carried off the bus first and returned to their wheelchairs, and finally pushed to the edges of the sand. The beach is not accessible for wheelchairs however, and the chairs roll to a halt and can be pushed no further. Some days, when the sand is drier and dustier, it is easier to roll wheelchairs some of the way. But the rains have saturated the sands with water, a consistency that, at first blush seems firm and compact, but prove squishier and easily displaced. Wet sand obstructs the tires, gumming them up and sinking them too far into the earth when pressure is applied. One dorm mother finds a quick solution. She retrieves the sitting mats laid down at the camp and lines them in front of the wheelchairs. Then, each of the children is lifted onto the mats and pulled to camp. Six magic carpets begin to snake down the beach. The children lightly glide and bounce over miniature dunes, carried on new legs dissimilar to the wheels to which they are so accustomed. Gleeful sounds are punctuated by stops and starts whenever a student loses balance and needs to be righted. The lead volunteer instructs the students to "Hold on to each other's shoulders," which creates a stabler chain for smooth transport.

The non-disabled students are selected to deboard next. They pose different problems because they are spryer and more mobile, immediately running amok on arrival and flitting about in various directions. Since the children using wheelchairs are settled, less muscle is needed for lifting, and one dorm mother becomes charged with wrangling and watching over these children. I turn to the lead volunteer and ask, "Have you ever lost anyone?" He shakes his head incredulously, "No, that would be unimaginable. We can't take our eyes off them."

Losing a child in public, particularly at the beach, is the stuff of parental nightmares; a small slip in attention can suddenly expose children to vast, anonymous, and impersonal dangers. Terrifying hypothetical possibilities are conditional *as if* scenarios haunting the imagination's uninhabitable reaches, which compel continuous relays of care and attention in the commons than those routinized within the enclosed school compound.

Trouble returns when the autistic students are introduced. The beach overwhelms two students who become inconsolable, both screaming, crying, jerking their bodies, and hitting the dorm mothers. The dorm mothers decide to take them to an isolated clearing near the tree line where they spend several minutes trying to soothe them, whispering soft reassurances and humming songs. Where these attempts fail, the mothers simply wait beside them, sometimes rubbing a child's back or restraining a flailing limb. One boy faces a tree trunk with his back to the sea, looking unmovable despite his frenetic rocking. Time passes, close to thirty minutes, but eventually the children become calm enough to rejoin the group. The mothers then give them plates filled with sand, which sparks my curiosity. "Why put sand on plates?" I ask. The lead volunteer tells me that having "a small portion of the beach, like a plate of sand, helps these children focus" as opposed to organizing the foreground and background of a whole landscape. The plates create a manageable territory for interaction, and the two children begin making piles, drawing small patterns, and filtering sand in and out of their hands. Both are seated close but apart from the other children who press together on the mats. The boy's back is still to the sea, but his rocking is slower and gentler than it had been.

The day takes shape around various activities—swimming, a boat ride, lunch, and dancing—which all require newly configuring the children to provide them safe access to different aspects of the beach. Swimming occurs in various stages. The non-disabled children are supervised as they lob themselves in and out of the surf on small, black inner-tubes. A few of the children with mobility impairments are carried up to the shores and dipped in and out of

the surf in turns for several minutes followed by diaper changes back at the camp. The autistic girl joins four other students with disabilities in the water. She connects hands with the other children and the dorm mothers to form a small circle, which ensures that no one is pulled too far away. They kick their legs beneath the surface, bobbing and drifting gently in the currents, building muscles lightly suspended in the water. In contrast with the scene of instruction where the girl was made to walk up cement stairs, drifting in the waves relates to Barthes (1977-78, 2005) concept of "drift," which offers "an alternative to the mythology of balance as well as to ideas of progress" (p. 202) a kind of "not-so-much-mode" (p. 8) in which one may recede from "the world's inability to accept the suspension of one's answer to a demand" (p. 204). Drifting stretches between affirmative and negative responses to meet these demands, leaning in and out of the criteria for their forms in relation.

Drift joins the list of conceptual and material doubles presented so far like viscous frictions, infrastructure, and others. The ambition is not to impose or invent connections with clever puns or collapse semantic meanings into indistinction. Rather, I take up what Barthes (1977) calls the "amphibologies" of words with multiple meanings. Barthes insists that the meanings of these words may be held in loose relation, "as if one were winking at the other and as if the word's meaning were in that wink" (pp. 72-3). Rather than choosing between one of two contextual meanings, this doubleness emerges within discourse in ways that allow shifting potentials to be noticed and conceived, for ideas to resonate with a plurality of imaginative and material practices of living. The appeal is also not a celebration of ambiguous polysemy by rote, but to attune to what may be polyphonic, polyrhythmic, and coming into form across heterogenous performances and scenes. Barthes argues that it is "not to hear everything (anything)" but rather attempt "to hear *something else*." To this end, it encourages "violating your own attachment to your intentionality, without being anti-intentional" (Davis & Sarlin, 2011: 9) to avoid determining or presuming a stance on other styles and forms of life

in transition. Taken together, drift has a non-executive function receptive to multiple enactments of referentiality co-occurring through the togetherness and separation of moving in relation. It both thinks with and against sovereign demands to enclose conceptual meanings. In the practical case of the girl, it attends to how performative nuances are both affirmed and denied against the therapist's criteria for balance. And it shows how small acts of swimming with students contrastively enact pedagogical practices that help loosen and extend initiatory objects to the students. As a result, the swimmers open to new bodily sensations, experiences, and capacities forged with and against the tides.

Back at the beach, several children have not been extended the same invitation, and complain about being left out. They have casts and bandages on their arms and legs that cannot be replaced at camp and therefore prevent them from swimming in the ocean. The lead volunteer decides to flag down a beach boy who gives tours on glass-bottom boats. After some resistance, the captain consents to bringing the children on board. The mats are again slid down the beach and closer to the shore where more heavy lifting is required to board them onto the boat. Finally, the motor revs up and for a short time the children can watch the seafloor swirl below them through the glass window on the boat's floor. The mothers point out coral formations as we pass over them, and the captain stops for a few minutes so the children can watch small white fish with black stripes school.

When we return to shore, the idyllic trip has created another chain-reaction, garnering attention of traders down the coast who begin to collect near the camp. Their presence becomes disruptive and distracting to the children who had grown more comfortable with their surrounds, especially the autistic children. Once more, camp becomes remade to build a separation from the traders. The volunteers begin playing music to sound out the interruptions, having children follow along with the tunes by clapping their hands, dancing, and moving their bodies whichever way they can. Children seated on the ground sway and swing their arms

while deaf students pick up the movements of others, mirroring the pulse of the rhythms. One boy, who is paralyzed from the waist down, hoists his body from the ground and swings his legs to the beat. The activities cohere in many on- and off-beats in which distinct and heterogenous tempos and riffs on the music compose a fuzzy transposition of collective referentiality. Something like dialogic reciprocity and shared meaning emerges between the music, the children, and each other, not as a revelation of what is individually or collectively held as valuable, but as mood and intensity generating alliances through movements of dance and music, itself an equivocal object of affirmation diversely practiced across participants.

The burst of activity has tired the children out and lunch preparations are underway. The mothers, volunteers, and some of the children create an assembly line passing fragrant plates of *pilau* rice to each of the students, the camp infusing with the smell of ginger, cinnamon, cardamom, and turmeric. Several of the children have trouble feeding themselves, however. One child's hands are too inflamed to pick up the rice and a few others cannot easily coordinate motions between mouth and plates. The dorm mothers move from child to child to spoon feed them rice, becoming ancillary infrastructures compensating for otherwise limited hand and eye coordination.

These acts of care, like sliding mats, plates of sands, lifts/carries, boat rides, and dance interludes are what disability scholar Arseli Dokumaci (2019) terms "people as affordances." The concept brings "into focus the sociality involved in their making, through improvised relationalities between the world and one's own body as well as between multiple bodies" (p. S100). These practices take shape across diverse material conditions and fields and exhibit a "most fluid form of what Mia Mingus calls 'access intimacy,' that is the 'elusive, hard to describe feeling when someone else 'gets' your access needs' without them being made explicit" (ibid. citing Mingus, 2011). The children do not then become active subjects using objects on the beach or passive bodies on which the material world is simply inscribed, but

both agents and the site of action. Agamben refers to this subject-object co-creation as a middle voicing in which a subject "constitutes itself only through the using, the being in relation with an other" (Agamben, 2014: 73; see also Wakefield & Braun, 2019 chapter on "oystertecture" in which they argue that returning things "to common use" involves "acting so as to change ourselves in the acting, or to be 'a' form of life rather than 'in' a form of life" (p. 213)). The students have various potentials activated through this play of proximities as fragments of the landscape are drawn nearer or pushed farther away.

From an ecological vantage, one can conceive of how these affordances differ from anthropological theories of landscape and human inhabitation, and specifically Tim Ingold's (1993) phenomenological account in which humans and land, culture and nature, mind and matter, are inextricably bound up with each together. Ingold's seminal essay "The Temporality of the Landscape" draws distinctions between landscape, land, environment, and space. The distinction between land and landscape, for example, is likened to value and use-value. Value like land is quantitative and homogenous, whereas use-value like landscape is qualitative and heterogenous, referring to the "specific properties or 'affordances' of any particular object, that commend it to the project of a user" (p. 153). He understands landscape to then involve a mutual entanglement of humans and the landscapes they inhabit. Ingold writes that the landscape "is not a totality that you or anyone else can look *at*, it is rather the world *in* which we stand in taking up a point of view on our surroundings. And it is within the context of this attentive involvement in the landscape that the human imagination gets to work in fashioning ideas about it" (p. 171). The essay implies a belongingness between man and landscape in which, "to borrow a phrase from Merleau-Ponty, it is not so much the object as 'the *homeland* of our thoughts'" (ibid.).

These arguments rest on a number of troubling assumptions. Ingold, inspired by Heidegger's notion of dwelling, takes for granted that "attentive involvement" would rely on

the capacity to synthesize and organize the perceptual field, by which an intentional, human subject becomes the measure of all things. The givenness of the landscape to man as dwelling, a homeland of our thoughts, recites a romantic nostalgia for a time-embedded sense of connection and dependent on practices of living synchronized with seasonal temporalities, all of which seem denied in the alienated modern experience of work and property rights. The beach trip by contrast took shape through the distance and dislocation of the children from the landscape, their difficulties organizing perceptions of it without becoming overwhelmed, as well as barriers to use access that impeded experience. Rather, the landscape became broken down into fragments to remake continuity, thereby bringing some aspects into relief at the pace and proximity suited to the student's specific capacities. As geographer John Wylie (2018) argues, for every invocation of landscape there is "something intransigent, apart, and indifferent in landscape that cannot be simply domesticated and encompassed through being rendered as sublime, or as spooky" (p. 19). Something always escapes the ability to make sense of its fragments, but not premised on a binary of homey/unhomely. Always already displaced, landscape emerges through "the distances that cleave between word and world" (p. 21) and therefore "is neither something seen, nor a way of seeing, but rather the materialities and sensibilities with which we see" (Wylie, 2005: 243). Extending an experience of togetherness with non-human life calls for inventive practices to extend experiences, distinct from a metaphysics of belonging.

The beach trip concludes much like it began—just out of sync with the landscape. Our tardy arrival becomes a tardy departure and the morning's low tide is replaced with afternoon swells that encroach on the camp. Hurried activities to pack up, return the children to the bus, and bring them back to the school ensue. Signs of the students' inhabitation vanish as the sea unwrites the day, and the sands become a palimpsest. But perhaps subtle transformations

endure and build toward other potentials too, if not at the beach, then perhaps within the lives held back behind Sahajanand's walls.

The trip provided the students with a break from the holding pattern of the school, not premised on survival, a return home, or incorporation into the common forms of life beyond, but a temporary excursion. Bringing the students and the beach into relation required reorientating and extending corporeal capacities and parceling the landscape without seeking to possess it. In the process, dorm mothers and volunteers worked without definitive rules in order to generate new ones through ongoing practice. The uncanniness of the beach also induced and intensified modes of care and attention otherwise thinly distributed at the school, providing examples of other pedagogical tools and paces of initiation. Although such trips are rare and resources more limited at Sahajanand, one may glimpse similar practices in the ways students interact too, co-creating communicative forms, accelerating activities, or disassociating from them, and helping one another stay attached to life in the school's protracted meantime, even in ordinary play like wheelchair races. These are subterranean practices of study in the "undercommons," to borrow Moten's (2013) popularized phrase, that reach around containment and escape liquidity without a known destination. Drifting between structures of bondage and freer movements of play trace figurations of meaningful activity and their forms of life, which otherwise may appear as inscrutable ciphers. They reference the ways in which students write lives together on the move, inhabiting displacement in a dynamic of separate togetherness. What slips past or wanders off from the criteria used to recognize and acknowledge their forms of life are not only the terrifying and uncanny marks of lives swallowed up in unlivable infrastructures and toxic climates. Rather, they index what is uncertain and unplanned about living subjunctively and keep alive questions about how to create imaginative pedagogies, relax the convictions and conventions of one form of life to reach toward another, and exercise attention to attune to the senses that may seem at first

incoherent. Sahajanand's interstitial, intertidal practices of living are lessons in shifting away from a will to improve, to a will to invent with others. The hope they engender is saturated with ambivalence, however, as it is always already structurally belated against the temporal horizons of extractivism and the finitude of socio-ecological meltdown. And yet, an excursion from this perspective may also hold an optimism untethered from its fix of cure and rescue, a winking possibility perhaps only minimally detected, for now.

Section Two: Brooding at the Open Ends of Kinship

The Prospects of Unrelatedness

Scenes of initiation that impose certain criteria, like vestibular balance on cement stairs, or a school enclosure erected for survival, give shape to an identified impasse. The impasse materializes against certain presumptions of progress, inclusion, and life possibilities drawn against and defining the risky limits of disability. On the other hand, the improvisatory, not-so-much-modes of drifting wander around and away from the impasse in ways that do not yield to its determinations. Adrift, people and landscapes generate infrastructures within relation and on the go, temporarily tacking together loose forms that attach children with disabilities to each other and to worlds inside and outside the school's hold. But what happens when the shape of an impasse is yet unknown, its boundaries and criteria shapeless, uncertain, formed around differing and contradictory criteria? What happens when drift emerges within an appeal for relation that's left unanswered and threatens one's capacity to attach or stay attached to a form of life? In this section, I analyze stories from parents and caregivers who strive to marshal care without dependable knowledge about their children's' disabilities or how to communicate with them, especially children who are non-verbal or seemingly unresponsive to appeals.

These acute uncertainties raise difficult questions about "forms of life," such as family, when disabled children do not settle into an expected kinship relation. Veena Das (2015) proposes that forms of life "are not simply the social as agreed conventions (forms) and the natural as the given or the biological (life)—rather there is also a tussle and creativity in how we may invent a history 'natural' to *us*" (pp. 38-9). Such a proposition sets stakes for building relationships with disabled children, which may unsettle or deviate from conventions that make kinship meaningful and recognizable, as well as what counts as or adds up to kinship in the creative "tussle" of relating. From this vantage, kinship becomes an indeterminate reference. Das' conclusions follow intellectual histories that have debated ways of figuring kinship

without reducing them to biological nature or cultural constructions. Against this impasse, David Schneider's (1968; 1984) critiques between the late 60s and 80s renounced not only kinship as biologically given, but kinship as a field of study altogether. He declared the death of kinship studies as an arbitrary, over-formalized domain and Western folk concept, and became influential in promoting gender as a central object of study. It marked an important turn within shifting analytical reprioritizations toward systems of inequality—a trajectory in which "sexuality became derivative of marriage, marriage of kinship, kinship of gender, and gender of prestige and power" (Borneman, 2010: 573).

Recent years have seen a resurgence of kinship studies in a different guise which, have aspired for a beyond-ness to the nature/culture debate. Influential within this turn have been ethnographies addressing issues of queer families, reproductive technologies, and adoption. Texts by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (2012) and Marshall Sahlins (2011a; 2011b) also provide provocative examples within "new" kinship studies and take up kinship as an ontological problem. Viveiros de Castro, echoing Lévi-Strauss (1969), argues that kinship is natural in human culture and cultural in human nature. He argues that it is not reducible to a biological given nor a social construction but rather, a constitutive element in the exchange of social relations. Sahlins (2011a) similarly proposes that kinship is "mutuality of being" or the intersubjective connections of relatedness and "transmissions of life-capacities among persons" that make them intrinsic to each other's lives (pp. 4, 14). Although his conclusions resemble Schneider's rejection of kinship as biology, they have provocative implications. For example, Sahlins distinguishes kinship from biological reproduction as "the a priori of birth rather than the sequitur" (Sahlins, 2011b: 68). In this view "birth is the metaphor" (Sahlins 2012: 673).

Sahlins and Viveiros de Castro present optimistic theories. But they have drawn criticism because they recall an intellectual history that has presented kinship without

addressing power and social differences like disability, among others. These concepts also risk reprising a metaphysics of belonging, which may be defined as "intertwined practices and collective repertoires for defining, legitimating, and exercising the rights of some bodies against others" (Sheller, 2012: 21). "Mutuality of being" also bypasses the "processes of 'thickening' or 'thinning' of relatedness" (Carsten, 2013: 247) which can read as an enlargement of "empathy" (Ochs et al., 2004) that may be absent or a "luxury one cannot afford under [certain] circumstances" (Hollan & Throop, 2008: 397)—especially in contexts of deprivation and suffering (Scheper-Hughes, 1993). These critiques suggest that conditions of de-kinning and kinlessness are also important for studying not what kinship "is," but the many tenses and tensions of action that may give it meaningful shape, or not.

On the other hand, Sahlins and Viveiros de Castro gesture at dynamics of hope, fortune, and futurity which can be evacuated out of life in critiques that offer only "paranoid readings" (Sedgwick 2003, 124-52). The sticky work of relating can motivate continual strivings for a good enough life, even if, or especially because, "we begin with the premise that social systems are, by definition, systems of inequality" (Yanagisako & Collier, 1987, 39). John Borneman (2010), for example, suggests receding from a focus on "normalizing practices [and] forms of subjectivity and subjection that result from them" and attending and attuning to "the actual situations in which people experience the need to care and be cared for and to the political economies of their distribution" (pp. 582-83). Approaching the everyday efforts of parents and caregivers invites a "reparative" reading that acknowledges a "different range of affects, ambitions, and risks" at play in the efforts of "selves and communities… [to extract] sustenance from the objects of a culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them" (Sedgwick, 2003: 150-51). In this way, it also begins with the acknowledgment that "separateness is necessary in making the other present" (Han 2014: 87), that intimacies emerge through leaps across uncertain and sometimes difficult gulfs to extend life capacities.

But a reparative reading does not then suggest that practices among parents seeking care and cures for their children are free of aggression, that they are experimenting and/or improvising with radical openness to transformation. Efforts of "producing relatedness" (Carstens, 2003) involve protecting valued dimensions of kinship that matter differently and differentially to those involved. Producing relatedness involves what I call *brooding* about interventions and the possibilities they may hold.

The following sub-sections explore aspects of "brooding" among parents participating at a school and rehabilitation center for children with autism, cerebral palsy, and multiple neurodevelopmental disabilities. It tracks moments when kinship relations grow and diminish depending on politico-legal recognition of family relationships, medical and therapeutic interventions, secular/religious discourses, and communicative practices with children. At their intersecting fault lines, parents and caregivers navigate uncertainties that unsettle, transform, and reimagine kinship idioms through various "methods of hope" (Miyazaki, 2007). Importantly, there are other methods not easily described as "hope" or hopefulness too, that produce "provisional, indeterminate and open-ended" orientations (Miyazaki, 2007: 137-8; see also Jansen, 2016 on the transitivity of hope). Some parents pursue methods which figure futures through ordinary practices knotted to epic and historical pasts. Others use methods that are prospective but dedicated to steering a determinate rather than open-ended outcome, like methods of faith and desires for innovative treatments. Most commonly, parents' prospects are ambi-transitive, modes and moods of action attached to various future in/determinacies, some with clear objectives and others not. These heterogenous approaches of producing relatedness cannot be understood within an "analytical aesthetics of emergence" (Miyazaki, 2007: 137-8) whereby kinship becomes a question only of social exchange or the linear outcome of gifts and givens. Parents grapple with what kinship means within and against idioms of given social texts as well as from the textures of everyday practices. It resembles what Berlant terms "genre-

flailing" (Berlant, 2018), when mixed prospective methods augment and undermine reliable expectation structures for what kinship might be and become.

Brooding therefore tracks how people make sense of and pursue kinships amidst acute uncertainties. On the one hand, brooding involves not-yet moods when methods of producing relatedness seem ineffective, generate ethical tensions, reach epistemological limits, and/or dissolve social bonds altogether. On the other, parents have intuitions of kinship possibilities worth pursuing and nurturing, which often emerge within ambiguously felicitous communicative acts, moments when parents trace and imagine where reciprocal utterances and mutual understandings could be and mean. To riff on a popular book title, brooding occurs when people do not know what to expect when they are expecting a form of relatedness not wholly given nor made, which incites and patterns multiple and entangled acts of cure, cruelty, and care.

Kinship's Soft Taxonomies

My research with children, parents, and caregivers began at public institutions but branched out to explore other children's disability resources on the Coast. At a school located in Bombolulu, a suburb just south of Mtwapa, I interviewed a mother who complained about having no choice but to send her son to a public school she deemed poor quality because she could not afford fees elsewhere. The mother specifically mentioned the "expensive Indian schools" in downtown Mombasa that were out of reach unless she could secure a sponsorship. "They are only for middle- and upper-class families," she concluded. I was curious to understand how those educational and rehabilitation centers might compare to the public schools with which I had grown familiar, so I followed this thread and built relationships with several of them. My fieldwork shifted focus to one in particular—The Cerebral Palsy Foundation Center (CPFC), an education and rehabilitation center that serves children with

autism, cerebral palsy, and multiple disabilities. The mother made pejorative comments about these schools, but at the time I had paid little credence to them; resentments about "Asians" or "Indians" are not uncommonly heard in Mombasa and other parts of East Africa. I had nevertheless noticed fewer children of Indian descent at the public disability schools I visited in Kilifi and Kwale counties, which suggested at least an ethnoreligious distinction. These issues resurfaced during my engagement with CPFC in non-obvious ways and intersected issues of disability, kinship, and ethno-religious community-building.

In the following sub-sections, I introduce CPFC's activities and highlight some of the challenges parents and teachers face while caring for children with disabilities. I then move on to discuss CPFC's historical relationship with a specific Asian community that seeks out its services, not only to access relatively higher-quality educational and therapeutic resources, but in efforts of initiating children into religious discourses that reproduce their forms of life. Finally, I track the tensions that emerge to produce these forms of relatedness. First, here is a typical scene at the center:

I am again heading to CPFC to join its activities on a hot Tuesday morning. After a sweaty rush hour commute across the congested Nyali Bridge to the city center, I transfer from a *matatu* bus to a *tuktuk* to catch some air and head to a subdivision of Mombasa Island near Tudor Creek. The architecture changes as I head north, shifting from Old Town's narrow roads and dense economic activity to wider suburban plots and planning. There are many art deco-style buildings peppered among shops and businesses, constructions popular among Indian traders in the 1930s. These ornate architectural designs linked elite Coastal Asians to styles considered modern in Bombay and flaunted the Asian community's fluency in European spatial vocabularies—what Thomas Metcalf calls "imperial citizenship," or a sign of both a commitment to and a critique of Empire (Metcalf, 2007; Goodman, 2018). Many buildings also sport epigraphs with Asian surnames, indicative of their *jamaat* or caste and religious

affiliation. Epigraphy expresses the pride, status, and kinship of specific lineages, and connotes a sense of permanent settlement in Mombasa; they materially assert desires to build rooted and enduring communities distinct but not disconnected from life in India (see Goodman, 2018 for an in-depth analysis of Mombasa architecture and Indian belonging).

Other forms of ethnoreligious belonging, as well as territorial separation, appear as I near CPFC and pass Khoja *jamaatkhana*s, or Islamic religious social halls that serve Shi'a Muslims. The Khoja originated from the Kutch region of Gujarat in Western India, a caste that converted from Hinduism to Islam in the 14th century and later split into three doctrinal groups: minority Sunnis and Twelver Shi'as, like the Ithna-Asheri, and the majority Shi'a Ismailis who follow Aga Khan. The construction of tall buildings, large residential compounds, and other such expansions index social advancement in ways that inflame enduring rivalries between the Ithna-Asheri and Ismaili in Mombasa, both of which have property in this area (Goodman, 2020). This territorial competition is evident on the road adjacent to CPFC, replete with securitized estates blocked by walls and trees to obstruct the properties beyond. Material and symbolic separations contribute to pejorative comments about "Asians" or "Indians" as exclusionary outsiders, perceptions circulating out of sight and mind of other historical and factional drivers within, between, and external to Asian sub-groups.

I finally arrive at CPFC, which, despite its gate, contrasts with the design of adjacent constructions. Its two-floor building has Mombasa's signature colors, painted with white walls and Egyptian blue trim. Matching signs list the disabilities treated here in caps, the familiar shades of lapis lazuli composing words like CEREBRAL PALSY and AUTISM within an aesthetic regime promulgated for an uninterrupted "Santorini" feel. The Center's bustling morning activities also jar with the breezy tones, as teachers and therapists hurry to set up equipment and mats before everyone arrives. A group of mothers show up first, most dressed in black *buibui* hijabs, but not exclusively. Then a steady stream of parents and children forms,

flowing from the gate to the building. Three or four dads join the morning procession too, many wearing white *kanzu* robes, but not exclusively. Children arrive holding their parents' hands or beside them on walkers, while others are swaddled in *kanga*s and carried to the entrance. Mothers and fathers sometimes walk long distances with children on their backs when money becomes insufficient to pay for a *matatu*. Although most students enrolled at CPFC come from middle and upper-class Muslim families, the center is open to anyone, and staff arduously seek out sponsorships to cover costs for children otherwise unable to afford attendance. Whether by foot or by private car, parents commute here several days a week to join the center's four-hour morning exercise sessions and receive guidance from occupational and physical therapists. Parents accompany children and take part in the exercises so they can learn recommended routines and replicate them at home. Now, they gather between the exercise space, a room that looks like a gymnasium or dance studio, and the administration office, which has an adjoining speech pathology room.

Dishes and silverware clang at the far end of the complex as the staff prepares diet-specific lunches in the kitchen for CPFC's approximately 50 children. Autistic children are frequently diagnosed with hyperactivity and ADHD, so their sugar is carefully monitored. Digestive problems are common too and many students are put on gluten and casein-free diets, which are thought to promote additional behavioral benefits and improved sleep patterns. Diet and nutrition, like the therapeutic exercise routines, are all carefully recorded in the children's files, which include assessment results administered upon enrolment, family social and medical histories, and documentation required under state regulations. These files are used to measure and track "progress" and "backsliding" as they are at Sahajanand (albeit with much better record-keeping), but they include other information too—which techniques have been tried and tested, which have worked best, which routines should be introduced or discontinued, and so forth. Meals, like all CPFC's activities, involve some degree of guesswork, and the staff adds,

removes, and substitutes foods based on observed behavioral changes in the children. The children's bodies become subjects and objects of ongoing and careful experimentation in the process. These practices are not akin to rarefied applications of best medical practices or human trials with test and control groups, but educated guesses based on long-term engagements with children. Therapists have developed intimate understandings of these children, identifying signs of pain, stress, and discomfort during exercises, and recording observations day after day. One occupational therapist explained to me that, "This boy was always crying when we stretched his legs and hamstrings and eventually, we realized that he was constipated, so we had to make changes to his diet. After we did that, he has stopped crying and can complete the exercise." Working with these children often involves interpreting spare and ambiguous signs of change before adjusting interventions.

When physical therapy concludes, the students file up to the second floor for lessons. There are a couple of colorful classrooms, complete with blackboards, educational toys, and rugs, which enable teachers to sit alongside students for interactive lessons, songs, and play. Another class is cramped with large square desks, each capable of seating 6-8 students. Aides, teachers, and sign language instructors typically move from side to side to sidle up with students and provide one-on-one or two-on-one instructions. The desks are covered with art supplies for crafting textiles, beading jewelry, and painting. Crafting is thought to improve motor skill development as well as pattern recognition, processing, and recall. Skills like beading are also thought of as vocational training because they help prepare children for trade work after graduation. The last classroom is used for vocation training too and has a row of donated computers for "higher functioning" and senior students to learn IT skills, everything from basic typing to graphic design. The walls are papered with colorful prints from a recent poster-design competition. I sit in on these classes from time to time, singing songs or helping the children with beading, often lingering after class to catch up with teachers. My primary role

at the school has grown into a different function though: to lend an ear to parents while they wait for morning therapies to conclude.

Parents enjoyed talking about the everyday challenges, concerns, and hopes they experienced raising their children, whether with other parents, teachers, specialists. Most relied on and confided in a few others at home, limited to a handful of sympathetic family members or a close friend who had a similar experience with a relative. The center therefore offers a space promising recognition and relief, even for a few hours. This "affective scene of identification" is similar to what Berlant (2008) calls an intimate public, or a space "that promises a certain experience of belonging and provides a complex of consolation, confirmation, discipline, and discussion of how to live as an x" (p. viii). Parents report daily changes in their children's conditions and disseminate information they find helpful, such as new therapies or techniques they've found online or in other fora. Chloe Silverman's (2011) historical ethnography *Understanding Autism* details similar practices in the US context, in which parents of autistic children act as "amateur experts" sharing in-depth knowledge or "situated knowledges" (p. 99) that contribute to treatment. These practices create an ad hoc support group to build on collective trials, knowledge, and contacts "with few resources other than each other" outside the center for "learning to treat their children" (p. 94).

My interviews became less structured and blended into these social functions over time, providing a space several mornings a week for parents to tell stories, vent, or sound off whatever was on their minds. The speech pathology room became my adjunct office for these meetings; the room was spare, snug, and nearly soundproof, which contributed to a comfortable blend of intimacy and separateness. It also gave these meetings something of a therapeutic feel, though no diagnoses or prescriptions were made, nor were conversations guided by efficiency principles in which communication "instills a procedural quality to emotional life" (Illouz, 2007: 38). Some conversations travelled well-worn paths within parents' wider quests to

marshal care, motored by hopes that I might know of a sponsor or service, or that their stories might be retold for future connections. This was to be expected. But most conversations were not so calculating and became momentary detours in the day to decompress, have a laugh, or a cry. Parents were in various stages of understanding and coming to terms with their children's conditions, some newly diagnosed and others several years along with therapy. But uncertainty was common across all discussions, including how to name, describe, and talk about the disability; how to communicate with friends, relatives, and neighbors about it; and how to speak with the children, many of whom were non-verbal, refused to make eye contact, or communicated in ways that unsettled distinctions between reaction and response. Seeking ways to talk about or with these children were practices that generated knowledge, a method of feeling for the contours of an ineloquently addressed concern in efforts to adjust one's appeals for social exchange.

Today I am meeting with Mwajuma—one of the mothers who had carried her child here in a *kanga*. She is still in the exercise session, so I walk around the gymnasium and take in the activities. Three children are reposed on mats to the left, and aides and therapists are stretching their limbs to relax contracted muscles and increase their range of motion. The children do not go along willingly and there are attempts at escape, screams, and cries. The aides respond with a trialed solution: balloons. They fetch multi-colored balloons and bounce them above the outstretched children, a distraction which holds attentions long enough to complete the exercises. Two students with cerebral palsy are exercising in wheelchairs behind the stretching station, pulling bungy-corded weights in abrupt and slow, uneven rhythms. The irregular repetitions may be less an effect of unhabituated motor skills than of play: the students are laughing with each other, showing off, and egging each other on. The aides step in from time to time to modulate the rhythms and prevent injuries. To their right, a boy is straining in arabesque movements to reach a therapist's open palm while maintaining a grip on a banister

behind him like yoga or ballet training. The therapist edges backwards, continually increasing distance and desire, without letting their hands meet. Another scene is unfolding at the opposite wall, where younger children are reposed on their parents' laps. Each unit is trying to clap in sync. They have been left to practice this independently, and one mother seems to be losing patience. The mother to her right notices and begins humming a song to build a beat. It doesn't seem to help with clap coordination, but a degree of morale returns. Finally, a group in the far corner is working with toothbrushes. The ambition is not yet brushing but coordinating hands and fingers to lift and hold the brushes' slender handles. Some students are making attempts by forming complimentary shapes with their hands, but occasionally failing to apply or maintain pressure. Others are working up to the toothbrush, trying a range of increasingly thinner instruments to hold. Each small movement takes time and requires the parents and therapists to stay alert and adaptable; minor shifts in interest, action, and energy can block or unblock any given exercise.

Finally, Mwajuma finishes and walks with me to the speech therapy room. She had enrolled her son only a few weeks previous, so our conversation focuses on her personal history. She lives nearby in Tudor in public housing, not a gated compound. She stays with her husband and children in an old estate near the ocean, which had been built to create affordable housing for port workers in the mid 1980s. The residents are under imminent threat of eviction though, precipitated by the government's 2016 Integrated Strategic Development Plan, which proposed to tear down and rehabilitate dilapidated public estates like Mwajuma's. No information has been made available about the project's start date, if vacating tenants will be relocated, or whether they can return post-renovation. Mwajuma has recently remarried and hoped that moving with her new husband to Tudor, nearer to CPFC, would provide the stability she lacked in previous years. Outside support from the center, this has not been the case.

She begins her story after a difficult pregnancy, when she first learned that her son had a disability. “My child did not cry for a week. I think that’s when he started having problems, when he was at the stage where a normal child should be able to sit. He couldn’t sit upright.” The doctors who had delivered her son never informed her about his condition. When she returned to the hospital, she learned that his spinal cord was bent “like an S.” “The main problem is the neck and the spinal cord, so he is braced with a pole to hold everything in place. He is 12 years old now and it is still like that. The doctors did not help me or explain anything to me, I had to find out for myself. He cannot do anything on his own; he just sleeps. So, I have to move him and help him sit. He cannot talk. I do everything for him—brush his teeth, feed him, give him water—everything.” She had sought out physiotherapy early on and but after three years decided to quit. “I became tired, and he did not show any improvement, so I started to look for a disability school with boarding where he could be looked after full time, but money was the problem.” School fees were too expensive, even at public disability schools like Tom Mboya and Port Reitz Primary, so her son stayed home with her for most of his life. Recently, Mwajuma’s fortunes shifted, and a member of her church council pledged to pay school fees for her son. “My sponsor is an African like me, so people from the church raise funds to help her. My child was able to enroll here three weeks ago. I do not know much about the center yet, but I am grateful for what they have done for us.”

Outside the center, she is primarily responsible for her son’s care, as she cannot rely on her family. Without a support system, she is caught in a double-bind: looking after him most of the day means she cannot work, which in turn, impedes her ability to afford care for him. “My parents are both deceased. There were four girls and one boy in our family. We lost a brother and a sister, so now it’s just the three of us. My late sister left behind three children and my younger sister was still lactating, so my eldest took them in. She is more well-off and can accommodate them. I wanted to take them, but I have two other children and wouldn’t be able

to care for six." Mwajuma wakes up at five am each morning to first take care of her disabled son so she can leave him and drop off her other children at school. When she returns, she then carries him to CPFC and partakes in his exercises. "There's no time for work by the time he comes home. I'm a housewife. It's only occasionally I get called to do small tasks like cleaning houses and washing clothes, usually only for 2-300 shillings." Disability brings additional costs for medicine, transportation, assisted devices, and other material upkeep too. Her husband's income is unreliable, so Mwajuma struggles to meet even basic requirements. "I don't have pampers for my disabled child. They are a must-have, but I cannot afford them. I'd have to spend 20 shillings every day, which is a lot. Some days my husband finds a job and I have 20 shillings, but I need to buy food… when things are good, we eat and when they are not, we sleep with empty stomachs. So, I use old *kanga*s for diapers, and I rewash them." It is no surprise that even 0.50 shillings for a *matatu* ride is a luxury she cannot afford.

Although her husband's uncertain schedule would enable him to help with her son, Mwajuma explains that "a man cannot say he is bringing his child here. Who will find a way to feed the family?" I point out that there are fathers who bring their children to the center, but the problem is not only about normatively gendered responsibilities. "There are some fathers who are more involved. From my perspective, a father who has a child has the will to help his child, but in my case, the child is not his, so I cannot ask him to come here if I am tired. He doesn't do more than he must do." The new husband is not cruel, but he does not extend much care, nor is he indifferent to the child's difference; he has a detached relation seemingly unbidden by strong expressions of desire, aversion, or solidarity, and unencumbered of a biological metaphor of birth.

Her son's biological father by contrast felt a strong aversion to the child and abandoned the family seven months after Mwajuma gave birth. He heeded his parents warning, as Mwajuma quotes, "'If the girl has had a disabled child now, in the future she will have the

same kind of children.' After that, he kept telling me to throw away my baby. But if you listen to people like this you might throw your child in the ocean. People say terrible things—not just him, neighbors too. You might be in need, and no one will feel sorry for you. Instead, people ask, 'what were you thinking when you allowed yourself to have that child.' But you cannot listen to these people. It was the same with my husband. I told him I was the one who carried him for nine months, so if you don't love him, I do! I took my child and left." Since filing for a divorce however, her ex-husband has not provided financial support and she has been unable to find the time, resources, and information to pursue payment in court—all of which deepens her precarious situation.

Stories like Mwajuma's are common among mothers of disabled children in Mombasa and generate difficult questions for understanding kinship, both in practices of living and in theory. Concepts raised at the start of this section, which define kinship as a "mutuality of being," need reconsideration in view of the challenges Mwajuma spotlights. If Sahlins (2011a; 2011b; 2012) is correct that "relations of procreation are patterned by the kinship order in which they are embedded," (p. 76) that *birth is the metaphor*, then Mwajuma may be conceived as in a state of *brooding* rather than kinship (to reprise Mayuka's poem). Mwajuma endured cruelties from people whose kinship roles may nominally be described as "husband/father" and "paternal parents." Such kinship referents and other figures of speech would seem a catachresis in the absence of mutuality as their a priori condition. Extending Sahlins' metaphoric, Mwajuma's son would be indexed as unborn and she not a mother. Here, the term brooding emphasizes (and "winks" at) the ambivalent in-between movements: transmissions of life capacities that have become blocked and thin toward kinlessness, as well as the concerned and concerted efforts to marshal care when and where these kinships wane. If no one else loves her son, Mwajuma does. Kinship theories need space for both care and cruelty.

Sahlins' concept of kinship provides fewer tools for understanding social exchange and valuation in Mwajuma's story. How might Mwajuma induce new social roles for herself and her son within a kinship order that analogizes disability as a loss of social utility and fungibility? Mwajuma remarries and has two more children but, to the extent she explains, kinship between her new husband and her son is limited to provisioning economic support for the entire family. Though Sahlins' concept is a welcome move beyond kinship as premised on biological descent, metaphors of birth still indicate and have power within systems of valuation that make transmissions of life capacities more and less possible. How might other social intersections be analyzed—in this case, those concerned with how disability reshapes kinship—without kinship dissolving indistinguishably into broader analyses of power?

Viveiros de Castro (2012) addresses one intersection, namely gender, in his critique of Gayle Rubin's (1975) influential essay "The Traffic in Women." Rubin argues that sexuality and gender are constituted through patriarchal kinship orders in which compulsory heterosexuality activates and reproduces exchanges between men and traffics women as their objects. Viveiros de Castro, however, thinks that Rubin gives this cultural construction too much ontological priority. Instead, he makes the case for nature/culture as given simultaneously in exchange: "Men do not 'exchange women,' and women are not there for exchange; they are created by exchange" (Viveiros de Castro, 2012: 256-57). In other words, the "exchange of kinship relations" creates gender and bodies (ibid.).

But this argument seems to brazenly ignore the vast control and management of women's fertility across the world which has often been closely linked to their social value. Marilyn Strathern (1988) argues, for example, that "the Western imagination plays with the idea that mothers make babies in the same way as a worker makes a product, and that work is their value" (p. 315). As Mwajuma described, her value as a mother, wife, and woman became bound up with biological reproduction, most sharply after hearing that, "in the future she will

have the same kind of [disabled] children." Giving birth to a disabled child disrupted her subject position as a woman/mother in her first marriage insomuch as it devalued her reproductive utility, which accords with Rubin and Strathern's insights. She was able to remarry and have two children, but the extent to which this new "exchange of kinship relations" included her disabled son remains unclear. Her new husband's care approaches a limit at the metaphor of birth, straining both Mwajuma and the family. The shape kinship takes includes what is *not* created by exchange—a relationship with the other man's child who is trafficked into the relation and attenuates mutuality. These gender dynamics disappear in Viveiros de Castro's analysis because it provides no ontological priority to *any* intersecting system of valuation, even strategically, offering only an elegant proposition at the expense of tools to understand how it works. Rubin's work remains important for drawing out these distinctions, though her focus on sexuality and gender neglects other issues of embodiment. How are genders *and* bodies created through the exchange of kinship relations? What still broods or is trafficked into these relations? And what does disability have to do with it?

The conclusion of Mwajuma's story provides some edification, not as an answer, but as indicative of what other tools are needed. Back in the office, Mwajuma explains that though she is grateful to have her son attend CPFC, the enrolment process dredged up past pains. She recounts, "When I came here, they asked for the full name of my child and I told them, 'I don't want to lie to you, I consider my current husband his father. If there is information I cannot provide or another guardian is needed, it's important you know that my current husband is not his father." But CPFC, like other healthcare providers in Kenya, are legally required to log patients' medical records with a clinic card. At intake, CPFC asked Mwajuma for the name listed on her son's card. "I told them the name is his [biological] father's, which I cannot erase. When a child is born, it is required to write the child's full name and the father's full name on the clinic card. They said they needed the names on the card." She feels around in her purse

and produces the card to show me before continuing. “They told me they needed the name that appears on the child’s birth certificate. I’m so angry we have to use those names. I wanted to change them but it’s impossible. When the card is filled out after delivery, you cannot change it again.” Mwajuma’s voice is beginning to quaver now. “That’s where the pain is—I don’t want to use his name at all. Because, you see, even when we were living together, and the child was little … it was my sister who brought me baby clothes…” She breaks down into tears and I gently conclude the conversation with her.

The clinic card is a passport to care. It identifies who is legally recognized and entitled to take care of the child and through it, birth as a metaphor is imbued with state authority. As Michael Herzfeld (1992, p. 12) puts it in his analysis of the state, “The familial and bodily symbols of nationalism are not simply metaphors. They are powerful emotive magnets, and they can be, and are, deployed by capricious officials and citizens.” Unlike a name given at birth, a christening “in which naming anchors and gives form to the possibility of recognition” hailing the son as a patient “substitutes a categorical term for a proper name, and in that moment transforms interpellation into a kind of accusation in a completely nonreciprocal, nondialectical structure” (Morris, 2011: 404). The mother’s surname takes no legal priority on the clinic card nor the birth certificate, an asymmetry that defines her as an object of one husband. Rubin’s argument becomes salient, showing that gender and sexuality cannot be extricated from the study of kinship.

Missed by Rubin’s analysis of “obligatory heterosexuality” and the asymmetrical division of the sexes, is how value is assigned to the flesh and racializes bodies when kinship becomes conflated with biological descent. The proper name operates on the clinic card like an epigraph, in that it brings into relief an aesthetic form of biological descent (e.g., biological progeny in the clinic and residencies in Tudor) through which claims of social belonging are evaluated, defined, and honored. Hortense Spiller’s (1987) essay, “Mama’s Baby Papa’s

Maybe: An American Grammar Book" is instructive as it explains how gender norms become unsettled, not as an effect of liberation from patriarchy, but as an effect of bondage. Spillers argues that the primitive accumulation of Africans, destruction of kinship systems, and dehumanization in the Middle Passage

> "marked a theft of the body—a willful and violent (and unimaginable from this distance) severing of the captive body from its motive will, its active desire. Under these conditions, we lose at least gender difference in the outcome, and the female body and the male body becomes a territory of cultural and political maneuver, not at all gender-related, gender-specific" (p. 67).

The body was reduced to flesh as a "zero degree of social conceptualization"—a distinction between "captive and liberated subject-positions" (ibid.). Whereas Rubin locates oppression in the exchange of women organized to (re)produce heteronormative kinship systems, Spillers finds that the "fundamental effacement and remission of African family and proper names—offers a counter-narrative to notions of the domestic as the site of gendering" (p. 72). Trafficked across the Middle Passage were not women nor men, but "divided flesh" (p. 68) quantified and exchanged as labor power for surplus capital. Spillers concludes that "in the historic outline of dominance, the respective subject-positions of 'female' and male' adhere to no symbolic integrity" in a state of "kinlessness" (p. 66).

