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GIVING IT AWAY: RHETORIC AND REFLEXIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL AID

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GIVING IT AWAY: RHETORIC AND REFLEXIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL AID

by

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Dedication

To Joe, unakumbukwa.

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Although it may seem slightly anachronistic, I would also like to demonstrate my abiding appreciation for Lisa Flores and Karen Ashcraft—because when I wrote my Master's thesis, I didn't know acknowledgements were a thing. I should have acknowledged them then for their astonishing work in transforming a confused physics teacher into a passable communication graduate student. Instead, I'll do so now.

I need to blame/praise my Dad for this whole thing coming to pass. When I was batting about the idea of applying to a Master's program in communication, I didn't think I would actually get in. Dad was the one who glanced up and off-handedly said, "What? Oh, you'll definitely get in. Just do it." Turns out, he was right. Thank you, Joe Hanchey, for always believing in me.

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GIVING IT AWAY: RHETORIC AND REFLEXIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL AID

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In this dissertation, I explore the ways global power relations interact with aid work on the ground, in order to better understand the ethics and politics of engaging in international aid work and the implications for rhetorical study as well as aid practice. Through rhetorical fieldwork at a community-based—yet internationally funded and run—nongovernmental aid organization in rural Tanzania, I answer the following research questions: (1) How are nongovernmental aid relationships between Westerners and Tanzanians rhetorically constituted *in situ*? What are the rhetorical effects of these local dynamics? How do they support, augment, or challenge current global understandings of (neo)colonialism, sexism, racism, and aid itself? In other words, what is the relationship between local aid relationships and global power flows? (2) What are the particular benefits and limitations of using rhetorical field methods to explore international aid and its power relationships?

This dissertation poses two main arguments in answer to my research questions: first, that the NGO provides a space where seemingly static and global power relations are recontextualized such that new opportunities are opened for their destabilization; and second, that rhetorical field methods allow for a broader understanding of participation than other qualitative approaches, leading to an increased importance of theorizing and enacting reflexivity in relation to neocolonial dynamics—both in aid and research practice. I demonstrate these arguments through analysis chapters focused on: the (neo)colonial contexts formed and challenged through relations with land; masculine performances in medical student volunteer relationships with Tanzanian translators; the role of white savior fantasies in U.S. volunteer subject construction; rethinking reflexivity through poststructural theory as a trauma connected to resonances of colonialism; and questioning the limits of participation in rhetorical fieldwork. In conclusion, I move toward grounding both rhetorical research and aid practice in haunting. I argue that it is only by immersing ourselves in failures to witness (to) injustice that both critical rhetoric and aid practice can begin to live up to their social change goals.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

May 23, 2015

Laura and I have been traveling for days, and everything seems a blur because of the constant movement. We had a hard time keeping track of what day it is, or was. I want to relate the past few days of events in entirety, but my memory is faulty these days, and I know there are important things I will forget.

As if anyone could ever remember in entirety.

We were both terrified to come back to Tanzania, and excited at the same time. We worried about dealing with street harassment, travel on unsafe buses, remembering Swahili, and if how to engage with people properly would come back to us. And, underneath, unsaid, I had a looming presence of death attached to Tanzania, and attendant guilt.

Actually, to say the guilt is attendant to death is incorrect. Guilt came as a handmaiden to nearly every memory—not just Joe's death, but teaching, life-skills workshops, my relationships with other teachers, how often I sat alone in my house. Everything.

But a lot of this points back to my immaturity at the time, coupled with a lack of cultural…sensitivity is not the right word. Ability? Consideration? Awareness? Laura and I talked the other night about how differently we view everything now—the harassment can be interpreted differently, with frames that don't see it as threatening. Suddenly, when we speak Swahili we are left alone, enjoyed, or called *wenyeji* [local]. When we were young, we jumped at the opportunity to judge first, and asked questions later. Now, we can question our assumptions more readily, reconsider our behavior and reactions. We would be better volunteers now, Laura and I agree. We could connect more, understand more, provide more. However, we then realized the Catch 22 of it all is that had we not been Peace Corps Volunteers already, we wouldn't be the same people we are: able to step back, question ourselves, evaluate.

For both of us, part of the reason we're here is an attempt to force ourselves to face our previous selves, look them in the eye, and accept them as part of our past—while using them and their mistakes to reframe our understandings of Tanzania, Tanzanians, and how to interpret our own desires to be here. What, if anything, do we add? Or do we only take?

Although I returned to the United States almost a decade ago, my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania still provides challenging questions and reflections that give me pause. I left the United States as a physics teacher and returned to apply to a Master's degree in Communication less than a week after I arrived. As a volunteer teacher in a small, rural village, I had struggled to connect with and understand the people I lived among—even though I could speak their language. I continually misunderstood relational dynamics and contextual factors in village events and student stories. As I grew more and more throughout my two years and three months in Tanzania to understand exactly *how little I understood*, I left wondering whether my stint as a volunteer physics teacher and women's empowerment seminar leader had been helpful—or, perhaps harmful.

Tied in with this aspect of my experience is another, deeper, lack of understanding. As I wrote in my home notes, five months before leaving to do my dissertation research:

> I watched a friend die in Tanzania, and spent the longest hours of my life right after it happened, replaying the scene over and over in my head, sitting by a dying fire in a stranger's kitchen, alone in the dark.
>
> Joe's death had shattered my volunteer image of Tanzania—as a time-out from "real" life, where I can have adventures that I will always return home to tell people about, to tell them how close I was to death, how I escaped in the nick of time. Because Africa is a place of adventure for white Westerners, right? A place where you have the ability to both make miraculous change in the lives of Others and return unscathed yourself—a dreamland, a place where you make things happen, but nothing happens to you. Because if it did, then it would not be the fantasy that you have created. It would be something tangible, something important, something agentic. Africa would be places and peoples that one would have to recognize, listen to, learn from.

I was frightened to return to Tanzania. Many of my personal ghosts lingered there: ghosts of the dead, ghosts of failed intercultural connections, ghosts of neocolonial relations.

It was a coincidence that I returned to Tanzania at the same time as Laura, who was part of my volunteer cohort, and had helped me escort Joe's body to Dar es Salaam for the funeral. She was going to do medical research; I was going to do research for my dissertation. We only traveled together for a few days in Tanzania before heading to opposite sides of the country, but it was long enough to talk through how different we felt as U.S. Americans in Tanzania now—how, surprisingly, our fears had melted away when we stepped off the plane.

I had gone as a volunteer to *help*. Now, I questioned what help was, and who got to define it. I questioned how Western assumptions, framings, and fantasies acted to structure aid projects in problematic ways. I had seen many internationally-funded aid organizations and volunteers throughout my time in Tanzania whose "help" had resulted in pitiful—and sometimes disastrous—consequences, and it led me to question what aid was doing wrong and how it could be done better. Or even, can aid be good at all?

In this dissertation, I explore the ways global power relations interact with aid work on the ground, in order to better understand the ethics and politics of engaging in international aid work and their implications for rhetorical study as well as aid practice. One means of doing so could have been to research an aid organization that exemplifies problematic relations between Western aid workers and the Tanzanian population they serve; however, I have chosen to go in a different direction. Rather than focus on pointed critiques that demonstrate exactly what *not* to do in aid, I searched for an organization

that was already attempting to deal with international dynamics of power, and that seemed to have lessons to share. Critiques are useful and necessary, but international aid theory and practice already have many readily available. There are far fewer examples of anything being done well.

This is not to say that the aid organization I focus on in this dissertation is perfect—far from. Yet it does do aid work *differently*, in ways that could provide new perspectives on cultivating aid relations and the communication involved therein. In this dissertation, I draw out connections between rhetoric and relationality, subjectivity and action in this internationally-funded nongovernmental aid organization, in order to find how we can better work with others, be-longing to them,[1] in a variety of ways. My own implication in aid relations and intercultural belonging leads me to interrogate what it means to be reflexive as a researcher, and how I am continually haunted by my recursive inability to do reflexivity right.

In the remainder of this introduction, I begin to sketch the basis for my investigation, the theory of which will be explored in more detail in the next chapter. I provide my research questions for the dissertation project, and then describe how they are attended to in each particular chapter. Finally, I close with a meditation on what it means in aid—and research—to "give it away."

[1] Aimee Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines: On the Subject of Feminist Alliances* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

RHETORIC AND RELATIONALITY AT THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Nestled into the side of a hill in the highlands of Tanzania lies a small village: a Children's Village. Although some might first identify the place as an orphanage—since it provides care for youth who have been orphaned or abused, or who require more care than their guardians can give—it is better identified by a different moniker. For this place is and does far more than a typical orphanage. The Children's Village contains a pre-school, kindergarten, sewing school, medical clinic, and farm in addition to the six homes where the children live. In fact, in these homes the children live as families, with house-mothers or fathers from their tribe, and have consistent contact with extended family or guardians in the nearby villages. Rather than providing a path to foster care or adoption, the Children's Village works to make sure that the young people will have a place in their home village when they reach a point where either their guardians are able to care for them, or they are able to care for themselves. Work still continues beyond the outskirts of Children's Village, as its employees run a home-based care initiative for HIV/AIDS patients, plan events with local schools at the community hall, and meet with government officials to keep everything running smoothly and in line with community desires.

The Children's Village is not your typical international aid project. When I first mentioned to people in the U.S. that I was going to spend two months researching a non-governmental organization (NGO) in Tanzania, invariably the first question they asked was, "What does the organization do?" I found that the surprising difficulty I had in answering such a simple question revealed a unique aspect of the NGO. For most international aid projects, NGOs focus on a particular problem they would like to solve—

hunger, poverty, disease, lack of clean water, lack of educational opportunities—and find a place that needs their help, perhaps spreading to other areas as they grow. However, this NGO began with a community, not a task. And it has developed not outward, to other geographical locations, but deeper into relation with the community and their shifting needs. Unlike typical international aid organizations, the Children's Village does not have one singular, static goal, its achievement is not based on number of people served, and there is no teleological end to their work.[2] Instead, the Children's Village seems unusually attuned to the shifting patterns of everyday life, the way that problems arise and are mitigated by changing times, circumstances, choices, and contexts. In short, this particular NGO is primarily and uniquely defined by its relations with the community.

At first, the idea of an NGO that arises from community relations rather than Western declarations of others' needs may sound ideal. However, Aimee Carrillo Rowe reminds us that loving, desiring, and belonging are always already political relations.[3] The NGO may be constituted through relations with the community around it, but such relations already exist within and are conditioned by movements of power—global flows of capital, imperialist control over resources, (neo)colonial understandings of agency—and thus cannot be understood apart from a political frame. Carrillo Rowe argues that the relations that constitute subjects—and here also constitute the NGO—do so on fluctuating political grounds. By "placing a *politics of relation*," the rhetorical scholar is

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[2] As an exemplar consider the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, supposed to be completed by the year 2015: "Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly: United Nations Millennium Declarations," *United Nations*, September 18, 2000, http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf, 5.
[3] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 25.

called to unearth the "infinitely shifting and contingent relations of belonging which temporarily define the contours of [a subject's or organization's] being" as one of the primary sites for understanding power.[4]

As such, the Children's Village represents an ideal place to study the power dynamics of international aid, and the complexities that are often overlooked. Globally attentive work on international aid tends to focus on broad political issues at the expense of local relations, and locally focused work tends to emphasize interpretive understanding at the expense of critiquing power dynamics. My dissertation seeks to remedy this problem by attending to the intersections between the local and global in the way aid functions and how it affects the populations that it acts within. As Carrillo Rowe explains, examining relationships provides a means of understanding important political nuances, and the Children's Village is particularly well-suited to hosting such research by its depth of relational ties.

Children's Village is a small NGO located in a village area in the highlands of Tanzania that serves people in 16 villages in the surrounding area. The population of their service area is approximately 40,000, and the estimated rate of infection for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) in the area is 35% of the population.[5] Initially begun by an ex-colonist, Mr. Giles, who traded the promise of medical supplies and aid for permission to purchase land in the area, the NGO is managed by a U.S. American and Canadian couple, Sarah and Tim, and has a few other long-term U.S. volunteers working

[4] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 26-27.
[5] This is based on surveys commissioned by the organization.

there. All other organizational staff are Tanzanian, and most of them are from the NGO's service area. In all, the NGO has 10 departments serving a variety of community needs. It began simply as an orphanage, but over the years Children's Village has shifted and changed in relation to the community it serves, the people who work there, the land on which it is built, and differing balances of life and death.

The shifting relations between the NGO, its employees, its volunteers, and community life are eminently rhetorical. In this dissertation project, I investigate the rhetorical means by which these relations are negotiated, and the rhetorical conditions that constitute them. As different aspects of rhetorical theory can help us to attend to both the ethics of subjective relations and the politics of (neo)colonial, capitalistic, racist, and patriarchal contexts, rhetorical approaches are particularly well-suited to understanding the local/global intersections of international aid. My use of rhetorical theory is thus inflected by critiques of representation and activist approaches, theories of rhetoricity and ethical relation, and conditions of infrapolitics and postcolonial dynamics. Briefly, critiques of representation bring out the problematic way Tanzanian people and contexts are described in order to facilitate aid. Theories of rhetoricity and ethical relation help, then, to address how these problematic understandings of others can constitute certain ways of being and acting—below and beyond conscious intention—toward others. Finally, infrapolitical and postcolonial perspectives bring attention to how all international aid relations are enacted within social fields resonant with (neo)colonial dynamics. Throughout this dissertation, I seek to examine how rhetoric constitutes the subjects, represents the issues, and can shift the political consequences involved in

international aid relationships by providing a detailed case study of one Western-run NGO serving a Tanzanian village area. In the remainder of the introduction, I explain in more detail why local/global intersections are particularly important, why both rhetorical and organizational communication theories are required, and why rhetorical field methods are necessary for this study.

First, placing a politics of relation in regard to the NGO, its employees, its donors, and community life around it helps us to focus on the way local relations are conditioned by global politics—and vice versa. The activities and circumstances of the NGO take place within, and are part of constantly renegotiating, a mess of power dynamics. As an example, Mr. Giles often drops by the children's village, or brings wealthy expatriate guests to see the NGO's work. He has referred to Sarah, the woman who manages the NGO, as a "roaring lion" to highlight her aggressive unfeminine tendencies, and his interactions with the staff are saturated with colonial perspectives on what Tanzanians can and cannot do, and over what they should or should not have control. The interactions between Mr. Giles and the NGO employees clearly point to the way that local relations in the NGO are conditioned by globally-reaching power dynamics of neocolonialism, capitalism, and sexism.

However, the local relations of the NGO also challenge typical understandings of these global power dynamics in interesting ways. For instance, most of the Tanzanian staff of the NGO expressed purely positive reactions to Western volunteers who come to work with the organization, and Western donations of aid and assistance. Unexpectedly, the greatest animosity in the organization's operations existed between Western

volunteers and *other* Western volunteers: Each thought the other to be "more colonial" than her. Each thought the other to be less understanding of the culture and less sensitive to Tanzanian desires. Correspondingly, each volunteer saw *herself* as better than other Westerners, and did not register any part of her own actions as a (neo)colonial force in NGO life—to be frank, in large part this also encompasses me as the researcher. Unlike typical macro-level analyses of aid, which may assume the need for Tanzanian resistance against the imperialist imposition of aid organizations run by Westerners into Tanzanian life, here the astute researcher would notice that something is occurring at the NGO that current theory may have a hard time capturing—that instead calls for an in-depth examination of the way local life supports, augments, or challenges global understandings.

Second, as the study is based in an international organization, and processes of organizing condition many of the global and local dynamics, this study necessitates attention to organizational communication as well as rhetorical theory. On the one hand, an organizational communication lens brings two important aspects often elided in rhetorical theory and method to the fore. First, in rhetoric, scholars tend to focus on organizing as a function of social movements, but more mundane organizing and organizations are often ignored.[6] Organizational communication theory can help to

[6] Organizing is discussed in work dealing with social movement and counterpublics theory, such as: John W. Bowers, Donovan J. Ochs, Richard J. Jensen, and David P. Schulz, *The Rhetoric of Agitation and Control* (Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc., 2010); Charles E. Morris III and Stephen Howard Browne, eds., *Readings in the Rhetoric of Social Protest* (State College: Strata Publishing, Inc, 2001); and Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, eds., *Counterpublics and the State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001). However, little other rhetorical work treats the process of organizing as notable, or organizational texts as distinct from other rhetorical texts for criticism.

remedy that gap. Second, rhetorical theorists are currently taken with field methods and fieldwork; two book-length projects have recently been released that take up the problem of rhetorical work in the field.[7] However, rhetorical field scholars have done little to show how these methods are different from other sub-fields' qualitative approaches that have been in use for decades. My dissertation approaches this elephant in the methodological room, elucidating ways that rhetorical approaches differ from qualitative approaches in organizational communication.

On the other hand, the rhetorical foundation of this study also brings something new and important to organizational communication scholarship. Although organizational rhetoric is an active subarea of organizational communication, the study of organizational rhetoric is primarily tied to purely instrumental ideas of rhetoric used for public relations and managerial control.[8] The work is almost entirely based on Burke, Perelman, and other 1950s theorists, and struggles to move beyond their thought.[9] In this dissertation, I hope to offer organizational communication scholars interested in rhetoric

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[7] Sara McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard, eds., *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2016); Michael Middleton, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric in Situ* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

[8] In 2008, E. Johanna Hartelius and Larry D. Browning found in a comprehensive literature review of organizational rhetoric that "rhetorical concepts employed in managerial journals are frequently inadequately grounding in rhetorical theory," and primarily view rhetoric "as a means of manipulation and control," either of employees or public opinion, as described in: John A. A. Silince and Roy Suddaby, "Organizational Rhetoric: Bridging Management and Communication Scholarship," *Management Communication Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (2008): 6. Unfortunately, the years since have yielded little change.

[9] Take for instance the panel I presented on at the National Commmunication Association conference this year, "Beyond Burke? Heretical Dimensions for Organizational Rhetoric Research and Theory," in which the majority of the scholars on the panel *primarily focused on Burke* in their presentations of new avenues for organizational rhetoric. However, there are some notable exceptions, such as the work of Rebecca Gill. See for instance: Rebecca Gill and Celeste C. Wells, "Welcome to the 'Hunger Games': An Exploration of the Rhetorical Construction of Legitimacy for One U.S.-Based Nonprofit Organization," *Management Communication Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2014): 26-55.

one possible way contemporary rhetorical theory could be used to look at an organizational setting and relations.

Third, the use of rhetorical field methods is necessary in this study in order to understand the interactions between people, objects, and organizing in the close and nuanced way necessary to a thorough understanding of how rhetorical relations are constantly negotiated under conditions of power. Of course, I am only able to study such relations in a close way by doing what Carrillo Rowe argues is necessary to (even partially) understanding others: belonging.[10] In this case, that requires a physical proximity to the Tanzanian staff with whom I would wish to belong, travel to the NGO's physical location, and thus an ability to be close to (physically and affectively) the people, objects, and organizing processes who reside there. Rhetorical field methods allow me to approach these relations as they unfold in a way that textual analysis alone could not. However, bringing rhetoric to the field raises questions, as well. In this dissertation, then, I also address the practice of rhetorical field methods, asking through my enactment of it how this practice is different than qualitative communication research methods, and how it is indeed *rhetorical*.

By examining relations at close proximity, as well as how this NGO belongs—to stretch a term from Carrillo Rowe[11]—to power dynamics of neocolonialism, sexism, and racism, I analyze international aid as a complicated political realm that offers much to

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[10] For instance, Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 25: "The sites of our belonging constitute how we see the world, what we value, who we are (becoming). The meaning of self is never individual, but a shifting set of relations that we move in and out of, often without reflection."
[11] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*.

rhetorical theory and political practice. In sum, my dissertation seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How are non-governmental aid relationships between Westerners and Tanzanians rhetorically constituted *in situ*? What are the rhetorical effects of these local dynamics? How do they support, augment, or challenge current global understandings of (neo)colonialism, sexism, racism, and aid itself? In other words, what is the relationship between local aid relationships and global power flows?
2. What are the particular benefits and limitations of using rhetorical field methods to explore international aid and its power relationships?

To answer these questions, I spent two months at the NGO in the summer of 2015, living and working with the people at the Children's Village. Staying on the NGO grounds, sometimes my research ended at 5pm, sometimes 8pm, and sometimes it went long into the night. During my time there, I wrote over 100 pages of single-spaced field notes, recorded over 100 hours of audio footage of meetings, conversations, tours, and other business at the NGO, and conducted 14 interviews with Tanzanian staff and nine interviews with Western staff and volunteers. I participated in meetings and workshops, led reflection times with volunteer groups, and coached the managers on advocating for Tanzanian leadership with donors.

However, my fieldwork did not end with my visit to the field. Since returning to the United States to write, I have talked with NGO staff on the phone and over Skype many times. Some of these conversations I have audio recorded, others were encapsulated in field notes, and yet others were had simply to catch up. In October of 2016, I was able to meet with three NGO staff members at a fundraiser held in the U.S., and in December 2016 I returned to the Children's Village for two weeks. While I was

there, I shared the major arguments of this dissertation with the Tanzanian *Kamati Kuu*, or Head Committee, of the organization. After every example of my argument that I provided, I was given two or three more that had happened in the time since my research had taken place. Together, the *Kamati Kuu* and I were able to develop practical suggestions for changes in the organization that could lessen neocolonial dynamics in Western donor and volunteer relationships with Tanzanian NGO workers and villagers.

Based on this fieldwork, my dissertation poses two main arguments in answer to my research questions: first, that the "contact zone"[12] of aid relationships at the NGO provides a space where seemingly static and global power relations are recontextualized such that new opportunities are opened for their destabilization; and second, that rhetorical field methods allow for a broader understanding of participation than other qualitative approaches, leading to an increased importance of theorizing and enacting reflexivity in relation to neocolonial dynamics—both in aid and research practice.

Local relationships between Westerners and Tanzanians cannot escape power dynamics, even if those dynamics are not local to this Tanzanian village area—such as the U.S.'s particular brand of racism. Westerners bring their own racial discourses to a country that does not have those particular racist structures in place.[13] Similarly,

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[12] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 7. Pratt defines contact zones as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination—such as colonialism and slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lives out across the globe today."

[13] Richard A. Schroeder, *Africa After Apartheid: South Africa, Race, and Nation in Tanzania* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012). Schroeder argues that racism in Tanzania is primarily experienced as a result of the influx of white South Africans who left their country after the fall of apartheid. Tanzania never had the sort of systematic governmental racist-colonial oppression experienced by many other African countries, as the British were primarily occupied with their northern neighbor, Kenya.

dynamics of gender, class, and neocolonialism are emplaced differently in Western nations than in Tanzania. When Western systems meet and interweave with the local village systems, both experience relative—and innovative—shifts in the way power operates. Land, context, culture: In the running of the NGO, these things meet in constantly moving configurations that change how power operates in the Children's Village. Throughout the analysis of this dissertation, explained further below, I demonstrate that as power is recontextualized in different formations at the NGO, new means are opened to challenge its operations.

My analysis is driven by close attention to how contextual factors interact with widespread power dynamics, which similarly calls for close attention to how I as the researcher participate in affecting the context and attendant relations. Drawing from both theories of rhetorical fieldwork and my own research experience, I argue that rhetorical field methods open up possibilities of participatory experience for the researcher as such methods are structured differently than qualitative methods in communication.

If recontextualizing power relations can lead to new ways to transform them, and the research is fundamentally a participant in how this happens, then reflexivity holds an important place in recontextualizing aid research and practice. Rhetorical field researchers have argued that reflexivity holds an increased role in fieldwork, and is necessary to understanding the political effect of a researcher on what she studies.[14] However, the sheer *difficulty* of reflexivity is rarely taken up: If the researcher is always

[14] George F. McHendry Jr., Michael K. Middleton, Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Megan O'Byrne, "Rhetorical Critic(ism)'s Body: Affect and Fieldwork on a Plane of Immanence," *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 4 (2014), 302.

involved in issues of power, then there is no "time-out" from reflexivity. Yet, it is impossible to entirely—or even adequately—recognize all power relations functioning at all moments of time throughout a research project. As a researcher and participant throughout the work of collecting audio recordings and field notes at the NGO, and further transcribing, analyzing, and writing the results, I attempted to perform reflexivity. But ultimately, I failed. Ultimately, I will *always* fail. Reflexivity cannot be realized or perfected.

Reflexivity is impossible, yet it is still necessary to critical participatory work. My dissertation is haunted by this contradiction. Throughout this dissertation, I continually reencounter traumatic moments where I am faced with the inadequacy of my grasp of power relations, moments where I missed important contextual facets—moments where I let neocolonialism win. What I hope to demonstrate through the chapters of this dissertation is *not* how to *do* reflexivity, but how to recognize those moments where reflexivity means to *do you*. A researcher dealing with power in shifting contexts will continually be haunted by her own research participation, and it is only through the trauma of revisiting one's participation in relations over and over that power may be witnessed to in a way that shifts its operations toward justice (for the moment, at least). In the eight chapters of this dissertation, I seek answers connecting the local and global, ethical and political, researcher and participant in international aid relationships. Here, I briefly describe the argument of each chapter, and explain how it contributes to this project.

CHAPTER DESCRIPTIONS

The following two chapters set the theoretical and methodological grounding, respectively. In the remaining chapters, the scope of my analysis begins large and continually narrows. In Chapter 4, I place the NGO in its physical and relational context by focusing on how land and understandings of it are productive of, and produced by, rhetorics of survivance. Chapter 5 narrows the lens to relationships between U.S. medical volunteers and their Tanzanian translators, examining the dynamics of intercultural interaction and how they affect and are affected by imperialism and masculinity. In Chapter 6, I then move from intercultural relations to centering processes of subject constitution for U.S. American volunteers, investigating how fantasies of white saviorism are preserved in volunteer interactions. Questions of subject construction set the stage for Chapter 7, where I engage the theoretical concept of "reflexivity" from a posthuman lens. In Chapter 8, I reflexively engage the past two years of research with the NGO to explore the limits of participation as a rhetorical field researcher. Finally, in Chapter 9 I examine how each analysis demonstrated a recontexualization and destabilization of seemingly static global power relations, and draw out implications for rhetorical theory and aid practice.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Grounding

Chapter 2 provides the theoretical basis for the study. First, I provide an overview of research that has been done on how international aid to Sub-Saharan Africa fits within the legacies of colonialism in the continent. Second, I contextualize my study as part of the rapidly developing field of study on international nongovernmental aid organizations,

and describe preceding research on the politics of such organizations. Lastly, I spend the most time in developing my theoretical approach to studying rhetoric in international aid, and how such study necessitates drawing connections between representational and constitutive theories of rhetoric.

Chapter 3: Finding the "Rhetoric" in Rhetorical Field Methods

Fieldwork is increasingly popular in rhetoric, and often touted as an innovative approach to criticism. Rhetorical field scholars tend to highlight the qualitative roots of fieldwork, and dissociate it from traditional rhetoric, promoting fieldwork as exciting and new. However, this has led to a curious distancing of *rhetoric* in rhetorical field methods. In this chapter, I argue that rhetorical fieldwork should be seen as continuous with trends in rhetorical scholarship, and that rhetorical scholars should consider, rather, how rhetorical fieldwork breaks with traditional qualitative methods. Comparing rhetorical fieldwork with qualitative approaches to communication research, I argue that rhetorical fieldwork is structured by fundamentally different assumptions through its critical lineage, social change goals, and focus on publicity. I then tie the structuring principles of rhetorical fieldwork to the specific context of this project.

Chapter 4: This Land is Your Land, this Land is my Land

In this chapter, I use the concepts of survivance and belonging to explore both the colonial and neocolonial dynamics of land. I weave together understandings of land as both a posthuman actor and a material concern throughout stories of its significance to the Children's Village. The negotiations surrounding land, what it is, whose it is, and how

it acts on those around it have important implications for the organization of NGO operations, control of resources, and (neo)colonial relations between Westerners and Tanzanians. By focusing on the relations constituting and enabled by land, this chapter brings out the political importance of leaving some research questions unanswered.

Chapter 5: The Imperialist Character of Medical Masculinity

In this chapter I investigate what happens when masculinities rhetorically constituted through media and a culture of militarization in the United States are expressed in a different national and cultural context, and how this may open avenues to challenge both hegemonic expressions of masculinity and neocolonial relations. I examine how the differences in how two groups of U.S. medical volunteers in Tanzania relate with their Tanzanian translators can be related to hegemonic masculinity. The first group seems tightly constrained by expectations of hegemonic masculine performance in their medical work, while the second does not. I build an argument that the bounds of U.S. hegemonic masculinity constrain decolonial possibility in intercultural relationships, and that loosening the strictures of hegemonic masculinity can open space for anti-colonial relationships and encounters.

Chapter 6: All of us Phantasmic Saviors

Starting from the question of why there seems to be more conflict between Western volunteers and other Western volunteers than between Westerners and Tanzanians leads me to investigate the processes of Western volunteer subject production in relation to foreclosure and fantasy. Drawing from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, in

this chapter I argue that U.S. American volunteer subject production is premised on certain foreclosures covered by the fantasies of being a white savior, and being able to make a difference in the world. When other U.S. volunteers challenge these racialized fantasies, volunteer subjects avoid subject dissolution and reformulation through two mechanisms: denial of the fantasy, or ironic placement of oneself outside of the fantasy.

Chapter 7: Reflexivity as Trauma

In this chapter, I examine the ways that my experiences and relations affect my own subject constitution, and how it affects the continuing relations around me. Drawing from work I have begun—but never quite gotten right—on reflexivity, as well as theory on haunting, trauma, and mourning, I consider what it might mean to conceptualize reflexivity as constitutive of subjectivity, rather than a subject-led action. Here I theorize reflexivity *as trauma*, a trauma that institutes a reflexive subject. Engaging with the ways Joe's death and other experiences as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tanzania continually return to haunt me and my research, I explore how reiteratively *missing* such experiences—being unable to adequately represent them in words, or give them a meaning that lays them to rest—is what actually allows for the political potential of reflexivity.

Chapter 8: Participating in a Coup

A year and a half after my initial research, my participation in NGO dynamics is drawn to a startling conclusion: the dissolution of the organization I have been studying. By tracing the process of how Sarah and Tim, the U.S. American managers, got to the

point of staging a coup against Mr. Giles, the chairman of the NGO board, I am faced with difficult questions regarding the extremities of participation in rhetorical field research. When one participates in overthrowing the organization one has been studying, has participation gone too far? In this chapter, I probe the limits of participation in rhetorical field research, arguing for an approach to fieldwork based in haunting.

Chapter 9: Giving it Away, in Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation, I hope to show that aid is more than the transfer of money from one person or place to another. International aid is comprised of so many other factors, aspects, and relations, that by breaking the focus purely on economic exchange perhaps we can begin to posit alternative ways of understanding aid and thereby relating to one another.

I hope to elucidate few different meanings of the title of this dissertation, "giving it away." In the most literal interpretation, aid *is* the act of giving away. When one thinks of "aid," one primarily thinks of giving away of money, objects, resources, or time to assist other people. However, giving something away can also mean revealing its true or underlying intent. Perhaps in the context of aid, we may find that all is not as good-willed as it seems.[15] Finally, giving something away can also relate to having no more use for it; the object in question has served its purpose and can be discarded. The investigations in this dissertation are meant to lead to a means of giving *aid* away, in this last sense. Our current systems of international aid, understandings of how it works, and relationships

[15] This is explored in Chapter 2, in the section entitled "Aid to Sub-Saharan Africa and the Legacies of Colonialism." Intent, as I use it, can be systemic as well as individual.

engendered by it leave much to be desired. It may be that a total reconceptualization of the concept is needed. In what ways might aid, itself, need to be given away?

Truly giving something away requires relinquishing control. Throughout my research at the Children's Village, I saw Western aid workers and donors struggling with ceding control of NGO operations and projects to the Tanzanian staff. Aid work balances on an inherent contradiction—both supposing Western dominance through the West's ability to provide help to others in the first place, and relinquishing Western power by giving this help away. Instead of sweeping the aspect of losing control under the rug, what might it look like to embrace it? An international aid practice that *gives aid away*, in this sense, has the potential to reconstitute power relations.

Rhetorical fieldwork involves a similar contradiction. By supposing activist goals, as I explain further in Chapter 3 and Chapter 8, rhetorical fieldwork assumes a researcher that is simultaneously a participant. Yet, at the same time, researchers often express a tension between participant and researcher, and some assume that to be one means setting aside the other.[16] There seems to be a desire in rhetorical fieldwork to control research practice, even when delimiting participation from observation is slippery, roles are indistinguishable and fluid, and pinning down exactly how one affected the research context is impossible. In this dissertation, I highlight questions of participation in rhetorical research in order to argue that rhetoricians, also, might need to give something away in order to achieve our political goals. By giving away attempts to secure finality in

[16] For instance, Danielle Endres, in *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, writes about a time when she had to "temporarily abandon [her] researcher role and actively participate in something going on in the field," 45.

our conclusions, to separate subject and object, to find the line between researcher and participant, it may be that we can participate more justly. Giving away control leads to a research practice that is haunted, where the researcher is continually faced with her own failures, incongruities, and injustices. Perhaps, for aid, it is only by giving it away to those it serves that aid can ever be equitably done. Perhaps, for rhetorical researchers, it is only by giving ourselves away—to incoherency, an inability to represent any subject in full, and the impossibility of recognizing all power relations happening at any given time—that research can be done justly.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Grounding

In the following sections, I address the theoretical foundations of this work. Here, I explain Sub-Saharan Africa's relationship to aid and the legacies of colonialism. I then create a theoretical foundation for understanding the politics of NGOs. Finally, I conclude with a discussion of rhetoric, subjectivity, and power.

AID TO SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND THE LEGACIES OF COLONIALISM

Excuse me, friends, I must catch my jet
I'm off to join the Development Set;
My bags are packed, and I've had all my shots
I have traveler's checks and pills for the trots!

The Development Set is bright and noble
Our thoughts are deep and our vision global;
Although we move with the better classes
Our thoughts are always with the masses.

In Sheraton Hotels in scattered nations
We damn multi-national corporations;
injustice seems easy to protest
In such seething hotbeds of social rest.

We discuss malnutrition over steaks
And plan hunger talks during coffee breaks.
Whether Asian floods or African drought,
We face each issue with open mouth.
...
Enough of these verses – on with the mission!
Our task is as broad as the human condition!
Just pray god the biblical promise is true:
The poor ye shall always have with you.[1]

In much Western discourse, the idea of sending aid and assistance to developing countries operates as an unquestioned good. However, as the above poem points out, this

[1] Ross Coggins, "The Development Set," *Journal of Communication* 28, no. 1 (1978): 80.

‘good’ act seems to proceed with a blind eye turned toward privilege, which often leads to aid reinforcing—rather than ameliorating—economic inequalities. I first heard the poem, originally published in 1978, during my time researching in Tanzania when it was read aloud by a missionary couple, the Jensens. Living on the same salary as the Tanzanians with whom they work, the Jensens’ means of doing international aid bucks the typical trends.[2] Although to them this poem rang as true in 2015 as it did in 1978, their perspective is not often shared or understood in Western nations. For, how can helping other people be a bad thing?

Pointing out the problems related to aid often leaves the detractor feeling like a spoilsport, or even a dirty sinner. As William Easterly writes in his book critiquing current approaches to international aid, “I often feel like a sinful atheist who has somehow wound up in the meeting of the conclave of cardinals to choose the successor to the saintly John Paul II.”[3] Easterly’s analogy draws a portrait of how eerily out of place the aid critic is in popular culture, as if by asking questions and being unsatisfied with the answers she becomes a heretic, and no longer deserves to commune with the saints, the charitable and altruistic ones involved with aid. However, I would like to carry Easterly’s analogy a step further to posit an addendum: Perhaps none of us are as saintly as we seem.

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[2] Maria Eriksson Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid* (New York: Zed Books, 2005). In her book, Baaz explores how aid relationships in Tanzania that claim ‘partnership’ are usually still heavily based in salary and living inequalities between Westerners and Tanzanians.

[3] William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden: Why the West’s Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007), 4.

It may well be that the intentions behind international aid have generally been good, but the effects certainly have not. In many ways, international aid has functioned since its inception as a continuation and extension of colonialism. In the context of governmental aid and large-scale restructuring pushed by organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, countries that were ravaged by colonialism continue to be ravaged by loans, supposedly provided to help, that leave post-colonial nations worse off economically than before, keeping them in a never-ending cycle of debt to the West.[4] Economists go so far as to argue that "across the globe the recipients of [U.S. government] aid are worse off; much worse off"[5] than before receiving aid. Instead of alleviating or mitigating challenging economic circumstances, as is ostensibly the goal, "[a]id has been, and continues to be, an unmitigated political, economic, and humanitarian disaster for most parts of the developing world."[6]

Nongovernmental aid is no better. Although acting in large part on a more localized scale, aid from NGOs has a number of adverse effects. For one, it continues to perpetuate paternalistic relationships between providers and recipients.[7] In a manner reminiscent of colonial claims that Western leadership was necessary to benefit the natives,[8] contemporary nongovernmental aid often assumes a lack of agency on the part

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[4] Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*, 210-236; Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid is Not Working and How There is a Better Way for Africa* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2009).
[5] Moyo, *Dead Aid,* xix.
[6] Moyo, *Dead Aid*, xix.
[7] Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership*.
[8] See for instance, Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1995), 207-231.

of those being served,[9] making a paternalistic attitude something even NGOs focused explicitly on "partnership" have been largely unable to avoid.[10] Additionally, nongovernmental aid is often based in consumer capitalism that requires developmental inequality to function in the first place.[11] By promoting "itself as if it were in a vacuum, not part of the many different kinds of consumption choices that individuals can make every day that actually affect… lives,"[12] nongovernmental aid in fact "deflects attention from addressing the causes of problems to solving their manifestations."[13] Arguably, nongovernmental aid helps to further reinforce the very systems that it purports to be changing.

Sub-Saharan Africa offers a particularly interesting context for analyzing the power dynamics undergirding the work of international nongovernmental aid. Within the continent's history of relations to Western nations, and the cultural attitudes and beliefs that have arisen with and from this history, there are two especially salient aspects that lead to Sub-Saharan Africa's unique position in terms of aid. First, Western-African relations of colonialism and slavery continue to impact current economic and cultural conditions in the continent. Scholars have argued that colonialism is the main cause of underdevelopment in Africa,[14] and that without colonialism, the AIDS crisis that continues to hold certain portions of the continent in a death grip could not have

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[9] Jenna N. Hanchey, "Agency Beyond Agents: Aid Campaigns in Sub-Saharan Africa and Collective Representations of Agency," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 9, no. 1 (2016): 11-29.
[10] Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership*.
[11] Lisa Ann Richey and Stefano Ponte, *Brand Aid: Shopping Well to Save the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).
[12] Richey and Ponte, *Brand Aid*, 4.
[13] Richey and Ponte, *Brand Aid*, 9.
[14] Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Baltimore: Black Classic Press, 2011).

occurred.[15] Colonialism also drew the arbitrary lines that divide current states, leading to strife and warfare between tribes due to colonial-forced relocation,[16] and difficulty in nation-building due to a lack of cohesive identity.[17] For this and other reasons, scholars have noted that subjugated African peoples are encouraged to identify instead with the colonizer, leading to what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o refers to as "colonization of the mind,"[18] making it difficult for African peoples to culturally and individually support themselves. This is also an economic problem, as the current neocolonial order ensures that even what seems like development often serves to maintain Western economic dominance.[19]

Second, Sub-Saharan Africa's place in Western fantasy as the land of the beast, the child, disease, famine, and war allows it to function as an open canvas on which Westerners can write at will.[20] Achille Mbembe notes that "Africa as an idea, a concept, has historically served, and continues to serve, as a polemical argument for the West's desperate desire to assert its difference from the rest of the world."[21] As the global signifier of lack and nothingness,[22] Africa provides the West with a space against which

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[15] Craig Timberg and Daniel Halperin, *Tinderbox: How the West Sparked the AIDS Epidemic and how the World Can Finally Overcome It* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013).
[16] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
[17] A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 95-96.
[18] Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1986).
[19] James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).
[20] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). For a current example of how Westerners use Africa as a personal canvas for painting their own fantasies, see Taylor Swift's new music video, "Wildest Dreams": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdneKLhsWOQ
[21] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 2.
[22] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 4.

it can define itself in opposition as full and potent: *something* in relation to *nothing*.[23] And if Africa *has* nothing, *is* nothing, then the West does nothing but good in bringing *something* forth in and for it. Not only, then, is aid ironically understood as the process of bringing material goods to a place bereft of resources,[24] but also as developing the people from an animal-like state. Mbembe relates that for Westerners talking about Africans, "We can give an account of him/her in the same way we can understand the psychic life of the *beast*. We can even, through a process of domestication and training, bring the African to where he or she can enjoy a fully human life. In this perspective, Africa is essentially, for us, an object of experimentation."[25]

However, given this history of relations and Western cultural fantasy, it seems important to note that Sub-Saharan Africa is not "defined simply by marginalization or that the continent is simply irrelevant to the wider global economy."[26] Even though an extreme interpretation of the effects of colonialism could read Africa as subjugated to the point of being dependent on the West for resources and self-esteem, this is actually a form of neocolonial thought. That is, the presumption of Sub-Saharan Africa's abjectness in large part forms the ideological basis on which Western nations are able to continue to extract resources and profit from Africa with little consequence. The assumption that Sub-Saharan Africa simply *is* poor, *per se*, is what allows for it to be made poorer, and therefore in need of aid. In this way, nongovernmental aid rests on, assumes, and

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[23] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 2.
[24] This is ironic because the Western world is actually quite dependent on African resources for its extravagant lifestyle. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 6.
[25] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 2.
[26] Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, 194.

continually reinstantiates the larger global economic relations that have placed Africa in the position of 'need' to start.

THE POLITICS OF NGOS

It may come then as no surprise that NGOs have their own set of politics as an organizational form, distinct from that of for-profit organizations and corporations. Even though NGOs vary greatly in size and scope, a similar set of developmental assumptions underlie their missions and goals, for the most part.[27] Focusing on the unique aspects of NGOs, however, is actually a rather recent development in organizational theory. It has been only a decade since Laurie Lewis wrote her influential article calling for a spotlight on NGOs, which she refers to primarily as 'nonprofits.'[28] Lewis defines NGOs by six criteria that must be met: it must be "organized," "private," "non-profit-distributing," "self-governing," "voluntary," and "of public benefit."[29] Organizations incorporating these aspects, Lewis argues, have been ignored by communication theorists in favor of bureaucratically-organized and for-profit businesses, and may offer new perspectives on communicating and organizing that challenge the sweeping generalities often made in the field based only on corporate examples.[30]

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[27] Thomas W. Dichter, *Despite Good Intentions: Why Development Assistance to the Third World has Failed* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), xiii. Dichter actually takes this argument further, making the case that because NGOs *are organizations*, they will never be able to achieve their development goals.

[28] Laurie Lewis, "The Civil Society Sector: A Review of Critical Issues and Research Agenda for Organizational Communication Scholars," *Management Communication Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (2005): 237-267. Nonprofit is the term most often used in the U.S. to refer to organizations in the civil sector, whereas internationally—and especially in relation to development—the preferred moniker is NGO.

[29] Lewis, "Civil Society," 240.

[30] Lewis, "Civil Society," 262-263.

In this way, attending to NGOs offers organizational scholars a way of grasping aspects of communication or organizing that are often hidden, missed, or underdeveloped by traditional organizational theory. For instance, by showing how theorizing about NGOs is still dominated by market-based economic thought, Matthew Koschmann opens space for the claim that NGOs have the potential to challenge such assumptions in organizational theorizing.[31] That is, NGOs can be used to reveal the limitations of neoliberalism's 'invisible hand.' Beth Eschenfelder comes at the potential of NGOs from a different angle, arguing that emotional labor, while found in various types of occupations, is particularly intensified in nongovernmental work.[32] NGOs offer vivid examples of emotional labor that may be useful to analyzing the concept in detail and complexity. NGOs both challenge and augment corporate-based organizational theories.

Part of what makes NGOs different than corporations, for organizational scholars, is the perceived attunement between such organizations and the communities around them.[33] Even though organizational scholars have long recognized that the relationship between organizations and society is permeable and fluid,[34] the two concepts are still often paired in a dualistic relation to each other.[35] NGOs provide one means of disrupting

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[31] Matthew Koschmann, "Developing a Communicative Theory of the Nonprofit," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 140-141.
[32] Beth Eschenfelder, "Exploring the Nature of Nonprofit Work Through Emotional Labor," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 173-178.
[33] For an instance of this thought, see Cicilia M. Krohling Peruzzo, "Organizational Communication in the Third Sector: An Alternative Perspective," *Management Communication Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (2009): 663-670.
[34] Dennis K. Mumby and Cynthia Stohl, "Disciplining Organizational Communication Studies," *Management Communication Quarterly* 10, no. 1 (1996): 65-67.
[35] Rachel A. Stohr, "Transnational Feminism, Global Governance, and the Reimagination of the Organization-Society Relationship: A Case Study of the Women's Environment and Development Organization," *Communication Theory* 25, no. 2 (2015): 208-209.

this dualistic relation, as they tend to overlap and even be indistinguishable from the communities they serve, or to do so more obviously than corporations.[36] Similarly, the relationship between work and life—normally placed in tension by organizational scholars as a pairing that must be balanced[37]—does not seem as separable in NGO work as in the corporate world.[38] However, this does not necessarily mean that the unique relationship between organizations and society displayed by NGOs is necessarily good or healthy.

Although NGOs have much to offer to communicative theories of organizing,[39] the organizations are not apolitical, nor necessarily positive. As Sarah Dempsey claims, the close association of NGOs with public assistance, social welfare, and aid can lead to "minimiz[ing] critical issues of power and control" in research regarding NGOs.[40] For instance, consider the overlap of work and life spheres mentioned above. Dempsey and Matthew Sanders claim that rather than having positive implications, this overlap affirms a logic that work can only be meaningful if it is based in exhaustion and self-sacrifice, an unhealthy way for anyone to live.[41] Additionally, Sanders shows that even though NGOs

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[36] Stohr, "Transnational Feminism," provides an example of how NGOs can be used to disrupt binary positionings of "organization" and "society."
[37] The phrase "work/life balance" is used quite heavily in a certain vein of organizational work.
[38] Sarah E. Dempsey and Matthew L. Sanders, "Meaningful Work? Nonprofit Marketization and Work/Life Imbalance in Popular Autobiographies of Social Entrepreneurship," *Organization* 17, no. 4 (2010): 437-459.
[39] Koschmann, "Developing a Communicative Theory," 139-146.
[40] Sarah E. Dempsey, "Nonprofits as Political Actors," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 147-151.
[41] Dempsey and Sanders, "Meaningful Work?."

disrupt market-based understandings of economics, they also do not escape such logics in their own operations.[42]

The power relations of these organizations become even clearer in the case of international NGOs, where the people being served are another category removed from the people doing the serving—thus challenging the easy mapping of 'organization' onto 'society' described above. When the people of one nation work on behalf of the people of another, relationships of representation and accountability are particularly problematic. The politics of representation have been elucidated in many fields,[43] and international NGOs are no exception to them. When any community is tasked—or has tasked itself[44]—with the responsibility of representing or speaking for an-other, questions arise about how to do that in the most just way. However, NGOs do not always engage with these questions or base their representations on the desires of the community being represented, and may actually work to further silence the communities' voices.[45] That is, representation runs into a problem with accountability. Whereas it may on the surface seem that NGOs are accountable to the people they serve, it often does not function this way in practice. Rather, accountability to non-Western communities is often placed in

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[42] Matthew L. Sanders, "Theorizing Nonprofit Organizations as Contradictory Enterprises: Understanding the Inherent Tensions of Nonprofit Marketization," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 179-185.

[43] For two particularly important pieces, see: Linda Alcoff, "The Problem of Speaking for Others," *Cultural Critique* 20 (1991-1992): 5-32; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

[44] Dempsey, "Nonprofits," 148: In "problematic cases, nonprofits function as self-elected representatives."

[45] Sarah E. Dempsey, "NGOs, Communicative Labor, and the Work of Grassroots Representation," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 6, no. 4 (2009): 328-345.

opposition to accountability to donors,[46] and the donors tend to win out.[47] The assumption of most NGOs is that the survival of the organization is paramount: The organization needs to exist in order to help. However, this overlooks the fact that an NGO also has the potential to do harm, and that an organization based on listening to the desire of Westerners and enacting those desires in a non-Western community, no matter how well-intentioned, may be doing exactly that.

In these ways, and others, the politics of NGOs tend to prioritize Western ideas, feelings, and actions over those of non-Westerners. Alexandra Murphy and Maria Dixon provide a poignant example in their description of a NGO serving Ugandans.[48] Created and run by a young, U.S. American woman, when it is suggested the NGO should move toward Ugandan leadership, the woman laughs, stating, "Everyone knows you can't trust them with the money or the organization."[49] These kinds of easy assertions of what "everyone knows" form the basis of more than a few international NGOs,[50] and reinforce neocolonial power relations between these organizations and the people they serve. Although there is space within international NGOs for contesting neocolonial relations,[51] these micro-contestations still operate within macro-level forces of capitalism,

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[46] Sarah E. Dempsey, "Negotiating Accountability within International Contexts: The Role of Bounded Voice," *Communication Monographs* 74, no. 3 (2007): 311-332.
[47] Shiv Ganesh, "Organizational Narcissism: Technology, Legitimacy, and Identity in an Indian NGO," *Management Communication Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (2003): 558-594. This statement simplifies an aspect of Ganesh's complex argument, wherein it is the organization's own narcissism that leads to its focus on donors over the communities being served.
[48] Alexandra G. Murphy and Maria A. Dixon, "Discourse Identity, and Power in International Nonprofit Collaborations," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no.1 (2012): 166-172.
[49] Murphy and Dixon, "Discourse, Identity, and Power," 168.
[50] Murphy and Dixon, "Discourse, Identity, and Power," 169. This "'charity model' vision of the relationship of [the NGO] to the people it seeks to serve is not uncommon in international nonprofits."
[51] Stephanie Norander and Lynn M. Harter, "Reflexivity in Practice: Challenges and Potentials of Transnational Organizing," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 74-105.

imperialism, racism, and sexism. A rigorous analysis of NGOs and their political dynamics would need to be sensitive both to the interpersonal, intercultural relations between subjects/objects, and to the larger political forces affecting and being affected by these relations. I argue that such an approach can be managed by moving ethical theories of relational subject-production in rhetoric into the political arena.

