

**KUKATAA: AN AFROCENTRIC EXPLORATION OF NON-  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION REFUSAL IN  
THE CONTEXT OF FEMALE GENITAL  
CUTTING IN TANZANIA**

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## ABSTRACT

Female genital cutting is often depicted in media spheres through numerical statistics and one to two-lined captions that do not effectively capture the full humanity of the Black girls and women they are describing. The numerical statistics and pictorial captions provide myopic and ahistorical interpretations of African people and paint Africa as a homogenous continent riddled by its own barbarity. Through an Afrocentric analysis of the practice of female genital cutting, Tanzania people and people throughout the African diaspora can be imagined through a Sankofa return to their Maatic and ubuntu humanity. The Maatic and ubuntu lens opens the radical possibility to understand that Black girls and women do not need to be circumcised to reach the fullest potential of their humanity. Using the Afronographic methodology, rooted in the Afrocentric metatheory, I analyzed how young Black women can become rhetorically lost in translation through nongovernmental organization (NGO) rhetoric, an extension of the fieldwork I did at the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM) in 2019. Additionally, I deconstructed NAFGEM's refusal to allow me to conduct interviews in 2022 unless their NGO personnel were present. The refusal revealed how NGOs become discursive embodiments of Eurocentricity invested in maintaining victimizing narratives based on the debasement of African humanity. Therefore, an Afrocentric metatheoretical analysis proliferates Eurocentric algorithms by centering the Kemetic humanizing principles of Ma'at and ubuntu to prioritize the word magic (nommo) of Black women and girls.

This dissertation is dedicated to the amazing young women who are seeking safe shelter in Moshi, Tanzania at the headquarters of the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM). Through the physicality of uttering the magic of their words, the young women move mountains that exceed the contours of Mount Kilimanjaro.

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This dissertation is a written intonation to my ancestors and the ways that their directions always led me back to Tanzania for reasons I do and do not understand. May their directions continue to guide me regardless of when the compass arrives.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

As an undergraduate at Cornell University studying Africana Studies, I was eager to understand the practice of female genital cutting beyond the lengthy articles that I was assigned for my classes. Through the Global Health minor, I was provided the opportunity to travel abroad to Tanzania in the summer of 2017. During the initial four weeks I spent in Moshi, Tanzania, I collaborated with my Cornell peers and medical students at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College (KCMC) to develop a case study about geriatric care in Tanzania. For the remaining four weeks, totaling eight weeks spent in the country, I interned at the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM), a nongovernmental organization located in Moshi, Tanzania that focused on mitigating the practice of female genital cutting and child marriage through educational efforts and interventions. My trip to Tanzania was the first time I had traveled abroad, and I was enamored by the long flights, safari trips, and epic climb of Mount Kilimanjaro, drifting far into the lure of fantastical travel. It would not be until years later and after two additional trips to Tanzania that I would understand the complex embodiment of my Western body as interwoven to the imaginary of white savior complexes and the Pan-European Academy<sup>1</sup>.

Beyond the zebras, giraffes, and warthogs of the Arusha National Park safari, there was the perpetuity of capitalism unraveling under my nose and nestled amidst my naivete: we paid tuition to collaborate and study with medical doctors at a local medical school; the homestay families we stayed at were paid for by a prepaid living stipend that

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<sup>1</sup> Asante, M. K. (2015). *Pan European Academy* [lecture]. MKA Institute.

we provided to the university; and the NGOs that we volunteered at were provided payments for our time there. In congruence with the payment from the university, I was presumed to support all tenets of NAFGEM and its mission. However, the payment was made by faculty members of the university, inundated by the strings of capitalism tied to their hands.

When I returned from my trip to Tanzania in the summer of 2017, I began working on my undergraduate thesis, which focused on female genital cutting. While conducting research about NAFGEM, I came across a feature on the Human Rights Watch website that discussed one of the young women I had met. Under a picture, the caption read: “Tigisi, now 12, was forced to marry at age 9, but now attends a boarding school with the support of NAFGEM, a local organization” (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Another caption read, “Agatha, 11, was 7 years old when her father tried to force her into marriage. A policeman intervened and took her to a local organization. With their help, Agatha is now at school” (Human Rights Watch, 2014). I had the privilege of meeting both Tigisi and Agatha three years after these pictures had been curated and these captions had been composed. I experienced cognitive dissonance as I attempted to attribute meaning to the captions provided because I felt that they did not effectively capture the complex lived realities of the young women I had met. The picture of Tigisi displays her positioned in the forefront, wearing a school uniform and backpack, while in the background of the picture are people who can be presumed to be Tigisi’s family, wearing Maasai clothing and standing around their indigenous home. Similar to Tigisi, Agatha is pictured with her school uniform and a presumably off-guard smile while she stands in a field of wheat. After seeing the depth of the photographs and captions on the