Spillers' argument brings to the fore the discursive and material dimensions that shape the flesh and unevenly produce bodies. These practices simultaneously deform and reform gender, race, class, and kinship in the process. Spiller's argument anticipates by nearly two decades Elizabeth Povinelli's (2006) distinction between *corporeality* and *carnality* "in terms of the difference between flesh as a juridical and political maneuver and flesh as a physical mattering forth of these maneuvers" (p. 7). In Mwajuma's case, the juridical and political aspects of biological descent, like the clinic card, legitimize birth as a metaphor and materially impact her son's care. Mwajuma's new husband has no formal obligation to care for the child, and other kinship bonds he may share through intimacies like co-habitation are not recognized. The unequal responsibilities that result create economic constraints which put housing and

other basic and disability-specific needs at risk. Juridico-political recognition is entangled with other fleshly matters too, without encompassing them. The absence of both men means Mwajuma is solely engaged in transmitting life capacities to her son, from moving him in bed, feeding him, washing him, changing his diapers, transforming his body through physiotherapy, and so forth. The grammar of care that emerges between Mwajuma and her son through intimate fleshly practice may not necessarily be articulated within other systems of valuation, creating potential threats for the reproduction of those systems. Fleshly life can be given sustenance or worn out, capacitated or debilitated, but these techniques depend critically on the criteria by which this form of life is valuable. What is suggested here, is that in addition to tracking sexuality/gender systems in the analysis of kinship, one should attend to *debility* systems too. Julie Livingston (2005) uses "debility" as a connective tissue between physiological impairments and social disabilities, something Jasbir Puar (2017) has adapted to explain the unequal, uneven processes of liberal settler colonialism in which some bodies are mattered forth as worthy of life while others may be thrown into the ocean, as Mwajuma put it. Debility systems therefore crosscut able/disabled social categories, "toggling between exceptionalizing disability and exceptional disability" (p. xvi).

This distinction draws out other aspects of kinship too. Mwajuma's son attends CPFC, described as one of the "expensive Indian schools" for "middle- and upper-class families," even though she cannot afford school fees for public education attended by other "Africans." Such racial thinking became embedded through colonial racial hierarchies that granted access to wealth and social mobility based on certain biocentric traits, indices of biological descent in the evolutionary ascent to Man, the overrepresented white European man (see Wynter 2003). In this way, the colonial system produced and collapsed patterns of racial and class difference. Contemporary Indian kinships, to the extent they transmit wealth within its own communal lines of descent, appear like a system sustaining and reproducing class and racial dominance,

a political barrier to the equitable redistribution of wealth, and constituting a genre of human made more worthy of life than "Africans." Descriptors like "expensive Indian schools" imply that Indians categorically have less debility than Africans, that Indian flesh matters more than African flesh. The divisiveness and territoriality of ingrained racial thinking brings a competitive element to kinship reproduction, advancing one's own at the expense of a racial Other. On the other hand, racial and class consciousness strengthens feelings of identification and belonging, which may create relationships less regulated by juridico-political systems. As Mwajuma noted, her sponsor from the church council is "an African like me." The implication is that this sponsor shared certain commonalities of race, class, and religion. The "sponsor" was therefore not in a privileged class and racial position and needed to mobilize support from the entire congregation.

These are not static hierarchies in practice. Wealth transmitted to Mwajuma from her community was activated through race and class distinctions while enabling an exchange of social relations between "Africans" and "Indians." Although the center serves certain social categories more than others, exchanges of kinship relations sometimes defy class and racial inequalities, even when exchanges are made possible through those very categories. Scenes of affective identification among parents and staff at the center can also abstract from these differences, an institution bridging plural kinship "systems" to bring into relief "disability" as a shared object of care and concern. In effect, relationships built at the center form life-sustaining solidarities premised on what Marcel Mauss described as "techniques of the body" (Mauss, 1934). The parents work together to exercise their children in "actions of a mechanical, physical, or physio-chemical order" that support a range of moral and conventional actions for living within various forms of life (p. 75). The techniques pursued, as seen in the gymnasium, are both recommended biomedical practices developed against the diagnostic criteria of

cerebral palsy, autism, and other multiple disabilities, as well as informed from a range of diversely situated knowledges.

Again, kinship always involves brooding. One should resist fetishizing disability care as an equalizing force of cross-cultural solidarity, an achieved pluralism which has transformed or subverted sedimented hierarchies. Rituals of producing certain kinds of bodies have analogical functions to secure continuities within certain forms of life. The enfolded uncertainties of everyday practices, incompleteness and recurrence of rituals, and unresolved nature of social relations, also suggest that these techniques of the body are not seamless "analogic flows" (Wagner 1977). Techniques of the body require ongoing work to pattern and renew social bonds which hold up sexual forms like the family, as well as broader kinds and qualities of kinship. But if efforts to "physically matter forth flesh," as Povinelli describes it, are critical ingredients in the reproduction of kinships, multiple techniques pursued by parents at CPFC are liable to create tensions.

In the following sub-sections, I explore how conflicts arise within and between competing kinship, institutional, and market value systems among parents hailing from a small diasporic community of Shi'a Khoja Ithna-Asheris of Indian descent ("Ithna-Asheri"). Brooding takes on prospective orientations that blur distinctions between kinships organized around familial, religious, and territorial limits—themselves under threat within historical trajectories of settler and neo(liberal) colonialism on the Coast—and the prospective (im)possibilities emerging from institutional care. Efforts to produce relatedness are pursued in multiple ways without settling into a single expectation structure. Rather, the parents at the school take on multiple subjunctive moods as they pursue plural routes of care, experimenting with both religious and market-driven therapeutic interventions. As parents locate and contend with the strangeness of their children's conditions, and how or whether to intervene, their children's bodies become stages of conflict around the continuity of Ithna-Asheri kinship and

community in Mombasa and the diaspora. These tensions neither cleanly rend nor reproduce sanctioned kinship idioms but diffract them through the multiple methods of care pursued. The resulting patchwork of experimental and discursive practices generate a holding space for children to become a part and apart from expectations of kinship as a structure, process, and a production of relatedness. Children grow and transform before and between the methods/acts of relating, however indeterminately, much like their parents and the Ithna-Asheri writ large. As will be shown, these kin and communities often fall out from the outside of continuous and coherent worlds but become knotted together and apart from each other in efforts of re/making them. The provisions and improvisations of producing relatedness fold back on themselves, brooding kinships as a form of life in repose while repositioning them anew over expectant and unknown horizons.

Endangered Trusts: Two Histories of "Asian" Islamic Welfare

As previously glossed, racial, and class-conscious descriptors like "expensive Indian schools" index viscerally felt and recursive reactions to abstract historical processes. On the Coast, they relate the violent racial hierarchies imposed under colonialism, which afforded "Arab" and "Asian" population greater access to capital and social mobility than those categorized as black "natives." Negative presumptions about Arab and Asian affluence rearticulate colonial racial categories which generate accusations that "Indians are not Kenyans," eliding centuries of Indian Ocean trade and migration between the Coast and subcontinent. Affirmative uses of the category "Asian" have also contributed to false categorizations. In 2017, President Uhuru Kenyatta's government officially recognized the country's Asian community as "Kenya's 44th tribe" (Verjee, 2017). Putting aside Kenyatta's politically motivated preoccupation with indigeneity and related politicking during a tight election race, the announcement exemplifies a rarefied and reductive discourse about Kenyans

of Indian descent that invents cohesion, homogeny, and shared values. This sub-section tells a different story.

In Mombasa, "Asian" relates to a heterogenous population of Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Goan Christians, and Muslims of varying sub-classes and sects. Among the Muslim Indians, there are the Sunni, which include the Baluchis, Koknis, and Memons as well as the predominantly Sunni Punjabi and Surati Muslims. Within the Shi'a community, there are Khoja Ismailis, Khoja Ithna-Asheris, and Daudi Bohras. To consider them a "tribe" is farcical even barring the manifold historical divisions which have arisen between groups (e.g., hostilities between Hindu and Muslim Indians during Partition or contemporary tensions between Ismailis and Ithna-Asheris, which date back to 19th century disputes). Frequently understated when describing Asian advancement within the colonial order is that privileges were based on *racial* hierarchies, not religious ones. The latter is central to how continuity and control over their forms of life have been repeatedly threatened, thus shaping communal resource provisions like education and charity for socially vulnerable members, including children with disabilities.

Histories of racial and religious conflict contextualize CPFC too, including the stakes of its care and tensions that emerge among parents. On the one hand, CPFC is ostensibly a "secular" disability non-profit de-linked from religious life: it employs staff across ethno-religious, geographical, and class backgrounds; provides some of the most comprehensive disability services on the Coast, aligned with globalized diagnostic assessments and therapeutic/educational interventions; solicits funding from a range of local, national, and international donors unrelated to affinity groups; and, depending on enrolment limits, accepts any child who can be connected with a sponsorship or afford attendance fees. On the other hand, the center is supported and sought after by an unusual number of Ithna-Asheri Muslim families. Neither of these aspects are coincidences.

To an outsider, the center's religious dimensions are non-obvious because the center is managed through a *trust*, part of property traceable to Ithna-Asheris settlers who first arrived in East Africa in the late 19th century. The first settlers migrated from Gujarat and religious like Karbala, Iraq, to Zanzibar, and later settled on the Coast, primarily on Mombasa Island and Lamu near the Somali border. The center's trust is central for understanding how Muslim communities like the Ithna-Asheri have (re)organized religious life, extended charity, and reproduced community in the diaspora since arriving in Kenya during colonialism. Needs desires, and knowledge valuable to this community are entangled with practices of caring for disabled children too. These histories also help contextualize and problematize perceptions of "Asians" as self-segregated outsiders ("*wageni*") in ways that have rarely been examined in Mombasa.

Since the 7th century, Muslims have established pious, communal properties known as *waqf*s to organize land rights, inheritance, and charity, among other social and spiritual functions. *Waqfs* are revenue-generating and -consuming properties established by an endower and held in trust by a custodian who apportions funds to beneficiaries. *Waqf*s therefore ensure public and private transmissions of wealth, providing socio-economic security and spiritual rewards for endowers' progeny and for public welfare, including Qur'anic education, religious centers, water provisioning, and healthcare (see (Barnes 1986; van Leeuwen 1999; Hennigan 2004; Chembea, 2017). Although *waqf*s exist today, they had operated outside political institutions before colonialism, managed under the jurisdiction of *khadi* courts. As such, the *waqf* sat "at the interface of private property and various religious foundations…[making] it an obvious instrument for exerting influence in many spheres of Muslim life" (Carmichael, 1997: 299).

As a cornerstone of religious discourse, public welfare, and social reproduction, it was "not surprising that the British sought a role in *waqf* management" (ibid.) at the dawn of

colonialism. When the Coast came under the British administration in 1895, the colonial government established "a wide range of secular policies and civil institutions to control resources, establish capitalist economy and consolidate political hegemony… [which] restructured traditional institutions impacting normative precepts on *waqf*s in the region" (Chembea, 2017: 92.) The Coast, known as the ten-mile strip, had been leased from the Sultan of Zanzibar through treaties to resolve political control and recognition between Germany and Britain during Africa's partition. Its unusual legal status positioned Muslims on the ten-mile strip as both British-protected persons and subjects of the Sultan, which enabled them to own land (Brennan, 2008). On the ground, the Sultan's authority was nominal, not exerted. Absent oversight, the British exploited vague and overlapping territorial spheres of influence between colonial common law, Islamic *sharia*, and Swahili and Mijikenda "customary" law (*mila*) to claim all "un-owned" land for the Crown (p. 853). Policies like the Land Title Ordinances, introduced between 1902 and 1908, deepened Muslim dispossession, requiring title holders to present evidence to the Land Registration Court. Most people lacked title deeds and were rendered squatters.

Land alienation intensified as jurisdiction over *waqf*s transferred from *kadhi* courts to indirect British oversight. Extricating *khadi* influence created an authority vacuum filled by the *Waqf* Commission of Kenya ("WCK") under the *Waqf* Commissioner Act ("*Waqf* Act"). The WCK followed colonial divide and rule logic whereby Muslims loyal to the Crown were appointed and charged with managing *waqf* policies. Breaking with Coastal legal discourses, the Commission installed a new system based on "an eclectic patchwork of provisions taken from various schools of Islamic law and…applied without distinction of sectarian differences to all local Muslims" (Mathews, 2013: 144). Constraints were imposed on communal uses and distributions of *waqf* proceeds, empowering the WCK to act in place of the endowers and communities (See Chembea, 2017: 59-80). Without title deeds nor material resources (leaving

aside the impact of lapsed spiritual merits (*sawāb*) and divine closeness (*qurba*) inextricably linked to the use of *waqf*s), it became difficult to consecrate new *waqf*s or replace those dispossessed, ultimately severing welfare support (see Hennigan, 2004).

These policies advanced colonial efforts to reshape kinships in ways productive for capital, and mold autonomous, self-contained families profitable for wage labor. Islamic charity was subversive in this regard because it induced unregulated bonds of dependency. The Africa Property Preservation Ordinance in 1916 became one way to crib dependencies, limiting the sale, leasing, and "pledging by any means whatsoever" of immovable property (Anderson, 2008; Chembea, 2017). Property could only be pledged to "a member of an African tribe inhabiting such area and residing therein" (ibid.) even though Islamic charity is not based on race, ethnicity, or locality. Blocked from this religious function, Muslims failed to consecrate *waqf*s or had to defer to the WCK, which undermined their authority and control over wealth and resources.

Unlike other non-African Muslims, Indians were prohibited from establishing *waqf*s within the terms of the *Waqf* Act. The Act defines "Muslims" as "an Arab, a member of the Twelve Tribes [Mijikenda], a Baluchi, a Somali, a Comoro Islander, a Malagasy, or a native of Africa, of the Muslim faith" (Anderson, 2008). It became illegal for Indians to establish heritable property for religious undertakings, which set them apart from Arabs and African Muslims on the Coast. Many of these policies also made it impossible for Indians to use *waqf*s to renew spiritual and kinship ties across the diaspora, as they could neither receive wealth as non-Africans nor send it as unrecognized Muslims (Chembea, 2021). Resistance to these policies put a spotlight on Indians' denominational and geographical interests outside Coastal Muslim communities and Kenya which marked them as outsiders. As Islamic welfare scholar Suleiman Chembea argues, "It is no wonder that there are very few *waqfs* by non-African Muslims in the WCK registry … [it] is possible to argue that they either did not register their

waqfs as required or resorted to other charitable institutions besides *waqfs*" (Chembea, 2018: 70). These constraints set the tone for Muslim charity from the colonial to contemporary eras.

Colonial policies also disrupted Qur'anic education as revenues supporting *madrasas* and orphanages became designated for other uses. The British did not generally use education "as a tool for extending state power in the Muslim community" (Carmichael, 1997: 303). Muslim education eroded through neglect and under-resourcing, cascaded by indirect causes (colonial disruption of religious structures, an overfocus on developing markets near white Highlands' settlements, and the spread of missionary schools) (pp. 303-306). Formal education expanded through mission schools which were avoided by Muslims who resisted the evangelization of their children. An overall decline in formal education made Coastal Muslims less competitive with Christian counterparts for jobs and civil service appointments. The decline of Qur'anic schools also prevented cultural scholars and legal teachers (*ulama* and *fuqaha*) from imparting religious discourses (Sanjuan, 2007). In the post-Independence era, the Kenyan state retained colonial *waqf* policies and left Coastal welfare services un(der)funded, while making "secular" education compulsory for all citizens—all of which have fed into notions of "*Pwani si Kenya*" that connect Muslim exceptionalism to Coastal peripheralization today.

Importantly, colonial policies were unevenly applied and resisted, and enabled Muslims to evade state control. Or rather, *some* Muslims regained and retained authority over *waqf*s, often through contradictory state and religious policy implementation. For example, the British recognized the authority of "ethnic Arab *liwalis* (regional governors) … as de facto rulers of Indians and African Muslims" (Chembea, 2021: 255), but suspended *liwalis* authority over family *waqf*s to protect only "those that represented the social status of Arabs while invalidating some owned by non-Arabs for alleged inconsistencies with the Sharia, or even use their revenue against prescribed purposes" (ibid.). Indirect and divide-and-rule tactics

recognized sovereignty selectively, allowing some landowners to control property, like the Mazrui family, at the expense of other non-Arab groups. Most notably, the Mijikenda and Swahili still contest land ownership, visible in conflicts between Mombasa Cement, the Mazrui, Mijikenda "squatters," and the local government. The Mazrui retained Coastal lands by securing them in private trusts independent of both the WCK and other public beneficiaries. The Mazrui Lands Trust deed nevertheless requires properties to be administered under *sharia* law, stating that "*waqf* land cannot be sold, but the benefit accruing thereof may be enjoyed, leased, transmitted and/or passed on to the next generation" (Chembea, 2017: 106). In effect, they were able to consecrate the property and secure Islamic charity by nesting *sharia* law within vehicles of common law.

Since the 1980s, Muslims have left state controlled *waqf*s for charitable alternatives, like almsgiving in voluntary (*sadaqah*) and obligatory (*zaqat*) practices organized through "private trusts and community-based associations including non-governmental organizations (NGOs)" (p. 105). Invisible webs of local and (trans)national connections support many non-profits in Mombasa, including CPFC, which operates through a non-labelled *waqf*. CPFC is managed by a trust held by members of the Ithna-Asheri diaspora. These are quiescent features of CPFC, in part because modesty and anonymity are valuable in Muslim charity (see Khan, 1979), and conceal pious donations such as funds gifted to construct CPFC's second floor, or donations received during its quarterly international food festivals. These donations suggestively align with Iqbal Akhtar's (2016, p. 77) observations that "[h]istorically, Khōjā donations to the community were made in two areas: communal feasts and building-construction projects." But these ambiguities are also driven by the "war on terror" which has made it risky to openly display Islamic affiliations, which may open organizations to investigation/audits, suspicions of being conduits for terrorism, and/or reducing non-religious donor funding (Chembea, 2020).

Outside CPFC's general mission statement and public funding, which are well-aligned with development industry standards, the center attracts an unusual number of Ithna-Asheri families—unusual because the Ithna-Asheri are a minority community with only around 2,000 members living across Kenya. Historical disenfranchisement has led Coastal Muslims to turn to charitable welfare associations before the government, resulting in a "peculiar model of social work based on the rejection of strict political affiliations, and often on a diversified input from their (trans-)local constituencies" (Challand, 2014: 56). The possibility that CPFC might offer resources aligned with the interests of affinity groups like this one was largely speculative, not promised. As Chembea (2020, p. 159) writes, "[placing] prominence on religious solidarity and the social fabric of the *umma* does not…suggest that Muslim charities are entirely 'religious' in operation or that non-Muslims are not entitled to charity." Distinctions between the "religious" and "secular" were blurry, but fed expectations of the center's services, which superimposed a specific affective scene of identification.

Religious distinctions were made explicit when criticisms surfaced that CPFC did not offer *madrasa* services. This gap was not unique to the CPFC though. Until 2017 there had never been a *madrasa* for children with disabilities on the Coast. The Qur'an requires people with disabilities to take up faithful practices to the extent they are able, and there are rarely special affordances beyond charitable support. The degree to which people with disabilities are accountable to Islamic practice is moreover flexible, unless an impairment affects one's judgement, which may cause greater suspensions of participation and rights. Even in this regard, accountability is often unclear. As Stefania Pandolfo (2018, p. 261) explains, with respect to Islam and mental illness, difficulties ascertaining appropriate commitments to religious training and devotion may protect "those who have been struck by madness or possession from being arbitrarily denied their status within the community and divested of their rights and property." The foggy lines between inclusion and exclusion leave it up to parents to

provide instruction at home as/if they see fit, in the absence of services. Coupled with CPFC's tenuous religious affiliation, it is unsurprising it did not offer *madrasa* services, even in view of *waqf*s' role in educational provision.

One of CPFC's teachers took a firmer stand on the issue, however, quitting the center to start her own *madrasa* for disabled children, frustrated by what she voiced as a low commitment to religious education. Toward the end of fieldwork, several "non-profits," including CPFC and a handful of similar centers in Mombasa Island and Nyali, had quickly followed suit and created a *madrasa* option too, typically at an extra cost. These schools are tacitly competitive, and parents often quietly use several simultaneously depending on the services provided.

There were differences of opinion about the type of religious training on offer. The teacher who defected from CPFC, for example, provides a *madrasa* open to all Muslim sects, focused on general learnings like the Arabic alphabet and numbers, and memorization/recitation of *suras*. Some parents were relieved to have access to *any* manner of disability-friendly service, even if (ostensibly) non-sect specific. But others were more selective. As one mother explained, CPFC's new *madrasa* offering seemed better suited to her values than others with new services: "I heard about this school from another member of my community…I am part of a 'community' so I would not be comfortable with my son attending another sect's *madrasa*. They read the same Qur'an, but we have different ways of life and interpretations of the Qur'an. I want my son to learn as a member of the Shi'a." From my uninitiated perspective, I noted Shi'a elements only when they became obvious. During one musical lesson, the teacher sang general jingles to memorize animal names, Arabic numerals, and the alphabet. But sometimes these songs would include didactic references, like "A is for Ali," a reference to Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's cousin, son-in-law, and companion, whom the Shi'a esteem as the divine successor of the Prophet.

Training carried out within the Shi'a "discursive tradition" (Asad, 1986) has been increasingly important to the Ithna-Asheri amidst concerns about the survival and continuity of their sect's identity. The composition of Ithna-Asheri "identity" and its minority status in Kenya emerges across dynamic and complex histories between India, the Coast, and the Near East. And they further underscore how associational sites like CPFC become valuable for creating linkages across deterritorialized members, and for supplying resources outside or unavailable from the state. These issues relate to broader entanglements of care and kinship at CPFC, which cannot be understood solely from transformations following British colonialism. Before returning to scenes at the center, I overview a second historical perspective framing concerns around Ithna-Asheri identity and kinship, connected yet distinct from (post)colonial state regulations and instruments like *waqf*s.

The "Khoja" emerged as a new ethnic caste in the medieval era when Muslim and Hindu saints converted multivocal Indic subcastes into Islam (Akhtar, 2016). The Khoja migrated extensively across the sub-continent for centuries, absorbing communities through trade, and finally settling in Gujarat in the 18th century. By the 19th century, the Khoja's formidable trading network spanned the Indian Ocean region from Karachi and Bombay to Muscat, Mogadishu, and Zanzibar. The caste's growing power and diversity heightened disagreements over religious traditions, wealth, and modern concepts of political organization. A schism arose when Aga Sultan Mohamed Shah (Aga Khan I) travelled from Persia to Bombay in the mid 19th century claiming his hereditary succession as the Khoja's Imam. Debates between Khoja elders and Shah were heard by colonial judges at the Bombay high court over two trials. Khoja identity was the central matter, weighed with evidence of biological, familial, and religious descent and inheritance against a reductive and racialized penal code, which variably identified the Khoja as Sunnis, Hindus, and Shias. The judge ruled in favor of Aga Khan, who produced evidence linking the Khoja to Ismaili descendants of Ali

ibn Abi Talib in Persia. After the decision, the Khoja split into three Islamic sects: the Ismaili, Ithna-Asheri, and Sunni. These "sects" do have distinctions with respect to the authority of the Prophet Muhammad's successors, but religious and caste differences transformed most when new kinship prohibitions severed the Ithna-Asheri from inter-Khoja marriage, exchange, residency patterns, language, and historical memory.

Following the schism, the Aga Khan outcasted the Ithna-Asheri. He highlighted their religious differences but enacted divisions by prohibiting family alliances and the exchange of women. Again, Rubin's emphasis on exchange remains critical here, pace Viveiros de Castros critique. Sultan Mohamed Shah (Aga Khan III) visited Zanzibar in 1899 and formally severed kinship ties by blocking the "giving" and "taking" of daughters. Women were critical mediums, borders, and objects of (re)producing patrilineal caste distinctions. During his visit, he declared to Ismaili settlers,

> Your faith and their faith is different… There are many other traditions that are much closer to you than the Ithnā ʿAsharī. What of the belief that "we were originally one"? How are we to understand this? You are unjust giving your daughters to the Ithnā ʿAsharī. Taking daughters from them or giving daughters to them, that is a great evil" (p. 72, citing H.B Māstar, 1909).

Ithna-Asheri migrations intensified during this period, and those who were intermarried with Ismailis, including those already living in the diaspora, faced traumatic family exclusions and dissolutions without a place to return. Disconnected from their ancestral homeland and unmoored from and within kinship structures, the Ithna-Asheri began to refigure and erase historical materials and memories linking them with the Khoja caste's Indic heritage.

In lieu of Indic heritage, the Ithna-Asheri have adopted narratives of Near Eastern Islamic religious identity and ritual practice to become "purely 'Muslim' in religion and culture" (p. 4), which has shaped their settlement patterns and transnational affiliations. Although Ithna-Asheri supporters were a minority in 19th century Bombay, the sect's religious reorientation appealed to Khoja settlers in Oman and Zanzibar who were already habituated to living within Islamic-Arab societies. The East African littoral therefore became a robust

location to consolidate and build Ithna-Asheri communities. Coastal members have also deepened ties with the Near East in pursuit of recognition, participation, and an authorial voice in pan-Shia discourses. They draw on powerful connections to Karbala, Iraq in everyday practices and holy rituals, which is a potent idiom of world destruction and salvation—the site where Husayn ibn Ali (Ali's son) and his company fell as martyrs in the Battle of Karbala, and the birthplace Shiism as a distinct religious sect. Ithna-Asheri's deference and uptake of politicized postrevolutionary Iranian Shiism later sought legitimation of their historical roots, further distinguishing them from the Ismaili who have "favored Westernization," with descent recognized by "appeals to British colonial authority" (p. 91).

Migration and religious engagement to and from East Africa and the Near East have conferred Coastal Ithna-Asheri an insular cosmopolitanism that dislocates them from the Kenyan nation-state and neighboring communities, as well as their Khoja "roots" in India and Shi'a "routes" into the Near East (Gilroy, 1993). Language has driven these dis/connections. Routes into Iran and Iraq have depended on learning religious texts written in Arabic and Persian, languages unfamiliar to most Ithna-Asheri in the 19th century who had relied on oral recitation rather than reading. Access became possible through print capitalism beginning in the 19th century when an Indian publisher, Gulāmalī Ismā'il, transliterated and printed over 400 religious texts and disseminated them across the diaspora. Arabic and Persian (greatly dissimilar to Gujarati) were transliterated by way of Urdu into Qu'ranic Gujarati, (pp. 87-117). These innovations shifted Ithna-Asheri identity from a caste to a religious focus through common language and global media circulation, which are core to their cohesion today (see Mizra, 2014). But new routes also eroded knowledge of pre-existing Khoja scripts commonly used by Indic merchants (e.g., Khōjkī), further severing past roots (Akhtar, 2016).

In addition to Gujarati, many Ithna-Asheri spoke Swahili given their long connection with East African traders, which has produced unique littoral dialects. Despite these new roots,

the "Asian trading class and the whole enterprise of the Omani-Zanzibar commercial empire was subordinated to British colonization" (Akhtar, 2016: 8, citing Sheriff 1987) and today, differences in language can also accent enduring race and class tensions. From the standpoint of Near Eastern Shi'a centers, polyglotism signals profanity when holy texts and rituals are conducted in Indic and African vernaculars rather than Arabic/Persian, creating a "prejudice against Indians as idolaters" (p. 183). Intersecting effects of European colonialism and South-South power asymmetries place Ithna-Asheri precariously inside and out from several worlds, caught in "an irreconcilable tension between the Indic ancestry of the Khōjā and their Near Eastern spiritual forbearers" (p. 183).

Given this large number of restrictions between British racial classes, *waqf* heritability, and religious-caste sectarianism, Ithna-Asheri kinship took shape through endogamy, not an incest taboo mandating exogamous reproduction (Lévi-Strauss, 1966). Alliance and descent are entangled with socio-historical, linguistic, and religious values that imbue blood with value, irreducible to a biological grounding as "natural links of kinship" (Schneider, 1984: 165). Consecrating ties in centers of religious authority through the diaspora, *waqf*s, and religious deference, creates significant limitations to "interpellate connection-by affinity" (Sandoval, 2002: 20) as some scholars have underscored in contexts where relatedness is produced outside the nuclear heterosexual family unit. On the other hand, they forge strong bonds of kinship through a robust networks far in excess to the "elementary family" as the most fundamental structuring unit (Radcliffe-Brown, 1941: 2).

Today, these restrictions are matters of debate against a declining Ithna-Asheri population (approximately 120,000 globally), raising difficult questions about the community's continuity. These concerns are taken up in transnational, bureaucratic associations like the Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna Asheri Jamaats of Africa, created in 1945, and The World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities, created after the

1970s Indian expulsions in East Africa. They act as de facto embassies to support members with resources ranging from passports to social welfare, as well as collaborating on religiopolitical agendas to advance Shiism and humanitarian assistance at a qualitatively different scale than non-profit models (Akhtar, 2016; see also KhojaPedia, a meticulous Ithna-Asheri archival and genealogical project). Among these organizations' wealth of publications, an influential guidebook circulated in 2012 called *The Endangered Species*. In a foreword by Hasnain Walji, who served as President of the World Federation, asks if the Ithna-Asheri will "survive two or more generations… [a] question [which] becomes all the more crucial, in view of the fact that, now that the new generation, far more engaged in the mainstream, is questioning the insularity of the community" (pp. 3-4). Although the Ithna-Asheri in East Africa have persevered through threats, albeit "under different influences," other diasporic members did not endure (ibid.). Walji remarks that settlers in Fiji retained their faith in Islam (notwithstanding conversion to Sunnism) but lost a shared language and culture, and those who travelled to the Caribbean "fared worse" and lost language, culture, *and* faith (ibid.). He calls on the Ithna-Asheri to heed the *nasihat* [advice/good counsel] of Iraqi Shi'a spiritual leader, Ayatollah Sistani, to unify people through these three elements, and thereby "bring people together in their own family" and enable "the religious attachment and its principles to be transmitted from generation to generation" (p. 9).

Parents' decisions at CPFC to adopt or avoid approaches for their children's care coincide with this guidance and impact prospects of passing down "endangered" discursive traditions. One mother, for example, rejected teaching her non-verbal son sign-language, nearly outraged by the suggestion:

> "The therapist suggested [sign language] to help him communicate because he has hand coordination. *But he can hear*. And our communication is growing. If I am drinking something, he indicates that he wants it too. Sometimes I don't know what he wants, fine. But I can talk to him a bit more now. When I talk to him in English, Swahili, and Gujarati, he understands all three languages. In the Shi'a community we speak in several languages. I also know Urdu and Kutch—everything except Hindi. So why would I have him learn sign language when I can improve his speech? Sign language can wait."

Hearing, speech, and mental faculties, like judgment, are highly valued for transmitting and practicing Islamic discursive traditions, premised on the reception, recitation, and style of delivery (see Meziane, 2021 who describes the Qur'an and Muslims' moral protest as untranslatable to the "*deafness*" of state secularism, unable to hear Islamic "vocal gestures"; see also Hirschkind, 2009). Decisions to refuse treatments that expand communication become a hinge on which inclusion into their form of life rests, as a family unit and a people; the Ithna-Asheri's roots and routes for belonging bend at the touch when and where reliable settlement may be found, while their insularity has powerfully collapsed scales of separation to bind them together.

In view of these histories, care at CPFC that may seem unexceptional within development frameworks proves integral, however indirectly or subtly, for imparting discursive practices. In a context like CPFC, where institutional and parental input inevitably combine into mixed methods, shaping children's fleshly capacities to steer future possibilities creates risky flashpoints over the values and prospects of kinship. I explore these issues in my discussions with a mother named Shelina, who pursued a repertoire of emic and etic methods to rehabilitate her two sons, practices which have incited epistemological and moral conflicts with her husband, in-laws, and religious community. Kinship becomes questioned and un/settled at various registers, including its capacity to order socio-religious and biological descent/alliance, transmit life-capacities (including the value of what is transmitted and the transmission process itself), and produce relations aligned with Ithna-Asheri discourse. I show that how competing discourses coincide within a form of life while generating conflicts within prospective orientations and their temporal structures of expectation.

Navigating Care and Cruelty, Hope and Faith

Back in the speech pathology office, I am waiting on Shelina to finish her part in the physical therapy exercises. I had heard about Shelina from other parents, who spoke with a mix of envy, curiosity, and doubt about her recent endeavor: Shelina had taken her son to India for stem cell therapy, a cutting-edge treatment for autism promising more efficacious and efficient results. Her trip indexed possibilities beyond Mombasa—better medical knowledge, accelerated therapies, and even cures to vaguely defined neurodevelopmental conditions which required patient and taxing work to treat. One mother framed it this way:

> You have to do *a lot* of research to understand your child's condition. My sister gave birth to a child with cerebral palsy. So, when my daughter was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, when it came to me, we realized the condition is on my father's side, it's with him. You need to learn more than just *where* it comes from though. We talk to family around the world, and my sisters-in-law sent me WhatsApp groups for cerebral palsy. I hear about a lot about new therapies on those groups.

After inquiring about these therapies, the mother mentioned that "a member of my community… she is at this school too. She gave her son stem cell therapy. It's a transplant from cells in the bone marrow and it's very safe, it has no disadvantages. A doctor travelled here from India who told us about stem cells, and I have been researching it a lot since meeting him." Despite the mother's initial confidence, another mood followed:

> They're still in research and development for the treatment, so I am at least 50% sure… But if it would do something… If it would do something, and I had the opportunity to go to India, I would go. But it is expensive round trip. In Mombasa, we don't have access to treatments like they have in other places. Even in Nairobi, people are more advanced, more on to it, more up to date. You hear a lot of negativity here, and even now, no one can tell me what type of cerebral palsy my son has, which might be possible if I went somewhere else.

The mother's comments struck familiar binaries figuring the "local" as ignorant, poor, and temporally lagging vis-à-vis the global as innovative, wealthy, and "up to date." They follow with Povinelli's (2006) analysis of kinship and intimacy as products of imperialism, which emerge from the false choice between two discourses, the "autological subject" of individual freedom and the "genealogical subject" of sociological constraint. The "intimate event" describes a moment of love where "the autological subject expresses herself most profoundly

and where genealogical constraint expresses itself more purely" (p. 82). Scholars writing on diasporic kinships have adopted this idea to pursue postcolonial critiques that "separate intimacy and genealogy, to open up new ways of seeing and experiencing sociality" (Adair, 2019: 16). Likewise, these discourses inform how the mother understands cerebral palsy as both an inheritance and an object of medical knowledge and treatment available only to the socially mobile. Within these criteria, kinship explains the origin and givenness of cerebral palsy without explaining what is given (which blocks care), and the medical market explains and remedies what is given without concern of uneven access in differently situated forms of life (which blocks kinship).

And yet, this false choice need not read as a profound or pure separation of incommensurate discourses; the intimate event superimposes the two grammars too. The mother uses medical diagnoses to identify the problem, not within genealogy tout court, but patrilineal descent, which absolves her mother, sister, and herself from any associated blame. Likewise, her frustrated desires for medical commodities and knowledge connects not only to economic and geographical mobility, but diasporic kinship with her sisters-in-law. She expresses be/longing that bridges the autological and genealogical, kinship and intimacy, in a middle-class, transnational, and feminist grammar too. News that another woman in her community has achieved this is energizing, a mood prevailing over other arguments and doubts (whether science works, etc.). My conversation with Shelina develops in a similar manner, between false choices of secular medical discourse and Ithna-Asheri discursive traditions. Some compromise is achieved even as negotiations reach stalemates, but subjunctive slippages between kinship as a system and a process do not resolve in a coherent expectation structure. Instead, children are positioned at the limits of these differing kinship imaginaries, on courses steered but not determined.

Finally, Shelina arrives, and we exchange greetings. She is tall and lean, dressed in a black *buibui* with silver hoop earrings. She is high-energy. She sits down and starts into the conversation unprompted. "Whenever you talk about it, you feel there is help coming." She continues, describing her children, "My first born is normal, he just turned 13, and then I have two more sons. One is eight, turning nine, and the other one just turned 12. Number two and three are autistic. The eight-year-old had the stem cells." The conversation overflows with stories that resist a linear narrative, and I always feel a step behind her. Somewhere in the middle, she describes the birth of her first son with autism, Abbas.

Shelina had a relatively easy pregnancy, free of illness, delayed labor, or other warning signs. After delivery, Abbas was bathed, dried, and presented to her for prayers. She inspected her son's body and became alarmed that Abbas had six fingers on both hands. "I got them cut, the last ones. I got them cut immediately." But there were other physical signs that concerned her. "His head looked like it was *heavy*, and there was a line on his head from the front to the back, a separation." She took turns with her mother and sister massaging Abbas' head in the days preceding his *aqiqah*, a rite of passage for shaving the newborn's hair, which includes a ritually anointing the head with saffron, charitable donations of silver or gold (per the weight of hair), and an offering of meat to Allah. The head, still soft after delivery, was gently reshaped with natural oils and homeopathic herbs until the line disappeared. Shelina described the massage as a "traditional Arab practice using a mixture of herbs," but similar rituals are performed across the Indian Ocean. It may draw on Zanzibari practices, for example, where newborn rituals include therapeutic massages with coconut oil to strengthen joints, often mixed with curative herbs to prevent illness and protect from spiritual evil. During these exercises, Shelina noticed physical traits she could not be manually transform, including Abbas' ears, which were "melting inward with strange indents" and "a protruding growth." This list of unusual signs, understood through touch and ritual practices, became worrying. "I thought

maybe this is a mutation… if there are physical problems, maybe there was something wrong in the brain too? Things were not right."

Correcting some of the outward signs eased her. Shelina resisted jumping to conclusions and fell into a relaxed rhythm during the first few months, as she had with her first child. But as Abbas approached six months of age, her fears returned, and she began observing behaviors during his first year that she could not explain:

> When he was six months old, he had delays that were not very worrying at first. But at eight months, then nine months, it was time to start speaking. 'Mama,' is all he would say. He would say 'mama' to everything, not just me. We would look at him and try to make him respond but he would take no interest. Then he would look at the TV. He was fixated on the TV. If you stood in front of it, he would crawl around you to look. I had my mother look after him when I went to work and when I returned in the evenings to pick him up, he would stare at the moon. His eyes would always be on the moon. Or he would stare at the car and *tuktuk* lights. Always staring at lights. By one year he still was not speaking. He even stopped saying 'mama.' I say, 'Abbas, say mama' and he would have no reaction.

Abbas' interest in the moon concerned Shelina's husband too, who saw it as indicative of *jinn* possession. "My husband told me this is a sign of evil. He is an educated man in the Qur'anic texts and is a leader in the mosque… He has a lot of degrees but no 'formal' education. He would tell me, 'Abbas is tempted by the moon like he is under a spell.' And he would ask me if I did this thing or that thing when I was pregnant, but I told you, everything was normal."

Her husband encouraged her to bring Abbas to an Imam for recitations, and to begin *madrasa* classes and training in the Qur'an, but she had reservations. "We spent a year bringing him to the Imam. They said, get him a teacher, read him the Qur'an. I was thinking, maybe it's time to see a pediatrician? I took him for recitations and to the *madrasa*." The teachers did not understand him and when Abbas heard the prayer call, he would put his hands over his ears; it was too much stimulation. The religious leaders and teachers were concerned. "They told me a *jinn* is controlling him. Of course, they blamed me. Our community is more interested in blame than disability." The accusations are linked to women's role as the moral and material borders of the caste (see also Nagar, 2000 on *mut'a* or Ithna-Asheri "temporary marriage" practices, which heighten regulations over women's sexuality on the basis of reproduction and

caste purity) Nevertheless, Shelina had fidelity to the idea, especially because she perceived Abbas as having unwieldly strength, which frightened her. She describes it as improbably super-human:

> Even when he was very young, he was strong-willed. When he got to three, four years old he would fight with me if he wanted something, and he was *very* strong. He could move a whole cupboard! He would move the whole fridge, I swear, he had the strength. That boy is like spiderman. I remember when he had bronchitis—it was so severe—and we would try to take his temperature and three men would have to hold him down! So, when the [Imam] said he would do rituals to stop the *jinn*, telling me it's in his soul, part of me thought, he must be right.

The Imam sought to "contain" the *jinn*'s power that itself ties to the soul so it would no longer have volition over his behavior. The efforts proved enervating for Shelina. "I kept bringing him for recitations, and we never saw a change. I was tired."

Shelina pled with her husband to try other methods, to pursue medical cures alongside spiritual ones. "I told him how I saw physical problems when he was born, that Abbas should see a doctor. My husband did not listen. By now he was three, so we wasted a year and a half." Abbas' behavior changed, including incessant and seemingly involuntary leg kicking, and he would hit himself with his hand when he became upset. Shelina visited a doctor independently, fearing self-injury and described the behavior she could not explain. "I told the doctor; Abbas will arrange everyone's shoes and the cups in lines, from the bedroom to the door outside, from smallest to largest. If the line was not perfect, he'll mend it. The doctor typed 'autism' and turned his laptop to show me. That's when I knew something else was going on." Shelina had an assessment conducted and Abbas was diagnosed with autism and ADHD. Equipped with new knowledge, Shelina presented it to her family.

She first shared the news with her mother, who was supportive. "My mother never went to school, but she understands; she's so aware. If you talk about medication, she understands—even things in the new generation, if you explain them to her once, she gets it. So, she understood from the start." Her husband however, never accepted the diagnosis. Shelina explained that autism is an incurable condition with no known cause; it can affect anyone

anywhere. Her husband countered, "That is not possible. Why? Is this something in your family?" He argued that it was an inherited curse:

> Now that I knew Abbas' diagnosis, I realized that my uncle, my mother's cousin, has an autistic daughter. But still, [the doctors] do not know what causes autism. So, I told my husband my uncle's daughter is autistic, I think, based on the knowledge I have now. Maybe someone on my mother's side? She had trouble, issues falling down—we didn't know what the problem was. She was fine until the age of three and then fell unconscious, but there were no doctors or schools where she lived—she was in Witu near Lamu—so they told her it was a bad spirit, a *jinn*. My husband now had something to point to, 'you see, it is a curse in your family, and now it's with you.'

Shelina spoke in a new grammar of individual diagnosis: Abbas is autistic, her niece is autistic, her mother might have an undiagnosed medical condition too. Her husband, by contrast, found a spiritual corruption transmitted by descent, which unlike a "mutation," has a moral valence. There are no errors, only mistakes that invite evils inextricable from the biological. But Shelina made a rebuttal within the husband's criteria too: "Hold on *baba*, you have a cousin who is mad, so there is madness in your house too!" She emphasized that her husband "was one of two children to survive out of seven siblings, and the last born also had problems." The conversation came to a standstill. "We got nowhere," Shelina remarks.

Shelina tried a second line of argument to vindicate herself from blame. If it were from her family, she contended, her first born would not have been "normal." But birth was *not* a metaphor that gave coherence to kinship, and her husband rejected her reasoning. "He said the first born was just luck… I'm sure you've heard, there is a Swahili myth that the first born gets lucky and problems find the second child," Shelina explained. But I had not heard this "myth." She clarifies that people talk about problems from "marriages with your first cousin"—that the likelihood of a birth defect increases with each successive birth. There had been cross-cousin marriages on both sides of the family, but Shelina restricts the argument: "I am out of this category—my husband and I are not cousins, so we dismissed this idea." This limited scope avoids implications of endogamous marriage on both partners' lines and debate about the "myth" reaches another standstill on the basis of alliance. The Ithna-Asheri's unique historical constraints have put pressure on the incest taboo as a structuring force. Pace Rubin, loosening

the incest taboo (which Rubin argues suppresses human androgyny) entails a crisis of valuation for mattering forth the flesh, and intensifies the policing of women's bodies rather than liberating it from sexuality/gender constraints.

Talk of endogamy was curiously common in fieldwork conversations. I had debated the issue with local health professors a few weeks after arriving in Mombasa, concerned with its implications of biological determinism. As one professor remarked, "the traditional practices among Muslims and Swahilis favor cross-cousin marriage and might have a hand in many cases of disability. We do not know its impact on mutation, genetic drift, and gene flow in the Swahili community." Despite my wariness, most Ithna-Asheri interlocutors I spoke with mentioned the "myth" of endogamy without my prompting it, while also personally distancing themselves from it ("we" but not "me"). Concerns about this "myth" take up difficult conversations on how to adjust in the face of historical threats and divisions, which have organized the community's insularity, without losing its continuity of values. For example, *Endangered Species* (2012, pp. 481-6) advises the community to reduce marriages within close knit families to ensure its continuity, recommending greater diaspora engagement with "Khoja Shia Communities of Indo-Pakistani origin …[who] we have much cultural affinity" as well as "Arab and Irani societies with whom we share a common faith."

Kinship is not an intractable structure. It is composed of converging, contingent, and alterable patterns for organizing how relations are figured and transform. Kinship is predicated on and by affective capacities to forge and find value in such attachments (recall similar arguments about infrastructure in Section One). Lévi-Strauss (1966, p. 93) too acknowledged that taboo and transgression are linked, that the latter can entail the former: "As the myth explains: had the Wawilak sisters not committed incest and polluted the water hole of Yurlunggur there would have been neither life nor death, neither copulation nor reproduction on the earth, and there would have been no cycle of seasons." Transgression and taboo are two

sides of the same coin. The authority of kinship relations is reversible, which can be said of any nominal or institutional authority. This openness saturates structures with potential, their capacity to generate care and cruelty, love and violence (Whitmarsh, 2014).