RHETORIC AS REPRESENTING AND CONSTITUTING

Typically, the study of rhetoric has been concerned with representation or signification. In this framing, symbols—most often words—can be used to represent a subject, object, idea, or course of action that has some sort of materiality in the world. The function of rhetoric in this vein is to represent things in the best way possible, whether that is the most ethical way,[52] the most politically effective way,[53] or the most descriptively accurate way.[54] Much international aid rhetoric functions in this manner by advocating for donations, for time spent volunteering, or for purchasing the "right" kind of coffee.[55] Similarly, critics of international aid often also approach it from an

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[52] For example, see: Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 2 (1970): 109-119; Richard M. Weaver, *The Ethics of Rhetoric*, (Davis: Hemagoras Press, 1985).

[53] For example, see: James Arnt Aune, *Rhetoric and Marxism* (Boulder: Westview, 1994); Dana L. Cloud, "Hegemony or Concordance? The Rhetoric of Tokenism in 'Oprah' Winfrey's Rags-to-Riches Biography," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 13, no. 2 (1996): 115-137; Phillip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35, no. 4 (1984): 197-216.

[54] For example, see: Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (1968): 1-14; Donald C. Bryant, "Rhetoric: Its Functions and its Scope," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 39, no. 4 (1953): 401-424.

[55] Buy-one-give-one models like Product (RED) often partner with high-profile organizations such as Starbucks.

instrumental perspective, arguing whether or not the representations used in aid campaigns support or challenge (neo)colonialism and capitalism, for example.[56]

Yet, international aid is more than pleas for donations, time, and awareness. Much of what constitutes international aid is the relations between people on the ground, and the way these are negotiated moment-to-moment. The representational function of rhetoric still operates here; however, it also becomes important to understand how subjects are constituted in these interactions, and how this constitution relates to instrumental action. To understand international aid relations, rhetorical scholars must consider how subjectivity and consciousness are functions of affective ties and relationships, and have important effects on the kinds of futures being created.[57] Here, rhetoric can be seen as that which constitutes subjects and their desires, as well as both an effect of—and what leads them to—"intimacy, trust, and collaboration" with others.[58] As Carrillo Rowe reminds us, these three types of relations to others are just as political as challenges to (neo)colonialism, and must be considered along with larger, global forces in order to work towards making international aid relationships more just. My research in this dissertation uses a theoretical approach inflected by both representative and constitutive functions of rhetoric, brought together through a focus on postcolonial and infrapolitical dynamics. In the remainder of this section, I first describe what a representative and constitutive understanding of rhetoric each entail for international aid,

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[56] Katherine Bell, "'A Delicious Way to Help Save Lives': Race, Commodification, and Celebrity in Product (RED)," *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 4, no. 3 (2011): 163-180; Hanchey, "Agency Beyond Agents;" Richey and Ponte, *Brand Aid*.
[57] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 9 and 5.
[58] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 1.

respectively. I then highlight three ways that this approach is particularly useful in studying global and local connections of international aid.

A representative understanding of rhetoric takes into account both instrumental symbolic actions that can shift public thought toward more just treatment of, and resource distribution for, an oppressed group of people, and critical interrogation of the representative functions of texts and other symbolic forms. When thinking of international aid as a force that should be challenged, the instrumental ability of rhetoric to resist and represent issues in an alternative manner holds enormous analytic value. In U.S.-based social movement work, subjects band together under a common goal, with a common enemy in mind—whether that be as concrete as a discriminatory policy in a workplace, or as nebulous as the symbolic economy of whiteness—in order to use rhetoric as a tool to change certain understandings, relations, and distributions.[59] Similarly, feminist, Marxist, and anti-racist cultural critics work under the same understanding of rhetoric as a tool to create certain understandings of populations; however, they come at it from the opposite direction. Instead of constructing messages meant to change relations, they analyze how messages have been used to represent groups of people in popular culture, and what the implications are of such representations

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[59] For examples, see: Karma R. Chávez, "Counter-public Enclaves and Understanding the Function of Rhetoric in Social Movement Coalition-Building," *Communication Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2011): 1-18; Stephen John Hartnett, Jennifer K. Wood, and Bryan J. McCann, "Turning Silence into Speech and Action: Prison Activism and the Pedagogy of Empowered Citizenship," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 8, no. 4 (2011): 331-352; Bryan J. McCann, "Therapeutic and Material <Victim>hood: Ideology and the Struggle for Meaning in the Illinois Death Penalty Controversy," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 4, no. 4 (2007): 382-401; Phaedra Pezzullo, "Resisting 'National Breast Cancer Awareness Month': The Rhetoric of Counterpublics and their Cultural Performances," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 89, no. 4 (2003): 345-365; Stacey K. Sowards and Valeria R. Renegar, "Reconceptualizing Rhetorical Activism in Contemporary Feminist Contexts," *The Howard Journal of Communication* 17, no. 1 (2006): 57-74.

on lived experience.[60] In these areas of scholarship, the symbolic functions of rhetoric are most important for helping rhetoricians move toward a more just society.

The study of international aid rhetoric should incorporate both these representational trajectories. For example, any study of the viral aid video *KONY 2012*, released by the organization Invisible Children and viewed by over one million people, would be incomplete without describing the vehement backlash from African critics who found the video to be blatantly (neo)colonial and completely detached from the Ugandan life it purportedly aimed to assist.[61] The force of this criticism was profound, sending one leader of Invisible Children into a public mental breakdown.[62] Arguably, it has even led to broader Western understanding of African subjects, and the way aid can be paternalistic.[63] Yet the need to critique aid rhetoric's representations remains. For

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[60] For examples, see: Bell, "'A Delicious Way';" Dana L. Cloud, "'To Veil the Threat of Terror': Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terror," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 285-306; Kate Lockwood Harris and Jenna N. Hanchey, "(De)stabilizing Sexual Violence Discourse: Masculinization of Victimhood, Organizational Blame, and Labile Imperialism," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 11, no. 4 (2014): 322-341; Casey Ryan Kelly, "Neocolonialism and the Global Prison in National Geographic's *Locked Up Abroad*," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 29, no. 4 (2012): 331-347; Edward Schiappa, *Beyond Representational Correctness: Rethinking Criticism of Popular Culture*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008).

[61] The video was extremely popular when first released, but criticism quickly grew. The video can be found here: Invisible Children, "KONY 2012," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4MnpzG5Sqc. Criticism can be found here: Ruth Kagomire, "My Response to KONY 2012," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLVY5jBnD-E&feature=share; Al Jazeera English, "Kony Screening Provokes Anger in Uganda," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rU_1jnrj5VI.

[62] Elizabeth Flock, "Invisible Children Co-Founder Jason Russell Hospitalized After Public Breakdown," *The Washington Post*, accessed January 8, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/invisible-children-co-founder-jason-russell-reportedly-arrested/2012/03/16/gIQAuBl5GS_blog.html.

[63] See for instance the fun breakdown of Hollywood stereotypes chronicled by Mama Hope, a small NGO working in Kenya: Mama Hope, "African Men. Hollywood Stereotypes [mamahope.org]," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=qSElmEmEjb4; as well as the hilarious satires created by the Norwegian Students' and Academics' International Assistance

example, at the NGO I researched, there is conflict over the way the NGO is publically named. Although the managers of the NGO prefer to call the grounds and operating center of the NGO a "children's village," because of the holistic care given to the children, and the way the center functions as partnering with family assistance rather than removing children from their community for adoption or foster care, both the U.S. and Canadian donation arms refer to the project as serving "orphans." Sarah told me that the word "orphan" is reminiscent of the "Please, sir, may I have some more?" Dickensian suffering of poorly treated and starved children, packed into a tiny space, with no love or family. She would rather the NGO was referred to as a children's village in order to highlight the way children stay in homes, with a "house mother" or "house father," continue to have support from extended family in the village, and may not even *be* orphans, but rather struggling with a medical condition where they need more hands-on care than their parents can provide. Nevertheless, "orphans" is more popular with the donor base precisely *because* the term connotes those things the manager described. The struggle here is over whether the representation of the children's village as an orphanage is harmful to an understanding of the Tanzanian subjects served, and the village context of which it is a part. The manager believes it is. The donation arms believe wooing donors and funds is more important.

Fund: SAIH Norway, "Africa For Norway – New Charity Single Out Now!," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJLqyuxm96k; SAIH Norway, "Let's Save Africa! – Gone Wrong," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbqA6o8_WC0; SAIH Norway, "Who Wants to be a Volunteer?," *Youtube*, accessed January 8, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymcflrj_rRc.

However, a constitutive understanding of rhetoric is also necessary to addressing international aid. In many ways, the context of international aid presents a challenge to understanding rhetoric *only* as a tool to shift symbolic and material economies. For one, there is no clear goal around which people can organize and for which they can advocate—or that they desire.[64] In the particular NGO that I studied, Tanzanians were very clear that they did not have a problem with the organization, its work, or international aid as a construct. Instead, they enjoyed the relational and material opportunities that the NGO provided. Additionally, there is no individual, organization, or establishment to which protest could be addressed.[65] To whom would the Tanzanian recipients of aid advocate for change? The individual donors providing large sums of money to the organization? Mr. Giles, the chairman of the NGO board? Some representative of global capitalism and its flows? There is no single individual or system that could be usefully addressed. Finally, even critiques of representational rhetoric falter, as multiple, hybridized publics are involved in aid representations, rather than one

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[64] In the context of aid, people may resist without having a goal, and even without recognizing their own actions or impulses *as* resistance. For example, in the novel *Wizard of the Crow*, Kenyan writer and literary critic Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o uses a display of queuing as a metaphor for how this might take place. Fueled by rumors that "the financial missionaries from the Global Bank were doling out cash," people in the fictional African country of Aburĩria start forming lines everywhere they go. "People did not even bother to ask what the queue was about; they simply assumed that there was good reason for it and wanted their share of whatever was being dispersed," writes Ngũgĩ. Ironically, the queues are what cause representatives from the Global Bank to deny the 'loan' they were about to provide, claiming that "the queues challenge the social order" and until they are successfully taken under control by the Ruler, money will not be forthcoming. In this way, Ngũgĩ's novel masterfully paints a portrait of how resistance to aid need not be intentional or goal-oriented to be successful, and may even act against intuitive understandings. Example drawn from: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *Wizard of the Crow* (New York: Anchor Books, 2006), 159.

[65] Aid is comprised of relatively abstract relations that control the distribution of material goods through disperse means, originating from a multiplicity of groups, nations, and bodies. Although one could locate resistance to a *specific* aid mechanism, such as the International Monetary Fund, that still leaves the larger system of aid unquestioned. Like a hydra, cutting off one head leaves others intact.

national public.[66] Focusing *only* on rhetoric's instrumental functions in this context would not allow for the most meaningful interpretations or shifts toward change. In order to understand the complicated relationships involved in international aid, we need a conceptualization of rhetoric that incorporates not only symbolic action, but also relations that constitute subjects. Studying international aid relationships and political dynamics requires a multi-faceted approach to rhetorical action.

The concept of rhetoricity,[67] or a persuadability that forms and re-forms the subject, identifies a useful dimension of rhetoric that can help to make sense of international aid relations constitutively. Rhetoricity constitutes an attempt to think rhetoric *prior to* representation, a sort of rhetoric that might be there before things, one that might institute them in the first place. Drawing from the work of Jacques Derrida and Emmanuel Levinas, Diane Davis turns the typical Burkean understanding of rhetoric as the means of bringing disparate and whole subjects together, toward an understanding of rhetoric as that which constitutes subjects—a fundamental relationality or rhetoricity without which there could be no subjectivity.[68] In this sense, rather than starting off closed and alone, the subject is radically open: There is "an affectability or persuadability

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[66] Most social movement work is in terms of national action. Although analyses of social movements sometimes expand beyond national publics, they then simply expand to a global, rather than *inter*national arena. However, protesting on behalf of a global body is different than the transnational work required to resist international aid. In the case of something like the protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999, a single organization can be located as the establishment, and that organization is making decisions that affect *a global public*. Aid, however, operates differently. Rather than instituting a global public, aid is comprised of interweaving cultural and national publics. No singular public of 'aid' can be located; relations are constructed in and among publics.

[67] Diane Davis, *Inessential Solidarity: Rhetoric and Foreigner Relations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

[68] Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*.

that is at work prior to and in excess of any shared meaning."[69] An openness to relation—and thus to alterity, to that which is radically different—is what brings the subject into being. However, this process does not happen only once, at a singular originary moment of the subject's formation, but rather continually, as the subject is constantly affected by contexts and relationships around her. Thinking of rhetoric not only as what subjects do, but what does them—that is, what brings subjects into being—helps focus on the constitutive dimensions of rhetoric in international aid.

Combining these representative and constitutive functions of rhetoric is beneficial to a study of the global and local intersections of international aid in three important ways. First, the combination allows us to better understand the contradictions between local actions and global political progress in international aid contexts. In his work on "infrapolitics," James Scott addresses why the actions of certain subjugated populations may seem to impede their own political progress.[70] Scott argues that acting and speaking in contradictions is a necessary tactical choice in which resistant subordinates must engage because of the threat of repercussions from those more powerful.[71] However, infrapolitics stops at the level of conscious action and instrumental effect. A constitutive view of rhetoric picks up where infrapolitics leaves off, allowing rhetorical scholars to trace how unconscious connections, desires, and forces also mediate local actions. Not to say that in this study I will be attempting to locate or pinpoint what such unconscious desires *are*, but that I wish to examine how actions, ideas, and subjectivities could be

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[69] Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 26.
[70] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
[71] Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 19.

conditioned by cultural forces, relational alliances, and rhetorical constitutions without the full knowledge of a subject.

For example, in tracing the relationship of African subjects to the postcolonial *commandement*,[72] Achille Mbembe explains that the "postcolonial relationship is not primarily a relationship of resistance or collaboration but can best be characterized as convivial, a relationship fraught by the fact of the *commandement* and its 'subjects' having to share the same living space."[73] In Mbembe's conceptualization of what we might term the constitutive level of infrapolitics, subordinated subjects are not necessarily knowingly resistant, but constantly and unwittingly adjusting to—and being adjusted by—the conditions and power relations in which they find themselves. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak similarly strikes a middle ground, finding space between how scholars typically tend to view postcolonial subjects in terms of either radical cultural specificity or globalized economic systems. Instead of leaning toward one, which often assumes conscious and self-determining subjects, or the other, which often assumes unconscious and over-determined subjects, Spivak considers the postcolonial relationship between local culture and global structure as "complicitous," seeing subjects as "[f]olded together," meaning that "we live on/off whatever lies on the other side, in the minute particulars of our living as in the broadest structures of policy."[74] One means of analyzing complicitous dynamics is through the American Indian concept of survivance, or

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[72] By *commandement*, Mbembe means colonial and neocolonial state sovereignty.
[73] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 104.
[74] Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 361-362.

"survival + resistance."[75] Survivance highlights how indigenous subjects can be both complicit with power and resistant simultaneously—and that neither aspect negates the other. Rhetoricity allows us to take this view of subjects and emphasize how it is *rhetorical*; the very being of subjects is continually influenced and affected by the relations of which they are a part.

This dual understanding of rhetoric, then, could shed new light on why the Tanzanians with whom I spoke warmly welcomed Western visitors and their assistance. Rather than consider this reception simply contradictory to the possibility of Tanzanian political emancipation from the (neo)colonial mechanisms of international aid, we can inquire into subjects' constitutive relations with the NGO, the surrounding community, and international dynamics. In this vein, we might ask what relations these Tanzanian subjects have been folded into, and how these "sites of [their] belonging constitute how [they] see the world, what [they] value, who [they] are (becoming)."[76]

Second, bringing the representative function of rhetoric together with the constitutive can help us to understand the way objects, environments, and other non-human actors may also figure as agentic forces in rhetorical relations. In theories of rhetoricity, the ability to affect or persuade does not require an agent to implement, because that ability exists prior to each iteration of a subject. A field of inquiry opens from this realization, as we can then ask what other things (for lack of a better word) may participate in persuadability when it is not only the domain of the human subject.

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[75] Malea Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians *Use* Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 53, no. 3 (2002): 400.
[76] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 25.

Drawing together contemporary work in this vein, a 2014 special issue of *Philosophy and Rhetoric* examined how "the animal, the object, the dead, and the divine" play a significant role in the way rhetoric functions.[77] The relations upon which rhetoric is built are not only between human and human, but also human and object, object and context, human and context, etc. The list could go on.

In the context of international aid, considering rhetoric as extra-human repositions the role of the NGO. For instance, in the dissertation, I take the organization as itself a subject being constantly (re)constituted through shifting relations with community life. The NGO's existence is predicated on a British ex-colonist's desire to buy land in order to build a resort lodge in the village area. Community members stipulated that in order to buy their land he would have to help them gain access to health and human services. Thus, the NGO was born out of a fundamental susceptibility to community relations. This affectability continues to reshape what the organization does and how. The NGO began as an orphanage, caring for children whose families could not. Then, the number of villagers dying of AIDS led the organization to shift its operations: It brought in district officials, opened a clinic, and now 4,000 people receive antiretroviral treatment each month. As HIV+ parents were able to continue living, the NGO shifted to accommodate the increased need for non-HIV related medical care, and moved to a model of caring for children only until their family could take them back, rather than a model based on adoption. The NGO, which began with but a single arm, now has ten departments with

[77] Diane Davis and Michelle Ballif, eds. "Extrahuman Rhetorical Relations: Addressing the Animal, the Object, the Dead, and the Divine," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 4 (2014): 346-566.

vastly different areas of service, all of which developed out of similar relational shifts. The NGO is, then, both a construction brought into being through relations with the community, and also an instrumental actor that changes and affects community life. By combining a focus on the constitutive with the representative aspects of rhetoric, we can begin to see the identity, work, and existence of the NGO in a more complicated light.

Third, combining the representative and constitutive functions of rhetoric can help us to understand the way ethical decisions are related to global power dynamics. For many rhetoricians, ethics takes precedence in theories of rhetoric as subject-constitutions. Joshua Gunn, for one, draws from psychoanalytic thought on objects to claim that it is precisely an "attunement" to objects that constitutes an ethical rhetoric.[78] For Davis, working from a Levinasian frame, encountering the other is "the opening of ethics,"[79] which includes "a *rhetorical imperative* (a responsibility to respond)."[80] The ethical relation spoken of here is the relation to alterity. Michelle Ballif agrees, focusing on the relation to the dead other as the fundamental relation with alterity, and argues that the haunted and uncertain condition of relating to the dead "is what renders rhetoric an *ethical*…enterprise."[81]

Similarly, ethics often takes precedence in popular conceptualizations of international aid. Most aid rhetoric is framed around the ethical choices of the Western donor. (RED), the consumer aid project created by "aid celebrities," Bono, Jeffery Sachs,

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[78] Joshua Gunn, "Canned Laughter," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 4 (2014): 449-450.
[79] Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 37.
[80] Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 59.
[81] Michelle Ballif, "Regarding the Dead," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 4 (2014): 13.

and Paul Farmer,[82] asks Westerners to "shop (RED), save lives" on their website.[83] World Vision, a popular Christian child sponsorship campaign, asks donors to "[s]ponsor a child and change a child's world for good."[84] Even Mama Hope, a progressive aid campaign aimed at ending stereotypes of African peoples, asks its supporters to "[s]top the pity."[85] Each of these campaigns frames the impetus for aid primarily in terms of ethical choices made by the Western donor.

Yet, the ethical implications of international aid choices and rhetorics cannot be understood outside of a political frame. Although most popular discourse about aid functions at the level of individual Western decisions, the purpose of aid *should* be systemic change, such that impoverished countries have access to basic resources, finances, and healthcare. International aid needs to be analyzed from a perspective that can address both the ethical angle of decision-making, and the political angle of social change. Constitutive theories of rhetoric therefore offer an ideal theoretical starting point from which to analyze the relation between ethical decisions of subjects, and by connecting them to theories of representation and change, the larger political context can be brought to bear. To return to an earlier example, drawing from subject-constitution could help us make sense of the hostile Westerner-on-Westerner relations taking place in the NGO. Each volunteer at the NGO believes their ethical decisions in relation to Tanzanians to be: first, under her conscious control, and second, more ethical than other

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[82] Richey and Ponte, *Brand Aid*, 4.
[83] (RED), "(RED)," *(RED)*. Accessed December 7, 2015, http://red.org.
[84] World Vision, Inc., "Sponsor a child," *World Vision*, accessed December 7, 2015, http://www.worldvision.org/p/sponsor-a-child.
[85] Mama Hope, "Stop the pity," *Mama Hope*. Accessed December 7, 2015, http://www.mamahope.org/unlock-potential/.

Westerners' own. Through the lens of rhetoricity, we can analyze how such ethics are constituted and understood, and continue through a representative perspective to demonstrate how the decisions that follow have political effects and implications, as I take up in Chapter 6.

In order to analyze international aid in a way that is sensitive both to local and global dynamics, we need a conceptualization of rhetoric that takes into account both representational functions or actions, and constitutive relations. By interweaving political efficacy with contradiction, human actors with non-human subjects, and ethics with politics, this double-sided understanding of rhetoric allows for a multi-faceted approach to international aid relations. This dissertation works from the premise that a complex and non-traditional approach to international aid may allow for a theoretical rethinking of aid itself.

Chapter 3: Finding the "Rhetoric" in Rhetorical Field Methods

Recently, work in rhetoric has moved from traditional text-based criticism toward experience in the field. Scholars are often vocal in claiming these approaches to be new and innovative in rhetorical studies as a way to demonstrate their importance. For example, Aaron Hess, drawing from Jerry Hauser, argues that "new spaces of inquiry require new methods," to provide a basis for detailing critical-rhetorical ethnography as a method that is new and different.[1] Similarly, Michael Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres argue that rhetorical field methods, in attending to the intersections of critical rhetoric, ethnography, and performance studies, offers "new possibilities for accessing (un)common…discourses."[2] Finally, Sara McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma Chavez, and Robert Glenn Howard use the subtitle "innovations in rhetorical method," for their book *Text + Field*.[3]

However, little is done to show how they are new and innovative *in general*.[4] That is, rhetorical field scholars do not often address how this work is at all different from qualitative approaches to communication studies, or why rhetorical scholars should import field methods if such methods are simply equivalent to what qualitative scholars do. In this chapter, I look for what, if anything, is uniquely *rhetorical* about rhetorical

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[1] Aaron Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric," *Communication Studies* 62, no. 2 (2011): 131.
[2] Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 389.
[3] Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chavez, and Robert Glenn Howard, *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016).
[4] Michael Middleton, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres and Samantha Senda-Cook, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric in situ* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), xv.

field methods. To do so, I first trace how field and experiences became a central part of rhetorical work, arising from the critical turn.[5] Rather than seeing the move to the field as shifting rhetoric's object of analysis, I argue that rhetorical fieldwork should be seen as contiguous with current theoretical understandings of rhetoric and approaches to its critique. I then compare rhetorical field methods to qualitative methods in social-scientific studies of communication in order to demonstrate what puts the "rhetoric" in rhetorical field methods. I argue that rhetorical field methods are structured by different concerns than qualitative social science methods due to rhetoric's historical basis in publicity, critical stance, and activist moves toward social change. Finally, I conclude by defending the importance of conceptualizing rhetorical field methods *as rhetoric*, rather than a "qualitative mode of research,"[6] and describe the implications of my argument for research at the Children's Village.

DEVELOPING FIELD METHODS *IN* RHETORIC

In 1989, two pieces were published that changed the face of rhetorical criticism. In one, Raymie McKerrow reoriented the practice of critique in rhetoric away from universalist approaches and toward a "critical rhetoric [that] seeks to unmask or demystify the discourse of power" in the shifting social circumstances found in the world.[7] In this more contextualized approach to rhetorical criticism, McKerrow claims

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[5] The critical turn is often mapped to Raymie McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis," *Communication Monographs* 56, no. 2 (1989): 91-111, though Barbara A. Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation from Within the Thematic of *Différance*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 22, no. 2 (1989): 110-130 is also an important marker when considering theoretical innovations that opened rhetoric to the field.

[6] McKinnon, et al., *Text + Field*, 4.

[7] McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric," 91.

rhetoric should be viewed as contingent, and "critique as a performance."[8] A critical rhetoric, then, is concerned primarily with power, and "must have consequences," that is, it must be attuned to future action that could shift power relations toward justice—however momentary and unstable our understanding of it.[9] In the second piece, Barbara Biesecker draws from deconstruction to analyze the role of "text" and "audience" in the theory of the rhetorical situation.[10] Considering the speaker and text as conditioned by *différance*, both are thus subject to an originary split in essence—which allows for "the rhetoricity of the text."[11] Simply put, without *différance*, rhetoric could not function, since there would be no foothold from which to affect the subject.[12] However, this also means that neither the speaker nor the situation can have the typical "presumed authority over the production of discourse."[13] This line of thought also requires rethinking the audience. Rather than whole subjects who are influenced by discourse, Biesecker considers the identity of the audience to be "the effect of *différance* and not of essence."[14] Thus, "the rhetorical situation [is] an event that makes possible the production of identities and social relations."[15]

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[8] McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric," 92.
[9] McKerrow, "Critical Rhetoric," 92.
[10] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation."
[11] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 121.
[12] That is, as Biesecker draws from Derrida's work, the act of writing-in-general is dependent upon a difference-within-the-same. The repetition of letters, of words, of phrases, of marks requires something that can be recognized as same within a different context and serving a different function. Thus, *différance*, or the difference that makes a difference, is necessary in order to have symbolicity.
[13] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 122.
[14] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 125.
[15] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 126.

Although it was not obvious at the time, the shifts in rhetorical thought begun by these two essays opened the way for rhetoric to engage fieldwork and lived experience, and, I will argue later, set the trajectory by which rhetorical fieldwork will come to be differentiated from qualitative methods. McKerrow's insistence that critique be considered a situated performance was picked up and furthered by Michael Calvin McGee the next year, who argued that texts are not stable, but assembled by rhetorical critics out of cultural fragments.[16] The import of this line of thought is the destabilization of what was previously a taken-for-granted object of rhetorical study: the text.[17] If there is no complete text, but rather a contextualized, assembled conflagration of rhetorical pieces, what is to differentiate one type of assembly from another, or in this case, textual representations of speech from lived interactions of it? Here, the implications of Biesecker's argument become important. If audiences, speakers, and the relations between all are articulated by the rhetorical event, rhetoricians must work in a "radically historical" way.[18] Rather than gloss over differences in subjectivities produced or manners of relation by focusing on a final product of a text, we are called to pay attention to process.[19]

By reconsidering the nature of text, speaker, and audience in this manner, rhetoricians were called to look at the process of relation and interaction between the three, and the path was left open as to how, exactly, to do so. It might not immediately be

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[16] Michael Calvin McGee, "Text, Context, and the Fragmentation of Contemporary Culture," *Western Journal of Speech Communication* 54, no. 3 (1990): 274-289.
[17] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 3.
[18] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 126.
[19] Biesecker, "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation," 127.

obvious how such work cracked the door to future rhetorical work in the field, since, as Dana Cloud argues, this form of critique seems to draw further from physical and material circumstances, rather than closer to them.[20] Yet, this perspective on text, speaker, and audience allowed for a means of understanding rhetoric as a situated process, and disconnected the rhetorical from requiring a coherent textual object to analyze—a move which is necessary in order to start viewing fieldwork as rhetorical. However, it was the rethinking of another aspect of rhetoric that ultimately connected rhetoric to the field.

Rhetoric is fundamentally a public affair. Inheriting a focus on the *polis* from its Aristotelian roots, and focusing primarily in the last century on speeches and other public spectacles, the object of rhetorical study has always been of public concern. This led Gerard Hauser to question whether rhetoric's public function is really as incorporative as rhetorical scholarship seems to assume.[21] Drawing from critiques of Habermas, Hauser argues that contemporary ways of understanding public opinion, such as polls or other readily available material, do not reflect growing segments of national citizens. Rather, multiple sub- and counter-publics, often in some way disadvantaged or marginalized, are not included in "public" opinion. In order to access all publics that make up "the public," according to Hauser, rhetoricians must attend to vernacular groups and their discourse in what might not usually be considered public spaces, but function as such for that group.

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[20] In Dana L. Cloud, "The Materiality of Discourse as Oxymoron: A Challenge to Critical Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 58, no. 3 (1994): 141-163.

[21] Gerard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999). However, it should be noted that scholars of public sphere theory had critiqued the public/private divide previously. See for instance: Craig Calhoun, ed. *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992).

Disturbing the notion of "public" moves rhetoric toward fieldwork in two ways. First, it opens the notion of what constitutes rhetorical discourse from accessible material to things that constitute people's understanding of publicity and sociality: that is, any symbolic interaction.[22] Second, arguing for the necessity of hearing such vernacular voices also implies the necessity of finding them. Since the very definition of vernacular rhetoric is that it is not as publically available as the rhetoric of the bourgeois public sphere, it must be sought in what would otherwise be deemed non-public places. For some voices, not available on the internet, in libraries, or in writing whatsoever, seeking their rhetoric necessitates interacting with them.

The door was now open to rhetorical fieldwork. Yet, not everyone interested in rhetoric and fieldwork approached the task in the same manner. In general, three distinct but overlapping trends can be identified in the reasons rhetoricians took to the field: public memory, vernacular publics, and activist scholarship.

Public memory scholars primarily took up the broadened understanding of text. For public memory scholars, the field opened the possibility of examining monuments and public spaces as texts that could be read and critiqued in much the same way as written or spoken rhetorical discourse.[23] This scholarship examines how space and place

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[22] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, 11.

[23] See for instance: V. William Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Neil Michel, "The Presence of the Present: Hijacking 'The Good War'?," *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 2 (2010): 170-207; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performances of the Civil Rights Memorial," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (2000): 31-55; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott and Eric Aoki, "Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2006): 27-47; Casey R. Schmitt, "Contours of the Land: Place-as-Rhetoric and Native American Effigy Mounds," *Western Journal of Communication* 79, no. 3 (2015): 307-326.

figures into the way that subjects are constituted through interaction with monuments as rhetorical texts. Vernacular publics scholars primarily took up the broadened understanding of public. For these scholars, following in the vein of Hauser, investigating in the field is meant to bring understandings of oft-neglected citizen-groups to light.[24] This tradition focuses on the democratizing work of making more differential voices heard in public life.

Activist scholarship requires both the broadened understanding of text and of public, as well as the move toward focusing rhetorical scholarship on process rather than product. In studying social movements and protest, process is central. Social change does not simply happen, but is affected through the continual reconstitution of social circumstances. Traditionally, rhetorical scholars attended to such process through the development of textual objects, the way a movement shifted and changed through its documentation.[25] As context became text, however, rhetorical scholars began to join movements, protests, and activism *as research*, in order to attend to the rhetorical dimensions occurring in the moment.[26]

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[24] See for instance: Cathryn Molloy, "Recuperative Ethos and Agile Epistemologies: Toward a Vernacular Engagement with Mental Illness Ontologies," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (2015): 138-163; Jenny Rice, *Distant Publics: Development Rhetoric and the Subject of Crisis*, (Pittsburgh: The University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); other work following directly in the line of Hauser has taken up vernacular online spaces, such as in: Robert Glenn Howard, "A Theory of Vernacular Rhetoric: The Case of the 'Sinner's Prayer' Online," *Folklore* 116, no. 2 (2005): 172-188; Robert Glenn Howard, "The Vernacular Web of Participatory Media," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25, no. 5 (2008): 490-513.
[25] See for instance: Carl R. Burchardt, "Two Faces of American Communism: Pamphlet Rhetoric of the Third Period and the Popular Front," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66, no. 4 (1980): 375-381; Dana L. Cloud, "The Null Persona: Race and the Rhetoric of Silence in the Uprising of '34," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 2, no. 2 (1999): 177-209; Celeste Condit Railsback, "The Contemporary American Abortion Controversy: Stages in the Argument," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 70, no. 4 (1984): 410-424.
[26] See for instance: Dana L. Cloud, *We Are the Union: Democratic Unionism and Dissent at Boeing* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Danielle Endres, Leah Sprain, and Tarla Rai Peterson,

DEFINING FIELD METHODS *AS* RHETORIC

Michael Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres brought this line of scholarship together under the heading of "rhetorical field methods" in 2011.[27] Prior to this essay, rhetoric in the field was not guided by distinct methodological principles, or pursued in a clearly defined manner.[28] Drawing from McKerrow's critical rhetoric, which they shorten to "CR," Middleton et al. define rhetoric field methods as referring

> …both to the rhetorical intervention into rhetorical spaces and action in which we engage when we describe and interpret insights gained through in situ rhetorical study (like CR this descriptive and interpretive practice aims to contribute to emancipatory practice), and to rhetorical field methods focus on the processural forms of rhetorical action that are accessible only through participatory methods (and that are flattened when those forms of rhetorical action are reduced to exclusively textual representations).[29]

Rhetorical field methods therefore include a few significant features: first, the method itself is recognized as an intervention into the field, rhetorically impacting the data being collected and its interpretation; second, it is explicitly concerned with power and emancipation; third, it is focused on process rather than product. These three features, as I will describe below, are part of what differentiate rhetorical field methods from qualitative methods.

Since this initial titular intervention, rhetorical field methods has been renamed as "critical participatory rhetoric," and as a concern simply with "the field" in rhetorical

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"The Imperative of Praxis-based Environmental Communication Research: Suggestions from the Step It Up 2007 National Research Project," *Environmental Communication* 2, no. 2 (2008): 237-245; Phaedra Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel, and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007).

[27] Middleton, et al., "Articulating," 386-406.

[28] Middleton, et al., "Articulating," 387.

[29] Middleton, et al., "Articulating," 387.

studies.[30] I continue to use the title "rhetorical field methods" here to connect the multiple trends of fieldwork in rhetoric because I think it is the most colloquially-used phrase, and it avoids issues of branding. When one brands a nice turn of phrase to capture what one's rhetorical field scholarship does that is "new," "innovative," and "different" it may capture momentary fame and attention, but I argue that it is also detrimental to rhetoric as a subdiscipline. By focusing attention predominantly on what makes field methods new or exciting, we have lost an attention to what makes field methods *rhetoric*. If we are importing qualitative methods, and doing them no differently than qualitative communication scholars, then what we are doing is not "new" and "exciting," but a poor imitation of what interpersonal and organizational communication have been doing for years. McKinnon et al. avoid this problem by defining rhetorical scholarship *as* an "interpretive social science," or "qualitative mode of research,"[31] thus claiming that rhetorical work in general is part-and-parcel to qualitative communication scholarship. I disagree. By defining rhetoric in terms of social science fields, we move away from structural differences in the subdiscipline that make rhetorical field study of a different quality than social scientific field study. I argue that instead of considering fieldwork as a "new" and "exciting" opportunity for rhetorical methods, we should consider rhetoric as a "new" and "exciting" opportunity for fieldwork.

Therefore, rather than positing rhetorical field methods as a break with traditional rhetorical analysis, I argue that it is more of a continuation. Many rhetorical field

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[30] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*; McKinnon, et al., *Text + Field*, 4.
[31] McKinnon, et al., *Text + Field*, 4.

scholars, on the other hand, have highlighted the difference between textual and field analyses. For instance, Middleton, et al. emphasize how fieldwork is "*actually lived,*"[32] addressing "actually existing" audiences of rhetoric in contrast to textual work.[33] Textual criticism is not seen as involving the participation required by fieldwork; instead of accounting for one's *interaction with* participants, textual criticism only requires an account of one's *solitary position* as a critic.[34] However, rather than separating rhetorical field work as qualitatively different than rhetorical analysis, I think that considering the two as formally similar is imperative to fully implementing the theoretical innovations catalyzed by critical rhetoric in the realm of critique. Here, I show how a theoretical inflection drawing from poststructural scholarship offers an alternative means through which to understand rhetorical field methods—a means that highlights the continuity of the method with past rhetorical thought. In the remainder of this section, I explore three ways in which the split between fieldwork and textual criticism in rhetoric is undermined by current theory.[35]

For one, the split between text and field seems to rest on an assumption of text as stable and codified in a way that speech is not.[36] For instance, Middleton, et al. trace the fragmentation of "the text" in the field, but they still rely on differentiations between "rhetorics that are encountered immanently in the field" and "after-the-fact texts," as well

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[32] Middleton, et al., "Articulating," 392.
[33] Middleton, et al., "Articulating," 393.
[34] Middleton, et al., "Articulating," 392.
[35] For instance, Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography," 127-152; George F. McHendry Jr., Michael K. Middleton, Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Megan O'Byrne, "Rhetorical Critic(ism)'s Body: Affect and Fieldwork on a Plane of Immanence," *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 4 (2014): 293-310.
[36] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 5 and 7.

as "ephemeral rhetorical activity" and "traditional rhetorical texts" in their explanations of fieldwork. I think this stems particularly from the desire to make fieldwork seem new, and hence notable. However, a substantial body of poststructural theory in the field would contest this notion.[37] In *Of Grammatology*, Jacques Derrida critiques Saussure in order to show that text is no more stably present than speech, but that in actuality both depend on the same "general possibility of writing."[38] Writing in this sense can be described as the "movement of *différance*," and thus both text and speech are structured on a difference within the same, on the possibility the same words could always *mean differently*.[39] I take this "retaining the other as other in the same" as a fundamental aspect of all rhetoric,[40] in line with other rhetorical scholars.[41]

The first assumption of a split between text and field leads to a second: that one cannot be in participation with a text in the same way one is with other people. However, destabilizing the notion of text as fully present and stable would also destabilize the idea that one cannot participate actively with a text. For instance, in her work on rhetoric and reflexivity, Mary Garrett argues that considering how one interacts with a text is no less important for rhetoricians than considering how one interacts with participants is for

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[37] I especially like how Joshua Gunn puts it: "This critique of the communication model means that the ends, be they speaker and audience, text and reader, or episode and viewer, are unstable, divided, and messy; so conceived, the gap between the poles is now seen as firing off relations and producing texts and subjects in a sticky swirl." Joshua Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Talking to the Dead," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 1 (2004): 3.
[38] Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 52.
[39] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 60.
[40] Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 62.
[41] See for instance: Diane Davis, *Inessential Solidarity: Rhetoric and Foreigner Relations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

qualitative researchers.[42] For Garrett, the problem with reflexive engagement in rhetorical scholarship is the lack of training in how to do it, more than anything else.[43] Of course, there will be differences in degree to which a text can "speak back" to you in relation to participants, but the formal relationship between researcher and text, and researcher and participant, is quite similar.

This idea of fieldwork as entailing a special kind of participation unavailable with a text, when mixed with an inherent emancipatory aim, allows for a third assumption: that field rhetoricians have an ability to combat power relations that textual analysts do not. McHendry et al., for instance, focus on the aspect of "immanent participation" in fieldwork, or the way that "[i]n situ rhetorical critics are faced with choices that cut to the core of one's political and intellectual commitments" and that offer opportunities to destabilize power relations within the moment.[44] Drawing from an ethnographic understanding of reflexivity, or the ability to understand and reflect on one's imbrication as a scholar within power relations, McHendry et al. see field methods as a profound opportunity to challenge relations of power as they are in the process of being constructed, rather than as sedimented relations found in a text. However, Garrett raises an interesting question that challenges this understanding, and also plagues my own work on reflexivity: "to what extent can self-reflexivity be synchronous?"[45] Even if one could be fully conscious of the power relations one is involved in supporting/disturbing—which

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[42] Mary Garrett, "Tied to a Tree: Culture and Self-Reflexivity," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2013): 254.
[43] Garrett, "Tied to a Tree," 245.
[44] McHendry, et al., "Rhetorical Critic(ism)'s Body," 294.
[45] Garrett, "Tied to a Tree," 247.

my theoretical stance challenges[46]—one would also have to be significantly conscious of them *as they are happening* in order to achieve the sort of distinction from textual analysis that McHendry et al. are proffering here. As reflexivity is often upheld as a panacea for ameliorating power relations in qualitative work,[47] perhaps rhetorical scholars might better attend to understanding its limitations, and how a failure to disturb power relations in the moment could be just as important in the long run as a success. In fact, postcolonial feminist scholars have addressed this concern, arguing that failure is productive.[48] Rhetorical scholars will continue to fail, in both textual and field relationships, to recognize the operations of power. Moving to the field does not automatically offer a greater impact on social change.

Rhetorical field scholars often maintain these assumptions in order to display how fieldwork is innovative in rhetoric. That is, to highlight the importance of their work, they show how fieldwork is bringing different and important things to rhetoric. On the other hand, I argue for a focus on the continuity of these approaches with rhetorical scholarship in order to bring attention to a distinction not often considered from the rhetorical side: how fieldwork in rhetoric is fundamentally different than qualitative approaches to the field. Although many rhetorical field scholars draw heavily from qualitative

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[46] See for instance, Derrida's critique of being able to fully account for the context of an utterance: Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," in *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehiman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 18. I explore this further in Chapter 7.
[47] See for instance: Stephanie Norander and Lynn M. Harter, "Reflexivity in Practice: Challenges and Potentials of Transnational Organizing," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 74-105.
[48] Kamala Vismeswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 99-100.

scholarship,[49] or even describe their approach *as* qualitative,[50] part of the project of making field methods viable for rhetoric must include a defense of why this method is, in fact, rhetorical. For this purpose, I have highlighted the continuity of rhetorical fieldwork with traditional rhetorical work in order to showcase how qualitative scholarship is different.[51] In the following section, I contrast the ways rhetorical fieldwork is structured with the guiding impulses of qualitative communication fieldwork.

CONTRASTING RHETORICAL FIELD METHODS WITH QUALITATIVE SCHOLARSHIP

Thomas Lindlof and Bryan Taylor define qualitative methods in communication as the study of "*the performances and practices of human communication*."[52] They further elaborate that performances "are creative, local, and collaborative interaction events," and practices are "more abstract and standardized," forming "the generic and routine dimension of communicative acts."[53] Rhetorical field methods would seem to fit within this broad definition, attending to one aspect within the many examined by qualitative research. Yet, though qualitative methods can be used toward the same commitments as rhetorical field methods,[54] I argue that the context through which each of these methods developed constitutes each method in a different manner. Rhetorical fieldwork and qualitative social science work may sometimes appear similar in the final

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[49] Middleton, et al., "Articulating."
[50] Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography;" McKinnon et al., *Text + Field*, 4.
[51] I focus here on qualitative approaches to communication, which stem from reactions to positivistic scholarship in social science fields, rather than ethnography, which stems from anthropological work, because the relation of rhetorical field methods to ethnography has been addressed elsewhere: Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, xvi.
[52] Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods Third Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 4.
[53] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 4.
[54] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 27-28.

product, however the process is structured by different concerns, goals, and approaches in each, due to the history of each respective field. Rhetorical field methods are structured in a way that makes them substantively different than qualitative research in social-scientific subfields. As an analogy, consider Nancy Fraser's work in pointing out that a public that could include women and does not is significantly different from a public that is *structured on the basis of* the exclusion of women.[55] In the same manner, qualitative scholarship that could be attuned towards rhetorical aims is significantly different from rhetorical fieldwork that is structured on the basis of rhetorical aims. In this section, I will briefly attend to three ways that rhetorical field methods is structured by different assumptions and principles than qualitative social-science methods: rhetorical field methods arise from critical concerns, rhetorical field methods have activist goals, and rhetorical field methods are focused on public problems.

Critical Lineage

First, rhetorical field methods come from a critical lineage. Qualitative work, on the other hand, often arises out of a response to quantitative scholarship. Lindlof and Taylor describe how, in the wake of concerns regarding the problematic assumptions of positivist quantitative research, qualitative scholarship still had to answer to its ideological remnants. For one, according to Lindlof and Taylor, qualitative methods was regarded as "*soft science* characterized by imprecise instruments, biased observations, selective reporting of data, and ambiguous limited findings" in relation to the perceived

[55] Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1992).

rigor of quantitative work.[56] Even contemporary qualitative work feels a pressure to define itself in relation to quantitative scholarship. For instance, Sarah J. Tracy provides support for qualitative methods by explaining that they can "provide insight into cultural activities that might otherwise be missed in structured surveys or experiments," and that they "can uncover salient issues that can later be studied using more structured methods," by which she means quantitative analysis.[57] Similarly, interpersonal scholar Dawn Braithwaite has written about the challenges of publishing work as an interpretive qualitative researcher in her own subfield. She explains that "the paradigmatic dominance of post-positivism has been difficult to overcome," making publication of qualitative work extremely difficult because it is asked to meet quantitative standards of rigor.[58] Qualitative methods must constantly be defined in relation to quantitative analysis in social-scientific research.

Interpretive and critical social science scholars in communication recognize these challenges, but have a difficult time moving out of the quantitative shadow. At a recent organizational communication conference that is only held every 20 years, in order to focus on broad trends and changes in the subfield, one of the competitively chosen papers argued for an innovation in method in order to move away from "a quantitative specter—a ghost of post-positivism lingering and manipulating qualitative scholars' movements."[59]

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[56] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 10.
[57] Sarah J. Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 5.
[58] Dawn O. Braithwaite, "'Opening the Door': The History and Future of Qualitative Scholarship in Interpersonal Communication," *Communication Studies* 65, no. 4 (2014): 443.
[59] Elizabeth K. Eger and Amy Way, "Imagining Organizational Communication Research Beyond the Quantitative Specter: Introducing a Comparative Constructed Focus Group Method," presented at the

As an attendee and presenter at the conference, I found Elizabeth Eger and Amy Way's argument to be important and interesting, highlighting the methodological barriers poststructural organizational communication scholars run into. However, during the question-and-answer period, many of the quantitative scholars in attendance voiced either that they did not understand the argument about the "quantitative specter," or that it was baseless. Similar to hegemonic structures, many scholars trained in the traditions of the field could not perceive the assumptions structuring their own research, or how such structures could present roadblocks to innovative thought. Their reluctance to accept Eger and Way's argument provides even more evidence to how deeply embedded quantitative assumptions are in social science fields, and how these affect qualitative research—here, by telling Eger and Way that their argument is not reasonable.

Rhetorical fieldwork, on the other hand, has arisen from a tradition of strongly established critical scholarship in the field. Many scholars, including myself, trace the trajectory of fieldwork back to McKerrow's explanation of critical rhetoric. The structuring paradigm in rhetorical field methods, then, is its critical heritage, as opposed to the positivistic roots of social sciences in communication. If we continue to characterize rhetorical field methods as social science, or as an importation of qualitative methods into the field, in order to highlight how it is something "new" for rhetoric, we invite as well the structuring influences that social science scholars work within.

Organizational Communication Traditions, Transitions, and Transformations Conference, February 2016, 2.

Activist Goals

Qualitative scholarship in communicative social science has also been seen as "controversial," either for the way scholars "drew upon 'personal' interests in choosing their research questions and sites," or for the perceived deviance or unimportance of the subcultures they desired to study.[60] The idea that a researcher might influence the decision of what was important to study, or how it should be studied, is problematic in positivist and post-positivist research where objectivity is prized. Qualitative work has had to wrestle with these assumptions in order to do critical work aimed at social change.

Rhetorical fieldwork, on the other hand, came from a tradition of critical scholarship that was already strongly established in the field of rhetoric before the turn to experiential data occurred. Rather than fieldwork being structured on the terms of—or as a response to—certain ideological principles of scholarship (e.g., rigor, precision, and objectivity), rhetorical fieldwork was an outgrowth of ideological principles supporting activism, publicity, and partiality. As such, rhetorical field methods are able to assume social change as an inherent goal of the project, whereas qualitative scholarship has had to fight against a fear of the researcher affecting those being studied. In social-scientific positivistic communication studies, it is important for the validity of results to isolate variables in order to accurately read if a variable had a predicted effect.[61] Qualitative methods, then, developed through critiques of quantitative research's subjective nature, and inability to objectively study "reality" without being biased.[62] In much social science

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[60] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 10.
[61] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 6-7.
[62] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 10.

communication work, qualitative practices were initially constructed with post-positivistic assumptions, which expected the researcher to "preserve the subjective experience of social actors in explaining how their performances are meaningful."[63] That is, in such studies, the researcher needs to keep herself out of the equation as much as possible, and present the experience of others as is, without interference. Such post-positivistic studies are still done, though the door is now open to more critical moves and interventions in research. However, given the historical development of qualitative social science research, critical interventionism must constantly be defended in a manner intelligible to quantitative and post-positivistic scholars.

Rhetorical scholarship, on the other hand, has long embraced the partiality of the critic,[64] and the necessity of critical judgment.[65] In most contemporary rhetorical scholarship, to borrow a phrase from Marx, the point *is* to change it. It is thus no surprise that rhetorical field methods openly acknowledge its social-change aims.[66] More importantly, the critical subtext in rhetorical studies allows for this approach to be unapologetic, commonly accepted, and even sometimes assumed. Portraying rhetorical fieldwork as primarily qualitative, or social scientific, opens it to the same challenges faced by qualitative communication scholars from quantitative assumptions of objectivity and impartiality.

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[63] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 9.
[64] Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* 56, no. 2 (1970): 109-119.
[65] Phillip Wander, "The Third Persona: An Ideological Turn in Rhetorical Theory," *Central States Speech Journal* 35, no. 4 (1984): 197-216.
[66] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, xviii-xix.

Public Problems

Finally, qualitative scholarship has developed from a focus on the private, whereas rhetorical field methods developed from a focus on the public. As cited above, qualitative scholarship in communication often focuses on the personal interests of the researcher, or "deviant" groups.[67] Similarly, Tracy explains that qualitative methods are particularly useful for "studying contexts you are personally curious about but have never before had a 'valid' reason for entering," as well as providing "a peek into regularly guarded worlds, and an opportunity to tell a story that few know about."[68] Although this may sound similar to Hauser's work in challenging the notion of "the public," the search to incorporate marginalized groups is structured significantly differently in qualitative studies. Instead of looking for groups of citizens *already contributing* to public thought and expression, the motivation behind qualitative methods is to find those private individuals and sectors marginalized by the public, to *bring them* into a public arena. Qualitative methods in communication came from a desire to understand the minority populations relegated to insignificant status in quantitative models—the stories that "few know about."[69] Rhetorical field methods, on the other hand, arose from an obsession with publicity, with better understanding those that contribute to public thought, public discussion, and publicity itself.

The public is at the very core of rhetorical study. To call ourselves a social science field belies that commitment, and shakes our very foundation. Yet, publicity,

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[67] Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication*, 10.
[68] Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 5.
[69] Tracy, *Qualitative Research Methods*, 5.

when thought as the heart of rhetoric, provides a means of considering fieldwork from a different light. Rhetorical studies of publicity might help qualitative communication scholars view their work from a different perspective: rather than thinking about the private concerns at the margin of quantitative scholarship, or groups of social "deviants," rhetorical impulses toward fieldwork as an investigation of publics and publicity may help qualitative scholars to envision their own work in a new way.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FIELDWORK IN THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

As scholars of terministic screens, media representational framings, and ideologies hidden within words, we know that naming is important. What I ask in this chapter is that before we define this methodological approach in ways that may sell more books, turn more heads, or sound more impressive in the current moment, we consider the ramifications it has for conceptualizing and enacting our future work. Rhetorical field methods can easily be held up as something new and innovative in the stodgy old field of rhetoric and public address, but in doing so we align it with qualitative scholarship that has its own history of structures and assumptions. Rather than take those on, or think of fieldwork as importing a "new" method into rhetoric, we should instead think of rhetorical fieldwork as a clear outgrowth of our own assumptions, trends, and impulses as rhetoricians. By thinking of rhetorical fieldwork as primarily *rhetorical*, we may be doing far more "new" and "innovative" work than we are by using those words to distinguish this study from traditional rhetorical aims.