Human Rights Watch website, I was subsumed by my own wishful thinking: there was no way NAFGEM permitted representatives from the Human Rights Watch to take such unidimensional photographs of the young women who were seeking safe shelter at their headquarters. To make sense of my dissonance, I conducted Master's thesis fieldwork in the summer of 2019 to attempt to holistically understand the lived experiences of the young women seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM. During the ten interviews, I asked the young women seeking safe shelter at the NGO's headquarters questions to gain a sense of who they were. Due to my limited language proficiency, I asked the organization's social worker to act as a translator for the interviews. Although I naively thought she would ask each question in good faith to garner an authentic answer from the young women, her involvement in the interviews revealed that she was feeding the young women's answers and adding responses to the questions that did not come from the young women. Due to the social worker's involvement in the interviews, the young woman's responses were convoluted to represent NAFGEM's organizational agenda that saw the young women's stories as engines for fundraising profit.

As a response to the translative loss of the young women's voices in my Master's thesis fieldwork, I sought to return to Tanzania to conduct dissertation fieldwork to ask similar questions, but with the young women away from the organizational headquarters and with a translator present that was independent of the organization. When I returned to Tanzania in December 2022 with the hope of beginning to conduct my dissertation interviews, I began discussing the interviews with the young women at the headquarters, some of whom I had also interviewed in 2019. They seemed excited to leave the organizational headquarters for a day as they spent most of their holidays confined to the

space. However, one of the young women stated that she was hesitant to leave and would need permission from the organizational executive before leaving. When I mentioned that I wanted to do interviews away from the headquarters with my own translator to the organizational executive, I felt a palpable shift in energy. He stated that I needed to provide the questions that I would be asking the young women ahead of time and that the young women were not allowed to leave the organizational headquarters as he was their legal guardian. He also asked that I provide my previous thesis that I had written about the organization and retorted that if I said anything bad about the organization or the Tanzania government, “bad things could happen,” even pointing at the seal that the organization had received from the Tanzanian government. After this interaction and observing the organizational executive whispering to other organizational personnel when I entered the room, I thought it would be in my best and safest interest to return home.

### ***Research Goals and Objectives***

Africology, as a discipline, provides the Afrocentric toolbox to make sense of the experiences of the young women seeking safe shelter in Moshi, Tanzania, and the interpretative lens initiated by my own location as a Black woman who initially came to Tanzania with a Global Health framework. “Africology is a discipline devoted to the renaissance of the African world. Thus, it is not a geographic-specific quest; it is a worldwide challenge for people committed to advancing human relationships” (Asante, 2007, p. 54). The quest that this project is engaging in is rooted in a desire to tell the stories of young women impacted by female genital cutting in a manner that is discontinuous with sensationalized discourse about the practice. Predominant discourse

often articulates the practice through the Eurocentric lens of medicine, law, or politics. Therefore, an Afrocentric analysis of the young women's interviews opens the paradigmatic possibility to see the young women in a way that centers their agency and unfolds their Maatic existences to Afrofuturistic technoscapes. During my time in Tanzania in 2019, I conducted interviews with the girls seeking safe shelter and asked them questions about who they were and who they imagined themselves to be. However, with the presence of the social worker who acted as a translator, the NGO's rhetoric became reproduced, marginalizing the young women at NAFGEM as determiners of their Maatic truths regarding the practice of female genital cutting. In 2023, when I returned, I sought to disband from the Eurocentric ways that the Tanzanian social worker had told the young women's stories and instead center the humanity of the young women. NAFGEM's desire to monitor the truths of the young women and intimate how information was curated about the NGO is a replication of Eurocentricity that my theoretical landscape as an Africologist refused to replicate. By unearthing the lies that are told in media circuits about the practice of female genital cutting and its existence in a landscape of primitivity, the ubuntu humanity of young Black women is prioritized and contributes to Afrocentric algorithms.

### **Defining Female Genital Cutting**

Throughout this project, rather than NAFGEM's organizational reference to female genital mutilation, I will be employing the term female genital cutting (FGC)<sup>3</sup>. Comparative terms such as female genital mutilation (FGM) suggest all alterations are mutilation and alienate the girls and women who engage in the practice. Circumcision suggests a "false analogy" to the more "minor operations performed on men," while

female genital cutting evolved out of respect and sensitivity to the women who never considered the procedure mutilation (Boyle, 2005; Rahman & Toubia, 2000; Skaine, 2005). The term female genital mutilation has also been heavily criticized by African feminists for its Eurocentric implications, although it is still heavily utilized by media outlets such as the World Health Organization and authors around the globe. Since this project operates from an Afrocentric orientation, the term cutting will be employed because it engages with the reality of the practice while still preserving the agency of the girls and women involved.