That said, there are limits to how reversible authority may be in certain times and spaces, and though endogamy and mutation may be correlated, disability cannot be reduced to biocentric traits. This is suggested in Shelina's third argument to her husband: She had researched autism on the internet after the doctor's visit and learned that children around the world have been diagnosed with the condition. She showed her husband videos of children with autism in Western countries. "I said, 'look, *hata wazungu* [even white people] have it. Their kids have the same behaviors. It's its own thing that can affect anyone. So, if these people have it and *their* doctors don't know where it comes from, how can it come from me?" Her husband was unwavering, and he cautioned Shelina that the condition "is a trial of faith from God." Presuming the son's condition were an accident that could befall anyone, whether a biological consequence or not, tread dangerously near idolatrous innovation [*bid'ah*]. They reached no agreement on the legitimacy of the diagnosis nor its ethical consequences but decided to pursue both medical and religious methods, nevertheless.

Shelina's hopes for effective medical treatments intensified in the face of early setbacks. Shelina used her income to pay for several forms of therapy, which she earned working as an accountant. She first enroled Abbas at a center in Nyali that falsely promised to "cure his autism in three months." Her mother-in-law grew angry when no progress was made, which reignited her husband's accusations. Shelina was accused of "shopping for solutions." Market-fed desires became linked to her career too, that her misplaced interest in making money had interfered with her pregnancy and loosened her commitments to marriage. "They would accuse me of selling my son's soul or say that I had committed adultery." She continued to work during her third pregnancy against the family's recommendations to afford Abbas'

therapies. When she gave birth to a second autistic child, the family's accusations were all but confirmed in their eyes.

Against mounting pressures within the immediate family, Shelina used her connections in Mombasa and overseas. A member of her community spoke with CPFC to accept Abbas, despite limited space. Still, the center did not seem sufficient on its own. "Abbas was very hard to control, and it was difficult to keep him safe at home. He didn't listen to anything I said. If I needed to work from home and took my eyes off him, he'd get himself into dangerous situations." Around this time, family friends in India wrote her about a doctor pioneering treatments for autism. He would be visiting Kenya to give a presentation on new therapies. Shelina eagerly attended the presentation at a Nyali hotel, and after speaking with the doctor, made plans for Abbas to undergo the treatment. She received a steep family discount, and pooled funds from other relatives to supplement travel costs to India. "Our community takes care of its members, so I didn't have to ask my husband to help. He did not think it was a good idea, but my morale was high," Shelina notes.

The therapies did not "cure" Abbas as she had wished, but she saw improvements. "Unfortunately, he still can't speak, but it's a process. A lot of physiotherapy is needed after the procedure to ensure the stem cells work, but you can see the effects grow." She stresses that the results are dramatic nevertheless:

> He is *so* much calmer now. I can massage his legs and do more exercises recommended [by CPFC] because he can sit in one place now. There is more self-control. He never seems to get tired, but when I say, 'Abbas stop,' he stops. I couldn't even take him to the store before the treatments. Still there are many things he cannot do (he can't wash himself) but he can do more now, like pour himself water. Its' the first major progress we made.

I ask if she will have her second autistic son undergo treatment too, but his condition is different. "He was much more normal when he was born—we didn't have issues with his head. And he is cautious, he's scared of danger, unlike Abbas. He doesn't have speech, but he shows facial expressions, so I see when he is happy or sad. He can evaluate situations. Abbas can't."

Given her second son's "milder" symptoms and her familiarity with autism, Shelina forwent hospital diagnosis, instead using online autism quizzes to assess the condition's severity. CPFC later confirmed her online diagnosis. Still, Shelina complains, "at home I am the only person who believes all this stuff [about autism]. Their father handles it his way, and I handle it my way." The father attributed not legitimacy to Abbas' behavior changes as confirming his "autism" diagnosis either. "He says the changes are from the Imam. But if that is the case, why are we seeing them now?" Shelina quips.

The parents' debate does not suggest that religion and "secular" medicine are inherently opposed. Post-Asadian anthropology stresses that the father's position should not be understood as a *belief* apart or opposed to the "secular," but should invite "an examination of the latent 'religious' traditions in what has been taken to be 'secular modernity'" (Whitmarsh & Roberts, 2016: 203). CPFC exemplifies this too, and includes biomedical and religious services alongside each other, after all. CPFC staff emphatically pursues the former through a range of diagnostic assessments, progress tracking, and dietary, behavioral, and physical therapies. These assessments' legitimacy requires trust in the authority of scientific knowledge and its production, not wholly dissimilar to faith in discursive traditions. The neurodevelopmental diagnostic categories treated at CPFC do not, moreover, constitute empirical "facts" in contrast to superstitious "beliefs."

Conditions like autism are highly indeterminate, often indicative of the criteria applied than heterogeneity within an otherwise coherent category. It is now "common for scientists to label autism a disorder of the 'idiosyncratic brain,' to refer to the 'autisms,' or suggest that we should 'give up on a single explanation for autism'" (Hollins 2017: 2, citing Hahamy et al., 2015; Gerschwind & Levitt, 2007; Happé et al., 2006). Following Bruno Latour's (1993) argument on the "modern" purification of scientific facts, the indeterminacy of autism as a diagnostic category has emerged because it is demarcated "from the apparatus used to

investigate it [which] has placed uncertainty on the 'object' side of the object/instrument split: an indeterminate object rather than an uncertain instrument" (p. 15; see also Stengers 2010). This does not detract from the reality of "autism" as a lived experience, but underscores how its diagnosis stems and abstracts from the epistemological tools which generate uncertainties. Unchallenged diagnostic facts cascade into further knowledge production. Assessments and measurements treat autism as a "disorder" to understand progress and backsliding, including theories of the "spectrum" which have described people as "hacking" or "passing" diagnostic tests, and therefore "high functioning" or possessing exceptional capacities, previously linking Asperger's Syndrome with genius talents (p. 13-14). These instruments' inability to generalize great variations among people diagnosed is pithily stated as, "if you've met one person with autism, you've met one person with autism" (Moore, 2014, p. 151). CPFC staff adapt to such variability without mistrusting categorization by rote. Parents like Shelina find comfort in the authority of scientific knowledge too, which provides a navigation amidst disorienting guesswork and impersonal explanations free of blame.

Desires for assurance, knowledge, and intervention proliferate/have been proliferated by neurodevelopment markets, including for experimental therapies. Many have written about the biopolitics of autism markets, some describing its profit-driven production of bodies, knowledge, and desires as an "autism industrial complex" (Broderick & Roscigno, 2021; see also Dawson, 2004; Milton & Moon, 2012; McGuire, 2013; Latif, 2016; Goodley, 2016; Grinker, 2018). Following Ian Hacking (1999), medical markets are "embedded in a financial system that has come to depend on diagnosis for its sustainability and growth" (p. 7; see also Hacking, 1986). Exchanges enabled and made through diagnostic rhetorics "make up" people, producing consumers with "*need for* and *consent to* intervention for autism" as well as "claims to the *legitimacy* of particular intervention technologies (Broderick & Roscigno, 2021; p. 83). Drive to consume therapies turns on the urgency of intervention too (recall Shelina, "we wasted

three years"). Following Joseph Dumit (2012, p. 190), mass health markets co-produce medical knowledge, therapies, and *affective* consumers, or anxious subjects "whose health is not a state to be achieved but a form of vigilance in which one is always behind, always at risk, involving a pessimism of will in that one is always failing to be as healthy as possible." Against ever shifting norms of affectively necessary health, new desires emerge for medical innovations for an increasing number of ambiguous, emerging, and profitable conditions.

Within this context, the stem cell treatment Shelina pursued sits uneasily between care and cruelty. Bracketing experimental uncertainties, stem cell therapies have not been rigorously tested, lack evidence of effectiveness, and carry severe side effects. Presentations generating "hype" for these cutting-edge therapies are on the rise in un(der)regulated markets (see Sunder Rajan, 2006) and rely on "tokens of scientific legitimacy" which can be "more like attending a persuasive entertainment show or something on a television shopping network than an educational seminar" (Montague, 2019). Shelina's trust and hope are overdetermined and exploited in ways that can transform even well-intentioned transmissions of life-capacities into unwitting acts of violence.

Connections can be drawn between biomedical and humanitarian markets too, which share technologies and logics to redress social suffering (see, among many others, Jasanoff, 2006; Jasanoff & Kim, 2009; Prasad, 2016 Birch, 2017). As Anna Agathangelou (2017) observes on the adoption of new cell technologies for charitable/social justice interventions, "the promise of humanitarian innovation and innovations in stem cell biology are generating various forms of commitment among people who imagine and desire a future that will come when the promise is realized…a general promise of innovation in both humanitarian projects and for-profit projects of regenerative medicine" to fulfill hopes and eradicate anxieties (pp. 96-97).

CPFC provides a local face to these otherwise abstract processes of medical knowledge production and value extraction, which converge with religious and charitable functions and create a discordant menu of expectation structures. On the one hand, CPFC serves as a site for consecrating religious piety by caring for society's most vulnerable, and for passing down religious discourses unencumbered by outside authority like the (post)colonial state. On the other, the center is a laboratory of globalized and marketized medical techniques to improve health outcomes, sometimes creating a feedback loop in which rehabilitation becomes a precondition for initiating children into Islamic religious practices. Disputes between Shelina and her husband demonstrate the difficulties of applying mixed "techniques of the body" that rest on multiple promissory horizons. An impasse emerges in relation with the anticipated outcome or expectation, between issues of survival/preservation and improvement, similar to the impasse faced at Sahajanand.

Techniques of treating children with disabilities make their fleshly capacities stages and intervention sites for competing expectations structures that trouble kinship, whether conceived as given or made. The husband's efforts to pursue healing through recitation are experimental only in that they are "trials" for healing the family's spiritual ills. He is concerned with containing the *jinn* in the boy's soul (*naf*) but understands it as only a symptom of a deeper issue needing cure—which blaming Shelina attempts to name—kinship's ethical and organizational breakdown. Healing is a trial of not merely rehabilitating Abbas but securing an ethical form of life in which "reestablishing the link between worldly activities and awareness of the divine … is fundamentally communal, because in Islam responsibility towards God is necessarily articulated as responsibility towards the world" (Pandolfo, 2018: 260). The husband's approach can be understood as a visceral reaction to the abstract Ithna-Asheri histories previous summarized. Situated in this socio-historical context, the issue is irreducible to an arbitrary accident or an anonymous condition befalling anyone, anywhere in the same

way. The (dis)connections which have brought into relief the Ithna-Asheri's form of life unsettled both prior patterns for organizing kinship and reliable assurances for its future continuity. At stake are prospective orientations for kinship and the communities in which it is woven. Brooding describes this prospecting, which looks to what has been given and can be made, scouted along past and future horizons. Such horizons appear within debates about how possibilities are opened and/or foreclosed within present practices of living.

Genre flailing emerges when expectation structures for the continuity of life become unsettled, when wishes for how life ought to be are unmoored and deviate with how it has been, now seems, and/or might become. Likewise, conflict between Shelina and her husband arise between their subjunctive positions. Shelina's hope for stem cell therapies and other autism treatments have a dissimilar temporal structure to her husband's faith. As Isabella Stengers (2002, p. 245) argues, hope is the "difference between probability and possibility." For the father, such a difference need not be drawn if one undertakes practices with good faith and devotion in God. He has a postcritical orientation in that one must "'insist properly' in thought and action—empirically and conceptually—*even without entertaining the hope that doing so will ultimately matter a great deal*" (emphasis added, Jensen, 2014: 362). He therefore focuses on what is given in past and present actions to ensure the future by extricating strange, extimate transgressions sensed as disordering the continuity of life. From this perspective, one may see why the husband was more indifferent to "secular" techniques for treating the boy's symptoms than his wife's potential loss of faith and culpability.

Shelina's efforts to refocus the problem on her son's body to externalize the cause rather than one given and grown within a specific form of life. Pursuing autism therapies produced *un*relatedness, however and edged toward de-kinning. Unlike faith, which grapples with what has been given as a guide for ensuring the future, commodities incite hopes of ever transforming and improving social relationships, recoding relatedness as a sign of relation to

come. Markets exploit the temporal disjunction between the present value of consuming tangible commodities and the future perfect tense of their promissory realization. As Kaushik Sunder Rajan (2006, p. 136) writes, they operate with a "new grammatical tense" or the "future perfect, present tense." The continual deferral of future anterior promises becomes a frustration-excitation circuit gaming both hope and hopelessness, which spurs more "shopping for solutions," new objects to ground prospective orientations. From the perspective of faith, turning toward the probable or possible is a pathological and profane insistence—"one of the 'limits' that can transgress into apostasy or establish the truth of God's law…[comparable] to a whispering of the devil in the ear (*waswās*), one of the widespread causes of madness" (Pandolfo, 2018: 211). Giving into the temptation of false promises can read as substituting submission to God with submission to the state and market, which counterfeit identity and values that support forms of life.

Despite these differences, viewing Shelina and her husband within too rigid an autological/genealogical subject binary overstates their incommensurability. As Matteo Benussi (2021, p. 32 citing Agamben, 2013a) argues, ethical tensions are not always incommensurable chasms between forms of life, but intensities of difference within them "*that 'coincides' with its form*" (see also Zigon, 2017; 2018). From Shelina's standpoint, her son's symptoms intersected a sexuality/gender system that made them marks of her transgression as a wife, mother, and daughter. Her hopes then were not only premised on market-driven desires. They became vested in "secular" medicine because of constraints within the kinship system and its historical deregulation; if she could only demonstrate and prove their efficacy, she might yet vindicate herself. In this sense, her method of hope is not quite an orientation akin to the autological subject. Shelina demonstrated fidelity and faith in the discursive tradition, after all, but turned away when she became the medium inviting strange, extimate threats into the home. Like the other mother at CPFC, she leveraged the close distance of diasporic kin as a flexible

genealogical subject. Accusations from Shelina's husband, like "shopping for solutions," can also be understood as ways to immunize himself from genealogical givens he shares too ("we" but not "me"). He also takes very little interest in incorporating his son into the discursive tradition. As Shelina notes, "his father takes him to the Imam, but he is like the others in my community—they are satisfied just giving these children charity because in the end, God will save the children and reward the charity." The father produces relatedness through charitable support, as he might with more distant dependents of *waqf* welfare, but unlike these dependents, Abbas' disability makes him unaccountable to proper discursive practice. Like the autological subject, he is free of the obligation to reciprocate and constraints guiding the community's continuity.

Abbas coincides with this form of life at its border, which becomes expressed in his relationship with the two parents too. "I discipline him a lot, so he prefers to spend time with his father. He's always following him around. But his father takes little interest because of the boy's condition. He avoids him as much as possible, so I have my mother watch him when I cannot be home." Shelina anxiously molds Abbas, sometimes with extreme methods, to stabilize the boundaries between what is inside and outside the form of life, in which disability may symptomatize either Ithna-Asheri alliance practices or randomized global mutation, an evil inherited within kinship or a kinship to come, made possible through external medical solutions. The husband's gender-based accusations of Shelina mark women's reproduction as unstable communal boundaries, and ironically entails men as independent, autological subjects within the form of life. In the process, Abbas becomes peripheralized as an inert recipient of charity who otherwise enables communal reproduction. The two expectation structures position Abbas's disability as a frame supplementing the form of life, as well as a sign of lack that needs repairing. He is neither distinguished as a part of the external milieu nor an autological/genealogical subject engaged in the reciprocal work of the community. In effect,

he becomes like Derrida's *parergon*, "summoned and assembled like a supplement because of the lack – a certain 'internal' indetermination – in the very thing it enframes" (Derrida, 1979: 33).

Across both expectation structures, disability remains coded as a negative condition to contain until it can be redeemed by God or cured and managed through diagnostic treatment. In the process, disability (de)stabilizes kinship relations. It becomes a sign of the community's endangerment through the givens of forced endogamy and the encroachments of the state and capital on the authority of discursive traditions. On the other hand, it becomes an object of transformation and spiritual reward on which kin carve their relative subjectivity. The children do not readily emerge in parents' stories as subjects, but objects to preserve and act upon. When they act, children's plasticity becomes a primary concern, often in a grammar of speciation, between the not-yet human who is genetically or spiritually defective, or a superhuman with uncontrollable strength like "spiderman" or controlled by evil spirits (on plasticity and the "human" see also Jackson, 2020). In this respect, brooding relates concerns of kinship's uncertain forms and functions, neither fitting systemic biological or social givens for organizing social exchange and valuation in the past, nor reliably produced through analogical acts of making relatedness in the future. The present is a holding pattern for disabled children, incubated at kinship's peripheries unless enough unrelatedness is shed.

But there are other prospects too. Brooding can involve prospective orientations open to emergent forms of relatedness. I spotlight one example, which bridges the community's epic and historical pasts, the ordinary ethics of being with and caring for disabled kin in the present, and futures voiced in ambiguously un/familiar grammars. At the open edge of kinship, people with disabilities may communicate by knotting many horizons of possibility, binding bonds with others through inchoate subjectivities neither entirely prior nor promised.

Strings of Communication

I am seated next to children at the beading station in one of CPFC's second floor classrooms. A teacher is helping the boy with Downs' Syndrome to my right, removing beads that deviate from the color pattern on the template and guiding his hands to the bead bowls to begin anew. These exercises were intended to improve hand and eye coordination as well as pattern recognition and recall. I am distracted from the lesson by a boy wearing glasses and a plaid shirt though, who has wandered from his station to ours. He approaches with a water bottle, seemingly waiting on someone to interact with him. "Just ignore him," the teacher tells me. "He always wants us to refill his bottle even after we have given him water."

But as weeks passed, I found it difficult to continue ignoring the boy. He would return so frequently that I began tinkering with the water bottle. I'd sometimes place it at different ends of the table for him to retrieve, shake it in different rhythms, or roll it to him to see if he'd roll it back, and so on. These interactions were brief, at most a few minutes, and I would usually forget about them until the next visit. But the boy returned again and again, and gradually he absorbed my attention, until finally the bottle had become a kind of puzzle I could not work out. Playing with the bottle grew into some routines. They were not quite games with reliable rules though, or rather, not rules I understood. I would convince myself from past observations that if I used the bottle *x* way the boy would elicit *y* response, only to have doubt flood in when the boy's response varied from what I had anticipated. I mentioned the water bottle to the teachers again, but they were convinced he had a sensory fixation or was feigning thirst for attention. Perhaps they were right; asking for water is an effective way to elicit someone's attention, after all. I eventually stopped trying to identify or predict patterns in the boy's behavior. Or so I thought. There were instances when I found myself filling up the bottle at the cooler in response to something he had done, later wondering why I had felt so confident distinguishing between playing, feigning, and making a genuine request.

Although the teachers had not noticed the water bottle's potential as a communicative medium, they were also experimenting with language as part of their daily pedagogy. The teachers would trial a range of techniques from introducing colorful props, making their bodies smaller and bigger, and modulating their voices—louder, softer, melodic, staccato—which helped students absorb and retain the lessons in different ways. Some techniques worked better for certain students and not others, and conveying meaning required changing its vehicle again and again. It was not always clear if an exchange succeeded or if whatever vehicle used transmitted something distinct from the intended meaning, like trying to feed someone berries but only ever staining their lips with them. The parents also stressed how communication "had grown" with their children too, which always involved intuiting certain noises, behaviors, and dispositions as acknowledgements or gestures of reciprocity, despite not always being able to decipher the meanings with certainty, precision, or regularity. They would also relate these behaviors to teachers to facilitate the lessons. It seemed that we were all learning how to string these patterns together, trying to build them, undo them, change the tones, or start over from scratch. Perhaps the template was changing too. There was no way of knowing for sure, but something remained in the effort that accreted into a space of knowingness where relationships formed.

I had met and chatted with the boy's father several times, even before the water bottle became significant. He's an older Ithna-Asheri man who goes by the nickname Buffalo. Buffalo has several children, including his oldest from his first marriage who is in her 40s and lives in Switzerland, and three from his second marriage: two pre-teen sons and the six-year-old son who is diagnosed with autism. They live on the South Coast in Voi in his brother's family home, moving in after Buffalo's recent spate of unemployment.

Many of our initial conversations circled the unemployment problem on the Coast and his disappointment about degrading conditions over the last few decades. As he put it, "Things

got bad in the late 80s. The wrong people started coming to the Coast and took up most of our jobs. People have been asleep and these [upcountry] people took advantage it. You can see how hopeless people have become today." Complaints about upcountry groups occupying land and labor are common on the Coast. But Buffalo senses greater losses than employment, often waxing poetic about the past too:

> Life was better back then. Even though we weren't rich, we were happier than the kids today. Money was strong and people were friendlier and prepared to help one another; people on the Coast used to be very warm. If you knocked on someone's door to ask for something, people would give you ¾ of what they had. Today, if you knock, no one even opens the door. People used to sleep outside when it was hot, people's doors were open. Now I cannot trust my son playing outside. You cannot trust your neighbors. And the streets are flooded with drugs.

As our conversations evolved over time, he connected his nostalgia for employment, public safety, and communal trust to constraints felt at home, both during his childhood and today, which were often centered on caring for kin with disabilities.

Buffalo's primary grievance at home is with his wife, especially the way she treats their youngest son. "My wife is not patient with him. She walks with a stick and tries to frighten him into behaving. I tell her, just speak to him nicely, take his hand, and he'll come through. I am much more patient. I treat him like a normal child—that's the difference." Buffalo fears he cannot leave the boy with her for long periods because he does not trust his wife to provide adequate supervision. "I tell her to look after this boy. But you see, last week I went away to take a job, and he took his little backpack, put his toys in it, and he walked out of the house and tried to board a *tuktuk*. People saw him on the road and took him home. I told his mother, 'you were on the phone not paying attention and he could have been lost or kidnapped.'" Buffalo attributes their parenting differences to upbringing. "She comes from a family where… when the children are delivered, they are left with the *wazee* [parents] to watch them. The [grandmother] raises them and when the children are grown, the mother says, these are my kids. It's the upbringing that breeds laziness. It kills me because my family was not like this." These are common generalizations about child-rearing on the Coast, though they do have a

grain of truth. Buffalo's long list of complaints about his wife might also be taken with a grain of salt in a context where women are frequently scapegoated for any number of domestic or communal problems. Nevertheless, Buffalo is resolutely engaged in his son's care, and one of the few fathers in attendance each day at CPFC.

Buffalo's relationship with his son grows out of earlier childhood experiences. He was one of nine siblings, including an older sister who had a disability. Buffalo's father feared his sister and refused to speak to her. "When we were young, only our mother would look after her. When [our sister] needed something, we helped relay messages to him." His father tried to educate the children and "show them love" despite being "a very hot-tempered man that took no nonsense." But his passion, whether of love or anger, was rarely extended to Buffalo's sister. Buffalo spent almost 20 years as a primary care provider for his sister until she passed away in her 40s. Buffalo credits his patience with his son to these experiences, which have helped them build a strong relationship. He again contrasts this with his wife's intolerance in another example: "I tell my wife to stop yelling at the boy, he will understand, but she becomes frustrated. She was yelling at him the other day because he was taking juice from the kitchen. She was going to hit him, but I stopped her. I spoke to him calmly, 'you cannot have juice, but I will fill your water bottle' and when I brought it, he came and hugged me." On mention of the water bottle, and its role conditioning response, I interrupt Buffalo's didactic story to inquire further. Buffalo pauses to reflect, and then recalls a childhood memory that connects his son and sister in provocative ways.

"What you're describing reminds me… we communicated with our sister in a similar manner." Buffalo qualifies, "There is a big difference between her and my son. She was clever, no doubt. You see, she had intellectual problems and she was disfigured. But it was the *way* she spoke… It was very unusual. We were the only ones who understood her—a few of my siblings, but primarily me and my mother. You can talk to my son normally and see that he

understands even though he cannot speak yet. It was not the same way with my sister unless you really knew how to understand her." Buffalo grew up learning his to understand his sister as if it were a second language. "She was much older than me, so I was around her since I was a child. I always knew when she wanted something… I could tell from the way she would call" But how did his sister's "call" relate to the water bottle? Buffalo clarifies that his sister "would communicate with a string bracelet" which like the water bottle, she would use in place of verbal speech. As I learned, the bracelet carried significant relationships to religion, kinship, and the Ithna-Asheri's roots/routes as well.

Buffalo's sister received the bracelet at a time when her faculties sharply declined, which coincided with occult panics in the family home. "You see, my mother would tell us stories. She gave birth to my sister facing a window that looked out on the summer tree, and my mother believed someone cast an evil eye during the delivery. She told us 'This is why your sister has problems.'" Buffalo did not explain the relevance of the tree, though trees and other knobby, branching plants are often associated with witchcraft and occult forces on the Coast (see Section Four for discussion on the occult). He continues, "Years later, my brother saw a woman dressed in white sitting next to our mother on the couch. The woman reached out to grab her and then suddenly vanished. My father spoke with a learned man, who told him the family should move. We thought the house was haunted. The same week, my sister's condition got much worse, and she stopped speaking." Amidst fears of the occult, the mother went to a "shrine" to have the bracelet blessed, which she gave to Buffalo's sister for protection. This bracelet became central to her communicative world within the family.

"My sister had a habit of playing with string. She would tie materials together and clutch onto them; she was very strong, so sometimes it was hard to retrieve them. When we pulled things free from her hands, we saw she tied them in strange ways." The family drew connections from how she tied objects with string and manipulated the bracelet. "My sister

would twist that bracelet into knots and pull on it, or she would slide it up and down her arm… it all depended on what she wanted. If we heard her call, we would listen to the sounds she made, look for things she tied up, and watch to see what she did with the bracelet. From there we figured out what she was saying." These elements could work independently or in combination depending on what thought was thought to have been conveyed, articulated in an aural, material, and performative grammar. I suggest that his sister invented a new type of sign language, to which he counters, jokingly, "Sign language does not tie the house up in string!"

More than tying objects, thoughts, and desires, the bracelet also ties past and present worlds together too. The "shrine" that Buffalo mentions is called a *mēhphīl*, a sacred space used for religious congregating, rites of passage, and prayers and invocations. They contain replica tombs of religious figures and saints which enable Muslim communities outside of the Near East to flexibly "connect to the spiritual geographies of distinctly Islamic narratives, such as those of Mecca or Karbala" (Akhtar, 2016: 133). Their mobile features make possible indigenizing prayer and intercession within the uniquely multireligious context of East African settlements, dissimilar to religious sites in Iran and Iraq where prayers are unavailable in Gujarati and Urdu and render the Ithna-Asheri "disempowered… [and] thrust into a linguistic and performative culture that is alien to them" (ibid.). These sights often retain material, performative, and liturgical elements traceable to the Ithna-Asheri's "Indic origins in the earlier vernacular traditions of *khōjāpanth*" (p. 133) as well.

The bracelet also blends Shi'a and Indic discourses. The Ithna-Asheri refer to them as *dōra*, but they are known by several other names in Indic/Hindu rituals (*kautuka, kalava, and kara*). They are commonly made with woven red and gold thread, though the Ithna-Asheri craft *dōra* in black and green to distance themselves from Hindu and pre-schism Khoja practices. The bracelets are used to ward off the evil eye and create a "binding of bonds" (Davis, 20120), sometimes for alliances between bride and groom or between kin, like brothers and sisters. In

Hinduism, tying at the wrist, near nodes of energy and blood circulation, generates a spiritual link between the soul and God. They may also be tied around vessels like the *kalasha*, symbolized as life elixirs and appealed to for abundance, fertility, and christening.

Within Shi'a practices, *dōra* memorialize the ropes and chains worn by captives in the Battle of Karbala, sometimes associated with Imam Zain al-Abedeen. Though he was held captive in Karabala, the Imam (then a child) had fallen deathly ill and could not fight, which spared him the fate of Husain, his relatives, and other supporters. God's mercy on Zain al-Abedeen, coupled with virtuous traits of patience, charity, and care for the sick and feeble, make his invocation potent for healing rituals, especially for children. During rituals at *mēhphīl* shrines and holy days like Ashura (when the Shi'a mourn the Battle of Karbala), prayers are recited, and the bracelets are touched by an *alam* (the "standard" or moving discs engraved with verses marking the martyrdom of Husain). Despite links to these discursive traditions, *dōra* are subject to lively debates. Non-Indic Shia view them as a corrupt innovation of the faith, as they possess spiritual value blurring distinctions between Indic and Near Eastern practices, caste and religion.

The sister's bracelet connected her to the Ithna-Asheri's form of life as well as the particular arrangement of the family. It became a way to hold Buffalo's sister within the weave of kinship—something which required continual renewal. "My mother would replace the bracelet and bring it back to the shrine. It upset my sister but eased my father. He kept his distance from her, but the bracelet gave him peace of mind having her in the house." The bracelet loses power over time and must be ritually restored/replaced. Buffalo did not know if his sister understood its significance, conceding that "she liked playing with string, so maybe it was only a string to her." Is the water bottle only a water bottle to the boy? I ask how he sees the two connected and learn a second possibility. "My son loves that water bottle because I give it to him every morning. Our sister was the same way with her strings. It was something

we all did together, especially my mother. The strange thing is that my mother was always afraid [about] what would happen to my sister after she died because she understood her better than any of us. Before my mother passed, my sister became ill too. They both passed away the same week, only four days apart."

The sister's strings became surfaces through which kinship was written and inhabited across uncertainties of shared meaning. On the one hand, the bracelet enabled the family to bring the sister to the discursive tradition and its inheritances. Buffalo's father, like Abbas' father, relied on it to keep her proximal yet apart, while the mother continually regenerated it to produce relatedness. For the sister, it held possibilities beyond these discourses, a way to extend herself by arranging and exchanging with the people and materials around her. The aesthetic and communicative traces she rendered may well have been understood by the mother and the siblings or only imagined so. But these traces also materialized where the sister's utterance would have been, creating a conditional space that mingled different grammars—where transliteration may aspire for translation. Walter Benjamin's (1969a, 78) writing on translation is edifying here, explaining that "individual words can almost never fully reproduce the meaning they have in the original. For sense in its poetic significance is not limited to meaning but derives from the connotations conveyed by the word chosen to express it. We say of words that they have emotional connotations." The strings did not necessarily become a shared language in any pure sense, but sites of contact marked by language like a stain, a/part from meaning. Put differently, one may imagine forms of life taking on the color of each other as emotional connotations accrete into a relational bond. Or as Donna Haraway might say, "it matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots… (Haraway, 2016: 12)."

When does such a knotting shift from patient guesswork to the intuition of another's wish, to bonds entangling one's fate? Buffalo suggests patience is one approach, which

resonates with Povinelli (2011, p. 106) who finds the "space of potentiality…often seems to require waiting; one must survive these conditions 'long enough…to accomplish [the] performative trick of recognition." These can be fragile horizons. Waiting may not be a luxury to those endangered/in danger, or it may become a holding pattern, an impasse. Brooding may cause one to pace around in circles.

A final circling: The question of kinship is not whether birth is a metaphor that substitutes for the activities of producing relatedness with biological givens. As shown, the biological is neither entirely determining of nor trivial to kinship. Nor is the problem whether mutuality or the production of relatedness is a metonym that displaces older kinship concepts. Both dominant themes in kinship theory can be found in the warp and weft of how people understand, exchange, make, and inherit kinship relations. But people with disabilities pose a problem when *subjectivity* is the precondition for kinship, when inhabiting a social role becomes continually deferred or zone of in/distinction. Subjecthood can bridge discourses like the autological and genealogical, but for children like Abbas, to be born into kinship requires metamorphosizing to fit the metaphor. Until then, they often straddle the not-yet/and-yet borders of birth. Sometimes parents cannot muster waiting and entrust their children's care to institutions outside kinship relations, like Sahajanand. Others consolidate kinship relations but not reciprocally, creating a holding zone within a form of life. Brooding takes prospective orientations, concerned with the heritability of past forms of life and for making relations manifest in the future. But imperfect, incomplete, and blocked transmissions of life-sustaining capacities can displace once dependable kinship idioms, generating uncertainties as their genres erode. But it opens material and imaginative spaces for improvising rituals too, which may accrete into other affective bonds. The anxiety of not knowing what to expect nor expecting what is known can, to borrow a phrase from Eve Sedgwick, open us up to intuiting and feeling "the promising closeness of transmissible gifts" (Sedgwick, 2003: 24).

Section Three: Workshopping Subjectivity, Disabling Development

Re/siding within a Compromised Shelter

This section tracks a practice of coasting I call *oblique mobility*, which enables people with disabilities to leverage liberal development discourses to generate possibilities before and outside their constraints. It assembles scenes and stories around a field site called *Bombolulu Cultural Centre and Workshop*, a "sheltered workshop" that employs, houses, and provides social services for people with disabilities in Mombasa. Bombolulu has polyvalent functions, acting as a social enterprise, a non-profit implementation partner, a charitable donee, an activist community organizer, a landlord, a vocational training center, and a place for people with disabilities to socialize with others. Because of its diverse resources and activities, the workshop holds up rare promises for recognition, acknowledgment, and reciprocity often foreclosed for people with disabilities in ordinary life. But promises are also held up in a negative sense, as compromised and contradictory processes incite impasses—scenes of contestation, disappointment, and betrayal that reinscribe the disruptions, deferrals, and disconnections people with disabilities seek to escape. T

his section traces sociohistorical conditions and situated practices that both open and inhibit possibilities for participants at the workshop. It considers what third voices exist before and not in-between the workshop's dialectical impasse of inclusion and exclusion, tracking patterns and practices of imagining a break beyond the hold. In so doing, practices at Bombolulu become helpful for rethinking binaries of dependency and independency identifiable within anthropological analyses of African "development," and for refiguring concepts within disability studies from "southern" perspectives.

Stories at Bombolulu circle more familiar, "dark" (Ortner, 2016) iterations of development: (post)colonial African states have been wracked by unfettered deregulation and austerity policies leading to mass unemployment, political unaccountability, infrastructural

breakdown, and insufficient social service provisioning, which have intensified everyday experiences of precarity. In the wake of colonialism and structural adjustment, non-profits have multiplied in response to fill these gaps, a "soft imperialism" (Jarman, 2005) managed in the interests of international civil society institutions far afield, typically in sites of capital accumulation. As development institutions defer the democratic possibilities they purport to promote, humanitarian and rights-based discourses advance ideological values of independence, autonomy, and self-determination, materialized across various "sustainability" programs, policy trainings, and new debt vehicles (Grewal, 2017: 4). Following Foucauldian analyses, scholars have increasingly argued that these power relations generate entrepreneurial subject-effects which recode desires for reliable lives into ambitions bootstrapped to market-oriented solutions (see Turcot & Povinelli, 2012). Development initiatives are often ephemeral and "impatient" (Spivak, 2003: 38), fall short in meeting established objectives, and reproduce or exacerbate the effects of structural crisis they are proposed to palliate. Many of these elements and effects resonate with tensions at Bombolulu.

In the first three sub-sections, I develop tensions emerging across multiple sites and scales which overdetermine Bombolulu's decline and position it at an institutional impasse. I first present a theoretical analysis of Joseph Tonda's "violence of the imaginary" to frame issues of mass deregulation, including the relationship between institutional and symbolic breakdown and disability. This sub-section offers preliminary tools for tracking how the imagination opens to possibility and violence within the meantime of deferred social mobility and reciprocity. I then introduce fieldwork scenes at the workshop, drawing out structural tensions between its welfare and market functions through Coastal and global labor histories. Together, these entangled discourses of sovereignty, liberalization, and welfarism shape the challenges people with disabilities face as they leverage their positions at the workshop to lobby for rights, recognition, and resources. I show the costs participants face, caught in an

impasse between the workshop's impending collapse, no longer economically viable nor aligned with emerging development priorities, and a public beyond the shelter that remains hostile and preclusive to people with disabilities. Women pursuing disability advocacy navigate these tensions and the gender-based shame and violence that attaches to them, as they seek routes and resources outside the workshop. But in the process, they also create negative solidarities with other disability organizations and state actors and exclude people with disabilities who may redirect funding or have impairments undervalued within performance-driven activism. Moreover, hierarchies emerge between women too. Those who can charismatically perform development discourses enjoy greater opportunities for social and material capital, sometimes articulating inequalities on intersecting ethno-territorial and religious axes as well.

But this perspective is a partial one. How might participants at Bombolulu become interpellated into liberal development discourses and forms of identity politics that can harm and constrain them? How extensive and intensive are the effects? And why, in a debilitated context might adopting an oft-stigmatized identity become desirable? One may ask if Bombolulu offers "idioms of solidarity or belonging [that] can be both officially celebrated and taken as a sign of backwardness within the logic of late liberalism," or else open spaces for inventive, non-sovereign action or "co-performative" modes of political agency (Cody, 2016: 183)? African political economies and the configurations of social relations they describe cannot be understood only as instruments of forced choices within the international order (Tonda, 2021; see also Hengehold, 2012).

Participants' lives also acquire meaning, coherence, and value within compromised institutional sites; complexly situated social spaces entail more than epiphenomenal subjectivities as effects of discursive regimes and configurations of biopower. As Didier Fassin (2014, p. 54) writes, this view often "eludes confrontation with what had been one of Foucault's

most remarkable intuitions: the place occupied by life in contemporary societies." Kathleen Stewart (2012, p. 519) stirs a consonant chord of inquiry, asking how heavy terms like "identity," "politics," and "culture" become enacted in "ordinary tactile composition, everyday worldings that matter beyond their status as representations or objects of moralizing." And Fred Moten's (2017) *Black and Blur* thinks with this problem for critical race studies and the black diaspora, attuning to the performative noise and aesthetics that irrupt and point to what is exterior or "not in between" dialectics. Taken together, there have been plural efforts to track sounds, opacities, and imaginaries that break discursive and representational frames even when they appear overdetermined.

Microsocial interactions and tactical practices of living on at Bombolulu enable activists to reach and think outward from the collapsing shelter. These social performances are irreducible to hegemonic subject-effects as people mobilize other future conditionals within development discourses. Practices of oblique mobility occur in the gaps of interpellation and enable cunning efforts to think before and beyond the workshop by seizing sparse resources and opportunities to spark alternative social projects. In so doing, the women are able to shift internal inequalities, transform violent disability imaginaries, and reopen forms of reciprocity and mutual aid. Though often partial and hierarchical, oblique mobility generates embryonic forms of political mobilization and solidarity that reanimate possibilities and intuitions of disability justice.

Shelter Deferred: Imaginaries in/of the Meantime

I am waiting in Nyali Mall's parking lot to meet the first lead I received during my Saturday morning coffee in Nairobi. Despite the Director warning me not to conduct research in Mombasa, he linked me with a man named George, a disability activist. George is running an hour late from a meeting and called to inform me of his delay, smoothing over the

inconvenience with a jokey trope: “TIA—This is Africa. You are on African time now!” The punchline presumes a context marking foreigners (*wageni*), typically white foreigners (*wazungu*), as unaccustomed to having their expectations and desires frustrated; foreigners may feel tripped up from having what ordinarily satisfies their lives on demand, or else enjoy a time out from the demands of lives led elsewhere. The word *mzungu*, after all, shares the root -*zungu*, as in *kizunguzungu* (dizziness) and *mzunguko (*circle). Taking an unexpected turn can be pleasurable until a lack of common(s’) sense spins out into vertigo.

But for people not transacting in temporary pleasures and their interruptions, “This is Africa” involves navigating the everyday amidst experiences of breakdown and uncertainty. Watching ordinary scenes unfold at the mall offers a small window into how people negotiate and adjust within relationships mediated across local and global scales. Social connections mediated through consumption are saturated with imaginations and fantasies beyond the here and now, that serve as “antidotes to the finitude of social experience” (Appadurai, 1996: 53). But consumption also underscores the disjunctive “inequalities that leave most Africans excluded and abjected from the economic and institutional conditions that they themselves regard as modern” (Ferguson, 2006: 167). Consumption choices made across this divide become associated with a person’s *tabia* or perceived character, which is “less a discreet property of persons than a way of relating persons, places, and social relationships” (Weiss, 2009:153). Soliciting connections and forms of exchange opens to the harms and hopes of maintaining or improving one’s social positioning and generativity. I consider analytical tools to frame these observations, which become valuable for mapping (pre)figurations of disability at Bombolulu too, especially Joseph Tonda’s (2021) concepts of modern sovereignty and the imagination. Tonda maps the poetic functions of (extra)ordinary social activities on a hybrid historical plane of mixed ontological status—particularly, the imagination’s force and efficacy to interpret, reflect, and shape social (un)realities in ways that are not entirely local, global,

archaic, nor modern. Before arriving at this analysis, here are a few happenings in/of the meantime:

A woman is lugging grocery bags from Naivas while talking on the phone to her sister. She has purchased Blue Band margarine, eggs, milk, and bread. But her upscale supermarket errand entailed profanity, not purity: the meat she wanted had been contaminated by chemicals. "They told me that the meat is dirty—I heard on the radio that food is causing cancer. *Jamani aisee!* Many people are getting cancer these days!" The contaminated meat does not seem like a freak-accident. *Something* has been happening from farm to table that is increasingly affecting population health. The abstractions of foreshortened life chances and massified debilitation became viscerally felt in an anxious encounter with the deli aisle. Although the woman interpreted the contamination as linked to other structural effects of "slow death" (Berlant, 2007), these signs provided no guidance for safe consumption. Will the meat be okay to eat next week when the accident is cleaned up or, does the high incidence of cancer symptomize a deeper breakdown in regulation? There is no clear historical development nor connection with production to organize her imagination and assuage her concerns. Interpreting the events, she channels her moral panic into a new yarn and urges her sister to connect the dots too, warning, "Don't buy any meat!" Provisionally a vegetarian, the woman disappears into the congested transit hub bordering the mall.

There are also entangled financial and libidinal transactions taking shape around the coffee shop, not necessarily premised on care, contract, or commitment. Loose rules of engagement facilitate uncertain exchanges of money, bodies, and feelings, so long as those engaged lubricate and endure what's risky about relating with others, if only to temporarily stay in sync. At the coffee shop, waitresses gossip at the cash register with backs turned to three impatient businessmen itching for their bills. "My angel (*malaika*)," one man calls out, appealing to the waitresses with flattery. A smiling waitress approaches the table and the man

issues something saccharine that makes her giggle. His wedding band glints in the sun as he folds her hands into his. A grey-haired European man shuffles past, guiding a scantily clad Kenyan girl by her hips. He walks her toward the Italian bar and café at the rear of the mall to sugar her up with day wine and more, as many couples like them regularly do.

Behind the usual café couples, there are the Italian owners who huddle like a cabal from dawn to dusk, smoking cigars and talking on smart and burner phones. It's hardly a secret that the mafia has shuttled money and whatever else between Mombasa and Malindi for decades. Many institutions in Mombasa, whether consumption sites or civil bodies, blur boundaries between the public and private and the licit and illicit in ways that exceed a singular or instrumental functionality. Likewise, people linger around this café to satisfy many appetites both on and off menu.

Feeding appetites may feed other things too. I approach the disabled parking space to await George's car but freeze when I spot the man who had asked me to buy considerable quantities of rice and oil. He claimed this "donation" would support a nearby AIDS orphanage, but it seemed unlikely to exist. I double back to the perimeters of the complex, only to dodge vendors also trying to intercept me. One group is dressed in ceremonial Maasai *mashuka*. They sell ethno-commodities. Red, yellow, and green striped sheets line the sidewalk before an overcrowded liquor store and display beaded accessories and sandals, wood carvings, and *rungu* throwing clubs. The older men lack the visibly stretched earlobes of Maasai initiates, perhaps indicating an unmooring of lineal rites of passage or, a lucrative ethnic role play. Like everything at the mall, it is difficult to discern if these appearances are distinct from how life might *really* operate and the stakes misrecognizing it.

These uncertainties make consuming goods, food, sex, money, and power risky business in Mombasa, with each scene offering glimpses of reified and animated social relations. Joseph Tonda (2021, pp. 56-62) argues that these relations are constituted through

"structures of causality," mixed ideological and hegemonic, political, and scientific products composed from local African histories and contact with European Empire. Africa's encounter with Empire deregulated pre-existing material relations and institutions, including the ideological force of their symbolic structures, which has resulted in a freeing and disunification of social imaginaries. Making sense of social life creates forced choices between heterogenous institutions and phenomena: modernity versus archaism, Abrahamic versus animist, capitalist versus "authentic," among others. These choices can generate the "violence of the imaginary," which builds on Pierre Bourdieu's "symbolic violence." He considers Bourdieu's concept through African archives, in which deregulation incites more im-mediate, moralizing a/effects than symbolic violence, which was developed analyzing French institutions.

To apply simple examples from the mall, the Maasai entrepreneurs, who are neither reducible to ideologies of the "western" capitalist subject nor pre-capitalist clansmen, may become interpretable through structures of causality that superimpose parts of both schemas. Their lack of initiation markings may become explainable through these imaginaries, in which they are deemed con artists selling "fake" goods for profit, or as eating profits at the expense of communal reproduction. People operating within deregulated symbolic systems can take on characteristics coherent to capitalists and witches, able "eat without being eaten [and] able to see without being visible," unconstrained from prohibitions/obligations to reciprocate "on behalf of their communities, so that exchanges could continue" (Hengehold, 2012: 105).