I argue that rhetorical field methods can be seen as new and innovative ways of doing fieldwork precisely because they are *rhetorical*. Thinking of rhetorical field

methods not as a qualitative or social scientific approach opens new ways for *all* communication scholars to engage in fieldwork. What happens to study in the field when methods do not need to respond to quantitative concerns? In rhetorical field methods, there is no automatic opposition or relation to quantitative methods; the relationship between qualitative and quantitative work does not need to be addressed, implicitly or explicitly. What can a method do when it is presumed to be critical and activist in orientation, and does not need to defend either intervention with research subjects or participation in social change goals? How does this structure actions in the field differently? What questions might this open up that have otherwise been obscured?

Its critical lineage, assumed goal of social change, and focus on publicity make rhetorical field methods a structurally different enterprise than qualitative work in communication studies. Although rhetorical field methods takes cues from various approaches to social science research, it is important to view it as a uniquely rhetorical endeavor. By continuing from traditional strands of research in rhetoric, rhetorical field methods presents not a new way of doing rhetoric, but a new—rhetorical—way of approaching the field.

I use rhetorical field methods to investigate the ethics and politics of intercultural rhetoric and relations at the Children's Village. The Children's Village begins with a line of six houses arcing across the top crest of a hill. Walking downhill from the first house, one encounters a medical clinic, run by a Nurse-Midwife named Mustafa. Mustafa and his medically untrained but quick-learning staff assist up to 60 patients a day, some from the Children's Village, most from surrounding areas. Past the clinic and to the right is a

kindergarten, with playground equipment out front: monkey bars, a jungle gym, and swings. At slightly before 8am, a group of laughing children can be seen running down the hill, past the clinic, all clad in blue and green uniforms, racing to school. They are welcomed there by Nuru, the Head of Education at the children's village, and her capable teaching team. Further along, at a curve in the road leading down the hill, come light, methodical, clattering noises. Entering the building reveals a host of sewing machines, each wielded by a nervous hand. This is the sewing school, a place for youth who have been failed by the education system in Tanzania—a common occurrence[70]—to learn a trade. If one were to continue around the curve and down into the valley, walking through fields of fruit trees, tomatoes, maize, beans, and vegetables on the descent, one might run into Sofia or the other gardeners under her supervision.

In addition to what can be seen onsite, there is a host of associated work that happens in the neighboring community. Let's follow Arnold, the Head of Social Welfare, as he gets a motorcycle *lifti* into the next village. He passes by brick houses, some finished with a layer of concrete and paint, others haphazardly constructed with thatch roofs. The motorcycle stops before one of the latter, where Arnold meets Cosmas, the Head of Home-Based Care Volunteers, at the side of the road. Inside may be an HIV+ youth who can no longer walk, a man who has trouble keeping up with his medication, a baby with spina bifida, or an elder who lacks the ability to care for herself. Or perhaps,

[70] Jenna N. Hanchey and Brenda L. Berkelaar, "Context Matters: Examining Discourses of Career Success in Tanzania," *Management Communication Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2015): 411-439.

inside might be a child who needs to be taken to the Children's Village for care. In that case, they might call Regina, the Head of Guardianship, to arrange the details.

Simultaneously, in another nearby village, Deo is attending a village leadership meeting to describe the latest affairs of the organization and to hear the local gossip. As Head of Administration, he loves dealing with that kind of bureaucracy (and everyone else is thankful that he does!). After the meeting, he'll head back to the office to apprise Damas, the Head of Human Resources, of any news and draw up a report. Everyone has to write monthly reports of what was accomplished in his or her sector, and construct a budget for the following month. Without a budget, each can look forward to many frustrating meetings with Enritha, the Children's Village accountant, as well as Sarah and Tim, the Western NGO managers.

The Children's Village is a complex organization involved in a variety of tasks to improve life in this particular village community. The imagination-powered tour above provides just a sample of the many people involved the organization where I locate my research, but it succinctly introduces the complicated relational dynamics on which the organization depends. In this interwoven mesh of organizational departments, organizational leadership, community members, and community governance, attempted influences from Western donors and volunteers are continually worked through, reformed, or resisted. Through rhetorical field methods, I was able to witness up-close how this occurred at the NGO.

The critical structure, social change goals, and public focus of rhetorical fieldwork are central to the way I conducted my research. Throughout my fieldwork, I

was just as much a participant as observer, working to help the NGO maneuver within international neocolonial dynamics, and make changes to both subjective relations and material circumstances. In addition, I draw understandings about rhetoric and reflexivity from the particular struggles of the Children's Village that can be useful in a variety of public contexts to further anti-colonial goals. Certainly aid is a public problem, perhaps even a problem that goes beyond typical understandings of the public as nationally bounded, and asks what publicity looks like on a global scale. Finally, it is through the specific concerns of rhetorical field methods that I am able to make my argument that both rhetorical research and aid work must be haunted in order to move toward justice.

Chapter 4: This Land is Your Land, This Land is My Land

The sun had reached the edge of the sky when I stepped off the bus into the dust of Mikoda village. It was the dry season, a time when the mountain areas of Tanzania had weather that most U.S. Americans would never believe could happen in "Africa"—cold, dry, and dusty. I looked around, and, not seeing my friend Tim, knew that I would have to find my way to the Children's Village on my own. I hadn't realized when I told the bus driver to let me off at "Mikoda" that it was a sprawling village area, and I had gotten off a mile or two away from where I should have.

Asking around as the sun began to set, I was convinced to hire a *pikipiki* to take me to the right place. The motorcycle driver was friendly, but also clearly nervous about going to the nongovernmental organization (NGO) that functioned as its own small village within the larger Mikoda area. Along the way, he told me that the NGO had terrifying Maasai guards, a nomadic tribe known for its fierceness.[1] He had also heard that they had a very fierce dog who would rip thieves to shreds (I would have laughed, since Barley is the friendliest thing on four legs, but Tanzanians generally do not keep dogs as pets, and are unaccustomed to dogs that are not meant to intimidate). In short, he was afraid of the Children's Village, a community NGO, locally staffed, whose predominant lines of work were sheltering vulnerable children, assisting schools with educational training and materials, and providing healthcare to a village sorely lacking it.

[1] For that reason, many Maasai capitalized on their tribal reputation by turning to work as security guards across the country.

As I rode on the back of a motorcycle up and down hills on a craggy dirt road, I kept asking the driver to go more slowly. “If I go slower than this,” he said in Swahili after my third request, “You’ll fall off the back when we go up that next hill!” It’s amazing to me how land can be so beautiful and peaceful, and at the same time can seem like a deathtrap when passing through on a motorcycle—each crevice and crack designed to throw me from my precarious perch. The same land can be beautiful and treacherous; the same land can belong to a community and be stolen from it.

In this chapter, I will tell you a story about land. I was told this story by NGO staff: one U.S. American manager, Sarah; one Canadian manager, Tim; as well as Deo, Damas, Mustafa, Sofia, Regina, and Nuru. Land, in their story, both acts on those around it and can be used as a rhetorical tool. As a story, it offers not so much a truth as a perspective. It is partial. To start, I ground the telling in two theoretical traditions: rhetorics of survivance, and spatial politics of belonging. The story then unfolds in two sections, with parallel forms. In the first section, land acts to tie the NGO to a colonial history; in the second, land is offered as a means to free the NGO from neocolonial relations. Throughout both there are tensions and battles that I leave unsettled in the following discussion. Instead, as the sections of the story intertwine, I locate five rhetorics of survivance that can be pulled from the text, and argue that this incomplete story offers rhetoricians a way to think new materialisms and old materialisms in concert with one another.

GROUNDING THE STORY

Rhetorics of Survivance

Much of what this story expresses, whether from the perspective of the NGO or of other constituencies, are rhetorics of survivance. Malea Powell defines rhetoric of survivance as addressing "survival + resistance," and used to "transform…object-status within colonial discourse into subject-status, a presence instead of an absence."[2] Survivance is often used by Native American scholars to describe how indigenous peoples of the Americas make their continued presence and relations to land and others felt. As Ernest Stromberg explains, "While 'survival' conjures images of a stark minimalist clinging at the edge of existence, survivance goes beyond mere survival to acknowledge the dynamic and creative nature of Indigenous rhetoric."[3] To say that people simply survive under colonialism characterizes them as passive recipients of others' heinous agency. Survivance, on the other hand, turns passivity into action, and makes clear the relationality involved in the "active presence" of indigenous peoples.[4] Survivance is a response to a relation of colonialism, and it retenders the relation in such a way as to afford indigenous strength under colonial conditions.

If survivance is important to Native American populations because hegemonic U.S. discourse portrays them as people of an age past, or ghostly remainders,[5] survivance

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[2] Malea Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance: How American Indians *Use* Writing," *College Composition and Communication* 53, no. 3 (2002): 400.
[3] Ernest Stromberg, "Rhetoric and American Indians: An Introduction," in *American Indian Rhetorics of Survivance: Word Medicine, Word Magic*, ed. Ernest Stromberg (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 1.
[4] Gerald Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance: Literary Theory and Practice," in *Survivance: Narratives of Native Presence*, ed. Gerald Vizenor (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 11.
[5] Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover: The University Press of New England, 2000).

is important to African populations because hegemonic Western discourse portrays them as always already dead due to famine, poverty, diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola, and war. Either that, or Sub-Saharan Africa is not signified at all. Achille Mbembe argues that "Africa" functions as an empty signifier upon which Westerners may project anything to which they would like to construct themselves in opposition.[6] Rhetorics of survivance, then, become a way for Sub-Saharan Africans to signify presence against the common tropes of emptiness, darkness, or nonexistence associated with the continent.

Rhetorics of survivance help to reimagine indigeneity by opening positionalities that would not make sense in a simple logic of either a resistant entity, or one who primarily acts for survival.[7] By putting together survival + resistance, survivance cannot be nailed down to a singular best practice or narrow sense of resistance to power; as Gerald Vizenor puts it, rhetorics of survivance "create…situational sentiments of chance."[8] A similar sense may be what leads Mbembe to refer to the postcolonial relationship between government and subjects as "convivial."[9] Rather than acting or speaking in a manner that can be recognized as fully resistant, or fully succumbing to neocolonial regimes, the African subject of survivance has "the ability to engage in baroque practices fundamentally ambiguous, fluid, and modifiable even where there are clear, written, precise rules."[10] As Aimee Carrillo Rowe explains, subalternity is "an

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[6] Achille Mbembe, *On The Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 2.
[7] Powell, "Rhetorics of Survivance," 418.
[8] Vizenor, "Aesthetics of Survivance," 11.
[9] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 104.
[10] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 129.

ongoing relational process…[a] verb, not noun."[11] Practices of survivance are always in relation to (neo)colonial control, meaning that they are radically contingent, rarely predictable, and often unrecognizable in typical Western narratives.

Sites of Belonging: Relationality and Space

Here, our story about land is not just about the rhetorics of survivance that people employ, but how survivance is configured through relations of space and place. Carrillo Rowe writes that "[t]he sites of our belonging constitute how we see the world, what we value, who we are (becoming). The meaning of self is never individual, but a shifting set of relations that we move in and out of, often without reflection."[12] These relations include movement through space, shifting formations of proximity and distance with people and places around us. As Katherine McKittrick, a geographer of Black women, puts it, "geography is always human and…humanness is always geographic."[13] We as subjects are constituted by the spatial arrangements we move through, and the subjective relations they entail. As such, intimacy, connection, and proximity are all connected—and have effects in relation to land as well as people. Where your home is in relation to someone else's matters; whose land is next to your land matters; who lived in this place before you lived here matters; how you travel to work and who you pass matters.

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[11] Aimee Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines: On the Subject of Feminist Alliances* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 12.
[12] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 25.
[13] Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), ix.

However, land never simply "just is."[14] Humans are not the only agents in interactions of place and space, in movement through, across, and around land. McKittrick claims that "geography holds in it the possibility to speak for itself."[15] Land is as much as agent in some interactions as humans are, perhaps exerting even more influence as it is often taken as that which "just is," a normalizing force acting beneath the surface of conscious reflection.[16] The story I tell here is a story of people, a story of an organization, and a story of land, all acting in relation.

I gathered this story from time spent in the field. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak comments, "We cannot 'learn about' the subaltern only by reading literary texts, or, mutatis mutandis, sociohistorical documents… It is responsible to read books, but book learning is not responsibility."[17] Field methods engages in a proximity with subjects that assists in building close, affective ties—ties which should make the researcher more responsible and caring toward her subjects—but is not inherently any more responsible than the book-learning to which Spivak points. In fact, I have struggled with the responsibility of my story: Am I providing the audience with enough information to form a full picture? Can I speak about people whose opinion I was unable to solicit? What if I have constructed a fiction that bears only slight relation to reality?

To tell this story in a responsible manner, I must admit to its partiality, and as such, its fictionalizing moves. Kamala Vismeswaran explains that ethnography is

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[14] McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xi.
[15] McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, ix.
[16] McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, xi.
[17] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 142.

necessarily a fictionalizing endeavor, as even with "its pretense to present a self-contained narrative or cultural whole, [it] remains incomplete and detached from the realms to which it points."[18] My story is partial, but so are all stories. As Lila Abu-Lughod explains, "[o]nly a false belief in the possibility of a nonsituated story (or 'objectivity') could make one ask that stories reflect the way things, over there, 'really' are."[19] Fieldwork does not present simple, self-contained narratives or explanations to the researcher, but rather complicated circumstances, fraught decisions, and contradictory motivations. In concluding her work about the life of a Mexican woman, Ruth Behar remarks, "There is no *true* version of a life, after all. There are only stories told about and around a life."[20] The stories I tell about the life of this NGO and its land may be partial, but recognizing that partiality and keeping it continually in mind can help to bring out important implications. I am not attempting to represent the way things "really" are in Tanzania, or who "really" has the right to land. Even this partial story is complex and difficult, and does not have a clear moral. Instead, through the two parts of the story I try to bring forth the way land, people, and relations are brought together through rhetorics of survivance, in order to demonstrate how the lines between immaterial and material, community and outsider are less clear than they may seem.

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[18] Kamala Vismeswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 1.
[19] Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
[20] Ruth Behar, *Translated Woman*: *Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 235, emphasis in original.

THE STORY OF AN NGO AND ITS STRUGGLE WITH LAND

Part 1: Entangled in Colonial Control

History

Over 15 years ago, a British man whose time Tanzania predated the country's independence decided that he wanted to buy land in a rural area in the Southern Highlands. He owned lodges and camps in various animal reserves, and wanted to build an ex-patriot retreat lodge to complement his safari holdings, where he could live with his wife and welcome other ex-patriots or Western tourists for a comfortable stay with a village feel. He approached the local government about the possibility of purchasing open land. They informed him that they would allow him to buy land in the area on two conditions: that he provide work opportunities for area villagers, and that he help them acquire access to medical care and better educational opportunities. They insisted he use part of the purchased land to provide services to help the local community. Promising them a hospital, an ambulance, and help for local schools, he was allowed to purchase the land.

Mr. Giles was determined to make good on his promises, and provide needed assistance to the village. If his determination held a paternalistic edge, it was still well-intentioned. So, once he got the retreat lodge up and running, he began the Gileses' Community NGO—colloquially referred to as Children's Village—recruiting two Western volunteers to run the newly begun organization. He cordoned off part of the land he had purchased as that of the NGO, and instituted himself as the head of the

organization's board of directors, filling the rest in with family members and one Tanzanian employee of his lodge.

Now, Mr. Giles has a nice, if struggling, retreat lodge, a small farm that grows coffee and raises trout, sheep, and cattle, and a flourishing NGO right around the corner. The initial volunteers who ran the organization left after a year and a half, but the current managers—a married couple, one U.S. American, one Canadian—have been working there for going on ten years. In that time, what had begun as a mere orphanage for community children had grown multiple branches, based on community needs and desires. The Children's Village supports a local clinic and HIV/AIDS medical dispensary, a system of Home-Based Care volunteers located throughout 14 surrounding villagers, a Montessori kindergarten open to any nearby children, homes for orphaned or at-risk youth run by Tanzanian house mothers and fathers, and a trade school dedicated to teaching sewing skills to youth who failed out of school. Their staff includes a nurse-midwife, village outreach liaison, home-based care volunteer supervisor, supervisor of the guardians (house mothers and fathers), and social welfare officer, among others—all of whom are Tanzanians, and most of whom are from the local area.

Although Mr. Giles has never donated a penny to the Children's Village, the lodge and the NGO remain tied through the land, in both the minds of the people and the minds of the Giles family. Mr. Giles seems to think of the relationship between the lodge and the NGO as a sort of partnership; he brings wealthy guests of the lodge over to the Children's Village to entice them to donate, and in return he gets recognition as the leader of the NGO, helping the poor, nearby villagers.

Entanglements

However, the relationship between the lodge and the NGO has never been clearly defined. Mr. Giles, at first, seemed to wish to provide services to the organization, since he did not donate any money. Initially, he helped to moderate overhead costs for the organization, so that almost all donated money went directly to services, by using the employees and transportation means of the lodge to do things for the NGO on the side. In this way, he hoped to keep the organization away from the path of having Westerners run everything, rather than the local population, and on the other extreme, away from tempting local staff with easy access to money that could be stolen. Instead, Mr. Giles initially planned to have the NGO run by managers already working at the lodge. The work at the NGO, then, would simply be an extension of their normal duties. Pretty quickly, this became a problem for the NGO.

For one, the lodge has a primary fix-it man named Salim who Mr. Giles would send to the NGO when they needed repairs. But, if the NGO needed repairs at the same time as the lodge, the lodge would get first priority, and sometimes the Children's Village wouldn't get the needed repairs for a week. As I mentioned earlier, the lodge has never been the income generator that Mr. Giles hoped it would be, and as the lodge struggled financially, the slight burden of providing services to the NGO grated more harshly on the feelings of the Gileses. The Children's Village started getting charged for the work Salim did for them. Sometimes the NGO would be charged, sometimes the lodge would be charged, and sometimes each would get charged for work done on the other. When the current managers started, one of their initial goals was to separate the NGO from the business. Sarah and Tim worked out a plan with Mr. Giles where Salim would work four

days a week at the lodge, and two days a week at the NGO. That way, they knew how much to pay him for his services. However, the lodge was still the main priority, and Salim functioned at the beck and call of Mr. Giles. If Mr. Giles needed something done at the business, the Children's Village might not see Salim for two months. And if the Children's Village tried to hire someone else in the meantime, Mr. Giles would chide them for wasting donor money—why hire a handyman when one's salary is already being paid? Recently, the conflict ended when Salim decided to retire, allowing the NGO to finally retain its own fix-it services.

Transportation has caused similar issues. Initially, when the lodge needed to send people to town for supplies, they would also pick up goods for the Children's Village. Later, they began charging the NGO half of the transport cost. As time went on, even the salary of the man doing the financial accounting for the lodge began to be half-charged to the NGO. This continued, down the line, with every other staff member at the lodge who also provided services to the NGO. Rather than its initial position as the "corporate social responsibility" arm of the business, the Children's Village had come to be viewed as a financial burden to the lodge.

From a different perspective, the lodge could actually be seen as a financial burden to the Children's Village. The NGO has a truck that was donated from England, and shipped over to Tanzania in a crate. Staff simply refer to it as "the Mazda." The small, imported pick-up truck is unlike any vehicle I have ever seen in-country, meaning that both parts and labor are uncommon, if available at all. The Mazda is unquestionably the NGO's vehicle, but that does not stop Mr. Giles and the lodge staff from making

decisions about its use, without informing Sarah, Tim, or the staff of the NGO. For instance, while Sarah and Tim were back in the United States for an unexpectedly long stay, Mr. Giles insisted that the vehicle be kept at the lodge, rather than the Children's Village. In fact, he removed all money from the NGO and the bank, and required that staff come to the lodge to request funds directly from him—even when they had already been budgeted and approved by the NGO managers. During that time, his son used the Mazda to survey the exact borders of the Giles land, without informing the NGO staff. The rough travels caused damage to the car, and left it inoperable. Faced with the NGO's impending visit from a volunteer dentist who needed transport, Mr. Giles had the Mazda fixed at great expense and charged the damage to the NGO. Wole, a staff member of the lodge, expressed surprise that this would upset Tim. In his mind, Mr. Giles was doing what he needed to do to help the NGO. Neither he nor Mr. Giles understood that the Children's Village had a tight budget that had already been planned by the managers and the staff, and that such unplanned uses of money would hurt NGO operations.

Land Battle

That the particular incident which created tension between the lodge and NGO was the surveying of the Gileses' land was a sign of things to come, and highlights the role of land. In the last two years, a family has come forward to argue that the man who originally sold the land to Mr. Giles sold some property that he did not actually own. Almost 20 years after purchasing land, a local Tanzanian villager is suing Mr. Giles on the ground that some parts of his land should never have been sold to him, and that it should be returned to its indigenous owners. The reason his son, David, took the Mazda

to survey the land was to ensure that they are only occupying what is legally theirs—and that they are occupying *everything* that is legally theirs—thereby building evidence for the court case against his family, and keeping people from using their land. Now, as foreshadowed by the damage done to the Mazda, the NGO is getting caught in the middle of the land battle. Even though the particular plots of Mr. Giles' land in question are not NGO grounds, the NGO is still seen as part of the colonial occupation of Tanzanian lands.

In a recent election for the Chairman of the Village Council, the man leading the land dispute based his campaign predominantly on anger toward the Gileses. He campaigned on a platform of "taking back what is ours." In part, this action included taking back the areas of land under dispute, but surprisingly, it also included placing blame on the NGO. Part of the work of the NGO is to help support the local school systems through starting programs, and asking them to eventually take over payment for them. In this way, the NGO can manage the building of infrastructure, and also make certain that the programs are truly desired by the community as they are willing to invest in them. For two local programs, this plan did not work, however. In both programs, one that provided porridge to elementary school students and one that paid the salary of a kindergarten teacher, the schools failed to take over payment for the operations when agreed, and the programs simply shut down. Maurus Nomba used this as part of his platform, yelling that as Village Chairperson, he would push for their rights. According to Sarah, he had a rally where he yelled, "We need to take back what is ours! If we don't get our kindergarten teacher and porridge program back, blood will be spilled!"

In the intensity of the land dispute, the NGO is both lumped in with the Gileses as a place where foreigners occupy what should be local land, and still the subject of anger at the *removal* of their services to the community. That is, the programs that the NGO institutes are clearly desired, but instead of being praised for what they are doing in and for the local community, they are blamed when their finances are insufficient to keep the programs up. As Mustafa, one of the NGO staff, commented, "No matter what kind of work you are doing, there will always be those that complain because it does not benefit them personally, and who won't take the time to notice how it benefits others." When I asked another staff member, Damas, what the community thinks of them, he said: "They don't think of us, unless they are getting services from us." From this perspective, Nomba's comment exposes that part of the community operates under a sort of Mitchell-esque, "don't know what you've got til it's gone," relationship to the NGO. Only when services are no longer there do some community members realize the help the NGO had been providing.

After his campaign for Chairperson failed, Nomba took up other tactics. He started a committee entitled "The Eye of the Falcon" and began writing letters to the community government about the Gileses and the NGO. At first, the Eye of the Falcon was only composed of Nomba and two of his relatives. At a meeting in the spring of 2015, the first of his letters was read to a village meeting, and claimed that the NGO needed to immediately shut down, and leave their village. The community members in the room were livid, arguing back that the organization took care of children from their community, helped their sick, and helped their elders. Yet, at the same time, the notion

that the NGO should simply be shut down struck them as ridiculous. The uproar was so great that the leadership handed the letter back to Maurus, saying that he couldn't provide one again until he named all the people on this committee, a committee that seemed unnecessarily dramatic to the village leadership.

It's not as surprising as it may seem that Nomba lumped together the NGO and the lodge in his land battle and claims the NGO needs to be shut down. The Children's Village is located in between the lodge and other land owned by the Giles business arm. The Gileses own a private airline, and as part of a plan to generate more interest in and revenue for the lodge, planned to use the land on the far side of the NGO as an airstrip. They started building the airstrip, but ran out of money and put the construction on pause until more could be gathered. While construction was stopped, Mr. Giles gave permission to families to use the land for subsistence farming. However, some of these people, after growing food for a couple seasons, no longer wished to use the land and thought they could gain some money by selling it on to other families. After the sale, those families thought they owned the land fair and square. In short, Mr. Giles found out that people were now claiming it as *their* land, rather than borrowed land, and decided to do his best to stop them from continuing to use it. Yet, there's still no money for the airstrip project. To the Giles family, the best option seemed to be telling the NGO that *they* needed to use the land, in order to keep others off of it. Sarah and Tim refused, knowing that would place their community service organization in direct contention with community members. However, they continue to be pushed by Giles family members to "control" the land, so that the local families stop "invading" it. This caused tension between the

Children's Village and more members of the community, as some felt it was the NGO that forced them to be removed from the land they were farming.

A lot has happened in the last year at the NGO. The land battle between the Nomba clan and Mr. Giles has been raging on. Earlier this year, the Regional Commissioner finally came to investigate the claims, as the legal battle had proceeded through levels of court until it reached the regional level. After she spent time at the Giles lodge, she toured the NGO. Each department of the NGO was explained by its Tanzanian leader. It was the first time Mr. Giles had seen a tour of the NGO led by Tanzanians. He exclaimed to Sarah that it was amazing—how did she get them all to sound like *her*? She responded, they don't sound like me, when I speak, I sound like them. She explained that they lead each of the departments, and her job is to facilitate and support what they do. The Regional Commissioner was also very impressed. So impressed, in fact, that she wanted all the government officials she worked with to see it, and promised to be back with them in two weeks. Two weeks later she returned with 80 regional officials in tow.

After touring the NGO and some of its outreach projects in local villages, they escorted the Regional Commissioner to the community hall, where the Regional Commissioner hosted a town hall meeting to get people's feedback on the land situation. Before the meeting started, Mr. Giles pulled Sarah aside to tell her how proud and encouraged he was by the competence and confidence of the Tanzanian staff in the project, and how he felt that they truly had made his vision of helping the people in the area come true. He told her he could now die a happy man.

Mr. Giles spoke too soon. Even as the NGO has been thriving in the last year, so has the Eye of the Falcon. Nomba's followers had grown, and they had strategically planted themselves throughout the community hall for the meeting. In what followed, the Regional Commissioner, Nomba, and the Gileses sat on stage in the front, listening for two hours as members of the Eye of the Falcon disparaged Mr. Giles and told him to go back to Europe so that they might have their land back. Many, including an employee of the NGO, complained to the Regional Commissioner that there was no food to be had for their children unless they left. Mrs. Giles cried and cried, her face buried in her hands.

Bosco, the outspoken employee of the NGO, is a member of the same clan as Maurus Nomba. In this area of Tanzania, people do not simply associate by tribe, but by smaller clans within a tribe. As such, everyone has both a family surname and a clan name that they sometimes go by (making it confusing for Western visitors or volunteers). When Bosco stood up and berated Mr. Giles for stealing their land and leaving them poor and hungry, in some ways he was entirely correct: Mr. Giles is a white, European man living on Tanzanian land. Yet other premises are shakier: Bosco owns a home, and has the most stable employment of—most likely—anyone in that room as he has a five-year contract with the NGO. He is not hungry, and has the means to assist his family members because of his employment. In this area, there are very few companies or organizations for which to work. Other than teachers or those who run their own shops or bars, most people with stable employment work for the lodge or the NGO.

With such unrest in the village, the community grew impatient waiting for the Regional Commissioner's decision. Instead, they decided to hold a town hall meeting in

an attempt to find a way themselves to lay the issue to rest. At the town hall, it was decided by a majority vote—outweighing the members of the Eye of the Falcon—that if Mr. Giles made good on his original promise to build a clinic in the village, they would end the land dispute. The decision was announced to the village in the same community hall where the Regional Commissioner had heard community comments, and with the entirety of the local government sitting on stage. Mr. Giles was not present at the announcement of the town hall's verdict. When the members of Eye of the Falcon heard that the case would be closed, they rushed the stage and beat up their own neighbors, leaders, and friends. Bosco threw one of the first punches, spearheading what turned into an all-out brawl.

Continuations

The Eye of the Falcon initiative has spoken and acted with an anger and violence that I have rarely seen in Tanzania. Each time I have seen it, it's associated with thievery. In most of Tanzania, thievery is punishable by death—often public, mass-enacted death. In Peace Corps training, I remember it being stressed that we should never call someone a thief, unless we wanted to witness their death by mob action. I once saw a teenage boy accused of stealing flip-flops in the market. I turned away as he was surrounded; it was not my place to interfere, and I could not watch. The only other instance of violence I remember was when someone in a neighboring village stole a goat, and was caught. He was tied with the entrails and whipped with them as a crowd marched him from the outlying village to the only local jail cell in Maguu. Reportedly, people poured kerosene

in his wounds, and forced him to eat pieces of the stolen goat meat, raw. He died before he could be tried for his crime.

On the one hand, it makes sense that the Eye of the Falcon would respond to Mr. Giles as one would to a thief. He arrived as a colonist in the 1950s, before Tanzania gained its independence, working as a manager on a tea plantation. Even though he did not purchase the land until after independence, and did so legally, the land may still have generationally belonged to the Nomba family. However, the pieces of land the family is fighting for are small, and none of them overlap with the land used by the NGO. Why would they respond to the NGO in the same manner? Why is the NGO rhetorically attached to Mr. Giles, rather than to the community officials who requested it or the community members who benefit from it? How does the NGO come to occupy a space of hatred and vitriol?

Since the decision, the Children's Village has faced three forest fires, deliberately set, in areas that threaten the safety of their people and property. One was in the heat of the day, the next in late afternoon, and the final, terrifyingly, at 5am, before most people had awoken. Each time, the NGO emptied, as all hands went to fight the fires—including the children under guardianship there. Fighting fires in rural Tanzania is no easy task; there is no running water, so buckets must be carried from the nearest source to douse the flames. Other people grab branches or sticks to beat them out. The work is long, slow, and arduous.

The need to have everyone fighting the fire, however, was tempered by a fear that the fire was meant to call people away from the NGO, and leave it undefended for

vandalism or looting. In addition, according to Sarah, the women who work at the Children's Village responded to these threats by imagining what else this group of people might do to threaten or terrorize them. They couldn't sleep, worried that someone might try to break in at night. One even mentioned the fear that someone would try to poison the staff's food. In the eyes of the NGO workers, the harassment was not viewed as simply a way to get to Mr. Giles; they saw themselves as the targets.

People used to hang around the NGO after work was over, gossiping and laughing, or stopping by Sarah and Tim's house for evening tea. No one stays later than they need to anymore. Villagers have started to harass NGO employees as they walk home. Tanzania is quite near the Equator, and the light of day runs from approximately 6am to 6pm year-round. With some employees needing to walk two or more miles home, they need to leave promptly to reach home in the waning light of day. The staff is afraid that if they are caught walking home after dark, the threats and harassment might turn into violence and harm.

It is not unrelated that 80% of the NGO staff are Tanzanian women from the local area. Most of the women now walk home in large groups, in order to fend off trouble. For some of these women, like Sofia, work at the NGO has allowed them financial independence, and a way to take care of their children on their own without staying in abusive relationships. For others, it allows them control over a part of the household income, so that their husbands can't spend everything on alcohol.

When the women feel like they are the targets of anger and hatred, rather than Mr. Giles, they are recognizing another aspect of this complicated situation. The land battle

has broken up marriages, put others on the rocks, and split families. One clan in particular is involved, but marriages are not bounded by clans in this village area. Many women who work at the NGO are married or related to those involved in the Eye of the Falcon, and act as the target of their anger, now that the court case has been decided in favor of Mr. Giles.

Only one attack was launched directly at Mr. Giles and his land. A group of men decided to march from Mikoda village to the Giles lodge, and set fire to the trees on the main path into the property. They first forced the man in the village tasked with keeping an emergency whistle (a standard village practice) to give the whistle to them. They then attracted more people to the march by blowing the whistle as they walked. The direct goal of the march was unclear; they wanted to register displeasure, certainly, and shouted at Mr. Giles to give back their land, but when they arrived at the farm around the lodge, the vandalism seemed relatively benign. Young men in the group climbed into trees, throwing things and setting fires, but no one attempted to harm Mr. Giles or any of the lodge's buildings. Mr. Giles tried to talk with them, and Mrs. Giles tried frantically to put out the fires. The police came and arrested the entire group, including Bosco and many teenagers.

With the fear of the staff and children building after each attack, Sarah and Tim finally decided enough was enough, and asked the village government to intercede on behalf of the NGO. The government officials called a meeting, and every official in the surrounding area attended. The hall was packed, and the NGO had brought every child in their care, as well as many staff members. Their goal was to make a plea for peace. As

children from the village read speeches written by Herman and Musa, two staff members, expressing fear and asking for those responsible to please stop putting their lives in danger, a glance about the room revealed that members of the Eye of the Falcon were conspicuously absent. Knowing that a summons for a general community meeting based on vandalism meant harsh reprimand for those involved, and a possibility of public arrest (the police were there with their cell-like vehicle meant for transporting prisoners—in fact, they had an accomplice to theft locked in the back for the entirety of the day-long meeting), the members of the Nomba family simply did not go.

The fear and fires were ended when the members of the Eye of the Falcon were all arrested from their homes one night. After spending time in jail for vandalism, they were convinced to stop stirring up contention in the community. Mr. Giles and the Eye of the Falcon agreed on the town hall's terms: If he built and stocked a clinic in the village, then they would call the issue settled.

Part 2: Resisting Neocolonial Control

History

Esther and Gail were introduced to the NGO through the lodge. As guests who ran their own charity donating books to places across "Africa," they were interested when Mr. Giles asked if they wanted to tour the Children's Village. Esther and Gail are both Canadian, retired, and independently wealthy. They were excited at the chance to fund a burgeoning operation, and eventually pledged to fund the NGO $100,000 (Canadian) a year for the following ten years.

The Children's Village, though a registered Tanzanian non-profit organization in its own right, has partner organizations in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Finland, and Sweden. The donations from Esther and Gail's Canadian organization comprise 41% of the NGO's annual budget, making the financial contributions from Canada quite important to the organization's daily operations and survival.

At first, Sarah and Tim easily came to consensus with Esther and Gail about which projects should be funded, and what direction organizational operations should proceed. Since there were a wide range of needs expressed by the community, and the organization was just starting—and therefore open to doing practically anything—they were happy simply to accomplish whatever the community wanted. There were no set departments yet within the NGO, and no limits imposed by strategic plans or past operations. Over time, Esther and Gail have grown to feel more invested in the community, and to perceive themselves as more knowledgeable about how community issues should be handled.

In part, this stems from their yearly trip to visit the NGO. Esther and Gail come for a month each year to visit the projects that they are funding, and oversee their implementation. To have a place to stay, they donated money to the NGO for the express purpose of building themselves a house. The house, larger than the houses of the Children's Village, and placed immediately behind a large, flat rock with a breathtakingly scenic view of the valley and rolling hills below, is set apart from the rest of the Children's Village. When Esther, Gail, or any other Canadian guests associated with

them come to visit the organization, they refuse to stay anywhere else, even if there are other volunteers whom Sarah and Tim have already planned to house there.

Entanglements

Esther and Gail do not speak Swahili, and so must be escorted by NGO staff to visit any projects in the surrounding village areas. At first, Sarah and Tim enjoyed showing Esther and Gail the results of their funding, but as the years went by, Esther and Gail began to feel entitled to more control over operations, and Sarah and Tim began to feel exhausted by managing them. Problems started to emerge between the NGO managers and the Canadian donors in 2012, when they vehemently disagreed over the treatment of a Children's Village student's psychological problems. Sarah and Tim were not forthcoming over what the specific issue was, but as they explained it, they shared the situation with Esther and Gail over beers one evening, as friends, hoping to procure some advice. Instead, Esther and Gail proclaimed that they needed to immediately report this shocking situation to the entirety of the Canadian NGO supporters. Sarah and Tim were upset, as they felt this student's privacy should be protected. Although mental health services are not readily available in Tanzania, and they did attempt to get the child treatment in a city a day's travel away, Esther and Gail expressed that, in their opinion, Sarah and Tim were failing the child.

The following year, Esther and Gail's disagreements with Sarah and Tim increased. Their visit coincided with that of a large group of college student volunteers, inciting complaints. Specifically, they felt that they did not receive the attention they deserved that trip, since Sarah and Tim's time was split between them and the volunteer

group. In addition, they protested the use of Montessori methods in the NGO's kindergarten class, even though this particular Montessori curriculum was designed specifically for low-resource, Tanzanian classrooms. Evidently, the Canadians associated Montessori education with class elitism, and refused to fund such a project. The kindergarten continued anyway, as the Tanzanian teachers and students were enthralled and excited by the new curriculum. Now, a few years later, the students graduating from the kindergarten have gone on to get top marks in the local primary schools, and the Regional Commissioner was so impressed when she visited that she plans to make the NGO's kindergarten a curricular model for early childhood education throughout the entire region.

What followed left both the Canadian donors and the NGO managers in a rage. A couple months before Esther and Gail were coming in 2014, Sarah and Tim had planned a short trip to the U.S. to attend Tim's sister's wedding. They knew Sarah was pregnant, and were looking forward to making sure everything was proceeding normally before they returned to Tanzania. Unfortunately, it was not. Sarah was pregnant with not one baby, but four, and the sharing of nutrients between them was uneven. In the following months, they would lose two fetuses. In childbirth, Sarah would come close to losing her life.

Esther and Gail, for the first time, were going to visit the NGO without the supervision of Sarah and Tim. In a Skype conversation before they left, the Canadians asked Sarah and Tim if they had any advice for being there on their own. They told the donors that the most important thing was to avoid promises. If people ask for money, or

to implement a certain project, tell them you will think about it. Do not answer right away, because if you agree, they will hold you to it. What they left unstated was that Esther and Gail do not have the proper knowledge to know if the organization has the budget for such projects, or if it is even possible to implement them, and what contextual constraints there might be. In the conversation, Sarah and Tim also let them know that one of the projects the donors funded, a library, had some problems. Mr. Giles had put pressure on people in the village to get the library up and running before the donors got there, but Sarah and Tim did not want to pretend like everything was fine simply to appease foreign donors. In their eyes, it was important for the Canadians to understand the struggles and challenges involved in projects.

The visit did not go smoothly. From their actions, it seems that Esther and Gail no longer trusted the managing of the organization to Sarah and Tim, and by this time felt their own opinions on the managing of the organization should hold more weight. For one, they were incensed when they arrived and saw the condition of the library. They sent Sarah and Tim a vicious email, blaming Sarah, in particular, for failing both their donors and the community. Sarah paraphrased the email as, "You fucked up; hope we can go on." The email was sent right after Sarah and Tim learned of the loss of their two children. It was quickly followed by an email from Mr. Giles, ordering them to apologize to the donors for fear the organization might lose their funding.

Esther and Gail decided to take managerial decisions into their own hands. While visiting different project areas for the NGO, they suggested to village leaders that they should work with the two Canadian donors directly, instead of through the NGO

leadership. At the school with the failing library, Esther and Gail decided to reassign a staff member from the NGO to work at the library, without consulting the Children's Village leadership. That staff member was Bosco. Bosco had originally worked as the librarian, but Sarah and Tim had transferred him to the NGO to get the kindergarten up-and-running. They negotiated the temporary transfer with the school where the library was housed, and helped them set up interviews for replacement librarians. For months, the school communicated to Sarah and Tim that they had hired a librarian, and the library was operating swimmingly. An unanticipated visit proved this to be a lie; the library was found in shambles and unused. Without understanding the background context—that Sarah and Tim had been working with the school to keep the library open—Esther and Gail may have seen the managers' removal of Bosco from his original post as, at best, a bad decision, and, at worst, a purposeful attempt to undermine the donors' pet project. Esther and Gail, without the backing or knowledge of the NGO staff, moved Bosco back to the library, and gave him a five-year contract to work there—and *only* there. Unwittingly, they provided the necessary stability for Bosco to participate in the Eye of the Falcon movement without fear of professional retribution.

At another school, they handed $1000 in cash directly to a teacher rather than move it through proper NGO channels. The money was supposed to be used for a bookshelf. The next summer, when I was in the area, there was still no bookshelf, only a host of excuses for its absence. According to Damas, some people in the community may like the Canadians better, because they just hand out money, but he thinks it does not accomplish much in the long run. He says the NGO staff, on the other hand, "know how

to go through the proper procedure." When Sarah and Tim reported Esther and Gail's behavior in an email to Mr. Giles, he was furious, because handing out money in the village directly undermines the legitimacy of the organization. However, he still did not want to communicate anything that might make Esther and Gail withdraw their funding.

These conflicting interests came to a head when Esther and Gail's stay again overlapped with that of a volunteer group. This time, after returning home, they found a book called *Damned Nations*, highlighted passages on the dangers of voluntourism, and mailed it to Mr. Giles, telling him that the NGO should no longer host volunteers.[21] Ironically, the pages immediately following in the book are about the problems that arise when international donors attempt to control local operations.[22] The NGO found itself caught in a place where its biggest donors threatened to remove their support if the organization did not shift its operations to coincide with their desires.

Land Battle

Sarah and Tim returned to the NGO—with their two surviving newborns, and their two older children—for the first time since all this had happened only two days before I arrived to research with them. They were still figuring out how to find their feet, how to deal with everything that had happened while they were gone, and how to continue to work toward Tanzanian leadership of the organization while held in the grip of heavy-handed donors. In interviews with the Tanzanian leaders of each department of the NGO, nearly all expressed that the day-to-day operations of the organization could

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[21] Samantha Nutt, *Damned Nations: Greed, Guns, Armies & Aid* (Toronto, Ontario: Signal, 2011), 137-142.
[22] Nutt, *Damned Nations,* 148-149.

easily be run by the Tanzanian staff, but that they could never entice or interface with donors in the way Sarah and Tim do. In fact, Sarah sees their role at the organization as "handling donors so that they do what the organization needs them to do," until either: (1) Tanzanian managers are trained to solicit and direct donors, or (2) the organization becomes financially self-sufficient.

A few weeks into my stay, Sarah and Tim received word that Esther and Gail were courting another wealthy Canadian who wished to donate a large sum of money to an organization, and was trying to figure out the place it could best be used. They had immediately suggested that a trade school at the NGO might catch his interest, and told Sarah and Tim to start developing a plan for what that might look like. But Sarah and Tim did not want to bring in another donor, complete with strings attached, to implement a plan that the community did not necessarily need or want. Instead, they decided to raise the issue at the monthly *Kamati Kuu* meeting with all of the NGO department leaders, and see what the Tanzanian leadership would like to do with a large sum of money.

They raised the issue first as a hypothetical: If the NGO were given a large sum of money, what would be the most important thing to do with it? It was a beautiful July day, warm enough for us to sit in a circle outside of the office building (which is good, as a group of high school volunteers had been tasked with painting and sealing the office interior that afternoon). All of the departments were represented, with the exception of Health and Medicine because Mustafa had patients needing attention at the clinic. After voicing different options, and discussing the merits of each, the committee voted nearly unanimously: The Tanzanian leadership would use the money to purchase land.

The NGO is located in an area of dense pine and eucalyptus forests. For many families in the area, financial stability comes from owning acres of land and planting trees that can be harvested for lumber. Pine tree lumber from this area is in high demand, and ten-year-old trees fetch a handsome sum. Trees can also be sold at seven years, if need be (and it often is). Many families purchase a plot of land to plant trees when a child is born, so that seven years later they will have the money necessary for school fees and educational expenses. For the NGO staff, land was the clear answer to donor trouble.

If the NGO owned its own land, and planted trees in a ten-plot rotation such that some acreage could be harvested each year, they could function independently of donor funds. For many staff members, the most pressing issue at the NGO was not opening a trade school, or funding more kindergarten programs, but insuring the financial stability of the NGO itself. Sarah had recently been sharing more with the staff about how donor relations worked. She described how donors dictating exactly where money goes is not actually legal, providing the metaphor that if you give money to your church "for the poor," you can't then tell the church that the money has to be given to a particular friend of yours. The money has been given *away*; it's no longer yours to control. The staff members participating in the conversation provided examples of how this has happened at the NGO. Therefore, having witnessed the capriciousness of donors, and perhaps feeling the tension in the air between Esther and Gail and the managers, the staff decided that the NGO needed to own its own land. Then, they said, if the donors stop donating, we will still be able to feed and care for the children that rely on us.

After the vote had been taken on how best to use the money, Sarah and Tim revealed that they did have an interested donor, but that the donor was currently considering putting the money toward a trade school. Together, the *Kamati Kuu* worked out a plan to connect the land purchase to the trade school, making it difficult for a donor to argue against the purchase. The logic proceeded as follows: One of the largest trades in the area is woodworking; being trained in woodworking would be a useful skill for the trade school to teach local people; in order to train people in woodworking, the school would need a constant supply of wood; the best way to have a constant supply of wood is to purchase land, and grow trees ourselves. Everyone understood that a donor would not want to fund a plan that effectively stifled donor control, but thought that this line of argumentation might work. The mood as we left the meeting was uplifting.

However, the logic was not as convincing to the Canadian donors, or to Mr. Giles, as the NGO leadership had hoped. In fact, when Sarah and Tim emailed Esther, Gail, and Mr. Giles about the tentative plan, their immediate reaction was anger that Tanzanian staff had been consulted. For Mr. Giles, this took the form of exclamations that Sarah and Tim are the managers, not the Tanzanians, and that the Head Committee should not be included in decision-making, because that is not their job. For Esther and Gail, it took the form protecting the interests of the donor; they said the land is a great idea for the future, but this donor has a dream of building a technical school, and we don't want to scare him off with such complicated plans.

Now, Mr. Giles has never trusted Tanzanian leadership. While Sarah and Tim were absent for months in 2014, he not only took control of all NGO finances, making

the staff ask him for money for every budgetary need, but also ran a surprise audit of the NGO. Without informing Sarah, Tim, or any of the Tanzanian staff, he arrived one day with an accountant, and reviewed all the NGO's financial records. According to Mr. Giles, the audit revealed "serious theft." According to Sarah, he found that one of the staff was buying gas in the village, where the price was significantly higher than what Mr. Giles's staff paid buying gas in the city. Mr. Giles wanted this employee fired, but Sarah and Tim declined to do so. To Mr. Giles, having this same staff that he audited now consulted for monetary issues would probably seem terrifying. As a colonial, and then postcolonial, British businessman working in Tanzania, he has certainly been the target of previous acts of resistance to power. What he fails to remember is that the NGO is not a business.

Esther and Gail, on the other hand, expressed grassroots leadership and partnership with Tanzanians as the explicit goal of their work. However, as research has noted, Western aid workers' desire for partnership often works as a façade for paternalism,[23] and they were not comfortable with the plan proposed by the *Kamati Kuu*. The deferral of the Tanzanian plan to a future donor managed to avoid dealing with the question of Tanzanian project leadership; by claiming that it was not possible this time, because the donor already knew what he wanted to do, they effectively took the idea off the table.

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[23] Maria Eriksson Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid* (New York: Zed Books, 2005).

Continuations

Over the past year since my research, relationships between the NGO managers and the Canadian donors have only worsened. Esther and Gail typically come to visit the NGO for the month of November. However, in 2016 they decided to come from mid-September to mid-October. It is safe to assume that they purposefully planned their visit precisely for the time Sarah and Tim would be in the United States for Sarah's brother's wedding. Sarah had emailed them the dates a year in advance, requesting that they *not* schedule their visit while Sarah and Tim would be gone. Mr. Giles responded to their email, emphasizing the importance of Esther and Gail's visit being at a time when Sarah and Tim could receive them. Instead, Esther and Gail arrived in Tanzania a week after Sarah and Tim had left for the States.

Even though Sarah emailed to ask if they had arrived safely, they did not hear from Esther and Gail for days. When they did, it was to be blamed for yet another project not going according to their plan. Earlier this year, Sarah and Tim had a Skype conversation with Esther and Gail about their plans for the year. Esther and Gail expressed a desire to provide more schools with access to books through transportable boxes that could be rotated through different schools, providing students with a box of new books each rotation. They had agreed on a general plan, and a general budget. Over the years, the NGO had received a slew of donated books, and had yet to do anything with them. The book box plan provided the perfect opportunity to put them to use. Sarah tasked a Tanzanian staff person, Musa, and a Tanzanian volunteer with the organization, Patricia, with organizing boxes of books that secondary school students would be interested in reading. Musa and Patricia spent weeks reading books, discussing the pros

and cons of including different stories, and constructed boxes of the best and most interesting. The two did not always agree; Musa was a village man who had grown up poor, attending low-income schools, and Patricia was a city woman who had always been well-off financially and attended schools with resources and connections. They poured heart and soul into choosing the best combinations of books for Tanzanian students, and were immensely proud of the boxes they compiled together.

Ten days before Sarah and Tim left for the U.S., they received an email from Esther and Gail with a list of specific books attached, and a request that they put in a $6000 order for these particular books immediately. Esther and Gail planned to use these books in the boxes, and wanted the books to arrive around the same time they themselves would be reaching the village. Sarah and Tim, planning and packing for an international trip with their four children, and busy finalizing two-month schedules for each NGO employee to enact while they were gone, had no time to order the books. In fact, they had already used much of the book box budget on other aspects of the project, and no longer had $6000 to spend.

Esther and Gail were very upset when they arrived and found the books had not been ordered. Sarah responded to their email with a detailed explanation of the process they had used to form the current boxes, and the hours of work put in by Musa and Patricia in choosing the best books. Esther and Gail responded dismissively, describing how they had more than 20 years of experience working in Africa, and had consulted with experts in Canada to choose these books, which were all by African authors—unlike

the donated books. Esther and Gail told Sarah that they were in the process of dismantling and re-doing the boxes on which Musa and Patricia had worked so hard.

Sarah and Tim were nervous about what they would find upon return to the NGO. In early October 2016, they held a large fundraiser with many wealthy individuals who have the possibility of being high-impact donors. The fundraiser itself raised over $50,000 (U.S.). Esther and Gail contribute $100,000 (Canadian) to the NGO each year. Sarah and Tim hoped to find funders that would pledge this amount for the remaining year of Esther and Gail's original ten-year promise, so that they may tell the Canadian donors, quite simply, "no." At the moment, however, NGO operations depend on Esther and Gail remaining happy enough to continue their current level of funding.