Authors such as Micere Mugo have provided sharp critiques of the word mutilation and its use in Western literature. For example, in her article “Elitist Anti-Circumcision Discourse as Mutilating and Anti-Feminist,” she advances the work of Leslye Amede Obiora by arguing that the use of the phrase "genital mutilation" alienates and criminalizes the very population with whom one is seeking to hold a conversation (Mugo, 1997). Mugo critiques the work of Alice Walker in *Possessing the Secret of Joy* and *Warrior Marks* as engaging in rhetorical elitism and vanguardism, concluding that her views on “female genital mutilation” have come to constitute a last word on the subject. Yaba Blay further unpacks the work of Micere Mugo and her critique of Alice Walker by adding that the use of the term female genital mutilation decenters Black women. Blay describes how Alice Walker’s work<sup>2</sup> portrays Africa and, consequently,

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<sup>2</sup> Although this example is not explicitly cited by Yaba Blay, one of the examples of the ways that Alice Walker paints women impacted by female genital cutting can be seen on page 180 of *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. In addition to her continued use of the word mutilation, when narrating for one of her characters, Pierre, she explains, “Now he says in the scholarly tone that still strikes me as amusing in one so childlike in size, we can begin to understand something about the insistence among people in mutilating cultures, that a woman’s vagina must be tight..” The narration of a fictional character in a text in

African culture and people in a light not dissimilar to colonial explorers, scientists, anthropologists, and missionaries – as backward, primitive, and in need of salvation from the West (Blay, 2008). To suggest that African women are capable of mutilating African girls replicates the scientific racism of the Western gaze that sees African people as alien and in need of salvation from their savagery. Furthermore, it engages with a hierarchy of domination that sees African women as inferiorized by racialized and gendered classifications.

Western narratives often dismiss the prevalence of the practice in spaces such as the United States, often skewing the practice to be a primarily primitive ritual in the non-West. For example, the World Health Organization, a source statistically reiterated by many authors throughout the Pan-European Academy, states that “More than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone female genital mutilation in 30 countries in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia where FGM is practiced” (WHO, 2023). However, this discursive cartography engages in a pathology of dishonesty that suggests that female genital cutting is locationally specific to a primitive diasporic Africa. Contrary to the myopic projections advanced by esteemed organizations such as the World Health Organization, female genital cutting is a practice that affects women globally. As many as 140 million girls and women alive today have been cut, and researchers estimate that more than 513,000 girls and women in the US have experienced or are at risk of FGC (The Office on Women’s Health, 2022). In Tanzania, it is estimated that one in ten women have undergone FGC, and of those, 35 percent underwent it before the age of one (United Nations, 2023).

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1992 began a pathway toward the media sensationalism of the practice, the portrayal of Africa as homogenous, and the descriptions of African women as mutilators.

To imply that female genital mutilation (FGM) is only practiced in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East engages in a history of othering rooted in Eurocentricity. Vincent Woodard chronicles the construction of the African body as other through his depictions of pseudoscientific medical histories told by physicians such as Samuel Cartwright. In *The Delectable Negro: Human Consumption and Homoeroticism within US Slave Culture*, he describes how the Black body becomes consumable through colonial constructions that postulate “black,” “slave,” chattel,” and “African” to mean qualitatively nothing and virtually anything (Woodard, 2014, p. 168). The generalization of a practice to be mutilationally specific to certain cartographies attempts to cast the Black body into spaces of virtual nothingness and promulgate historical hierarchies of domination, which becomes amplified when one considers how female genital cutting was known as “love surgery” when practiced by American gynecologists. Gynecologist James C. Burt, known as the “love surgeon,” became renowned between 1954 and 1966 for the experiments he would do on women where he “would remove the hood of a patient’s clitoris to expose it, thinking it would enhance the pleasure of sexual intercourse for them” (Haymarket Media, 2013). This same practice, when conducted in African diasporic countries, is immediately considered one of the four types of female genital mutilation. The differential branding of James C. Burt’s practices situates itself in a history of scientific racism, where J. Marion Sims is pedestalized as the father of gynecology when he experimented on the bodies of Black women to feed his work.

In bell hooks’ “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance,” she discusses the commodification of Otherness and how it has had erotic implications in media circuits. Contact with the so-called Other is a location subdued with desire, so to cast Africa, Asia,

and the Middle East as the primary places where female genital mutilation happens, the desired encounter within white supremacist cartographies has transpired, where Black people are cast as primitive savages and consumptive others. hooks posits the irony of considering Black women as nothingness through her analysis of the closing scene of Sandra Bernhard's film *Without You I'm Nothing*. She reformulates Bernhard's closing message as follows: "You may need black culture since without us you are nothing, but black women have no need of you" (hooks, 1992). Female genital cutting ceases to exist as a practice worthy of study or inclusion on the World Health Organization and Human Rights Watch website without the inherent marginalization and sexual commodification of Black women; in a desire to convey Black women's bodies as nothing, they have become virtually everything on technological landscapes.