The woman shopping for groceries provides another perspective. Tonda (2021, pp. 254-7) uses eating practices in pre-colonial Africa to exemplify communally reproductive activities in which impure substances were "purged" through symbolic and moral regulation, like de-witching. The grocery shopper by contrast hears news of contaminated meat alienated from its mode of production in which illness, as an invisible force is "still linked to the fact that the other is drinking my blood." Illness and eating undergo a "mutation" from signifying shared

substance grounded in social order to imaginaries superimposing parts of structural causes. A key difference between symbolic violence and the violence of the imaginary, is that the latter's im-mediacy enables it to take hold and act on the bodies of others. The grocery shopper both self-responsibilizes like a liberal consumer-citizen and seeks to restore order and purity like a witchdoctor. Both effects emerge from ideological schemas, but partially so. Not every ideology of Empire or pre-colonial societies is contextually coherent in Mombasa nor is the prohibition on buying meat more synonymous with de-witching than liberal hypervigilance. Instead, these part-schemas compose an imaginary signified that short-circuits into the signifiers of the shopper's narrative. She shares a morally forceful interpretation to im-mediately prevent her sister from buying contaminated food without knowing the material causes and connections of the food and health disaster.

Tonda sees this form of violence imbricated in widespread inequalities, with the violence of the imaginary entailing spectacular and traumatic events in certain conjunctures of time and place. Important for this analysis, Tonda provides remarkable examples of how the violence of the imaginary (dis)figures bodies. Consider some briefly summarized fetishisms:

- Commodity fetishism: Elaborating Arjun Appadurai's analysis, Tonda argues that that the violence of the imaginary causes social reciprocity to "break with the gift" (p. 267). Capitalism's "*prosthetic* libinal economy," writes Appadurai (1999), can conflate bodies and commodities with "things," and offer a menu of "sensual pleasures in the objects and the bodies on display" (pp. 36-40, emphasis added). Appadurai contends that "all social reciprocity is imploded into the possible gift, and the possible relationship." In the liminal space of deferral, people become conduits for the social lives of things. Mary Douglas' (1996) argument offers edifying contrast here. She suggests becoming "matter out of place" is an effect of infelicities within or barriers to role recruitment, which code certain social differences as impure and dangerous. In

contexts of symbolic deregulation, those entailed either as persons or "matter out of place" may blur in social imaginaries and intensify modes of chameleonic cunning in social performances.

- Political fetishism: In Kenya, trade in human body parts increases during election cycles as politicians in or vying for power, purchase them to increase potency and fortune. Tonda writes, "politicians 'kill'… to remove human spare parts that serve in the making of fetishes intended to keep them in power" and the "parts" typically are "the organs of albinos, Pygmies, people of mixed race, twins, and their parents" (pp. 208-9). Spare parts of anomalously embodied people.
- Bodily fetishism: The violence of the imaginary incites anxiety in which "men and women both fear being reduced to their image, to the body parts that represent them in imagination, or to the cash value of that image and body part, and 'eaten' irrevocably in that reduced form" (Hengehold, 2012: 106-7). Tonda describes how women's sexuality may be reduced to a "sex-body"—most brutal when rape is synonymized with the "looting and pillaging" of the female body during war (pp. 254-67). The reduction of sexuality to the sex-body, a concatenation of strippable parts, affects men too. As Tonda (2001) writes, "Autrement dit, le corps apparaît comme la synecdoque de la personne. Ainsi, d'un homme devenu impuissant, on dit que son corps est mort" (p. 416). (In other words, the body appears as the synecdoche of the person. Thus, of a man who has become powerless/impotent, his body is said to be dead.)

For the interests of this study, Tonda's analysis shows violent articulations of fetishism that entail a *disability synecdoche*. Social personhood becomes denied through its reduction to fungible/loot-able body parts, whether anomalous or de/over-sexualized, in ways that foreclose social reciprocity. I apply "disability synecdoche" cautiously in view of what David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder (2000) describe as a "narrative prosthesis," an emplotment device for the

fantasy and catharsis of resolution, in which disability functions as a master trope of anxiety. An imaginary "disability synecdoche" advances an overtly negative conception of disability too, even though impairment-effects met by social exclusions are central to struggles for disability justice. A key difference is Mitchell & Snyder attempt connecting literary analysis to discourses affecting the real lives of people with disabilities, which risks determining disability representation as programmatic and obscures how disability disrupts representation, including the variable aesthetic qualities disruptions take. Western temporalities are moreover not hegemonic in a context like Mombasa. Like Tonda's supplementation of Bourdieu's' symbolic violence, the disability synecdoche may serve as a supplement to "narrative prosthesis." Its poetic functionality of violence offers a tool to understand how matter may be marked and made out of place within contexts vulnerable to the "overproduction of indeterminate meaning" (Geschiere, 1998), not as a plot device, but in acts affecting the lives of people with disabilities.

Pushing further on this concept's non-negative dimensions, the improvisational and ritual capacities of Tonda's disability synecdoche open to possibilities which may not function as violent death-driven acts of domination. Florence Bernault (2006) for example, shows how people in Equatorial Africa reversed and dislocated colonists' symbolic economies of sacrifice (renunciation of bodily fetishes, polygamy, and submission to conscripted labor) by transgressively absorbing white body parts into fetish economies, which created "*destructive understandings*" of cultural proximity and moral failure. Even ordinary mall scenes show both the eventfulness Tonda captures so clearly, and many small deferrals and bearable misrecognitions—all the floating and feinting of holding up everyday relations and playing with opacities to elide recognition, which may deflect violent imaginaries. Tonda's most dramatic examples are shaped through the predicating and inbetweening of social performance

and negotiation too, not just a distortion effect on social realities that conditions and activates the exchange of bodies as things.

It underlines this section's core questions: How people with disabilities become practically included in social interactions and transactions that tend toward overdetermining their objectification within disability imaginaries or subjectivation reproducing the conditions of their own exclusion. These questions become germane to Bombolulu in scenes where people with disabilities advance development initiatives that deepen the problems they hope to solve. While often the case, participants also harness the imagination's capacity to break open ideological accounts of history and move around the flanks of their borders. The imagination is a crucial site for locating spaces where disabled people tactically consume and shape meanings to reopen possibilities of relationality and reverse Tonda's "break with the gift." Attending to these spaces of coasting at Bombolulu, including their costs and interruptions, grounds what's plural about the preceding analyses and specifies the differences disability makes for workshop participants striving for a dependable life.

Umbrella Bodies: Welfarism and Adverse Incorporation

Without further delay, or just one more: George's arrival. I spoke with him before meeting, and he said he walks with crutches and wears a leg brace. "You can't miss me." He omitted that he would be driving an SUV, legs concealed. Disability is not necessarily a marked, visible, or static condition nor do functional impairments diagnosed as "paralytic polio" offer privileged knowledge. And it cannot be assumed that "if one finds a body, one can recover a person" (Currier & Migraine-George 2016: 292). These propositions may help retrospectively, but at the time I couldn't find a body or a person and was scrambling around the sweltering parking lot. *Kizunguzungu* indeed. Fortunately, becoming matter out of place made me easier to spot, so George drove up to me. When I sat down in the passenger seat, I

was surprised to see a refashioned umbrella between us, which George used for pumping the gas and brakes. Built environments overdetermine users of certain capacities which may require unmaking or refashioning what's common in the commons—in George's case, an umbrella for mobility. In mine, it was more about getting a grip.

I did grip onto the door as we umbrella'd around afternoon traffic to a destination unknown to me. George was enraged. He works in the government on issues related to disability, mental health, and substance abuse and had just attended a funder conference where he expected a roundtable discussion with input from stakeholders like himself. Instead, it was a donor mingle in which the local implementing partners became showpieces of community participation, their opinions ignored and steamrolled. George angrily vented while pumping the umbrella to evade afternoon street activity—weaving between *matatu* buses, *bodaboda* (motorcycles), *tuktuk* (rickshaws), hawkers, *machinga* (pushcart vendors), potholes, goat herds, and errant chickens. George cannot out manoeuvre his outrage though, eventually yelling, "Kenya was ranked by someone—who knows who—as *the* most depressed country in Africa, and today I believe it!" As if George's experience at the donor conference was a "disease of the will" (Valverde, 1998) recoverable through a World Health Organization action report. The irony of governmentality is that "[f]reedom-seeking projects [like development initiatives] can suddenly turn into their opposite and come to be experienced as yet another slavery, another addiction; 'as each assertion of will has made voluntarity itself appear problematical in a new area, the assertion of the will itself has come to appear addictive'" (p. 4). My drive of depressive realism indicates that Kenya was sixth on that report (WHO Report, 2019), a fact to flick like the sleeve of a burning cigarette.

We finally arrive at an expansive compound with a stylized sign that reads, *Bombolulu Workshops and Cultural Cen*tre. An *askari* guard raises the gate and I see that the space beyond is populated with people with varying visible impairments, many physical but not exclusively.

There is a spacious tiled courtyard that yawns back to ward housing on the left, a performance area in the middle, and a long office building on the right. Near the office are four women sitting in shaded chairs next to their crutches. They are telling some off-color jokes in hushed tones. One woman dressed in a black *buibui* seems to have said something especially saucy because all four women are in an uproar when George and I slip into the office.

A woman named Jemimah greets us. She is on crutches too and sports fashionable clothing, makeup, and accessories. George and I follow her to an office, passing an informational pamphlet about Bombolulu on one of the tables. Jemimah is pictured on the cover wearing a Maasai *kikoi*, complete with layers of beadwork jewelry; she is the workshop posterchild. The office beyond is designed with a spatial grammar accommodating mobility impairments, spare in appearance due to widely placed furniture and absent doors for easier access. Chairs are set perpendicular to tables to facilitate take offs and landings in crutches. I quickly learn a habit I need to unlearn: It is inconsiderate to push chairs in under tables. The walls bear pictures of disability events and a smattering of posters, some reminding visitors that Jesus saves and one listing what makes someone a Winner or a Loser. Winners listen.

Not that one could find a word in edgewise. George has resumed complaining about the conference. The trouble he says, is it feeds into the low awareness of mental health problems in Kenya, and how poor mental health leads to drug and alcohol abuse. People with mental disabilities are ostracized because the community thinks they are crazy, that their families made bad deals or killed people, and that resulting curses cause mental disabilities. Jemimah agrees to placate him but is straight to business about a disability mainstreaming training, including a policy review for the 2003 Disability Act. She codeswitches to Swahili to explain that a critical advocacy plan has disappeared with its author, a recently fired employee. She suggests they organize an event to discuss their concerns, linking the workshop's managing umbrella non-profit, Association of the Physically Disabled of Kenya (APDK) with relevant government

branches—the latter George is to facilitate. An old man with a visual impairment interrupts the conversation. Jemimah introduces him as Mwinyi and tells him to give me a tour. “Don’t worry, you may think he cannot see where he is taking you, but he has selective sight,” she jokes.

With selective sight, the cultural tour is an optimistic scene. Mwinyi guides me through each division of labor, with rooms designed to make consumer goods and assisted devices for people with disabilities. One room features a jewelry workshop, the most successful business segment. Shards and sheets of metal cover the floor and tables. There’s eight workers laboring. On the floor, a man with a mobility impairment pounds metal with a mallet to create textural effects. A wheelchair-bound woman is cutting wire and shaping hoops for earrings with pliers. Three men form an assembly line at a central table. Mwinyi, visibly resentful, notes that the workshop has become more inclusive in accord with recent development trends, so able-bodied employees like these men enjoy employment too. In a context where most disabled Kenyans are unemployed, this is a friction within a space dedicated for people with disabilities. We move on to a cacophonous room where deaf men forge wheelchairs, and another with sewing and leathercraft tools to make clothes and wine sleeves for tourists. The last area features a man of short stature who carves elegant figurines from sandalwood, cedar, coconut, and ebony as well as camel and cow bone. He travels between the workshop and his homestead in south coast to collect carving materials. He spends most of his time here however, where 90% of artisans are offered housing—a rare commodity outside the workshop. People with disabilities are presumed unable to meet rents and often move frequently or become homelessness if they cannot stay with family.

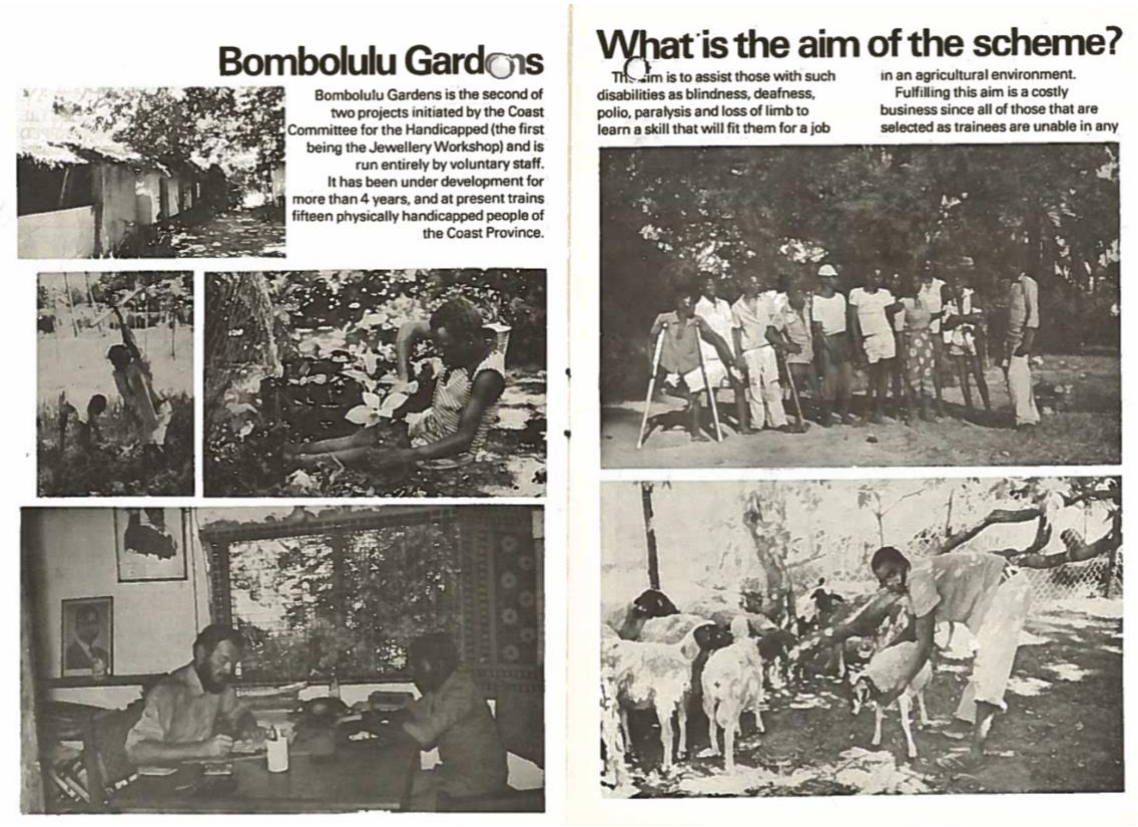
As a “sheltered workshop,” Bombolulu employs people with disabilities separate from others, on either a permanent or temporary basis, who are generally precluded from the labor market. As an ideal type, Bombolulu’s mixed roles as an NGO, business, landlord, and

parastatal enable it to function like a business and as an alternative to the welfare state. Bombolulu makes and manages profits from tourism and export commodity markets, modifying economic outcomes in the interest of people with disabilities to offer social insurance, assistance, and services normally out of reach. Workers exchange labor and rents for reciprocal entitlements to employment and housing delinked from exclusionary risk thresholds, which materially and symbolically distinguishes its social insurance from charity. Profits made become transfer payments subsidizing housing and de-commodifying access to vocational training, assisted devices, and accessible common. space, which mirror forms of non-contributory and publicly funded social services. Donor aid and charity may flow into the workshop to expand and improve services on offer too. The potential for aid and government subsidization theoretically enables the workshop to mitigate survival risks. But it is mostly underwritten by business growth, even during economic crises and downturn.

The workshop's history has been more turbulent. Bombolulu was created in the late 60s in Mazeras (a coastal township farther inland) through a Methodist church, and later as an Oxfam-funded donor project. The original workshop featured a poultry rearing project, a farm scheme, a market garden, a screen-printing project, a weaving enterprise, and a jewelry business (Record Grants Made by Oxfam, 1978-1981). But the first project collapsed "because there was no proper planning, no continuity of management and no profit" leading to worker strikes, "due nominally to a pay increase awarded to the able-bodied managers," which required the "police to be called in, the jewelry workshop to be closed, and the four strike leaders to be dismissed (Nicholls, Visit Report, 1986). The Managing Committee resigned, and the Ministry of Social Services refused to take on the project (Wills, Tour Report Sheet, 1987).

A communication from Oxfam in 1987 describes the workshop's revival. The national umbrella organization, APDK—the aforementioned non-profit consortium overseeing various national disability projects—rebooted the workshop, purportedly because "the jobs of 28

disabled people were at stake" (ibid.). A German director was onboarded and tasked with cleaning up the "Kenyan interim manager's misappropriation of more than KSh 3M" and the theft of the water pump, as well as rebuild the business entirely (ibid.). Bombolulu moved to its current location and business began to boom, especially from its rejuvenated jewelry business. The new director focused on local markets, increasing sales to customers in Mombasa and Nairobi, including tourist hotels, with limited exports to the United States and Europe. Staffing increased and employees were offered free housing. By the end of the 80s, the Workshop's business was soaring, and management expanded operations to other sites including a furniture factory in Likoni. Tourist buses regularly came for visitors to enjoy performances, take tours, and buy gifts. At its peak, some 250-300 people with disabilities were employed.



Bombolulu Workshop Brochure from the early 1980s (M'Anampiu, Bombolulu Gardens, 1980-85). 2

2 Note even here the phrase, "Fulfilling this aim is costly business."

Mwinyi supplies some of this history during the tour since he had worked at Bombolulu for 25 years. His grandfather wanted him to become a tanner, but the German director assigned him as a tour guide because of his fluency in English. At Bombolulu's peak, Mwinyi gave several tours a day with safari cars routinely bringing European travelers to marvel at the facility and enjoy cultural shows. But the scene is starkly different today. We arrive at our last destination—an enormous, museum-like gift shop, with a vaulted *makuti* coconut thatched roof, exhibiting copious products in an attractively neat, antiseptic arrangement. The space feels roundly empty absent other visitors though. These days, business has come to a standstill, and has been in decline for some time. The 2007/8 election violence, global financial crisis, and terrorism panics have strangled Mombasa's tourist market. "There are no tourists these days," Mwinyi reports.

Some of these challenges relate to transformations under neoliberalism which dismantled "collective institutions and regulatory frameworks in the name of untrammeled competition and market freedom" (Garland, 2014: 359). Neoliberals often critique welfare policies as wasteful, ineffective, and generative of harmful dependencies that overlap, however ironically, with critiques of deinstitutionalization advocates advocating to close exclusionary spaces like sheltered workshops (see Ben-Moshe, 2020). Sheltered workshops can be exploitative and pay employees sub-minimum wages (Bombolulu pays based on production, not labor time) and providing few pathways for employment elsewhere. These sites have acquired pejorative connotations, particularly in the US, Europe, and Australia. In the US, sheltered workshops were nearly rebranded as "work centers," but that raised specters of sweat shops, internment camps, and penal institutions warehousing surplus populations (US Department of Labor Handbook: Section 14(c)). A similar logic underpins critiques of aid dependency, seen as disruptive to recipients' political autonomy, accountability, service delivery, and long-term planning (Moss et al., 2006).

The international development industry has moved away from funding projects deemed unsustainable, now focused on integrative approaches for people with disabilities, often buzz-worded as "mainstreaming." Social enterprise remains a popular path for achieving integration, but pursued through combinations of impact investing, social entrepreneurship programming, and debt vehicles to tap liquidity at the base of the pyramid—all of which supposedly enables markets to work for the poor. Within the false choice of punitive institutionalization and funding that protracts social abandonment, development partners managing risk at a distance have little desire to bail out a project like Bombolulu, a project detachable from more progressive agendas to come. And the government, which remains unaccountable to people with disabilities (the reason Bombolulu exists in the first place) is keen to align itself with agendas shifting responsibility back onto the disabled to lift themselves out of poverty, rather than subsidize a capsizing project.

But Bombolulu's problem precede contemporary critiques of neoliberalism. Whether welfare is provided by the state or a development institution, it is an ancillary to the free market. Sociologist David Garland (2014, p. 346) traces the historical development of welfare states which, despite its different iterations across geographies, function by "modifying economic outcomes without obstructing enterprise; protecting labor without reducing employment; limiting exploitation without provoking capital flight; taxing profits to fund public spending without harming growth or prompting investment strike." Control and discipline through welfare abet capitalism's anti-social effects to provide social and material infrastructures for profitable capitalist action. The "paradoxical—one might say *dialectical*—consequence is that 'capitalism depends vitally on the presence, essential but never guaranteed, of an effective opposition to it … and 'the welfare state' is the collective name we give to those forces" (pp. 347-52). This paradoxical incorporation is wracked by chronic system conflicts too, such as

administration, adaptation, and political challenges that similarly impede Bombolulu's welfare functions.

Issues termed adverse selection, moral hazard, and cost-containment problems could be described as gaming unequal power and knowledge to exploitative ends. APDK, which had few reasons to preserve the failed workshop, has used its role of "taking care" for "taking things" (Ahmed, 2019: 33). Profits budgeted for workshop sustainability sometimes disappear into other project ledgers. The workshop faces bankruptcy and a financial audit for misappropriations of project funding. Workshop administrators are also engaged in increasingly personalized ventures, including Bombolulu's most recently fired Director. Those who cannot adapt, like many of the artisans, have resorted to informal credit unions, to afford daily bread in the absence of salaries. They are more susceptible to the risks of project dissolution than administrators, whose employment under APDK is unrelated to craft and manual labor. As people attempt to secure the scarce resources at Bombolulu, trust dissolves between employees, exacerbated by waves of recent firings.

Ironies and contradictions emerge at the interface of welfare, development, and market functions. Critiques that welfare creates dependency falter as systemic conflict makes workshop participants more individualistic and reliant on newer forms of development aid, as opposed to seeking compromises to transform the workshop collectively. International development reprioritizations advancing greater self-determination and political legitimacy still pawn local stakeholders like George in exchange relationships between donor partners. Marx's "hidden abode" of production is not only in the factory but farther afield in global civil society (Spivak, 1988; Fraser, 2017), and functions by substituting economic inclusion with the pretense of participatory inclusion.

Without this shelter however, disabled workers would have their labor de-commodified to the farthest margins of surplus and would be unlikely to secure or sustain on the meagre

government provisions available. Bombolulu is not a *project* from this vantage but an attachment to life, even if its achievement entails what Megan Moodie (2003) calls "subcontracting peril." Entangled life-attaching and death-dealing dependencies may support James Ferguson's (2015, p. 43) contention that "liberal ideals of freedom, autonomy, and dignity," which overvalue social independence and stigmatize dependence, are unfounded. Ferguson's ambition to recognize and (re)value "declarations of dependence" encourages some reparative reading of Bombolulu's project, or at least suspends the unhelpful onslaught of dark critiques against liberalism.

A similar resonance is found in China Scherz's (2014) manuscript, *Having People, Having Heart,* which offers a rich ethnography about two Ugandan non-profits of purportedly contrasting ethics: one adopts sustainability and audit discourses, and the other, a Catholic charity dedicated to virtuous giving. Scherz asks how "different ethicomoral assemblages—or the heterogeneous ways people understand and orient themselves toward something we might imperfectly call 'the good' or 'the right'—come together in collision, collaboration, coexistence, and compromise" (p. 7). The Catholic charity Scherz describes accesses an emic ethos of kindness and interdependency that enables its sisters to deliver aid through patronage networks and community participation. The other non-profit succumbs to short-term funding, despite meeting development standards of best practice (e.g., financial accountability and monitoring and evaluation to evidence "impact") and cannot continue operating. Unlike Ferguson, who proposes a universal solution to mitigate liberal indifference, Scherz offers an example of working within dependencies in which local ethics become alternative infrastructures supporting and circulating social good(s).

Although both are provocative, Bombolulu complicates their conclusions. Ferguson's valorizations of dependency as a "bond," "a share," and "co-presence" among citizens and the state bear some resemblance to Marshal Sahlins' reworking of kinship as the "mutuality of

being." One may wonder, for example, if the Universal Basic Income Ferguson advocates would reduce a person with disability's welfare provision after redistribution and deepen need or amplify criteria like medical diagnosis to access further care. The latter is already an impediment to people with disabilities seeking the insufficient bimonthly KSh 2000 or ~$18.00 cash transfer payments, reserved for the "severely disabled." One of the most significant challenges disabled activists face, like Jemimah and George is holding the state accountable to implementing policy change, especially from the vantage of the Coast. The task is to consider not only what these alternative politics of dependency reimagine for the future, but what they mean now, in the foxholes of the present. Capital does not flow such that it encompasses the entire planet. Invoking earlier Ferguson, it does a "globe hopping…in a selectively disordered and starkly divided landscape" (Ferguson, 2007: 48).

Likewise, Scherz's analysis elides how the Catholic charity grapples with resource constraints and how the sisters navigate donor relationships without becoming stained by liberal development and its pitfalls. Kindness as a *local* ethos tends to reify rather than clarify patronage networks supporting the charity's project too. Again, kindness may be a "luxury one cannot afford under [certain] circumstances" (Hollan & Throop, 2008: 397.) One may wonder if a 'bad' ethics of cruelty, abrasiveness, or indifference can forge and/or sustain life-giving, even "good" dependencies too. How might forms of "adverse incorporation" abide this logic (see Hickey & du Toit, 2007)?

Limitations arise when Scherz's analysis pivots on purified notions of social good when ordinary acts often face what is good-enough in the meantime. Likewise, a binary emerges in Ferguson between social dependencies and liberal ideals of asocial independence, enabling him to imagine cash transfer and UBI as "a bond" with the state among shareholding citizens. Where analyzing dependency on institutions, people ordinarily have contradictory attachments to them. Sometimes the potlatch's "share" entails alienation and misfortune even

when its effects are approximately "social" (Parry, 1986; Parry 2017). These analyses do not "stay with the trouble" (Haraway, 2016),3 and present difficulties in a Coastal context which has fragile bonds with the state and relies on strained charity-models in the wake of development investments "hopping" to Nairobi. This is not a wholesale inditement of Ferguson and Scherz's work. But celebrating binary alternatives should be cautiously resisted, whether premised on community-based participation or non-utopic imaginations of an expanded welfare state. Importantly, both have been entangled with the historical emergence of disability as a costly social category.

Community-based participation and welfarism became tools for imperial Britain to manage surplus populations considered deviant in the metropole and colonies, including the unemployed, sick, elderly, criminals, and vagrants. The eugenics movement was foundational to the birth of British welfarism in the 1940s, often credited to William Beveridge who was an active member of the Eugenics Society.4 Eugenicists used southern colonies like Kenya for experiments that eventually informed welfare policies—from weighing brains to establishing normative measurement tools like IQ testing and the bell curve. Welfarism relied on these tools to identify unproductive populations in need of development, justifying imperatives to improve "backward" native populations in the colonies (Campbell, 2012) and unproductive metropolitan groups contributing to high unemployment rates (Brignell, 2010).

Welfarism also emerged in response to unruly labor demands in the metropole and colonies, including Mombasa docker strikes between the 1940s and 60s (Zeleza, 1993). Dock labor was described as an undifferentiated "swarm" as colonial administrators struggled to distinguish and reorganize localized power structures mediated by cartels (Cooper, 1987).

3 Donna Haraway's (2016) criticizes "dark" narratives of capitalist destruction like Ferguson as well as a "comic faith in technofixes...[that] technology will somehow come to the rescue of its naughty but very clever children" (p.3), which are central to contemporary discussions about UBI.

4 Beveridge joined the Eugenics Society in 1909. His 1942 Beveridge Report, the blueprint for post-war welfarism, credited the Eugenics Society for inspiring his social policy ideas like the children's allowance—a social security extended to parents and guardians (see Horder, 1943, Eugenics Society Annual Report).

Labor crises erupted in industrialized cities across colonial Africa including ports, railways, postal services, and the Copperbelt mines during this period. The colonial administration's inability to contain strikers threatened industries core to Britain's economic strategy for repaying dollar debts after WWII. New emphases on economic development and social welfare were advanced as ways to discipline labor; it was hoped that improved infrastructure and social services would produce an efficient and pacified workforce.5 As a result, "counter-insurgency strategies after 1945 were often inseparable from development projects intended to raise living standards and welfare provision" (Thomas & Curless, 2017: 1-12).

Socially engineered solutions like the 1940 Colonial Development and Welfare Act, have overlaps with contemporary development strategies increasingly reliant on community participation networks. "Community Development" became a new term during this period, linked to mobilizing African women who were seen as key agents of project success (Lewis, 2000). Early efforts to build locally sustainable, metropolitan-style welfare organizations largely failed though, due to weak bureaucratic structures, growing anti-colonial tensions, and administrative conservatism (ibid.). Instead, development projects fell under the purview of better-established faith-based organizations, like those Scherz describes. Community-managed support networks, religious charities, and welfare policies were therefore deeply entangled with the categorization and management of disability as a social and medical liability. These historical continuities question critiques of neoliberalism that mourn the withdrawal of the welfare state, often pronounced in sharp opposition to austerity policies accelerating the destructive subsumption of life under capital.

Bombolulu is therefore positioned within many double binds of inclusion and exclusion, dependency and independency, welfare and austerity, and institutionalization and deinstitutionalization that cannot be relieved by celebrating (inter)dependency with the state or

5 See elaboration on this history in Section 4 discussing Tom Mboya.

community by rote—most emphatically because they are underpinned and animated through historically ableist ontologies. More generative is considering what people with disabilities do in the meantime, both from an emic and etic space of critical ambivalence, to navigate paths away from or foxholes within dialectical impasses.

In what follows, I take up biographical experiences and their ambivalent tensions navigating life within institutional settings, and the political stakes they create for disability advocacy as Bombolulu participants seek avenues of expression, participation, and representation beyond the shelter's enclosure. Specifically, I consider issues of pride/shame that attach to women at the intersections of gender and disability and how social differentials emerge within women's disability activism. I spotlight the limits activism creates within social margins, including women's unequal access and representation along religious, class, and bodily axes and the "negative solidarities" they create. I also suggest sites of potential within identity politics that stage and support patterns of oblique mobility explored in the concluding analysis.

Feeling(s) Around the Limits of Gender and Identity Politics

Back at Bombolulu, I linger after the tour to talk with Saumu, whom I had seen joking on arrival. I mention that she struck me as a natural comedian. She is less jocular communicating in English though. Jokes she notes, lack "the same flavor" if not performed in Swahili. The cadence is off, or an ingredient is missing—perhaps a knowing addressee to body forth the burlesque? We fall into a tacit syncopation despite using bland language. I volleyed questions to which she responded with intermittent air claps when a good flavor emerged, and anxious taps on her thigh when it soured. In this way, we sketched out her journey from childhood to her station at Bombolulu.

What makes her clap: school, family, poetry, and public speaking. Saumu is the eldest of nine children, born in a small village in Kwale County. Her mother and father grew and sold agricultural goods. When she was eight months' old, she was affected by polio and sent to a rehabilitation clinic and primary school at Port Reitz. Parents were forbidden to visit, often for many years, allegedly to spare children an upsetting reminder of their separation from home. Saumu thought of Port Reitz as her place of birth and lived there for ten years. Saumu was fond of Port Reitz and made friends who she stays close with today.

In the early 90s there were no secondary schools in Mombasa for people with disabilities, so after graduating, she travelled to a special boarding school in Thika, northeast of Nairobi. She cherished her time at this school. "We were all the same. I had so many friends. Life was easy there. But it was the last time life was easy for me." She pursued mass communications, hoping to become a radio presenter, but switched to legal secretarial studies in hopes that there would be more job possibilities after graduation. The difficulties she experienced during this period are points of pride for her today. Saumu's parents lapsed in paying school fees and the principal sought to send her home from Thika. "I decided to stand on my own and refused to go home. I said no. In the end, I was expelled from Thika, but I am proud that I stood up for myself." She completed her coursework in Mombasa but struggledo integrating in the mainstream school. "It was hard for the first time and the students were afraid to come close and talk to me. They had not spoken with a disabled person, and I stood out because I was the only one. But I challenged them." At a school event, she performed a poem about disability before 1000+ students, which earned her respect from her peers. She says, "When I visit that school today, people still talk about that poem." Her self-confidence helped her build a relationship with her family too. "They believe in me because I believe in myself. I am very proud of having their acceptance. Family is everything to me." Sauma also draws strength from the Qur'an, which inspires her poems which she recites on a local radio station

every Saturday. Poetry and performance offer modes of self-extension that enable her to endure hardships and transform relationships with others, both public and intimate.

Although Saumu's early life in special schools was marked by aspects of social separation and invisibility, these institutions offered comforting protections from exclusions experienced in public life, as well as biosocial communities of shared experience. They did not seem like terminal end points then, promising Saumu possibilities of self-transformation and integration into familial and community life after completion. On the other hand, the pride Saumu describes, of refusing what had been refused her, still connote carceral dimensions of institutionalization. "If the mainstream school could accept me, why keep me at a special school?" Shelina reflects.

Such expressions of pride, resistance, and hope are non-trivial. As Eli Clare (1999) notes, "Pride is not an inessential thing. Without pride, disabled people are much more likely to accept unquestioningly the daily material conditions of ableism: unemployment, poverty, segregated and substandard education, years spent locked up in nursing homes, violence perpetrated by caregivers, [and] lack of access" (p. 107). But self-determination and exposure, pride and witnessing, are distinct and do not always act in concert. Pride does not necessarily undo shame nor ensure that one's personal histories become collective; shamelessness may reinvite shame too. Saumu's joy of radio presentation may index self and communal realization of inclusion and participation, a narrative mode of sharing experience, and a pathway for transforming community perceptions. It may offer a prosthetic of voice that serves as a non-ambulatory alternative for mobility. But these forms of exposure are also tethered to dreams for work and expression that have already been ratcheted down; Saumu has been cognizant of the economic avenues available for people with disabilities, facing toward and away from radio as a viable career. Our conversation delicately teeters between optimism and pessimism, pride

and shame, which sometimes arrests our syncopation and induces code-switching into Swahili when her pain becomes ineloquently inexpressible.

Anxious taps occur when discussing love, social services, and employment. Saumu had fallen in love with a man years ago, but his family rejected her. Women with disabilities are often imagined as incapable of meeting normative gender expectations like pregnancy, motherhood, and domestic labor (Terefa et al., 2017). They index impediments to social, material, and biological regeneration and figure disabled kin as lifelong burdens straining social security. Women with disabilities risk transgressing social taboos that code people with disabilities as unfit for the reproduction of life, where desire can code for hyper-sexuality and incite discourses of cosmic misfortunes, curses, and witchcraft accusations. Shame resulting from over- and under-sexualization are debts that preclude or devalue social exchange rather than presupposing and activating it. And they have made Saumu's experience with love and romance unbearable; she's sworn never to pursue a relationship again, though she longs for a partner. Her feelings are compounded by her mother too, who ceaselessly encourages her to find a husband. Some parents with disabled children have even forced them to sleep with or marry partners against their will (Kotze, 2016). It is a tension Saumu expresses to me through contradiction: "The greatest advice I have received has been from my mother, who tells me not to give up hope for marriage." I ask why she believes this to be the "greatest" advice if she cannot follow it. "I don't know, I … I am not ready, maybe one day. It is very painful."

Sexual shame diffuses and blurs civil and domestic divisions. As Saumu explains, "It is harder for women with disabilities than men, especially for marriage and pregnancy. The families do not think you can do anything. They are afraid you will not be able to have children. They are afraid you will pass your disability to your children. My friends who have been pregnant tell me stories… it is very hard for a disabled woman to carry a baby for nine months. [As she becomes emotional, she begins codeswitching] And then when you go to the hospital

wakati wa kujifungua (time of conception) … the nurses, they do not help you. The nurses, they ask you questions instead! Why is this disabled woman pregnant? *Hata wewe?* (Even you?). And they blame you for being irresponsible, for tricking a man. The things they do to women in these hospitals, I … I cannot say it." She is referring to forced abortions and sterilizations, which are troubling familiar forms of violence in Kenyan hospitals.

The nurses' encounters with pregnant disabled women are accented by uncertainty (*hata wewe?*), which overrides their motivation to provide care. Given that most people with disabilities spend part of their lives outside public participation, and in view of the pejorative pre-colonial and modern ideologies grounded in biological difference, few people have non-negative schemas from which to read disabled bodies. When twinned with morally loaded beliefs of pregnancy and childbirth, it can generate deep contradictions and outrage. Lynn Thomas explores themes on pregnancy from the pre- to post-colonial eras in Kenya and shows how it has becomes a primary site for securing social value: wealth in people and material resources; symbolic and moral order, including affective and spiritual ties across generations and between the living and the dead; political, economic, and racial control across kin and kind; colonial regulation and resistance; and contemporary (inter)national contests over women's sexual health (Thomas, 2003). Politics of the "womb" (which in Swahili, shares the word for belly or *tumbo*) present pregnancy and childbirth as a transforming ritual border between social (re)production and pollution and death. Given its stakes, those "who should conceive and carry a pregnancy to term and who should assist in childbirth and childrearing have repeatedly been framed as pressing material and moral issues" (p. 4). Still, associating disability with pregnancy is unthinkable to some.

The uncertainty, unreadability, and panic posed by a disabled pregnant woman rears the violence of the imaginary to reconcile contradictory signs of impairment and pregnancy. As Saumu points out, nurses may draw connections absent knowledge of women's social

histories, sometimes refusing to talk to them at all. The body is reduced to impaired parts, indexing the theft or corruption of value (like the commodity eaten that rends the gift, or the deadly political fetish exchanged to misappropriate power), and sexuality may be reduced to the sex-body that stores loot-able or exchangeable value for social consumption/regeneration. Making sense of embodied disjointedness, a body as looted and loot-able, a debt and credit, finds inter-propositional coherence by synonymizing both impairment and pregnancy with moral, sexual, and economic transgression, entailing the pregnant disabled woman as contiguous with the witch and welfare queen. The achieved parallelism with material practices and institutions of moral and eugenic regulation work to restore order amidst symbolic breakdowns. Here, the eugenic dimensions of welfare resurface and become intertwined with schema from mission medicine and pre-colonial practices of infanticide among "abnormal" babies like twins, those born with defects, albinos, and others. These poetic functions show the violent metonymizing of disabled women's bodies, how it incites and justifies the "right to maim" (Puar, 2017), and how a gross violation of consent becomes morally coherent and efficacious by fetishizing the body. Definitions of disability, like the social model's "attitudinal and environmental barriers to full participation" (UN General Assembly, 2007, Res 61/2016) are contrastively dull tools for inscrutable experiences of violence emerging between situated bodies, places, and practices, at intimate intersections of sexuality, kinship, community, and citizenship.

Troubles track beyond the hospital too. Saumu continues: "Bus drivers don't stop for a person with disabilities. You wake up early and wait for hours to go anywhere. If you are out and you need to use the toilet… How do you use a toilet if it is on the ground, and you cannot support yourself with your legs? There are roads and paths where I cannot use with a wheelchair. Who will carry me across them or go instead of me? You need people to help you

do things. I live with my cousin, but she is in school and away from home a lot. I don't have a husband or children. Without money, you cannot pay other people to help you."

We segue to money matters. Sauma describes her passion for Bombolulu's work, which has helped her become a community peacebuilder. She educates people about disability in small villages, including her homestead. "People have bad mentalities about people with disabilities, especially in the villages. They think disability is caused by witchcraft. They don't think people with disabilities should do *chochote* (anything) and they leave them on their own. They don't have information about disabilities or knowledge of any services for them." Despite work she considers meaningful, Sauma has been seeking employment elsewhere. "Bombolulu has problems now and we have not been given a salary in 10 months. The workshop is collapsing. It is a sheltered place and I want to work with non-disabled people so that I can grow. [Bombolulu] is like a box. We cannot grow up here. Time stops when you are separated from everyone else. But it is a challenge to find employment somewhere else. I send many CVs for jobs, but I haven't been successful. You believe that if you go to school, you will find a job, but there are no jobs for us on the other side." Government policies require employers to meet hiring quotas for people with disabilities, but "nothing has been implemented in 20 years," Sauma observes. "We go to meetings and talk to the government. They hear us and say they will help us. But we just eat meals and then nothing happens. We are tired. The politicians are liars. I hate politics, it is not in my blood."

Politics are in Jemimah's blood though. My visits to Bombolulu involved meeting Jemimah for what seemed an endless number of advocacy conferences and disability trainings. She and other administrative staff order *tuktuks* to attend conferences and lobbying events, often held at high-end resorts. At each meeting, one sees the same faces, all from APDK or activists and non-profit representatives linked to the umbrella through grants, partnerships, and less professionally based connections. We greet Ruth, a no-nonsense women's rights activist

with an emphatic voice ideal for motivational speaking. She has a custom platform shoe designed to keep her level when walking on a leg foreshortened from polio and owns a clothing shop down the road from Bombolulu. We greet Emily, a grassroots community organizer and entrepreneur with muscular dystrophy; she sells menstrual products for women with disabilities and locally produced peanut butter. We greet the Mombasa government disability representative who, though not herself disabled, attends to record and respond to lobbying efforts. When I visited her at the social service office, she told me that "Disabled people think they deserve everything. We do all we can with the little money we get from the central government. They never appreciate the help we offer them; they always want more." Nevertheless, she along with other familiars discuss challenges facing people with disabilities, identify policy implementation problems, and underscore the government's broken promises for several hours, breaking for food and beverages, and wrapping up—only to repeat the same meeting whenever new venues can be booked and per diems allocated. The per diems appeared untraceable, loose cash. I declined stipends at every meeting, which were offered even if I attended impromptu. Although Bombolulu was in financial straits and had failed to pay salaries for months, it seemed the umbrella organization could still interest attending representatives and administrators with handouts for advocacy engagements.

On one such occasion, I travel to meet Jemimah at a five-star beachside resort and find her in the parking lot. She is incensed, loudly directing hotel staff to move and rearrange the meeting space, clear parking for incoming participants, and dry wet floors in the hotel lavatories. "You have to self-advocate because no one will do it for you." She explains, "[The hotel staff] booked a room for us at the far end of the hotel and there is no room for vehicles to bring people with disabilities close to the door. It forces us to walk long distances and our crutches become very painful to use day after day. You find when you book space for people with disabilities, the hotel puts you in a room that can only be accessed by stairs, or you arrive

early to use the toilet because they don't clean the floors and we slip on the water after everyone else has used it. We are paying them to use this space and we explain our needs and still they do not listen. Many [people with disabilities] do not stand up for themselves; you must advocate for yourself and speak up at every turn, everywhere you go. It does not begin and end at the meeting." Jemimah along with the other organizers have transformed the hotel into an accessible and disability-friendly space and do so at the start of each event.

We eventually arrive at the conference room and Jemimah begins circulating from table to table to greet all the familiars and to introduce herself to any fresh faces. The women are laughing and sharing hugs, catching up on the latest news, and exchanging business cards and phone numbers. I pick up an event schedule to read the two-day meeting line-up, which focuses on advocacy issues for women with disabilities. Today's itinerary includes, Arrivals and Registration, Introductions, Opening Remarks, Orientation, Expectations and Setting the Tone. Breakfast and Tea Break. Advocacy for Women with Disabilities, Government Engagement. Lunch. Access to Justice, Sports & Advocacy, Media & Advocacy. Tea Break. Media Interviews and Wrap-up. The speakers include community-based organizations partnered with or initiated by APDK, government representatives, and a few organizations with relevant foci on human rights, legal services, and public recreation.

The most important attendee is an NGO and social enterprise partner from Nairobi called This-Ability, which has organized the event. Organizers have assembled floor-to-ceiling, glossy collateral displays in the front of the conference room, replete with professional photography, captioned with text about key issues, and signed with the logos of supporting partners like UNICEF and Australia Aid. One display focuses on "Autonomy" and another describes rights issues for Kenyan women and girls. It is unusual to see a presentation like this outside Nairobi, which requires more capital than most local organizations generate. In addition to funding from international donors and public-private partnerships, these NGOs have human

capital for business development, communications and social media staff, and distributed management roles for programs, evaluation, and finance.

The room adjoining the presentation set-up is buzzing with journalists and media reporters who are interviewing women in front of a photography exhibition. I quickly return my phone to my bag to avoid sparking interest from roving journalists; my WhatsApp has become a deluge of group messages from local and national reporters who exchange contact details with participants at disability events like this one. Media coverage is a distinguishing feature of what would otherwise be repetitive events, and each meeting provides new opportunities for networking, visibility, and public speaking.

Somewhere after "Setting the Tone," the meeting starts to pass me by, and I falter recording stories I have heard many times. The speakers are indeed outlining critical issues, including immense barriers women like Saumu and Jemimah have described to me. But I find my notes repeating phrases like "moving the goal post" three or four too many times. It's not only me feigning attention. During one presentation a gecko became unglued from the ceiling, suddenly dropping dead and issuing a muffled splatter. This-Ability's director and two other women equally unglued from the presenter's speech noticed the animal fall too, and we avoided furtive glances to one another to repress laughter. Finally, the tea and breakfast break enlivens the room, and the women organize small forms of mutual aid; those who have wheelchairs convey drinks and doughnuts to women who would otherwise have to wait uncomfortably on crutches. Others are passing down napkins, milk, and sugar bowls to women of short stature who cannot reach the table. For a moment, there is a choreography of solidarity achieved with women working together as affordances across different abilities, feeding one another and resuming the personal conversations that bookend the meetings.