Construction of the trade school is underway, and Sarah and Tim have found a woman from Kenya with experience running trade schools to lead its operations. She also has a story to which women who work at the NGO can relate; she left an abusive husband and had to fight to make it on her own as a teacher, before single women working was a commonplace occurrence in her area. She is an inspiration for many women at the NGO, though the male teacher who will be leading sewing classes at the school balks at working under a woman. As of yet, the Children's Village has not been able to purchase any land.

SURVIVANCE AND BELONGING IN THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

Who Does the Land Belong to, and Who Belongs to the Land?

The story above could be interpreted multiple ways. One reader could think the NGO is an agent of resistance to colonial dynamics through its use of land to support and

heal the community around it; another reader could think the NGO is being resisted by the community for its colonial use of land that rightly belongs to others. One could construe the Eye of the Falcon as freedom fighters for the land; another could locate the women working at the NGO as freedom fighters *on* the land. Or, one could perceive the Children's Village as chartered precisely to occupy land in service to community desires, and another could read it as occupying land in service to donor desires. Who does the land belong to, and who belongs to the land?

I want to be careful not to put forth a singular perspective, or assume one group as more befitting to the land than others. LuMing Mao, a comparative rhetorician, may be useful in avoiding the tendency academic writing has to settle problems, and provide an answer. Mao describes facing radical difference as a meeting with incongruities. Incongruities, according to Mao, "call on us not to take at face value what is the most authentic of authentic detail or what is the most native of native knowledge,"[24] but instead to question our assumptions about the other and ourselves. The story of the NGO provides a host of incongruities that tempt us to declare who is most native—who the land belongs to—or who is most authentic—who belongs to the land. But leaving the question unsettled may offer more insight into what we think we know about the other, and what we think we know about ourselves.

Keeping the question open is therefore a matter of responsibility. As Vismeswaran argues, "What we come to know is engendered by relations of power."[25]

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[24] LuMing Mao, "Beyond Bias, Binary, and Border: Mapping out the Future of Comparative Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2013): 211.
[25] Vismeswaran, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, 77.

There is no process of learning, no process of relation that is not already political. To hold responsible to those we study requires that we take into account not only the data collected, but also the process of its collection, the relationships we formed, who we be-longed to in the midst.[26] We must remember that "whom we love is political."[27] My own love, with all its politics and faults, lies with the NGO.

However, if I allow my love for the NGO to decide the question, "Who does the land belong to, and who belongs to the land?" I will have already closed off the possibility of responsibility. In an interview, Derrida once said, "I believe that there is no responsibility, no ethico-political decision, that must not pass through the proofs of the incalculable or the undecidable. Otherwise everything would be reducible to calculation, program, causality."[28] If I decided the answer before writing this chapter, then what is the point of inquiry? Responsibility requires facing the politics of my love, the feelings it engenders toward Mr. Giles, the Eye of the Falcon, Esther and Gail, and attempt to hear the other perspectives I have foreclosed with my telling of the story. We will always fail to hear the other to some extent, but that should not stop us from trying. In order to move toward a more just world, Spivak entreats us to engage "the undecidable in the face of which we must risk the decision that we can hear the other."[29] Recognizing that we cannot ever fully hear the other *is what allows* scholars to make the decision to hear. Only because it is impossible is it worth attempting.

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[26] Carrillo Rowe, in *Power Lines* uses "be-longing" to denote the act of "being longing for" an other.
[27] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 25.
[28] Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy, trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 108.
[29] Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 199.

At the same time, there are important material concerns to this situation. Recognizing affective politics does not mean I should ignore the importance of Mr. Giles as a neocolonial presence: His distrust for Tanzanian leadership has led to the rejection of *Kamati Kuu* decisions, and a need for Sarah and Tim to hide their long-term plan of moving the organization toward Tanzanian leadership, effectively stunting large-scale changes in that direction; he does not allow Tanzanians to control NGO funds, leading to many problems with organizational operations when Sarah and Tim were in the U.S.; and, he once physically assaulted a member of Sarah and Tim's household staff. I should not ignore the neocolonial behaviors of Esther and Gail: They donated to a nonprofit to build themselves a vacation home; they reject Tanzanian decisions, because they believe they know better what Tanzanians need than Tanzanians do; they use their money to undermine leadership of the organization, so that they can maintain control of NGO operations from halfway around the world. I should not ignore the patriarchal role of the Eye of the Falcon: The Eye of the Falcon is made up entirely of men who use threatening language and physical violence to intimidate; they have verbally and physically threatened women who work at the NGO, and because of the NGO have financial independence; they targeted the NGO for attacks—where the workers are primarily village women—rather than the lodge.

For me, the question becomes: How do we integrate material and immaterial politics to make sense of the relationship between the NGO, the community, and the land? To answer this question, I take up the NGO as a locus of survivance, asking how the rhetorics that surround it can be seen as rhetorics of survivance. As rhetorics of

survivance bring together survival + resistance, or what seems instinctive and pre-subjective with the actively persuasive, in order to combat colonial injustice, they offer a means by which we can read affective politics and material politics in relation.

The NGO as a Locus of Survivance

To read the NGO as a locus of survivance, I wish to explore how it functions as a node of intersection for rhetorics of survivance coming from a variety of perspectives. In doing so, survivance can help us make sense of the contradictory interpretations of the NGO, the community, and decolonial resistance that readers could pull from the story of the Children's Village. My use of rhetoric, here, is not typical. Since survivance weaves together survival and resistance in sometimes contradictory ways, it is not an easy concept to draw out of a statement or traditional text. To find survivance in this story of the NGO, I instead think of rhetoric as both symbolic on a broader scale and pre-symbolic, drawing together the actions taken and affective states that influence the formation of subjects, contexts, and relationships in the village, and which may not be consciously intended or recognized. I focus on five rhetorics of survivance that move through the node of the NGO.

The first rhetoric of survivance is the request for community services as a condition of purchasing land. The NGO itself was born out of survivance. Rather than simply acquiesce to Mr. Giles's desire to buy land in the area, as one might out of sheer impulse to survival, or deny his request as a move of complete resistance, the village leadership allowed him to purchase land under conditions of their own determination. They required medical services, educational services, and work. In part, Mr. Giles has

fulfilled these promises through the NGO, but they continue to hold him to his word—particularly through requiring the completion of a clinic in Mikoda in order to settle the land battle.

The second rhetoric of survivance is the act of working for the NGO as women. For the 80% of the Children's Village staff that are local women, working for the NGO is both an act of survival in order to maintain the necessary financial status to care for themselves and their children, and an act of resistance against patriarchal strictures. Even in the face of harassment from the Eye of the Falcon, no one has left her work at the NGO. Instead, women continue to be the biggest advocates of the organization, and the most enthusiastic about the work being done for the community, perhaps because many of those who utilize NGO services are women. Women at the NGO have led the development of most of its programs, and continue to bring creative ideas to help the community to the table. Working at the NGO allows them an ability to direct change in the village that they otherwise might not have.

The third rhetoric of survivance is Bosco's work for both the NGO and the Eye of the Falcon. Bosco's work is quite literally split along the lines of survival and resistance; he earns a living wage from the NGO, but has no qualms verbally attacking it in order to gain a foothold in the land battle with Mr. Giles. It is interesting that the stability of his work with the Children's Village was a result of Esther and Gail's neocolonial attempts to control NGO processes themselves; if they had not offered him a five-year contract without the knowledge or permission of the NGO managers, he would not be in such a stable position for his resistant efforts in the Eye of the Falcon. In this way, Bosco,

wittingly or unwittingly, draws from neocolonialism to use it against perceived colonial occupation.

The fourth rhetoric of survivance is bringing the NGO into the land battle against Mr. Giles. The Eye of the Falcon, in order to both survive and resist, could not attack Mr. Giles head-on. When they did—in the legal land battle and the attack on the lodge land—they lost. Survival in the process of resistance required attacking Mr. Giles where he was weakest: the NGO. Now, Mr. Giles does not contribute money to the NGO, and he does not technically run the organization, but he still feels as if it is his baby, and his responsibility. When the Eye of the Falcon leveled their harassment at the NGO, even though doing so was misogynistic, they acted in line with survivance against the colonial occupation of land.

The fifth rhetoric of survivance is the attempt to use donor money to expand the NGO's land. For the Tanzanian staff of the NGO, survival as an organization could easily mean acquiescing totally to donor-desired programs and donor control. On the other hand, resistance against such control could lead to the complete dissolution of the organization. Survivance allows the Tanzanian staff to contest donor control of operations while yet attempting to secure financial security. Their move to pose the purchase of land as a requirement for the donor's own desired project was a masterful stroke of survivance. It may not have worked for the time being, but with such rhetorics at their disposal, I would be surprised if they did not accomplish their goals in the future.

CONCLUSION: SURVIVANCE, BELONGING, AND MATERIALISMS

This chapter told a story about an NGO and its relationship to land. In the complicated and sometimes contradictory story of the NGO, rhetorics of survivance helped us to locate processes of survival + resistance, and examine how various parts of the local community advocated for themselves, their loved ones, and their land. The argument that I want to pull from this analysis is not about who should own the land, or who should control it, but rather about what looking at the struggles over land as a process of survivance can reveal to us about rhetoric and rhetorical theory. In particular, I claim that focusing on rhetorics of survivance reveals the importance of thinking about both material and affective politics in concert.

I use the metaphor of "in concert" deliberately. That is, instruments can play solo and perform beautiful and meaningful music, but only together can complement each other's strengths and bring out something complex and intricate. Studies that focus on materialistic concerns of capital, ownership, and resistance are important; studies that focus on affect, pre-subjective influence, and the politics of other "instinctual" reactions provide meaningful perspectives. But I think there is also call to work the two in concert, to let two instruments that do not always play in harmony bring forth new sounds. The instruments may not always sound good together, but sometimes it takes the tension of an unresolved chord to bring out the strength and beauty of the final resolution. Final, at least, for this song: The music continues.

Here, the concept of survivance allowed us to explore a variety of perspectives, desires, and needs coming together over the NGO and its land. Rather than settle on a singular answer of who should own the land and why, by examining all the different

claims being made, I hope to open areas of reflection over our own assumptions. To put it in Mao's terms, examining rhetorics of survivance allows us to examine the incongruities that arise "between what we think we know about and can speak for the other and what has to happen in order for us to begin to know about and speak for the other."[30] Putting the incongruity in terms of old and new materialisms, I hope, allows for each rhetorical scholar to come face-to-face with what needs to happen before she can know and speak for the other. What assumptions have led each of us to the interpretations we are wont to make, and what must we question before making them?

At the end of this chapter, rather than claiming that we leave the story unsettled, perhaps we should say that the story leaves us unsettled. For the story continues from here, it has been continuing as I have written and as you have read. I hope that it is we who are unsettled in its wake. Confronting the different relationships to land, the interwoven means of survivance, should leave us questioning not the conclusion of the story, but what conclusion we wanted to make of it.

[30] Mao, "Beyond Bias," 211.

Chapter 5: The Imperialist Character of Medical Masculinity

A Miraculous Arrival

The medical student volunteers arrived after dark. We had expected them to pull into the dirt lot of the Tanzanian village organization around lunchtime. As they stepped out of the car, grinning and high-fiving each other, a few of the more vocal students fought to be the first one to tell us the story. Interrupting each other to add details, they described how there had been a miscommunication on the flight time from Dar es Salaam to the smaller city closest to this village area. The NGO had thought the plane would arrive at 10:30am, and had planned transport based on that. In reality, the plane left Dar es Salaam at that time. Because of this discrepancy, the vehicle meant for baggage transport was unavailable when the group actually arrived, so instead of sending their luggage ahead of them in a different vehicle, the medical students kept everything in the same car with them while they did some shopping in town before heading to the village.

This might have been unremarkable, except for the crowded discomfort of the car, if not for following events. The delay had put the medical students' vehicle on the single dirt road out from town around the same time as much of the local transportation. So, when a small bus headed out to the village flipped over on the road, the medical students and their two attending physicians were there within minutes to help the people injured in the accident, and luckily happened to have all of their equipment and medicine on hand.

As one of the students continued on about how "cool" it was to watch their trip leader, Dr. Greg, stitch up a wound, others exclaimed that events like this one are what they are here for. The mood was exultant. I could only come up with two ways to

interpret the comment that 'this is what they are here for': either that they are here for miraculous occurrences to happen *to* them, or they are here to *be the miracle*. The celebratory focus and jubilant descriptions obscure another side to this story. What does it mean to pose these Tanzanian villagers as lucky to have been attended to by second-year medical students? Rather than reflect on the inequalities that make a passing group of medical students these peoples' best hope at healing, or consider the ethics involved in treating people they are not legally qualified to treat in the United States, the students took up the mantle of heroes.

Two days later, I wrote in my field notes, "It might be partially because of this event that I started with a semi-negative image of the medical student group. I read them as being arrogant, hegemonically masculine, and insensitive to the people and culture around them." The medical students' performance of masculine heroism cannot be separated from its context, from the histories and cultural legacies bound up together when U.S. American medical students come to a Tanzanian village to treat patients for a week. In this chapter, I investigate how masculinity relates to neocolonialism in intercultural relationships by examining the ways in which these two different groups of medical student volunteers—one that seemed bound to expressions and performances of hegemonic masculinity, and one that was not so constricted—interacted with their Tanzanian translators. By examining how masculinity intertwines with neocolonialism in practice, I shed light on paths to decolonizing international relationships through alternative gendered performances.

Rhetorical research on masculinity has typically focused on its representations in popular culture or news media in order to draw out how hegemonic masculinity is constructed and challenged.[1] However, most of this research has had a domestic focus, examining interactions between masculinities and femininities in the United States. International relations research, on the other hand, attends to how masculinity relates to neocolonialism, but does so by focusing almost exclusively on how militarized masculinities underwrite U.S. imperial government and military affairs.[2] Such research forgoes attention to how international politics can happen in civilian relations below the state level.[3]

Drawing from both of these areas of research, in this chapter I investigate what happens when masculinities rhetorically constituted through media and a culture of militarization in the United States are expressed in a different national and cultural context, and how this may open avenues to challenge both hegemonic expressions of

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[1] Karen Lee Ashcraft and Lisa A. Flores, "'Slaves with White Collars': Persistent Performances of Masculinity in Crisis," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 23, no. 1 (2003): 1-29; Christopher Duerringer, "Be a Man—Buy a Car! Articulating Masculinity with Consumerism in *Man's Last Stand*," *Southern Communication Journal* 80, no. 2 (2015): 137-152; Kate Lockwood Harris and Jenna N. Hanchey, "(De)stabilizing Sexual Violence Discourse: Masculinization of Victimhood, Organizational Blame, and Labile Imperialism," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 11, no. 4 (2014): 322-341; Casey Ryan Kelly, "Feminine Purity and Masculine Revenge-Seeking in Taken (2008)," *Feminist Media Studies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 403-418; Mark A. Rademacher and Casey Kelly, "'I'm Here to Do Business. I'm Not Here to Play Games.' Work, Consumption, and Masculinity in *Storage Wars*," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 40, no. 1 (2016): 7-24; Jessica M. Prody, "Protesting War and Hegemonic Masculinity in Music Videos: Audioslave's 'Doesn't Remind Me,'" *Women's Studies in Communication* 38, no. 4 (2015): 440-461; Richard A. Rogers, "Deciphering Kokopelli: Masculinity in Commodified Appropriations of Native American Imagery," *Communication and Crtical/Cultural Studies* 4, no. 3 (2007): 233-255.

[2] Terrell Carver, "Men and Masculinities in International Relations Research," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (2014): 113-126; Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, *Second Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Cynthia Enloe, *The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Zillah Eisenstein, *Sexual Decoys: Gender, Race and War in Imperial Democracy* (New York: Zed Books, 2007).

[3] For an exception, see: Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*, xxi.

masculinity and neocolonial relations. By examining how hegemonic masculinity constrains the performances of one U.S. American group in relation to their Tanzanian colleagues, and when those constraints are loosened with a second group how intercultural relationships shift in important ways, I build an argument that the bounds of U.S. hegemonic masculinity constrain decolonial possibility in intercultural relationships, and that loosening the strictures of hegemonic masculinity can open space for anti-colonial relationships and encounters.

MASCULINE ANXIETIES AND IMPERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Investigations of masculinity and femininity in international and intercultural contexts are indebted to feminist scholars who first stopped to ask, "Where are the women?"[4] However, as Zillah Eisenstein has noted, simply including women does not necessarily undo patriarchy.[5] Following from the work of those who asked, "Where are the women?" I thereby take up Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's question in this piece, asking, "What is man that he was obliged to produce such a text of history?"[6]

Masculinity and Anxiety

For one thing, man and his masculinity are never complete or finalized, leaving him open to anxieties. As Anne McClintock demonstrates in her analysis of colonial art, with depictions of male mastery and power come male anxiety and paranoia.[7] That masculinity is not essential to male bodies means that they must always labor to connect

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[4] Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*.
[5] Eisenstein, *Sexual Decoys*, 93-94.
[6] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Post-Modern Condition: The End of Poltiics?," in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 33.
[7] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 26.

and re-connect masculinity to their bodies, through continual performances, in order to (attempt to) meet hegemonic standards for manliness.[8] Anxieties are thus endemic to masculinity; however, the strategies used to curtail or repress them shift with social, cultural, and historical context.

For instance, Cynthia Enloe describes how U.S. Congresspeople's deferential attitude toward the military arises from a "nervousness" and "angst" over a perceived need to be "manly" enough to maintain power in the U.S. government's masculinist culture.[9] She also traces how men's craving to perform masculinity in a way that is acceptable and believable to other men can lead to atrocities in order to maintain "male bonding."[10] Other masculinities have found it useful to embrace aspects of femininity in order to maintain dominance. For instance, Kate Lockwood Harris and I have shown how masculine imperialism, in the form of U.S. dominance over other nations, can incorporate women and aspects of femininity in order to maintain global control.[11] Whatever the response to anxiety, the thread that seems to tie all of these masculine performances together is their harmful results for surrounding women, alternative masculinities, and international Others.

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[8] Judith Butler, "Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion," in *Dangerous Liasons: Gender, Nation, & Postcolonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press (1997), 384.
[9] Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 125.
[10] Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 101-117.
[11] Harris and Hanchey, "(De)stabilizing Sexual Violence Discourse."

Masculinity and Imperialism

It should come as no surprise, then, that masculinity is part and parcel to imperialism.[12] In this chapter, I take imperialism to mean the process of one nation gaining and holding power over other nations, whether through physical invasion, economic policy, or cultural imposition. The relationship between masculinity and imperialism is so deeply taken for granted that it often does not seem to merit investigation. McClintock argues that imperialism cannot be understood separate from gender, race, and class dynamics. Although she attends to the Victorian era, other authors have extended gendered analyses of imperialism into contemporary times. Zillah Eisenstein, for example, examines how current U.S. imperialism uses women and people of color in positions of power to obscure its masculinist operations.[13]

The ways in which masculinity is bound up in imperialism have two important implications for this project. First, the relationship between masculinity and imperialism leads to a gendering of physical space. In European colonial invasions, land was often feminized and sexualized, figured as virginal and "spread" for the taking.[14] At the same time, the virginal figuring could also double as an erasure of indigenous peoples by painting the land as empty and clean. In this way, the feminizing of space is part of what allows for the violent acts of physical colonization and cultural imposition: the weakness, lack, or perceived nonexistence of the national Other requires the strong guidance of white, Western man in order to move toward development.

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[12] C. E. Gettings, ed. *Imperialism and Gender: Constructions of Masculinity* (London: Dangaroo Press, 1996).
[13] Eisenstein, *Sexual Decoys*.
[14] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 23.

This strong guidance of the white, Western man signals the second implication of the relationship between masculinity and imperialism: The two are tied through the notion of sovereignty. Joshua Gunn uses the work of Carl Schmitt to forward a theory of sovereignty as arising in the state of exception, where sovereign power is embodied in a "figure who has the power to transgress his own rules."[15] Gunn deftly demonstrates how the figure of the father is tied to the figure of the nation throughout the film *War of the Worlds*, as the father takes on a masculine responsibility of operating outside and above the law as a vigilante in order to reinstate the order and control that the nation failed to maintain. The sovereign power to operate above the law—ostensibly for the good of all or with a heroic sense of responsibility—is a type of masculinity that allows for what Teju Cole has called "the white savior industrial complex," where Westerners create the global economic systems and policies that pull resources out of African countries, and then declare themselves solely responsible for fixing such "underdeveloped" nations.[16] Thus, the fascistic masculinity that Gunn pinpointed in the film becomes neocolonial in international aid relations, as it declares sovereign control not over other citizens of the same nation, but over an entirely different people, land, and culture.

Masculinity and Ambiguity

Performances of imperialist masculinity are no less subject to anxiety than masculinity's other forms, as they are no more solid or natural. On the contrary, imperial sovereign masculinity is precariously balanced, as overly feminine demonstrations could

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[15] Joshua Gunn, "Father Trouble: Staging Sovereignty in Spielberg's War of the Worlds," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 25, no. 1 (2008): 16.
[16] Teju Cole, "The White-Savior Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic*, March 21, 2012, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/.

be seen as too weak to maintain power, and overly aggressive moves could render one subject to accusations of lacking sovereign responsibility. Importantly, this means that ambiguously-gendered performances have the potential to throw both imperialism and masculinity off-balance.

Judith Butler explains that gender can never be performed perfectly or finally, and that concomitant with every gendered performance is the possibility that it could always have been otherwise. Specifically, she says, it is "the nonspace of cultural collision"[17] that opens the potential for reworking gendered performances and expectations. The cultural complexities of international experiences, I suggest, provide such a space for ambiguous performances that take advantage of the ambivalence of gendered and national interrelations.

In this chapter, I suggest that by pulling at the knots that bind masculinity to imperialism, space is opened for decolonial possibilities. Imperial masculinity, in its sovereignty, rests on a notion of the subject as an autonomous individual. When this perspective is altered, when the subject is seen as radically dependent on the systems and subjects around her for her being, a type of responsibility to the Other opens up that is very different from that expected by sovereignty.[18] Rather than taking up responsibility for others as a hero, emboldened by one's masculine power to save others—and the day—the type of responsibility necessitated by relationality is one that no subject can

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[17] Butler, "Gender is Burning," 383.
[18] Diane Davis, *Inessential Solidarity: Rhetoric and Foreigner Relations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

ever fully meet.[19] In other words, subjects become radically indebted to those around them. Loosening masculinity allows for a greater attunement to others, and such attunement could lead to decolonial relations.

MEDICAL CARE AT THE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE

When the Children's Village first came into being about a decade ago, orphan care and HIV/AIDS treatment were the foremost issues in the village area. Last measure put the rate of HIV infection at 35% of the local population.[20] Given this alarming need, the organization's healthcare projects over the past ten years have focused almost exclusively on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment. Now that more and more HIV+ adults in the village are on consistent medication, and living longer lives, other health issues are becoming increasingly prevalent. Thus, the Children's Village has recently begun to build and supply a local clinic. The only problem is there are very few people with any sort of medical training in the area with whom to staff it.

As luck would have it, in the spring of 2014, a medical student group at a public U.S. university were told that they could not take their upcoming trip to Kenya, and needed to find a new site for their annual summer medical mission trip. A friend of some of the students happened to know Sarah and Tim, and put the two groups in contact. In the summer of 2014, the first group of medical student volunteers came to hold clinics at and around the Children's Village for a week. They enjoyed the experience so much that they promised to come back the following year, in addition to the annual new team. As a researcher in the summer of 2015, I was able to interact with both the returning group of

[19] Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*, 122.
[20] This number is drawn from surveys commissioned by the organization.

now second-year medical students, and the new team of first-year medical students, as they worked with translators to run clinics in the village area for a week each.

The relationship between the medical student volunteers and the translators with whom they worked played an integral role in how the clinics operated. The translators were trained by the NGO initially to work with research projects in the area. English is primarily taught and spoken in secondary school in Tanzania, so most of the translators have either just recently completed their initial or advanced secondary studies, or have kept up English training since. Language use in the area tends to aggregate by age: older villagers primarily or only speak the tribal language; middle-age villagers speak both the local tribal language and Swahili, with perhaps a few additional English words; younger villagers will have learned some English in school, but speak mostly Swahili, and struggle to understand the tribal language beyond the basics. The work of the translators, then, is imperative to ensuring quality care for those who attend the clinics. However, this importance was not registered equally by both of the medical groups.

The first medical student group to arrive, the team of second-year students, swept in on a heroic high of having saved a vehicle-full of lives, and carried that attitude through the week with them. Two men led this group: Dr. Greg, considered an expert in medical mission trips, and a student named Hunter. The remainder of the group included five men and two women, as well as two women nurses and a supporting doctor, Dr. Baker, a woman who would then be the leading doctor for the second group. Most of this group had come to the NGO the previous year, and were further along in their medical studies than the second group. For whatever reasons, this group's gendered performances

seemed tightly bound by imperialist versions of hegemonic masculinity, particularly showcased in the treatment of the translators as tools to be utilized efficiently to get work done—effectively undermining the value of the translators as people.

The second medical student group differed from the first in significant ways. Led by two women doctors, and comprised of all women medical students with the exception of two men, for much of the group this was their first volunteer trip abroad. The group's gendered performances were not as constrained as the first group's own to an imperialist masculinity. This group relied on their translators as partners, listened to the translators' thoughts, and considered their work primarily as an ethical dilemma rather than an exercise in efficiency.

In this chapter, I trace how imperialist masculinity constrained the first group to colonizing relationships with translators, and how the loosened restrictions of masculinity opened opportunities for more just relationships in the second. For this specific part of the project, I analyzed field notes, interviews, and conversations. The interviews included four with individual medical volunteers, and four with individual translators. The conversations then include multiple group debriefs with each full medical student team, casual conversations with smaller groups of medical volunteers, and a formal meeting with the translators in between the departure of the first group and the arrival of the second. Some of the interviews and conversations are in Swahili, which I transcribed in Swahili, and later translated. All told, I collected 240 single-spaced pages of transcripts and field notes regarding the two medical student groups, their translators, and my interactions with all of them. In the following section, I weave these texts together to

demonstrate first how masculinity can constrain volunteers to neocolonial relationships, and second how the ability to perform otherwise can open decolonial possibility.

MASCULINITY AND IMPERIALISM: TWO CASES OF MEDICAL VOLUNTEERS

Sovereignty, Control, and Fragility: Holding to Masculinity, Encouraging Imperialism

The gendered performances of the first group of medical students to arrive seemed tightly bound by hegemonic conventions of U.S. masculinity. In the context of intercultural relationships between the U.S. medical students and Tanzanian translators and patients, such performances continually reinforced neocolonial power structures. In this section, I analyze how their performances showcased three aspects of masculinity—sovereignty, control, and fragility—and how these became forces of neocolonial relation in this particular context.

Sovereignty

At 8 a.m. on Sunday mornings, the sun is just beginning to crest the hills to the east of the Children's Village. Sarah had boiled water, and was letting the French-press coffee brew while breathing deeply of the chilly June air and enjoying the quiet. Workweeks in the village area are six days long, with a day off for most people on Sunday—Saturday for the Seventh Day Adventists. Living on the NGO grounds, Sarah often had people coming to her home with work requests at odd hours; Sunday each week offered a much-needed chance to relax. And with infant twins in the home, peaceful time alone was difficult to get.

A knock at the door shattered her reverie. Dr. Greg and four medical student men had decided that they did not want to do the activity planned for the group that morning, which was going to church with their translators, and had come to ask Sarah to arrange a fishing outing for them with the Giles' retreat lodge instead. I was staying with Sarah and Tim, and was quite shocked to find guests at the door so early on a Sunday morning. Later that day, I wrote in my field notes that Dr. Greg and the medical students seemed "to not take into account the people around them, and how their 'needs' and requests might greatly inconvenience other people."

As described above, masculine sovereignty functions as above or outside the laws that constrain other people. Here, Dr. Greg and his compatriots not only considered themselves able to shirk the plans that had been made by the NGO for them that morning, but they also deemed themselves and their leisure activity important enough that those around them should forgo relaxation in order to provide last-minute arrangements for them. I use this event as an exemplar for attitudes, comments, and interactions displayed by the majority of the group throughout the week, but there are a myriad of other examples. For instance, the students often complained that their transportation did not take them straight to the clinics where they were working each day, but stopped along the way to pick up patients who could not walk or pay for transportation themselves. Although it is common in Tanzania for transportation to never be fully private and ridesharing is expected, the medical students seemed to feel this was demeaning, and grumbled about being "a shuttle service."

In sum, the masculine sovereignty in this assumption that the medical group is or should be the main priority leads to two particularly salient types of interaction with other people. Masculine sovereignty, in placing one above the laws constraining others, either leads to a paternalistic responsibility for others who ostensibly need saving, or a dismissive treatment of others and their work as less important or even unimportant. When performed in this context—where the host country has a history of colonization, where predominantly white bodies are laboring to save or fix black bodies,[21] and where the visiting peoples come from a nation centered on an ideology of exceptionalism[22]—masculine sovereignty catalyzes and constitutes neocolonialism through paternalism toward and relegation of Tanzanian others.

The paternalistic responsibility for others was clearest in the treatment of patients. Take for example a young woman that came to the clinic with her father. Dr. Baker described her in a daily debrief as "doing a two-week freak-out on her family," where her behavior had suddenly changed such that at times she wouldn't speak and would "sometimes go into fits of rage." She then continued that it was important to find out "what has happened to her, who has hurt her" in order to solve this young woman's strange condition. After finding out that her family had stopped paying her school fees, one medical student exclaimed, "If we only had some cash on us right now!" to which others replied "Right?" and "Yeah!" To the medical team, this seemed like an easily identifiable problem that one often hears about in connection with the developing world:

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[21] All members of the group appeared to be white, with the exception of one Indian-American man.
[22] Jenna N. Hanchey, "Constructing 'American Exceptionalism': Peace Corps Volunteer Discourses of Race, Gender, and Empowerment," in *Volunteering and Communication Volume II: Studies in International and Intercultural Contexts*, eds. Michael W. Kramer, Laurie K. Lewis, and Loril M. Gossett (New York: Peter Lang, 2015), 233-250.

young women being denied schooling by their parents, whether by dint of conservatism or poverty. The simple solution, then, is for the medical team to pay the school fees, since they are sure not to be very expensive in middle-class U.S. American terms, and by doing so this young woman's future can be secured.

However, Sarah immediately interrupted this train of thought by forcefully requesting, "please *don't* give cash." She explained that though this sudden behavior shift in a teenage girl might seem out of place to the medical team, it is actually quite common in the area. When young women are found out to have a boyfriend, parents cut off school fees out of concern the young woman will get pregnant and their money will have gone to waste, leading to the drastic behavior changes and displays of anger.[23] With the quick option to saving the young woman removed, the medical team did not seem interested in continuing the conversation. Instead, Dr. Greg quickly said, "I'll just kind of follow-up," before moving into praise for the care and concern shown by the nurses and women doctors that day. The paternalistic attitude toward the situation led to jumping to quick conclusions in order to save the day. However, when they were forced to think beyond immediate assumptions and easy solutions into more complex territory, the project was abandoned. As I will describe in more detail later, there is a sense of fragility to these masculine savior displays.

A sense of responsibility toward Tanzanian others was not only displayed in moments such as this, but also continuously re-emphasized through declarations about

[23] Until 2010 in Tanzania, pregnant women were expelled from school and not allowed to continue their studies at a public school after giving birth. Although this law has been changed, stigma continues to have much the same effect as the law, particularly in rural contexts. Arnaud Bébien, "EDUCATION-TANZANIA: Pregnant Teens Forced Out of School," Inter Press Service News Agency, March 10, 2010, http://www.ipsnews.net/2010/03/education-tanzania-pregnant-teens-forced-out-of-school/.

the group's purpose. Throughout the week, the medical volunteers were constantly repeating comments such as: "I mean, that's why we're here. To give back and to help people;" "I'm here to treat, more than to build relationships, really;" "I'm here for one purpose, you know, like I'm trying to work 100% of the time, like, as much as possible." Their words were accompanied by actions such as working through lunch and past sunset in order to see as many patients as possible, ignoring my requests for interviews out of a sense that it would be a waste of their valuable time, and skipping over greetings in patient interactions in order to move quickly through to diagnoses. Their intense focus on a perceived responsibility to treat patients may seem laudable, but it worked through an exclusion of any other foci as interruptions to that work. For one, the focus of their work pushed the fact that they were only second-year medical students, not legally allowed to treat patients in the U.S., to the background. In addition, this focus functioned through a dismissal of Tanzanian customs and translators' cultural knowledge.

In this case, then, the sense of paternalistic responsibility is tied to actions that relegate Tanzanian people and cultural knowledge to a place of less importance. That is, thinking of oneself as a sovereign subject in an intercultural context seems to require relegating cultural others to object status.[24] The most palpable example of this phenomenon is the way this group handled translator assignments. Rather than each individual medical worker having his or her own translator that they worked with

[24] In this way, the relation of the white volunteer men interacting with black Tanzanians was significantly different than racist relations between white men and black men in the United States. Rather than infantilizing, as in the U.S. might happen through use of terms such as "boy," here the male patients and translators were primarily objectified.

throughout the week, translators were constantly picked up and discarded for one task or another—they were viewed as tools that enabled the medical students to do their work.

However, thinking of the translators as objective tools able to be interchangeably traded instead of subjective partners who also assist actively in the work being done led to both struggles for the Tanzanian translators and problems with the quality of work. One translator named Denis described how being traded between doctors was difficult for them:

> Because—like I met with the doctor the first day. And I need to study what he likes and what he doesn't like. So I know that this is my doctor. And we know each other, so it will be easy for me to process with this doctor. But when the time comes to change, to go to the new doctor, you're—you need to study, to start again studying each other. So that is…a challenge.

Other translators such as Happy and Idda explained that they had trouble understanding people who were talking too fast at first, but if they were able to get used to the style of a single speaker, they could better understand what they were saying at a fast pace. Innocent and Damas added that spending time with one medical student was not only important to understand them, but also to know how to communicate back with them, as certain medical students prized brevity in answers and others desired as much detailed explanation as possible. The translators explained that they had to take care in explanations in order not to annoy their medical worker.

However, the medical students often did not notice the burden placed upon the translators by the shifting assignments. Because their attention was consumed by the primary goal of seeing as many patients as possible, if the translator each had been working with was detained—by something such as taking too long to eat lunch, or being

called by a patient who requested a female translator—the medical student saw the time wasted while waiting for his or her translator to return as a larger problem than simply grabbing another one. Some even saw the interchangeability of translators as fun, allowing them to meet new people. No medical worker verbalized in debrief meetings or in interviews that they had any concept that this placed a burden on the translators.

Since the translators were seen as tools to be utilized for the medical students to do *their* work, translator knowledge about culture and context were often dismissed as extraneous. The construct of what "the job" is was constituted by the U.S. Americans, and constrained how they thought it should be approached. For instance, Mustafa, the medical officer at the NGO, interrupted one of the medical student debrief meetings to talk to Sarah. She then asked for his opinion on a question about birth control that had been raised by one of the nurses. As he began to speak in Swahili, with Sarah translating, about birth control options in the village and the systemic issues with family planning, many of the men tuned out and began their own whispered conversations. The first two to do so were the student leadership of the team. This is not only demonstrative of a masculinist notion that birth control is a women's issue, but also a U.S.-centric belief that the work that they do in the village is not affected by cultural constraints or systemic issues, and that as workers who are only here for a week, they do not need to understand the Tanzanian village context in order to do their work well. It is telling that Mustafa had not been asked to participate in the meeting in the first place. As the person in charge of village medical outreach as well as the NGO clinic, his knowledge of medicine in the area could be seen as integral to the project. However, when U.S. masculine sovereignty

defines U.S. medical workers and their understanding of the job as primary, Tanzanian knowledge and concerns are pushed to the background.

Control

Masculine sovereignty is premised on an ability to maintain control. The medical workers must continually demonstrate that they are in control in order to perform the masculine figure of responsibility, acting outside of the law in order to save and protect others. Of course, as with any masculine performance, having control over situations and people is an unstable fiction that must be constantly bolstered. In this case, maintaining control often took the form of disavowing Tanzanian skill or agency.

Walking into the community hall on the day of the first clinic, I first noticed the lace and flowers draped around the edge of the stage. As the largest meeting place in the village, this building held most important community events—including nearly all weddings. Kept to the side, the decorations would not affect the tables placed on the stage to act as a pharmacy. All the work of diagnoses would happen in the three small rooms behind the stage, as well as makeshift "private" areas in the folds of the curtains, secluded enough to see patients who had minor wounds and injuries. In front of the stage, the majority of the hall was filled with rows upon rows of brightly-colored plastic chairs. At 8 a.m. the first few rows were already filled; by noon the room would hold hundreds of patients from miles around.

The first task when met with a large number of patients to be seen in a relatively short period of time is to triage—have one person take down the basic information of the patient and their primary complaint. If this is done while the patients are waiting to be

admitted to the limited examination space, it saves time so that patients can be seen and diagnosed more quickly. On the first day of clinic, the medical workers had not started triaging immediately; they did not realize they needed to until mid-day. Later that evening, in the debrief meeting, one of the nurses described why she started to triage in order to remove pressure from the medical students seeing patients: "Well, it's like, I know one thing is you've got to spell out, like, names, and I'm like, oh my gosh! I can't imagine! That takes like five minutes for somebody to just—for the translator to give you every letter of their name. I have no clue how to spell their names or even what they're saying." Although the medical students all lauded her work and the time that she saved them, I wondered why no one thought to simply hand the notebook to the translator, and let them write the name.

Similarly, later in the meeting, the doctors were planning how to communicate with each other when the team split into four groups the following day to do clinics and home-visits in two different village areas. They were concerned that they only had two phones, and were discussing how they could get access to a third, when I interrupted and asked if they had considered that the translators also had phones. The idea that the translators could also call or text each other, or the medical group phones, had not occurred to them.

In both of these examples, the medical workers have a need to maintain control of operations, even when the Tanzanian translators would be better able to perform the task at hand. In part, this need is connected to the sovereign aspect of masculinity and its need to center the U.S. individual at the expense of Tanzanian knowledge—that the translators

could possibly have something to offer to their work, other than the singular act of translation, does not enter their minds. A suitable masculine performance requires holding control, and not ceding it to cultural others.

When masculinity influences U.S. Americans to hold control over Tanzanians in their own country, the neocolonial implications are clear. To the translators, this registered as a feeling that they were not really considered part of the team, leading to frustration at not being allowed to help to the fullest extent. For instance, when I asked Innocent what he had learned from his experience translating, he said he learned that "cooperation is the best thing in solving anything." He went on to describe how the medical team worked together so well, even though "some of them are doctors, some of them are school of medicine [meaning medical students]…Asking questions to each other—even the doctors, like Dr. Greg, Dr. Baker, Shelley, Becky, Tiffany and others—they are cooperating so well." Painting a picture of cooperation as something that only occurred between the medical workers, Innocent seemed to imply that Tanzanians were not a part of the team. In a different interview, Happy made this view explicit. When waiting for the transportation to arrive in the mornings, and while traveling to the clinics, Happy is frustrated that the medical workers do not usually talk with the translators. She explains, "Sometimes I feel a little angry, thinking why are they speaking just to each other when we're here as a team!" She went on to narrate how each morning, when preparing to leave for clinic, the U.S. medical workers will load the bags of supplies and medicines into the cars themselves, without asking the Tanzanian translators for help. This upsets her, because she feels that if they were really working as a team, the medical

workers would invite the translators to assist. It is also telling that she talks about how uncomfortable her and the other translators are stepping in themselves; there is a feeling that they are not wanted.[25]

Insidiously, the performances of mastery and control at some points make the Tanzanian translators question their ability to help in areas other than the singular skill the medical group seems to allow them. For instance, when I asked Innocent if there are ways for cooperation to be improved in the group, the means that he gave is to prepare better translators. He then emphasized the importance of the translator as "he or she makes sure a good connection between patient and doctor." In other words, the task of the translator is to work as a conduit, a tool that allows for the connection of patient and doctor. Even Innocent seems to accept the premise that the translators are tools that allow the medical students to do *their* work. Happy also describes how sometimes the patient, after the medical student has gone to check his diagnosis with either Dr. Greg or Dr. Baker, will suddenly tell her something else that is wrong, that the patient had been holding back from the medical student. Happy said that this put her in an uncomfortable position, because when she told the medical student they would often be frustrated and annoyed at the further use of time, and she felt it to be taken out on her. Happy felt like she was bothering the medical students to bring it up, and would sometimes simply not tell them because of this.

[25] As far as gender relations were felt by the Tanzanian translators, it is important to note that the women were far more bothered by the lack of felt teamwork or connection between the medical students and translators than the men.

The medical worker attempts to control time, and keep everything moving efficiently also made the translators uncomfortable in other circumstances. When asked what they had learned about U.S. Americans from this experience, nearly every translator first noted, "They care a lot about time." The focus on schedules and efficiency is alien to the cultural norms of Tanzanian society, and the translators had to adjust in order to keep the medical workers from becoming frustrated. Yet, even though they knew of the importance of time to U.S. Americans, and worked hard to operate in a way that suited the visitors, they still had a difficult time predicting in advance the situations in which this care for time was relevant.

Every day the medical workers and Tanzanian translators would drive out to a different village area and hold a clinic. The U.S. medical workers were given sack lunches with peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, hard-boiled eggs, carrots, and cookies. The translators, not caring for such Western food, were given money to find a café in the village area from which to buy food. Often this required driving ten or so minutes up the road at a designated lunchtime, ordering the food, waiting while it was prepared, eating, and returning. The translators were often gone for an hour. They were unprepared for the animosity it bred with the medical students. As one student put it, "The Tanzanians were kinda dicking around and stuff, and I would be a little frustrated." Although the translators recognized the problem and felt uncomfortable that the medical students were so upset by waiting for them, the translators did not know how to be better with time. As Happy put it, "Us Tanzanians, we don't know time!...We don't know! We eat, we sit awhile, we rest, but our friends [the medical workers] go by time." Another translator,

Idda, unwilling to cope with the discomfort of the situation, started cooking her own lunch at night after finishing work, and bringing it with her the following day.

Control is not something the U.S. Americans have, but is instead a performance that masculinity desires in order to secure an unstable sovereignty and power over the law and others. Perhaps this is why the inability to control Tanzanian translator use of time frustrated the medical students. In the next section, I look at examples of where the fragility of masculinity comes through, and the ways the medical students attempted to address their anxieties stemming from the inability to perform imperial masculinity perfectly or finally.

Fragility

The morning after the medical group arrived, I trudged up the hill from Pasheni, the house where the leaders of the group and I were staying, to House 4, where the students and nurses roomed. Although I had helped the house mamas to meal-plan last week based on housing location, Dr. Greg insisted the group eat together at all meals—even the first breakfast immediately following their late-night arrival. I, as the odd-man out, figured that meant I should also eat with them. In the courtyard of the house, I greeted the house mamas, and then entered to find the medical workers split between two tables: one of younger students, and one including the older people: two doctors, two nurses and some students. I hovered around the older table sipping coffee, since there was no room for me to sit. From the other side of the room, I caught the end of someone's complaint: "…yeah, and there's just like this roll with some butter and a tiny bit of jam on it, an egg, and a couple carrots and that's it!" I realized that they were talking about

their packed lunches. Insulted on behalf of the house mamas, whom I had assisted with their work and knew its magnitude, I bristled.

Since I was then listening more closely to conversation at the other table, I overheard a student who had not come the year before asking a man from the young table where she should put used coffee grounds. He said confidently, "Oh, just throw them over the fence." Turning, I caught her eye, and suggested she should ask the house mamas what they usually do with coffee grounds. She asked and found that there is a compost system in which the coffee grounds are a useful addition.

Masculinity requires maintenance to stay in place; constant reiterations through performance are required to keep a masculine identity seemingly stable. But the pressure of hegemonic masculinity to perform consistently and in an acceptable manner means that masculinity is fragile, imminently susceptible to failure. As described earlier, this fragility produces an anxiety that, predominantly, men answer in a variety of ways. The comments I heard at that first breakfast both point to this fragility: one functions as a demonstration of masculine toughness in that one has to do long hours of exhausting work on such terrible food, and the other as a response to anxiety that sovereignty may not be as complete as it seems through a need to provide answers even if one does not have them.

The fragility of U.S. masculinity was often displayed through discomfort at times where the medical group felt out of control or that their sovereignty was usurped. For instance, Happy noticed the medical students' discomfort when the translators would be talking together and Swahili and laughing. She says, "Yes, we are translators, but aren't

we also Tanzanian?" meaning that Tanzanians are friendly people who love to talk and laugh. She also mentions that in the car rides to the various clinic sites, the U.S. medical workers often sit silently, so she ends up talking with other Tanzanians, because they are the only ones talking. Happy identifies this as a "challenge" in the work, since she can see that it causes tension, but she does not know how to make the relationships between them better.

A more consequential example of masculinity's fragility lies in the way the medical students dealt with diseases that they did not have the means to treat. One evening, when the medical team met to debrief the day, a student started by describing "an interesting case" of testicular cancer he had seen that day. He said, "It was kinda sad to see it," as there was "just kinda nothing that we could do about it," and since the untreated tumor had progressed far enough that one testicle was the size of a softball. Until this point, the conversation had centered on the disease as a case, like one might find in a textbook, and abstracted it to the point where the Tanzanian man whose life and body they were talking about faded into the background. Sarah interrupted this trend, and asked point-blank: "Did you tell him that he has cancer?" The student responded, "I told him that we thought he had a tumor and that we are planning on bringing a surgeon back next year, and that we would like to take a picture so we can show the surgeon so that when we come back next year we could hopefully take care of it." He later quietly added, "He won't make it a year."

This example is one case of many over the week where the medical students were afraid or unwilling to tell patients that they had untreatable diseases. They voiced concern

to a U.S. college student volunteer that the Tanzanian patients would be angry, or might blame them for giving the disease, and so it's better simply not to tell them. The racist paternalism of this attitude is quite pronounced, as the predominantly white U.S. Americans claim the ability to withhold information about the health of black Tanzanians for their own good. However, *why* they feel the need to do so is not initially clear. Even supposing that Tanzanians did blame the medical workers for their disease, or were angry at the diagnosis, why should this be a problem? What harm could angering a Tanzanian villager that one will never see again possibly bring? What are the U.S. medical workers afraid of? To start, withholding that someone is terminally ill can only be "for his own good" if there is first a grounding assumption of the medical worker's superiority over the Tanzanian patient, which allows him to make those decisions. Imperialist masculinity certainly works in this fashion, but the sovereignty of this identity also calls for control, answers: an ability to save. The reason the medical workers did not want to disclose that patients had terminal diseases, I suggest, is that they could not face the corresponding threat to their sovereign masculinity. Without an ability to save or fix the patients, their performance of sovereignty faltered. Thus, when the *sovereign* aspect of masculinity could not be met, the medical workers fell into an excessive performance of the *imperial* aspect of masculinity.

Encounters with fragility often lead to excessive demonstrations of masculinity as a means to combat attendant anxieties. Among the medical workers themselves, this entailed conversations about how "cool" and "awesome" it is to be seeing patients they wouldn't be allowed to treat unsupervised the in U.S. As I have written about in my

Master's thesis work, U.S. aid workers have a tendency to such logic, suggesting that they should be lauded for doing work *precisely because* they do not know what they are doing, or do not have the proper training. Passion, ingenuity, and persistence are presented as viable alternatives to skill and preparation.[26] The desire to perform sovereign masculinity is threatened by the fact that most of these medical workers have only just finished their second year of medical school, and do not have the required education to treat patients. Consider the following interchange with Ken:

> *Jenna*: So what do you see as your role in coming here?
> *Ken*: Providing healthcare.
> *Jenna*: Providing healthcare that isn't accessible?
> *Ken*: Yeah, I'm here to treat, more than to build relationships, really. I'm here, like, I'm a doctor—I mean, I want to be a doctor. That's what I want to do. Go and see as many people as possible.

Ken, and many of the other medical workers, slipped into the habit of referring to themselves as "doctors" throughout the week, in part because it was easier to translate than "medical student." However, assuming the title of doctor before it is earned can be seen as another type of excessive performance of masculinity, one that is reliant on being in a so-called under-developed country, treating patients who are considered too uneducated or poor to complain about being treated by under-skilled workers.

Such excessive performances of masculine skill to hide fragility can also help explain the treatment of Mustafa. As a nurse-midwife, Mustafa is the only person with medical experience in the Children's Village, and is the second highest-trained in the village area. There is no question that his education pales in comparison to that of the

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[26] Jenna N. Hanchey, "A Postcolonial Analysis of Peace Corps Volunteer Narratives: The Political Construction of the Volunteer, Her Work, and Her Relationship to 'The Host Country National,'" (master's thesis, University of Colorado Boulder, 2012), 88-92.

doctors. However, he often seemed to be treated as a threat by the medical group. As I noted above, he was not invited to debrief meetings, and his opinions were not only rarely regarded, but also actively talked over. In addition, a college-age U.S. woman volunteering at the NGO found herself caught in the middle of the tension between a man in the group and Mustafa, as both would work to out-do the other in flirtation and attention to her. Mustafa poses a threat to the medical workers because of the hold that U.S. imperialist masculinity has on them. He shows the fragility of their control over the medical operations in the village, as he has much more cultural knowledge than they do, and his very position at the NGO is a reminder that he will be there working in the area with these very same patients long after they are gone. He serves as a reminder that people are not simply saved and the job is not simply done when they board the plane to return back to the U.S. Mustafa, as a figure, threatens the very basis of imperial masculinity: the ability to save people who cannot save themselves. Mustafa cannot be included as a helpful cultural liaison, a wealth of understanding of how medicine works and is lacking in Tanzanian village contexts, without facing the fragility of their ability to help, let alone save, people in the village, and that this ability is dependent upon others.

The final evening of their stay, the medical workers, Sarah and Tim, and the other U.S. volunteers currently staying at the NGO put on our most fancy Tanzanian clothing and rode up the hill to the expatriate retreat lodge for drinks and dinner. After dining, we gathered by the fireplace so the medical students could discuss which patients would be receiving referrals to get advanced treatment in a city hospital, or even transported to the capital of Dar es Salaam if the need was dire. The medical students had worked

throughout the school year raising funds to distribute, but there were not enough for everyone who needed help. Decisions must be made. To the chagrin of the medical students, some referrals were needed for patients who had been on the list last year. When the NGO staff had narrated for them the day before how each of last year's referred patients were doing, the medical students had been quite upset: many patients had arrived at hospitals only to be turned away again, others discovered the requisite surgeon had moved, and more had been unable to leave their families for so long a time. The medical students had been deflated, a final challenge to their masculine savior abilities leveled. Yet, tonight, the air was again jovial. They had more money to give, and a chance to leave with a clean slate, before they could hear their gifts were unable to secure the proper results.