But solidarity comes under debate when we return for the second round of presentations, including a list-writing exercise on the most significant advocacy challenges for

women with disabilities. Each line item is preceded by a speech, a personal narrative or anecdote that becomes summarily written as "-Culture," "-Ignorance," "-Follow-ups after trainings," "-Economic challenges/transport expenses" "-Bring trainings to grassroots," and so forth. Others are more detailed and raise under-discussed problems, like stories of local administrators interfering in cases of sexual abuse, and the marginalization of mental disabilities from advocacy initiatives. Finally, some women, without a hint of irony, complain that volunteers are challenged because people attend trainings only for monetary benefits, and that the same organizations attend all the trainings, so information does not trickle down to the communities.

It is not an accident that other groups do not attend these conferences. APDK actively discourages organizations from holding events without their involvement. I had met with members of other disability organizations who relayed frustrations and resentments about APDK, even the physically disabled in general, as privileged gatekeepers hoarding access to resources and visibility. It exemplifies what political philosophers Jeremy Gilbert (2013) and Jason Read (2019) describe as "negative solidarity," or an affective sensibility and imagination binding competitive individuals through an enraged sense of injustice against those who are seen as needing and failing to bear an equal share of austerity. Depoliticized collective action leads people to edge out others who are often more marginalized, creating a race to the bottom. This sensibility underpins the demonization of the "welfare queen" too, and surfaces in the Mombasa disability representative's assessment of the disabled as "unappreciative." And it arises as a contradiction during advocacy meetings, expressed as a frustrated political aspiration for broader grassroots mobilization while refusing grassroots organizations' access to a common share. As a result, the physically disabled become resentfully coded as privileged, accused of leaving out people with mental disabilities and other impairments, and not equitably extending trainings to local communities and grassroots organizers.

Space for self-reflection occurs in front of the cameras at the end of the event. The women are standing for interviews before the photography exhibition, with Jemimah taking the lead. She is reputed in Mombasa for her public speaking, which has presented her with media opportunities on local and (inter)national stages. She was invited as an apprentice by the CEO of an Oregon-based disability INGO for her work mobilizing grassroots women's organizations and glided down the catwalk for a women's change media competition that crowned her "Ms. President"—the first woman with a disability ever to take part in a Mombasa fashion event. She also held a TedX Talk, in which she recounted her experience falling ill as a child and losing the use of her legs from medical malpractice. She felt alienated from her family and community and her parents struggled to accommodate her mobility impairment as members of a nomadic social group. Jemimah conducted the talk in a ceremonial Maasai outfit to emphasize that her resilience enabled her to overcome barriers to connecting with her community. Her greatest goal has been to empower people with disabilities so they, like her, will be able to "get whatever they set their minds to."

My interest redirects from the narratives about the pride of overcoming shame that occupy interviews, to the photographs behind them. The exhibit displays three large black and white prints, each of This-Ability team members in attendance at the conference. The first features a woman with a visual impairment who directs her cloudy eyes at the viewer. She is topless, holding her breasts against her body to conceal them with pressed arms, and her head is covered in a vivid red and yellow kanga headwrap set in sharp relief against the grey tones. The second features a woman in a wheelchair wearing fashionable black heels and a black skirt suit. She also has ethnic accessories including Maasai beaded cuffs and a beaded veil that obstructs her face, possibly used for wedding or funerary ceremonies. The last image presents a nude woman seated in a backless wheelchair. Her curving back is posed to the viewer face on, with a widow's peak of lace screening the crease of her buttocks. Her right arm hugs her

breasts and her left lilts over the crown of her head, which is tilted back and covered in a florescent red and yellow African wrap. I cannot help but juxtapose the Muslim participants gathered in front of these images, themselves in modest dress of *niqabs* and *buibui* as cameras record broadcast narratives about women's empowerment.

This scene raises questions around the representation of disability, sexuality, and their intersections. A sympathetic reading can acknowledge efforts to (re)sexualize disabled women's bodies within a patriarchal and ableist national context in ways that cannot necessarily be expected to bear the weight of exemplarity of heterogenous women, whose sexuality has frequently been erased and policed. They incite imaginations of eros and sensuality that break open ideologies objectifying women's bodies as vehicles for sex, marriage, and reproduction, and resist the violent fetishism of disabled women as non-fungible sex-bodies.

But these photographs contrast with the ethics and aesthetics of Muslim women's modest dress, including those participating in the conference and the broader Coastal context. Deregulating prohibitions of disabled women's sexuality-as-transgression traffics new dangers of indecency on socio-religious axes. Nativist projections of "Africanness," indexed through beadwork from "up-country" ethnic groups, creates yet another erasure of (indigenous and Muslim) disabled women on the Coast. Gender's intersectionalities are effaced here, but not with the same "forced choice" as other women present. Though a binary of "autological liberal subject" and "genealogical bearer of tradition" (Povinelli, 2006) may appear, it occurs through additional religious, ethnic, class, and geographical lines. Unlike the Nairobi representatives and the public speakers, most of whom are "up-country," the Muslim women face additional forced choices. They either become illegible as women of the Coast, members of an undifferentiated swarm who are ambiguously native yet foreign, urban but without urbanity, apart from and a part of representational and distributional politics. Or they become modern

women includable in liberal modes of recognition, so long as they may shed or sequester the markings of fundamentalism.6 Given the preconditions of civil society's social contract for distributing benefits of welfare and development, these forms of representation reproduce class divisions against narrowed opportunities for soliciting resources and capitalizing social reputation as creditability.

Conference insights also provide generative comparisons and contrasts with ideas advanced by western (feminist) disability scholars. Feminist disability philosopher Marian Corker (2001) criticizes disability scholars and activists for over-emphasizing what she describes as "masculinist notions of presence, visibility, material 'reality,' and identity as 'given'" in theories and politics, erasing the sensed ways of being and knowing "not situated at the *surface level* of reception and interpretation of 'reality'" (p.35 emphasis added). Corker is critiquing disability identity politics which have become dumping grounds for everything deviating from "the abstract, self-possessed, autonomous individual" (p. 41) that legitimizes western social institutions. She proposes an investigation of "sensibility," which she defines as a "set of individual and collective dispositions to emotions, attitudes, and feelings that are relevant to value theory, including ethics, aesthetics, and politics" (p. 46). Given the contextual challenges presented, her point is non-trivial. But the rejection of identity politics and visibility as always already phallocentric and superficial ignores efforts of self-writing through media engagements and the libidinal possibilities presented through the photographs, as one element of the conference "surface."7

6 See also liberal feminist political philosopher Susan Okin's (1999) *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* in which she argues that cultures that oppress women, like those of Muslim societies, would be better off "becoming extinct" if they are unable to "alter [themselves] as to reinforce the equality of women" (p. 22-23). Okin was invested in international civil society development work, acting as a delegate and fundraiser for the Global Fund for Women, which supports groups like This-Ability in Kenya.

7 Jean-François Lyotard (1993) for example, describes a "surface" or libidinal skin, as a moebius region on which intensities take place and meet with *dispositifs* that channel libidinal energy. The surface becomes differentiated and disjunctive through representation, logic, and the law of non-contradiction, with emergent enclosures creating a theatricality of volume.

Jasbir Puar (2017) also critiques disability identity politics, taking aim at Rosemary Garland-Thomas' influential notion of "disability gain" (Garland-Thomas, 1997) that universally professes disability as a "resource rather than a restriction" (Garland-Thomas, 2009: 19). Puar interrogates Garland-Thomas' presumption that disability is a universal condition which eventually befalls all of us, asking who and how certain people are made to gain at the expense of others. Puar writes that, "deconstructing the presumed, taken-for-granted capacities-enabled status of able-bodies, such ontological contingencies should not sublimate the sociopolitical contexts within which they occur, nor be thought of by any means as 'the truth of our body's vulnerability to the randomness of fate'" (p. 89-9on "ontological contingency" see Turner, 2006). Puar refocuses on how disability as an identity becomes exceptional and exceptionalizing through unevenly debilitating historical processes. The absence of polio vaccines and effective healthcare institutions, which have contributed to the conference participants' mobility impairments, are not mere accidents of fate. The greater mobilization of people with "physical" impairments rather than the "mentally disabled," is not just an effect of the universalized impairment/disability binary failing to capture "ontological contingencies" either. Following Puar's argument, some participants are further "removed from lines of social mobility" (Spivak, 2004: 521), including women with disabilities who cannot attend and those whose impairments prevent them from "speaking" (see Spivak, 1988) in a fleshly rather than propositional sense. These cleavages create negative solidarities and under/privileged positions within and between development organizations like Bombolulu and APDK, and with grassroot activists and communities, contributing to how binaries and impairment-specific categorizations become sedimented and arranged in hierarchical and undemocratic ways.

And yet, holding closely to Puar's analysis of debilitation can lead us to "disability studies without disability" (Mitchell & Synder, 2019: 663-66). As crip studies scholars David

Mitchell and Sharon Snyder note, "the theorization of debility, in this context, argues against the exclusionary biases of what we have called 'neoliberal inclusionism' while jettisoning many of the bodies it would alternatively represent" (p. 665). Following how impairments disqualify individuals from access to common participation demonstrates how "physical, psychological, and sensory capacities are unexpectedly grounded in the bedrock definition of participatory democracy" (ibid.). Stories shared by Saumu and Jemimah, as well as conference participants, provide windows into the barriers specific to mobility impairments, including material infrastructures like transport, wet floors, ground toilets, and so forth, that affect and are affected by other areas of life: work, love, marriage, and reproduction. Political and economic opportunities also depend on accessing and using certain media to represent disability experiences, often with aptitudes like public speaking. Though valuable for activism, public speaking as a primary tool forecloses equal participation among people who cannot communicate in the same way.

As an awkward enjambment, we may read the "Hottentot Venus" as an alternative example to theories of gender and identity politics, which integrates issues of visibility, sexuality, (dis)ableism/impairment, and systemic inequality, but points to other possibilities. The Hottentot Venus were featured in "freak shows" as spectacular primitive African women, gazed upon for their dark skin, big breasts, and large buttocks, with bodies coded as profoundly erotic and ugly, alluring and monstrous. Victorian spectacles of the Hottentot Venus fed colonial beliefs of the European white man's superiority which travelled within and justified the autotelic discourses of colonial domination, and constructed and embedded enduring ontologies of race, sex, and ability. Historian Maria Isabel Romero Ruiz (2013) provides an illuminating anecdote of the Hottentot Venus performers, relevant to discussions on disability:

> Freakery was a common profession in the Victorian period. Freaks considered themselves professionals who had their own techniques regarding costumes, choreography, music and songs, stage machinery and supporting materials like souvenirs and pamphlets. Their spectacles were advertised in the press of the day and the merchandising of their image made of them a profitable business. In this sense it is

important to bear in mind that they did not consider themselves "disabled" in the modern sense of the word. Therefore, freaks were able-bodied people who could work and did not have to resort to public charity, thus keeping their respectable status; they even had contracts and managers (p. 140).

The Hottentot Venus' roles as paid performers delinked physical difference from identification with disability because economic inclusion accorded a "respectable status." Visibility involved cultivating aesthetic sensibilities and identifying as "freaks," distinguishable from and exceeding categorizations of less respectable groups. But they were nevertheless objectified and violated through same logics of "disability" under the white colonial gaze. Far from participatory democracy, colonial perceptions of Hottentot Venus' embodiment grounded lives lived as slaves. Though they "even had contracts and managers," their performances were rhetorical acts for colonial audiences to enjoy and confirmation of white European man as Man that disqualified racial, sexual, and embodied Others (Wynter, 2003). Each disability perspective is useful for reading accounts of the Hottentot Venus, despite contrasting perspectives, emphases, and critiques: Puar's debility toggle, Corker's visibility critique, and Mitchell & Snyder's embodied grounding of public participation.

Despite its theoretical applicability across disability perspectives, the Hottentot Venus *refused* the identity of disability. And their refusal is important. The Hottentot Venus, who were enslaved, objectified, and commodified, nevertheless *speak* in this anecdote through aesthetic practices and (dis)identifications. Fred Moten (2017) has similarly rethought Marx's labor theory of value to account for slaves as commodities who were not merely silent chattel, but actors performing under constraint. The commodity, Moten argues, does not simply ventriloquize its valuation as given in exchange but has an image, sound, and substance surrounding exchange (pp. 26-27 citing Marx, 1973 [1939]: 483, 485), contra Marx's contention that "no chemist has ever discovered exchange value in a pearl or a diamond" (Marx, 1992 [1867]: 177). The givenness of the commodity is not just ontologically resolved in the value given between opposing or interacting forces, processes, or dialectics; its substance and

activity also precedes and predicates that givenness. Applying this idea to the critique that disability identity politics is only a negative category for everything deviating from "the abstract, self-possessed, autonomous individual," we may reconsider the work of activists in Mombasa who, within the presented western disability analyses, can only be unwitting agents or victims of their continued exclusion. The various impasses and forced choices that trap women with disabilities within carceral institutions, subject them to violence, and undercut their political representation also point to exteriorizing potentials of disruption, tactical misrecognition, and future planning that may yet predicate the givenness of ableist subjectification and objectification. It is with this in mind that I draw concluding reflections on the advocacy meetings and sheltered workshop in response to the questions framing this Section.

Oblique Mobility, an Inside Out Interpellation

This section opens with questions about interpellation: how are people with disabilities hailed as subjects at Bombolulu and its related activities? How intensive and extensive are its effects? How might people with disabilities recognize themselves as included in public life when the mediating vehicles abstract and alienate them from lived experiences of difference? And what forms of solidarity might nevertheless be made possible in these spaces?

Interpellation into disability as an identity category enables people to recognize themselves as "disabled" through ritual affirmations that secure routine attachments. At Bombolulu, these attachments are centrally related to labor integration and social security, delinked from other intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, or class. People with disabilities are theoretically rights-bearing citizens and eligible for state welfare and other market-based and infrastructural affordances. But the post-Independence state marked people with disabilities as a "liability" unless they could be integrated into productive labor, which

preserved colonial predicates of able-enough body as pre-requisite for social value. In lieu of co-creating common infrastructures that would facilitate "disability mainstreaming," welfare was extended only to a few primary education centers and funding been extended only to minimally maintain the "severely disabled." In this regard, adopting disability as an identity granted access to a handful of non-profit sites, like Bombolulu, promising a viable passageway into society and protection from exclusions felt in public and private life.

Following Louis Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" (1971) ideological interpellation hails people at Bombolulu into identification as "disabled" through modern grammars of impairment/disability—a discourse spatialized to accommodate for embodied differences in infrastructural design and labor division, that creates attachments to scarce resources with the promise of enduring, transforming, and re-entering life outside the shelter in the future. It is premised on forms of labor made accessible to people with identifiable impairments and is therefore underpinned by a medical model of disability and the entangled eugenics logics that enable welfarism and development to improve specific populations. People with disabilities remain in the institutional hold until social barriers in public and private spheres can be reduced, making the social model an ongoing activist project—that is, not merely integrating non-disabled workers into the workshop, but disabled workers into public life. Pursuing these transformations while also ensuring the workshop's security in the meantime, encourages participants to routinely adopt recognizable "disability" identifications and their discursive practices.

Amidst massifying precarity, especially in the wake of structural adjustment and millennial austerity politics, the difference between having something and nothing acquired greater stakes, especially for the political and economically peripheralized Coast. The promise of sheltered work only proved more critical a resource as access to land, labor, and housing became fetishized. These transformations also heightened anxieties emerging and exacerbated

in the colonial era about "up-country" labor, ethnic and racial privileges, and religious peripheralization and fundamentalism. Market and development discourses which frame women's "empowerment" in terms of economic and political autonomy and self-determination have intensified the "violence of the imaginary" on gendered axes too. Returning to Tonda's analysis, Western imperialism deregulated pre-colonial social institutions and their symbolic authority, which in turn deregulated imaginaries of embodied social differences. Socioeconomic and political power become remediated through the flesh, creating violent fetishizations of women's bodies as sites of sexual and moral transgression and the reduction of disability to anomalous parts. In this context, identification with "disability" offers a way to vie for work and welfare disentangled from stickier claims and imaginaries associated with intersecting social differentials. Where disability takes on intersections like "women with disabilities," rarefied narratives recognizable for soliciting donors and the state take priority. These discourses do not extend evenly into spaces outside institutions, like hospitals and homesteads, which may rearticulate eugenic and occult grammars that devalue and dehumanize people with disabilities. Even if identity politics bring misrecognitions and continually defer promises of a better life, they may minimally provide affirmation in contrast to experiences of isolation, shame, and violence felt elsewhere.

These summary observations feed into a paranoid reading of interpellation at Bombolulu and provide one partial perspective. For the Bombolulu artisans circumscribed to manual labor, as well as more severely disabled residents, the workshop's economic decline and potential dissolution threatens their attachments to a dependable future. Their recognizable subjecthood is tethered to tenancy, production, and profit unless external state or development support is secured, or the shelter's markets transform. The administration enjoys a wider playing field of opportunities, accessing community, state, (inter)national development and media organizations, and use the compromised shelter as a platform to pivot and fall back on,

in the meantime. But these attempts to branch away and deterritorialize reap only momentary rewards—another chance to lobby, another media appearance, another meal. Participants speak "good" liberal grammars of "rights," "empowerment," and "autonomy," but repetitive meetings are enervating and mimetic, composed of the same performances of shame/pride that oversimplify complex life experiences and seem unsuccessful in achieving political change or reinvigorating Bombolulu's dwindling market. Rather than becoming transformed and transported somewhere new, rhetorical agency feels like a vicious cycle (*mzunguko mbaya*), as one participant put it, which can suck the life out of meeting rooms; a dying gecko becomes a slapstick moment much like a tripped-up tourist, contrasting with the meeting's "mechanically encrusted" speeches (see Bergson, 1914).

Worse still, deterritorializing out from Bombolulu also reterriorializes the workshop in ways that incite negative solidarities with the local state representatives and other grassroots activists. The addictions of voluntarity lead participants to eat the futures of others who may be identifiable as "disabled," rending the gift from social reciprocity for temporary relief. Charismatic media performances transact creditability within ableist grammars that erase experiences of other women participants, especially Muslim women, who are cut out of representations of empowerment. Not everyone can advocate for themselves "at every turn," as Jemimah puts it, as observed in the omission of people who have "mental disabilities," the non-verbal, the severely disabled, people living at "the grassroots" or at the village level who have "bad mentalities," or anyone deemed too ineloquent to speak. In effect, while certain disability experiences become privileged, hierarchies emerge between these physically disabled women and other (un)categorized, anomalously embodied people. Interpellation into international civil society discourses on "gender and development" ironically traffic in the violent disability synecdoche composed of commodity, political, and bodily fetishisms,

exchanges made for short-term self-medications of survival, in a race to the bottom before Bombolulu's eventual collapse.

On the other hand, one may ask, following Sedgwick's (2003, p. 140-1) provocation: "What does a hermeneutics of suspicion and exposure have to say to social formations in which visibility itself constitutes much of the violence?" In a reparative gesture, even if Bombolulu's economic and political functions are imperfect or worse, participants hailed into liberal development subject positions may heartily believe in the power of their narratives and causes as a means of advancing toward a better life. One may resist understanding such initiatives as merely self-interested, a ruse, or inherently destructive. Collapsing more complex group differences and differentials among disabled women into the dull signifiers recognizable in development discourse, for example, can still act on outside observers efficaciously and with moral force. This may prove important for conveying messages to a public uninterested, adverse, and/or resistant to interpreting people with disabilities non-negatively. As Julie Livingston (2008) has shown in her study on disgust, negative imaginaries are more likely to erode through long-term intimacy and exposure to people with disabilities, shifting the surfacing effects of affective economies (see also Ahmed, 2004). Staying in circulation is a better alternative than accepting life lived in a "box" where "time stands still." Social capital accretes too, which accounts for Jemimah's repute and credibility as a familiar face in the community. Saumu and Jemimah also emphasize the pride they take in these public performances, advocating for themselves in a context where the distribution of shame is radically scaled against them. In this respect, advocacy meetings and media performances become affirmative even if "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 1984).

But to "stay with the trouble," a few curious insights may also be observed. Although affective, feelingful, and hopeful experiences emerge through advocacy, the workshop

participants were acutely aware and openly discussed the futility of these meetings. What else is going on here? Why do they continue to show up? Judith Butler (1997) observes in Althusser's theory of interpellation that "the grammar of that narrative presupposes that there is no subjection without a subject who undergoes it" (p. 112). From an empirical standpoint, the misrecognition of the presumed subject arises because Althusser does not account for socialization. Lisa Wedeen (2019, pp. 9-10) makes two other important observations. First, people are "variously liable to recognize themselves as different kinds of hailed subjects." Secondly, and most provocatively, for interpellation to be completed, the issuer of the hail must also recognize the responder's recognition of it, which "is critical to how the contours of inclusion and exclusion are drawn."

Available modes of recognition therefore offer a menu of playable language games. Disability identity politics and its agglutinated categories (disability + gender, + kind of labor, and so forth) render visible and valuable specific subjectivities among otherwise heterogenous differences of self-understanding, and the potential to operate otherwise within recognition's expected responses. As Elizabeth Povinelli (2011) has elaborated, there is a "larger triadic dynamic of recognition-espionage-camouflage" (p. 30) in which spaces emerge for the "cunning of recognition" (see Povinelli, 2002). Performing "good" liberal subject positions can occur through bearable misrecognitions and mask more oblique translations of subjectivity into agency. It signals space to move around the limitations of power structures, even if doing so produces hierarchical and undemocratic effects. Attention to the cunning use of interpellation refocuses on how participants use advocacy meetings to redistribute resources, enact political possibilities, and forge solidarities too. I call these patterns practices of oblique mobility.

Remember the loose cash? Bombolulu activists receive per diems from APDK as well as a pool of funding allocated by partnering participants, including the state.[8] They therefore make available funding denied to Bombolulu among donors who view it as an outmoded project, and from the state, which offers only a limited number of small grants to disability groups and cash transfers for the severely disabled. Because Bombolulu is supported by an umbrella body with multiple projects, and contributions for meetings are pooled, the participants can receive funding in ways that out-maneuver actuarial "good governance" and "transparency" imposed by donors. In other words, advocacy meetings become clever ways to secure welfare without soliciting it through development and citizenship discourses—all the while making appeals and demands in the recognized language of rights and economic empowerment. There are therefore "idioms of solidarity or belonging [that] can be both officially celebrated and taken as a sign of backwardness within the logic of late liberalism" (Cody, 2016: 196). As Gayatri Spivak (2008) has also noted, secularism is not an epistemology; there is a difference between knowing the game and playing the game, between describing the rules, and playing within them to win.

Funding, partnerships, and other emerging opportunities generated from these events can also be collected and redistributed within the group. The participants are constantly sharing connections, information, news, and business cards. It is no wonder that many participating women have raised enough capital to open small businesses or afford improved assisted devices, like Ruth's clothing shop and custom boot respectively. Few of Bombolulu's administrative staff live on-site like the artisans because they earn and save enough money to rent small properties nearby. Tacit forms of group decision-making and resource distribution enable these exchanges to proceed unregulated, unlike a "bond" with the state or selfless giving

8 APDK is a key partner of the local government, through which national disability funds are channelled as well. This is taken up more critically in the following section.

through community patronage networks. Although pooling and redistributing resources fall short of co-presence and altruistic sharing with others, like grassroots activists and people with underrepresented disabilities, they nevertheless create a mutual aid network.

In this regard, performing recognizable liberal subjectivities may present exclusionary images of empowered "African women," but the women at the conferences are not the intended audiences of this bland language, as Saumu might say. Most of the participating women are well-known to one another, as is the content of their speeches. The ability to garner credit and repute through public speaking operates both as individualistic status-seeking and a means to support a specific milieu of disabled women. Partnerships with other non-profit partners from Nairobi and national media engagements help participants bypass the underperforming local state and its defanged representation, scouting for opportunities beyond Coastal exceptionalism, which makes the erasure of local differences tactical rather than merely a violent or unequal mode of representation. These forms of speech differ from what Judith Butler (1997, pp. 6-10) terms "postliberatory politics," which are premised on performatively subverting dominant discourses within fields of power. Rather, these women are performing within interpellated subject genres all too well while also carrying out other business in ways that escape regulation.

Although meetings reproduce hierarchies that cede solidarities with other people with disabilities, thereby restricting grander political ambitions, valuable co-performative political solidarities are still produced. With pooled purchasing power, the women can occupy and transact in institutions that typically resist adapting to disability inclusion and accessibility. The government has been unsuccessful enforcing disability policies for private businesses, not only on the basis of employment, but for infrastructural standards otherwise required in the 2003 Disability Act. Occupying and transforming these spaces enable disability activists to affect

something like "co-presence" between the law makers, private employers, and disabled citizen-consumers where others could not.

For women who regularly struggle to access or pay for care without support from kin, like Saumu, the conferences also offer episodes in which women with disabilities create affordances for one another, enabling access to transportation and buildings, using facilities like restrooms, and facilitating consumption. Many women in attendance are friends and the meetings become a way to fund recreation with each other—opportunities to share stories, hang out, and tell jokes. Modes of interpellation that would seem abstract and alienating can create intimate moments of togetherness in unsanctioned ways, offering spaces for participants to co-create with one another, even if briefly. To refrain Kathleen Stewart (2012, p. 519), these ordinary scenes of activity are saturated with patterns and living compositions that "matter beyond their status as representations or objects of moralizing."

The ability to slide around dialectical impasses and exploit subjectivation is not synonymous with justice, however. It is closer to what Rosalind Morris (2019) calls an "intuition of justice," which is worth citing at length. She describes it as

> "The capacity, under particular historical circumstances, to denaturalize what culture has rendered as second nature and to discern in our own singular experience something generalizable. The content of that distinction remains entirely open. But its discovery means subverting or rather redeploying other structures of generalization—gender, generation, race, caste, etc. Those categories, however, are also ones of containment, of borders that interrupt what might have been a flight toward the universal. The generalization that makes use of the category of both comparison and limitation is the form of praxis by which a common (which may or not be universal) is produced—not because we all have an empirical experience of having been transgressed in a manner that exceeds the rule of law, and can spontaneously cognize the equivalence between these experiences, but because we can both think the counter-example and generalize, which is to say, participate in an idea (Online, *The Idea of Communism*).

Consonantly, claims are frequently made in universalizing language at advocacy meetings, especially on the bases of human and citizenship rights. This contrasts with Partha Chatterjee's contention that marginalized communities make claims on the state in idioms of community, "often on the fringes of legality, and not through the abstract principles of an unmarked national citizenship that is denied to them" (Cody, 2016 citing Chatterjee, 2004). Rather, what occurs

at the fringes of legality is the cunning use of categories like disability and gender, that invoke generalization without draining the political from all positive content.

When the language game is played well, the women's response to the hail performs the expected genre of recognition. The effect is not reducible to a negative disability synecdoche by which women, for example, testify to the cruel conditions they have been forced to live and exchange these testimonies with non-state organizations for material security—what Vinh-Kim Nguyen (2010) terms "therapeutic citizenship." While this may occur, women with disabilities also make use of the "violence of the imaginary" to reverse the symbolic logic of development discourses. A well-played language game produces the miraculous emergence of a subject through a moral and im-mediate short-circuiting to signification, disconnected from the signified.

In this sense, they make real Althusser's impossible temporality, in which there is no subjection without a subject who undergoes it. Interpellation can theoretically be "secured through iterable linguistic conventions or language games" that would elude one's experience of ideological demands in everyday life, something that seems to occur "without a specific originary moment" (Wedeen, 2019: 9-10). Bombolulu's advocacy meetings are full of known and felt enervation, complete with an occasionally dying gecko. In this way, the meetings sometimes skim the limits of ideology, sometimes bordering on parody. "Issuers" of the hail, attendees like the local state disability representative, recognize these brushes with parody too. Her comments, which cast aspersions on disabled women as unappreciative welfare queens, may suggest more than "negative solidarities." Recognizing the women's response to the hail can reach a "destructive understanding" of "cultural proximity and moral failure" much like the colonists who sought to end fetish economies but became vulnerable to sharing in and being unmade by the same logics (Bernault, 2006).

Likewise, the implosion of gift relations into the "possible gift" may be reimagined. Tonda's narrow reading of Maussian exchange makes Appadurai's possible gift an *im*possible gift, severed from social reciprocity. This "possible" gift *could* arrive if not for the given conditions of Tonda's "modern sovereign." But im/possibility turns on potentiality, or in a somewhat pedantic phrasing, the potential of an im/possible gift. In the practice of making commons' spaces for people with disabilities, by which participating means speaking within universal grammars while enacting "counterexamples that bypass how those universals have yet to become naturalized" (Morris, 2019), the gift may still become possible. The women's social and political mobilizing *can* be achieved, even if it falls short of social reciprocity. Repetitive meetings involve redistributing resources; occupying and transforming spaces; and breaching alienating social barriers in moments of togetherness, after all. These acts of social and political mobilization enable participants to solicit and donate time and resources, even if hampered by what "might have been a flight toward the universal" (ibid.). A compromised gift *can* be given, received, and circulated. *Can-could* is the ungrammatical, weird temporality of this actualizable exchange that reaches toward, and in small ways, opens possibility outside constraint.

Again, the women are not sharing altruistically with other disability groups nor are they achieving disability inclusion through repetitive meetings, least of all not back in the workshop. But they do get things started, even if their eating together selects from a menu at the Café Prosthetic Libinal Economy, eating those excluded and as if they were things. In the meantime, they enact an uncommoning of the commons spaces they occupy. They enact a politics of visibility *and* sensibility too, such as the aesthetics and ethics orchestrated during meal breaks, in which women attune and adapt to their differing capacities—microsocial acts of flourishing that glint at the deferred but possible gift. These oblique activities move between and outside subjectivation and objectification. As Fred Moten (2017) puts it, the capacity for interpellation

is both an "internalization of the outside as lost object," and the always already "given possibility of the exteriority of the inside" (p. 33).9 In the double binds of "post-liberatory" power structures, the participants enact forms and styles of relationality that precede and predicate the givenness of the meetings' givens, as well as invent, aestheticize, and enact what is not yet present. Therein one may locate the dislocated intuition of justice and the non-negative disability synecdoche, the compromised gift that gets things going under constraint, sometimes albeit, with terrible costs.

Because of these costs, there is little celebration or glamour even where one sees glimmers of Ferguson's non-utopic co-present bond or Scherz's patronage networking outside actuarial development logics. Even the most successful and socially mobile participants at Bombolulu still ordinarily suffer profound humiliations, the agency they achieve remains limited, and the flickering hope of these social forms face accusations and imaginaries of corruption that excluded people with disabilities see Bombolulu and APDK enjoying. As will be underscored in the final section, these undemocratic and hierarchical elements emerging through oblique mobility at Bombolulu remain "critical to how the contours of inclusions and exclusion are drawn" and have brought great harm to other people with disabilities in the community. They incite the unsettled business of disconnection among those included—a pattern of actions distinct from compromise (for which there can be no compromise among the most aggrieved) ranging from litigation to insurgency. As I will show, people with disabilities at the far margins of social mobility invent other practices living through which enduring worlds are made to stand too.

9 Moten is inspired by Foucault's essay "Thought of the Outside" which he thinks of as a "black outdoors" available from within the hold of the Middle Passage and the constraints of social worlds grown within racial violence. In a talk on the black outdoors, an audience member recounts a story in which slave traders were met by surprise, seeing slaves exiting the hold of the ship with stars and moons carved into their bodies, despite not sharing the same language and being transported in pitch darkness (Moten, F. & Hartman, S., 2016, Online, *The Black Outdoors*; see also Foucault, 1987).

Section Four: Insurgent Disability Demands & the Foundering Settlement

Insurgent Motility, a Thought toward the Inside

Bombolulu is an institution that offers participants an "equal opportunity to inequality" (Morris, 2019). On the one hand, it promises a pathway for participants to transform themselves and others through globalized grammars and practices of disability "mainstreaming" and inclusion, while on the other, holding up these ambitions with social hierarchies that perpetuate exclusions. Attending and attuning to the work at Bombolulu shows how people with disabilities' attachments to the ideals of identity politics, as avenues to claim citizenship rights, material resources, and social recognition, are abraded by the rough realities of state abandonment, wageless labour, disinterested development, and marginalizing misrecognitions that continually defer the shelter's promises into the future. Lauren Berlant (2011) appositely diagnoses this double bind as a relation of "cruel optimism," tracking the becoming general of shared affective responses or "structures of feeling" (see Williams, 1977) under austerity conditions which materialize in the feelings and activities of hitting an impasse. Jacques Derrida (1998) uses a different term— "pharmakon"— to describe such impasses as mutually entailing cure and poison, and in a deconstructive gesture, points toward spaces that disrupt this analytical closure (p. 34). Berlant similarly telescopes into sites and styles of "lateral agency," which may offer momentary breaks from the forces wearing life out (Berlant 2011: 95-119). Lateral agency may also entail spreading out and improvising ways to scout alternative modes and styles of being and becoming with others in efforts to sustain life and build social projects. Likewise, some participants at Bombolulu have obliquely mobilized within the misrecognitions of liberal identity politics, finding spaces to hang out, eat a meal, and have a laugh, as well as to redistribute resources, transform occupied spaces, and stage ground for disability advocacy. Equal opportunities to inequality enable these solidaristic and

co-performative "gifts" to be given, even if they are compromised and reproduce "negative solidarities" among participants and other disability institutions.

But what falls out of this picture? Morris, Berlant, and Derrida offer heuristics of today's "globally dominant regime" (Morris, 2019) tied to the hegemonic hunger of colonial Empires and the delocalization processes that transformed "post-war political and economic norms of reciprocity and meritocracy since the 1970s" (Berlant, 2011: 9). These forces have left most people today "out of joint" (Derrida, 1994) and precariously treading water in the deferred messianism of "democracy to come." But, as Tonda cautions, the experience of deregulation in Africa bears important distinctions to concepts conceived within Euro-American institutions, archives, and philosophical traditions. Bombolulu has "structures of causality" that ground the double binds, hierarchies, and lateral acts of participation. The people with disabilities who reside within this shelter remain attached to labor and housing; they have a foundation from which to spring, pivot, and extend the gifts of political mobilization for a possible "democracy to come," and to tactically leverage given "opportunity" structures, even if unequally and with unequal consequences. Who falls then, not to the bottom of these social hierarchies (like the factory artisans, for example), but *outside* them? Who is denied an equal access to inequality? James Ferguson's (2015) *Give a Man a Fish* has renewed utility here, as he draws on a range of African histories from pre- to post-colonial periods to show that hierarchical dependencies were "the principal mechanism for achieving social personhood. Without networks of dependence, you were nobody—except perhaps a witch" (p. 146). What would lateral agency, solidarity, and intuitions of justice look like if the analysis began with the lumpenproletariat rather than the proletariat? Marx's agent of history was the able worker, after all, whose body served as the material basis of his labor theory of value. Those incapable of selling their labor included a surplus population—of widows, the elderly, beggars, the sick, and individuals he called "the mutilated and the victims

of industry" (Marx, [1867] 2020: 360). If indeed the specter of Marx haunts us today (Derrida), whether in our strivings to transform the "idea of communism" into viable praxes (Morris), or in desires to emancipate the human senses from the "affective present" (Berlant), how do people dependent on others figure into such imaginations and aspirations of justice?

These expansive questions provoke this section's more modest ambitions to explore how people with disabilities solicit relationships and resources when they are disconnected from access to labor, housing, and institutions. I follow a group called the Founders who were retrenched and kicked out of Bombolulu after its tourism market collapsed. The Founders have remained *disposed* of the shelter in many senses of the term, evicted from their homes or bought off through contract negotiations, and prevented from returning to the workshop. Outside the shelter, many of these disabled ex-workers have been left homeless, unemployed, and socially immobilized, taking to begging and informal activities to scrape by each day. Yet they remain disposed of Bombolulu in another sense: for over a decade they have rivalled their expulsion through (il)legal means, engaged in endless lawsuits and at times, vigilante justice. Like Berlant, I have been interested in "why people stay attached to lives that do not work" (Berlant, 2011; see also Berlant, 2007). But in a different register, I ask how the Founders stay attached to a compromised life that has been denied them, how they renew attachments to an institution that actively seeks to finalize their disconnection, and how they are able continue fighting without a reliable support system.

To this end, this section advances a "thought toward the *inside*,"10 to signal how the Founders attempt to anchor themselves to discourses at the thresholds of Bombolulu's social context, through appeals to courts, employment contracts, the workshop's material compound,

10 I am playing on Foucault's (1987) "Thought from the Outside," which refers to how the limits of a context point to their historical openness and possibility for change and transformation which cannot be predicted by an interior contingency. Here, I signal the Founders not as impossibly located beyond context or discourse, but at the border of abjection. Efforts to attach to any fields of power within or at the limits of context, to be re-subjectivized, require what I am calling motility.

the land on which it is built, and the land's occult ancestral forces—plastic practices employed to find a way back inside and become subjects with power over those currently occupying the workshop. By following variously aggressive, transgressive, and ingressive activities, I show how the Founders who act in *motile* ways, despite being cut off from lines of social mobility. Motility is a mode of attaching and detaching to imaginary and material resources with variable degrees of intensity and proximities of extension, that enables the Founders to flexibly ground and resurge demands for reparations. Motile styles of demand-making return attention to the gift, not only as a form of giving and receiving, but as a mode of solicitation, critique, and complaint. The Founders' resurgent demands moreover exceed matters of liberal recognition and misrecognition; they sometimes involve insurgent action, both physical and occult, to unsettle legal resolutions said to have delivered "justice," as well as to (re)assert their right to claim the rights of citizenship. I call these patterns of coasting, *insurgent motility.*

Inviting Complaints, Restricting Critiques

I'm in a tetchy mood as I edge into downtown Mombasa on a *matatu* bus. Bombolulu has asked a staggeringly high price for me to station there as a researcher, to do an "internship." I had anticipated this obstacle before it was officially expressed, which only amplified a desire to complain and deflect my failure to dodge the expected. My commute is making matters worse; the air is thickening into a claggy fog between overclose passengers, our bodies jigsaw-puzzled so tightly together that we can taste one another's days. The bus driver is exaggerating tensions with his jolty, jittery, go, go, go, STOP! pattern, a nervous toe-tapping tic from the khat he's been chewing and spitting (*miraa*), intensified by the claustrophobic mid-day traffic creeping into downtown Mombasa. Many of the passengers crammed inside are attempting to perform the bodily consent denied us after the last bus stop's pickup, clutching to whatever surfaces can be felt out in extension to prevent a damning loss of balance, and bargaining with

space wherever and whenever possible. But then another, go, go, go STOP! scrambles us and I press up against a window, suddenly relieved by a crack of air and view of the road. Looking for landmarks to gauge how far we've been gas-brake-tapped along, I see the back of another bus in gridlock with a peeling slogan-sticker: ACT LIKE YOU TRUST PEOPLE BUT DON'T. I almost laugh from a shared sense of feeling wronged. The bus then lurches ahead, requiring yet another reorientation and rearrangement of bodies and the forced choices to which we have tacitly consented.



I finally arrive, sodden, and take time to air out on the coral stairs to the second-floor café. I see Vincent seated in the corner. His left hand hangs off the Indian teakwood balustrade, an ornately carved Zanzibari-style balcony enclosure, that extends out and above the narrow, meandering street below—distinctive architectural features that imbue Mombasa "Old Town" with its old-world feel. His right hand holds a ginger tea. He's sweaty, sick-sweaty, but nods me a smile as I join him at the table. "The spice soothes," he explains holding up the tea, "but sometimes they add cardamom, and I don't like the taste of it." It is unclear what problem he is soothing or if the chosen remedy contains a poison too. We meet here every week under the

pretense of planning work together, but typically share complaints about the pitfalls of disability organizing for an hour or two. He works in a hospital that was donated by Alicia Keys near Mombasa's biggest slum, Bangladesh, where he does outreach work to provide free or discounted medical care to parents with disabled children. This week he's offering affordable cleft lip reconstructions. I issue only vague affirmations about the importance of this work, careful not to say anything too pointed. Once I had asked him about his autism diagnosis for a child at the clinic, after interviewing the mother and learning that the child suffered meningitis as a baby. In Mombasa, kids receive autism diagnoses like lollipops these days. I omitted this provocation and instead asked whether he believed there was enough evidence linking bacterial and viral infections with autism. He became irritated anyway, taking it not merely as a scientific question but a question of his judgment. Ever since then, I had been mindful of seeking the right balance of complaint and critique during our venting sessions, with variable success.

What's tricky about a complaint is that it relies on a degree of fictionalization to invite the other into a shared struggle about what is disappointing, without erasing the struggle itself (see Berlant, 2008: 19). But too much transparency or opacity may carry the more devastating force of critique and create prohibitions or dissolve trust premised on relationality. Anthropologist Alberto Corsín Jiménez (2011) describes this through comparison: relational trust as a play of sharing and deceiving, and what he calls "public trust as a political epistemology" (p. 192) in audit cultures that strive for disclosure. Drawing on Max Gluckman's (1972) analysis of the occult as a hidden and moral force of relational accountability and his own ethnography on the Yukaghir hunters whose social relations are supported through reversals (or the reversibility) of trust and mistrust, he notes that "we need divisions and disruptions to know what unites and integrates. We need the occult to know why some things are worth making visible" (p. 193). In contrast, inadvertently questioning Vincent's diagnosis

took a "turn towards an auditing and accountability of science [as] a move towards its publicity: opening up science's internal trustworthiness by making it transparent, by 'going public'" (Corsín Jiménez, 2010: 82-3). This not only made Vincent's diagnosis seem untrustworthy but broke down the context of *our* trust and its reversibility. Act like you trust people, even if you don't.

The object of complaint/critique matters too. We launch into our grievances about recent news but focus on the faults of other people and organizations, as if this ambition for third parties to remain non-person(s) could endure (see Benveniste, 1971). We share stories about an intentional inefficiency that has slowed program rollouts, a disappearing government fund, and a disabled woman who drowned in an unmaintained public latrine. There were things of this order to complain about and criticize. But the conversation grows more personal, as "my judgement of a third party's act [becomes] subject to [his] judgement of mine" (Sidnell, Meudec, & Lambek, 2019: 310). What started with a series of seemingly impersonal reflections were also assessments of how everyday life has shaped who we are, and what we think of one another. Taking second person stances, each of us seeks in one other "someone who can receive the words that give testimony to [each of our selves]" (Das, 2018: 543). Our different perceptions of political organizing incite an unexpected agonism, rending what was shared about our complaints and redirecting the force of critique toward the other. I advance a naïve optimism about ways to improve inter-group relationships and he reacts with a chiding pessimistic realism.

It goes like this: I ask him about coordination in the disability non-profit sector, and why different groups seem resistant to working together. "You want to know how it works here? Everyone wants to take control. If you plan something and you invite another group, they try to take over it." "Maybe it's a communication problem," I counter, "that could be worked out with an open platform, maybe a WhatsApp group, to help people organize less

competitively." I recognize the risk management jargon as it escapes my mouth and try to divert attention by ordering a ginger tea for myself. "We have tried that." He's irritable now. "You can't just make a communication platform—people will want to control it and it will only be about them. Who would choose the group members? Who would police the content?" We border on bickering. Holding onto the idea, I contend that most communication platforms have administrators—perhaps groups could take turns? He looks sicker suddenly, and I realize my platitudes are tapping the brakes of his patience. I sip the tea, which *does* soothe for a moment, but the conversation jerks forward again. He asks, "Do you want to see things for what they really are?" finally arriving at accusing me of mistaking transparency for knowledge. He gestures for my phone. "How could I not?" I reply, handing over the device. "You'll see, people are self-interested," he continues, typing a number into the contacts. "This is my friend Monica's number. Call her and you'll find out," he avers, as if whatever Monica will share shall make me see things for what they really are. As if to say, it's hopeless, you'll see. Or rather, you'll *know*. His nondisclosure's air of mystery seems to restore a balance of trust to our conversation though, extricating the object of critique from our relationship to a future elsewhere, so that we may return to the context of our regularly scheduled ritual of complaining.

The differing functions of complaint and critique are important for understanding histories and experiences of demand-making among the Founders, who I am soon to meet. As will emerge through these ethnographic scenes, complaint has a second-person function of inviting and summoning others into a common struggle in ways that can generate forms of relationality, activities of demanding justice, and imaginations of writing a future in which justice may be achieved. Critique is the other face of demand-making. Forms of relationality based on shared struggle abstract from what is not shared, the difference that threatens to emerge again to decollectivize and decontextualize struggle. And critique also emerges to break

open matters that seek settlement and contextual closure. Avenues for demanding justice use these two tools of transformation across many foundations—legal, extra-legal, occult—that have differing criteria for issuing, understanding, and enforcing demands.

The following two sub-sections explore these dual processes—how complaints invite reversibility into relational forms of life, and how critique abstracts and dissolves relations, and ironically, the authority of knowledge and force it generates as well. They introduce the Founders' conflict and focus first on its legal dimensions. In the "Complainants Trials," I analyze how complaints create relational forms of trust based on exclusionary experiences, and how they become threatened through critique's third-person ingression, or what Veena Das (2007) calls the "signature of the state," which are unaccountable to, yet act on the Founders. In the "Respondent's Critique," I take up an opposing perspective to understand how legal criteria undermine the preconditions of consent on which their knowledge and power is founded. And I show how social relations rooted in collective struggle also haunt the litigation and prevent its divisive resolution, a countersignature of the state acting under erasure.

The Complainants' Trials

I head out to meet Monica, who I still know almost nothing about. When I called her and explained that Vincent recommended that we meet to discuss local disability organizing, she simply agreed and told me to meet her at the Bombolulu Stage bus terminal. I walk from Nyali to Bombolulu Stage, a dusty road tracing class shifts from the mall to a dilapidated secondary school for the physically handicapped, to a church, and then to the many small shops and markets that include informal pushcart vendors, roadside hawkers, and lines of *bodaboda* motorcycle drivers awaiting ride requests or sleeping atop their bikes—all hyper-organized by the spaces, times, and commuting patterns throughout the workday, but which otherwise can read like a dizzying congestion of informal activity. I will walk this route many times again. I

arrive at the Stage, which is a short distance from the workshop, and sit down next to women selling fruit while I wait, scanning the crowd for Monica.

I spot who must be her, crossing the crowded street on crudely made crutches blunted with cloth. We exchange introductions and I follow her through to a narrow alley between buildings constructed with cement and aluminum sheeting. It branches to a network of small corridors behind the buildings, with turns at the ribs of houses and between laundry lines onto what appears to be improvised or temporary paths. Finally, we arrive at a small mission school. I had presumed we were headed to her house or somewhere she works to have a one-on-one conversation. But I see a procession of people with disabilities coming from another direction, two squeezing through by wheelchair, a blind woman in a pink abaya touching corners and walls for familiarity, and an elderly Mijikenda man crawling on the ground behind them.

As everyone gathers inside, I learn that this group is called the "Founders," though I am unsure what that means despite a brief explanation from one member: "We have a group that meets here at this school to help disabled people and their families." The Founders can use these spare classrooms for free when they need to organize. The headmaster greets me when most of the expected attendees have arrived. He asks me if I would like to speak to the people gathering here today, which I affirm. Misinterpreting what I will be doing and agreeing to something I do not yet understand, I attempt to hold an impromptu focus group to collect biographical information and histories from the members. The first comes from a man seated in a wheelchair sporting cropped hair, a collared plaid shirt, a loose rolled trouser, and sandals. His whole body is sepia under a thin coat of dust. He explains that he has a small business selling cigarettes and other small consumables to support his wife and his two children. He sits on the roadside all day to make small sums of money from passing commuters. But I lose his narrative in the noise of interruptions—people still filing in, children playing, side discussions. My improvised focus group meet-and-greet does not seem responsive to why these people have

assembled here, a meeting which may have been scheduled strictly because a *mzungu* had contacted Monica. It is impossible to know whether this is a regular meeting, or if a game of telephone had created a cascade of imaginations and expectations. Possibly both.

I try to steer whatever this meeting might be into with a rolodex of research methods until I can orient myself and turn my attention to a woman in a wheelchair whose legs are covered with several blankets. She is older than the first man and wears sunglasses, grins whenever she speaks, and recounts stories with a disarmingly cool and cynical self-possession, even when describing chilling violence. She begins by explaining that she was affected by polio as a child. Back in those days, presumedly the 1950s, when a mother gave birth to a disabled child, her bloodline was blamed. "My father told [my mother], that that's from *your* family. He left us." She attended Port Reitz School for the Physically Disabled, completing primary and secondary education, but could not get a job because of her disability. Most employers would not interview her. If she did find employment, she was often forced to sleep with men to make her case or keep her job. "The men didn't care that I had a disability. They wanted sex. They thought it was the only thing I could offer as a woman. And you learn many things about men when they take from women like us." After spates of sexual abuse and multiple rapes, she would not take it anymore. She quit seeking employment until she heard about Bombolulu Workshop—a unique space of opportunity for disabled people, more so in the 1970s when she joined.

But her narrative moves apace from her personal life and skips past the years she spent at Bombolulu to the time she was "forced out." She explains that "APDK stopped our work. They took the land there and tried to push everyone off of it. It was a land grabbing case. After we were terminated, we were given only small compensation. It was not enough. From 2011 there was a case that had been ruled on and we should have been returned to work. And to our houses there. The ruling was decided in our favor." I had not heard this story before, which fast

forwarded past my ability to comprehend. With fragments of narrative and familiarity with present-day Bombolulu, I ask, “But not everyone was kicked out of Bombolulu, right?” to which she replies, “Yes there were a few that stayed. But they got rid of most of us. And then many others were replaced by able-bodied workers.” The situation is harder for her as an older person. She is a mother of five, but two of her children passed away and the other three live too far away to provide for her. I attempt asking her where she lives now or how she affords food and amenities, but she cuts back to Bombolulu saying, “This is a violation of our rights! We are here to demand our rights! We demand our land!”

I move to another Founder named Rachel to fill in the narrative gaps. Rachel is blind and sits clutching a black purse in her lap. She speaks gently but with measure, and sketches several moments in her life, beginning with her education at Likoni School for the Blind. She completed primary school and high school, and later attended a vocational college for the blind, including training in craft trades like basket weaving and tailoring. She too ended up at Bombolulu Workshop after a period of unemployment, but first in a volunteer capacity. She aspired to become a telephone operator, so she left Bombolulu to attend a training center in Nairobi. She earned a certificate in 1985, but it proved futile for convincing employers she could carry out telephone operator work. Each one echoed the last, assuming that she was unable to operate such a machine. “They think that if you are blind, you have other handicaps too—that you also have another physical or a mental handicap. So, they assume you are asking for charity.” Her training became immaterial within these imaginaries. Rachel returned to Bombolulu two years later and enjoyed relative stability and reprieve from the humiliation of negotiating her value elsewhere. But the stability and value promised within Bombolulu’s protective border became a membrane that suddenly ripped off her life.

Rachel worked at Bombolulu until 2012 until a second round of mass retrenchments. She explains that “it was difficult to know what the leadership was doing even after the first

retrenchment because it happened so slowly." Far from securing the jobs of endangered employees as the 1987 Oxfam communication with APDK contends, Rachel believes that the management "wanted to replace the current operations with a new program, which required chasing out the physically handicapped that were already there." Rachel explains that the workshop's move from Mazeras to its current location has a contentious backstory, filling in pieces about the "land grabbing case":

> We realized that the German man who worked for APDK was hired to manage the move of the center from Mazeras, but not to take ownership of the land itself. That land was bought by the physically handicapped who raised money to purchase it in Mazeras. But APDK wanted to take the land for themselves and do other programs. We took that matter to the court. We won the case, but they did not want to pay us. Nothing has happened. No one was held accountable. They started the case again [an appeal]. They wanted to chase us from our houses.

I ask Rachel what she has been doing in the meantime, which has spanned nearly a decade. She is a single mother, and her daughter has two grandchildren. They help a little, but it is not enough, so she sells Airtel and Vodacom vouchers. She pulls the vouchers from her purse as if showing me the difference between her wish of telephone operation and *this*. I ask why she has not tried to join other disability groups with funding and projects, if for no other reason than to bide time until the next court judgement. She replies, "There are different groups, sure. There are the deaf. There are the women groups. But before you go to another group, you need to get the rights that you are owed where you are. We are fighting for our rights here and now and after that, then we can work with others."

My mention of "other groups" has been overheard and the room's atmosphere changes. Concern. People are whispering and asking questions about me. Have you seen him before? Is he working for other groups? Is he a friend or enemy? Can he be trusted? The conversations become collective, and a de facto court opens. I am called to provide a defense statement about the nature of my research, followed by a cross examination. "Where do you come from and what is your objective?" one man demands. "I saw you at the government office yesterday—what were you doing there? Who were you talking to there?" asks another. "I saw you at

Bombolulu Workshop last month. So, you work for them, right?" People are becoming angry. I think about the discussion that led me here and the stakes these people share. How could you ask them to work with other disability organizations after their betrayal at Bombolulu? How would they work with other groups without compromising their case against APDK? My WhatsApp suggestion seems absurd now too. Even if Rachel could access a smartphone, should she consume the Airtel and Vodacom products she sells to survive, to jockey for voice among others, including those that have dispossessed her? I am psychically self-flagellating for my impulsive ignorance speaking with Vincent. And now I am in a sweat attempting to publicly respond to the Founders' questions.

I now understand why Vincent interrupted our argument and smugly provided me with Monica's contact. My mention of working with other groups has reiterated our conversation anew and Vincent has reappeared to haunt me with his critique again. What is made transparently affirmative in second-person pairings points also emerges against what is hidden and iterable in other contexts. Vincent's returning critique operates non-consensually and retributively. It may open me to knowledge that expands our mutual capacity for acknowledgment, confirmation, and consolation. A greater capacity to share complaints about the futility of disability solidarity can also make Vincent's perspective dominant (like a law among laws substituting for justice) or still seem insufficient, inciting more, even vicious, cycles of retribution/redistribution. Our meetings, initially premised on improving disability mobilization, could also transform from frustrated ambition to no ambition, dissolving the context and substance of the relationship. Complaint (which invites) and critique (which restricts) are adjustment tools shaping axes of transparency and opacity, trust and distrust, and conditions for sharing. Their effects impact the contextual preconditions of relationality, in which becoming over-enclosed by contextual circularity or over-exposed by its ellipsis produce social connections and disconnections. But there are openings for other indeterminate

singularities to break across these moving tissues too, in which to skate around economies of closure and exposure.

Back in the classroom, we are still figuring this form through the labors of entextualization, with the Founders enacting critical care across embodied differences to work out consent with me, or else refuse my imposition on their group. Each member takes turns to ask questions germane to others, a soloist sounding concerns that exceed the individual, harmonizing in turns within the ensemble. One woman rolls up to the head of the classroom in her wheelchair, raising her own questions and relaying those of others with limited mobility at the back. Another Founder translates to and from sign language each question and response for the deaf members. Finally, someone taps on Rachel's shoulder to indicate that it's her turn. Each round is punctuated by noisy discussions and evaluations, resolving some concerns and inciting new ones for the line-up. In this way, the Founders become "a moving (exchange) ratio, of more-and-less-than ones, in which authenticity, belief, doubt and speculation are the always contingent outcome of a serial calibration of signal and noise, interference and (un)certainty" (Simone, 2019: 15 citing Lury, 2018).

The pop court requires that I channel some magic too to breach the border effects of the group's paranoic concerns. It calls for a ritual of complaint to loosens what's threatening about my existing attachments, to invite the Founders' invitation (I summon you to summon me) and share, to some degree, reversible relations tying our experiences together. I hyperbolize half-truths to strike a balance between the opaque impartiality of an outside researcher, concealing whatever compromising connections I have with other groups, while expressing support for their fight, including a shared sense that many institutions intended to protect people with disabilities contribute to wronging them. It is a delicate dance between benign sympathy and an impossible empathy, to become transparently committed to them without promising something too great or betraying the others I engage.

The "trial" is not one of opposing parties with prepared representation in a courthouse however, but two converging co-present parties. The outcome may be either the "guilty" verdict's prohibition as a law of exclusion, or not. The "not" is a relational "knot" of conditions looser than the prescriptive formalism of the law, open to trialing and twisting social forms rather than a third-party imposing form through interpretation, calculation, and punishment (see also Nancy, 1997). We are seeking conditions of possibility in-relation. I eventually pass the pop court; my responses deindividualize me from potential threats enough to enable the Founders to act as if they trust me, a relieving ruling of "not guilty" for now.

Conversation resumes. A man named Patrick emerges as a group spokesperson, taking over the conversation with a lengthy monologue that details the Founders' history. He explains that "people with disabilities in Kenya have suffered a lot because there was no legal framework for a long time; disability didn't even appear in the Constitution." He and several of the oldest Founders had worked at Bombolulu in Mazeras since its inception in the 1960s and view it as "our space to own, to manage, and the make a living out of." The Founders' claims to ownership stem from their long history contributing to the workshop. As Patrick explains, "The [amendment] that came now in 2010—that's where our rights emerged. And we trained those people there on the new rights." But more than labor and advocacy, the Founders claim the original group of disabled workers in Mazeras had pooled their earnings and purchased the land deed for the new workshop. "Those same people who are suffering now, all the beggars you see in the street, those were the original people who had ownership of that land and that workshop. That is why we formed this group: to challenge these things in court and to get our ownership, to decide things without other people interfering. We can manage it and prosper; that is what we want." Patrick maintains that the Founders' ownership claims have been recognized by the court, stating "Even the court, they said, 'these people are supposed to stay in those houses at the workshop for the rest of their lives because that place

belongs to them.'" But this legal victory seems to have been temporary given the still unresolved, protracted court battle. The Founders continue to save and pool funds to keep fighting. Even though "resources for the case are limited" they have "managed to hire lawyers and pay the court fees." But the rulings have dragged on slowly, requiring not only money but patience: "The other trouble is that we must keep waiting for the rulings. We were supposed to have a ruling last month. But up until now there is no ruling." Held the meantime, they have no choice but to "do small types of work, or beg; what can we do without the resources for work at Bombolulu? *The work is there*."

Patrick's story is a partial one, leaving unexplained the reversal of the Founder's victory. A court docket from 2013 addresses the dispute over retrenchments and expulsions, with a surprising outcome (*KUDHEIFA v. APDK* [2013] eKLR, 348). In its judgment, the judge weighed whether the retrenchments were a) based on genuine redundancy and justifiable in substance; b) carried out following the minimum standards of fairness under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the law; and c) if the retrenched staff are entitled to reinstatement. There was no dispute whether the redundancy was genuine; Bombolulu Workshop had evidenced its serious financial losses during the 2007/8 violence and global recession. The court also finds that the CBA was honored and met the conditions of the Employment Act 2007. In this respect, APDK is deemed to have lawfully retrenched its employees. But the judge finds in favor of the Founders or "Complainants" too. He writes,

> "Disabled Persons, however, are not ordinary Employees, whose terms and conditions of employment are fully addressed through the provisions of the Employment Act 2007 alone; they are a special category of our Society. In determining the issues raised by this dispute, the Court has an obligation to consider other Legal Instruments that are meant to regulate the lives of Physically Challenged Persons."

Reviewing the facts against a wider set of criteria, the judge still contends that APDK acted "fairly," but his attention turns to a missing party: the state.

The judge finds that APDK's financial difficulties were "compounded by the lack of support for the Respondent from the Government." APDK wrote the Minister of Gender,

Children and Social Development requesting a KSh 5M subsidy to secure the jobs of its employees but received no response. Consultations on the CBA and redundancy needed to consider "the social dimensions of the problem" which makes the state "a key player in mitigating the social impacts of any redundancy – be it in the private or public sector." Moreover, he notes that The Persons with Disabilities Act "requires the Government to take steps with a view to the full realization of the rights of Persons with Disabilities," which includes the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities that APDK appealed for subsidy. The Act also "requires the Council to secure 5% of all positions in employment in the public and private sectors for Persons with Disabilities." He concludes finding no fault with the retrenched employees nor APDK, determining that "the heart of the problem is the negligence of the Government." The employees were directed to return to work and have salaries adjusted for terminal benefits, with the parties communicating the decision to the Government." The judge acknowledges that legal interpretation and judgement is not a simple application of legal criteria to the evidence. He considers evidence within its social and material context and resists separating social, economic, and political domains as if they operate with unrelated, autonomous principles (each having a law among laws). The "case" under review is supported by social histories that invite multiple frameworks of evaluation and reconciliation. In effect, the judge seeks a balance between critique and complaint, of restricting and inviting relation—a not and a knot.

The victory is temporary. A 2018 appeal hearing reverses the initial ruling almost entirely (*KUDHEIFA v. APDK* [2018] eKLR, 749). The court continues to hold that APDK lawfully terminated the employees. But he finds that the Founder's reinstatement required that the KSh 5M government subsidy had been pleaded, which it had not; employees who were legally fired due to insufficient funds cannot return to work if those funds never become available. More interesting, the state cannot be mandated to pay for the employees'

reinstatement—even though the Persons with Disabilities Act would obligate it—because *it was not a party in the case*. The judge states, "This was an employment contract between the appellant, the claimants and the Union which negotiated the CBA; the government was not a party to it; how does the government then become bound in such a contract. As a general rule of the thumb, a contract binds only the parties to it." The judge concludes that "all this may be morally right in principle" but the lower court's decision violated "natural justice" even if "it matters not that the same decision would have been arrived at."

The expectation that the state is obliged to protect the employment of people with disabilities paradoxically enables the government to neglect it. The state is expected to operate broadly through manifold forms of governance and uphold obligations to its citizens—in this case, with resources and protections Constitutionally promised to people with disabilities. But the iterability of state power, whether cited in court or a letter requesting emergency funding, presumes and entails a context as if "the state" were a co-present party. Veena Das (2007) calls this the "signature of the state," an act of writing that contains a gap between the rules and their performative aspects. Unlike speech acts and utterances achieved within trusted conventions of a given context that bind adjacent or co-present speakers together, the state's rules are performed dendritically, branching from it in absentia (pp. 162-83). Das distinguishes between the ordinary life of iterability in which one "may be quoted out of context, [one's] words can be reproduced in a mood of irony, or they may be infused with another affect" and the state signature: "[in] the life of the state…that very iterability becomes a sign not of vulnerability, but a mode of circulation through which power is produced" (p. 178). Although the bureaucratic and procedural structures associated with "state" power differ from the social forms that the community, domestic, and personal take in the everyday, the signature's iterability "[bears] the tracks of how the state is re-created within and not only outside such

forms of sociality" (p. 180). This social interiorization of the state marks the state's spectrality, its magical dimensions, as an "uncanny presence" (p. 166).

The signature of the state appears through a restrictive reading of contract and Constitutional law. In the 2013 and 2018 hearings, both judges acknowledged that APDK met reasonable criteria according to employment law. Both judges acknowledged that morally, the Founders meaningfully showed that their employment is deserving of exceptional support, given the challenges they experience as people with disabilities. But the context necessary for the Founders' victory crumbles due to the uncertain extent the judges interpret the Constitution in relation to other laws.

The 2010 Constitution inaugurated transformative provisions to address social inequalities, including disability clauses for employment contracts. The 2013 judge viewed these provisions as intrinsic to the civil contract. The 2018 judge however viewed the matter *firstly* as a civil contract case *after which* Constitutional provisions may be applied. He separates issues over economic and citizenship rights and requires representation from the executive branch to attest to the latter. The irony is that the Constitution is also intrinsic to the judge's authority to decide on, recognize, and uphold disability clauses within civil contracts. But instead of deferring judgment on the employment contract until its Constitutional issues are decided, the 2018 judge maintains its validity. It is *as if* the "state" *had* presented a case proving that the disability amendments are extrinsic, and therefore, that the civil court *could* decide which aspects of the Constitution are enforceable without the "state" present.

The signature of the state enables legal decisions to be made through, against, and before the Constitution. It generates economic, political, and bodily fetishisms by which the Founders' case becomes a "disability synecdoche." Symbolic deregulation emerges in court's vague jurisdiction to enforce the Constitution within a private economic matter. Any judgment necessarily decides on both by separating the economic and political issues, or not, an ironic

performance of authority that violates the Constitutional separation of powers. Upholding the contract while separating its economic and political dimensions excludes people with disabilities from both the market and citizen protections, and dissolves preconditions for state regulation over the market. The "state" is then invited to appear as a representative to argue that the Constitution is unenforceable, which immunizes it from the critique that it has an obligation to uphold disability provisions. It is as if the state, civil court, and people with disabilities share this complaint in common. The relation shared through law is disjunctive, however—a relation without relation that trivializes and reifies the embodied conditions of disability grounding the Founder's complaint, unshared by the state or court.

Most incredibly, the judge's ruling also abstracts from the bureaucratic structures and relations through which the executive branch operates. The judge calls for representation from the National Development Fund for Persons with Disabilities, which is managed by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities—a semi-autonomous agency within the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development. The National Council decides how to prioritize funding for projects across the country, but it relies on implementing civil society institutions to do so, making them an extension of the state along the blurry boundaries of *semi*-autonomous. APDK is one of NDF's (if not the) most important national partners. A "creative destruction" emerges between the state and APDK, as it did in the advocacy meetings in Section Three. If such a trial proceeded as the 2018 judge recommends, it would therefore violate "natural justice" too because APDK, both a civil society organization and private employee, merges with the "state" as (nearly the) same party in the case. In effect, APDK becomes empowered to determine the enforceability of Constitutional provisions for people with disabilities within its own disputed contract case.

Short-circuiting these relationships into a signature, which efficiently enacts power over the bodies and imaginations of others, evidences the endemic problem Tonda identifies

with the violence of the imaginary. Paired with the state's iterability in ordinary spheres of life, one can understand how cycles of violence ensue based on retribution and redistribution. State power travels contagiously across many fragile contexts, while whatever, wherever, and whoever the "state" is remains nebulous, decentered, and unaccountable.

Back in the meeting, the Founders are raising other problems with the legal proceedings. Patrick has now been joined by a second group leader—the older Mijikenda man who had crawled into the classroom earlier. Both men take turns explaining why the case has dragged on for so long. Patrick claims they had corrupt lawyers who they had to fire and replace. The other man follows, insinuating that "*Money is talking.*" The Founders' recent hearing had gone well, and the ruling was likely to be in their favor. But before the judgment's announcement, the judge was inexplicably reshuffled. The case has now been delayed, offering a new judge time to review written evidence, independent of a live hearing. Despite these murky proceedings and reversals, which have spanned a decade, the Founders are persistent. Patrick says that "we will win, 100%." Whether this is misplaced confidence or a sign of addictive voluntarity, the law does offer a foothold into power relations, a small hope of jockeying for a different outcome.

Leveraging my own knowledge of the virtually bankrupt workshop, I ask how Bombolulu will pay if the Founders win, given the funding deficits. Patrick shouts back, "THEY HAVE THE MONEY! THEY HAVE MONEY! Last month they had an order of KSh 2 Million of jewelry. They have the money, but they do not want to pay." I wonder how he knows this so surely, but he goes on:

> If [APDK] want[s] to borrow money for the workshop, they can. If they want to write a proposal to get the government to fund them, they can. If they get money from Germany, it comes through APDK. And imagine us, months and now years after those rulings, and we still have no money. The government doesn't care. The Ministry of Labor doesn't care. What will you eat? People are borrowing from shops and children go to these shops to cry. We are begging for our lives. We have a very difficult time finding places to live, paying for rents. The housing at Bombolulu is designed for us but APDK is charging rents for those houses. They are charging for children to stay there. How do you survive without eating and you are still working? Now, we do not even care if they do not pay us. We want our land back.

The Founders' energy is consuming. Everything they have described seems to betray the certainty of success they claim is in their future. How do they keep these demands alive?

As our meeting draws to an end I ask, "What will you do if [you win and] APDK does not leave? The police are corrupt and can be paid, you know that." I add, almost rhetorically: "What will you do, take to the machete?" My suggestion of violence is met with a collective uproar of laughter and excitement. "You will see! Action will be taken! Because you see, [pointing to another lady] she was sweeping and cleaning at Bombolulu—she can work like that. And then they chased her away and someone else is doing that work—someone able-bodied. We will do whatever is needed when that time comes. We are not playing around!"

The Founders have *not* been playing around. In addition to legal action, they have made and remade demands through retributive violence and rioting; redistributive uses of public disability funding; and espionage, oathing, and other furtive and affective practices of organizing. In the sub-sections that follow, I take up these manifold modes of demand-making at several angles and registers of analysis, which often involve "discursive space-clearing" (Appiah, 1991) to develop conceptual patterns emerging through the Founders' practices and the ethnographic materials gathered. I refer to the Founders' converging patterns of demand-making as *insurgent motility*. Insurgent motility develop in several steps, organized as follows:

I first consider how legal criteria shape the limits and possibilities of the Founders' demands. The state does not have a monopoly on sovereignty even if its "signature" is pervasive. I show how the countersignatures emerge within legal criteria in the next sub-section, "The Respondent's Critiques." I then explore the Founder's in/visible acts of resistance in "Para-legal Foundations," reconsidering historical interpretations and theoretical analyses based on the ethnography. In so doing, I locate modes of resistance and demand-making I refer to as "para-legal" which are attached yet irreducible to the force of law and its transgression. I deepen my investigation of para-legal practices in "A Cutting Wonder, A Blanking Out,"

highlighting occult foundations which inform the Founders' specific commitments to and techniques of resurging demands. Lastly, I conclude with how the Founders' diverse insurgent practices have "motile" patterns, which enable them to continually unsettle resolutions that would otherwise disconnect them from the workshop.

The Respondent's Critiques

After meeting with the Founders, I sought to understand the conflict at Bombolulu from the APDK's perspective and scheduled a meeting with the former Director, the German man who had overseen the Bombolulu project. Our discussion clarifies APDK's critique of the Founders' complaint and draws provocative connections to labor histories between the Coast and the colonial metropole, as well as the (post)colonial state and people with disabilities. Importantly, it shows how APDK's critique becomes vulnerable to the Founders' countersignature. APDK's efforts to sever and settle its relationship with the Founders reiterates a prior, shared context of struggle that serves to prolong rather than dismiss the case.

The meeting occurs on a hot Friday afternoon at the former Director's ("ex-Director) large, gated house in Nyali. When I arrive, I am greeted by his Kenyan wife, who pours coffee and tea as I settle in the living room. I shiver in the air conditioning as I wait for the ex-Director to join me, watching condensation drip down the windows and puddle on sills. The house seems to have its own wintry water cycle for which I am under-dressed. I take a coffee out of necessity. The ex-Director enters the living room in a green sweater, also sipping a warm beverage—a fresh tea.

Our meeting begins warmly enough. By way of introduction, he says that he was the Director of APDK for 37 years, overseeing several sites—Bombolulu, Port Reitz, and the Likoni Furniture Workshop, which were his cornerstone projects. Presently he supports business development through Christian Blind Mission (CBM), which still aids APDK's work.

He asks if I would like milk or sugar as we turn to the Bombolulu Workshop project specifically. I decline. “It is really run down these days. It’s a sad story, huh?” He offers me a biscuit. I decline.

The ex-Director left Bombolulu eight years ago, around the time the retrenchments and evictions appeared on national headlines due to protests staged by the Founders. “There were ups and downs. For a social enterprise to compete on the open market, it’s not easy. We had good, profitable years. There were years we had half a million turnover, $100K profit, which was reinvested. In fact, when I left, the Coast branch still had KSh 50M. Now it’s not only gone, but they are in a deficit.” The problem, he explains, is that the national cohort began paying themselves huge allowances and funding projects where money could not be traced. He dips a biscuit in his tea. This is not unique to Bombolulu, which is just one of APDK’s projects. APDK has grantees around the country with many employees. With them, projects have emerged with price tags reaching KSh 10-15M with nothing shown. Now, the organization is facing a forensic audit and many employees have been fired. It is a wonder why he continues to carry out business development for APDK despite condemning its corruption, but I resist inquiring about his motivations. I instead mention that APDK has been having legal troubles that might undo his hard work.

He throws me a look that braces me for something unpleasant. “That’s another thing.” He begins detailing the legal battle with the Founders, prefacing it with bitterness, “They look for every opportunity to get something.” He angrily recounts protests in 2011 and the news attention it brought. But he is quick to remind me that he had overhauled the workshop after its collapse in the 80s, a period which also saw a major employee protest:

> It was handed over to APDK because APDK at least had local structures in place. Bombolulu in contrast had no real structures, just a local committee with a volunteer from Norway. So even in terms of employment, there were always fights, always people being underpaid. We took them under APDK and its constitution, regulations, and collective bargaining agreements—those labor conditions—and we took over well. The Workshop grew from 27 to 300 employees. They were earning good money; local tourism was booming. Two buses were coming every hour with people visiting the cultural center to buy products.

I knew this success story well from my conversation with Mwinyi. The ex-Director goes on to explain that before the retrenchments, the 2007/8 ethnic violence and global recession had destroyed the tourist market Bombolulu relied on; the workshop simply could not afford to keep all of their employees. And the terms of the retrenchments were "fair," he underscores, because "there was a *clear* collective bargaining agreement that was negotiated. *People make free decisions*. We offered them a package. They signed. They took the severance pay and left." He is steaming. "And now, now these people have come back to ask for more!"

Returning to the court pleadings, we learn a more complex story about the "clear" collective bargaining agreements, severance packages, and the Founders' capacity to make "free decisions." In 2013, the court heard a collective complaint claiming APDK shorted its employees' salaries, house allowances, and terminal benefits, with the claimant (the Founders) seeking arrears pursued in conjunction with complaints about terminations that violated the CBA, particularly around early retirement (*KUDHEIFA v. APDK* [2018] eKLR, 749). The judge's first order of business is to criticize the Founders, stating that the collective complaint was overloaded. The economic and individual issues should have been separated. The judge insinuates that the employees' lawyer either did not know the correct procedure or did not care. Perhaps this was the "corrupt lawyer" Patrick fired. More than this, the judge is flabbergasted: "It is mind-boggling, why in any event a claim for unfair and unlawful termination has to be made alongside a collective economic dispute. This claim is improperly before the Court and is rejected." Both claims address breaches of contract with the employee's CBA though, a document composed with both market and welfare policies.

Dividing these matters, the judge finds that claims to unpaid salaries have not been proven because the Claimants provided no evidence. By contrast, APDK offered documents and witness testimony showing salaries adjusted to changes in basic wage, which the judge accepts at face value. Changes in basic wage are deceiving however, as APDK pays Bombolulu

workers per production quantity, not labor hours adjusted to market rates. The judge decides, nevertheless, that "In the absence of such counter-evidence, this claim must fall by the wayside" and "The assertion by the Claimant…in the absence of documents to contradict what was availed by the Respondent, cannot be believed." Here, the decision turns on the ability to provide evidence rather than weighing evidence from both sides; if evidence is not presented, its existence cannot be presumed. The Founders did not have equal access to APDK's books. Based on the docket, no discovery was conducted either, which includes requests for production (whereby Respondents would be court-mandated to provide certain documents to the Claimants, like wage records). APDK's forensic audit raises questions about the validity of the evidence it presented too.

The court goes further to state "it is not plausible that the Claimant would wait from 1994, to raise the issue relating to underpayment of wages." The judge ignores that the Founders have been begging on the streets for nine years. What is less plausible than the time required to organize and raise enough money for a lawyer, convince a lawyer to take the case, and file a claim, is that the Founders managed to do so at all. These are not merely moral ascriptions; The Founders make plain their socioeconomic position; they beg and barely earn enough to see each day through. Not that they need to say much, as many are coated in roadside dust. This is imperceivable to the judge who ultimately interprets the law (which has no stipulation on the timeframe for filing a complaint) to suggest that waiting too long to file disqualifies the complaint. Or, in his words, makes it so it "cannot be believed."

The judge has no shortage of creativity nor a limited imagination though. On matters of individual reparations for unfair termination, the court sides *against* APDK, but reduces the remedy to nearly nothing. The CBA sets the retirement age at 55 years, but the Persons with Disabilities Act 2003, which is a Constitutional amendment, mandates 60 years. The court avers that "The introduction of the 60 year-retirement age was aimed at compensating disabled

persons for the lost years, as they enter the labour market late." The workshop employees receive training and jobs at an "early age," involved in "work that is physically draining." The judge is not concerned with protecting *these* workers from exhaustion though. He continues on to say, "APDK as an institution wholly devoted to the rehabilitation of the disabled, would not run sustainably, if forced to retain senior citizens in its labour force." Founders forced into early retirement are deemed an exceptional and privileged class of disabled workers, to which the Constitution cannot apply, yet their labor is unvaluable and an economic liability. In effect, these workers are both not disabled enough given their many years' experience and access to training, and too disabled to be reinstated at APDK.

The judge's paternalism stands in for blatantly ableist discrimination (note "exhausted" not "impaired" or "disabled"), to justify protecting the welfare of elderly workers and their employers, which ironically prevents him from enforcing a valid contract at an institution designed for people with physical capacities deviating from labor standards. Accommodating people who cannot compete at standard market rates—whether disabled, elderly, or "exhausted"—is the very reason sheltered workshops exist in the first place. In this regard, the judge is not exceptional; numerous court pleadings related to Bombolulu evidence confusion about whether a sheltered workshop is a business or a non-profit. Most treat disabled workers as any other abstract individual laborer and displace welfare functions onto issues affecting an abstract social whole, subject to Constitutional review or, in this judgement, in the general interest of elderly workers.

Although APDK's case "resonated" with the court, upholding a retirement age of 55 as opposed to 60 would violate the Constitution, and the judge suggests APDK appeal with the Law Commission. Still, the court decides against reinstating the prematurely terminated employees. The judge notes that "The employees were 55 years old in 2009, which would place them at around 59 years today. They would only serve for about 1 year before they reach the

statutory and contractual 60 year-retirement age." For four years' lost work, the court requires APDK to pay only five months' salary. The national legislation created to protect people with disabilities is first reinterpreted in ableist language and then, without jurisdiction to apply his creative reinterpretation of Constitutional law, the judge advances a second fabulation that protects APDK from breach of contract, reduces damages owed, and refuses granting even a one-year reinstatement. The latter, which is described as a negligible duration, is wholly disconnected from the temporality of everyday survival—even a year would make a huge difference to a 59-year-old disabled person begging for resources. It would have been more respectable if the judge had held up the 55-year limit, as he flagrantly violates the Constitution anyway. At minimum it would preserve fidelity to numbers, acknowledging that 55 and 60 are different values, rather than proposing that 1 is actually 0.

One may wonder how disabled employees entered into this CBA with anything comprehensible as consent or a "free decision," given that Bombolulu Workshop remains one of the only places of employment available for people with disabilities in Mombasa. Many of the Founders did not work at Bombolulu by choice, but as a result of stymied efforts to find work elsewhere. An interesting parallel on consent can be elaborated from Hannah Arendt's (1970) essay in *On Violence* about civil disobedience, in which she indicts the Black Panthers, black student movement, and abolitionists for bringing violence to university campuses, which she says fail to "promote causes, neither history nor revolution, neither progress nor reaction" (pp. 77-78). Like the court's portrayal of the Founders' complaints, Arendt sees these disruptions in individualistic terms, serving "to dramatize grievances and bring them to public attention," all the while lowering universal standards (ibid.). Arendt contends that violence upsets the *consensus universalis* that structures and animates the university, making it "pay indiscriminately, for 'soul courses' and instruction in Swahili as well as for real reforms" (ibid.). This universal consensus is underpinned by histories of slavery, making it precisely the

site of struggle against racism. Refusing to acknowledge this makes it unsurprising that studying an African trading language is dismissed as an indulgence while English remains unmarked. Moten (2018) argues that Arendt's criticisms, manifest in a "commitment to institutions that are founded on the exclusionary essence of the supposedly universal consensus, itself an effect of the most egregious abstraction of them all, the fiction of the general interest" (p. 91).

Situated within the Coastal context, one may recall that CBAs were integral to colonial welfare reforms between the 1940s and 1960s to control labor strikes and housing demands, all in the name of protecting the interests of *able* workers. Concerns shifted to "improving the efficiency of workers in terms of health and sound conditions, by increasing the incentive to work and by making the actual conditions more attractive. Greater efficiency should follow from the health, education, and social services provided for in the long-term programmes now being made" (Jones, 1947). The same people who negotiated colonial collective bargaining agreements and won victories for workers, like Tom Mboya (who cut his political teeth quelling strikes in Mombasa), became Kenya's first post-Independence leaders. Mboya also led the delegation at the Lancaster House Conferences, which negotiated Kenya's Constitutional framework, and developed the first Industrial Court where the Founders' legal battles take place today. As noted in the Introduction, these leaders did not view including people with disabilities as advancing the "general interest." They were concerned with asserting control over labor power and recommended people with disabilities join institutions like sheltered workshops to avoid becoming a "liability" (see also Cooper, 1987: 273-6).

These exclusions persist and underwrite the CBA reviewed by the court, construing the Founders' claims as misguided, individual acts disruptive to protections for other workers. Individualized grievances are not exempt from but exceptional to the "collective" rationale of the CBA's welfarist and economic functions, paradoxically perpetuating the very ableism that

violates the rights of the unemployed, elderly, and disabled. The Founders' "exclusion from the tacit consensus did not mean being excused from the obligation to consent; and such obligation did not mean the presumption of ability to consent or to join and participate in the tacit consensus" (Moten, 2018: 91). It is as if the Founders were made to buy a bus ride, tried to board, but never made it to their destination because they were left out or thrown off while the other passengers worked out consent under constraint.

Back in the frigid living room, the former Director has become irritable recounting the Bombolulu story. He opens a box of chocolates to take the edge off and offers me one. I decline. I ask him if it would have been possible for the retrenched staff to build an organization like Bombolulu over the last decade rather than pursuing legal action. Perhaps they could have channeled their energy into a new social enterprise? A lot of time had elapsed, after all. The former Director explains hotly, "It's not that easy to do! You can't just… wake up and start a similar project! You see, *they have no reputation*. How will they get funding? *Where will you get land from* and where will you start building?"

I attempt to steer the conversation away from Bombolulu, asking about the disability labor policies requiring employers to meet a 5% quota. He answers quickly about a lack of enforcement, but neither this nor the chocolate is sufficiently distracting; his tires are caught in the rut of reminiscing on Bombolulu. He begins reversing, "You know, it comes back to what I call them—*disgruntled people* who misuse resources." I again try to interrupt again, but he is spinning circles. "Actually, when they came and occupied the place, the police arrested them and the leaders. How can you force people out and burn tires? *It's uncivilized*." His words ventriloquize the colonial archives, describing the "unruly" masses of Africans whose resistance to imperial control became autotelic justification to civilize them out of their backwardness. He complains that several fired employees still squat in the houses at

Bombolulu despite being told "many times by the labor court to leave," some occupying rooms for 10 years.

His complaints bear some truth. Jemimah blocked me from touring the housing section at Bombolulu, which I had assumed was to respect residents' privacy. I later learned that several of the rooms were sites of conflict with squatters who refused to leave or pay for rent, electricity, and water. The extent to which these people have been told "many times by the labor court to leave" is less clear, however.

The decision to APDK's motion for judicial review, filed in 2014, showcases the logical gymnastics APDK used to discredit and expunge a legal body unfavorable to its housing dispute with the tenants (*Republic v. Chairman, Rent Restriction Tribunal Mombasa & 20 others Ex-Parte APDK* [2018] eKLR MCA 9 of 2014). When retrenched employees were told to leave their houses, they sought and won an ex-parte injunction from the Rent Restriction Tribunal of Mombasa which prevented their eviction. APDK applied for a judicial review, holding that the Tribunal had no jurisdiction to issue the injunction since APDK had no tenancy contract with the retrenched employees. In other words, since the employees had been fired and housing was provided as a condition of the employment contract, APDK was technically not a party in the case and bore no connection to the alleged Complainants. The tribunal had improperly legalized squatting on APDK property by inventing a relationship that did not exist, and by extension, the preconditions of a case.

The court rejects the motion, finding that APDK's dispute is over merits, not the process leading to the decision on those merits. Iterability backfires against APDK in its effort to rend its pre-existing relationship with the Founders. The law that activates and regulates contract relations cannot be expunged from them, even if the relation dissolves. Whether the contract is active or terminated, it bears a trace of the relationship between APDK and the Founders, as well as the jurisdiction through which the relationship was born. In this way, the context of

struggle re-emerges as a countersignature that prevents APDK from severing and erasing a connection to the Founders.

In a similar manner, the Founders continue to haunt the ex-Director. “They don’t know how to give up,” he says, as if he is about to conclude. Instead he starts into a rant, defending his position against the Founders’ land grabbing accusations. His defense comes as a surprise to me as I had posed no question on the matter. I quote at length:

> So now, it's so funny—okay—that land was actually handed over to Bombolulu Workshop. Okay, the project started in Mazeras by the Methodist church. That was in 1971, I think. So, they started training. The main focus was on training, skills development with the UK volunteers and, uh, they purchased this piece of land here in 1974? 75? Yeah. It was registered under the trustees of the Methodist church, yeah? But then it was handed over to the Bombolulu project when it was formed as an independent committee and registered, and then they transferred it to APDK, the trustees transferred it. *There was no outside influence.* It was a decision of the Board because the project had collapsed. They wanted nothing to do with it due to the growing concern and they handed it over. And then even later on, [the Founders] even tried to influence the trustees. ‘Oh, we have been kicked out’—the same story they were telling you trying to get sympathy. [The trustee] was swayed and swore in an affidavit he was misled by APDK, you know, but he had signed off the transfer document. So now the case started. And then uh, halfway through the case— [the court] abandoned it because now [the Founders] had a lawyer that wanted to be paid. They didn't pay him. So, the case flopped, and they went to court again. In fact, I was a witness in court this year in April because I am the one who handled all of the transition, period. With the trustee. And he retracted his affidavit again with our lawyers and now swore to a different affidavit. And you know, he has a mental challenge already. He is still alive but is over 90 years old probably, *very confused*. Yeah. So, there's no chance of any success, but they are hanging on to a straw.

Was the trustee “misled,” does he have a “mental challenge already,” or is the ex-Director “with the trustee”? I decide not to pursue the matter and redirect to other topical tangents to soothe him, chatting with chattering teeth about Village Savings and Loan Group (VSLA) projects. I tactically relate my optimistic experiences working on VSLAs as a research and business development consultant, despite having internally recommended massive revisions to the organization’s programming, including rewriting the country office strategy to address horrific stories that surfaced during several months’ fieldwork on the Zanzibari archipelago. I convey these challenges to him, but with thin anecdotes so he may obtain satisfaction correcting me. I mention how women who saved for businesses but remained unbanked had had rats eat savings stored in boxes. How husbands stole wives’ VSLA savings to drink beer. How a hotel privatized beach access relied upon for seaweed farming and fishing

businesses, resulting in VSLA loan defaults. The stories work, and he puts me in a place; they offer him an opportunity to share his expertise building and transforming loan and savings projects across East Africa. His track record of success is important to him—a legacy he believes has made a lasting and positive impact. In this way, I indulge in the development dream with him until things become elliptical again. We conclude on an optimistic note, as if we now trust one other, and end with a volley of pleasantries about preferences for coffee or tea. He likes tea with biscuits. "I don't drink tea," I aver, and I thank him for the conversation before departing.

Para-legal Foundations

A few weeks after our introduction, I made plans to accompany Patrick on a walk to visit the Founders' lawyer, who had not yet submitted the closing brief for the land case. The Founders had managed to pay him but were five weeks late. The lawyer had made slow work of executing deliverables for the case, likely due to erratic payments and meager financial incentives in general. Patrick's motivation to invite me seemed obvious. I had disclosure requirements, like stating my affiliation as a researcher, not a donor, and waiting outside during the meeting, among other conditions, but his offer was unwavering. Transparency does not power off the imagination after all. The 10 or so kilometers' walk from Bombolulu Stage to downtown Mombasa seemed like invaluable time to learn more about the Founders and the case, so eventually I agreed. I would join them on many more walks and errands like this one. Trust with Patrick and several other Founders grew over time, and transactional qualities disappeared from our meetings, or were at least better hidden.

Walking from Bombolulu Stage once more, I spot Patrick standing with crutches between road traffic and a mound of dirt covered with splintered wood, broken concrete, and loose bricks. Behind him is a cement structure where men are selling hardware and sawing

lumber to build furniture. Looming in the backdrop is a free-standing, three-floor building with the look of post-apocalyptic ruin. Two ground-level shops have heavy metal security doors swung open, thickly reglazed and peeling with arbitrary paint colors. One shop sells kerosene and whatever else is omitted from its hand drawn sign "GAS / CYBER / MPesa / HOME DELIVERY," and the other is a "Vanity Boutique" displaying second-hand bodycon dresses stretched over curvaceous mannequins. The second floor is composed of open-air rooms protected with thick bars beneath the scrawling red, blue, black, and white words, ONE STOP FLAMINGO HOTEL NOW OPEN. It's likely frequented for sex work and other private transactions, assuming it still accepts business. The third floor has rooms exposed to the outdoors, which are possibly part of the "hotel," rented out, or uninhabited. A white sheet drying from a ledge shows signs of life. At the top of the building, rusted rods protrude like shoots to bear the roof, and an acute awning of scrawny tree limbs juts above the façade to hold a canopy of irregularly cut and scavenged metal shielding exposed rooms from sun and rain. Errands and errancy articulate the building's outdoorsy properties, aspirating the noise, dust, and sustenance of circulating street activities, locking lawlessness inside and out with affricatives of jail-like quarters and chained doors, and sounding out the prosaic necessity and poetic adlibbing of inhabitants occasioned by itineracy and eviction. I join Patrick near the industrial debris, shake his hand, and ask how he plans to travel to town. "I am waiting to borrow a wheelchair and then we go. I have to make a few deliveries on the way," he says. Our day too will combine errands and errancy in a zigzagging path to the lawyer, with stops and starts for planned and unplanned exchanges.