Relationality, Uncertainty, and Care: Breaking the Bonds of Masculinity, Opening Decolonial Paths

The second group of medical students, on the other hand, did not operate with the same savior mindset as the first. In fact, the group seemed unbound by the conventions of U.S. hegemonic masculinity. Many of the ways they related with the Tanzanian translators and patients, as well as the NGO staff, broke away from the constraining masculine expectations that drove the first group. Through performances of relationality, uncertainty, and care, the second group of medical volunteers shirked imperial masculinity in a way that created space for decolonial opportunity.

Relationality: Challenging Sovereignty

Stepping out of the small airport, invariably each person in the newly-arrived medical group looked around them, taking in the rolling hills and dry, dusty roads. I did not need to signal them to walk towards me; our van was the only one in the parking lot. I introduced myself, and helped them load their luggage into the vehicle. Unlike the first group, these students responded with interest to the description of my research, and asked me questions to gather more detail.

We stopped in town to buy some comfort food supplies for the week, and then headed out on the main road that we would eventually leave to turn towards the NGO. First, however, Sarah had requested that we stop by a farm run by a Zimbabewean couple, as it is the only place in the area where she can purchase produce such as lettuce, mushrooms, and beets. We exited the main road at the proper place, but after driving around dirt roads for about half an hour we realized we were lost. The driver stopped to ask directions, but we were still confused about how to tell the dirt road that led to the farm from all the others in the unchanging landscape of ankle-height grass peppered sparsely with trees. Finally, we talked with the farmer on the phone, and he agreed to meet us at the main road with the boxes of produce. After an hour-long fool's errand, we were back on our way to the NGO.

I was surprised to find that—after an extra hour of driving, out of the way, to buy food for someone else—the medical students were pleasant and uncomplaining. They did not express annoyance at being a "shuttle-service," but rather were pleased to be able to do a favor for someone they had not even met. The second group of medical workers did not act in a way beholden to a notion of sovereignty, but instead challenged the

assumptions of singular individuals, able to act alone and above the law to save. This group seemed particularly attuned to relationality in their encounters, and how work such as theirs could only be successful as a collective endeavor.

Consider, for instance, the way they related to the translators. In between the two medical groups' visits, Sarah and I had held a meeting with the translators to gauge what worked well in the first week, and what we could change to make things better for the translators with the second group. The translators all agreed that it would be far easier for them if they were able to work with one medical student for the whole week. This had, originally, been the plan for the first medical group as well; however, trading translators like so many available tools had quickly become the norm. Happy registered this use of translators as tools by differentiating between when the first medical group treated her as a *translator* from when they treated her as a *person.* Singling out Dr. Baker from the first group, Happy explained how she would provide explanations of medical issues, saying she "didn't just treat me like a translator," but took time to build a relationship with her.

Dr. Baker stayed for two weeks in the Children's Village after when the first group left, and remained to lead the second group when they arrived. On the night following the first day of clinic, she facilitated a reflection session including the all the medical students *and* translators, Sarah and Tim, Mustafa, and myself. Each of the medical students sat next to her translator. Rather than asking what "interesting cases" the medical workers had seen that day, Dr. Baker asked, quite simply, "Does anyone have something they want to share?" Although medical questions certainly came up, many of the students shared feelings that they had, celebrated their translators' hard work, and

asked Mustafa about cultural issues. In this way, the work that had been done that day was portrayed as a partnership utilizing the skills of the medical students, the translators, and the NGO staff.

Kelly, the first medical student to speak, described how she was surprised by "how uncomfortable [she] could be while helping at the same time." She had performed her first vaginal exam on a patient that morning, and she saw it as providing a moment of connection: "But I also—the same lady—got to talk to about getting HIV testing. And I feel like after that, like, intimate moment we *shared* something. So we were in a weird way bonded, and we had a long talk." Kelly finished, adding, "It was terrifying and wonderful at the same time." Whereas the first medical group had seen any extra time used talking as wasteful, or distracting from the "real" work, Kelly provides a perspective on medical work *as* relationality. Kelly did not think of her work primarily as saving or fixing this patient, but being able to connect with her through the process of medical assistance. By seeing the intimacy of connection as "terrifying and wonderful," Kelly did not hold herself up as a sovereign subject, a lone individual above others and the rules that constrain them, but located herself in the thick of relational complexity. In a second reflection time later in the week, another medical student echoed this approach. Carrie, detailing her challenge of the day, explained: "I had this lady who had HIV and there wasn't really much wrong with her, but she was just very sad at the test. And she just wanted to sit there and talk to me." Carrie took the time to talk with the patient, even though there was nothing physical that she could do for her, because she recognized that medical work is not simply about healing physical ailments.

The medical group wove this assumption throughout their experiences, treating language and cultural concerns as an important part of the work being done, and thereby relying heavily on the translators for advice and assistance. In the following exchange at the first debrief meeting, the medical students profess their dependence on the translators and Mustafa in order to provide ethical and quality care to patients:

> *Dr. Baker*: Was everyone okay with the level of independence we gave you today? Was it surprising, was it scary?
> *Samantha*: I was surprised by it. Um, I thought that…it was a lot more independence than that—than we would have. I just, I don't know. I didn't expect to…sit and do the whole history and my physical, everything by myself, and then come check with an attending. I thought we would be kind of surveilled the whole time.
> *Dr. Lewis*: Do you wish you had more supervision during it? Did you feel uncomfortable with it?
> *Samantha*: Um, no. I felt good about it. Because I felt like I had kind of a built-in supervisor in my translator. You know? Like, somebody's there to help.
> *Dr. Baker*: Not their first rodeo!
> *Samantha*: Yeah! They know what's going on too, and then I felt like you guys were pretty approachable.
> ….
> *Kelly*: I was really worried that like our inexperience would give like lower-level care. But it ended up being like our input, and you guys' input, and the translators, sometimes Dr. Mustafa. I felt like we were working more together and had more ideas than most patients would ever get. Like having different perspectives on the problem.

For this group of students, the translators are more than simply tools, they are partners in providing quality care. Having the input of the translators is what allows for the students to feel comfortable ethically with treating patients on such little education. It is also worth noting that this group consistently referred to Mustafa as Dr. Mustafa, switching to whom the upgraded education label was applied. Instead of seeing Mustafa as a threat, they saw him as a valuable resource into cultural knowledge, and asked him questions throughout the debrief time, listening carefully to his translated answers.

Each of the debrief times ended in a short Swahili or tribal language lesson. From the first day of arrival, the group had been excited about learning Swahili in order to be able to greet the patients and make them feel comfortable in clinic. The translators emphasized the importance of this in their meeting before the second group's arrival. By the first debrief, Dr. Baker was already able to ask, "Translators, did the students use greetings today?" and have Francis hurriedly assure her, "Of course!" as the other translators laughed and chorused, "Yes!" She then turned to Sarah, coaxing, "You promised us you would teach us a little bit more everyday…" as the students exclaimed "Yeah!" This group was excited to learn Swahili and the tribal language as they understood the importance of relationship building to medical treatment. Spending time learning Swahili was not considered a waste, but a way to build the connection necessary to having Tanzanian patients talk to them about their ailments, and trust them with their health. To these workers, medicine was about relationality, and no saving could be done without the knowledge and experience of the Tanzanian translators and staff.

Uncertainty: Losing Control

Musa and Idda gathered everyone into a circle on the stage in the community hall that would be used for the first day of clinic. Musa clapped his hands, and spread his arms wide to call for attention. "So we're going to sing a song called *Songa Mbele*," he says, elaborating on how *songa* means to keep moving forward, and never despair. The medical workers repeat the words slowly after him: *son-ga*, *m-be-le.* Many of them cannot say the words correctly. He and Idda begin to slap rhythmically, singing for everyone to *songa mbele*. As the verse repeats, they aim it towards an individual, pulling

him or her into the middle of the circle and having them dance until the chorus. The students and translators sing and dance unabashedly, even as patients begin to filter into the community hall and wait for the clinic to start. The U.S. Americans are uncertain of the words, but that does not hold them back from singing gibberish as loud as they can. As the song continues, energy builds and builds until the entire group is clapping and stomping in rhythm, rocking the stage and causing the beat to reverberate through bodies and objects. When Musa ends the song, everyone claps and cheers—including some patients! *Now* it is time for clinic to begin.

Although both groups of medical workers were led in an opening song on the first day of clinic, only the second allowed themselves to be carried away by the pulse in the Tanzanian music and relinquish control of their language and behavior. The first group had barely participated, perhaps because they were concerned with the time used up in singing, perhaps because they were embarrassed to sing when they were uncertain of the words. For whatever reason, their song had faded quietly into an ending. The second group's song went out with explosive energy, as they did not feel constrained in the same manner. By not holding themselves to the same masculine demonstrations of sovereignty, the second medical group also did not feel the need to perform control. Facing uncertainty head-on allowed the second medical group to create more equitable partnerships with their Tanzanian translators.

One implication of ceding control was immediately obvious that day in clinic: They were able to triage much more quickly and efficiently. The U.S. Americans quickly recognized that they were hopeless with writing unfamiliar Tanzanian names, and so

Francis was assigned triage duty. He handled it with aplomb—instructing patients where to sit, letting them know when they would be seen, and taking down their introductory information. That evening in the debrief time, Musa congratulated his fellow translator on a job well done, saying "Francis was very good today at like the management of patients…Last time we met this challenge that in the reception part, people would come, then they [the medical workers] would use like Western—like, they used Western writing style. *Long* time there. And, you know, arranging everybody…I have to give my big ups to Mr. Francis for always doing it!" Everyone seconded Musa's praise, and many clapped Francis on the back. The medical students were not only unperturbed to have a Tanzanian doing a job other than direct translation, they were thankful for the help and appreciative of his skill.

Throughout the week, the U.S. medical workers praised the Tanzanian translators' abilities. In one debrief, Amy expressed her adoration of Musa, saying:

> I just wanted to say, like, I mean—I think my experience with Musa as a translator has been amazing. He also seems like he's doing more of crowd control, and like, just keeping people happy, and, I don't know, he's just amazing. And so, like, I think he makes my job a lot easier. He—he's very good. Like, a lot of people were saying they've had trouble having people want to talk about their status, but he seems to make people very comfortable. So I guess my experience has been pretty good because I think he just makes people very comfortable.

Referencing the other medical students have had trouble finding out a patient's HIV status, Amy explains that a lot of the success of her work over the week is due to her translator's ability to connect with patients and make them feel at ease in her presence. Ceding control over an imperialist masculine ability to save national others ironically

allows her to do a better job at helping. She recognizes that Tanzanian knowledge and skill is integral, and that their medical work can only be done as a team.

The group was also willing to admit uncertainty in their understandings of medical issues in Tanzania. The students often met with situations that they found frustrating, or even inconceivable under a Western frame; however, they were open to hearing that theirs was not the only possible interpretation, and that they should not necessarily impose their feelings on people from another culture. For example, the students were asked in one debrief time to give a highlight, challenge, and learning moment from the day. Peter related that his challenge of the day was dealing with patients who did not have the proper medical record information with them, especially HIV+ patients. "They just didn't seem to care!" he interpreted. Dr. Baker responded with a different way of framing the situation, noting there is a large divide between HIV care and regular medical care in Tanzania. "They don't connect that those two things are put together, because they're treated totally differently by the healthcare system," she concludes. I offer a third frame, mentioning that oftentimes the machine testing the progression of the disease is out of order at the local treatment center, and that their shipments of medicine do not always arrive. "It might be that they're lackadaisical because sometimes their medicine just doesn't come in when it's supposed to," I offer. Peter sat thoughtfully for a moment, before deciding that his "learning moment" of the day was this very exchange, as it made him face that he was "not really thinking about the extenuating circumstances for all the people.

Later in the same session, Samantha voiced her concern for people having to relate their HIV status to her. “I had a lot of people look super ashamed,” she said. “They look down, they get quiet, they barely whisper.” I suggested we explore the possibility that the emotion she sees might not be shame, but sadness or an expression of a burden. Samantha acts reticent to jettison her interpretation, but Dr. Baker then adds, “I do think the entire diagnosis introduces 50 ways to get yelled at by health care providers, you know?" referencing their knowledge that Tanzanian doctors are not typically kind, but often try to bully patients into better health behaviors. People in the room nod in agreement, and Samantha seems to consider the new perspective.

In both of the previous examples, although the medical students are quick to proffer explanations for the feelings of their Tanzanian patients, they are also open to challenges and reinterpretations. They do not perform a need to demonstrate control or mastery over medicine and people, but allow for their own uncertainty and recognize that they could be wrong. The ability to embrace uncertainty and reframe interpretations makes way for relating to the Tanzanian patients in a non-imperial way. The initial explanations put forth by the medical students can be read as relating to Tanzanians in paternalistic manner. The first assumed Tanzanians to be too uneducated or lazy to have what they needed to get proper treatment, and the second leveled implicit criticism at a culture in which patients feel ashamed to admit their HIV status to a physician. By accepting different interpretations, the medical workers do not tie themselves to the imperialist relations that arise out of such assumptions of who Tanzanians are and what they feel.

By the end of the session, the medical students were leading the reframing themselves, and reflexively engaging with their own thought process. Samantha brought up another frustrating occurrence of having an old woman ask for her help: "There are some things though that are not—I just don't understand. That people are like, 'I'm 84, and my chest is tight when I'm walking up hill and carrying 50 lbs.' Like, I know that you *have* to know this is part of life! I don't understand why that's such a surprise. And that's really frustrating for me sometimes." One person suggests that they might not have biological education in schools, and another adds that perhaps she's the oldest person in her village. Samantha realizes, "I guess it's frustrating for me, because my answer is just, 'You're old,'" and later adds, "I guess I'm just disappointed that I don't have a solution, and I project that on them." By the end of the debrief session, the medical students have moved from assuming certain interpretations of Tanzanian emotions, to realizing that their interpretations speak more about themselves. Their willingness to embrace uncertainty, that they may not be able to fully understand their patients, allows them to break imperial masculine thought patterns that assume U.S. dominance over Tanzanian culture.

Care: Embracing Fragility

The second group of medical students demonstrated an ethic of care in engaging with their Tanzanian patients. In part, there were able to do so because they were not so tied to performance of U.S. imperial masculinity as the first group, and to the excessive expressions used to combat masculinity's fragility. Rather than respond with savior

solutions or nothing, this group took care to investigate how their work fit into complex circumstances.

For the first group, their own discomfort at facing failures of masculinity was primary in determining how they dealt with patients, but the second group took their discomfort as an opportunity to read interaction through a different perspective. The question of whether or not they should tell a patient that they have a terminal or debilitating disease never arose in this group. The medical team instead centered on Tanzanian cultural meanings in order to displace their own interpretations—and thus, discomfort—from the focal point. For example, Peter reflected in one debrief session:

> I was really kind of surprised that even though I felt like…it was all…it was all very new to me, and maybe I felt like I wasn't doing that much to help, but still the people that I was working with still felt like I had done a lot for them. And that was, um, that was really nice. Because I guess in the States, people feel like you've *never* done enough for them. So there's a complete 180 here, where even the littlest thing is greatly appreciated. So it was really cool.

Peter, like the first group, is concerned by his lack of ability to do "that much to help." However, instead of letting this perceived failure consume him, he turns his gaze toward his patients' perspectives. The cultural meaning of his interactions with patients here outweighs his own feels of inadequacy or discomfort, and is read as positively valenced against what happens in the States. Of course, glossing over how an entire nation deals with medicine is also problematic, but in this case the comment acts as a step toward recognizing that the U.S. medical student feelings and perspectives should not necessarily be held as primary or correct.

In order to be better attentive to the feelings and perspectives of their patients, the second group had a number of discussions about complacency, and how to avoid

dismissing a patient too quickly because their symptoms look—on the surface—like things the medical student knew to be common problems in the area. On the first day debrief, Dr. Lewis challenged the medical students, saying:

> You're going to see a lot of see a lot of swelling, the arthritis, but don't…say "Oh, another leg pain!" And say "Motrin." Take a look at the toenail, and say, "Oh, we can remove the toenail, it's not just leg pain." And don't become complacent. And I'm not saying that you will, but it can be easy: "Oh, they've got back pain, let's do some Motrin and send them home." These people are very sick sometimes, and there are things we want to make sure we can treat if we can.

Dr. Lewis wanted to make sure that the medical students put patient care in front of expediency or efficiency. When dealing with over a hundred patients to be seen in a day, the medial workers can easily resort to a quantity over quality means of valuing their work, as the first team did. Yet this group recognizes that there is an alternative: They labor under the assumption that even though they may not be able to see all the patients, the Tanzanians who come to clinic deserve the best care that they can give. In an interview, Amy described it as a balancing act:

> I think everyday…like, I've seen more patients, got more efficient, and that way you kind of like develop those patterns… But at the same time, like, being—being able to tailor it to individual people and then like…. I think that has been the most rewarding for me. Just like, being a little better with patient care each time.

In her view, both the pattern recognition that allows her to spot diseases more quickly, and the ability to recognize individual symptoms and quirks help her to better tailor her work to the patient's needs. By making care for patients the primary motivating force behind their daily work, the medical students in the second group temper the drive toward efficiency, quantity, and easy solutions that may salvage wounded masculine pride.

The move away from easy or quick solutions also registered in the groups' questions regarding systemic concerns. Unlike the first group, that often found it more expedient to think of cultural and contextual dynamics as outside the realm of their work, the second medical group was keenly interested in how their treatment was situated in the complex circumstances of Tanzanian village life in the area. Peter, in the first debrief session, was keenly curious about something. His brow was furrowed as he waited for an opportunity to speak. When an opening appeared, he looked directly at Mustafa, and asked, "We worked together on one patient who needed to go to the hospital, and I was just kinda curious—you got his number, and I think you gave him yours, I'm just curious where things go from there?" Mustafa began by querying whether it was all right that he speak in Swahili. Following the chorus of "yes," Mustafa told a story. Tanzanians often speak in more detail than U.S. Americans expect, bringing up aspects of circumstances the may seem beside the point. But as Mustafa wove the tale, even though it was in a language that they could not understand, all the medical workers were attentive and focused on him. Sarah and I took turns translating, telling the students in English about how this patient's AIDS was quite advanced, and that Mustafa discovered that he was not taking his medicine regularly. He represented a common problem in the area, Mustafa explained through Sarah, where those who do not want their communities to find out they are HIV+ go to the hospital under a fake name, or go to a variety of different, far-away hospitals, in order not to be found out. The flipside of their maneuver is that they do not get medication regularly, or may be prescribed different treatment regimens at each hospital, leading to increased resistance. The students—here for a week, and unable to

affect the problems of stigma and access in the area leading to such actions—listened intently. Whether or not they could fix the problem did not matter; they cared about understanding the circumstances of the patients they were seeing each day.

Their attentiveness to context helped these medical workers engage with the complexity of problems that cannot be solved with a simple savior solution. In the first group, when they could not fix a health problem, they sometimes hid this fact from the Tanzanian patient. The second group instead faced issues head-on, and asked the translators for advice on how best to relate the issues to their patients. In the first debrief meeting, Dr. Baker quizzed the medical students on all the possible problems that could cause leg pain, since they often see it in the patients. After wading through the different causes, she then turned to the translators:

> So, translators, tell me if this is good or not. When people have osteoarthritis, so it's usually because of age, and just wear and tear, use of the joints and the leg. So, when we explain it, it's something we can treat with ibuprofen, but will always be there and will probably get worse as they get older and older. I've been saying, "Your legs are tired from all the work you've done in your life." To try to explain, uh, it's not something that happened [like an accident]… and unfortunately, it's not something I can fix forever. Is—is there a better way to explain that?

Damas was the first translator to answer, explaining that some patients will understand, and others will not, but that saying "it's medicine for pain, and not to fix" helps them to know their leg will not get better. Sarah pressed him to answer the specific question asked, to which he responded, "I think we can just tell them that their legs are hurting because you are *old!*" The room broke out in giggles and chatter, but Denis protested that even old people do not see themselves as old. They should be told, "You are suffering because you exercising too much, carrying all these things." Francis fired back that if you

tell them the pain comes from hard work, someone might think, "Maybe you can *do something* that makes you to be fine again."

The translators' discussion provided a window for the medical students to see that even something as simple as explaining leg pain can be quite complicated in an area with little access to medical knowledge or resources. When this route to figuring out how best to care for the patients did not seem to be leading anywhere helpfully, the discussion switched directions toward alternative solutions. Dr. Baker asked the translators what feasible lifestyle changes they could encourage to help ease the pain. The group continued discussing the availability of shoes with good arch support, if women might be able to get assistance in carrying water, and if carrying a pile of logs in two trips instead of one might work. This medical team was not interested in seeming heroic, and sweeping away the complexity of situations, but instead focused on the details in order to find better avenues for patient care. They could only do so in partnership with the Tanzanian translators, without whom the U.S. medical workers could not have the necessary knowledge to understand their patients' lives.

The U.S. medical group embraced their reliance on their Tanzanian partners, and their inability to know everything. In this way, rather than treating their lack of proper training as point of fragility that needed to be obscured through overly-masculine performances, they treated it as an ethical dilemma, something to be carefully worked out with their patients. Peter described his approach to patients as "treading lightly," and making sure to ask, "Is it okay if I do this?" before attempting any tests or procedures. His surprise that the patients were continually obliging did not alter his approach: He

continued to treat each one with care. By engaging tentatively with each patient, Peter saw his care as mitigating the possibility that he might be giving them sub-standard treatment. Amy, on the other hand, found that the question of whether or not the treatment given was ethical could not be decisively settled. She reflected, "I feel like everyone [in the group] has this…idea of 'I want to help people.' But at the same time, like, I probably think this experience is more valuable for us—our learning and development, more than we're actually helping people. But…it's a conflicting—moral conundrum. Whether what we're doing is actually helpful or [not]." Amy never comes to a conclusion. She allows herself to be uncomfortable with the service she is providing in the village. Later in the interview, she adds, "I think this is a good thing to experience now as like an eye-opening experience, and then like, with more knowledge and more ability, like I think it would be better to come back in a few years, once that is there." The second medical group does not fix their interactions with the Tanzanian villagers to this particular week. Thinking relationally, they recognize that though their physical presence in the village might last only a week, the relationships they form will continue to have reverberating effects. This perspective allows Amy to think outside of this trip, and that perhaps to make this experience ethical will require a future return: a giving-back of the learning she feels she's gained—more than given—in this initial experience.

DETHRONING THE IMPERIAL SOVEREIGN, DECOLONIZING THEORY AND PRACTICE

In the preceding analysis, I analyzed how two groups of medical aid workers hailing from the same U.S. university demonstrated vastly different ways of conceptualizing medical aid work, and interacting with Tanzanian counterparts and

patients. Here, first I discuss how the initial group's need to perform hegemonic masculinity bound them in addition to performances of imperialism and to neocolonial relationships with the Tanzanian translators and patients. I then place the initial group's masculinity in conversation with the second group's ability to perform otherwise, examining how loosening ties to masculinity can allow for more just relations. In the concluding section, I will draw implications from this discussion for both theory and practice.

As Nira Yuval-Davis elucidates in her book *Gender & Nation*, "gender relations are at the heart of cultural constructions of social identities and collectivities as well as in most cultural conflicts and contestations."[27] Intercultural relationships and interactions are inextricably tied to gender identities and performances. In this chapter, I focus particularly on one cultural side's gendered performances, in order to show how a shift away from imperial masculinity can lead to decolonial effects.

The first group, boastful and proud on the main, presented themselves as sovereign subjects, able to save the Tanzanians that they came to treat. This individualized position kept them from seeing their dependence on the Tanzanian translators as anything more than dependence on a tool, and they thus missed opportunities for partnership or cultural learning. In fact, they often treated Tanzanians paternalistically. Their desire to maintain control over time and work led to a dismissal of Tanzanian perspectives. Unable to face the fragility of their masculine performances, they used excessive demonstrations to obscure their inability to cement a masculine

[27] Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 39.

identity, and in doing so treated Tanzanian patients as unable to handle difficult medical news, and Tanzanian staff as a nuisance.

The attempts to portray themselves as hegemonically masculine inevitably became bound up in neocolonial relations with the Tanzanians they encountered. The group, mainly composed of and led by men, felt pressure to protect a masculine identity based in sovereignty (over others), control (over others), and excessive performances (toward others). The medical workers in the first group treated Tanzanians as lesser beings to be saved, with value only as tools in the hands of the U.S. volunteers, and who must be paternalistically protected from knowledge that they cannot handle. In total, the U.S. medical workers' display of masculinity reinforced a pattern of neocolonial treatment that considers Tanzania—or often, Africa as a whole—to be inferior and backward.

However, the question remains: Why was the group so tied to masculinity in the first place? Feminist scholars provide two helpful explanations. First, certain professional contexts and spaces have been historically constituted as masculine bastions.[28] Western medicine is certainly one such field, and international aid and assistance is another.[29] In particular, Cynthia Enloe finds that aid that is considered to require more professional or technical skill, and can be seen as more urgent, is often construed as more masculine than

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[28] Eisenstein, *Sexual Decoys*; Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*.

[29] Katharina Rothe, Johannes Deutschbein, Carsten Wonneberger, Dorothee Alfermann, "Between 'Playing Doctor,' 'Work-Life Balance,' and 'Highend-Medicine': Do Young Doctors Challenge 'Hegemonic Masculinity' in the Field of Medicine?," *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 17, no. 1 (2016): n.p. In this German article, medicine is seen as a masculine field *per se*, and male doctors see the influx of female doctors as a "feminizing" of the field. This read of the article is drawn from the English-language abstract, as the full text is only available in German.

other types of aid.[30] That is, the intersection of Western medicine and working in aid to a so-called under-developed nation presents a particularly masculine atmosphere for the medical workers to enter. Second, such masculine atmospheres constrain those who enter them—whether men or women—to exacting gendered performances. Enloe demonstrates how for men in government or in war the context demands a particular masculine performance in order to be considered competent or acceptable.[31] Similarly, Zillah Eisenstein shows that women entering masculinist contexts can be held to these standards as well, or are punished for performing unacceptable types of femininity.[32]

However, there were some in the first group who attempted to balk these masculine standards and expectations. For instance, two of the translators I interviewed named multiple medical workers who treated them as more than tools, explaining medical issues to them outside of what was necessary for translation. In part, I keep returning to language describing masculinity as binding or constraining performances because the individual attempts to shift the masculine attitude of the group kept getting reincorporated or absorbed. The hegemonic masculinity of the group did not change. Consider Ken, who I earlier quoted as saying, "I'm here to treat, more than to build relationships, really." Later in the interview he admitted, "Like I said, I came here not really with the intention of building relationships, but it just kind of is what happens over time, and I guess maybe I should have been trying harder from day one to do that." However, as he continues talking about the relationships he's building with the

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[30] Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 240.
[31] Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 101-117 and 125.
[32] Eisenstein, *Sexual Decoys*, 24.

translators, he then becomes frustrated at how he's seen them "dicking around," and returns to the premise that he is here "to work 100% of the time, like, as much as possible." Even when Ken starts to explore the possibility that building relationships with the translators is important to his work, and something he should have been focused on, the line of thought is commandeered by the masculine imperative toward efficiency and expediency and curtailed before it can have much political impact.

Abed provides another interesting counter-performance. Abed had an individual side-project with the goal of treating a disease called mossyfoot that is common in the area. On the first day in the village, instead of attending clinic with the other medical workers, he ran a day-long seminar training the NGO's Home-Based Care network staff on how to educate villagers about prevention, and treat those with the problem. The following day, he led the home-based care workers in putting their training to the test with actual mossyfoot patients. Abed's project was inherently dependent on a partnership with the NGO workers, as it was meant for them to implement. Out of the whole group, Abed was the only volunteer to consistently represent his work as a partnership with Tanzanians. Describing how hard work from him and his partner in the U.S. met with that of Sarah and Tim, and the translators Innocent and Musa, as well as the home-based care workers, he exclaimed, "It's so many cogs in the wheel coming together to form something incredible!" Abed voiced that he may have a different perspective than the rest of the group because of this project; it allowed him to relate to the translators and staff in a different way than those only seeing patients in clinic.

Abed's story provides an entry point into seeing the difference between the two groups not primarily in terms of one having a majority of men, and the other having a majority of women (although this is certainly a factor), but of a prevailing relation to masculinity. Abed was able to escape the forces demanding a masculine performance in the group by literally being in a different location the first day, away from clinic, that allowed him to constitute a different relation with the Tanzanian staff. The second group, in a similar manner, was led by a woman doctor who had spent two weeks in the village in between the first group's departure and the second group's arrival, and had worked primarily with Tanzanian staff in that time. In addition, Dr. Baker, Sarah, and I spent time working with the translators to develop new strategies for the second group. Dr. Baker collected a number of the translators' suggestions of what U.S. American medical workers should know about Tanzania into a volunteer handbook, and distributed it to the second group before their arrival. For these reasons among others, the second group's identity was not tied to masculine dominance, but to intercultural understanding.

Based on the differences between the two groups, I argue that loosening the strictures of U.S. hegemonic masculinity in intercultural situations, and the way it constrains gendered performance, can open space for decolonial relations. The second group concerned itself with relationship building from the start, working to learn the language, and asking the translators questions. The medical students felt no need to control the workings of the clinic or their translators, but were happy to have the Tanzanians take charge of the tasks that they could do better or more quickly. Finally, the medical workers were continually reevaluating their interpretations and their approaches,

in order to provide better medical care to the patients they saw each day. Rather than project over-confidence, they allowed themselves to feel uncertain, and to reflect on alternative understandings. In doing so, their relationships with the Tanzanian translators approached an equitable partnership, more than a use of another person as a tool.

The relational ethic of the second group demonstrates the decolonial tactic Gayatri Spivak calls "un-learning our privilege as our loss."[33] The privilege of imperial masculinity should be seen as a loss for the first group, cutting off opportunities for cultural learning and partnership through performances of sovereignty and control. The second group recognized the loss of privilege, and abdicated neocolonial privilege in favor of Tanzanian agency.

However, the second group is not perfect, and moving toward decoloniality does not simply make it so. Medical aid to Tanzania is required in the first place because of an inadequate national health system, and an imperialist global economic context that makes this difficult to change.[34] In addition, relaxing the atmosphere that demands masculine performances does not simply lead to the end of raced imperial interactions. As shown in Samantha's disbelief that an 8o-year-old woman should wonder why she has back pain, the second group still had impulses to think of the Tanzanian patients as remarkably ignorant or even nonsensical. The paternalistic attitude built into U.S. American identity through things such as manifest destiny and American exceptionalism over the course of centuries does not just disappear. What makes the second group notable, and provides a

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[33] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Criticism, Feminism, and the Institution," in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 9.
[34] Rosalind Pollack Petchesky, *Global Prescriptions: Gendering Health and Human Rights* (London: Zed, 2003).

hope that decolonial relations could arise out of demasculinizing contexts and behavior, is that even though the medical students sometimes began with neocolonial views, they were still very open to alternative interpretations, explanations and contextualizations—to reframings. Breaking through the boundaries of masculinity thus opens paths to decolonial relations. Decoloniality is not achieved immediately or necessarily by loosening the expectations toward masculinity, but doing so opens inroads toward relations that otherwise were not accessible. As Spivak explains, negotiation with power structures requires that "[i]n order to keep one's effectiveness, one must also preserve those structures—not cut them down completely." That is the only way to "change something that one is obliged to inhabit."[35] These medical student volunteers cannot undo the structure of global economics, or aid to Tanzania on the systemic level, but they can work to undermine neocolonialism through their own intercultural relations.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> Masculinity. It's always there just below the political surface. Propping up authority. Causing anxiety. This prime minister's wavy hair. That dictator's khaki fatigues. A president's cowboy belt buckle.[36]

As Cynthia Enloe reminds us, politics is never free from gendered power dynamics. In this chapter, I demonstrated how masculinity affects intercultural relationships in practice, and how when aid workers feel unconstrained by the need to perform masculinity, they are better able to pursue decolonial actions. This chapter marks a departure from traditional scholarship on masculinity, most of which centers on media

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[35] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "The Post-Colonial Critic," in *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 72.
[36] Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*, 152.

representations or governmental actions.[37] By examining both what masculinity looks like in practice, and how U.S. Americans perform masculinity in an international context, the preceding analysis has important implications for scholarship.

First, rhetorical criticism of masculinity in media representations can be usefully supplemented by scholarship attending to how masculinity is reproduced and performed in practice. Hegemonic masculinity is constituted and reconstituted both through media consumption and responses to media, and lived negotiations and interactions with others. Currently, rhetorical scholars have compiled a wealth of knowledge on masculinity in the media, and the way is constructs and reflects cultural struggles. By complementing this work with more attention to rhetoric *in situ*, and how people are persuaded toward or against masculine performances in lived interactions, rhetorical scholars can build a more dynamic and complex vision of rhetorics that support and destabilize hegemonic masculinity.

Second, this piece adds to international relations scholarship on gender and colonialism by recognizing that politics does not only occur on the national level, but also on the level of organizations and initiatives. Research that focuses on localized interactions can provide means of shifting international power relations that might not appear on the national level. In addition, interpersonal intercultural relations are in themselves a powerful political form that can either reinforce or challenge nationalist

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[37] For media criticism, see for instance: Ashcraft and Flores, "'Slaves with White Collars;'" Duerringer, "Be a Man"; Harris and Hanchey, "(De)stabilizing Sexual Violence Discourse;" Kelly, "Feminine Purity;" Rademacher and Kelly, "'I'm Here to Do Business;'" Prody, "Protesting War;" Rogers, "Deciphering Kokopelli." For governmental analysis, see for instance: Carver, "Men and Masculinities," Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases*; Enloe, *The Curious Feminist*; Eisenstein, *Sexual Decoys.*

ideologies. Attending to such relations can add to understandings of international politics, and how they may be changed for the better.

Finally, considering the ways masculinity and imperialism are related in lived interaction also helps practitioners to develop ways of making international aid more equitable, and not simply an exercise in "the white savior industrial complex."[38] Learning from these experiences of these two groups—and hopefully others in the future—can provide methods to break through masculine constraints and allow for more just possibilities of relation in practice.

[38] Teju Cole, "The White-Savior Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic*, March 21, 2012, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/.

Chapter 6: All of us Phantasmic Saviors

VOLUNTEER-ON-VOLUNTEER CONFLICT

Sitting at the kitchen table with my coffee one morning, after the children had all left for school, I took advantage of the relative peace and quiet to write my field notes from the day before during breakfast. I was typing away as Tiffany, a medical student volunteer who had come with the first group but stayed for three weeks after they left, came into the house and sat down. Sarah and Tim's house was the only place at the Children's Village with Wi-Fi, and it attracted all of the volunteers and donors in the early hours of the morning and late hours of the night—the times when the generator was running and the electricity was on.[1] Looking back as I write this chapter, I do not remember exactly what took place between us, but I do know that my field note narrative of events and reflections from the day before is suddenly interrupted by:

> (Sidenote: I'm typing this sitting at the kitchen table with Tiffany. I asked her if she was going to the CTC [HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment Center] today, and she gave me a 10-minute complaining answer about how they don't give them any work to do there other than filling out forms. All I was trying to do was be polite! I tried to go back to my work, typing up the stories of what was going on yesterday, but she kept trying to get me to respond to her admonitions that their time is wasted at the CTC. I was not asking for a defense of their schedule; I was just asking, quickly, what they would be doing today. I kept trying to say, "Okay," or "That's fine," to stop the wave of desire that I acknowledge that they can be bitchy about not wanting to go to the CTC. What I wanted to say was that they were only there once, and it was a day that the clinical officer was left alone and overwhelmed with work. You cannot make statements starting with "Every time we go to the CTC…" when you've been there ONCE. Also, stop trying to get me to give you validation for your feelings. That is not my place, and I do not want to. I want to type my damn notes. I know you think that I am not working, but these are actually quite important. I know paperwork does not seem like an

[1] The electricity at the NGO was only on from approximately 5-8am and 7-11pm. These times were chosen for the children living at the Children's Village—in the morning, so they could get ready for school, and at night so they could have light to do their homework.

> important job to you, but it is quite important to me. I know that you think you should be put to work saving lives rather than stuck in an office all day, but what I do allows people to think in ways that affect lives on a global scale. I am working. End rant.)

I was angry with Tiffany for what I perceived as her not valuing my research as work. She wanted to vent, and have me validate her feelings. I refused, instead imposing over them a view that *I* knew more the context she was working in than she did, that *I* understood Tanzanians better, and that *I* was okay with menial tasks, because *I* knew better than to be a white savior. At the same time, I supported my feelings with a similar logic to the one I read into her actions: What I do allows people to think in ways that affect lives on a global scale. My claim seems to be that I know better than to try to be a white savior in aid, but being an *ivory-tower savior* is different.

The funny thing is I really liked Tiffany. We were friends, and I enjoyed talking with her. Yet there were times where we were not kind to one another. Moreover, the negative feelings I felt toward Tiffany in this instance were anything but unique; every Western volunteer had conflict with other Western volunteers, at some point or another. As I casually surveyed other aid workers in the area, I found that the phenomenon was not unique to this organization, either. One missionary informed me that this was well known in the Church, and thus why missionaries often were placed separately. Rather than simply noting this as a fact of life for Western volunteers in Tanzania, I became curious: Why is there a seemingly inherent conflict between Western volunteers? And how does it relate to neocolonialism?

Nearly every volunteer I talked to at the NGO, whether formally or informally, described the most challenging part of working in Tanzania as *other Westerners*. Nearly

all of the volunteers had some sense of how easily aid can turn into paternalism, or—at the least—how aid projects fail when they are not connected to community desires. Many also knew that being a "white savior" or a "voluntourist" was bad. Yet each Westerner seemed to feel as if she had a right to be in Tanzania when others did not.

If volunteers were to take their own critiques of other volunteers seriously, they—or, I should say, *we*—would have a very difficult time being in Tanzania. What is it that a Westerner, often with little to no knowledge of Swahili, has to offer to a village context in a country with which they are unfamiliar and are visiting for a month that cannot be traced back to an assumed privilege—of country of birth, of skin color, or of both? Even with skilled volunteers, such as medical students, the lack of contextual, linguistic, or cultural knowledge should give them pause. How is it, then, that most volunteers are able to so clearly see this lack in others, and go to such lengths to avoid it in themselves?

In this chapter, I argue that the subject constitution of Western volunteers is dependent upon foreclosures that (initially) remove questions of our own colonial and racial presence to the unsymbolizable Real.[2] Even though the Real affects symbolic life, it cannot be put into words or conceptualized as such. If the subjectivity of the Western volunteer is constituted through a foreclosure of the neocolonial self, accusations of neocolonialism may be leveled at others without a recognition of the same in one's own relations. To build this argument, I first describe the process of subject construction for U.S. American volunteers, what foreclosures it depends on, and how U.S. volunteer

[2] Jacques Lacan theorizes "The Real" as that which cannot be symbolized by a subject, that which is impossible to represent. Even though the Real cannot be conceptualized, it still affects subjectivity and rhetorical action. Jacques Lacan, "Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's 'Verneinung,'" in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 324.

subjects are racialized through fantasies of being a "white savior" and "changing the world." I focus particularly on U.S. Americans since nearly all of the volunteers with whom I interacted during my time present at the NGO were U.S. American. Although the Children's Village also has volunteers from Canada, Sweden, Finland, and Great Britain, there were not many present during my stay at the NGO. In addition, each of these countries has particular national identities that play into the process of subject constitution, and some of the aspects I trace in this chapter are uniquely U.S. American. In the following section, I demonstrate how U.S. American volunteers maneuver symbolically to avoid the dissolution and reconstitution of subjectivity that would come with traversing their fantasies. Finally, I explore potential routes of encouraging subjective dissolution, and the limitations to doing so.

CONSTRUCTING U.S. AMERICAN VOLUNTEER SUBJECTS

Foreclosures and Fantasies

My sense of foreclosure is derived from the psychoanalytic theory of Jacques Lacan, as then used by Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. For Lacan, the subject is fundamentally constituted through a misrecognition of oneself as whole, and the simultaneous foreclosure of the possibility of the subject ever being whole or completely self-knowing.[3] To be a subject requires foreclosure, a structural limitation to self-reflexivity. Butler explains that, "to the extent that one is a subject, [one is] always at

[3] Jacques Lacan, "The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious," in *Ecrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2006), 671-702.

a distance from oneself, from one's origin, from one's history."[4] Since foreclosure is the condition that makes subjectivity possible, the subject's "veritable subsistence [would be] abolished by his knowledge."[5] In other words, it is impossible for a subject to fully know herself, recognize herself, understand herself.

At the same time, foreclosure creates the possibility for agency. It is only on the condition that "certain things become impossible for [the subject]; certain things become unrecoverable"[6] that a subject can act at all. Part of what allows for the subject to act is her fantasies, which work to cover what is foreclosed through a narrative of possible wholeness. Fantasies "offer, simultaneously, a frame within which to exercise agency and a shield from the horror of contingency."[7] Through fantasy, a subject can narrate her past experiences in a way that produces meaning,[8] and thereby defend herself from recognizing her own structural inability to ever be coherent as a Self.

Joshua Gunn writes that each subject has a "fundamental fantasy" that she "has internalized to explain to herself the cause of her desiring, what drives her."[9] Although each subject internalizes fantasies in a unique way, all draw from cultural sources. Gunn provides examples of "the longing for Prince Charming to arrive, the erotic pursuit of a personal savior, talking to a dead parent."[10] For the purposes of this chapter, then, U.S. American volunteers all draw from common U.S. cultural fantasies. Subjectivity shifts

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[4] Judith Butler, "Changing the Subject: Judith Butler's Politics of Radical Resignifcation," in *The Judith Butler Reader*, eds. Sara Salih with Judith Butler (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004),332.
[5] Lacan, "Subversion of the Subject," 679.
[6] Butler, "Changing the Subject," 333.
[7] Joshua Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Talking to the Dead," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 1 (2004): 19.
[8] Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy," 8.
[9] Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy," 10.
[10] Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy," 10.

and changes over time, and a subject's fantasies need not always remain the same. In the context of volunteering, when one is met with defining oneself as a U.S. American in another country, there for the ostensible purpose of doing good, the cultural fantasies that U.S. Americans draw from tend toward the fantasy of the white savior and the related fantasy of making a difference in the world.

Racing Neocolonial Fantasies

International volunteering depends on a foreclosure inherent in the idea of international aid, and a foreclosure normatively associated with U.S. national identity. As Spivak explains, "to the extent that…the North continues ostensibly to 'aid' the South—as formerly imperialism 'civilized' the New World—the South's crucial assistance to the North in keeping up its resource-hungry lifestyle is forever foreclosed."[11] Aid from the U.S. to Tanzania, including volunteers, is premised on a foreclosure of how relations with countries such as Tanzania make that aid possible in the first place. In addition, prevalent cultural invocation of the myth of "American exceptionalism" indicates another foreclosure constitutive of U.S. American subjectivities. American exceptionalism hails the U.S. as a uniquely superior nation, and "allows for an unquestioningly positive construction of humanitarian aid,"[12] thus foreclosing the possibility that aid can do harm. Even these descriptions are shorthand attempts to render what is unsymbolizeable (for certain subjects) into symbolic writings. Inevitably, I too, as a U.S. American subject, am

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[11] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 6.
[12] Jenna N. Hanchey, "Constructing 'American Exceptionalism': Peace Corps Volunteer Discourses of Race, Gender, and Empowerment," in *Volunteering and Communication Volume II: Studies in International and Intercultural Contexts*, eds. Michael W. Kramer, Laurie K. Lewis, and Loril M. Gossett (New York: Peter Lang, 2015), 234.

slipping over my own interruptions of the Real. Being a volunteer constituted by these foreclosures requires the internalization of fantasies that allow the volunteer subject to create a fiction of wholeness and stability that hides the terror of dissolution heralded by the Real.

The fantasy of the white savior is one such fiction. Being a white savior incorporates both the idea of national autonomy found in the conceptualization of aid itself, and the idea of superiority found in American exceptionalist ideology. In the fantasy of the white savior, the U.S. American volunteer can "find herself"—that is, find wholeness, be complete—in other countries, by saving other people. The fantasy of the white savior is that one's identity can be found in changing the world, in making a difference. By making a difference, I can be the Self I want to be.

That this is a fantasy does not necessarily mean that one cannot do anything good for others, or that no meaning can be found in international volunteering. Instead, since the subject is constituted only through foreclosure, it means that she will never achieve changing the world, or making a difference—she will never be the perfect white savior she wants to be, because the subject can never be whole. The U.S. American volunteer subject is covering for something they cannot face: that the entire premise of volunteering is dependent upon global systems of economic capitalism that mine Africa for resources. That is, the very idea of changing the world is based in having already messed it up in the first place. The white savior as such is an impossibility, because one can never be wholly innocent. Perhaps this is why Gunn writes that "in the end…fantasy helps one avoid

taking responsibility…for one's own symbolicity."[13] U.S. American volunteers, through fantasy, avoid taking responsibility for the symbolic economies they are already caught up in as purveyors of aid.

Up until this point, I have assumed a racialization of fantasy that needs to be unpacked. When Teju Cole writes about the "White Savior Industrial Complex," he is clear that the issue is about white privilege. He writes about how "Africa serves as a backdrop for white fantasies of conquest and heroism,"[14] where "a nobody from America or Europe can go to Africa and become a godlike savior, or, at the very least, have his emotional needs satisfied."[15] Whiteness is here tied to the nationalistic idea of U.S. American exceptionalism, where anyone, regardless of qualifications, has the ability to be a savior in Africa simply because of her national identity, and assuming that she is white. The assumption of a white body is inherent in the cultural narratives that produce an idea that the North must aid the South, and that U.S. Americans are exceptional,[16] and thus becomes inherent in the fantasies of saving others and making a difference.

However, at the same time, Cole recognizes that he as a black, African man living in the U.S. is not outside of dynamics of power: "I don't fool myself that I am not implicated in these transnational networks of oppressive practices."[17] Foreclosures and fantasies are clearly racialized in certain ways, but how do they then constitute subjects who do not necessarily fit into the racial assumptions of the cultural narratives they

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[13] Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy," 18.
[14] Teju Cole, "The White-Savior Industrial Complex," *The Atlantic*, March 21, 2012, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/03/the-white-savior-industrial-complex/254843/.
[15] Cole, "The White-Savior Industrial Complex."
[16] Hanchey, "Constructing 'American Exceptionalism.'"
[17] Cole, "The White-Savior Industrial Complex."

imbibe? How do non-white volunteer subjects get positioned in these fantasies that assume a white savior?

Amina Mama's theorization of how black British women's subjectivities are constituted differently than white British subjects may be useful in answering these questions. Mama theorizes subjectivity as "dynamic and multiple, and as collectively and relationally produced."[18] In opposition to past psychoanalytic and psychological studies, which had seen black subjectivities as determined by racism and racist societal dynamics, Mama instead argues that "racism can be seen as texturing subjectivity, rather than determining black social emotional life."[19] Aimee Carrillo Rowe similarly describes subject constitution as a function of differential belonging, in order to understand the contingency of social location and relational mobility that form the subject—and the contradictory narratives that the subject imbibes.[20]

In Mama's study, she finds that "[t]he black British subject is therefore born out of an imposed contradiction between blackness and British-ness, British-ness being equated with whiteness in the dominant symbolic order."[21] Now, although such an opposition of nationality and racial identity may not hold as tightly within the general U.S. American context, particularly in a moment where the Black Lives Matter movement looms large in the cultural scene, I argue that the contradiction between blackness and American-ness manifests much more strongly in the context of international aid. As noted above, the fantasies internalized by U.S. American volunteers

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[18] Amina Mama, *Beyond the Masks: Race, Gender and Subjectivity* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 98.
[19] Mama, *Beyond the Masks*, 111.
[20] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 15-16.
[21] Mama, *Beyond the Masks*, 114.

often assume whiteness. Volunteers of color are more likely to immediately be faced with a contradiction in their experience as volunteers that may cause them to question their role abroad more quickly, or construct it in a different manner, as not reliant on the same cultural fantasies as white volunteers.

Undoing and Redoing in U.S American Volunteer Subjects

Contradictions offer a means of recognizing some foreclosures that underlie subjectivity, thereby undoing both the foreclosures themselves—once they are recognized they are no longer foreclosed—and the subject as such. Not that the subject completely dissolves, but that she is reconstituted upon the basis of a different foreclosure. As Butler explains, "while we are constituted socially in limited ways and through certain kinds of limitations, exclusions, and foreclosures, we are not constituted for all time in that way."[22] By addressing the foreclosure, the subject "can renew the meaning and the effect of the foreclosure."[23]

In psychoanalytic theory, the way to address foreclosure is by traversing the fantasy that covers it. Dana Cloud, quoting Zizek, explains that "[t]o 'traverse the fantasy'…is to recognize it as a signal of unrealizeable hopes, to come into traumatic awareness that there is 'nothing "behind" it, and to recognize how fantasy masks precisely this "nothing."'"[24] However, it is not as simple as it sounds to recognize that the fantasy that one has been using to make sense of her life is "nothing." How are subjects brought to such an awareness, outside of clinical psychoanalytic practice?

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[22] Butler, "Changing the Subject," 333.
[23] Butler, "Changing the Subject," 333.
[24] Dana L. Cloud, "The Irony Bribe and Reality Television: Investment and Detachment in *The Bachelor*," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 27, no. 5 (2010): 416.

Aimee Carrillo Rowe argues that "deep connections along lines of difference are a transformative source"[25] in relation to subjectivity. When connections are forged across what she calls "power lines," it changes how subjects are formed, since subject constitution "arise[s] out of the collectivities into which we insert ourselves or are inserted."[26] From this perspective, then, volunteering also includes the possibility of forming connections across difference that would begin to force the subject to face her foreclosures and be reconstituted in ways that make her capable of acting against the very power relations formative of her subjectivity.

This may make it sound as if, in order to create reflexive subjects, the only thing necessary is to bring contradictions to their attention. However, there are means of avoiding subjective contradictions. U.S. American volunteers at the Children's Village displayed two main ways of avoiding subjective undoing: first, through denial of contradiction, and second, through an irony that identifies themselves as outside of the fantasy. Denial is the response when a fantasy is so strongly internalized that the subject cannot question it (for the time being, anyway). Irony is the response when a fantasy is recognized as such, but not as one's own.

Popular critiques of aid have lately been rampant on social media.[27] Because of this, many young volunteers are "fully aware of the relation between their work and

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[25] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 4.
[26] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 10.
[27] See, for instance: SAIH Norway, "Africa for Norway – New charity single out now!" *YouTube*, November 16, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJLqyuxm96k; SAIH Norway, "Let's Save Africa! –Gone Wrong," *Youtube,* November 8, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xbqA6o8_WC0; SAIH Norway, "Who Wants to be a Volunteer?," *Youtube*, November 7, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymcflrj_rRc; SAIH, "Radi-Aid Awards," *Radi-Aid*, accessed April 4, 2017, http://www.rustyradiator.com; Humanitarians of Tinder, "Humanitarians of Tinder," accessed April

parodies of it, as well as the cultural and political critique of the "white savior complex.""[28] Elsa Gunnarsdottie and Kathryn Mathers view this as a logical outcome of neoliberal subject production. They argue that millennials' heavy use of social media has led them to "turn aid …into an entirely affective economy, switching emotional resonance for political and economic landscapes of inequality."[29] What is "good" in aid is then individualized as positive affective resonance, leading volunteers to find "no contradiction in being both critical of and a participant in voluntourism." I want to add, here, that this individualization allows a U.S. American volunteer to be critical of *others* who participate in voluntourism, or the white savior complex, without seeing that she herself participates in the same thing. Without recognizing the system, aid becomes a plethora of bad apples in which the "good" U.S. American volunteer can work proudly while critiquing everyone else.