From a narrow, muddy path dividing the construction shop and the building, I see the elderly Mijikenda man appear. He rolls sluggishly through the damp until reaching partially paved ground that wraps to the storefronts. He parks in front of a closed shop and calls to a construction worker in a dusty blue boiler suit. A finger wags to the white plastic lawn chair

nearby and the worker carries it to him. We approach and the elderly man and I exchange a deferential greeting loaned from Arabic, "*Shikamoo, Bwana—Marahaba.*" Bwana swings out of the wheelchair, relying on his arms to ease knobby legs onto the ground, and then hoists himself onto the buckling lawn chair before it collapses from unevenly applied pressure. Patrick takes over captaining the wheelchair, and slides his crutches onto a soldered shelf below, remarking that "we both had wheelchairs from APDK when we worked for them, but one is broken now. We share this one." The tire treads are badly worn from the unforgiving terrain and it's a miracle it has held up for over a decade. They chat about errands and the meeting with the lawyer, and Patrick fastens a plastic bag to the wheelchair's handle to collect any useful objects he may find along the way. Finally, the two of us bid goodbye and take off down the shoulder of the road, dodging traffic, day laborers, and broken ground.

The trip is arduous. I am adapting my pace to match Patrick's wheelchair, but it is impossible to walk beside him while evading street activity. It proves difficult to talk with him at first. We also make *a lot* of stops along the way. Patrick will turn suddenly off the road without indicating when or why, only issuing a "wait here" as he rolls away. First, he disappears into a market area out of view and then down an alley, returning each time with something in the shelf beneath his wheelchair: a bag of rice, a wrapped package, a sack of vegetables. As we continue, he hands these items off, sometimes earning something for himself in a loose credit network. I come to see a circuit of informal business that needs to be run before meeting with the lawyer. "We do small things for work," he finally explains, "and these things are better than just begging in front of stores. I work with the others like this too, especially when I need the wheelchair to do business." He stops again, this time to pick up a discarded plastic bottle. He holds it up to me, saying with a grin, "we use this for petrol." Then he delivers more freight and redeems the petrol, placing the filled bottle in the bag hanging from the wheelchair.

His style of speaking makes it seem like he is telling a joke but really, he is enraged because the joke is at his expense. I've seen a similar look before, interviewing the Founders that first day. "YOU SEE THAT!" he shouts back at me through another wide smile, pointing to a truck that has narrowly swerved out of his path. I run to catch up and he goes off. "The drivers will run you off the road! They will even scream at us when we are out because they don't think the disabled should be in the way. They can even kill us, they don't care. How do we go anywhere if we cannot use the roads? And you see the roads are very bad."

We continue like this for about a half hour before arriving at a better paved section of road, which provides an opportunity to speak fluidly. We talk about his life growing up. I learn that he was born between the Coast and Nairobi near Machakos but later moved to stay with family in Kwale County. Like many of the people with mobility impairments I had met, he contracted polio when he was young and lost use of his legs. His impairment impacted his childhood, and he felt he missed out on what other boys did, especially hunting and flirting with girls. Back then there were no laws against hunting buffalos and elephants (poaching became illegal in 1973), and the boys in his village would leave for many days to hunt in the bush, and brag about what they had killed when they returned. When he later attended Kenyatta Secondary School, he made many friends despite attending a "mainstream" school. But he had wanted to meet girls like the other boys, who would sneak out at night. Like hunting, he had to stay behind. Most of the girls were afraid to talk to him too. "The girls would tease me, so they stayed away." He often spoke of how his impairment prevented him from enjoying milestones tied to manhood. Bombolulu adds to this list of emasculating disappointments too. "I trained to be an accountant, not do handicrafts and beading. It's women's work," he complained. But he does take pride in being a "sharpshooter with a catapult." "I can hit anything out of a tree from very far—a mango, a coconut. Even the birds are afraid of me!" He would compete with

the other boys when he was young, knocking down fruit or striking small animals like lizards. I do not think much of these stories, at first.

After several hours, we arrive at the law firm in downtown Mombasa. I am tired from the journey and overwhelmed by the effort Patrick expends commuting, both to keep the trial moving ahead and to solicit resources from the government's disability welfare office. Prior to meeting the Founders, I had seen Patrick at the welfare office several times in the waiting area. Now we stand before a clay-colored marble building, which is not disability friendly. The law firm is on the third floor, so more energy must be expended. Patrick takes out his crutches and painstakingly pulls himself up each step until we reach the destination.

When we arrive, I exchange introductions with the lawyer as planned. I seat myself in the waiting area and watch Patrick enter the office through a glass window. The lawyer shoots me an inquisitive glance before following him inside. They talk across a desk stacked with nearly two feet of documents for a few minutes. Patrick returns not ten minutes later relaying that "The filing will be reviewed within the month." There are no other new developments in the case, but the lawyer's assurances outwardly restore Patrick's hopes that a decision will arrive soon.

Returning to the street, Patrick and I have a curious parting conversation. I ask if he is returning to Bombolulu Stage. "No, I am going to the social service office," he says. "I'm asking for funding to support our group to support disability justice." We share a big laugh. The *nerve* of asking the government to fund a lawsuit against them strikes the right pitch of irony, and for the first time that day I witness Patrick wear a smile that seems free of anger. He continues mid-laugh, "You know the Mau Mau fighters? The freedom fighters who fought the British to win Kenyan independence? We are like those fighters." I ask him what he means. "We stick together. The Mau Mau took oaths to each other, and it made them invisible to enemies. When shots were fired at them, you see, the bullets turned into water!" With a laugh

I reply, "It's a game of 'now you see me, now you don't!'" Patrick agrees, "Yes, we are fighting in many ways, and they cannot see us coming!" I recall the group's laughter during our first meeting when I had mentioned exacting violence on the workshop. I realize Patrick had meant what he said then as he does now: "We are not playing around!"

Protests since the first retrenchments exemplify this sentiment. As the ex-Director indicated, when the first retrenchments took place in 2011, the scandal at Bombolulu Workshop made national headlines for a week. The retrenched artisans rioted, burned tires, and refused to leave their homes until the police were called. Their protests first focused on losing homes and jobs, with older artisans forced out shy of the national retirement age. Land grabbing accusations appeared later, thickening the plot of the public scandal (Otienno, 2011). In a public speech on Tononoka Grounds, where labor union strikes had been mediated by Tom Mboya some 60 years previous, the Founders' Chairman (whom I met with later) addressed the public about the eviction: "We are told to leave the only home we know. They tell us we are old and have retired. We have nowhere to go." Tononoka Grounds had a strategic and symbolic function because it is one of the few public spaces for spectatorship and major political rallies in Mombasa, past and present. Delivering a speech about the protests at Tononoka gave violence a pose, or a "posture, a stance, struck in reiterative gesture often signifying precedent" (Schneider, 2011: 90), that linked the Founders' struggle to public memories of transformative political mobilizations, including colonial labor strikes.

Today, headlines have desisted as the Founders await verdicts and plan their next move. As Patrick later restated to me, "We are fighting for our lives. But we *will* win, 100%, *by whatever means*." The Founders' history of rioting, property destruction, and squatting coupled with a present mood where "taking to the machete" is not unimaginable, shows how they stage complaints beyond the juridical theatre, publicizing critiques in the media and on the street in extra-legal ways. As Franz Fanon (1961, 1963) argues, "Violence alone, violence committed

by the people, violence organized and educated by its leaders, makes it possible for the masses to understand social truths and gives the key to them" (p. 147). The violence Fanon imagines is not merely resistance to power but a break with and transformation of colonial onto-epistemologies, native subjectivities, and embodied domination. The scope of the Founders' protests is more modest, but their turn to violence nevertheless pronounced an alternative epistemological stance: the law's claim on truth fails to address the plight and experience of disability exclusions. If the law cannot produce justice, the Founders will fight for it elsewhere "by whatever means."

Extra-legal acts find expression in Patrick's reference to the Mau Mau rebellion too. The 1950s anti-colonial insurgents sought to uproot an occupying force that had stolen autochthonous land and to reassert ownership with self-determination. The workshop's control by European partners and able-bodied managers resonates with efforts to decolonize Kenyan institutions, or as the Founders put it, "expel foreigners." The Founders' adversary is APDK, who they associate with "upcountry" labor unaccountable to the Coast and land grabbing too. This may make identifying with Mau Mau insurgents a non-obvious historical inspiration, since the "upcountry" Kikuyu were the dominant face of the liberation struggle. But retracing the stories Patrick recounted en route to the lawyer connects Mau Mau influences and the Founders' insurgent demands in other ways.

Patrick's emphasis on hunting and skillful marksmanship suggested that he hails from the Akamba (which he later noted himself) a people who had been distributed between the Ukambani region near Machakos and were well-known elephant hunters and ivory traders. Ivory trade connected the Akamba through Zanzibari mercantile routes and caravans that linked the Coast with the interior, making them one of the wealthiest ethnic groups in Eastern Africa (Parsons, 1999: 676). It makes sense that Patrick has family in Machakos and on the Coast. Patrick's pride in his sharp-shooting is also a status-bearing attribute among the

Akamba, and young men were prepared for initiations by practicing their "skill with a bow and poisoned arrows" (ibid.). The Akamba's martial reputation led the British, who were fixated on taxonomies, to celebrate and mythologize the Akamba's superior military capacities and to over-select them for military conscription (p. 683). Although the Akamba are said to have taken satisfaction in these stereotypes, they leveraged colonial imaginaries as a survival technique, using the favorable distributions of military wages from enlistment to endure deadly droughts during the inter-war and post-war periods, if they did not otherwise join the KAR out of overt coercion (ibid.).

When WWII ended and Mau Mau troubles began, the colonists grew fearful of decommissioned Akamba and their potential "contamination" by anti-colonial discourse. The Akamba's role in Mau Mau is often underemphasized, though the term "Mau Mau" may have originated from an Akamba saying, "Ma Umau" or "Our Grandfathers," which was first used when Akamba pastoralists revolted against colonial de-stocking in 1938. They urged the British to leave so they could live freely again, like the time of "Our Grandfathers" (See Black History Month, 2020). Thousands of Akamba took Mau Mau oaths and lived among the Kikuyu, often connected through intermarriage. Given these proximities and escalating tensions, the British desired reassurance of Akamba loyalism.

The British tried to secure Akamba support by expanding welfare development and separating Akamba from Kikuyu neighbors and kin. The British placed Akamba and Kikuyu patients in different hospitals, for example, to isolate Kikuyu prisoners and avoid "contamination" (Osborne, 2010: 76). Welfare development schemes were pursued with greater intensity despite stretched post-war budgets, especially in the Machakos District. Decommissioning campaigns which had been unevenly pursued in the late 1940s returned with new vigor to make "Kamba communities interested in adult literacy programmes" alongside welfare schemes including "the building of meeting halls, the formation of women's clubs, and

improved farming management and related techniques" (Synder, 2020: 83-84). Community development played off the Akamba's role as traders, pursued with many craft-production projects, especially for women, to discipline labor and migration, and prevent intermarriage with the Kikuyu (ibid.). The colonists believed that the Akamba would be unlikely to join insurgents if provided with work in cities and agricultural extension programs on homesteads (ibid.). But the efforts did not ease colonial anxieties. The 1954 Daily Telegraph warned: "If it ever should come about that every Kamba was suspected of having taken the Mau Mau oath just as every Kikuyu is suspected to-day, the gravest possible situation would have arisen. The Kamba are far braver than the Kikuyu and [because] of the experience of so many of them with the forces, more skilled in fighting" (Daily Telegraph, 1954).

These histories provide various ways to interpret Patrick's link between Mau Mau and the Founder's fight, but their explanatory and emancipatory power can be difficult to distil. Fanon rejected historicization as a means to liberation, arguing that it fails to break the link between the present and past domination. Hortense Spillers (2003) presents Fanon's concern as a problem not of historical narrative but how to "best *interarticulate* the varied temporalities that arrive on the space of the 'now'" (p. 35). Spillers argues that intersubjective formations emerge by adopting narratives one calls one's own and through narratives that immanently emerge within the subject. She recruits four registers of Lacanian temporality that include "'the physical past whose existence is abolished,' the epic past 'perfected in the handiwork of memory,' and the 'historic past in which man finds the guarantor of his future'…[and] one 'which reveals itself in repetition.'" She associates the latter with the "emergence of Truth in the Real" which is not a matter of "relocating, or 'remembering' something prior so much as it is *inventing and bring to stand* the intersubjective formation" (pp. 36-37). Adopting her framework, I present four readings of the Founders' riots alongside Patrick's Mau Mau reference, turning over various im/possibilities. Through these analyses, I show how insurgent

interarticulations of power emerge *and* break from both legal protest and the extra-legal dimensions of physical force—something I describe as *para-legal* force.

Here is one partial reading of Mau Mau's historical connection: Patrick's memories of being left behind from production (hunting), reproduction (girls), and role recruitment (manhood and labor) involve emasculating intersections of sexuality and disability. His role at Bombolulu circumscribed him to "women's work," and he has been dispossessed even of this. The historical past becomes a "guarantor of the future" in this respect, as the subversive opacity of Akamba loyalty and its martial capacity during Mau Mau provides a narrative mitigating shame, and showcases latent, shrewd, and surprising strengths. This is underscored through epic memories of Akamba martial prowess and the oath's power to create aspirational kinships, clandestine value exchange, and sovereign invulnerability, which has been complexly tied to recursive uses of gerontocratic power to defend and disrupt state authority over time (see Blunt, 2019; see also Luongo, 2011 on Akamba oathing). Patrick says that the Founders will no longer negotiate nor compromise a return to the workshop; they intend to expel APDK and manage it themselves. To this end, interarticulated historical narratives drive insurgent moods and modes of action through imaginaries of gerontocratic power once securing social cohesion and moral accountability, and of liberated libinal energies suppressed under (neo)colonialism. Insurgency therefore becomes a means to bring home the "kill," to work free of emasculating welfare controls, and to act as a decision maker within social roles previously usurped, denied, and foreclosed.

This interpretation does not aspire to an explanatory truth claim but offers a possible reading that confirms and questions Fanon's resistance to historicization. Specifically, Fanon was concerned with insurgency's intimacy with the pathological and the criminal. He contends that colonial subjects zealous to work for their oppressors could "simply be considered [a] pathological case" from the perspective of the conscious colonized subject. In this respect,

Patrick's attachment to insurgent histories may value criminality without becoming pathological. But Fanon argues that this "could equally be applied to the respect the native has for the oppressor's laws" (Fanon, [1961] 1963: 294-5), which the Founders also pursue. The Founder's dual use of legal and extra-legal methods for usurping APDK's authority risk cycling between the criminal and the pathological. Are there spaces in which other types of action may flourish obliquely, neither criminal nor pathological? What does Patrick mean, for example, when he says, "they cannot see us coming?"

Let's first take up one of Fanon's pathologizing forces: the law. Renewing demands by maintaining a "case" promises access to citizenship, even if it creates deferrals and inequalities (both a poison and a cure). Flickers of hope, like the temporary victories in 2013 and at the housing tribunal, keep the Founders baited and attached to the law. Patrick exerts himself to travel to town to meet lawyers, to keep the battle going for over a decade. A Lacanian reading may serve as a reparative gesture here: the subject's "lack" is a constitutive rather than an exceptional element of alienation within a symbolic structure, whether of language or of law. The Founders are citizens, however distant rights may be, and they continually perform this subject position in court. But the discontinuities and deferrals of the law's promise also creates a "disease of the will." In this regard, the Founders' lack is not an alienation experienced as subjects of language. It becomes pathological through reasserting the case for punctuations of subjecthood against experiences of ongoing abandonment.

The pathological attachment to the law is mirrored in the criminalization of its transgression: Extra-legal protest articulated through an imaginary of Mau Mau insurgency emerges "at a moment when the state's imprimatur [is] rendered fugitive" as a means of supplementary violence to "enforce the truth of words, whether [they] entailed the speech act of swearing oaths in a nominally 'traditional' ritual context, or in acts of 'modern' law enforcement" (Blunt, 2019: 6). But extra-legal force also becomes shaped by "the signature of

the state." The signature produces cycles of retributive violence, and the protests viewed through the theatre of security are recoded as criminal activities of "uncivilized" and "disgruntled people," resulting in police responses to neutralize conflict. In double binds of power/resistance, Patrick's interarticulated histories may become re-linearized: liberation appears achievable by overcoming emasculated development through violence, a masculine rite of passage that reproduces the colonial/state logic it seeks to resist. When counterinsurgency reintroduces retribution, the disease of the will reinscribes a psychosocial castration, a physical inability to catapult the oppressor, and circumscription back into demeaning work elsewhere.

This can be a reductive reading, overlooking the variability of Mau Mau-inspired oathing in Kenya, which made and unmade sovereignty, masculinity, and elderhood within recursive crises of meaning. Alternatively, if insurgency gestures toward an outcome yet unthought, like the unknowability of a post-liberatory future, then protest mirroring anti-colonial liberation could be an articulation of acephalous force seeking no resolution nor reabsorption into existing norms and values. The Founders may accede to social roles and styles of sovereignty unrealized in kinship, work, and welfare that have shamed them. Spillers explains that narratives are not only tools of remembering or relocating a past but inventing and bringing to stand an immanent intersubjective formation. And yet, this may idealise an unoriented criminality disassociated from the norm or case and, most importantly, ignore that the Founders do want *certain* outcomes from their struggles.

A third interpretation is more provocative. Insurgency is "contagion" that can spread to other contexts and reshape public opinion. The colonists' vulnerability to Mau Mau oathing worried that "official" discourses left sleeping threats undisturbed and beyond control, even among those considered loyal to the Crown. The publicization of the Bombolulu scandal could similarly attach to imaginaries of political self-determination in the public eye. Oathing's

sympathetic magic is unruly, echoed in the ex-Director's assessment of the riots as "just trying to get sympathy." Sympathy also functions in the ex-Director's restless description of the Trustee's wavering loyalty. Either the Trustee is pathological because he has a "mental challenge already" or the Founders have skated aside the law's power to criminalize or protect the general interest. The Founders' sympathetic appeals have made the Trustee "very confused," causing him to "[retract] his affidavit again with [APDK's] lawyers." Kyla Schuller (2018) similarly argues how sentimentality served as a critical surface of (in)security for liberal colonial and biopolitical projects. Colonial efforts to make culturally plastic and biologically determined populations sought to *in*form relational sentimentalities, producing dominant ideologies and institutions of race, sex, and disability, along with certain disciplined subjectivities (see also Magubane, 2001). The ex-Director's description of the protests as "uncivilized," reacts to a deep fear (a contextual spreading) of breached affective borders undermining control.

These interpretations present a picture of connections rather than explanatory causes between the Founders' fight, Mau Mau insurgency, imperial projects, and the contemporary conflict. As Wittgenstein ([1931] 2018) remarks on Frazer's explanations of ritual, this presentation is "as one might illustrate an inner relation between a circle and an ellipse by gradually transforming an ellipse into a circle; but not to claim that a given ellipse in fact, historically, emerged from a circle (developmental hypothesis), rather only to sharpen our eye for a formal connection" (No. 39). Interarticulated histories point to resemblances between past and present events, and the linked multi-scalar transformations that to some extent, "connect this picture with [the] feelings and thoughts" (ibid.) of those engaged in the conflict.

Although Wittgenstein's critique of Frazer is a reminder not to presume the local ontologies at play, he is silent on the "rules of transformation" between the connections drawn (Palmié, 2018: 14). To the extent that any interpretation or explanation of this picture errs,

(perhaps the historical conditions Schuller shows are immanent but unexpressed, perhaps the highlighted aspects of Mau Mau had no effect on what happened, perhaps the facts presented are distortions, perhaps many external criteria have been imposed), we may recognize the reiteration of the Founder's stories, this text included. The narrative and its historicization have transformed, been bent out of shape, and made liable to misfire. These errors have viral qualities like the "signature," mutating and making attachments unregulated by the context of utterance. The agreements made are not necessarily forged in shared truths, emotions, rationalities, or wishes. Agreements grow through forms of life that comingle with the narratives they encounter. Politically conscious modes of insurgency may give rise to unoriented, nonreactive, and indeterminable possibilities.

The complaint and critique, previously described as adjustment tools, oscillate between the pathological circularity of enclosure and the contextual dissolution of ellipsis—the not and the knot. These homonyms are dissimilar to the pictures in Wittgenstein's example. They are rules of transformation at poles of contextual action. The protest is a mode of critiquing the state, but it may not shift public reason against APDK, in which some audited truth or aspiration for transparency becomes valuable knowledge. Instead, moral feeling invites third person responsiveness, pointing to "a social phenomenon outside or other than discourse...[and] insofar as it refers to something other than itself, what moral sensibility 'is' is always in excess of what enunciates it and what is enunciated" (Povinelli, 2002: 9). The Founders' sympathetic performances solicit reception of their testimony, which opens to possible second-person stances across heterogenous external criteria.

The Founders' insurgency articulates what I call *para-legal* force, which relates both to (extra)legal actions whereby the riots act against and within the law's language games, *and* paralogical functions soliciting linkages or agreements not necessarily based on or subordinate to existing rules or precedent. This is not to idealize sympathy, nor suggest that it offers radical

liberatory potential. But it suggests a middle voicing between the circularity of litigation and open-ended irresolution, intentionality and non-intentionality, pathological critique and the opacities of complaint.

Applying this idea, here is a fourth reading on Mau Mau insurgency: The Founders' physical past saw the disruption of home, production, and protection from external violence. Those evicted faced inaccessible streets and buildings, deteriorating assisted devices, deadly traffic, begging, rape, and other miseries without an alternative. Patrick accepted the job at Bombolulu under constraint, like the Akamba who were coerced into the military and welfare projects, to obtain greater social security. Patrick was tired of being left out and left behind, of separation from his peers and romantic prospects. Bombolulu became a space to flourish through cooperation, evidenced by a collective land purchase to grow the business. Likewise, joining the Mau Mau was not only a means of liberation, but a way to transgress colonial divide and rule through the unruly relatedness of the oath. The past serves as a "guarantor of the future," in which the Founders reconstitute a social separated from the workshop in a shared struggle.

In the mythic past, oathing conferred magical properties of invisibility and imperviousness to bullets. This decentralized form of power had generative and unregulatable abilities to create alliances against a common enemy—insurgents could be everywhere and nowhere. The Founders portray themselves to outsiders as "helping disabled people with their families" to redistribute funding from the state and dispel inception from enemies. They share news of APDK's activities around the city, knowledgeable of who and where APDK meets, and the workshop's production quantities and profits, with squatters providing intel from within. Connected across networks of informal labor concealed in alley ways and market stalls, the masquerades for public funds, and acts of espionage around the city enable the Founders to stay active despite APDK's efforts to defeat them. They create affordances across embodied

differences and share resources against material constraints, strengthening the extension and intension of alliances made. It provides for a future anterior not premised on self-determination and sovereignty, but an adaptive, flexible, and transpersonal sociality that can endure crises absent reliable protections. Oathing's gerontopower serves as an acephalous force that pieces together a gestalt structure at the edges of the law, to circulate economic goods, lock out threats, and adlib mutual aid at the ends of a world once inhabited. This hermeneutics contrasts with insurgency understood through the spectacle of extra-legal violence.11

Momentary articulations of force restore prospects though, enlivening gestures that signify precedent. The Founders enact modes of social poesis to renew their demands, unlike APDK which is circumscribed to putting out fires when and where they appear. As Moten phrases it, "there is no poesis of the settler" (Moten, 2018: 192). The opacity of the Founder's sociality is a strength in this relation, spreading protection, endurance, and adaptation across the group. Articulated violence may raise a face of insurgent mobilization, a head to be cut, but the "many-headed hydra" (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000) resides in the surrounds of state visibility.

The mechanical Master using the same tools, the predictability of his language game, and the slapstick of the occupier's immobility, is reason to grin at a near-death road accident, or belly laugh in a moment of absurd tactical action. Consider for example, the inhumanity of the Bergsonian comic's mechanically encrusted form, which Bergson likens to a hunchback (Bergson, 1914). Mel Chen (2018) argues that laughter at the hunchback enacts violence on the rigidified disabled form in the theatre of security. In the Founder's case this achieves an ironic reversal; the dull tools the state and APDK must employ to disconnect the Founders

11 I am intrigued by James Holston's (2007) work on insurgency, but it focuses emphatically on the legal dimensions of claims- and rights-based efforts of the Brazilian urban "peripheries," without an equal focus on what might not be premised on, exceed, or surround interiorized state signatures. I also am taken by Julian Brown's (2015) "insurgent citizenship" study in South Africa, he focuses on public protests and struggles with the police. I contend that there is much more opacity worth exploring than these visible redistributions of the sensible.

generate "sympathies" among the Founders too, which interanimates their commitments to continue fighting. Their subjection to that commitment is a mode of self-determination. As Moten writes, "Fanon's poetics of the settler, his account of what he understands to be colonialism's sociogenic power…moves us to the threshold of knowing not only the impotence of that power but our own prior sociopoetic resistance to it" (Moten, 2018: 192).

The incalculability and indefiniteness of the Founders' social modes of cooperation exist at and enact a borderless border that surrounds the "state," APDK, and other threatening groups. It enables the Founders to watch, plan, and resurge without being surveilled, offering slim but crucial leverage to surprise and reprise the fight, to stay preoccupied with occupation at the limits of law and lawlessness. These practices underwrite public articulations of insurgency, an absent present countersignature that haunts APDK and the state. Such is the concentric curve of para-legal force which predicates and reopens imaginations of future actions and their possibilities—a view toward the inside always already building and built.

There is nothing glamorous in the fugitivity of the Founders' position, between insurgent articulation and opaque planning and survival. Life is too wild, too thin a membrane in a zone of abandonment. Affirming *both* (extra)legal force and its paralogical alternatives, the Founders find themselves in a different double-bind: between negotiating within the law's exclusionary language game and insurgent projects conditioned by exhausting hyper-plastic practices in the law's surrounds. Although the Founders' have developed resilient, resurgent, and insurgent social forms to continue fighting, what then might fuel their commitments to keep fighting? If legal victory is the only possible pathway and guarantor of justice, why keep running into the walls of its foreclosed promises? Might there be possibilities other than rage and righteousness, or desperate needs and hopes?

In the penultimate sub-section, I consider one last field of power underpinning the Founders' fight. Namely, I point to the occult as a "blank figure" that influences oblique

movements of adhesion and cohesion, which serves to cut and alter relations and induce social spacings. Shifting conditions of possibility produce a force of feeling over the argument of law and its alternatives, a groundless ground strengthening the Founders' shared subjunctive resolve to keep fighting. An affirmative stance that says yes to both law and insurgency is a project to destroy the (im)possibility of impasse. To this end, I argue that the occult is not necessarily a thing, a tool, an explanation, nor an ensemble of motions premised on social mobility. It is a mode of cutting and clearing space to link and elaborate excluded social relations—a movement of perforation and enjambment.

A Cutting Wonder, a Blanking Out

I return to Bombolulu Stage again, this time to meet the core Founder leadership at one of their homes. I walk to the post-apocalyptic multistory building and amble down the muddy alleyway near the construction shop. Swinging laundry from my eyes, I arrive in a square with two modern "Swahili-style" houses or *majengo*, modelled after pre-modern Coastal architecture in colonial reiterations, which responded to housing crises between the 1930s and 1950s. These simplified cement structures contrast with the ornate coral houses initially designed by early Afro-Arab Swahili traders, a style preserved and recreated today, and bears some of the same spatial logics. The houses are rectangular with four rooms on each side of a central corridor, creating a gradation of movement from public to private, typically with living rooms and enclosed verandas near the entrance and the eldest residents' bedrooms at the back.

Before colonialism, the spatial metaphors of Coastal homes demarcated Swahili residents from outsiders, including hinterland ethnic groups like the Mijikenda. Like the hierarchical organization of Mombasa's city center and its ruling class (*waungwana*), those considered more uncivilized, impoverished, impure, and primitive (*washenzi*) were distributed farther from interiors, whether public or private. As Janet McIntosh (2009) observes of Swahili

homes in Coastal Malindi, the "inner sanctum of Swahili houses still tend to be guarded against low-status visitors such as non-Muslim Giriama [a sub-group of Mijikenda] tradesmen, who, if they are considered too redolent of the bush, are typically obliged to remain outside" (p. 33). Cognizant of values related to space, intimacy, and status, I idle near the open doorway rather than edging inside or calling for any Founders who may have already arrived; I wait on Patrick who had invited me, but who is running late.

In the meantime, I gaze around the communal square. There is a small *baraza* with *makuti* thatching where men are gathered, talking about politics and news. The earth in front of this open-air meeting structure is scorched from a recent fire. A woman walks around the circle of burn and soot carrying a chicken by the neck, ready to slaughter it. She shoots me a sharp glance, giving me the impression that she feels trespassed by my visit—perhaps she thinks I am a tourist who has wandered in to regard their lives as a sightseeing novelty? Fortunately, a young woman emerges from the house and offers me a chair, *ukae* (you should sit), but I softly decline, greet her, and inquire about Bwana. *Asante, unaendeleaje? Nasubiri mtu. Unamjua mzee wenye ulemavu—yuko hapa?* Hearing that I am waiting for an older man with a disability, she calls to him inside; Bwana *is* here to my relief. He too arrived before the others and has been resting in Kafedha's room, the blind woman I had met at the first meeting, who wore a pink abaya. Bwana and I greet at the doorway with the ritually hospitable politeness of "*Shikamoo—Marahaba"* and I follow him inside, passing the printed sheets that divide domiciles. I see eyes peering through cracks and children's hands pulling at the fabrics. One woman looks right through me, busy washing the ground in the corridor with a soapy pink washing basin. Another woman carrying a blue basin is blind has an appearance so similar to Kafedha I almost mistake her. I tail Bwana to move out of their ways, and disappear behind him into a dark, concrete room where we sit and chat until the others arrive. We settle in the first room on the left, closest to the entrance.

Unlike the baroque Swahili homes *majengo* are modelled after, these residents enjoy no elite providence, with rooms rented out per room at low rates. "Modern" *majengo* emerged through unique housing histories in Mombasa. When they were first erected in the 1930s, Mombasa hosted large populations of casual laborers, which contributed to colonial perceptions that it was an unruly native town. Unlike mainland Kenya where the *kipande* (pass) system was imposed to control work and housing, Coastal employers rarely applied *kipande*, and too much urban property was already owned by those identified as Arabs, Indians, and Swahilis to implement supervised native locations or residential segregation (Leys, 1973: 289-90). Land speculation and commercial development also hiked prices beyond the rent-paying abilities of African workers. As a result, landlords could only afford houses like these, where workers were packed "into the Swahili-style houses of the sections of the city that became known as Majengo" (Cooper, 1987: 34-5). To the colonists, these overcrowded private houses were signs of dangerously unhygienic, uncontrolled, and criminal classes (Stren, 1978).

As efforts to decasualize labor met with housing crises from increased permanent settlement and urban overcrowding, colonists sought to stabilize an urban working class of petite bourgeoisie, renewing interest in *majengo* housing. With proper supervision, the British believed housing was a welfare solution to pacify labor unrest, alleviate African workers' grievances about racial privileges, and later, to insulate the Coast from the spread of Mau Mau. Investments were made through the Colonial Welfare and Development Fund in the 1940s and 1950s rationalized as increasing African *majengo* landlords and homeowners to create vested community interests and promote civic obligations, like paying taxes (Cooper, 1987: 188-91).

Today, these houses evoke the feel of a small-scale community settlement, complete with shared spaces for cooking, cleaning, washing, and convening, but they are not inhabited by a petite bourgeoisie class of tenants nor populated according to the value hierarchies of Swahili architecture. Residents like Kafedha struggle to afford spare rooms and can be found

begging for donations *(misaada*) at nearby shops to meet rents. Tenants lack doors to cordon off their small rooms, and have taken to improvising divisions with sheets, *kangas*, laundry, string, and hanging tools; the valorization of private, enclosed, and pure spaces structuring Coastal architecture is a luxury beyond these tenants' means. The layout is instead a material token of social devaluation from local and global domination (see Donley-Reid, 1990).

Bwana settles on the left side of the small room. He looks the same as I had seen him last, wearing a Muslim *kofia* flat-top hat and a white *kanzu* robe and sits in his wheelchair barefoot, unable to fit a sandal to clubbed feet. To his right rests a large blue plastic barrel full of rainwater, a catchment for washing, bathing, and drinking. I sit on a plastic chair opposite another curtained-off room almost an arm's reach away. There are only a few necessities inside: a cooking spoon and knife, and a *jiko* grill containing lightly fried rice, mixed with sparing dices of tomato and onion, possibly a day or two old. There is no room for a bed even if one could afford it; one must sleep flat on the earth floor, perhaps stretching out fabric for comfort or to stay dry in case of rain. Cracks of sunlight streak through the aluminum roof and spangle Bwana's sunken cheeks.

Bwana is embarrassed. He had not realized I arrived early without the others. Kafedha lives here, not him, and he has accidentally invited a guest into her home. The women in the hall have been jabbering about this in a pitch higher than passive aggression. "Okay, okay," Bwana says laughing, trying to shake it off, "okay, *umefika tayari peke yako!* (you have already arrived alone)." I am apologetic but try to make light of it too, and speaking in earshot, ask to be forgiven for the mistake—I have arrived early and accidentally moved into Kafedha's house! We reiterate this plot several more times hoping that a slightly different manner or emphasis will soothe discomfiture by having another witness our witnessing. Finally, our anxious banter leads into other conversation.

I mention that I had mistaken the blind woman in the hall for Kafedha. Bwana replies, "You have made no mistake—that is her sister!" I am surprised and ask quietly, "But they are both blind? Both sisters?" Bwana replies, "Ah, but that is how Africans are, you can see. You find a whole family that has a disability, you find all the siblings are blind. You know there are witches that curse people here." I am again surprised and exclaim, "But you are disabled! Do you believe in *uchawi* (witchcraft)? Do you believe you are cursed?" As it has been explained by others in Mombasa, witchcraft beliefs reflect stigmatizing attitudes about people with disabilities, which come from "ignorant" community or family members, not from people with disabilities themselves. Bwana laughs again. "Ah, but you can tell when it comes from *uchawi*. I tell you, when I was a young boy, it happened to me. I was grazing goats, okay, it happened to me; it comes from the home." Anxiety about my home invasion returns sharply, but I am quickly drawn into Bwana's story:

When Bwana was 10 years old, he was in the forest herding goats with his age-set friend and his "stepfather." His friend took some goats to one end of the forest and he to another. "But you see, then *a tree cut*. What do you call that when the tree cuts and there is a small one that remains in the ground?" I supply "stump," though I am at first uncertain that this is what he means; the Mijikenda carve human-form wooden stakes (*koma*) and other larger statuesque effigies (*vigango*) to propitiate ancestors. Disrupting these objects, even inadvertently stepping on one concealed on the ground can lead to curses. But as the story progresses, this seems improbable. "Yes, that tree stump was *moving*. When I am going this way, it is also going this way. When I am going that way, it is also going that way. So, I called my stepfather, 'Come and see there is a miracle here!' But when he came near that stump moved between my legs and I fell down. It was a miracle! But then… then I could not move anywhere, and I began crying." When Bwana returned to the village, he was sick and could not sit down. "That stump created an action immediately, and now there was a ghost in my leg that needed to be removed."

Bwana's stepfather brought him to the *kaya*, a sacred forest where the Mijikenda bury and convene with their ancestors. Elders perform rituals to honor and seek guidance from these spirits with whom they have a covenant. Before land became parceled with title deeds in the (post)colonial periods, *kaya*s were inherited through patrimony and overseen by *Mulungu*, the spirit world, which tasked elders with caring for the ancestors' lands. Outsiders' admission into these forests required rituals sanctifying interdependencies with gift exchanges centered on palm wine, which could also be used to calm disturbed spirits through offerings (McIntosh, 2009: 107). Because ancestral spirits inhabit the *kaya*'s trees and vegetation, cutting or disturbing these forests is prohibited today, and results in fines and ritual cursing by the few elders look after them. The elders' authority is still feared by some people in surrounding communities, thought to have buried powerful charms buried in the *kaya*s (Kibet & Nyamweru, 2008). But Mijikenda authority and their *kaya*s have been under threat since the late 19th century when the Mijikenda lost roles as trade middlemen between the Coast and hinterland. They were forced to rely increasingly on subsistence crops and livestock (p. 288), as seem in Bwana's story.

In the forest, Bwana's stepfather called on the council of elders (*ngambi*) who gathered to assess the attack and propose a solution. These elders had once comprised a strong institution, deciding on all major dispute resolutions, external trades, and resource management issues. But their power has diminished from the colonial to postcolonial eras. In 1910, a colonial ordinance granted rights to Arabs and Swahilis, recognized as subjects of the Omani Sultan, enabling them to privatize property. The colonial administration also began to control palm wine and maize trading, destroying the Mijikenda's primary modes of production. Coupled with compulsory labor and taxation that forced many Mijikenda to become squatters on Arab/Swahili lands, they lost an alternative means of income (Willis & Miers, 1997). The 1913-14 Giriama rebellion organized protests to fight these dispossessions, which like the Mau

Mau rebellion also mobilized and cohered through oathing practices. Under the post-Independence government, the role of the council of elders has been further "reduced to the solving of small village problems relating to marriages, land transfers and other minor civil cases" (McIntosh, 2009: 103-4; see also Mazrui, 1997; Kanyinga, 1998). In the 1970s and 80s, elders proved unable to expel squatters in *kaya*s until the government intervened, despite lobbying for this authority for over 20 years.

Today, many Mijikenda have become "squatters" on plots owned by others, which fuels ethnic accusations of wealthy Swahili and Arab land grabbing. Bwana's occult attack via a "tree cut" occurred within a context of increasing violations of ancestral grounds, the authority of the elders, and internal competition over resources amidst imposed scarcity—external forces encroaching on and diminishing the group's ability to reproduce itself. These histories resonate and connect with Bwana's story, even if without explaining it. The Mijikenda's dispossession and disempowerment also made it impossible to remedy the attack, as Bwana explains.

To heal the attack, the elders tried to coax the spirit from his legs. "You have to visit the witchdoctor (*mganga*) who imitates [*anaiga*] the actions of the ghost to draw it out. There are many witchdoctors who live here in Kenya [*wakaa Kenya hapa*]." The witchdoctor returned to the site to find the tree stump, in an effort to identify the type of ghost it held and "where the power was stored" in Bwana's body. But "that tree went to a river or into the forest—" Bwana starts. I interject incredulously, "…it disappeared!?" He screams back, "IT DISAPPEARED!" and we erupt into excited laughter about the strange escape. But the occult tends to recede from the tangible, like the many signatures of un(ac)countable power tracked so far. Bwana resumes, "The witchdoctor plays a game. What do you call this? Something like, a skin of a cow…a tail. [The witchdoctor] places a perfume there and drags the tail across the legs to locate the ghost." Bwana traces the path across his legs to demonstrate. But the ghost proved *too* powerful, and the witchdoctor feared it would kill him if he attempted channeling it into his own body. If this

had occurred, the ghost would have succeeded in stealing both Bwana's force and the witchdoctor's, which would return to the witch controlling the ghost. The witchdoctor's death also posed a risk to the village as its sole healer, the only person "with a higher power" other than the witch. The witchdoctor could not heal Bwana. "The ghost is still in my legs and that is why I cannot walk today," he stated.

Occult attacks exceeding the capacities of Mijikenda witchdoctors are often understood as effects of non-local *majini* or *mapepo* spirits from Arabia, which are said to fly or teleport across the ocean. *Majini* are susceptible to counter-powers sometimes untapped or untappable by local witchdoctors. Becoming a person "with a higher power" may be a matter of inheritance or some intrinsic ability, but magical practices can also be learned. The use of perfume is a ritual element the Mijikenda adopted from Swahili and Arab practices, among many others, like reading certain Qur'anic texts and consuming special foods. Perceived gaps in the adoption and practice of (and sometime conversion to) Islam become articulated when rituals are infelicitous. The drama of (dis)incorporation between ethnically territorial groups, which both pre-dated and became exacerbated through colonial racial policies, may emerge during occult attacks and spirit possessions like Bwana's (McIntosh, 2009: 42). Coastal inequalities may conjoin and elaborate rather than syncretize differences between ethnic groups, despite the Mijikenda's significant integration into Swahili social structures for hundreds of years. On the other hand, while responses to spirit attacks can serve as critiques of the Mijikenda's beleaguered status, a "mimicry of menace" (Bhabha, 1984: 125-33), practices indexing coercive conversion or adoption of Islamic practices in times of illness are not typically sites of parody and judgment (McIntosh, 2009: 166). Bwana's story does not ironize the *mganga's* techniques, which include remedies that are both local and foreign. All to say nothing of how rituals may be effective, which generous readings like McIntosh's underrepresent, focused instead on incompatibilities that trace ethno-territorial divisions.

Bwana never assigned blame to a specified external group. Rather, the culpable agent was the witch, who hungered for his power. I ask him if he had known the witch or the motivation behind the attack. "Yes, there was a witch [an old man] there who said, telling my mother, 'Ah, your child has big legs; they are strong and can run fast. I want to put them, the power of those legs, in my calabash.' We thought he must be joking, but he meant it. So, you see, this is our custom and that is why you see so many disabled people in some families."

There are many possible connections and explanations. Some *majini* narratives connect oblique desires for prosperity through the idiom of mobility. For example, lazy, power-hungry witches may emphasize "moral condemnation of greedy Swahili and the detailed stories of how their children are grimly drained by the bloodlust of the spirit. These children are socially destroyed [and] their paralyzed status caricatures the state of ineffectual lassitude that many Giriama associate with all Swahili" (p. 119). But Bwana was not preoccupied with what the witch sought to do with his power nor the witch's relationships inside or outside the village. Rather, the story was didactic in a different way, pronouncing the truth of the occult and its ordinariness in everyday life, even though it produces miraculous phenomena and effects. What seems improbable or impossible, a miracle—like whole families and sets of siblings becoming disabled—happens all the time.

As we talk, I wonder about the abstract presence of the occult in ordinary life. I point out that many people I met with say witchcraft is an old idea. Bwana retorts, "If you don't think it is true, you automatically let it inside! You can even be surprised when it affects you. You can even hear a whistle sometimes and see that the snake comes." Pushing against this a bit more, I ask "But can disability just occur from *bahati mbaya* [bad luck]? Surely there are a lot of snakes around the forests. Is there evidence [*ushahidi*] that makes you certain it's caused by witchcraft?" Bwana is steadfast. "Yes, but snakes do not come to whistles like this! *Uchawi* is not something you can see; it is all around us. The witches want to take your health, the power

you are given by God—the witches… they do not like that. That is why people fear people with disabilities, because the witches are using their power." Disability is not a matter of bad luck, but of power taken in relation with another. The impaired or disabled person is not the source of the curse, but rather their linkage to the witch. While the occult remains invisible, people with disabilities are figures of asymmetrical and conjunctive power, which is a proximity to malevolence people fear.

A tree cut is also a "cut-out" of the Mijikenda social order. It could be "regarded as destructive [because] the social whole must thereby seem mutilated, fragmented … One feels for a body losing its limbs." But as Marilyn Strathern (1991) argues, this interpretation is "perhaps some of the Western anxiety attendant on the 'assembling' and 'tying' endeavors" (pp. 113-15). In contrast, "where cutting is a creative act, it displays capacities of persons and the external power of relationships … [in which] sociality in turn appears to 'move' like a figure against a background of persons and relationships" (ibid.). Anxiety is an effect of the cut-out and linkage produced by the witch, and the disabled person figures this movement of social spacing. Reactions may not be anxious either. Bwana says he does not fear the ghost in his legs or the witch; it is something he lives with as a part of and apart from him.

His story raises questions about the criticisms of disability scholars like Devva Kasnitz and Russell Shuttleworth, who take umbrage with literature that "overly focuses on the exotic, fate and fault, cause and cure" (Kasnitz & Russell, 2001: 7). Identifying Bwana's story as "exotic" overlooks how ordinary it is too, not only by his own account, but compared even with pervasive Western disability definitions. Is not the exclusionary interface between impairment and disempowering social hierarchies where the social model locates disabling effects? Perhaps the problem is the practice of reading stories like Bwana's as exotic or finding explanations in connections only drawn.

Rather, fate, fault, and cause show how power is harnessed and precludes common access to a world. One may ask how stories like Bwana's shape complexly situated experiences of disability rather than imposing the linearity of cause and effect, which ironically justifies dismissing them. As for cure, healing contextualizes the experience of disability, becoming a site where power differentials are articulated and negotiated within and between ethnic groups, creating social deregulation and its resistance. Cure was not premised on disability as a medical impairment nor was it only an individual matter of rehabilitating Bwana. Cure had stakes for the community as a whole which dissuaded the elders from pursuing the ritual. It is full of ambivalences irreducible to a presumed teleological endpoint. Connections between disability and the occult may not then be dismissed as documenting "exotic" difference; such contexts can show what's uncritical about these criticisms, keeping important questions alive and open to wonder.

My wonder is interrupted by the other Founders' arrival. Patrick, Kafedha, and the Founders' leader, an elderly blind Mijikenda man introduced as "Chairman," file in and greet us. As they settle, I volunteer that Bwana and I had been discussing that many Kenyans are dismissive of witchcraft. Everyone responds in echoed agreements that *uchawi* most certainly exists. *Uchawi uko*, the Chairman affirms, which roughly translates to *the occult is t/here*. The translation implies that it is an abstract presence always everywhere around. I ask him if it exists in other places, like in Europe or America, and he affirms again, *uchawi uko*.

Mention of my foreignness reminds Bwana to apologize for accidentally inviting me inside, which the other Founders surmise is due to my ignorance of local customs. I try my joke about moving into the house again, which almost softens the mistake. The joke incites laughter, but my delivery isn't idiomatic, and the Chairman asks if understand what the group is saying despite having communicated in Swahili for several minutes. I qualify that I *can* understand, grasping his distinction, and explain that difficulties arise because I speak with a

different style. "*Ah, kuna 'foleni' kuongea*," he remarks to Bwana—interpreting this difference as a "traffic-jam" of speaking (lit. "queue"). My skepticism of witchcraft, intrusion into the house, and bottlenecked voice have accented my foreignness too much, and the Chairman interrogates the others about "which side" I am on, and if I "can be trusted." Fortunately, my rapport with the others saves me from another pop trial, and they assure him that I am an ally.

Inviting the wrong guests into one's house is a central concern among the Founders, discussed across several hours of conversation, which returned recurrently to themes of tenancy, land claims, and the occult. The Chairman presents me with an original copy Bombolulu's land deed and overviews several well-worn aspects of the case. He offers a comparison of the Founders' plight with other Coastal groups, responding to my questions about Coastal land-grabbing:

> Many *wapwani* [people of the Coast] had land stolen from them. We are these people too; we are always fighting with foreigners to take back what is ours. But the disabled people in Mazeras bought that land then [in the 1980s] with their own money; the land was not taken from us many years ago like the people deceived in the past [*walidangaywa hapo zamani*]. Those people came a long time ago—they were the first people. But when the descendants of those lineages [*ukoo*] look for their rights today there are no documents for those lands. We have the land deed! It is here, you can see it. And I tell you, we had our lands taken from us too because we are also *wapwani*. But now it is a second time—this land was for the disabled, not for this ethnic group [*kabila*] not for that one. So, we move on both paths, but we are speaking for our rights as disabled people now.

Rights and land deeds take him down the path less burdened with traffic, speaking in idioms that better suit criteria of recognition. I ask, "How did APDK get past you if you had a deed?" The Chairman explains:

> We invited [the ex-Director] to manage the project after our Trustee retired. He was introduced to us from a Board member but now that Board member has died so we cannot bring him to court now. We did not know [the ex-Director], but he came to us as a volunteer from Germany and promised that he would help us. We trusted him. But when he received the workshop documents to move us from Mazeras, he went to make a deal to sell the land to APDK in secret, and he had no right to make that decision without us. He did not tell us that he would sell our land to APDK. He did not tell anyone. So, he moved in the night, and we did not know it was happening. We could not stop him.

Patrick interjects, "The problem is we invited him into our house and then he sold it to someone else!" Kafedha erupts with laughter hearing this, exclaiming, "*Shetani*! [The devil] That man, he acts like the devil!"

The Chairman's comparison showcases dispossession along two paths, those of *wapwani* and disability, which underscores how "para-legal" force may yet meet an impasse. With respect to *wapwani*, the Founders are linked to the inheritances as the "first people" of the Coast, connected with themes "of settlement in Mombasa [which] performs a function as a mythical charter to claim ownership of the coastal land" (Park, 2015). Although conjunctive and distinct, the Founders therefore purchased a parcel that recovered some autochthony over land dispossessed on both ethno-territorial and colonial terms. Their claims to the land at Bombolulu redouble this violation of Coastal dispossession.

The entangled mythic and physical histories of land-grabbing also draw a distinction with definitions of Coastal autochthony. Connections to *kaya* forests and lands of the *ukoo* (lineages) are "'geo-cultural links,' which political thinkers often paint as a natural symbiosis of land and 'children of the soil,' [and] undergird claims to rights and resources" (Prestholdt, 2014: 269). On the other hand, autochthony is tied to shifting, mythic oral histories that have "little to do with codified rights; rather it embeds legal or bureaucratic questions in emotive narratives of settlement and static concepts of geography… [to champion] local identity against 'dangerous strangers' as a means of gaining political leverage when resources, opportunities, and influence appear to be at stake" (p. 253; see also Jenkins, 2012; Ceuppens & Geschiere, 2005). The Founders' claims are emotive, but also keenly conscious of the juridical and bureaucratic advantage of the land deed. It fulfills contemporary criteria of recognition in contrast with other Coastal land claims which often fall by the wayside. Para-legal force acts between these two realms, in which the contractual deed links with the determinism of legal rights/criteria and to what goes before its phrase, sounding out prior social and cosmological relationships of land, lineage, and home.

The loss of home crosscuts plural notions of autochthony and route different paths forward and back. The origins of "Coastal" autochthony become relationality affirmed,

recovered, and cut-out through the memory of *wapwani* land, but in a second instance, an/other relationship is forged through an intersecting third term—disability—that differently affirms, recovers, and cuts a relational linkage to the past. Claims made on the basis of the disability rights and abstracted from issues of *wapwani*, enable the Founders to voice authority on "both paths" without explicitly arguing on ethno-territorial or anti-colonial terms. Sidestepping *wapwani*s' histories, however, calls into question where the land at Bombolulu comes from, even if the Founders are also *wapwani*. Ironically, they perpetuate an economy of contract through the "signature" on the deed, and conceptually through the self-authorizing force of law, that affirms a powerful technology for land-grabbing.

On the other hand, the Founders become dispossessed un/like other *wapwani*, even with evidence of codified rights, because those who work in their name are unaccountable and "move in the night." As people with disabilities, the Founders have been historically prefigured as liabilities and excluded from political and economic self-determination, making them dependent on outsiders for resources and representation (e.g., whether the "state" manifests as the central government, a development Trustee and Director, philanthropists and charities, etc.). Like *wapwani*s' fight against occupation, the Founders argue that the workshop should not be managed by the able-bodied or foreigners. Both "paths" signal a return home after encountering and turning at a traffic-jam, at an impasse. But the paths are dissimilar to those from which the Founders arrived, and the promise of home too bears this difference.

Patricks' words, "We invited him into our house and then he sold it to someone else" linger with me. I am reminded of my present home invasion again and the discomfitures of my foreignness. It's provoked an anxious drive to relate and build relations, so I use Kafedha's interruption to learn more about her. Kafedha lived at Bombolulu until her eviction. She stays in this room alone because she is unmarried, and her only child lives far away. Her second child passed away two years ago and had provided her with some support. But when he died,

she was plagued by housing insecurity and homelessness. Her current room has become one of many in a long chain of evictions. She narrowly secured it through her sister's recommendation, who otherwise faces similar struggles as a blind woman. Few landlords trust that Kafedha will make rent, and earning enough is difficult because no employer will hire an elderly blind woman. Bwana cuts in, "What can she do? She cannot do anything because there is no work. This lady struggles. But I tell you, she is the greatest survivor among all of us. She is a survivor! She begs for charity to afford rent. She can get 100 [KSh], 200, and it is very little. But she manages, and we all manage like this." Kafedha is cut off from the political and economic domain of the petite bourgeoise and ever more distanced from the mutual aid of family dependencies. She faces intersecting exclusions of disability, age, and gender and those linked to Coastal dispossession, both colonial and local. Even in the most accommodating of circumstances, she teeters dangerously between guest, host, and squatter, between the street and the front door.

"Home" is constantly deferred through spiraling dispossessions from Coastal land to Bombolulu's grounds to a series of *majengo* rooms. The Founders' fight may be rethought in terms of this dispossession, not violated ownership as land-claims or autochthony might suggest, for they really never owned anything. Dispossession prophesizes the space given up for relating to the social world, and claim-making becomes the backward pointing to the priority of the prior. What has been given up is also given, imbricated even in the material layout of Kafedha's rented *majengo* room. The life she builds is what survives dispossession before its threshold.

More Founders cut into my chat with Kafedha, and it becomes absorbed into a fugue of conversation, with each person soloing off the chord struck by a previous speaker and progressing with a new round. Bwana continues, "The problem is the case is taking a long time" and the Chairman chimes in, "I am exhausted! We are exhausted! [*nimechoka,*

tumechoka].” He begins a dirge, “We cannot keep waiting for many more years. Most of us will die before we get the judgment, especially if we must make appeals up to the Supreme Court of Kenya. Then it is Patrick’s responsibility to keep fighting for us.” “*Tumezeeka*!” Kafedha wails, explaining that she and the others have “grown old” battling in the courts for 12 years [“even since two zero zero eight when we started”]. I try a counterpoint for reconciliation, noting that the ex-Director might become exhausted too. “He is also *mzee* [elderly], right? He started at Bombolulu over 30 years ago? Maybe he will give up first.” Kafedha harmonizes at first, “Yes, he was older than Patrick is now when he started,” then adding a dissonant tritone, “But I say! That man is the devil. He may even live forever because he is stealing from other people. He is not tired like us because he has lived with everything that belongs to us.” Bwana joins the ensemble now, “That man is a snake. You see, he even appeared to us as a volunteer, but he did not have any documents explaining his work in Kenya. Nothing. We ask him for documents, a letter from APDK, but he does not have them. How do you remain in Kenya without any documents? He says he cannot find the letters, so he is tricking people again!” Roused by Bwana’s snake call, I respond rhetorically, “It’s a miracle, isn’t it?” and Bwana laughs in agreement, “You see, he steals like a witch, and then he disappears, and you cannot find him!” The Chairman refrains another “*uchawi uko*,” hearing the whistling invitation of the ex-Director’s malevolence. But Patrick’s outro finally suspends these musings: “Yes you say *uchawi*, but it can happen to these people too, even that *mzungu*; you see, he is not different. We must be hopeful. And we will not let him get away; God is on our side, so he cannot hide forever.”

What might be understood from all this talk around witches, witchdoctors, ghosts, devils, and oaths? Answers resist simple clarification across discussions. We may consider the four primary examples: The ex-Director figures a witch, similar to the one in Bwana’s village, bringing malevolence from within the home and taking power from others. The ex-Director

relies on the law (and possibly the devil) to evade documentation to steal from the Founders, which enables him to exceed the limits of old age and death. The village witch instrumentalized the Arabian *majini*, tapping into an occult force that exceeded the control of the village, to extend his mobility, debilitate a generational line, and unseat the witchdoctor as the sole elder authorized with a "higher power." On the "brighter" side of the occult examples, there is the witchdoctor, who used his powers to heal people attacked by ghosts and spirits and restore balance with the village ancestors. The Founders too claim to adopt occult practices, including oathing like the Mau Mau, which strengthens their resolve to one another, enabling them to operate within and around the law to stage insurgent actions. All of these examples raise problems for sticky dichotomies of modernity/tradition, good/evil, control/deregulation, kinning/dekinning, and belief/doubt. And they open other possibilities too.

Although many influential analyses have helpfully de-exoticized occult practices, relationships between modernity and witchcraft often seem causal if not positivist, in which they become signs of the ontological rupturing of social order and tools for explaining crises of meaning arising since the colonial encounter. Accusations that the ex-Director is the devil, a snake, or acts like a witch do seem to follow scholarship about the alarming escalation in occult economies and violence, in which ideas of the occult and its practices are used to make sense of and respond to the deregulations, dispossessions, and other discontents of modernity (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1999; 2002). Likewise, accusations may be indicative of Tonda's violence of the imaginary, in which kinship dissolution ("*déparentélisation*") expands witchcraft accusations to places outside lineal control or to "lineal non-places"—those of global circuits, whether a mission post, administrative center, or a sheltered workshop (Tonda, 2020). Bwana's story too highlights conflicts around the breakdown of lineal authority within a context of ethnic and colonial encroachment on Mijikenda lands.

But conflicts between the Mijikenda and other Coastal groups also pre-date colonial racial codifications, land dispossessions, and labor controls. And the shocks of colonialism and (neo)liberalism were not a singular event, but of long histories with many entangled *durées*. Although linked processes of domination resonate between the Mijikenda and Bombolulu, they still have incommensurate qualities, as the Chairmen underscored. Notions that witchcraft is an effect of modern and capitalist transformation risks aggregating a wide variety of disjunctive contexts, offering elegant hermeneutics while abstracting from sometimes important differences available through historicization (see Murry & Sanders, 2005) critique of the Comaroffs (2002)). Peter Geschiere similarly argues that Tonda's Modern Sovereign did not emerge from a particular "moment" or period but reflects "a long-term *articulation* in which different elements are combined in highly precarious and accidental ways" (Geschiere, 2013: 19).

Such representations take a moralizing tone or describe the rise in occult phenomena as a sign of moral panic. The Comaroffs and Tonda present rather dark examples of the occult, focused on violent effects under deleterious conditions of modern domination and extraction. As Terence Ranger has forcefully argued, anthropologists have too often conflated the "occult into one sinister phenomenon" which carries on into the "twenty-first century the old missionary condemnation of all African religion as witchcraft" (Ranger, 2007: 274). It is unclear from the Founders' stories whether the use of "higher powers" can be dichotomized as evil witchcraft (*uchawi*) and good medicine (*uganga*). The witchdoctor's use of *uganga* medicine contrasts with *shetani* and *majini*, but his techniques also borrowed and imitated those from which the "ghost" in Bwana's legs arrived. McIntosh's analysis similarly argues that Swahili spirit possession is a site of desire and integration, even if the effects reproduce ethno-territorial exclusions, sometimes quite viscerally. The Founders describe their use of occult forces too in ways that are not distinctly "good" nor "evil," like oaths to fight the state and

APDK. As previously noted, oathing has recursive histories that have made and unmade the authority of elders, youth, and the post-Independence state. Even the ancestral spirits of the forest are sources of possibility and curses. Tapping into occult forces to grow one's power beyond normative limits is not condemned by the Founders, at least when power is not at their expense. And their insurgency relies on exceeding limitations of access, resources, and visibility much like the elaborated powers enjoyed by adversaries.

Ontologies of force show how occult powers are wielded against others in (il)legitimate ways, unsettling the truth of "facts" that authorize dispossessions. Yet there are also limits to accessing occult powers that ambiguate agency, interpretive faculty, and affectivity as a shared ground for social relationality. People use variable fields of power, which suggests that "the" occult is not a singular dimension. The state's uncanny presence draws power in the un(ac)countability of laws to ghost-write itself in and out of contexts, and the ex-Director too has found hiding spots with/out authorizing documentation. These signatures are dissimilar to those of ancestral spirits inhabiting trees or of calling to spirits from across the ocean. To some extent, each of these "sources" are accessible to outside groups—the Mijikenda may use the law or adopt Islamic practices, the ex-Director may become a snake and work with the devil—but they do not share the same extensity or intensity of power nor yield the same effects. While oathing can spread beyond control, the Founders' oaths are not an open admission to others who do not share their struggle.

There are limits to how and who the occult affects too, unruly but not random. Oathing may incite unregulatable sympathies among the public and between members without affecting everyone in similar ways within and across contexts. Tonda's violence of the imaginary travels across fragile contexts, but it still refracts, changes, fizzles, flares. These sympathies alter (un)certain odds, which contrasts with Giovanni Da Col's (2012, p. 14) argument that "with fortune and luck, we establish a domain of 'uncontrolled relatedness' … a source of

reproductive vitality and value, [in which] fortune is unstable in all transactions: it is prone to leak, to flee, or to be captured, stolen, parasitized upon, or eaten by witches." Like fortune and luck, the Founders insist that occult forces can potentially befall anyone, in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere, even invoked through error, or in Bwana's explanation, by mistaken (dis)belief. But Bwana distinguishes the occult from the arbitrariness of *bahati mbaya* or "bad luck," pointing to ordinary patterns of anomalous phenomena like whole families or sets of siblings acquiring disabilities. These "miracles" tend toward certain forms. It seems that the occult, like fire, may unexpectedly yet contingently alight anywhere, sometimes growing and spreading, and sometimes controlled burns, like flaming tires and firepits for warmth; its evidence is only ever found in the burn and soot, and the relations that trace its effects.

The Founders' use of the occult also equivocates Tonda's argument that mass symbolic deregulation has dissolved kinship. If witchcraft "comes from the home" it may breakdown kinship as readily as incite revalorizations of the home, which is a privileged space for certain styles and forms of intimacy. While gerontopower in Bwana's story proved limited, there was remarkable deference to social order and authority. The healing rituals articulated communal concern and lineal distinction, even if an effect of attenuated power, and responded by shoring up protections for the village. Mau Mau oathing too provided a way to forge obligations with others even if deregulation transformed older structures of relation. The Founders are delinked from "traditional" forms of lineal control but have generated their own tacit regulations to protect inter-group kinships, as seen in the pop trial and concerns of inviting guests into Kafedha's house. "Lineal-non places," as Tonda terms them, may also become sites that ritually restore kinship bonds with regulations forged through new and old forms of value.

More productive to track is how the occult operates within kinship ties to strengthen or weaken them, and how it makes and takes space for their elaboration. Geschiere generatively adopts Berlant's notion of intimacy, which relates to "usurping places meant for other kinds of

relation" (Berlant, 1998: 282). This resonates with Patrick's words on inviting a stranger into one's home and discovering they have sold it. And it connects with the ancestral tree in Bwana's story, which is cut and rushes away with social power it should not have. The cut-out transforms the space of relations through linkages to a third term not active previously: the conjoined ghost figures a witch's usurpation of power. Cutting relations opens to uncertainties, especially when relations relied on for life are crowded out or cast away.

Uncertainty is central to Nils Bubandt (2008, p. 6) argument in *The Empty Seashell* that "witchcraft is an instance of doubt's undomesticability…in spite of people's most desperate hopes and sustained efforts" to tame it" Bubandt contends that witchcraft is not about belief and "built on an 'epistemology of presence' in which witchcraft is assumed to be unproblematically 'real' or 'there' to those who 'believe in it'" (p. 12). Rather, the occult is an *aporia* that conditions doubt. In other words, the occult does not offer a mode of reasoning, a way to control chance, or explain the world. People still try to instrumentalize it, creating narratives and figures that address the indeterminacies, opacities, and ambivalences of social relations while always reproducing them anew. Bubandt argues that "the relationship between witchcraft and modernity is the inverse; witchcraft is the ambivalent aporia, the interminable problem; modernity, meanwhile, appears to allow a certain kind of explanation of this aporia and, as such, is mined for answers to it" (p. 14).

Bubandt's argument is provocative, but I agree with Ros Morris' review (2016, p. 514) which asks if "doubt is, indeed, the opposite of belief, or whether the insistence on doubt might constitute a legitimation by reversal of the very structure Bubandt wants to escape. For, is not doubt the condition of possibility of belief?" Reflecting on the Founders' stories, I struggle with Bubandt's notion that the occult, an aporia, conditions fear rather than surprise, anxiety rather than expectation, doubt rather than belief. Where is Bwana's miracle in this analysis? While the effects of his occult attack sparked restlessness and brought forth doubt's

"undomesticability" (Bubandt, 2008: 6), Bwana's initial encounter was one of wonder, "come and see, it is a miracle!" Wonder is captivating, a momentary pause between the (im)possible and the actual, the undecidable and the decision, the end and another beginning. An outro. A turn on a path.

Bubandt's analysis of the occult offers no such non-negative possibilities, only a restless journey continually circling back to the aporia's interminable uncertainty. In his reading of Derrida, the aporia marks "an impassable situation, where understanding and the will to knowledge fail; aporia is a 'not knowing where to go'" (p. 6). Not all impassable situations are the same nor is using the occult singularly fueled by existential anxiety or a "will-toward-epistemological-domination" (p. 4); these experiences of impasse carry other movements, moods, and feelings of adjustment too (see also Rubenstein, 2008 who argues that wonder is the "unnamed ethos" of Derrida's deconstruction).

Geschiere's uptake that connects witchcraft and intimacy is generative for a non-negative reading of the occult. If the occult emerges when spaces meant for other social relations are usurped, its effects and practices figure the movement of a third term that cuts, ingresses, and transforms social contexts. Occult practices may not repair what's broken or uncertain about relation, identity, order, or meaning either, but they may figure possibilities of interrupting, disrupting, or transforming the spacing of social orders, indifferent to contextual difference. The occult can be thought of as what sociologist Kevin Hetherington (2000, p. 182, citing Derrida, 1976; Baumann, 1991) calls a "blank figure," which is "an emblem of otherness, of ambiguity and undecidability." A blank figure has no presumed meaning, control, or reasoning attached to it at first. Rather, "the presence of a certain kind of blank may become known and incorporated into what we understand as the conditions of the possible" (ibid.).

The Founders' turn to home from a marginal social border is a movement that emerges within the pause, the outro, the cut from social order. While their impasse accords with

Bubandt's uncanny and existential terror, the pause is blanker than that, not necessarily bleaker. Reading wonder alongside Bubandt's elliptical doubt and aporetic circularity opens to conditions of possibility that "shifts our focus from textual treatises and tradition to discourses and practices of emotion, expression, and creativity. This allows for the process of "making, crafting, and manufacturing worlds, possibilities, and dispositions, in its embryonic and collaborative stages" (Srinivas, 2018: 6).

The occult as a blank figure of aporia *and* wonder enables us to see how the "dark side of kinship" (Geschiere, 2003) may less darkly forge bonds of shared struggle to cut relationships that block paths for having, being, and becoming in a world. Refraining Strathern, the cut-out offers new juxtapositions, opening up latent analogies between them and their interarticulated histories, which may grow out in unexpected directions.12 When dispossession is already a condition of living, cutting's disfigurement is also the blank's opening, inviting a return of excluded thirds; socially internalized aporias become potential sites to cut-out, ingress, and haunt excluding others. They are moreover sites of shared feeling and concern, which may be more anxious and painful than pleasurable and numbing, but they offer a holding pattern like temporary housing too.

In these ways, the occult "comes from the home" as its groundless ground. The Founders' fugue shifted between two different aporias, or rather, blanks. It began with the anxious doubts of their being-toward-death but turned to wonder of the ex-Director's being-with the occult, opening a space to reflect on his temporary housing too. They imagined the ex-Director as a squatter without justifiable documentation, with "nothing." His home is imagined as a frontier space, liable to become liquified like any other subprime debtor, or usurped like the *wapwani*'s lands, Bombolulu, or *majengo*. The house is where the value form

12 Strathern's anthropological method may be thought of in terms of "pruning" (see Street & Copeman, 2014). Her uptake here is not merely an application of a meta-concept or method to a field site—connections grow out in both directions. There are linkages of the occult and "cuttings" within semantic Swahili categories as well as terms related to disability. (On Swahili noun classes and disability (especially class 5), see Devlieger, 2010: 83).

is (re)produced and therefore "the space in which the value form can come undone, fail to reproduce, or produce otherwise; a foundation that can be liquefied by the failure to fulfil obligations, both sexual and economic" (Cooper & Mitropoulos 2009: 368). The aporia of the home stages a tension between structure and anti-structure, and between forms of life and their dissolution. The Founders speculate around this absent presence, an aporia of relation holding up the ex-Directors world, in an occult idiom of recognized alterity and vulnerability. The occult becomes an alternative roadmap of pressure points and soft spots to cut relations and resurge demands in blanked out spaces. The Founders may pursue an investigation into the ex-Director's residency rights, offering another path in their fight. But at minimum, it strengthens convictions that the ex-Director is not immune to power, whether of the law or the occult. "He cannot hide forever," Patrick said.

But the occult is not only for taking advantage of latent or hidden vulnerabilities in relation. It offers the "possibility of a social liquefaction escaping even the most liquid of securities" (Cooper & Mitropoulos, 2009: 68). The Founders survive in the meantime while keeping the insurgency alive, the latter through tapping into occult histories. If one leader dies before the fight is won, others will step in, as the Chairman underscored. The blank is a figure indexing many possible movements to shift social spacings, including making spaces to adhere a demand, and adapting within and across shifting contexts for coherence in the face of uncertainty. In these ways, the Founders turn together against sites of impasse to keep scouting a route home, and in the process form surface tensions in a "tacking" movement. Hetherington (2000) uses tacking to describe the spatial location and movement of the blank figure, as it signifies "not only a specific and indirect way of moving in space, but also a type of a light and temporary stitch, used to hold materials of social space together in some semblance of order during the process of manufacture" (p. 181). More than this,

> [to] tack is to move indirectly, switching from left to right and from near to far; it is to make changes and to bring novelty and uncertainty. Left and right, near and far are brought into being by this motion

in ways that allow them to be connected in ways that do not rely on preestablished rules about distance, scale, or regionality. But to tack is also to hold the world together lightly, allowing its materials to be able to move about while not becoming completely detached; it also allows them to become rucked up, folded, and scrumpled… In that sense tacking produces a degree of change as well as stasis (ibid., citation omitted).

Tacking broadly describes the not and knot of the Founders' diverse movements of critique and complaint, of law and linkage, of aporia and wonder—all of which are needed to endure, adapt, and keep demands alive.

To heal the attack at Bombolulu then, the Founders' move like the tree cut, staying in relation to intercept and incept, transform and translate their target: "When I am going this way, it is also going this way. When I am going that way, it is also going that way." Switching from left to right, near and far, absence and presence, may rely on the content and effects of occult practices, as well as any number of unrelated tools, tactics, and criteria to keep demands alive. Most important are the movements themselves, which imitate those of the occult, wedging (un)certainties into relations to change social spacings. The blank shifts knowable and unknowable odds to ebb new foundations and flow away from the impasses of others. This is not luck, but practices of transforming conditions of possibility. It can invite unexpected guests into one's home and lead to any manner of traffic-jam along a path, but it may yet enable the Founders to make demands with alternative criteria, or criteria yet to be formed. Even if the odds vary little, these efforts keep them flexibly linked to the workshop and adjusting to changing contexts of movement. Far from dissolving kinship among members, occult actions orchestrate a feeling and mood over the argument, with the efficacy of imaginary force. The Founders' fugue offers subjunctive positions that fuel prospects and determinations to break from scenes of negotiation, where a transformed and translated relation may settle into a newly inhabitable form. Staying attached to the scene of negotiation, for now, is not the same as seeking compromise. The scene of impasse is to be cut, inhabited, and transitioned somewhere else too. A reliable home to come, perhaps.

Outro: Motile Moorings and Unsettled Gifts

An outro has the cadence of an ending. And a song's pause is full of resonance from the sound before it. One may wish to dwell there longer, to find some "temporary housing" in its meantime. Stories of Bombolulu are about meantimes, of disabled lives lingering between the agreements, moods, and feelings of its song's interarticulated histories and the outro's future horizons. But often the pause becomes an impasse, a cul-de-sac in which one circles without a foreseeable exit. There is a haunting terror that the song may yet repeat, which for many includes experiences of exclusions and the exhausting efforts of staying in synch, tune, and pitch with consensuses that have not and cannot accommodate them, to which they nevertheless consented. Some participants at Bombolulu seek a way out of the impasse, an intuition for some justice not in-between that incites the work of forging alternative political idioms, projects, and solidarities. But for the Founders, who were evicted before the song's conclusion, the stakes are significantly different; their meantime hovers elsewhere, in an/other social time and place. In this way, the Founders' intuitions of justice are of the inside, evinced in para-legal and tmetic efforts of cutting the "out" of "outro" for re-introduction at Bombolulu, to integrate and sound something new.

Attention these social differentials within what could be glossed as "liminal" spaces returns us to this section's initial questions: How and why do the Founders stay attached to a compromised life that has been denied them? How do they renew attachments to an institution that actively seeks to finalize their disconnection? And how are the Founders able resurge demands, despite facing a protracted and shapeless future resolution, when they are cut off from lines of social mobility? Analyzing variously situated command structures of power reveals complex histories of struggle between the Founders and the state/APDK. What emerges as answers to these questions are heterogenous activities not easily reducible to historical explanations, moral imperatives, defining ethe, or a specific subjective formation. Nor can the

Founders' actions be circumscribed to mere pathological responses to domination, driven solely by aporetic ellipses of anxiety, doubt, and fear, or criminal behaviors that only serve to repeat cyclic retributions and redistributions to unimagined ends. Most provocative are the moods and modes of the Founders' demands, which far from mechanistic, have enabled them to reiterate their complaints and critiques in adaptive and sometimes unpredictable ways.

As the Founders have demanded "rights" across the term's plural meanings, feelings, and articulations, they have tried to meet various and disparate types of criteria. In terms of formal legal conventions, the Founders have made complaints and appeals through contract law for employment, retirement, and housing benefits as well as constitutional amendments to secure welfare promised to disabled citizens. Despite these efforts, the Founders have yet to solicit a donor for reparations, recognition, or sovereign ownership. All the while they have worked extra-legally, through rioting, protest, and squatting at Bombolulu. In these moments, the Founders transact in the register of NGO-ese and legal speak and the authority accorded to certain documentary "evidence," like collective bargaining agreements and land deeds. Sometimes they adopt a financialized grammar, expecting money to flow through Bombolulu well into the future, abstracted from the workshop's more dire material conditions, as well as in the language of audit, complaining of the lack of transparency and accountability of Bombolulu funding. These demands produce signatures and countersignatures of the "state" whether they emerge in the court or in protests. The Founders also apply criteria recovered from physical, epic, and mythic pasts that situate Coastal forms of life, drawing from discourses of anti-colonial liberation struggles, coastal autochthony, and cosmologies of mixed lineal and modern status, including those of ancestors, God, fate, and occult forces.

There are therefore many legal and paralogical foundations on which demands are made, through which the Founders performatively juxtapose and mottle ethical and moral assemblages of civil life, coastal lineage, decolonial resistance, and the occult. Across this

heterogenous field, disability emerges through various figure-ground relations when mooring to these foundations. To borrow a term from sociologist Rolland Munro (2004), disability becomes "punctualized" when a foundation is pursued, cutting disability into a specific 'figure' to be addressed within the here and now. Punctualization has a timing effect too, Munro argues, in which the call for a specific identity demands a display which interrupts other calls in the act of soliciting a relation, to entail a donor. Each punctualization, whether framed in terms of the disabled citizen, worker, criminal, autochthone, or occultist creates a small foothold in the present, and enables the Founders to present a face of their demand that needs attention now, even though the promise of return is continually deferred. The Founders therefore remain disposed of the sheltered workshop, arranged by and inclined toward it while still cast away. They attach and detach across these foundations, moving across contexts, and calling through different grammars to meet shifting criteria, with each punctualization inventing and bringing to stand a figure of intersubjective formation.

Movements of extension that shuttle between, adjust to, and transform contexts of action are modes of "motility," a condition of relating and switching that can open up new social spaces and close down old ones. Motility is distinct from mobility which, conceived either spatially or socially, focuses on structural change rather than possibilities that may fall out of ordering definitions, values, and arrangements. Mobility also privileges attention on the structural causes and effects of action rather than "elements relating to *access* to different forms and degrees of mobility, *competence* to recognize and make use of access, and *appropriation* of a particular choice, including the option of non-action" (Kaufman et al., 2004: 249-50). Motility is therefore useful for tracking the manipulation of social and material distances that make matters appear absent or present. Munro argues that motility is also a condition of deferral, an ability to withdraw from social divisions and categories of distance, recognizing the "possibilities of order arising from connections between heterogeneous elements that can

be other to these categorisations" (Munro, 1997b: 223; *see also* Latimer & Munro, 2009). It is not about the ability to move within given social contexts, but the "ability to change the context of movement and of ordering through the connection made possible by an indifference to categories of difference" (Hetherington, 2000: 176).

Motility may be further understood in relation with Elizabeth Povinelli's concept of "intimate grammars," which she describes as having a "modal pulsion" (Povinelli, 1991). Intimate grammars highlight the subjunctive commitments and affective experience of figuring identities to solicit attachments; it gets at the force and feeling of demanding relations. Performing within different grammars across scenes of demand-making are *intimate* because they include all the micro-discursive and corporeal encounters, the hopes, aspirations, and disappointments, that pattern the Founders' experiences. After all, modality "grammatically marks the degree of commitment a speaker has to a proposition" (Povinelli 1991: 202-3). Both motility and intimate grammars signal spaces of conditionality, non-closure, and undecidability. Motility moves within spaces where performatives fail to saturate context, a modal function like the "metalingual signal of language's dependence on a subject who must become a speaking subject" (ibid.). Pragmatically, the Founders act as if they are "disabled workers," "disabled citizens," or some other "x" persons, each time enacting fuzzy transpositions of who they might be, have been, or will have been, and perhaps not only. In these ways, intimate grammars point to, as Povinelli argues, what is provisional about the "perduring presuppositional structures of language and society even if, in the first instance, this condition of possibility is nothing more than an empty grammatical space" (ibid). In other words, a "blank figure" of aporia and wonder disturbs and is disturbed by the code it inhabits. There are always alternate modalities of performing disability and demanding relation, whether by appealing in courts, burning tires, stealing power, or soliciting attachments in some other way, even if there is no content for that other way as of yet. This condition of possibility is an

irresolution that holds open a space of desire and temporalizes the Founders' motility through each renewal of their demands.

Whether one considers the exchange of relations at play for soliciting welfare or work, a gift, or a commodity—however the nature of exchange might be conceived—each time a relation between the Founders and Bombolulu is being renewed, even when what is demanded is withheld, even when the Founders' demand becomes an appeal left unanswered. When we think of exchange, from Mauss to Marx, as involving giving and receiving, what is given is always also a measure of what is withheld. Anthropologist Jacob Copeman calls this the "partonomy of the gift," for example. He argues that a "shadow gift relation" emerges which conjures commentary between the gift that is given and that which remains ungiven. The withheld gift, Copeman writes, "both present and not present, may come to haunt and unsettle the former. Such a relation may (be made to) form a relation of critique" (Copeman 2021: 29). This is a fresh understanding of how the gift, as a form of social critique may—as Copeman writes in relation to blood donation in India— "have utility in establishing relations and social solidarity" (Copeman 2008:13) But a critique does not necessarily create debt, obligation, or spirit as Mauss underscored in his canonical text. Quite explicitly to the contrary, Mauss argues that "it is certainly something other than utility that circulates" (Mauss 1925/2016).

What is remarkable about the Founder's resurgent demands however, is not only their ability to continually generate critiques of the gift withheld, but *contexts of complaint too*, which grow commitments among the members. The ensemble of more-and-less-than-one invites exchanges between the Founders, from protecting the group from outside threats, loaning assisted devices, pooling resources, collecting intel, and sharing time to plan. These exchanges enable the Founders to haunt the workshop, to constantly defer a settled disconnection, is both the shadow gift's critique and the mood and desire that informs the Founders' intimate grammars and fuels their convictions. The Founders do not exchange a

shadow gift directly with one another, for its utility lies in cutting contexts to which they do not yet belong which induces further motile modes of action. The space forged through critique enables the poesis of reversible relations, trust, and care extended within the group. This affective economy is before and against critique, for the critique remains tethered to the scene of negotiation with which the Founders aspire to break; after all, they do not desire compromise. In other words, the Founders' complaints become cut-outs—reiterated signatures that travel beyond the context of utterance, a critique that breaks open the closure APDK/state attempts to finalize. It is precisely these opened spaces of renewed inhabitation—even if they are momentary footholds or "punctuations"—that return to the Founders to re-invite their shared struggle, their rituals of complaint.

In this way, the Founders' complaints continue to cleave spaces for action, creating foundations for future demands. 10+ years of legal deferrals and state prevarication stretch out the time of injustice at Bombolulu, generating an exhausting impasse. Although APDK hopes this protraction will reduce the efficacy of the Founders' demands, disqualifying and disconnecting them from the workshop by wearing them out, the protraction may ease the risk of failure too. The Founders stubbornly endure, outwaiting those seeking a determined, decided relationship in the work of living on, building an archive of demands and its desires. It is quite possible that no one will meet the Founders' demands, and perhaps they will eventually succumb to a slow death. But the motility and mood of demanding relation keeps the obligation to them, and each other, unresolved and undecidable; it's a foundering of settlement that reopens the future again and again. These are painful pauses to live within nonetheless, but the Founders' debts are shared, as are the renewed prospects of another turn together. Perhaps there is some grace in that.

Conclusion: Coasting On

Across the four sections, coasting graphs social movements not reliant on power, in relief of those working within the criteria of an impasse. These impasses emerge through the presented historical, archival, and ethnographic analyses, specifying the ways power operates and figures disability as a negative condition, as a cost. In addition to stigmatisers, resistance among those stigmatised give shape to the impasse, including forms of activism, countersignatures, and critiques people use to navigate power and create figure-ground relations inclusive of disability. Often impasses become circular, pathological diseases of the will that over-enclose and lock out people with disabilities, or critique dissolves and liquifies the ground on which to attach and build a life. The costs in Mombasa are many:

At Sahajanand, the will to improve operates through logistical processes of zoning and liquidating life. Extractivism displaces communities and toxifies ecologies, which constellate historical fragments from pre- to (post)colonial eras, linking disability with drought and predatory patronage. Children displaced, damaged, and demonized by communities are warehoused in the school, where disability becomes a spectacle for campaigning politicians, traded with other favours for the profitable underregulation of mining economies. Education and therapy are meagre and maladapted to these children's disabilities, further degrading them against national averages, for which welfare is granted in exchange for future productive labor. Disability becomes characterised as always already behind from the measures of competence organizing opportunities beyond the school's walls. Drifting from these standards is not synonymous with resistance, but feeds into and deepens the impasse.

For Ithna-Asheri parents at CPFC, the impasse is both given and made. Histories of exile and imposed endogamy became entangled with Coastal colonial policies, further severing kinship systems and dependencies necessary for reproducing Islamic forms of life. These structures of causality condition anxieties about Ithna-Asheri identity and the continuity of its

community, creating associations between disability and moral transgression, like the "myth" of cross-cousin marriage, idiomatic of past violence and future threat. Women, who sit at the boundaries of communal reproduction and its dangerous insularity, are often blamed for their children's disabilities too. Out from these tensions, disability becomes a site of intervention to produce relatedness by external means, where hope and hopelessness rest on uncertain scientific criteria profitable for experimental and potentially harmful cures. Within the discursive tradition, the inability to communicate or have sound judgment impedes inclusion into recitation-based religious practices, and healing locates the impairment as an extimate threat of the possessed soul. These criteria code for a future resolution in charitable preservation which can position children as objects of social reproduction held at a margin. Disability becomes a remainder on which other kinships are written, or a sign of kinship not yet achieved.

At Bombolulu, capital and welfare's dialectical relationship prefigures disability as an economic cost, and institutional welfare predicated on sustainable market activities undercuts its promises of economic inclusion, social security, and political representation. Wages delinked from market rates lead to wageless labor and exploitation without expanding pathways for life beyond the shelter. Collective bargaining agreements, used to discipline urban workers were designed to protect able-bodied workers, do not shield from these risks, as new legal protections for people with disabilities have often been unenforceable. Economic shocks, absent state and donor support, deepen disability as an economic liability and create hierarchies as people leverage the shelter's collapsing foundations. Activists seize on external opportunities but are dismissed by state representatives, themselves underfunded and politically defanged after decentralization, and resentful of castigation to do more. Disability identity politics brings hollow promises within development discourses, substituting economic inclusion with the pretense of participatory inclusion, which again reproduces disability as an economic cost. Women's activism generates inequalities at intersections of religion, ethnicity,

and ability, privileging upcountry and/or non-Muslim women who excel at public speaking skills with access to capital. On the other hand, women activists are rewarded for sharing stories of overcoming shame while contending with past grief, ongoing exclusions, and unspeakable violence, even in ordinary sites like clinics, roadways, and bathrooms. Competition for small pools of funding create negative solidarities between biopolitical groups, including resentments about people with physical impairments' relative social mobility with the mentally disabled, non-verbal, and others unable to participate.

The Founders are already living these activist's uncanny fears, by which being dispossessed prophesizes what will be given up: reliable jobs, housing, and all manner of social mobility. It deepens the pain of past disability exclusions—lapsed rites of passage, undesirable jobs, and sexual abuse. Legal battles for land at Bombolulu continually undermine Constitutional protections for people with disabilities, draining "disability" of exchange value for securing rights and resources. The promise of Constitution rights become foreclosed when these requirements are erased from employment contracts by deregulated and unaccountable state and legal authorities, whose functions are indistinguishably blurred with APDK. Judges instead advance judgments in which disability protections are against the general interest, including employers and vulnerable social groups like the elderly. Extra-legal violence generates public awareness but collapses into a pathological and recriminalizing cycle. Though the Founders are able to endure at the edges of a world lost, they fight for their lives each day and face a shapeless future against these routes to victory.

Viewed through power/resistance, or as a stigmatised identity in permanent liminality, disability becomes a perspective, as Goffman puts it, from which social structures are critiqued but never inhabited and holding patterns in which time stands still. Social navigation at the impasse figures disability as a condition transporting people nowhere but downward, held in carceral spaces, the margins of social order, in a race to the bottom, or at the bottom left

begging. From this perspective, the four coasting patterns identified would constantly escape from one's view: drifting away, signing through strings, hiding in plain sight, insurging from the surrounds. We need simultaneous awareness of other grounds, to read contrapuntal movements of power and resistance themselves contrapuntally, to hear the heterophonic voices of missing thirds, and to track the atonal shifts in the figure-ground relations they make possible.

As drift moves children toward and away from acknowledged and sanctioned forms of communication and mobility, they spend the greater part of their time learning from and playing among one another, finding new ways of communicating and forging relationships meaningful to them. Conditions at the school are difficult, and patterns of coasting are non-negative rather than ideal, and saturated with ambivalence and frictions. But frictions are critical to coasting movements because they provide surface tensions for holding on through transformation, whether in a wheelchair race or floating in the ocean. They create affordances without overdetermining relationships, like parcelling out a landscape for children to interact at their own paces and styles. In effect, drifting involves inhabiting displacement together without steering the forms it takes. This is dissimilar to neglect because creating affordances requires tacit knowledge, care attendant to the nuances of another's needs. Drift emerges from practices in which people act as infrastructures, in ways not premised on belonging and exile, disaster and rescue, bondage and freedom—binaries that plague imaginaries of petro-capitalists and environmentalists alike, and trouble disability activists tending to toxic bodies.

The indeterminacies of drifting can nevertheless be difficult for parents reconciling their expectations of kinship, especially when primary modes of transmission like communication no longer reliably ground relations. There is nothing inherently wrong with prospective orientations like hope and faith or seeking medical and religious interventions. But efforts of producing relatedness can grow into efforts of fitting children into metaphors and

metonyms of kinship premised on recognizable subject positions and create impasses that block transformation and movement. Desire, care, and violence are dimensions of kinship after all, and its opposite might be indifference. People's subjunctive commitments fuel coasting practices and give them modal pulsion too. But brooding is not a mechanistic steering, though it may make steering more or less possible, like umbrella-ing around traffic or the spread of sympathetic magic. Brooding to bring forth a kinship bond returns parents to careful arts of attention, to keep making contact. It spurs intuitions of communication even when children offer only its sparest signs. Prospective orientations allow for other expectations to emerge through patterns of contact, for an utterance to sound where it would have been, in various spaces, gestures, and materials that may hold different meanings for parents and children, but otherwise absorb the color of one another's lives. Sometimes, kinships are strung together in ways that make unexpected ties with suppressed pasts. Or they speak by bending and twisting the surfaces of one's form of life, sounding through worlds both lost and arriving, translating words lost so they may arrive at the edges of intuition.

Oblique mobility produces a sense of emergence too as women activists reopen foreclosed possibilities to redistribute resources, occupy and transform spaces, enact political futures, and forge solidarities. Meetings which can seem endlessly repetitive and simplify complex experiences of disability into narratives of pride and shame show other practices co-occurring that alter these social texts. The participants enact forms and styles of relationality that precede and predicate the givenness of the meetings' givens, all which are well known to core participants who return again and again. In the process, oblique mobility enables them to invent, aestheticize, and enact what is not yet present and circumnavigate donors and the state to access and redistribute resources. In a context where it is recommended to act as if you trust others while thinking differently, where life-sustaining resources are surrendered to common thieves, these acts are liable to create negative solidarities and inequalities. These activists did

not invent the language game or the preconditions of civil society's social contract for distributing benefits of welfare and development. But they have learned to play it slant, enabling them to think outside the impasse.

Insurgent motility has been described most thoroughly, as it vividly shows the geographic aspects of coasting—the ways the Founders' more-and-less-than-one poetics of tacking and turning together into different contexts for demand making enables them to reopen possible spaces for inhabitation. Though oblique motility aspires to social mobility, the indeterminacy of how excluded middles may change a social text enables their disconnection to remain unsettled. Relying on these practices is far from ideal and serves as a caution against valorising the transgressive potential of antistructure or understanding desubjectivation as a momentary reprieve.

Coasting offers a way to track these practices of living without losing sight of their social locations and directions of travel amidst increasingly urgent efforts to locate new political idioms and rules of transformation. Under deregulated conditions, conflicts over structure and anti-structure absorb and oversaturate our attentions and our concepts, often at the expense of thinking about other infrastructures used for transforming and passing through blockages in the continuity of life. Tracking these practices of living, the patterns they take, invites us to hear something else. In this project, it offers a non-negative reading of disability through the ways people with disabilities knot lives together. Perhaps not reading, but attuning to their heterophonic voices, which coast on inside, outside, and otherwise to an impasse.

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