The idea that one can both participate in aid and critique it at the same time functions as a sort of experiential irony bribe. Cloud describes the irony bribe in audiences who "hate-watch" the Bachelor, demonstrating how "the *irony bribe* wins viewers to participation in an ideological discourse by tempting them not only with mass social and political fantasy, but also with the possibility of protection against rampant archaic desires by the reflexive *rejection* of the fantasy."[30] The irony bribe for aid is an idea that being savvy about the ridiculous contradictions of aid narratives then allows a

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4, 2017.http://humanitariansoftinder.com; Barbie Savior, "Barbie Savior," *Instagram*, accessed April 4, 2017, https://www.instagram.com/barbiesavior.

[28] Elsa Gunnarsdottie and Kathryn Mathers, "'Doing Good'" in an Age of Parody," *Africa is a Country*, January 11, 2017, http://africasacountry.com/2017/01/doing-good-in-an-age-of-parody/.

[29] Gunnarsdottie and Mathers, "'Doing Good'" in an Age of Parody."

[30] Cloud, "The Irony Bribe," 415.

U.S. American subject to *really* make a difference in practice; that understanding the premises of aid will allow one to get the savior thing right, this time.

That is the funny thing about irony: "irony allows the ironist to avoid the traumatic encounter by imagining that s/he is somehow outside of the fantasy and its spectacular failures to deliver on its promises."[31] Through irony, recognition of the fantasy as such can counterintuitively work to shore up the foreclosures that the fantasy precludes in the first place. That is, irony can serve as a means of avoiding the subjective undoing to which Butler points, and the transformative potential of relations across difference that Carrillo Rowe posits.

The irony of U.S. American subjects understanding that they should not be white saviors is that this understanding can allow them a way to avoid recognizing their own complicity with the act. Precisely because they have the ability to recognize that being a white savior is a bad thing, they are able to claim that they are *not that*, and so avoid the only recognition that would allow for the dissolution and reformulation of the volunteer subject as a decolonial ally: that they *are* the white saviors and voluntourists they love to hate.

Part of what this fantasy rests on is an idea of the "good" Children's Village volunteer as partnering with Tanzanians, rather than imperialistically telling them what to do. If one works together with Tanzanians, then one cannot be a white savior—that's every *other* volunteer. However, in a study of aid workers in northern Tanzania, Maria Eriksson Baaz demonstrates how even aid workers who explicitly see themselves as

[31] Cloud, "The Irony Bribe," 416.

"partnering" with Tanzanians end up simply reinforcing a paternalistic mode of interaction that has extended from the colonial era into a new, neocolonial form.[32] She finds that the language of partnership is seldom accompanied by equitable relationships between Tanzanian and Western workers. The idea of partnership with Tanzanians thus acts as another piece of the irony bribe—that *I* am a partner, and others are not.

In the next section, I detail ways that U.S. American volunteers avoided traversing their volunteer fantasies at the NGO, and instead recentered them. For this chapter, I analyzed 335 pages of field notes, interviews, and conversation with—and *about*—two particular volunteer groups. The first volunteer group was a group of college students in a study abroad program run through a public U.S. university. Although the program accepted students of all majors, the courses in the program were Swahili, East African Culture, and Public Health in East Africa. The students had been in Tanzania for two weeks before spending two-and-a-half days at the NGO. The group was racially diverse, and they were accompanied by their instructors: a U.S. American woman postdoctoral researcher in public health, a Kenyan woman professor of African Culture, and a Tanzanian man who was the Swahili instructor. The second volunteer group was a group of high school students from all over the U.S. who had come as part of a "service and leadership" trip through a large nonprofit specializing in study abroad travel. They stayed at the NGO for nearly a week. The two teachers accompanying them were African American women, and the students were almost exclusively white. Rather than taking classes, these students had spent the past two weeks in Tanzania teaching English in

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[32] Maria Eriksson Baaz, *The Paternalism of Partnership: A Postcolonial Reading of Identity in Development Aid* (New York: Zed Books, 2005).

primary and secondary schools. I also draw from interactions with long-term volunteers: Dr. Baker and Tiffany, two white medical workers who stayed for three weeks after their group left; Mary, a white high-school graduate who had been working in the NGO's Education Department for over a year; Amanda and Nancy, college best-friends who had come to volunteer for a month—Amanda is white, and Nancy's father is black and her mother is white; and Sue, a young white woman just out of high school who was volunteering for a month.

AVOIDING DISSOLUTION OF U.S. AMERICAN VOLUNTEER SUBJECTIVITY

Before demonstrating what happened when volunteer fantasies were challenged, I first provide some examples of how those fantasies were articulated in context. In particular, the U.S. American volunteers emphasized three main aspects of the white savior fantasy: that they are "blessed" enough to be able to make a difference, that "Africa" provides a context of wilderness and adventure, and that any normal (white) U.S. American can make a difference there.

Many of the volunteers at the NGO described their desire to make a difference, or change the world: desires which my past work has shown to have neocolonial implications in international contexts.[33] For instance, when asked why she had come on a trip to Tanzania, one high school student named Tracy said, "…cuz I know, like my—like, when I die, I want to know that I made a difference. It sounds kind of cheesy, but I want to know that I impacted someone's life. And—or, more than one person." Since she

[33] Jenna N. Hanchey, "Making a Difference: The Politics of Knowledge and Learning in 'Effective' Peace Corps Service," in *A Postcolonial Analysis of Peace Corps Volunteer Narratives: The Political Construction of the Volunteer, Her Work, and Her Relationship to 'The Host Country National'* (master's thesis, University of Colorado Boulder, 2012), 75-107.

is answering a question about why she wanted to come to Tanzania, Tracy's answer implicitly ties the idea of making a difference to *being in Tanzania*—or perhaps more generally, being in Africa. Ben, another high school student, makes these ties more explicit in his answer to the same question:

> Yeah, so, I've been blessed—I've been like so fortunate in my life to be able to travel all over the world, Asia and Africa, and I just feel so blessed, and like, I just want to be able to see the different cultures, and like—there's like a stereotype that like Africa's so poor and impoverished, at least that's what I've heard, and um, so I've always wanted to come here and help and I feel like I've been so fortunate.

Ben makes it quite clear that he sees himself to be fortunate, and that it is his good fortune and blessings that give him the ability to help in Africa.

Even when asked directly about Tanzania, many volunteers responded in terms of Africa as a whole, and invoked narratives of otherness or wilderness in doing so. For example, when I asked a long-term volunteer, Mary, during an interview why she was volunteering here at the NGO, she explained, "Africa just seemed, just, spoke to me more than the other places [that were options for volunteering]…it sounded like a totally neat place to go." The particulars of different countries in Africa, and even different places in Tanzania, are elided by the whole and unified "Africa" imagined by white savior fantasies. In another example, a high school student who, again, was asked about why she had come to Tanzania, explained during a group reflection session:

> *Alicia*: I guess I initially went on the trip, um—do you know the movie the Wild Thornberrys?
> *Sarah*: Yes. Um, well, I know *of* it.
> *Alicia*: It's a cartoon about living in Africa, and I saw it when I was really little and absolutely fell in love with the idea of coming to Africa…I honestly didn't come so much for service, um, that's not what really drew me in, what really drew

> me in was like the group—I mean, not that I don't want to do service but like—coming to Africa, and like giving such a chance to do something like that.
> *Sarah*: To meet like a new group of people or what?
> *Alicia*: To go to Africa.

The Wild Thornberrys is a cartoon television show and film about a family of white Western wildlife documentarians in Africa. The cartoon focuses on a young daughter of the filmmakers who was given the magical gift of speaking to animals by a shaman. The movie particularly follows the daughter on an adventure to save a cheetah cub taken by poachers. The Wild Thornberrys seems to encapsulate a certain type of white savior narrative, one that focuses on the adventure to be had by white people in the yet virgin lands of Africa, which are filled with wild and majestic animals (but not usually people).

The idea that Alicia could emulate the Wild Thornberrys' adventures in Africa also rests on a final assumption of volunteer fantasies: that any (white) U.S. American, no matter how unqualified, can "make a difference" or "help" in Africa. Mary exemplifies this as she further explains why she is volunteering in Tanzania:

> Like, I feel like I had like selfish intentions. Like I wanted to…. I wanted to know more about myself. And…what my interests were. And what, um, kinds of things I was capable of. Um, and, just the fee—I loved the way that I felt after volunteering, just like, as a human. Like I just felt really confident, and…so I wanted like more of that feeling. And kind of, um…trying to push my potential. Like, I don't think I—I didn't try very hard in high school. So it's like, another aspect of my—and then I'm doing minimum wage jobs in Pittsburgh, so I'm *not*, like, going to live up to my potential at the minimum wage job! It's like, doing something else that maybe I could like put more of myself into, and like more of my heart, and like see if I work really hard like what kinds of results could come of that.

Mary explains how she was unqualified for anything but a minimum wage job in the U.S., because she "didn't try very hard in high school," but that a minimum wage job would not give her the opportunity to live up to her potential. She implies that she can,

however, live up to her potential at the Children's Village, even though she later in the interview talks about how she had no qualifications to work in education when she first arrived. Underlying many volunteer narratives is an assumption that one does not need to be qualified to work in Africa, because being a (white) U.S. American is qualification enough to help. As another example, consider that the high school student group arrived at the NGO after spending two weeks teaching English in both primary and secondary schools. Amira remarked on her experience in the first school, saying:

> At first it was like, like—oh I wasn't sure what we were doing, at first [inaudible], and then we got to the school and we were teaching students, and we were just completely thrown to the sharks there, and I didn't—I came late, so I hadn't met anyone either, and then all of a sudden I was standing in front of a class, expecting me to teach them grammar, like, language grammar. And I had no idea! But I *knew* it. Like I know it, I just don't know wording.

She admits that she both did not know how to teach grammar and did not know grammar itself, before backtracking on that statement to save face.

In the following two subsections, I trace two ways that U.S. American volunteers react to challenges to their white savior fantasies that end up restabilizing the fantasy, rather than exploring what it forecloses. First, I explore how denial figures an inability to recognize the fantasy itself in volunteer explanations. Denial often functions through slippages, claims that initial statements were worded incorrectly, and attempts to decontexualize. Second, I trace how an ironic rendering of oneself as outside the fantasy allows volunteers to recognize that other people have white savior fantasies, but elide that recognition in themselves. In particular, I look at the different ways race is bound up in the ironic recentering of fantasies through white volunteers lack of recognition that volunteers of color offer a different perspective, the way that focusing on other people's

insight can lead to a lack of reflexive engagement with one's own fantasies, and how volunteers of color are villainized or ignored when offering impetus for reflection to white volunteers.

Denial: Inability to Recognize the Fantasy

Perhaps the most blatant form of fantasy denial came from Sue, a young white volunteer just out of high school. She spent a month at the NGO videotaping different projects in order to create short films that the Children's Village could use to encourage donations. In an interview I did with Sue, she kept referring to the problem of "dependence" in aid: that Tanzanians will become lazy and entitled if an organization simply hands out free goods to them. As this recurred, I asked Sue questions to try to encourage reflection on how assuming "dependence" as a key problem in aid requires an inherent power inequity—centering the white savior fantasy by portraying annoyance at having to continually save others.

> *Sue*: I like the idea of providing resources that like don't create dependence, but maybe like resources that help people who want to make a difference in their own country. I think that could be cool? I don't know.
> *Jenna*: But is that really putting them in charge?
> *Sue*: Well—
> *Jenna*: —Or is it just another way of screening a power relation?
> *Sue*: Exactly, yeah, I mean it depends on the stipulations. I think it would be cool, I mean—you know. So like, the—theoretically. But that's the thing too, so much stuff, like, you know—David Giles' idea of colonialism as a way to regulate the Tanzanian government and, like, its corruption! Like, in theory, you're like wow, maybe that's not so bad. But then you think about it, and you're like, you know, in practice that would just cause more corruption, that would just cause more *bibi*s and *baba*s [grandmothers and grandfathers] talking about the past when they were, um, not independent and could not make their own decision and had no voice. Um, and—so obviously in practice, that's not, that's not how things work. Power gets corrupted very easily.

When I try to get Sue to think about how "providing resources that like don't create dependence" still puts Western people in charge of aid, she avoids facing the assumption of Western dominance central to her fantasy and instead reinforces it by talking about how "in theory" colonialism is "not so bad." She had recently had a conversation with Mr. Giles' son, David, who is a vocal proponent of reinstating a British-controlled colonial government in Tanzania. Although Sue does come to a conclusion that colonialism would be bad, she gets there through a route that does not disturb her assumption of Western dominance. Rather than reflect on how colonialism is *inherently bad*, as it paternalistically assumes the British would be better able to run Tanzania than Tanzanians, Sue instead focuses on how it would result in "more corruption." In addition to Sue's clear avoidance of questioning Western dominance, there are three primary ways that U.S. American volunteers in the Children's Village deny or avoid addressing the foundations of their fantasies: by slippage, by rewording, and by decontextualization.

Denial Through Slippage

When volunteers avoid traversing their fantasies by denial through slippage, they avoid directly answering the question that was asked by reorienting it around a minor aspect, thereby avoiding the main implication that would disturb an assumption of the white savior fantasy. Mary provides a good example in my interview with her.

> *Mary*: Like, most NGOs are started by Westerners. So if you're looking at it from that side [that NGOs should be managed by local people]—that eventually you would be passing it off to Tanzanians. That if it was going to continue on, it would continue on as a Tanzanian only project. And I would agree with that more and more. …That you're empowering Tanzanians to do that work that you're doing.
> *Jenna*: Why do you think the Westerners are needed to start it in the first place?

> *Mary*: Money. I would say, is probably a big thing. And then I think that it would be hard…impossible…to like, give money to, like if I wanted to start this NGO, I found Damas [a staff member], and I gave him all the money to start this NGO without me being a part of it at all. I don't think that that would go down very well.
> *Jenna*: Why?
> *Mary*: Um…cuz…I don't think he—I can't—I don't know if there's like one person who's—who has all that knowledge. Anyway. And who'd be able to do that. Even in America. If you just gave money to one person, and they would just know exactly the best way to, like, do it.

Here, instead of facing the question of why Westerners are needed to lead an aid organization in the first place, Mary uses the terms of her own answer to slip from the question of *Western* control into a question about *individual* control. Mary could not quite break through the fantasy of white saviorism. When faced with the knowledge that her position of Westerners being required to start an NGO was based in an idea that Tanzanians could not be trusted to handle money themselves, she denied it by slipping between Tanzanian*s* and *a* Tanzanian. This then allowed her to claim that the reason Westerners were needed to start an NGO is that one person cannot be trusted with money—a clear *non sequitur*. However, by tying this to the idea that this is true "even in America," she can make it seem as if her statement treats Tanzanians and U.S. Americans equally.

In another statement in the same interview, Mary again uses a verbal slippage to avoid facing the problem of Western dominance in NGO leadership. She says that she sees herself as working herself out of a job, eventually turning her position over to be run by Tanzanians. "Working yourself out of a job" is a common approach to empowerment discourse in aid that attempts to distance itself from the white savior attitude of assuming Western dominance. The key here is that Westerners have been trained and/or are skilled

in some areas about which Tanzanians do not have access to proper education. By putting it in terms of training and education, claims to be working oneself out of a job can still posit Western dominance while countering its inherency. After Mary claims to be working herself out of a job, I ask:

> Jenna: Um…So what is it that you see yourself as needing to work yourself out of? You said you're working yourself out of a job. So what is it that right now you need to bring, that you can eventually train them [in]?
> Mary: Um, I think—some of the—still—like goal-setting I think is still hard. And I think I—you know, I'm still learning as well. You know? Um, and I—as I learn I can teach. You know? So there's this always developing to it. It's not like I'll just run out of everything, and be done.

Mary belies her own statement about wanting to work herself out of a job by claiming that, actually, there will always be more that she can teach the Tanzanians at the NGO. By slipping between *their learning* and *her own*, she not only avoids addressing the key problem of her own assumed dominance, but also reinforces it. Rather than address what she knows that Tanzanians do not, and why, her statement that "as I learn I can teach" implies that her learning will always be more advanced than Tanzanians—it has to be, in order for her always to have something to teach them. By trying to speak in a way that counters inherent Western dominance, Mary recenters it.

Denial Through Rewording

The high school student group was particularly adept at parroting language of the NGO leadership and their teachers to avoid both responsibility for saying something offensive or problematic, and reflection on what led them to speak in that way. For multiple reasons, Sarah decided to lead reflection sessions for them each evening, in an attempt to help them think through what they were doing here, and move away from a

white savior or voluntourist attitude. In part, this stemmed from the recent ire demonstrated by the donors Esther and Gail about "voluntourists," and Mr. Giles' threat that the organization would stop taking all volunteers in the future if Esther and Gail continued to be unhappy. Another important contextual thread is that Sarah did not want to host this group in the first place; she felt had been tricked into it by the manager of the trip, who conveniently also was "unable" to accompany the group to the village.[34] Sarah felt both deceived, and then burdened with another person's responsibility in taking care of this group. The reflection sessions were a means of trying to make the best of an unfortunate situation where unskilled volunteers were burdening the NGO's staff and time.

Language is a structuring force, and it has the power to affect symbolic and material change. However, language can also be used as a means of escape or avoidance. As Mama argues, "Adopting political rhetoric and symbolism, however earnestly, does not unproblematically lead to personal change."[35] The high school group demonstrated multiple times the power of rewording in avoiding reflexivity. Camille, one of the teachers, told Sarah and I after the first reflection session that "when they [the students] were answering your questions, they were feeding you guys back the same keywords that you were using." The students, however, seemed to see this not as avoidance, but as defense. In the reflection times, the feeling of defensiveness in the room was tense and stifling. The students were so concerned that they might *say* the wrong thing that they

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[34] The trip manager had told Sarah that one of her staff members had agreed to host the group, but when the staff member later sent her a screenshot of the conversation, it was clear she had said "You have to ask Sarah about the group," rather than just agreed to it.
[35] Mama, *Beyond the Masks*, 6.

were unable to stop and ask if they were *doing* the wrong thing by being there to "help" in the first place.

When asked to reflect, they would often instead reword their statements in order to avoid having to think about what was just said. The implication was that they had expressed themselves wrong or that we had misunderstood them, instead of that they had expressed a perspective that needed to be reflected on further. As an example, Neill commented in the first reflection session that he had come to Tanzania in order to "better the people":

> *Neill*: Well, also, because I know that I want to work with people and try to help in some way, and so that's why I came here also is to see how I can help to better the people, and not just how I think I should better them.
> *Sarah*: To better the people in what way?
> *Neill*: In the way that they want to be bettered. In the ways that like I could be, I guess, respected amongst them because I'm listening to what they have to say and I'm getting—what they want from me, and then giving them what they need and not what I think they need.
> *Jenna*: Can I ask a…question?
> *Neill*: Of course
> *Jenna*: Is there already a certain assumption, or what assumptions are being made in the idea that you can help, even if you are listening to how they need to be helped?
> …
> *Sarah*: So the pushback is—you said "giving them." So, the word to 'give' people implies that there's a hierarchy of, also, of power, of have and have-nots. What do you think about that?
> *Neill*: Oo. Okay, well, putting it in that way, I think I would re-word my—I would choose a different word. I would think more of….I, I don't know. Cuz like, I don't want to make it seem like there's a hierarchy, because I'd rather set myself as equal. Because we're all people, when it comes down to it. And I understand that, and I just want to have—to have sort of exchange, really. Because I understand that there's some issues—like, that's obvious—like, we can all recognize that there's something—like, they might need…water, I don't know, I don't know. I don't know what they need, and that's why I'm here to figure it out. But whatever they *needed*, then that's what I want to figure out. Like, kind of just like, fill in where I'm *needed*, not to *give*, but just to…just to be there, I guess. Just to be useful.

When Sarah and I tried to prod Neill into questioning why he assumed he could "better the people" in Tanzania, he first tried to refocus on how he would make sure to "giv[e] them what they need." When we again tried to get him to think about the assumption of U.S. American dominance in that statement, he explicitly said that in answer to us he would "re-word…choose a different word." Here, Neill uses attempts at rewording to avoid challenging the fantasy that he innately has something to give that can help "better the people" of Tanzania.

Denial Through Decontextualization

On the third reflection night with the high school group, Dr. Baker and Tiffany came in to talk with them about medical matters in Tanzania, and the systemic issues involved with getting people in the village access to treatment. As an example, they told the students about all the problems they had faced just that day in attempting to get a dying baby on anti-retroviral medications (ARVs)[36]—and how it still had not yet happened. They were attempting to point out the importance of systemic inequalities to healthcare access, and disturb the white savior narrative of an individual being able to simply save lives alone. Dr. Baker summed up the heart of their presentation by saying:

> …when it comes down to it, it doesn't matter how smart I am, and how well-educated I am—it just doesn't, um, it doesn't matter if you don't have a system around you to support you. Um, I need to have nurses and lab techs and machines and medicines and pharmacists and all that sort of stuff and that's how I do my job. Here, when those things aren't available, it's tough, and you try to pull yourself up by your bootstraps—I can look up doses, I can mix medicines, I can give shots, that sort of thing—but when you have an entire *system* failure, where this mama's been to three doctors. And nobody helps her. And even now, I'm

[36] ARVs are medications used to treat HIV/AIDS.

> like, this baby's dying! And I don't have an emergency room to send them to. What can you do?

The medical workers did an excellent job challenging a central theme of the white savior narrative: that a decontextualized individual can, as Dr. Baker says, "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" and win the day.

However, some of the students felt this attack on their fantasy, and denied it by attempting to decontextualize the narrative back away from systemic issues. For one example, at the end of the session, one of the students asked the medical workers: "And I kinda know like—I know happy endings aren't really real-world, and obviously from the stories you have told us, it doesn't happen super-often. But you guys are obviously in this field for a reason, and I was wondering if you could just share a story of, just like overcoming—not a miracle, but…" The student trailed off, unable to find another word for what she was asking from Dr. Baker and Tiffany than a story about a "miracle." Dr. Baker again took the opportunity to directly undermine the lone savior fantasy, answering, "When we turn the bad stories into systemic change."

The next day, I spoke to one of the teachers who thought this was a moment of break-through for the students. She said that after we had left, the students were silent, and Camille had told them, "You *still* don't get it." Her comment had prompted them to talk more about *why* the doctors told negative stories, with no happy endings, and how life is not like TV, and some of the them started crying and realized that 'helping' is not as easy as it sounds. However, at the last reflection session, it was clear that some students still could not address the terms of their fantasy, instead internalizing that the medical workers must have "just" had a "bad day." We had asked the students to describe

a metaphorical rose, bud, and thorn of their weeks, or high point, new beginning, and low point. Alicia began with her thorn:

> So my thorn was actually, um, I think this last night when the doctors came and talked to us. I really liked all the [inaudible] that they were saying and I totally understood where they were coming from, with like having a bad day, but like they kind of had a negative attitude towards helping and they kind of were saying that like everything was hopeless. And I'm—I'm sure that they don't normally talk like that, I'm sure that was just their bad day, but that kinda just—I think that affected everyone else in the room—just mainly, it kinda just like brought everyone's spirits down. Why are we here if we can't help? Why is anyone here if there's no hope? And it was kind of a rough few minutes.

Instead of reflecting on the way their hard work fits into a difficult system, Alicia dismissed the medical workers' presentation as "having a bad day," "a negative attitude," and not how they "normally talk." This, then, allowed her to have a "rough few minutes," rather than taking the time necessarily to really think through the challenging aspects of their stories. Although later in the session I managed to point out that by saying the medical workers had simply had "a bad day," the students missed the lesson of the conversation, no one picked up my comment for further discussion. Instead, another student changed the subject by asking what happened to the baby.[37]

Irony: Imagining Oneself as Outside the Fantasy

If denial involves being unable to face the assumptions underlying a fantasy, irony involves facing them as aspects of someone else's fantasy, and not one's own. In recentering the white savior fantasy through irony, U.S. American volunteers at the NGO recognize the fantasy, but avoid addressing it in their own lives by identifying other

[37] In case the reader is also wondering, baby Siva was eventually able to get on ARVs. By being fed through an eye-dropper for weeks, she regained strength enough to survive for a further year before succumbing to an opportune infection.

volunteers to whom they can define themselves in opposition. Mary provides a clear example of irony in my interview with her:

> *Mary*: Well, I think, I mean, when you start out, I think you have like a savior complex. And so, being aware of that, and aware, of…like…how you're being perceived and what your intentions are with your work. There's been a lot of volunteers that come through that like, want their stamp of Africa. Like, I'm gonna wear African clothes every day, I'm going to eat ugali [the staple starch for Tanzanians] every day, and that means that I like, did something, you know?
> …
> *Jenna*: Do you feel like you started there, too, or that you had a different attitude?
> *Mary*: I feel like I just came—I feel like—or at least I tried to come with an open mind and just try to push myself. To get out of my comfort zone. I'm—I think I'm pretty integrated.

Mary starts by claiming that the general volunteer, when starting out, has a "savior complex," but goes on to excise herself from this general claim. Although she is able to recognize the general fantasy that U.S. volunteers begin with, she imagines herself to be outside of it, to be different than the others.

Another example of an ironic recognition of fantasy is when a volunteer assumes that she is doing something worthwhile—making a difference—while others are not. Some of the college students betrayed this attitude while working on the farm one day. The students were split into three groups to work in the fields. One was using *majembe* [hoes] to dig up the ground for replanting, and the others were put to work weeding the areas where crops were already growing. I wrote about the reaction of the hoeing group to the others in my field notes:

> The students who were working with the *majembe* did not want to switch with the other students at all. I think they wanted to prove themselves capable of doing the most difficult task. They seemed to have a negative attitude…that placed their work above that of their counterparts. When they finished hoeing the hill and went to pick greens to cook for lunch, the students picked some leaves, stood up, and immediately said, "That only took like two minutes. What have they been

> doing this whole time?" referring to the other two groups of students. I chimed in at the same time as another student to say, "They weren't picking greens. They were weeding." However, it's interesting that the first assumption they had was that the other groups hadn't been doing real work at all, and must have just been lazily wasting time. It's such an ironic view for these students to take, here doing the work Tanzanians do *every day*, when it's a perspective that is so often turned back on Africans themselves. Just because we don't understand the kind of work they are doing, and because we have already assumed that *we* are doing the hardest work, they must not be doing anything worthwhile at all, those lazy people.

Rather than asking what the other students were doing, the first group immediately assumes that they have been working hard, making a difference, while the other groups have been wasting time.

Irony is based in a recognition that a fantasy exists, but a refusal to recognize oneself as within the grips of it. Throughout my time at the NGO, irony in reconstituting U.S. American volunteer subjectivity was most pronounced in regard to race. In the following subsections, I address three ways that race interacts with irony: first, in regard to restabilizing normative whiteness; second, in a focus on judging others *in lieu of* reflecting on oneself; and third, in villainizing and dismissing of people of color.

Irony Through Whiteness

In *Lose Your Mother*, Saidiya Hartman writes of her double-experience as an African American searching for her home that was long ago stolen by the slave trade using the metaphor of the "come, go back, child."[38] She writes that the descendants of slaves are caught between two calls, telling them both to stay—come closer—and go—go home. Home is both *there* and *not there*, as love is both *there* and *not there* in either

[38] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2007), 84-100.

place.[39] For African American volunteers, in particular, the white savior fantasy attached to volunteering is disturbed by a recognition of their double presence as both *home* and *not home* in the continent from which their ancestors were taken.

However, white volunteers for whom the white savior fantasy fits undisturbed have a hard time recognizing the struggles of African American volunteer subjects. In part, an ironic engagement with fantasy requires *being able to locate others within the fantasy*, in order to then imagine yourself outside of it. Instead of letting the double-experience of African American volunteers question the fantasy of the white savior itself, unreflective white U.S. volunteers instead labor to be able to contain African American volunteers within it. By fixating on the singular dimension of foreignness assumed in volunteer fantasies, they are able to avoid facing questions about the assumption of whiteness in their own subject construction. Consider the following conversation, between a group of white volunteers and staff members at the NGO that questions the legitimacy of African American student perspectives in the college group:

> *Julie*: There is a thing with the African American kids. Like, they're like, "*We* can just blend in, and *we* are different." And a little bit of like self-segregation in the group.
> *Sarah*: I noticed that.
> *Julie*: Yeah.
> *Sarah*: Three of them are sharing a room together, for example.
> *Amanda*: I actually—they were—I don't know how they arranged themselves at the houses, but I got that—
> *Julie*: Like, even in Dar. When Jason [her husband, the trip manager] was with them in Dar and they went to the mall, and he definitely heard a couple of them saying, "I wish we could just walk away from these white people because then we could just blend in." And Jason's like, "Wake up honey, you're a foreigner just as much as everybody else." You know? Like you walk different, you act different, you dress different. And as soon as you open your mouth—yeah. Anyway.

[39] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 87.

> *Sarah*: That's interesting.
> *Julie*: Yeah, it's an interesting dynamic. Jason always—he says he gets that kind of chip-on-your-shoulder attitude kinda thing from the African American students all the time. Like, "What are you, white guy? What do you have to teach me about Africa? This is my homeland."
> *Amanda*: Is it?
> *Julie*: I mean, one was born in Kenya, okay. But she lived in America. One's Ghanaian, ethnically, but she grew up in America.
> *Jenna*: Is, um, the man from Nigeria, like *from* Nigeria?
> *Julie*: Yeah, but until he was like 5.
> *Jenna*: Okay.
> *Julie*: They've all grown up in America.

The resilience of whiteness is astounding. Even when it is pointed out that three of the students are *from Africa*, they are still rationalized as within the fantasy—and thus within our ability to judge—because they grew up in the U.S. Rather than trying to engage with the students' perspectives, and address the assumptions of whiteness in our understandings of U.S. volunteer presence in Tanzania, or the different experiences and perspectives that U.S. volunteers of color bring, we in the conversation instead recenter the white savior fantasy by forcing others to fit within it.

Irony through a Focus on Judging Others

At the same time, the work of traversing fantasies depends on an ability to reflect on oneself, one's context, and one's relations. If a U.S. American volunteer, of whatever race, focuses on judgment of others *at the expense* of their own subjective processes, she cannot face her foreclosures. Take for example Idogbe, the young Nigerian man raised in the U.S. In the college group's reflection session, he called out the rest of the group:

> When you guys [inaudible] talk about people, and the problems that are hurting people. That's exactly how I feel. I have so many nephews and either—my grandfather had like 50 wives or something—I have people all over the place in Africa. And then people will say, oh Africa is blah blah blah blah. I take it as a personal attack. Because like, you're talking about me. You're talking about

> where I'm from, you're talking about my cousins. You're talking about my nephews. …And you go on to say something, you say, "Oh my god, this is so disgusting. And I met this guy [inaudible]. It was horrifying." And I come and sit there and think, I'm two seconds removed from being in Africa myself. …I take offense to that. And I know people here who are actually living in these conditions, and they take five more times offense to that than I am.

Idogbe's critique of the other volunteers was sound. Their instructors labeled the group as "complainy," and they were often drawing attention to their own perceived problems, rather than spending time connecting with people in the village. In the spirit of the "First World Problems" meme, the students often reinforced their own privilege by making comments about, for example, how they refused to sleep in a place with cockroaches, rather than recognize their U.S. American and class privilege in being able to make such refusals in the first place.

However, Idogbe's criticism was not isolated, and became a constant refrain that functioned, yes, to legitimately critique his classmates, but also to avoid recognizing his own foreclosures. In my field notes, I wrote that, "because of this attitude of *already knowing*, he did not take advantage of the opportunities to learn, grow, communicate, and connect with the Tanzanians in the village. While another classmate was trying her hardest to speak Swahili to everyone, and learn about them, Idogbe maintained a circle of U.S. raised—if not born—people around him to lord over."

Yet, I hesitate as I write this section. Am I, by writing *my perception* of Idogbe, not doing the exact same thing? I must say yes—the very condition of subjectivity is covering our foreclosures with fantasies, and I know I will never be able to recognize them in the moment. But worse, in my mind, is the question of whether my irony is of a greater scale, and that rather than reflecting carefully on racial dynamics in a way that

also calls attention to other aspects of volunteer fantasies, I have not simply reinforced whiteness. For, I cannot excuse myself from the same white savior fantasies that I am writing about in others. Over the years, my fantasy has shifted and changed, and I have moved some things past foreclosed into the symbolic realm; yet foreclosures always remain. To the extent that I misidentify myself as a coherent subject, to the extent that I can act—that I *can write*—other possibilities and recognitions are necessarily foreclosed. Below, I provide another example that refers to my own problematic judgments of others in regard to race. I did not want to avoid writing about Idogbe simply because it is hard to do so, or because I am afraid that in doing so I will reveal my own problematic assumptions of whiteness. With this in mind, I present an example of my own.

When the high school group arrived, they were accompanied by Julie, the public health researcher who had been an instructor for the college group. Although Julie was not affiliated with them, she came in place of her husband, Jason, the trip's manager. We asked her what the group was like, and one of her first responses was about how the teachers were too judgmental of the students:

> *Julie*: Like, yesterday the kids broke out into a song. And it's a song by black people. And [Jalisa, one of the teachers] was like, "What is this? Yesterday there were too many black people and now they're appropriating black culture?"
> *Jenna*: Well, I mean—
> *Sarah*: What were they saying?
> *Julie*: I don't know.
> *Jenna*: I could see why that would be offensive.
> *Julie*: Yeah, I don't know. I wasn't there.

Julie had no more context, other than at some point the students had said there were "too many black people here." Although I did not simply agree with Julie's read of the story as the teachers being too harsh, I also did not challenge it outright. Later, Mary, who must

also have heard this story from Julie, brought it up in conversation with me when I asked if she had heard about the issues of this particular group:

> *Mary*: About the issues that are arising so far?
> *Jenna*: Yes.
> *Mary*: Well, like racism? From the leaders?
> *Jenna*: Well, it's just like—a like "we are coming back to our homeland, you guys…can't…"
> *Mary*: Ohhh. That happened in that other group a little bit.
> *Jenna*: It did.
> *Mary*: Yeah.
> *Jenna*: Like, "You guys can't understand the way we understand." But then, at the same time, one of the examples that Julie was talking about to me also kinda sounded legitimate.
> *Mary*: Okay, which was?
> *Jenna*: But she didn't give much detail, and I don't think she overheard exactly what had happened. But one of the leaders said something like, um, you can't say that—so what the leader said was—well, everybody in the van was like singing an artist's—a black artist's song. And she said, you can't say there's too many black people here and then appropriate black culture. And Sarah had missed the first half of this—
> *Mary*: You can't say—
> *Jenna*: That there are too many black people here. And then appropriate black culture. And Julie's using this as an example, but like not having heard what happened beforehand, that could absolutely be a legitimate cause of anger.

Even as a critically trained scholar, who has taken classes and written essays about issues of race, I cannot simply stand up to Mary and say, "No, the teachers are in no way being racist." Instead, I use diminutives, saying that the position of the teachers "kinda sounded legitimate," and that their anger "could" also be legitimate. I have a hard time facing my fantasy straight-on; I cannot face that I do not understand everything that the African American teachers are dealing with, because it would disturb the white-savior-researcher fantasy I was holding onto. I should have been a better ally, and I was not. Instead, what I end up doing by painting *them* as judging the students, is foreclosing my own judgment of other volunteers, and strengthening my fantasy as a "good" volunteer.

Irony Through Dismissing People of Color

The line between irony and denial is thinner than I have painted it here. In this final analysis section, I flirt with the boundary between the two. The way that irony and denial can be both separate and yet overlapping demonstrates the way subject construction changes over time; being knowledgeable and reflective over a white savior fantasy at one point does not mean one will always be so. Denial moves into irony, and irony moves back into denial. Recognized foreclosures can be reforeclosed. Here I describe instances where the teachers of the high school group, Camille and Jalisa, point out contradictions in the fantasy that subjects have already recognized, and yet here are denied. Having been recognized, these contradictions are foreclosed again, through a process where irony borders denial.

By starting out suspicious of—or even not wholeheartedly supportive of—the black teachers, the white volunteers and staff at the NGO risked repeating the dynamic that the high school students had put in place. The students did not take kindly to the teachers, instead villainizing them for seeing problems in student behavior. In short, because Camille and Jalisa were able to better recognize racist/imperialist dynamics, they were often seen as the enemy when they tried to get the students to reflect.

In a meeting that Sarah and I had with the teachers to get their perspective on the student group, Jalisa and Camille described how the students had dismissed each of them in turn:

> *Jalisa*: We were on the hike at the Stone Age museum, and one of the girls said, "I saw a white person on the street, and I went up to him and I said, 'Hey, my brother!' Because I haven't seen"—or what did they say? "'Hey, my brother, because I need to see some white people.'" Or you know, something like that.
> *Sarah*: What?!

> *Jalisa*: "Hey, my brother, because there aren't many of us here." Or something like that! And I—and I go, and I say—"Well, how do you think we feel every day? Every day in America, all I see most of the time is white people. And so how do you think other people feel when they are out of their—you know, not around"—and then, it made me feel some sort of way when she said "my people." Because I'm standing right there—
> *Jenna*: Yeah, and are you not "her people"?

Jalisa later says that the students dismissed what she had to say to them, because "when these things come from me, it's like, 'Oh there goes Jalisa analyzing race stuff again,' you know?" In this instance, it is precisely *because* Jalisa has pointed out these dynamics before, precisely because the students have already been faced with the whiteness of their fantasies, that they can dismiss it. Irony borders on denial, as the more often Jalisa points out race issues to the students, the more likely they are to dismiss her.

Camille faced a similar dismissal from the students when she attempted to instruct them in what was culturally appropriate.

> *Camille*: And we tried to address it [the group's cliquishness] the first week, and they kind of just were like, "Y'all are over thinking everything." And we became the bad guys. Cuz, like, whatever. But I know that I have had some experiences where I have felt extremely disrespected by them. Just in the way that they talk to me. And I come from a family, and even in my classroom, it's high power distance between myself and my students. And for them, I guess they grew up in high schools where it's low power distance, where like kids negotiate, and like—you know—like, Ben, when he like picked that girl up at [the school they were working at].
> *Jenna and Sarah*: What?!
> *Camille*: At one of the schools, he picked up a 14- or 15-year-old looking girl. So, she was—and she was actually, what did she say, she was a Form 4? …So she was a secondary student, like full breasts, full behind.
> *Sarah*: And he picked her up?
> *Camille*: He picked her up like this [demonstrates both arms lifting, one around the torso, one around the upper thighs] to take a picture!
> *Jenna*: That is inappropriate.
> *Camille*: I *told* him that it was inappropriate, and as I was telling him to come down the stairs and talk to Jason, he turned to me and said, "Camille, you're ruining all our fun." I'm sorry, we just had a conversation just yesterday about

> public displays of affection and not touching each other—you decide that you're gonna grab this girl from the small of her back and like right under her behind? Like, he had her like *this!*
> *Jenna*: That's *really* inappropriate behavior.

In a similar manner, Camille becomes the teacher who is out to ruin all their fun. Again, her repetitive act of being a disciplinarian, or of explaining cultural dynamics to them, ironically allows them to dismiss her as a villain or enemy, thus denying her critiques of privilege in their fantasies. The disrespect and dismissal that the students show her is tied to her unwillingness to let power dynamics stand unchallenged. When challenged, the students ironically locate themselves outside of the fantasy, by dismissing Camille's read of their fantasy of subject production as nit-picking rather than fundamental, skirting the border with denial.

The students were not the only people who dismissed the teachers' critiques. While listening through the audio recordings of our meeting with the teachers, and the reflection times with the students, I noted two moments where Jalisa attempted to engage Sarah in reflection over her position as manager of the NGO. Here, irony effectively reverts back to denial through the avoidance of her concerns:

> *Jalisa*: I just wonder…like how…how do we change their mindset about being saviors when it seems like that's kinda what we see everywhere we go. Like, everywhere we've gone there's always been like a group of white people that are—
> *Sarah*: Like church missionaries come in, and doing something, or building a building?
> *Jalisa*: Or even like, here. It's like, all white people like living in the big house.[40] Or all the volunteers—I haven't met all the volunteers, but all the volunteers that I've met have been white. How do we—
> *Sarah*: Here, specifically at this NGO or in the country?

[40] Sarah and Tim live in a significantly bigger house than the rest at the Children's Village. It's two stories; all the rest are one.

> *Jalisa*: Just, period. How do we change that narrative, when that's the narrative that we are seeing? You know what I'm saying? Like, I don't know how to do that when that's what we are being presented with?
> *Camille*: Well, I think, this kinda goes back to what Mary said yesterday, that she's training someone else to work herself out of a job. …And that you want to leave a group of Tanzanians that are here, able to run the NGO themselves.
> …
> *Sarah*: Is there somebody at the door?

As someone else enters the room, the thread of conversation is lost for the remainder of the meeting. Jalisa was attempting to get Sarah to reflect on her position in the NGO, and how she presents it to the volunteers who come to visit. As Sarah led the tour, leads the reflection sessions, is constantly walking about to monitor activities during the day, it can be easy to see her as a living embodiment of the white savior fantasy. In a reflection session later that evening, Jalisa again attempts to challenge this fantasy, when a student seems to refer to Sarah having single-handedly "created" the community at the Children's Village:

> *Amira*: And I really—I really wanted to experience new things, and be able to experience different things—new things—to see a different—to see how this community—this whole community that you have created works.
> …
> *Jalisa*: Can I ask a clarifying question? You said, "A community that you created." Who were you referring to?
> *Amira*: You as in every person here who's worked to create this community, and those who participate in the comm—the community as an NGO. This is a different feel—this—everything that happens here, I guess.
> *Sarah*: I, I think that—I mean, that's a tough question to answer. Is there a face of an NGO, is there like, what does it mean? And what do communities—how do we define community as a community?

By moving the conversation into "how do we define community," Sarah misses an opportunity to challenge that fantasy of the white savior in her own subject construction:

a fantasy that she has been consistently challenging in others throughout her encounters with volunteer groups.

In leading the reflection sessions, Sarah and I clearly repeated that ironic reinstantiation of the fantasy. Focusing on getting the *students* to reflect removed the impetus from changing ourselves, and placed it on changing others. Much of the desire for the students to get somewhere in reflection was, for me, about proving I was already there myself.[41] That is, part of what emerges from defining myself in opposition to *other* white saviors, is that I, in leading the reflection sessions, really wanted to see an "aha" moment in the students in order to prove I have already had that moment—that I have transitioned from unwitting white savior to "woke," and that I deserve to be in Tanzania now. The irony of defining oneself as outside of the fantasy is that it is done as a means to justify one's presence in Tanzania, an attempt to prove that it is possible to be there outside of the context of neocolonialism. This, of course, is nothing but a fantasy.

THE PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF VOLUNTEER FORECLOSURES

Two weeks after the student groups left, I wrote in my field notes:

> Last night, right before going to bed, Sarah said to me, "I hope I'm not a hypocrite." I asked what she meant, and she continued, "I'm always saying that the Tanzanians are in charge, but I also hold onto to some decisions myself." I told her that I don't think she's a hypocrite. We left it at that last night, but I feel like I need to explain, in these notes if not to her, why I feel that way. In my mind, it's similar to the way I think about Dr. Baker's conflict over whether providing service outside of her expertise here is ethical or unethical: should she treat these patients in way that amounts to a lower standard of care than they deserve, since she is simply a pediatrician? Or by not treating them, is she doing greater ethical harm, when there is no access to medical care whatsoever otherwise? In my mind, what matters almost as much as her answer is the fact that she is *asking the questions in the first place*. Similarly, the fact that Sarah is concerned, and deeply

[41] Constance Gordon, personal communication.

> concerned, about whether or not she is being hypocritical is part of what allows her to do her work here so well.

From my current frame of mind I would better have answered, "Of course you're a hypocrite. But there's no way not to be." As Butler reminds us, every foreclosure is productive as well as restrictive.[42] Hypocrisy can still allow for good work, and recognizing it opens possibility to move the work in even better directions.

In this concluding section, I would like to bring out the practical relevance of this research for work in the Children's Village. Subjectivity is often handled in purely theoretical terms; rather than add to the already abundant work on the theoretical implications of poststructural subject constitution, I instead turn to how even high theory has important implications in the field. To do so, I describe how I presented this research when I returned to the NGO to speak with the Tanzanian staff about my findings, and the conversations that ensued.

As I struggled to put conclusions about subject construction in practical terms for the staff of the NGO, I asked: What is productive in the denial and ironic removal found in U.S. American volunteer subject construction? Denial and irony produce subjectivities dependent on certain fantasies, and also reinforce the pathways, described above, for maintaining those fantasies. In order for work at the NGO to become more politically just, the fantasies of white saviorism and making a difference needed to be destabilized. Recognizing that interactions between Western volunteers often served to shore up the fantasies, I began to ask if perhaps there was a way to *replace* those interactions with interactions between Westerners and Tanzanian staff.

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[42] Butler, "Changing the Subject," 333.

The denial and irony described above tends to make it difficult for Westerners to give other Westerners advice about their relationships with Tanzanians. There are a number of volunteers and donors who come in with ideas about projects, or desires for where their money should go, that have no idea how to navigate the cultural context. For many of these ideas, it is obvious to the Tanzanian staff and to Sarah and Tim, who have lived in this village for 10 years, that the ideas simply will not work. The NGO's leadership team thought that Westerners would be better able to say "no" to other Westerners. However, when Sarah and Tim attempt to communicate that an idea will not work to volunteers or donors, they are seen as jealous, or trying to undermine another Westerner's success. They are challenging the fantasy, and the response from volunteers and donors often follows the path of irony.

I suggested to the Tanzanian staff that they actually have a much stronger position from which to say "no" to donors and volunteers than the permanent Western staff. When volunteers are given an explanation from Tanzanians, it points out the contradiction in their—often explicit—desire to *partner* with Tanzanians. It makes it harder to protect the fantasy through the usual ironic pathways of saying that the other Westerner is just jealous, or that they do not understand the context. If a Tanzanian who grew up in that village is saying something will not work, it undermines the fantasy in a way that does not provide the typical mechanisms of avoiding subjective dissolution. Without claiming a direct, colonial superiority over a Tanzanian, a Westerner cannot refuse the critique. There are few ways to maintain the *neocolonial* white savior narrative, and disregard a Tanzanian telling you a project will not work. Being directly challenged by another

Westerner can stay within the bounds of the fantasy; being directly challenged by a Tanzanian disturbs the claim that you can locate yourself outside of the fantasy, and that you are *not* the white savior you think everyone else to be.

As an extension of this suggestion, the staff and I came up with other means of forging connections across difference. I had also said that they needed to create some mechanism by which volunteers are *obviously* placed under Tanzanian leadership. The organization had already made the shift from calling short-term Western workers "volunteers" to calling them "interns," highlighting that they are there to learn and serve, not to save. However, the message was still not sinking in.[43] Together, we came up with the idea of having the Western volunteers undergo performance reviews, like the employees of the organization do, where they are given an overview of their perceived strengths and areas for improvement from a Tanzanian superior.

Following Carrillo Rowe, these two changes in the organization are attempts to help create more possibilities for subjects to "forge connections across power lines" and learn "to listen and speak *differently*."[44] We cannot start to escape the irony of being a volunteer under the conditions of white supremacy and imperialism—and we never fully will—without deep and abiding transracial and transcultural connections. Those conditions also highlight precisely why disturbing such fantasies is of the utmost importance. As a local missionary put it, "This is not a playground. These are people's

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[43] Mary, for instance, continually repeated that her and her Tanzanian coworker, Nuru, were equals, when actually Nuru is the Head of the Education Department, and Mary works under her.
[44] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 11 and 13.

lives, and this is the future of a community. And this is not about how Americans feel about things. It's not."

However, I have left a major question unanswered in my analysis of how U.S. American volunteers *avoid* subjective dissolution: How, then, can it be encouraged? If it can at all? How can volunteers become more reflexive on their own subjective fantasies? The changes in organizational policy described above can place Westerners in uncomfortable or unexpected relationships with Tanzanians, relationships that cross power lines and ask them to think differently, but they do not necessarily force them to do so. What leads to greater reflexivity, and the ability to face subjective dissolution?

Chapter 7: Reflexivity as Trauma

An old man, a stranger, yells at me. "*Mzungu*! Where are the diamonds? I know you're here for them! I know you know where they are!" As a Peace Corps volunteer teacher living in Tanzania, I was frightened. He approached me aggressively, and accused me of actions of which I knew nothing. I backed away cautiously, and walked quickly home.

This moment returns to me, over and over, because I cannot come up with an explanation sufficient to lay it to rest. As a critical rhetorical scholar, my research training informs me that the solution is to be reflexive, to consider what this situation reveals about power. Maybe then I can find an interpretation that provides valuable insight into intercultural relations and my own implication in restabilizing power dynamics. However, the command to "be reflexive" is more difficult than it sounds. What does it mean, in practice, to be reflexive? If I continue to be stymied by this old man yelling at me each time the situation arises in my mind, does that imply there are limits to what can be understood through reflexivity?

Reflexivity is often used simply, as a term that critical scholars should know is necessary and understand how to enact.[1] Yet, if we were to ponder the question of what it

[1] For example, take the following recent essays published in *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies.* In E. Cram's work queering the settler archive, they mention that "archival invention must carefully situate the sociality of bodies, sensation, and feeling through praxis of reflexivity," with no further explanation of what reflexivity entails. In her essay on Lauren Berlant's method and style, Heather Love mentions that Berlant displays "uncanny" and "exemplary" self-reflexivity, without defining the term. James Hay even says the journal itself is "animated by a reflexivity about the conditions and institutional/disciplinary regimes of intellectual and academic work," but seems to assume that this animation and how it is enacted are obvious to the audience of the journal. E. Cram, "Archival Ambience and Sensory Memory: Generating Queer Intimacies in the Settler Colonial Archive," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 13, no. 2 (2016): 116; James Hay, "Introduction," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 10, no. 1 (2013): 2;

means to be reflexive more deeply, we might run into trouble. How is it, exactly, that one recognizes power operating? How is it that some can be more reflexive than others? What allows for their greater sensitivity to power relations? What invokes the limits of reflexive practice for each subject in context? Can one be unwittingly reflexive? I find that such questions underscoring what being reflexive means are rarely addressed, let alone answered. When scholars call for researchers to be reflexive, when they say they are being reflexive, when the use of the word continues to be structured by a peculiar absence of what this act entails, we find that rather than mark a presence of a concept, reflexivity marks a haunting—a structuring absence.[2]

Charles E. Morris III describes how rhetorical approaches to critical studies have long been uncomfortable with the idea of reflexivity, as it requires a sort of "critical exhibitionism," "indecorousness," and "impiety" to demonstrate in writing how we as critics are implicated in the relations with text and context that comprise our research.[3] He recognizes that rhetorical scholars *theorize* reflexivity, and may in fact be *doing* it, but that it is not *articulated* in their writing.[4] Interestingly, the reverse phenomenon is also prevalent in critical/cultural studies: that scholars articulate reflexivity in their writing

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Heather Love, "What Does Lauren Berlant Teach Us about X?," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 9, no. 4 (2012): 322 and 324.

[2] As Avery Gordon describes, "[i]n haunting, organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life in a way that confounds our analytic separations and confound the social separations themselves." Things that haunt influence and impact our theories and research experiences, yet cannot be reduced to the theoretical constructs by which we operate as scholars. There is an excess to haunting, a not-yet-understood remainder that needs to be addressed. Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 19.

[3] Charles E. Morris III, "(Self-)Portrait of Prof. R.C.: A Retrospective," *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 1 (2010): 33-34.

[4] Morris, "(Self)-Portrait," 33.

without having a clear theoretical mooring.[5] The word reflexivity appears, but the assumptions undergirding its use remain ethereal. In both of these cases, reflexivity haunts critical/cultural work.

The specter of reflexivity thus presents itself in different forms. In the first case, it appears as a foreboding apparition, portending the demise of rigorous criticism in a mire of narcissistic work and navel-gazing. In the second, it is a beautiful mirage, a specter that seems to offer answers to the difficult questions plaguing critical scholarship, but that disappears as soon as one reaches it. In this chapter, I move toward a third understanding, which sees reflexivity as a necessary marker of a haunting, reminding scholars of the silences, gaps, and erasures that constitute critical theory and method, calling for attention. That the specter is necessary does not automatically mean it is benevolent, nor that it will be easily addressed.[6] Reckoning with ghosts is never easy, nor are we ever finished with them.[7]

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[5] See note 1, above.

[6] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 22 and 57. Gordon notes that "ghosts are never innocent," and describes through the story of Sigmund Freud's relationship with Sabina Spielrein how difficult it can be to engage with ghosts and haunting.

[7] In this paper, I will use "ghosts" and "specters" interchangeably. Literature on haunting references both, and does not seem to make a distinction. Jacques Derrida does distinguish between "*spirit*" and "specter," explaining that "what distinguishes the specter or the *revenant* from the *spirit*, including the spirit in the sense of the ghost in general, is doubtless a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X, that *non-sensuous sensuous* of which *Capital* speaks…it is also, no doubt, the tangible intangibility of a proper body without flesh, but still the body of some*one* as some*one other*." The difference between spirit and specter expounded here also seems to differentiate ghosts *in specific* from spirit (as opposed to his mention of them *in general* as analogous to spirit). That is, the specter or specific ghost has a sense of tangibility, it appears in some form. Even if this form can never be apprehended totally and one can never be sure if one, in fact, *saw* a ghost, there is *something there*. The spirit as such does not enter the realm of the "proper body without flesh," but specters and specific ghosts, such as the ghosts of reflexivity, do. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), 6.

The first step in reckoning with our ghosts is to talk with them. For Avery Gordon, speaking and listening to ghosts is what makes all the difference between repressing them and reckoning with them.[8] Gordon uses the psychoanalytic language of "the uncanny," when something becomes alien precisely because of its familiarity, to show why we are frightened of ghosts: they present a resemblance we are not ready to admit in relation to our theories, cultures, or selves.[9] We must speak with them, rather than run, as facing this troubling resemblance is the only way to move our theories, cultures, and selves toward more just relations.[10] Similarly, Jacques Derrida claims that speaking to the specter is "necessary," as without this experience, both ethics and justice are impossible.[11] For Derrida, speaking to the specter represents an encounter with the undecideable, as the ghostly apparition floats in the undecideable realm between *being there* and *not being there*, and between representing things future or a return of the past.[12] Undecideability is the key to ethics for Derrida. In this perspective, if one faces a situation for which there is a pre-ordained answer, one is not really *deciding*, but simply following orders or instructions. Taking a decision means facing the infinite responsibilities inherent in a situation, knowing it is impossible to meet them all, and

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[8] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 49-50.
[9] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 51-52.
[10] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 190 and 60.
[11] Derrida argues that ethics and justice are not possible without recognizing ghosts since they depend on relationships to people and things *not present*: "It is necessary to speak *of the* ghost, indeed *to the* ghost and with it, from the moment that no ethics, no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable and *just* that does not recognize in its principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born." Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 11 and xviii.
[12] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 5-6 and 46.

deciding what to do anyway.[13] Facing the specter requires us to face our failure to ever be fully ethical, and yet also, as Gordon demonstrates, is the only way to move toward more ethical and just relations.

The second step in reckoning with our ghosts is to witness (to) the transformative encounter. Witnessing (to) incorporates the double sense of witnessing that Kelly Oliver describes: "*eyewitness* testimony based on first-hand knowledge, on the one hand, and *bearing witness* to something beyond recognition that can't be seen, on the other."[14] The undecidablility of the specter—here, not here; corporeal, incorporeal—requires a witnessing (to) that describes both the experience with the ghost and the uncanny resemblance it brings to light that cannot quite be pinned down. For reflexivity, this means explaining the circumstances and relations in which we have taken part in a way that brings to light power dynamics otherwise invisible—and that are not easily affixed even in these circumstances. Witnessing (to) such excessive experiences is transformative because reckoning requires transition: "the precarious but motivated transition from being troubled, often inexplicably or by repetitively stuck explanations, to doing something else."[15]

The third step in reckoning with our ghosts is to recognize that reckoning is never finished, and we must continue to speak to and witness (to) our ghosts. Derrida refers to specters as *revenant*, meaning "that which comes back."[16] The function of

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[13] Jacques Derrida, "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy, trans. Peter Connor and Avital Ronell (New York: Routledge, 1991), 167.
[14] Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 17.
[15] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 190.
[16] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 224.

undecideability in specters makes it so that we can never meet all aspects of our responsibility to a ghost, all its needs and desires. As Derrida puts it, "a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back."[17] This function of continual return marks a final important aspect of haunting: that it is traumatic. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena."[18] Dealing with specters—who have and will always return but cannot be anticipated or controlled—is an encounter with trauma. Ghosts return without expectation and against our will, they represent more than our theories, cultures, and selves can ingest, and our encounters with them are never fully symbolizable.

Thinking of reflexivity as a traumatic haunting provides one means of understanding *why* reflexivity is functioning as a specter in relation to critical/cultural work in the first place. Reflexivity haunts because it is in excess of our theories. We cannot actually capture what being reflexive looks like in words, cannot fully understand and relate our implication in all power relations, at all times, and thus we always fail. Our continual failures at seeing power relations mean that reflexivity is continually required; reflexivity continually returns. Often, it does so in ways that present an uncanny and uncomfortable recognition of ourselves: a resemblance that is difficult to accept. And to the extent that we fail to accept it, the resemblance continues to return, to haunt, to mark

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[17] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 123.
[18] Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 11.

our need for reflexivity. Looking at reflexivity *as trauma* can bring us past the limits of conscious recognition that structure our current understandings of the concept.[19] Moving beyond reflexivity as recognizing power relations, consciously noticing them and describing them, we can begin to think of reflexivity as not only what we perform, but what performs *us*.

To reckon with reflexivity as trauma, I draw from field notes collected during my fieldwork in Tanzania, as well as homenotes written before and after embarking on fieldwork. By analyzing how the traumatic experience that led me to graduate school, to persistent study, and to my current research project functions as a continual reflexive return, I demonstrate what a lens that looks at reflexivity as trauma can accomplish. Further, I show how this perspective pushes us beyond the mire of navel-gazing where reflexivity often gets theoretically and methodologically stuck, to cross into terrain that necessitates an uncanny and uncomfortable engagement with cultural politics—one that may ultimately allow us to move trauma toward justice.

As critical/cultural scholars turn increasingly toward the field, the need to address the specter of reflexivity feels more urgent.[20] Aaron Hess argues that in fieldwork

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[19] Here I am drawing from the argument of Oliver's book—that theories of witnessing should move beyond thinking of witnessing as an act of conscious recognition, toward a relation that institutes subjectivity and revives subjectivity post-trauma—to make a partially analogous argument about reflexivity—that it should be theorized beyond an act of conscious recognition. Oliver, *Witnessing*.

[20] Fieldwork is an increasing component of critical rhetorical studies, as the two books on the subject to be released within a six-month period demonstrate: Sara McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard, eds., *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method* (State College: Penn State University Press, 2016); Michael Middleton, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric in Situ* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015).

reflexivity takes on a kairotic dimension,[21] which shortens its temporal frame. Rather than the extended timeframe involved in reading, re-reading, and analyzing a text, critical scholars are faced with moments of possibility for reflexive action in the field. However, even though the trend toward fieldwork presents an exigence for better understanding of reflexivity, it is not merely—nor *mostly*—because of movement toward the field that reflexivity needs to be brought into focus. As I argue in this chapter, reflexivity is never finalized in a single moment, but figures instead a continual return—similar to textual analysis. Primarily, then, we need to attend to reflexivity because this concept structures what our scholarship can address, achieve, and embody in unrecognized ways. Constantly behind the scenes in debates over subjectivity, objectivity, and power lies reflexivity, out of sight, but influencing the terms of the discussion.

Based on the ways reflexivity is typically handled (as theorized, but not enacted, and claimed, but not theorized), my goal in this chapter is two-fold: first, to bring reflexivity out from the background of our theories in order to understand how critical scholars use or assume the concept; second, to move beyond the humanist limits of many conceptualizations of reflexivity toward a performative theory. Specifically, I argue for an understanding of reflexivity as trauma. In order to do so, I trace the three steps outlined above. To talk to our ghosts, I explore how reflexivity is often posited as a fully-conscious achievement of a humanist subject, the problems this perspective presents, and how to address them through a performative model of reflexivity as trauma. To witness (to) transformative encounters that institute reflexive subjects, I analyze my field notes to

[21] Aaron Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric," *Communication Studies* 62, no. 2 (2011): 138.

bring out both how reflexivity can be read as trauma, and how this connects subjects to larger fields of power. Here, I demonstrate how my own encounter with reflexivity is not truly *my own*, and can be read instead as a haunting of colonialism. Finally, I create a basis for continuation rather than concluding, to catalyze further encounters with the ghosts of reflexivity. For, as Derrida reminds us, there is never only one ghost. By choosing which ghosts to see, hear, and invite, we necessarily foreclose some others.[22] Here, I address one ghost of reflexivity, invite him in, try to understand his desires.[23] In part, I hope that this ghostly encounter displays an ethic of hospitality and responsibility that others may draw from, take up, or counter.[24] For we cannot have done with ghosts.

TALKING TO THE GHOSTS

(You) Doing Reflexivity

In much critical communication research, the term "reflexivity" is utilized without explanation of what it means or how, exactly, it is enacted.[25] For those that do investigate the term in relation to our scholarship and politics, reflexivity is discussed as a conscious action that is done, or perspective that is adopted, by a particular subject in order to attempt to redress her own problematic participation in power relations with others.[26]

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[22] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 109.
[23] The masculine pronoun is used purposefully here.
[24] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 81.
[25] For examples, see: Rachel Alicia Griffin, "Feminist Consciousness and 'Unassimilated' Feminisms," *Women's Studies in Communication* 37, no. 3 (2014): 255 and 256; Rona Tamiko Halualani, S. Lily Mendoza and Jolanta A. Drzewiecka, "'Critical' Junctures in Intercultural Communication Studies: A Review," *Review of Communication* 9, no. 1 (2009): 19 and 20; Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography," 138 and 147.
[26] The key, here, is that reflexivity is seen as something that *a subject consciously institutes*. For examples in critical work across the field, see: Kirsten J. Broadfoot and Debashish Munshi, "Diverse Voices and Alternative Rationalities: Imagining Forms of Postcolonial Organizational Communication," *Management Communication Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (2007): 249-267; Mary Garrett, "Tied to a Tree: Culture and Self-

Often, this involves listing one's positionality at the beginning of the essay in terms of social categories of difference, such as race, gender, sex, sexuality, and nation, implying a recognition of one's positionality in relation to others and how it affected the way the research was conducted and analyzed. In some cases, conscious reflexivity is even indirectly upheld as a panacea that can fix all of (white, male, cis-gender, straight, U.S. American) scholarship's difficulties with alterity.[27]

There are scholars who have started to move beyond a perspective on reflexivity that assumes stable social categories, essential identities, and achievable reflexive intent. In James McDonald's theorization of queer reflexivity, he argues that reflexive understandings of the researcher's role in power should not be fixed in identity categories, but rather conceptualized as shifting and contingent understandings of the researcher that change as context changes.[28] Similarly, Kate Lockwood Harris presents an intersectional approach to reflexivity that recognizes how stable identity categories can be useful and necessary in order to challenge power structures, and yet deconstructs them by recognizing that these categories are but strategic essentialisms, and that identities are

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Reflexivity," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (2013): 243-255; Jasmine R. Linabury and Stephanie A. Hamel, "At the Heart of Feminist Transnational Organizing: Exploring Postcolonial Reflexivity in Organizational Practice at World Pulse," *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 8, no. 3 (2015): 237-248.

[27] For example: Stephanie Norander and Lynn M. Harter, "Reflexivity in Practice: Challenges and Potentials of Transnational Organizing," *Management Communication Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2012): 74-105. Although Norander and Harter do not argue that the organization they study is or can perfectly enact reflexivity, the concept itself is still upheld as something that can be striven for—a goal that can be reached. In this chapter, I challenge the idea that reflexivity should be thought of as something that can fix power relations.

[28] James McDonald, "Coming Out in the Field: A Queer Reflexive Account of Shifting Researcher Identity," *Management Learning* 44, no. 2 (2013): 127-143.

multiple, fluid, and contingent.[29] Both McDonald and Harris challenge the reliance of reflexive scholarship on essentializing identities. Kimberlee Pérez and Dustin Bradley Goltz take this a methodological step further. Their performance piece starts with a bold declaration of identity categories that are then both deconstructed and relied on throughout, demonstrating a method for articulating how researcher identity is fundamentally relational rather than essential, and yet the social force of identity categories cannot be wholly escaped.[30]

These authors push and prod at the nature of the subject, revealing that a subject's identity is not so easy to describe or reflect upon. There is no stable essence to gaze upon, understand, and represent through writing. This view of reflexivity draws attention to social relations rather than centering an individual subject, asking us to consider how subjects are constituted in order to understand the reflexive researcher as relational. Rather than referring to the concept of reflexivity as "self-reflexivity," which invokes a unitary subject,[31] D. Soyini Madison asks us instead to think of reflexivity "as constitutive of the performative-I."[32] In this manner, thinking of reflexivity as a process that institutes and re-institutes subjectivity requires a focus on how a particular, momentary "I" is created through and with the people and circumstances that surround it. Aligning with the work of Aimee Carrillo Rowe, such a view of reflexivity would enact a

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[29] Kate Lockwood Harris, "Reflexive Voicing: A Communicative Approach to Intersectional Writing," *Qualitative Research* 16, no. 1 (2016): 111-127.
[30] Kimberlee Pérez and Dustin Bradley Goltz, "Treading Across Lines in the Sand: Performing Bodies in Coalitional Subjectivity," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (2010): 247 and 250.
[31] See for instance: Broadfoot and Munshi, "Diverse Voices and Alternative Rationalities;" Mary Garrett, "Tied to a Tree;" Hess, "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography."
[32] D. Soyini Madison, "The Labor of Reflexivity," *Cultural Studies <--> Critical Methodologies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 130.

"vital departure from the self-reflexive move of situating the individualized feminist researcher" by instead "call[ing] attention to…*collective practices*."[33] This, then, brings attention to the political processes by which particular subjects are brought into being in relation to others.

De-centering the sovereign subject in our theories of reflexivity might allow scholars of color, as well as queer and non-Western scholars a break from their tiring work of constantly having to push against the center of critical hegemony. By considering reflexivity as something that focuses on the *self*, we have allowed white, straight, cis-gender, U.S. American scholars to simply state that they are so, name their identities, and move on as an engagement with "reflexivity"—or a sort of reflexivity that changes nothing, and serves instead to re-center such subjectivities.[34] A theory of reflexivity as trauma, as I later explain, focuses on how reflexivity *institutes* subjects, initiating a greater scrutiny of social circumstances and relational "power lines."[35] As Diane Davis argues, understanding the subject as a product of "inessential solidarity"—as instituted by and through relation to the Other from the very beginning—opens us up to a profound ethical obligation to the Other—and others.[36]

Yet I want to push not only at what a subject *is*, but what a subject *does* in order to better understand reflexivity. When someone does reflexivity, is reflexive, where does the action stop? What are the limits of reflexivity? Where is a subject stopped from

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[33] Aimee Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines: On the Subject of Feminist Alliances* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 5.
[34] Bernadette Marie Calafell, "The Future of Feminist Scholarship: Beyond the Politics of Inclusion," *Women's Studies in Communication* 37, no. 3 (2014): 266-270; Griffin, "Feminist Consciousness."
[35] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*.
[36] Diane Davis, *Inessential Solidarity: Rhetoric and Foreigner Relations* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010).

seeing her own implication in power relations? How do we theorize what happens when a subject fails to be reflexive? What is left over when she fails? The conscious actions of the sovereign subject will always fail to live up to their emancipatory intent.[37] In the following section, I examine what this failure looks like: What remains when our intention to be reflexive fails to recognize power in action, and reinforces the dynamics we are trying to destabilize with our work?

Reflexivity's Remainders

In her essay, "The Labor of Reflexivity," Madison searches "for the *fallout* of reflexivity…for what lingers behind after reflexivity has come and gone."[38] There will always be a remainder: a path not taken, a possibility unnoticed, a facet missed. In part, this is because we can never understand the full context of a situation. Derrida addresses this structural limitation in his essay, "Signature, Event, Context," showing how it challenges the idea of "communication [as] that which circulates a representation as an ideal content (meaning)."[39] That is, since context can never be fully delimited or understood, a statement can never provide a reflection of exactly what is happening. Derrida explains that there is a "structural unconsciousness" that "prohibits any saturation of the context."[40] In our case, reflexivity can never fully capture all power relations and

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[37] Carrillo Rowe describes this failure in her own work, explaining that "for all these efforts to displace essentialist logics, to avoid the pitfalls of truth claims, to reflexively unravel identity categories and my own positionality—I fail as I encounter, at every turn, the limits of language." Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*, 19.
[38] Madison, "The Labor of Reflexivity," 129.
[39] Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," in *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehiman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 6.
[40] Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," 18.

implications of a situation, because the context can never be fully known, let alone represented or put into words.

An old man, a stranger, yells at me. "*Mzungu*! Where are the diamonds? I know you're here for them! I know you know where they are!" Stunned at first, thinking he must have confused me with someone else, I said, "No sir, I'm a teacher." As he continued to bellow about diamonds, I grew angry, defensively protesting, "I'm *helping.* I'm doing good here!"

At the time, I saw my response as justified in context. I was a volunteer, giving away my valuable time and energy, getting little in return for my hard work and sacrifice. Later, while researching and writing about colonialism in graduate school, I reflected on how my earlier self had failed to consider the larger context: Tanzania's history of colonization and resource extraction by peoples that I descend from and bodies that look like mine. Now, writing this chapter, I wonder what further reflexive remainders have yet to be realized. I think about how this example shows the slipperiness of context, our inability to put a vignette firmly in its place. And how even assuming that I can understand colonial histories or their present effects *in full* continues to display a colonizer's arrogance.[41] What will a future *I*, reading this chapter, find of reflexivity's remainders?

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[41] As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak puts it, "there is something Eurocentric about assuming that imperialism began with Europe." In thinking that I could possibly understand the ramifications of colonialism in total, bring the Other's experience into resonance with my own, I reinforce a kind of imperialism: "No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been an incommensurable and discontinuous other into a domesticated other that consolidates the imperialist self." Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 37 and 130.

Michael Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres describe reflexivity as the process of examining "how their bodies collide with and experience the identities of those they research." To engage in reflexivity they say rhetorical scholars need to "more rigorously [consider] our own bodies and how they interact with the interpretive frameworks and situations we enter when critiquing lived rhetorical experience."[42] However, reflexivity becomes complicated when the identity of the *I* who experiences is neither the *I* who writes nor the *I* who will later re-read this chapter. Given this chain of what Derrida would call "differential marks," the repeated *I* who is both the same and yet different (in a way that makes a difference),[43] what counts as context for reflexivity? We are supposed to reflect on how bodies interact with our interpretive frameworks and the situations around us. However, which interpretive framework is "mine?" Am *I* (as the person who writes) even supposed to be the one performing reflexivity? The "situation" is similarly difficult to pin down. Context cannot be delimited, and therefore the situation cannot possibly be consciously considered in its entirety. There is always a nonpresent remainder, a possibility that an utterance could be totally cut off from its context and repeated—like the four-line story above—that cannot be known when the utterance first occurs.[44] When *I* experienced the old man yelling at me, I could not know the experience would end up here, in writing.

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[42] Michael K. Middleton, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Danielle Endres, "Articulating Rhetorical Field Methods: Challenges and Tensions," *Western Journal of Communication* 75, no. 4 (2011): 395.
[43] Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," 10.
[44] Derrida explains that each graphematic mark includes "the nonpresent *remainder* [*restance*] of a differential mark cut off from its putative 'production' or origin." Therefore, "there is no experience consisting of *pure* presence but only of chains of differential marks." Since each mark contains the possibility of being read *in absentia*, it must also be able to function when "cut off…from its participation

This example begins to reveal the shortcomings of a subject-led view of reflexivity, which crystallize in two main theoretical problems. First, this view of reflexivity as consciously-enacted is often used alongside poststructural and posthumanist theories that would contradict such an easy use of achievable intent and unitary subjectivity. And second, even though reflexivity is described as something performed by the subject, many scholars do so in a distinctly *non-performative* manner,[45] citing reflexivity as a necessity and a good, yet failing to address how reflexivity *itself* may create or institute things.[46]

To tie both of these issues together: If reflexivity is the act of engaging with how one functions within power dynamics in an effort to destabilize them, then reflexivity is not only about what one *does* as a subject, but how one *is done*. That is, reflexivity is performative. However, our theories of it have failed to develop in the same way that theories of performative language and performativity have. When J. L. Austin first introduced the idea that language is performative—that is, that it can create rather than simply represent an already-existing object—he limited the successful performative to one that is instituted by an intending speaker.[47] Derrida, taking issue with this, went into great detail about not only how language can perform things beyond what someone

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in a saturable and constraining context," as my story is now. Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," 10 and 12.

[45] Sara Ahmed, "The Nonperformativity of Antiracism," *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism* 7, no. 1 (2006): 104-126, Calafell, "The Future of Feminist Scholarship," 266-270.

[46] As Radha Hegde notes, "Claiming a commitment to feminist politics [and I would add, any critical politics in general] through a pro forma rehearsal of self-reflexivity does not, as we have come to know, ameliorate the epistemic violence that is perpetuated by the process of representation." Radha Hegde, "Fragments and Interruptions: Sensory Regimes of Violence and the Limits of Feminist Ethnography," *Qualitative Inquiry* 15, no. 2 (2009): 291.

[47] J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 96.

intends, but how language is indeed what brings subjects themselves into being.[48] Following this path, feminist scholars have shown how this view of performativity as instituting the subject de-essentializes notions of gender and sex and allows for more ethical relations with alterity.[49]

In this light, I ask: what might it look like to consider reflexivity as performing us, instead of us performing reflexivity? I ask this not to move away from attempts at conscious ally-action and change—which is important—but to recognize that there are additional means of understanding reflexivity that may help cultural scholars to excise theory and practice from where they seem to be non-performatively stuck, currently. As Goltz suggests should be the task of critical scholars, I am attempting to "complicate and extend" our ideas of this concept, rather than overwrite and reduce.[50]

Gordon tells us that the limit of lived history "restricts our ability to rest secure in history as determinate context. (Indeed, it set us the challenge of always taking the so-called answer, the determinate context, as the contentious soliciting question.) But such a limit also harbors the ineluctable promise of making contact with the ghostly haunt."[51] It is precisely at the limits of our understanding—of context, situations, and selves—that we are able to confront the ghost of reflexivity face-to-face, and ask what comes next. Now that we have recognized the limits of reflexivity, in the following section I address what it

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[48] Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc*, trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehiman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988). Note that he means language in a more all-encompassing sense than can be reduced to words—a sort of symbolicity-in-general.
[49] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990); Davis, *Inessential Solidarity*.
[50] Dustin Bradley Goltz, "It Gets Better: Queer Futures, Critical Frustrations, and Radical Potentials," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 30, no. 2 (2013): 144.
[51] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 174.

is those limits may *do*. How might reflexivity itself, in both its successes and failures, institute something new?

Reflexivity Doing (You)

At this point, some readers might protest that the idea of reflexivity performing a subject, instead of the other way around, takes all possibility of action out of the concept. Drawing from Judith Butler, I put forth the opposite claim: that thinking of reflexivity in this way is precisely what *allows* a subject to act. In her book *Excitable Speech*, Butler claims that even though "address animates the subject into existence," it does not fix or determine the subject.[52] Instead, the call that initiates existence, coming from outside of the subject and therefore *not* in the subject's control, is precisely what allows the subject to act, since it provides the constraints within which action becomes recognizable as meaningful.[53] Here, conceptualizing reflexivity as something that institutes a subject allows us to inquire into the conditions that make reflexivity possible, how they are constructed, and what might allow them to be shifted and changed.

Not inconsequentially, Butler's book faces the problem of hate speech, and what happens when a subject is subjected to injurious—perhaps, even *traumatic*—language and naming. Butler's understanding of the subject constituted through hate speech provides a foothold into understanding the subject constituted through trauma. A trauma signals an interruption that cannot be put into words, cannot be fully represented or totally explained. A key aspect of trauma is that this inability to symbolize what occurred in the interruption forces the subject to keep returning to the event. What trauma figures

[52] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 25 and 2.
[53] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, 16.

is not the interruption or violent event *itself*, but rather "the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on."[54] Therefore, though the process of subject constitution is analogous in both hate speech and trauma, hate speech is not necessarily a traumatic event. As Kai Erikson explains, "it is *how people react to them* rather than *what they are* that give events whatever traumatic quality they can be said to have."[55] Reflexivity as trauma, then, is a repeated return to an experience that somehow ruptured systems of meaning, and requires witnessing (to) the event over and over, thereby producing a subject (over and over) (re)called to an ethical engagement with responsibility.

An old man—a stranger—yells at me. Reflexivity as trauma involves an uncontrolled, repetitive engagement with an event or time that cannot be understood.[56] I keep coming back to the moment where the old man interrogated me about diamonds not because I want to do so, but simply because it keeps pestering me, haunting me: It will not let me go. As Caruth states, "To be traumatized is precisely to be possessed by an image or an event."[57] When we are possessed by reflexivity, we are possessed by a need to continue returning to precisely those power relations that we cannot grasp, the ones that evaded our conscious ability to note, reflect on, and change. Where a humanist

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[54] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 4.
[55] Kai Erikson, "Notes on Trauma and Community" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 184, emphasis in original.
[56] Laura Brown argues that it is important to think of trauma not only as a singular event, but also a prolonged period of experience, in order to allow traumas outside of the narrow parameters of understanding often set by dominant groups. Laura S. Brown, "Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma" in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 101-103.
[57] Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience: Introduction," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4-5.

reflexivity fails, reflexivity as trauma begins. In analyzing experiences with death, Caruth explains that shock of trauma comes not from "the direct experience of the threat, but precisely the *missing* of this experience, the fact that, not being experienced *in time*, it has not yet been fully known."[58] The cause of the shock, the rupture of reflexivity as trauma, is not experiencing something fully, but knowing that we missed it. We weren't able to understand it *in time*, whether that be in the time of the moment, in time for publishing an essay, or in a lifetime. I keep coming back to the experience with the old man in Tanzania not because I understand it fully and want to share its wise lessons about power with other critical scholars, but because I *missed it* while it was happening. It is only by attempting—and failing—over and over to capture the event in words that I actually *experience* it.

Reflexivity as trauma involves witnessing (to) the traumatic event or time, even though it is impossible to actually do so. Witnessing (to), as defined earlier in the chapter, encapsulates the double sense of *witnessing* as experiencing something first-hand, and *witnessing to* as relating that experience to those who were not present for it. Grace Cho reminds us that trauma is not only a wound or a loss, but also "an excess, and therefore potentially productive."[59] Witnessing (to) marks the productivity of trauma. Trauma both produces a subject who has witnessed, and also produces the possibility for that subject to witness to the experience. Yet, strangely, Oliver reminds us that "[w]hat makes witnessing possible is its performance of the impossibility of ever witnessing the

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[58] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 62.
[59] Grace M. Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora: Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 24.

event."[60] Witnessing (to) stages someone discussing an event that she did not quite experience—she *missed*—and cannot quite put into words, but still feels the necessity to do so. As Cathy Caruth puts it, trauma "is marked, not by a simple knowledge, but by the ways it simultaneously defies and demands our witness."[61] Reflexivity, then, involves witnessing (to) precisely because we cannot ever know and recognize all the power relations of which we are a part, or their effects on our scholarship or actions, but we still must learn to relate to others in ethical and just ways. As Shoshana Felman encourages, "one does not have to *possess*, or *own* the truth, in order to effectively *bear witness* to it."[62] Rather, "the experience is constituted and reconstituted as such for the witness through testimony."[63] In this manner, we do not have to *know* reflexivity fully in order to witness (to) it in our scholarship. Remember, witnessing (to) is always a relational affair. We do not speak simply to ourselves. If we are brave enough to witness (to) what we do not possess and do not understand, we open the door to more just relations through the listening of others. Caruth reassures us that "the repeated failure to have seen in time…can be transformed into the imperative of a speaking that awakens others."[64] We, then, bear the responsibility to attempt to do so.

Reflexivity as trauma involves an ethical burden of responsibility through survival. Oliver reminds us that not all witnesses are ethical witnesses.[65] Witnessing (to) bears a responsibility to the Other, to the radical alterity of the incomprehensible

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[60] Oliver, *Witnessing*, 86.
[61] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 5.
[62] Shoshana Felman, "Education and Crisis," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 24, emphasis in original.
[63] Oliver, *Witnessing*, 143.
[64] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 108.
[65] Oliver, *Witnessing*, 107-132. She uses the terms "true" or "false," but I prefer "ethical" or "unethical."

experience.[66] Having passed through, the subject now carries that burden: to witness (to) in a manner that does the trauma justice, or moves the trauma toward justice. In some ways, witnessing (to) a trauma can never do it justice. As we have seen in reflexivity, there is no means of ever reflecting on a circumstance well enough to simply be politically just—there will always be something missed. In part, telling the story, relating the trauma will always be a betrayal.[67] Witnessing (to) can never capture the event—something is always elided, left out, erased, or even forgotten. In this manner, the real "story of trauma," as Caruth claims, is not "the escape from a death," but rather "its endless impact on a life."[68] We must continue to engage with the responsibility to the trauma, even as we fail, in order to constitute paths of more ethical and just engagement with others. Reflexivity as trauma requires engaging with "the necessity and impossibility of responding to another's death."[69] When we see another face a death, a tragedy, a discrimination, a microaggression, reflexivity requires that we witness (to) it in a way that attempts to make up for the fact that we have seen too late. In order to see or experience such an event, the event *must occur*. Reflexivity happens in the face of recognizing a "failure to see in time," a failure to stop something from happening.[70] Yet, this failure and "its haunting effects act as a mode of memory and an avenue for ethical

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[66] Felman explains that to bear witness is both a solitary responsibility and responsibility to the Other: "To bear witness is to *bear the solitude* of a responsibility, and to *bear the responsibility*, precisely, of that solitude. And yet, the *appointment* to bear witness is, paradoxically enough, an appointment to transgress the confines of that isolated stance, to speak *for* others and *to* others." Felman, "Education and Crisis," 15, emphasis in original.
[67] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 27.
[68] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 7.
[69] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 100, emphasis in original.
[70] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 100, discussing Lacan's reading of the dream of the burning child, originally found in Freud, but oft repeated.

engagement with the present."[71] Reflexivity as trauma recognizes that we will never meet all ethical obligations and we will constantly fail to be perfectly consciously reflexive, and yet we must continue. Failing to see in time is what institutes a subject that is able to see next time—in further part, anyway. The cycle of reflexivity then repeats.

WITNESSING (TO) THE TRANSFORMATIVE ENCOUNTER

Analyzing Subjective Trauma

> We sat on *mikeka*, large woven reed rugs for the rugby tournament, and did very little actual watching of the sport itself. Instead, I had a lot of conversations with the three American volunteers who came for a month to live with Sarah and Tim—Amanda, Nancy, and Sue—and the American volunteer who has been here for nearly a year and a half, Mary. We met a few other people of interest at the tournament as well. First was a man named Lex, from Austria. He just came and sat down on the mat with us, and introduced himself. He's been WWOOFing around Africa, and came to work on a farm in a nearby town.[72] When I told him I used to be a Peace Corps volunteer, he asked if I had heard about the bus accident on Sunday. I said, no, I hadn't, but Tim chimed in that he had. A bus carrying four Peace Corps volunteers crashed. It apparently, from rumors that I've heard, flipped over. One volunteer died, and the other three are in the hospital with broken ribs. There was a memorial service in Dar on Friday.
>
> Tim immediately offered the information that this had happened before in Peace Corps, a volunteer death, and looked to me to see if I remembered.
>
> Of course I remember. I can't forget.
>
> …I stiltedly explained that Joe had died when climbing with me. Tim interjected to offer the name of the rock—Mbuji? Yes, Mbuji. My explanation was a jumbled mess. I said something like, "We were climbing. He fell." A girl, maybe Sue, said, "And died?" I simply said, "Yes." After a moment I related how I then went and sat in a villager's kitchen for hours, alone, staring at the dying embers of a fire, waiting for the police to arrive. And how Etta had been at my site, but she didn't feel spiritually comfortable coming with us to climb that day. And how she

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[71] Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora*, 29.

[72] WWOOF stands for World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms. Through this organization, volunteers may work on organic farms in exchange for room and board. More information may be found at: WWOOF, "Welcome to WWOOF," *WWOOF International Ltd.*, accessed March 8, 2016, *http://wwoofinternational.org*

> and Marysunny came to wait with me, there on the rock. I don't know how it must have sounded to those who don't have the capacity to fill in all the other details: who these people are, how far it is between these places, how Marysunny and Peace Corps didn't believe me, thinking I was hysterical.
>
> …It would be too simple, to make this reoccurrence of Peace Corps volunteer death about me, my research, my emotional and intellectual project of understanding what is impossible to understand. But at the same time, I don't discount the synchronicity of the universe, nor the repetition of the inevitable under neocolonial structures. The continuing refrain of "To die so young, so far away, trying to do good, to serve, in Africa" echoes through media, through stranger's explanations (this one is basically taken from Lex), through expectations of what should be said. This refrain is in constant tension with the nagging understanding that many Tanzanians probably died too, Tanzanians die all the time in bus accidents, and that Westerners have simply come into contact with a constant of travel here. No one mentions the obvious, that it could just as likely have been a car accident in the U.S. that took this young volunteer's life. Somehow, it's supposed to be more sad here, where he was "serving," as opposed to simply living.
>
> ...I wonder if the three others, currently in the hospital, are in counseling right now. I wonder if they brought over the same emergency counselor from the U.S. that they did for me. I wonder if, perhaps even right now, he is leaning over a hospital bed, explaining to a crying man with broken ribs that it wasn't his fault for suggesting this bus company over another, or this time over a different one, or this excursion in general. The same way that he explained to me, until I would parrot the words, that it wasn't my fault, that it was Joe's decision, that he was an adventurer, and I couldn't have stopped him.

Falling. Joe falls. I see him, but I can do nothing. Just as Paul de Man continually returns to the structure of irony,[73] I re-turn to the fall, reflexively trying to allegorically refigure the story into something that is understandable this time. Failure. Retest. Avital Ronell tells us, "There is a self that crash-tests against limits. The crash-test dummy…probes the boundaries of its own transcendence,"[74] and it always fails. Is that what I'm doing? Trying to push past the limits of language to make sense of an event? Is that the *I* that is

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[73] Cited in: Avital Ronell, "The Rhetoric of Testing" in *Stupidity* (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2002), 121.
[74] Ronell, "The Rhetoric of Testing," 135.

being done by witnessing the death of a friend? Or am *I* one of those "philosopher wannabees turn[ed] into pornographers, tossing, for special effect, bodies into texts"[75] of whom she warns? But the body was not added; it's always been here, haunting the things that I write, appearing not quite visibly in the backgrounds of my texts.[76] It's not special. It's banal. We all have ghosts haunting our texts.

Ronell claims "*irony is of understanding*."[77] The expectation that we should *understand* is never and can never be met. Language is held in the grips not of understanding, then, but of chaos and stupidity.[78] Yet we continue to attempt to figure stories that make understanding possible, to witness (to) events in a manner that withstands betrayal, capturing an essence that does not exist. So I return to continual "retest[s] of an impossible venture."[79] Retest. He was an adventurer, he knew what he was doing, and the risks he took were his decisions alone. Failure. Retest. It was all my fault; I knew better and I should have stopped him from going further by himself. Failure. Retest. It was a tragedy, a uniquely horrible death. Failure. Retest. It was a death, like any other, like any Tanzanian's death. Failure. Retest.

Falling. Joe falls. I don't see it. I look away, but I know he falls. Like the father dreaming of the burning child,[80] I wake up and it's already too late. An old man, a stranger, yells at me. "*Mzungu*! Are you taking more of your friends to jump off that rock?" He laughs with his friends. Like the diamonds, this is something that I cannot

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[75] Ronell, "The Rhetoric of Testing," 154.
[76] Derrida speaks of the invisible visibility of ghosts. Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 5-6.
[77] Ronell, "The Rhetoric of Testing," 128, emphasis in original.
[78] Ronell, "The Rhetoric of Testing," 151.
[79] Ronell, "The Rhetoric of Testing," 125.
[80] Caruth, citing Freud, *Unclaimed Experience*, 100.

understand, that makes me shake with anger. I'm not a joke; I'm a victim of a tragedy. I'm not a mine mogul; I'm an innocent schoolteacher. Uncomfortable resonances between the two old men yelling at me present an uncanny resemblance I can't quite face. I don't see it. I fail to see in time.

Caruth reminds me that each failure "is not, however, a simple repetition of the *same* failure and loss…but a new act that repeats precisely a departure and a difference."[81] Each new failure brings a new opportunity to move trauma toward justice. By witnessing (to) the limits of understanding as others listen, my witnessing (to) "hand[s] over the seeing it does not and cannot contain to another (and another future)."[82] Although I cannot ever fully delimit the context of situations,[83] I know that this trauma is not simply about me and Joe, and the uncanny resemblances are not detached from contextual circumstances. Reflexivity as trauma brings us through repeated failure in order to draw our attention to what structures the repetition, to the ghostly shadows in the background that we cannot quite grasp.

Discussing Colonial Haunting

Gordon argues that "[t]o be haunted is to be tied to historical and social effects."[84] One's haunting is never simply one's own, but located within and structured by histories, contexts, and cultural dynamics of power. The resonance between the two old men is uncanny not because of a physical remembrance between two individual bodies, but because of something more encompassing, less concrete. When Sigmund Freud discusses

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[81] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 106.
[82] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 111.
[83] Derrida, *Signature, Event, Context*.
[84] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 190.

the uncanny, he uses the example of an automaton.[85] What is uncanny about the automaton is not that it is difficult to tell whether this particular thing is human or machine, but that it probes the demarcation between human and machine *in general*. What is uncanny about when an old man—a stranger—yells at me is not that it is hard to tell whether I am innocent or guilty, but that it probes the line between innocent and guilty in general.

> As we made our path through the mountains, to find the rock, Mbuji, Joe said that he felt like he was in the Lord of the Rings, traveling the long road from the Shire to Mordor. I had forgotten that, until just now. Sitting here to write.
>
> He was not so very wrong. Something was destroyed, in the end, but not a Ring. One life, and one perspective on the world.
>
> And so we came to Mbuji. But why? Why, really, did we decide it would be fun to go climb a deathly rock, with no guide, no rope, and little time left before sunset? Why, when I tired, did I let him go up alone? How could neither of us have seen that it was a stupid, stupid idea?
>
> And an answer that came to me after years of endless asking, is that the attitudes and ideas of that day were not simply those of Jenna and Joe, the individuals, who made stupid mistakes. They are, surely. But they are also more. In thinking back on that afternoon, I often think that I would not have done it here, in the United States. Hard on the heels of that thought usually comes, "Stupid, stupid Jenna—you should have known better!" But the vehemence of the following thought hides an insight that I don't let land: I would not have done that in the United States. I do act differently here than there, and vice versa. And so, most likely, did Joe.

As Aimee Carrillo Rowe argues in *Power Lines*, we need to think about politics, desire, and subjectivity relationally.[86] What Joe and I did when we went 'adventuring' was not the simple outgrowth of two sovereign subjects' choices, but rather the culmination—for

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[85] Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" in *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock (New York: Penguin, 2003): 121-162.
[86] Carrillo Rowe, *Power Lines*.

us, for the people we were in relation to each other and others—of resonances of colonialism. In *Methodology of the Oppressed*, Chela Sandoval argues that the fractured Western postmodern subject that must deal with its own death is only finally facing the same pain, insecurity, precarity, and sense that it can never and will never be whole that those subject to colonialism have had to face for centuries.[87] She comes close to implying that this current fracturing of the Western subject can be seen as an effect of the evils of colonial and imperial relationships. These relationships, as both she and Carrillo Rowe remind us, affect everyone, not simply the colonized and oppressed. The oppressor also holds effects.

Many third world feminists have painted staggering, beautiful, heartbreaking portrayals of the resonances of colonial violence in their bodies, minds, memory, and feeling: Jacqui Alexander, Saidiya Hartman, Grace Cho, Gloria Anzaldúa.[88] They show how the violence has continuing effects, generations past its physical application. But these violences happened to (some) precisely because they were enacted by (others). What do the physical and spiritual descendants of the colonizer carry in our bodies and our minds?

> Joe's death, for Joe and me, was the culmination of the effects of colonialism and imperialism in our bodies and our minds. Joe and I went on an adventure that day—as we both had, separately, many times before, partly because of who we thought ourselves to be in relation to the place of Africa. There are two aspects of

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[87] Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 32.

[88] Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, (San Francisco: aunt lute books, 2012); Cho, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora*; Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *small axe* 26, no. 1 (2008): 1-14; Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus, & Giroux, 2007).

> this relationship at the forefront of my mind: who we thought we were there, and what we thought Africa to be.
>
> We were adventurers, saviors, heroes. We came to save students from scholastic failure, to teach knowledge that only we had to give, to give of ourselves selflessly—or so we thought. How ironic! And we came for adventure. Africa is the land of the Serengeti, of majestic animals, wide plains, and fierce jungles. The land where danger is always present, but always overcome in the end. How could it not be? We were the heroes. In this story, the people of the land figure as sidenotes, scenery—necessary only to the extent that we have something to save, to change for the better. We were here for two years and three months, and then we would go home. It was a time-out from "real life," that would give us "valuable career experience" so that we could write things about how we had experience "working with limited resources" on our resumes. But we would come back. Because nothing that happens in a dream counts. And Africa did not seem like a real world.
>
> I'm painting too grandiose a picture, too pure an idea. Of course, we did have friends. And it was life. And we did love our students, and build relationships with them, too. But the fantasy, the fairy tale, the story of the hero was there in the background. A legacy of colonialism—the telling and retelling of heroic conquest, or who wins in the end, with the same type of people as heroes. No U.S. American can escape the resonances of colonialism and imperialism in the way we are taught to think of ourselves in relation to the rest of the world, and especially of ourselves in relation to Africa. Unrecognized, the story structures our thought, at least partially.
>
> Enough for Jenna and Joe to think that Mbuji was for their pleasure. Not to consider what could happen, because heroes don't die this way. Not meaninglessly. This could not be the ending. And so it was not even considered, not even thought. Africa was not the real world. We were going home in a month.

This trauma is more than mine. The excess, going beyond individual ownership, points to a cultural haunting. My repeated possession by Joe's death and by the encounters with the two old men forces a repeated reckoning with the ghosts of colonialism. Similar in each of these circumstances are glimpses of an attitude that structures my relations: an arrogance grasping to innocence, an abdication of responsibility that re-centers

dominance. There are uncanny resemblances I cannot face, because they force me to question the line between volunteer and colonizer.

Analyzing Freud's understanding of survival, Caruth argues that his notion can only be grasped "when we come to understand how it is through the peculiar and paradoxical complexity of survival that the theory of individual trauma contains within it the core of the trauma of a larger history."[89] To survive and continue on in a manner that does justice to trauma, we need to engage the trauma of this larger history. Colonialism haunts all Western relations with Sub-Saharan Africa, albeit in differential ways. When we listen to Joe's ghost we can hear whispers of historical attitudes and relations toward Africa, of the way volunteering can figure as adventure, and the way African countries are de-contextualized from global relations to maintain a fantasy of a playground for Western dreamers.[90]

Of course, this portrayal is also necessarily a betrayal. To figure this experience as simply another resonance of colonial histories would be just as reductive as claiming it involves no more than two individuals. By witnessing (to) Joe's death in this manner, and drawing connections between the two old men yelling at me, I hope to do justice to trauma. Oliver theorizes that the "performance of testimony says more than the witness knows."[91] I continue to fail to understand my own stories, I continue to fail to represent them fully in words, I continue to fail to see in time. But each failure is a failure that

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[89] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 71.
[90] See Taylor Swift's music video, "Wildest Dreams," for a recent example of this trope: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IdneKLhsWOQ, directed by Joseph Kahn.
[91] Oliver, *Witnessing*, 86.

brings a difference, and each listener is a listener who brings the possibility of a more just future.[92] As Gordon reminds us, "endings that are not over is what haunting is about."[93]

CONTINUING, IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION

To engage reflexivity as trauma does not require experiencing death close-hand, nor does it require an experience that breaks all senses of continuity or meaning. Reflexivity as trauma requires attention to the moments that return to possess us, over and over, however seemingly insignificant. We are all responsible for everyday tragedies. By responsible, I mean that we are all witnesses (to) injustice, and drawn into attempts to ethically describe what we have experienced—and missed. Reflexivity as trauma is in excess of what one consciously does in the moment, or a perspective she purposefully adopts. Placing reflexivity as trauma in relation to current understandings leads to a conceptualization of reflexivity as cyclical: both the performance that institutes you, *and* that which you perform, over and over again. Through this understanding we may be able to open new paths of research and theory in critical rhetorical scholarship, as well as move toward more just political and ethical relations.

I focus on those in a more clearly socially dominant position in my invocation of trauma cautiously. I have no wish to recenter white, Western subjectivities at the expense of marginalized subjectivities or those who have been subjected to violence due to power relations. However, the concept of reflexivity calls for recognition of how we become the unwitting tool of such violence. It calls us to analyze how our own research can act to reinforce power relations, how we dominate, how we can unwittingly inhabit the position

[92] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 106 and 111.
[93] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 139, referring to slavery and its resonances in Reconstruction.

of the aggressor who subjects others to violence. Labeling reflexivity as trauma forces the researcher to face the shocking, earth-shattering moment where she realizes that she is the one who has inflicted violence on someone else, that she is responsible for someone else's pain. Radha Hegde demonstrates this moment clearly in her study of women in India who commit infanticide. Confronted by a woman who had threatened to kill her own child, Hegde relates, "Kumari said to me 'take this one and you can also take the one who is in school, I'll keep the baby.' Suddenly, I felt the hollow inadequacy of my own academic brand of feminism."[94] Hegde is met with an experience that she cannot quite register in line with her politics and research expectations, a break in the continuity of her academic self. When she is asked to help, not only through research and writing, but by physically taking on a burden unfairly placed on the young woman by global flows of power, Hegde balks. Her refusal to help in that manner, in the manner desired, reinforces the power relations that placed Kumari in this position. Caruth also presents an example of this unwilling harm in the myth of Tancred, who repeatedly and accidentally stabbed his lover.[95] In both cases, the perpetrator of violence is also traumatized. And it is this unconscious perpetration that reflexivity calls us to recognize, to attempt to mitigate.

Yet, at the same time, reflexivity as trauma also calls us to responsibility for witnessing (to) traumas that we had no part in inflicting, but that depend on those ghostly dynamics and relations of power that haunt and influence all of our relations.[96] If we, as Derrida would have it, face an infinite amount of responsibilities in every decision we

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[94] Hegde, "Fragments and Interruptions," 289-290.
[95] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 2-4.
[96] Gordon explains that in haunting, "organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life." Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 19.

take, then we are a part of every trauma we witness, whether or not we are to blame. There is no outside of power, nor of responsibility for witnessing (to) its effects. Reflexivity as trauma requires an ethical engagement with each moment that passes beyond symbolicity, that we have a hard time capturing, in hopes that we speak more truth than we know. We will fail. But with each failure in the cycle of responsibility comes a new subject, and a new possibility of moving trauma toward justice.

Chapter 8: Participating in a Coup

> Mr. Jensen: The system is unlikely to change. And so, really the question—the question is *not* asking yourself: Can *we* and our children find a way of *adapting* and living in this system? If you ask yourself that question—
> Sarah: No, I don't—
> Mr. Jensen: —you're putting yourselves in a bad way.
> Sarah: I agree with that.
> Mr. Jensen: I think the question is: If we know that the system will not change, what do we have to do to move the NGO into a *different* system?

On February 5, 2017, I received a phone call from Sarah, out of the blue. She said that she and Tim really needed to talk with me about a communication issue at the NGO. I was in the middle of breakfast, and asked if she could call back later. While eating, I tried to think of what could be so important as to call, when it is usually easier for us to connect over email given the time difference.

It turns out that Mr. Giles had crossed a line this time. Over the past two days, Sarah and Tim had played host to a wealthy Belgian donor, under the impression that he was willing to contribute substantially to the NGO. Tim took him on a three-hour tour, Sarah met him for tea, and then the following day Sarah and Tim spent four hours taking him on a tour of their outreach projects in various villages. At the final stop, the community hall, Mr. Giles and the Belgian donor walked around the building by themselves, and emerged from their jaunt shaking hands and clapping each other on the back. Mr. Giles announced to Sarah and Tim that the Belgian donor had agreed to fund the clinic in the village, and the NGO would be managing the project. He then called his son, and asked David to have the clinic plans ready so that he and the donor could talk them over as soon as they returned to the lodge.

Sarah and Tim were stunned. The clinic had been Mr. Giles' personal responsibility—the condition upon which the land suit against him had been dropped. Having a donor fund the project, and the NGO manage it would take the entire burden off of Mr. Giles, and place it squarely on the NGO in a manner that did not seem ethical—or legal. They sent Mr. Giles a message saying that they had some reservations about this plan, and would like to speak with him about it. He pushed for more explanation, and they said that they were "hurt and discouraged" by the quick turnaround of the project from the business' responsibility to the NGO's responsibility, and how the decision was made with no consultation from them. Mr. Giles was incensed, and ordered them to clear their schedules for the following day so that they could meet to discuss the project.

Sarah and Tim called me the evening before the meeting, because they did not know what to do. Sarah explained:

> We have a meeting with him at 10, and this is my purpose—I need a Jenna-magic, here. I need like… I need an outside person who knows the history of the NGO to give us—if there's a different perspective we need to think about, um, is there something, like—Tim right now is feeling really down, and is like, "Well, why should we even bother fighting, the decision is done." I'm kind of in the boat of like, I want to at least try to convince Mr. Giles that he's making a bad decision. Even if I lose that battle, at least I've tried. So, we need to hear: What does Madam Communication think?

The responsibility to give a carefully thought-out and useful response weighed heavily. I was the first person they had called for advice. I walked us through a few different paths, first considering how, if their use of personal feelings and "I-statements" had not worked in their original explanation to Mr. Giles, perhaps the use of seemingly objective evidence would have better results:

> Okay, so here's what I see as being a route to avoid emotion in this, and to hopefully stifle his anger a little bit, is um, if you've got things in writing that you can just point to and be like, "Well, we're confused because here's what it says in the village notes…" And then like, …I just did this transcription last week in the interview that you guys did with him—when you said, "What is the financial relationship between the business and the NGO?" He said, "Absolutely none. There's absolutely no relationship."…So, you can point back to like, "Hey we had this conversation where you said that there's no financial relationship between the business and the NGO. And you know, we feel like this is a contradiction, and that this project needs to come from the business."

Sarah responded that she was concerned about that approach, because she felt like facts were not a stable ground on which to challenge Mr. Giles:

> So, like, Jenna…he's like Trump, as David [Giles] is to Bannon, as his Tanzanian counterpart is to Sean [Spicer]. So, uh, like, we sort of feel like we're being alternative fact-ed over here a lot. Cuz all of them have convinced themselves, like, "Why are you guys making such a big deal out of this? Isn't this a *good* thing? Aren't you guys going to be looked so well at? Like, the NGO is going to make even a bigger splash!" Where I really and truly think that *they don't have the money that they promised for this*. I think that is the heart of the issue: Because their business is going under, they cannot make good on their promise, and so because this magical donor appeared, it's saving their ass.

Sarah was concerned that providing factual evidence would be an attempt to solve the wrong problem. Presumably, the Giles should be aware that this move is questionable in its legality; the problem is not one of facts, but of ethics. The problem is that the Giles were *willing* to have a donor pay for what should have been a penalty to the business, and to funnel money through the NGO which, tied to them in name, they hoped would shield the project from too-close of scrutiny. We talked through multiple strategies that might assist with convincing Mr. Giles not to foist the clinic project off onto the NGO, but slowly began to realize that, in all likelihood, nothing would work.

I asked Sarah, "What happens if you simply refuse to do it?" She responded:

> Yeah. I'm—I mean, I'm there. I'm adamant. Like, no. My answer is no. Are you going to fire me? Fine. That's fine with me. Like, let us go. …If you want to find another person to do this, [go ahead]. But when I go, that means Tim goes. That means [the U.S. NGO] go[es]. That means Peace Corps leaves.[1] [The long-term volunteer dentist] has said, "If you go, I go." [The long-term volunteer pediatrician] has said that same thing. You've just kicked yourself in the ass.

Sarah and Tim recognized that this was an ethical line that they were not willing to cross. They also knew that Mr. Giles was not going to back down. The clash of ethico-political perspectives that had always existed at the heart of the NGO—between their relationships with Tanzanians and Mr. Giles' own, between their goal of having total Tanzanian leadership in the NGO and Mr. Giles' colonial distrust of Tanzanian ability, between their vision of community ownership and Mr. Giles' assumption that the villagers only want hand-outs—had finally come to a head. There would be no compromise this time. Their only options were revolutionary.

When I caught up with Sarah again, two weeks later, she told me that as she and Tim walked out of the meeting with the Giles family, they looked at each other and agreed it was time to leave. Running the organization at the behest of Mr. Giles had often left them in ethical quandaries, or circumstances where they could not meet their political goals. This time it went too far.

Sarah and Tim are, in their own words, "staging a coup." They plan to take control of the NGO projects, and remove Mr. Giles from power. They are in the process of contacting donors and the affiliated nonprofits that support the organization and are not connected to the Giles family. Sarah and Tim have a pretty good idea of who will be

[1] Sarah and Tim had, through the years, gotten various Peace Corps volunteers to extend their service for an extra year working with the organization.

on their side, once told the story. They are going to register their own nonprofit organization in Tanzania, and then, in a sweep, take most of the NGO's current donors and staff with them. At the same time, they are covertly raising money through the U.S. organization that they plan to use to make an offer on the Children's Village land. Whether or not they are able to buy the land, however, Sarah is convinced that their work will continue—separate from the Giles family.

In her second phone call, Sarah sounded almost giddy. Once the pressure of attempting to hold the current system together was relieved, she realized how little they needed it. They already had everything they needed to run the organization of their dreams, even if they did not get the land, as Sarah described by going through staff members one-by-one:

> Nuru, we could build her an office on her own land…We can give her the laminating machine, and all of the school supplies…So like, "We will continue to pay your salary, …we will still help provide you with school fees of children, and we will help you implement classrooms…" We think that we could take all of the kids, guardians that we employ right now, and we bring them to the [district-level] Social Welfare Office and we say, "We would like all of these women that have had ten plus years experience of being a housemother to be registered as fit families," and then we talk to the house mothers and say, "We want you guys to all leave, and we will continue paying your salaries, but now you will be raising these children in your own homes." And we will help supplement family income. …And, you know like, we will have Arnold employed to continue following them to make sure these kids are being cared for. So we will go ahead with the team that we believe in, like we can hand-pick people that we want to continue to work with, and then go from there. …We could even live in [the city, and] then, like once a week we travel out to Mikoda and we say, "Hey Tanzanians, who we love and who are managing these projects, we think you're doing a great job. Do you have any problems that we need to know about? Or any government meetings that we need to attend while we're there?" And this also lets, I feel like, Tanzanian ownership of the programs that they have technically started and run—like, it's this project that we have always—you know, this is where we're supposed to be headed!

It is only by overthrowing the NGO that the managers and staff will be able to have the Tanzanian-run organization they desired. And I helped them do it.

I helped to instigate a rebellion that has overthrown the organization I studied for my dissertation. A statement like this should give any researcher pause, but particularly as a critical rhetorician invested in participatory methods, this raises an important question: Did I take participation too far? In the remainder of this chapter, I seek to chart the limits of researcher participation in rhetorical field methods. I first explain how participation is conceptualized in rhetorical field methods, drawing from my work in Chapter 3. I then re-examine my role as a communication researcher working with the Children's Village over the past two years, tracing how my participation as a researcher helped set the groundwork for the coup. In the following section, I describe how my participation at the NGO raises questions about three aspects of participation: its limits, temporality, and embodiment. In conclusion, I argue that these questions call for an approach to rhetorical fieldwork that is based in haunting.

CONCEPTUALIZING PARTICIPATION IN RHETORICAL FIELD METHODS

In Chapter 3, I argued that rhetorical field methods are uniquely structured by their critical lineage, social change goals, and focus on publicity. How do these aspects of rhetorical fieldwork then affect the quality and extent to which a researcher participates in the fieldwork that they are collecting? In qualitative work, the researcher is often referred to as a "participant observer" to allow for both critical approaches that assume the researcher affects the research that is conducted, and post-positivist approaches that assume any participation by the researcher tarnishes the purity of the data being

collected.[2] If rhetorical work does not have such opposing views to contend with, for what kind of participation does it allow?

First, the critical lineage of rhetorical fieldwork assumes, like critical qualitative research, that the researcher cannot but participate. Acting as a critic in the time that rhetorics are forming and being instituted requires the critic to make immediate judgments in the moment, a process Aaron Hess refers to as "embodied judgment."[3] Yet, enacting immediate judgments calls for the rhetorical researcher to go beyond the traditional role of critic as well. As an actor in the formation of the texts to be critiqued, the rhetorician also becomes a part of what they are analyzing: a participant within the research. Middleton, et al., explain, "When in the field, critics cannot exist outside of the unfolding of events and therefore must embody some additional role(s) beyond critic, even if it is only observer."[4] Phaedra Pezzullo terms this "co-presence,"[5] and Kathleen M. de Onís furthers the term by describing how it leads her to activist participation in her fieldwork in Puerto Rico.[6]

Second, as de Onís's work exemplifies, if rhetorical critics in the field are serious about helping further social change goals, then being a participant in the field requires

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[2] Thomas R. Lindlof and Bryan C. Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2011), 135-148.
[3] Aaron Hess, "Embodied Judgment: A Call for a Phronetic Orientation in Rhetorical Ethnography," in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 127-152.
[4] Michael Middleton, Aaron Hess, Danielle Endres, and Samantha Senda-Cook, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric: Theoretical and Methodological Foundations for Studying Rhetoric in situ* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), 61.
[5] Phaedra C. Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism: Rhetorics of Pollution, Travel and Environmental Justice* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 2007).
[6] Kathleen M. de Onís, "'Pa' que tú lo sepas': Experiences with Co-Presence in Puerto Rico," in *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 101-116.

actively working toward social justice during the time of one's research. Most rhetorical researchers would probably agree with this statement—in theory. However, in practice and in publication, the idea of actively working to further social justice *in situ* seems to produce discomfort for rhetoricians. For example, activist participation in rhetorical fieldwork is often conceptualized as mundane action, such as being one-among-many at a protest or being part of the audience of a speech.[7] Even in the book *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, which takes participation as an assumption of rhetorical fieldwork, the authors speak of participatory contributions as "often…rather banal,"[8] providing examples of "passing out fliers, setting up tables, scheduling meetings, making PowerPoint slides, and providing transportation."[9] However, to take the activist call of rhetorical field methods seriously, rhetoricians must be willing to ask: What if the researcher is more than a humble contributor, but acts as a primary participant in the rhetoric being studied?

This question leads to my next point: Third, the focus on publicity in rhetoric writ-large has thus far translated into a focus on fieldwork centering actions which have public effects or merit; however, an alternative way of moving publicity into fieldwork might take up the possibility of the critic as a public actor. There is still a hesitation to think of participation beyond small acts, of participation that stands out. To draw an analogy from the field's history, rhetoricians are comfortable with moving from analyzing the text of a presidential speech to being in the audience in person, but we are

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[7] See, for instance: de Onís, "'Pa' que tú lo sepas;'" Alina Haliliuc, "Being, Evoking, and Reflecting from the Field: A Case for Critical Ethnography in Audience-Centered Rhetorical Criticism," *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 133-147.
[8] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 44.
[9] Middleton, et.al, *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 44.

not comfortable *being the president*. There is a feeing of discomfort if the critic takes the main stage. We have gotten to the point as rhetorical critics where we comfortably and confidently assert that the critic affects her research, but the idea that she plays *just as substantial* a role as her participants offends our sensibilities. Middleton et al. describe how "A willingness to be a part of what is happening shifts critics from observers, in the detached sense, to companions and advocates standing side by side as rhetoric unfolds."[10] A willingness *to be a part* of what is happening is only the first step, as if rhetorical critics are sticking a single toe into the water of participatory research. What happens when *a willingness* to participate turns into *a wholeheartedness*, an immersion into participation, diving into its depths?

REREADING THE PAST TWO YEARS OF RESEARCH

As I draft this chapter, I realize that it has been over two years since I first spoke with Sarah about the possibility of coming to do research at the Children's Village. At the time Sarah and Tim were still in the U.S. with their newborn twins. When I arrived in the Children's Village in May of 2015, I got there only two days after Sarah and Tim themselves. Because of all the things that had happened while they were gone—the issues with Esther and Gail, Mr. Giles' racist micro-managing of the NGO—they were beginning to seriously consider leaving the organization.

I arrived just in time to function as a sounding board and communicative counselor, as Sarah and Tim started a year-and-a-half long journey to realizing that the colonial constraints placed on the NGO by Mr. Giles would never allow for the handing-

[10] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 71.

off of organizational leadership to Tanzanians that they had always imagined as the endgame of the Children's Village. As a wise person told me when I spoke to him of the coup brewing at the NGO, "It's only in hindsight that things can be inevitable."[11] Certainly now, looking back at my research over the past two years, the coup seems inevitable.

A few days after I arrived to conduct research in 2015, I went with Sarah and Tim to visit a nearby missionary couple, the Jensens. The Jensens are older than Sarah and Tim, and function as mentors that help them process the neocolonial implications of doing aid work as Westerners in Tanzania. Also from the U.S., the Jensens had spent decades in Sub-Saharan Africa, first in the Congo and then in Tanzania. They had started their own aid organization after working for too many missions that relied on colonial dynamics and hierarchies. The Jensens started the organization for which they now worked, but had long ago turned the leadership over to a Tanzanian board.

As we were discussing the conflicts Sarah and Tim were currently facing at the NGO, Mrs. Jensen said, about me:

> Mrs. Jensen: What divine timing, though, for her to be here—
> Sarah: Right?
> Tim: Yeah.
> Mrs. Jensen: —at this critical juncture.

Over the next two months, the idea of Sarah and Tim's return to the Children's Village as a "critical juncture" got lost in the day-to-day milieu. Volunteers came and went, the staff dealt with typical everyday planning and maintenance, children arrived to live at the

[11] Joshua Gunn, personal communication.

NGO and others returned to village homes. Yet, Mrs. Jensen was not wrong—the critical juncture was just not a momentary one, but a longer period of time.

In the conversation with the Jensens, Tim said that being back from the U.S. was "a challenge of seeing what can come. I think it's kind of like final phase—it's kind of relieving. It's not gonna be that fun, but I think our final stage at this organization is taking a really good crack at those up above us, and getting that organized, and getting a vision that everyone is aware of, to start with, and is on board with." Looking back, I think if any idea characterizes my experience with those at the Children's Village the past two years, it's "taking a really good crack at those up above us." I have been able to watch as Sarah and Tim became less complacent with donors, and the *Kamati Kuu* became more firm in their decision-making. These cracks have started to up-end the reflections of global hierarchies in the NGO.

It is interesting, as a researcher, to have effectively taken part in the dissolution of the organization I studied as I studied it. Yet, it is only now that I realize I was doing so, the whole time. Over the time I spent at the NGO in 2015, I encouraged Sarah and Tim to speak back to donors and Mr. Giles, I encouraged the *Kamati Kuu* to speak back to Sarah and Tim, and I helped them all draft letters to donors and plan conversations with Mr. Giles that would ease a transition to Tanzanian NGO management. We spent many evenings sitting on the balcony—Sarah, Tim, and various Tanzanian and Western friends—sipping wine as the sun set, talking about problems with volunteers and the organizations that sent them, coming up with plans to help the NGO function differently. Take this example from my fieldnote written July 3, 2015:

> Over the past two days, I have also exercised my communication skills and political advocacy passions to help Jenny write letters both to the Finish NGO, and to Esther and Gail and the Canadian NGO, denoting the desires of the *Kamati Kuu*, and addressing concerns about financial matters brought up by Tanzanians in a way that (hopefully) wouldn't offend the donors, but would instead lead toward a path where the Tanzanians are more often consulted about major donation and financial decisions. Mr. Giles was cc'd on both emails.
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> Surprisingly, Mr. Giles responded very well to the first email. He agreed with all the financial plans. It is extremely helpful for Sarah and Tim to have in writing that he would like to sell the Mazda, and get two other vehicles for transporting children. He was quite excited about the plans, when presented as coming from "the NGO." We received that response last night, and cheers-ed on the balcony, watching the sunset. Tim read parts of it out loud to me, Sarah, and a houseguest. However, this morning, we received another email from Mr. Giles. And this one was not positive, whatsoever. In fact, it was outraged. In the email to Esther and Gail, the focus had been on the decision-making power of the *Kamati Kuu*. We emphasized their role, in order to start moving toward a system of Tanzanian leadership of the NGO, because eventually Sarah and Tim would like to work themselves out of a job. However, Mr. Giles was appalled at the idea that the Tanzanian staff—even the *Kamati Kuu*—should be asked about financial matters. He said that unless Esther had given permission for this to happen, that it was terrible to have consulted the Tanzanians about *their* wishes for *a donor's* money. The colonial perspective on Tanzanian leadership capabilities is extremely and unfortunately clear in this email, and leaves Sarah worried about the future ability of her and Tim to hand the NGO over to Tanzanian leaders.

In addition to work with Sarah and Tim, I interviewed the Tanzanian staff, I asked them if they could run the NGO without Westerners.[12] I came up with calling short-term Western workers "interns," rather than volunteers, which the NGO adopted into its volunteer paperwork.

The following year-and-a-half in the United States, we continued to have conversations about how to challenge Esther and Gail productively and not to let them micromanage projects, ending in the suggestion that the Children's Village should refuse

[12] Most responded affirmatively, *except* in finding and maintaining relationships with donors. For that, they said, Sarah and Tim are needed.

future money from them. Sarah and Tim started to talk to branding consultants about renaming the NGO, and I pushed back against the consultants' advice that the name should primarily be enticing to donors, reminding everyone that the focus of this NGO is the people of the village and that its name should ring true to *them*. I met up with Sarah and Tim in the United States to participate in a fundraiser for the U.S. affiliate charity, giving a speech about how this organization is different than others because of its foundation in ethical relations.

I returned to present my dissertation findings and advice to the *Kamati Kuu* in December 2016. Deo, the Chairman of the *Kamati Kuu*, said in introduction, "We have had a lot of people come and do research here. Sometimes they send us their papers. But this is the first person who has ever come back to talk to us about what she's written. We are thankful for this opportunity." I was intensely anxious about the presentation—what if they thought my read of the organization was totally wrong? Or, what if I had nothing useful to give them out of it? It was an immense relief to find, based on the staff's responses, that my presentation seemed to provide words for things they all had experienced but had a hard time expressing. We had an hour-long discussion about how to raise the profile of Tanzanian leadership at the NGO amongst volunteers, and how to say "no" to donors—hopefully, without losing their funding, but transferring it to projects the Tanzanian staff agreed upon.

Much of my participation in this organization has been leading toward its dissolution, as the Giles-controlled Board of Directors would never accept Tanzanian management. But this should not be surprising; I've written elsewhere about how taking

postcolonialism seriously may ultimate necessitate dissolving aid organizations as an anti-colonial tactic.[13] My participation in an NGO coup, surprising yet inevitable, raises important questions about the participatory aspect of rhetorical fieldwork.

PARTICIPATORY EXTREMITIES

My implication in the process of staging this coup reveals three questions about participatory extremities that have implications for future rhetorical fieldwork. First, when one participates in overthrowing the organization one is studying, has participation gone too far? Second, can participation be a continual process without losing the researcher? Third, what happens when participation is not bound strictly to physical presence in the field? Probing such extremities helps to develop how we understand participation in rhetorical field methods, and where its boundaries lie.

The Limits of Participation

Taking part in an organizational coup has led me to ask the following questions regarding the limits of participation: Is there a "too far" for participation? Does participation have limits beyond which it is no longer research? Or, can research be a totally participatory act? Exploring this extreme case of participation in research brings me to the argument that the lines separating "researcher" from "participant" are arbitrary. Rather than pointing to the limits of participation, the lines rhetoricians draw between researcher and participant instead reveal our own disciplinary anxieties.

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[13] Jenna N. Hanchey, "Reworking Resistance: A Postcolonial Perspective on International NGOs," in *Transformative Practices and Research in Organizational Communication*, eds. Philip Salem and Erik Timmerman (Hershey, PA: IGI Global, forthcoming).

Rhetorical fieldwork is often referred to as a form of "immanent participation,"[14] or "co-presence,"[15] implying that participation is always already occurring, simply by virtue of one's presence in the field along with other bodies. At the same time, researchers still feel the need to make statements such as, "I have to temporarily abandon my researcher role and actively participate in something going on in the field,"[16] implying that there is a firm separation between participation and research. In rhetorical fieldwork, there seems to be a theoretical understanding that simply by attending to a scene one is affecting what one studies, while at the same time there is a discomfort with what that means about the attention given to recording the scene for future analysis.

A month-and-a-half into my original fieldwork, I wrote in my field notes: "I'm not going to lie; I'm tired. I'm tired of writing field notes, and having to think through and focus on everything that's happening to me. …I'm ready for the data collection to be over for now; my brain is overwhelmed, and I need a break to think it all through." Fieldwork is *work*. I was living at the NGO, immersed in its problems and politics, providing advice, leading volunteer reflection sessions, and helping draft emails and documents at the same time as I was audio-recording conversations, writing detailed field notes, and tracking down employees at the busy organization for interviews.

Living at an organization provides a different point of analysis for participatory experience than is assumed in most rhetorical fieldwork. Many examples provided by

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[14] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 46; George F. McHendry, Jr., Michael K. Middleton, Danielle Endres, Samantha Senda-Cook, and Megan O'Byrne, "Rhetorical Critic(ism)'s Body: Affect and Fieldwork on a Plane of Immanence," *Southern Communication Journal* 79, no. 4 (2014): 293-310.
[15] Pezzullo, *Toxic Tourism*; de Onís, "'Pa' que tú lo sepas.'"
[16] Danielle Endres, in an excerpt from her field notes quoted in Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 45.

researchers assume participation in a particular event or at a particular location for a number of hours: a protest, a rave, a hike, a speech.[17] As such, the researcher mode remains primary, and when a tension between researcher and participant is felt it is usually in a draw toward more participation than seems prudent for one who is taking notes and fervently attempting to remember as much as possible. In my situation living at the Children's Village, I saw the tension between researcher and participant from the other side: I was tempted to abandon note taking and detailed description in favor of being there in the moment.

However, both of these positions invoke a distinction that is blurred through the very act of participant research. Consider the excerpt from my field notes I use in Chapter 6, when the medical volunteer, Tiffany, interrupts me in my writing.[18] I write in my field note about how I am angry with her for interrupting my writing of field notes. Similarly, the conversation we had was inflected by my clear desire to stop her from talking (one-word responses; attempts to change the subject) and get back to my work. Neither of these two things—the field notes, or the experience they attempt to represent—exists without the other. There is no research without participation, and vice versa.

Why, then, do rhetorical researchers feel such a tension between the two? In a field that embraces the deconstruction of subject/object divides, our research methods need not be structured by a divide between researcher and participant. That such a tension

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[17] See for example: Samantha Senda-Cook, in Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 5-7; Aaron Hess, in Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 16-17 and Hess, "Embodied Judgment;" Samantha Senda-Cook, in Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 59-60*;* Haliliuc, "Being, Evoking, and Reflecting from the Field."
[18] See pages 171-172.

exists at all should raise our eyebrows. Something else seems to be lurking, a nonpresent remainder affecting our research guidelines: a haunting.

Ultimately, locating a fixed line between researcher and participant, or attempting to delineate in what circumstances one may participate to what extent, is of less use than exploring where we are wont to draw such lines and why. Instead, tracing exactly to what extent one is willing or allows oneself to participate, where one becomes uncomfortable with participation, and what circumstances, environments, bodies, power dynamics, and relations contribute to such (dis)comfort with participation in research can help us to understand the unspoken and unwritten ideologies shaping our research. I take up this argument in the conclusion, claiming that we should explore the limits of participation as a haunting, a structuring absence that affects our conceptualizations of rhetorical field research.

The Temporality of Participation

My work with this organization has stretched from time living with them in a Tanzanian village, to Skype dates from my armchair in Austin, Texas, to roadtripping to Lawrence, Kansas for a fundraising event, to traveling back to Tanzania, and finally returning to the U.S. to receive a WhatsApp video call from Sarah saying the end of the organization is nigh. I thus feel a disconnect between my work and theories of rhetorical fieldwork when I read rhetorical field researchers who conceptualize fieldwork as *in situ* participation "within a temporally bound moment."[19] In this section, I want to explore the

[19] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 62.

implicit temporalities of participation in rhetorical fieldwork to argue that participation should be delinked from the field.

Rhetorical scholars use three main temporalities of participation. In the first and primary temporality, participation is directly tied to co-presence in the field. Here, the time of participation is equated with the time spent in the geographic location designated as the field, however it is bounded. Once one leaves the field, participatory time pauses until one returns. When Pezzullo explores the trope of "immediacy" and its use throughout the book *Text + Field*, she concludes her thoughts by saying it merits further investigation "in terms of what we learn from physical co-presence, as well as how traveling to a scene or interviewing someone can change one's perspective."[20] Her read encapsulates the way immediacy is typically handled in rhetorical fieldwork—as necessarily connected to presence "in the field." Here, on the other hand, I want to ask what may be gained from detaching immediacy from physical co-presence. Binding participation to action taken in the field negates much of the work I have done with the NGO, and obscures the ways that one can participate in a long-term capacity. The amount to which we feel for a cause, act for an organization, or are part of a movement is not bound by discreet temporalities; we are affected by readings that remind us of political talks with participants, we resonate with music and art reflective of our goals for change; we share articles on the internet with participants, and vice versa. Although scholars are

[20] Phaedra Pezzullo, "Afterword: Decentralizing and Regenerating the Field," in *Text+Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method,* eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 177-188.

already doing participation on a larger temporal scale, we still continue to write as if it is bounded by the field.[21]

A second temporality presents participation as an interruption in research work. For example, think back to Danielle Endres' comment that she needed to "abandon" her researcher role to "actively participate."[22] This temporality of participation stems from the perceived divide between researcher and participant, and is activated when scholars see those roles as colliding. However, conceptualizing participation within the temporality of interruption elides two important issues in participating. First, viewing participation as interruption prevents us from recognizing how the moments surrounding the interruption, when we seem *not* to be interrupting, are also participation. Inaction and observation can also have affective resonances on the research. Second, viewing participation as interruption obscures the ways participation can be ethically and politically important—even necessary. When we think of participation as interference in the temporality of research, rather than something that is always implicated in research by definition and something that imbues the flow of research time, participation becomes a time *out of research*. This, then, separates the implications of participation from the implications of research *per se*. What one does when one participates is seen as separate from how one researches.

I argue for a third temporality, that views participation as a continual aspect of research, stretching between, across, and through disparate events and moments. By

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[21] See for instance, de Onís, "'Pa' que tú lo sepas;'" Middleton, in Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 8-9.
[22] Endres, in Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 45.

widening our idea of the temporality of participation so that it is not bounded by experience in the field, rhetorical research can address participation in long-time changes within an organization or movement. In addition, thinking of participation as a continual aspect of research asks us to focus on the qualitative facets of participation, and how in different circumstances particular actions and inactions may be particularly politically important. Viewing participation as long-term allows me to draw together the experience of discussing organizational changes in the NGO office with the *Kamati Kuu*, and videochatting with Sarah about ways to deal with pushy donors, and it allows me to find threads connecting the multiple times that I have helped the NGO to act with the multiple times I have watched interactions in silence. Participation builds on itself, it ebbs and flows, its qualities shift and change. Viewing participation as long-term connections between, as relations leads to another question: How do I judge the political and ethical quality of participation, both in and through these moments? Did I do the right thing(s), participating in a coup?

The Embodiment of Participation

Although rhetorical field researchers take care to note that "criticism is always an embodied phenomenon,"[23] and "[c]ritics engage in embodied rhetorical criticism whether they employ participatory critical rhetoric or not,"[24] embodiment as often assumed to be *of more importance* when engaging in fieldwork than at other times in the research process. However, if as I have argued, participation should be viewed as long-term, drawing into connection experiences from the field to those at home, the importance of

[23] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 61.
[24] Middleton, et al., *Participatory Critical Rhetoric*, 70.

embodiment does not end when one leaves the field. The field has often been utilized as a simple heuristic for weeding out presumably unproductive reads of embodiment by assuming that the only important bodies are emplaced in the field.

However, our bodies *always* have the capacity to affect our research, because they are always emplaced in relation to the presence or absence of other bodies, to affective fields and emotion, to the political questions our work seeks to answer. A more careful rhetorical field method would note that bodies continually have the capacity to affect our research, and search for ways this might occur both within and without the field.

In her work investigating sites of public memory, Roberta Chevrette asks a provocative question: "How should the field of our rhetorical fieldwork be defined?"[25] She argues that sites of public memory are "places where meanings constellate within larger imaginative geographies," and as such call for researchers to "[expand] the scope of our inquiries beyond their borders."[26] I would like to draw an analogous conclusion here: that if sites of public memory must be treated as part of a larger discursive constellation, so must our own bodies as researchers. Consider the following four vignettes describing my embodied presence as a researcher that occurred *outside* of my time doing fieldwork at the NGO:

> Wandering around the streets of Dar es Salaam with Laura on my first few days back in Tanzania, before traveling for another two days to reach the Children's Village, I felt comfortable. Breathing the air, speaking Swahili, navigating transportation, drinking a cold Safari beer—my body felt at home, relaxed into the way I had lived for more than two years. My body remembered what I had

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[25] Roberta Chevrette, "Holographic Rhetoric: De/Colonizing Public Memory at Pueblo Grande," *Text + Field: Innovations in Rhetorical Method*, eds. Sara L. McKinnon, Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), 162.
[26] Roberta Chevrette, "Holographic Rhetoric," 162.

> forgotten—that these were experiences I had longed for from the geographic and cultural distance of the U.S.
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> A year after I returned to the United States from my initial research, I began to feel intensely anxious while working. My dissertation prospectus had taken far longer to write than I expected, and I was behind in my plans for transcribing. I still had very little to show in writing, and I had not spoken to the NGO staff for months. I read meaning into their silence, worrying that they saw me as someone who had used them for my own gain and left them with nothing to show for it. I was concerned that, having left some work Sarah had asked me to do sitting for months, they were upset with me. I worried that, even were I to finish this dissertation, I would have nothing tangible to give the organization. An in-person meet-up with Sarah and Tim dissuaded me from these fears, but they still took a bodily toll.
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> During my second trip to Tanzania, David Giles and a Belgian man staying at the retreat lodge drove by Sarah and I doing yoga in a secluded location. They honked, chuckled suggestively, and David made lewd comments about putting our "asses" in the air. I felt exposed, my body tensed, and I was angry at their blatant misogyny.
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> While doing my transcription, I would be so embarrassed about the way some conversations went—and particularly, about my own participation in them—that I would turn off the recording, throw down my headphones, and pace about the room before returning to my work. Vaguely remembering what I would say next in the recording, I sometimes yelled out loud at my past self, "No, don't ask that question!" or more simply, "Don't do it, Jenna!" startling my dog and eliciting questions about my wellbeing from my partner.

Our embodied participation *within* the field, however one defines it, is affected by felt moments and bodily changes throughout the research process. My bodily comfort being back in Tanzania, particularly after I was afraid to return, affected the ease with which I built relationships at the Children's Village. My fears about my work being useless to the NGO catalyzed my return journey there in 2016. My intense anger at David Giles inflected how I view his implication in power relations at the organization. My discomfort at transcribing my own conversations with the high school students has made me consider the ways that I deflect subjective dissolution and hold tight to my

fantasies as well. However, the question remains: If embodiment is not simply important in the field, how does one separate the important moments and shifts from the rest?

HAUNTED RESEARCH

All research either faces or ignores its ghosts. Avery Gordon claims, "The political and affective modalities by which we gain access to the facticity of constructed power either reckons with or displaces these ghostly matters and the matter of the ghost, with consequences either way."[27] The theories and methods that we construct, that lay the basis for rhetorical field research, will either take ghosts into account or ignore their structuring influence. As Jacques Derrida puts it, "Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony."[28] Rhetorical field methods are still in their infancy, and therefore we have the chance to affect how they are instituted in the discipline. We have the chance to (re)institute a methodology grounded in facing our ghosts.

In this chapter, I have traced how my participation as a researcher led me to take part in overthrowing the organization that I studied, and how my extreme brand of participation brought forth questions regarding the concept of participation in rhetorical fieldwork. Tracing the limits, temporality, and embodiment of participation, I argued that none of these aspects are as easily bounded as we often assume. Participation overlaps and interweaves with research, its timespan does not end when one physically leaves the field, and neither does its embodied presence. In multiple ways, the boundaries of

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[27] Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 21.
[28] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York, Routledge Classics: 2006), 46.

participation are wide open. What, then, leads us to draw them as we do? What critical nonpresences are affecting our research? How is our research haunted, and why?

For critical rhetorical researchers, the consequence of ignoring our ghosts is to undercut our own politics. Gordon describes how, "[i]n haunting, organized forces and systemic structures that appear removed from us make their impact felt in everyday life in a way that confounds our analytic separations and confounds the social separations themselves."[29] What we ignore when we ignore haunting *is the political*. Haunting is not the only form through which politics may be known, but to ignore haunting is to ignore a form of politics.

To do critical fieldwork in rhetoric, one must be haunted: haunted by the boundaries we draw, haunted by the choices we make, haunted by the changes in our bodies. Learning to talk to the ghosts—who point to aspects of our research methods that we would rather ignore—is difficult, and may entail facing fantasies involved in the constitution of Western researcher subjectivities: fantasies of wholeness that pertain to knowledge, understanding, and mastery. Whereas such a position would need to be fought for in qualitative work, rhetorical fieldwork holds the potential to *base fieldwork in haunting and subjective dissolution.* I argue for rhetoricians to conceptualize our fieldwork as an engagement with haunting.

In some ways, what this chapter attempts is to stage my own coup in rhetorical field methods, breaking us out of a system constructed by others that—I believe we will soon find—does not work for us. As I have argued in Chapter 3, when we uncritically

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[29] Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, 19.

claim to be taking up qualitative or ethnographic methods, we take on methods that are structured by another disciplinary history—complete with assumptions that do not fit those of rhetorical study. Rhetorical field methods are, in this manner, quite similar to the Children's Village, where anti-colonial employees were forced to work in and with colonial structures because colonists designed the system. What structures does rhetorical fieldwork take on, and how can they be overthrown?

At the same time, staging a coup does not simply free us from the problem of tracking our methodological—or organizational—ghosts, or save us from being haunted. We can never have done with ghosts, and we are not tasked to exorcise them. In this way, my metaphor of a coup may seem not to fit, since we cannot simply rid ourselves of the way fieldwork has been structured: "a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come back."[30] Instead, we are tasked with continually expecting ghosts, continually anticipating coups. The boundaries that form our fieldwork methodologies are always imminent, always to come and come back.[31] We must be vigilant in paying attention to our ghosts.

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[30] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 123.
[31] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 44. "At nightfall, one does not know if imminence means that the expected one has already returned."

Chapter 9: Giving it Away, in Conclusion

> "…to learn to live *with* ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts. To live otherwise, and better. No, not better, but more justly."[1]

Jacques Derrida opens his book *Specters of Marx* by discussing how to learn to live: "If it—learning to live—remains to be done, it can happen only between life and death. Neither in life nor in death *alone*."[2] This dissertation has been an attempt to learn to live, and as such it could only be done with ghosts. The questions plaguing me have run through the dissertation, sometimes clearly seen and other times obscured: How do we learn to live as aid actors and as rhetorical researchers? How do we learn to live otherwise, and more justly, in the way we relate to others in and through international power relations? What can we learn by living *with* our ghosts?

In this dissertation, we learn—again—to live, finally. Yet, no matter how much learning to live has been done, more inevitably remains. We cannot simply learn to live justly. We cannot simply recognize all (neo)colonial politics at play, we cannot know or control the outcomes of our participation as researchers, we cannot create aid that is only an unselfish act of giving away. But we should not forgo talking to our ghosts. Instead, we have an infinite responsibility to recognize them, to speak to them, to learn to live *with* them—over and over again.

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[1] Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006), xvii-xviii.
[2] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xvii.

Living with ghosts is living with time out of joint, living between life and death. This place of disjuncture, where life meets death, is the place both of giving and of justice. Giving without being obliged to, giving without creating a debt that expects something back—this can only be a disjuncture in the figurative circle of give-and-take. In this dissertation, we have seen how donors give—and then feel entitled to take control of projects. We have seen how medical volunteers give—to take heart that they have the ability to save. We have seen how U.S. volunteers give—to solidify their fantasies and stabilize their subject construction. We have seen how researchers give participation—taking note for use in articles and books. We have seen how the act of giving can annul the gift, creating instead an economy of exchange.

Justice, in giving, is found in the disjuncture—in a gift that one does not have to give, in a gift that does not return.[3] Giving in the presence of ghosts, giving out of joint, giving what one does not have, giving as a subject already dead to whom the gift cannot return, giving not out of duty but *beyond*—it is this giving that opens the possibilities of a justice-to-come. By exploring in this dissertation how aid work is done in practice, I have examined how giving becomes caught up in cycles of return that cancel its potential for justice, and reenact neocolonial, sexist, or racist relations of power rather than destabilizing them. Yet, I have also pointed to moments where power dynamics are

[3] Once one has recognized the force and the necessity of thinking justice on the basis of the gift, that is, beyond right, calculation, and commerce, once one has recognized therefore the necessity…of thinking the gift to the other as gift of that which one does not have and which thus, paradoxically, can only *come back* or belong to the other…" Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 32.

shaken, moments where they are openings for learning to do aid otherwise—to give not better, but more justly.[4]

To play with Derrida's words, *I would like to learn to* give*, finally*. But to give without gaining anything in return is impossible: one would have to give *without knowing it* to avoid receiving symbolic gains in return.[5] *Giving it away* is impossible as such. However, at the same time, it is still necessary to learn to give, finally. Giving aid away would be to move it from the form of economy, of give-and-take, to that of dissemination: a radical giving *away* that cannot return. What this dissertation provides, amongst the ways relations of power are reinscribed, are moments that hint toward giving aid away. These are moments out of joint, moments that cannot quite be pinned down: moments that signify ghosts with whom we must reckon. To be consumed by the problem of giving is to be haunted. We must learn to *give* with ghosts.

RHETORIC AND REFLEXIVITY IN INTERNATIONAL AID

In Chapter 1: Introduction, I set up the study by describing my past experiences with aid in Tanzania, and stated my research questions:

1. How are non-governmental aid relationships between Westerners and Tanzanians rhetorically constituted *in situ*? What are the rhetorical effects of these local dynamics? How do they support, augment, or challenge current global understandings of (neo)colonialism, sexism, racism, and aid itself? In other words, what is the relationship between local aid relationships and global power flows?
2. What are the particular benefits and limitations of using rhetorical field methods to explore international aid and its power relationships?

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[4] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xviii.

[5] "What would a gift be in which I gave without wanting to give and without knowing that I am giving, without the explicit intention of giving, or even in spite of myself? This is the paradox in which we have been engaged from the beginning. There is no gift without the intention of giving." Jacques Derrida, *Given Time I: Counterfeit Money*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 123.

Before answering these questions, I first provided the theoretical grounding for the study in Chapter 2. I traced the relationship between historical colonial relations and current neocolonial politics in international aid. Then, I discussed the way nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, are particularly situated within these politics, and are in many ways neocolonial actors. Finally, I established my use of rhetoric throughout the dissertation as both a representative and constitutive force.

Chapter 3: Finding the "Rhetoric" in Rhetorical Field Methods both previewed the methodology of the fieldwork used in this dissertation, and began to answer my second research question. I compared rhetorical field methods to qualitative research in communication studies, and argued that rhetorical fieldwork is particularly structured by its critical history, activist orientation, and focus on publics and publicity. I called for rhetorical work not to bind itself to the methodological histories of other fields by conceptualizing our methods as bringing qualitative methods *into* rhetoric, but instead argued that rhetorical scholars should ask how the unique structures of fieldwork in rhetoric may bring something particular that *we* can contribute to qualitative work.

In Chapter 4: This Land is Your Land, this Land is my Land, I examined how both colonial and neocolonial power relations influenced how land is conceptualized, utilized, and perceived in relation to the Children's Village organization. Yet, I also demonstrated how land acted to shift the way power operated in these relations. I showcased in particular five rhetorics of survivance that opened up possibilities for survival and resistance in and against (neo)colonial power dynamics. In this way, I began

to demonstrate how recontextualizing power relations and including nonhuman actors can open spaces to reconfigure power dynamics.

Chapter 5: The Imperialist Character of Medical Masculinity focused on the relationships between U.S. American medical volunteers and Tanzanian translators and patients at the NGO. I demonstrated how the first group of volunteers was constrained to enact hegemonic U.S. masculinity in relation to Tanzanians, leading to imperialist relations. However, a second group of medical volunteers was able to evade such constraints, and demonstrated how reinscribing U.S. constituted power relations in an international context can also open opportunity to destabilize such relations.

In Chapter 6: All of us Phantasmic Saviors, I analyzed how Western volunteers interacted with other volunteers at the NGO in order to demonstrate how U.S. Americans in particular avoid facing the fantasies upon which their volunteer subjectivities are built. I argued that volunteer fantasies of being a "white savior" and "making a difference" in the world are protected through mechanisms of denial and irony in volunteer-volunteer relations. Yet, at the same time, I demonstrated how the fierce need for protection simultaneously highlights the vulnerability of these subject constructions, and how conflict with other volunteers also provided moments where fantasies are traversed, subjectivities dissolved and reconstituted in a different fashion.

Chapter 7: Reflexivity as Trauma brought forward the ghosts that haunted the previous chapters of this dissertation. Pointing to the limits of reflexivity, how one can never fully recognize or understand how one is implicated in power relations, I argued for thinking of reflexivity as a trauma that is *done to* us, rather than something we as scholars

do. I demonstrated how a reckoning with our ghosts is never finished, and how we will always fail to see important power dynamics as they occur, leading to a continual traumatic encounter with our inability to *do* reflexivity. However, I also argued that this is precisely what allows for reflexivity to be *done to* us: It is this continual trauma of witnessing to our *failures to witness* that leads us toward justice. In our failures to challenge power dynamics lie the seeds of justice-to-come.

Chapter 8: Participating in a Coup took up the arguments of Chapter 3 to investigate the boundaries of researcher participation in what one studies. I described how participating in the overthrow of the organization I studied for this dissertation led me to question if such participation went too far. I used my arguments from Chapter 3, that rhetorical fieldwork is structured by its critical heritage, social change goals, and public focus, to question how my experience and that of other researchers brought forth participatory limits, temporalities, and embodiments. I highlighted that in each of these dimensions of participation, rhetoricians often drew unnecessary boundaries. Connecting these boundaries to disciplinary structures not of our making, I argued for a rhetorical field methodology based in haunting, in expecting and facing our ghosts.

Each of these chapters demonstrates how power dynamics are opened to rearticulation through recontextualization, whether those be power dynamics of aid practice or of rhetorical field research. This, in itself, is not new. But by tracing how this occurs in international aid relationships, where multiple, simultaneous cultural power dynamics collide, and by doing so through attention to processes of subject constitution, I

point to how rhetoric and reflexivity *done otherwise* can better recognize and open space for destabilizing power dynamics. No, not better, but more justly.[6]

The chapters of this dissertation demonstrate that being able to recognize how potential opportunities for challenging neocolonialism, capitalist imperialism, racism, and sexism emerge in every reinstantiation of power relations requires a reflexivity more rigorous and responsible than our current theories or attempts provide. A reflexivity based in assumptions of consciousness can never do enough. Thus, to have done what needs to be done, this dissertation points to a reflexivity done otherwise: a reflexivity done to us. What such reflexivity figures is a continual need to face our ghosts, to talk with them, to learn with them to give more justly.

Similarly, the chapters in this dissertation call for a rhetoric done otherwise. This rhetorical research faces our ghosts just in time to miss them, unable to fully understand and thereby exorcise them. A rhetorical research situated in haunting would not strive to fix or secure, but rather to sit with our lack of ability to know, in the form of our ghosts, and talk to it. I argue that it is only by immersing ourselves in failures to witness (to) injustice that critical rhetoric can learn to live up to its goals, finally.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND REMAINDERS

Rhetoric and reflexivity *done otherwise* bring forth important implications for rhetorical theory and research, and as well as aid studies and practice. First, in regard to rhetorical theory, I am not the first to call for a relation between rhetoric and haunting; other rhetorical scholars have envisioned rhetoric as a form of communication with the

[6] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xviii.

dead.[7] Scholars such as Joshua Gunn and Michelle Ballif theorize rhetoric as communing with the dead in order to draw out the ethical responsibilities entailed in any address to the Other. This dissertation adds an important dimension to current work by drawing attention to the ways haunting is also *political*. Rhetorical scholars who take up politics often do not take up haunting, and vice versa. By bridging this divide, and demonstrating how haunting is also politically important in rhetoric, there is space for the development of innovative approaches to theories of haunting and critical rhetorical theories. In this dissertation, I tied haunting to resonances of colonialism in contemporary aid work, highlighting the importance of thinking in terms of ghosts to understanding some forms of neocolonialism. In addition, I demonstrate how haunting leads to a reconceptualization of reflexivity in rhetorical theory. Future rhetorical scholarship could further both arms of this work, by exploring how haunting can be politicized in different ways, and how thinking of rhetoric as haunted calls for reenvisioning our theories.

Secondly, I contribute to rhetorical criticism by displaying what haunted rhetorical fieldwork may look like in practice. Haunted rhetorical fieldwork requires taking up areas of discomfort in rhetorical practice—a fully participatory researcher, personal experiences, unbounded temporalities—and facing what lurks, invisible, in and behind our discomfort. Haunted rhetorical fieldwork provides a different way to approach and figure the politics of fieldwork, and as such could productively rethink current popular tropes. In this dissertation, I focused particularly on subjectivity and reflexivity.

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[7] Michelle Ballif, "Regarding the Dead," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 4 (2014): 455-471; Joshua Gunn, "Canned Laughter," *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 47, no. 4 (2014): 434-454; Joshua Gunn, "Refitting Fantasy: Psychoanalysis, Subjectivity, and Talking to the Dead," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 1 (2004): 1-23; Joshua Gunn, "On Dead Subjects: A Rejoinder to Lundberg on (a) Psychoanalytic Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 4 (2004): 501-513.

Future work could examine a haunted fieldwork might differently approach affect, embodiment, co-presence, coalition, or alliance, among others.

Finally, even outside of the academy, this dissertation gives useful points of reflexive engagement for Western aid workers, and means for non-Western aid workers and recipients to push for political change. International aid work continues to be hotly contested. In the time it has taken me to complete this dissertation, parodies and satires of aid practice have become especially popular, and more and more Westerners enter into aid—as volunteers, donors, or employees—with an awareness of its problems. The explorations of how Western subjects are placed in, inhabit, and challenge neocolonial politics in this dissertation can provide a depth of Westerner reflexivity that is lacking in many satires of aid. Perhaps most importantly, by demonstrating typical methods of avoiding subjective dissolution, this dissertation holds a mirror up to U.S. volunteers and asks them not to look away from what they see. Ultimately, the question this dissertation poses for Western aid workers is: Is it possible for Western aid to be anti-colonial? The point of this dissertation is not to settle this question, but to let it unsettle the reader. It is precisely by facing this question, and struggling with its implications, that aid workers may more deeply engage with reflexivity—and be redone by their own reflexive traumas.

Certainly, this dissertation also has significant remainders, things leftover. To some extent, the limitations of this study are remarkably clear: I focused only on one, small, community-based NGO. The Children's Village is not representative of other NGOs, it cannot be easily compared to large aid organizations, and it may not even exist as such in six months. Even within this context, I was only able to write about a small

part of the activities, events, and relationships happening there. However, these localized events operating within a global context of power still offer much to be learned from, and taken up in future work. The intimate contextualization of this study was necessary in order to understand how subjective relations connected to global power dynamics, but it means the lessons gained from this study for use in, or study of, other aid organizations are much more indirect than, say, a list of best practices.

Further remains of this study are of greater import: What I have argued that the reader should learn, do, or take on throughout this dissertation is in most senses impossible. I have argued for research that leaves question unsettled, subjects that dissolve their subjectivities, reflexivity based in *missing* what occurred, and giving what one does not have to give. I ask my readers to do what is impossible. A notable limitation of this study is that its arguments cannot be fulfilled. At the same time, they are necessary. Our research and aid practice must be haunted by our failures, by our gifts that were annulled in expectation of return. Yet, we must continue to give it away.

GIVING IT AWAY

> No justice…seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism. …without this responsibility and this respect for justice concerning those who are not *there*, of those who are no longer or those who are not yet *present and living*, what sense would there be to ask the question "where?" "where tomorrow?" "whither?"[8]

[8] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xviii.

Joe, this is my gift to you. It's not mine to give—I took it first, you see. Can I give it to you, if it's not mine to give, and you're not there to receive it? Can it be a real gift, this time? I can't expect anything back from a memory. Or maybe I can—perhaps I give to gain a new perspective, a new narrative, a new relief. Failure, retest. *I would like to learn to give, finally.*

We must learn to give in a way that encompasses a responsibility to all living, dead, and yet to be born, to all present and nonpresent. We cannot succeed, but to respond faithfully we must try. We must attempt to know what we cannot know—how to give—attempt to stop what we cannot stop—the annulment of the gift by our recognition of it.[9] Yet by witnessing to the destruction of the gift, *even as we necessarily miss it,* are unable to see *in time*, we have another chance to give, better. "No, not better, but more justly."[10]

We try to give away money in aid, we try to give away time—and we will always somehow fail. We try to give away subjective coherence in research, we try to give away closure—and we will always somehow fail. We will continually be met with traumas of our failures to give, whether as a donor, aid worker, or researcher—moments we *missed* when the gift was annulled. Moments when our political goals went unfulfilled. But we must continue to face them, to speak to the ghosts, to give again.

Giving must arise from trauma, as "[n]either death nor immortal life can ever give anything, only a singular *surviving* can give."[11] Giving emerges from the failure to see in

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[9] Derrida, *Given Time*, 30.
[10] Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xvii-xviii.
[11] Derrida, *Given Time*, 101-102.

time, from the disjuncture of having seen too late, knowing too late what was required—giving occurs only in time out of joint.

As I complete this dissertation, I know the most important work is not finished, can never be finalized. We are all responsible for tragedies, and we cannot have done with them. This dissertation has brought me to face-to-face with my ghosts, but it has not put them to rest. Rather, facing my ghosts has led me to recognize how many more I have yet to face. How many more old men are out there, strangers, yelling, trying to attract my attention, to turn me toward facets of Western imperialism that I have yet to face? Have I learned to listen better? Or if not better, more justly?

And so, I give this dissertation away, with all that that entails.

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