The definition of female genital mutilation and its four types provided by the World Health Organization employs the use of medicalized terminologies that create a sense of embodied abstraction and cast the women and girls being described into marginal landscapes. For example, the World Health Organization cites four types of female genital mutilation:

**Type 1:** This is the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans (the external and visible part of the clitoris, which is a sensitive part of the female genitals), and/or the prepuce/ clitoral hood (the fold of skin surrounding the clitoral glans);

**Type 2:** This is the partial or total removal of the clitoral glans and the labia minora (the inner folds of the vulva), with or without removal of the labia majora (the outer folds of skin of the vulva);

**Type 3:** Also known as infibulation, this is the narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is formed by cutting and repositioning the labia minora, or labia majora, sometimes through stitching, with or without removal of the clitoral prepuce/clitoral hood and glans; and,

**Type 4:** This includes all other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, e.g., pricking, piercing, incising, scraping, and cauterizing the genital area (WHO, 2023).

Although one could argue that the World Health Organization seeks a biologically educational approach through a detailed inclusion of the four types of genital cutting, the reader that they are aiming this information toward is a Western eye. As a result, the medicalized terminologies have a sensationalist function, and the people involved with the practice become subtractions in a backdrop. While reading through type 1, a reader may become frozen in the language of removal, clitoral, prepuce, and hood, ultimately blurring the visibility of the young women impacted. In the description of type 2, *minora* and *majora* become words that take precedence for a reader. Although these Latin words are signifiers to the reader of the vaginal labia, they also bring to cognition the juxtaposition between those who become major and minor or significant and insignificant aspects of the portrayals of female genital cutting. Infibulation becomes a centralized linguistic focus in the description of type 3; its Latin etymological roots suggest not only removal but also the narrowing and confining of vaginal openings. In the descriptive attempt to magnify the sealing nature of infibulation, the girls and women described become sealed to a fate as procurers of mutilation. In conjunction with the human obfuscation of types 1 through 3 of the practice, type 4 also engages in deterministic othering that reminds the reader of the harm that the mutilating women are inflicting on themselves for ‘non-medical purposes.’

The definitions provided by esteemed organizations such as the World Health Organization uphold a presumption attuned with Westernized medical procedures, localizing the practice as unique to certain “mutilating countries.” Its presence in other “industrialized countries” could only be the result of “foreign influence.” “Even though most industrialized countries such as the United States, Australia, Canada, England, and

France have instituted policies to inhibit the practice, it has persisted among some immigrant communities” (Wangila, 2007, p. 4). This narrative excludes the fact that many supposedly “non-industrialized” countries also have policies that inhibit the practice, but politics of survival prompt the practice’s continuation in secret. The “immigrant” being the primary progenitor of the practice in Western spaces engages in a historicity that sees the immigrant as other, invader, and criminal. However, as noted by authors Rich Furman, Douglas Epps, and Greg Lamphear in the Introduction to *Detaining the Immigrant Other: Global and Transnational Issues*, monikers such as illegals, wetbacks, and aliens that rhetorically attempt to delineate us versus them pale in comparison to the actions taken against those who are on the wrong end of the social forces that create and are created by these dehumanizing names (Furman, Epps, and Lamphear, 2016). Similarly, the term mutilated and mutilation that is often used to describe the state or action of African women pales in comparison to the genocide, rape, and desecration of land that has been done throughout the African continent by the very progenitors of the mutilating language in the West.

Portrayals of the practice are often tethered to an outdated and homogenous Africa. The “Background” section of a 2023 article published by BMC Public Health entitled, “The role of communities and leadership in ending female genital mutilation: an exploratory cross-sectional study in Tanga” reads:

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is one of the diehard cultures in the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa. The act involves chopping off part of the female genitals in varying degrees depending on the society (Mkuwa et al., 2023).

The establishment of the practice as located in “sub-Saharan” Africa creates a linguistic delineation of its practitioners as inferior and subhuman. The simplification of the act to

be a “chopping off” curates a butcher-like graphic for the reader, and the suggestion that the severity of the practice is society-dependent fosters a cartography of savagery.

Encyclopedia Britannica does similar work to BMC Public Health in its portrayal of the practice of female genital cutting as societally specific. It defines female genital cutting as a “ritual surgical procedure that is traditional in some societies” (Brittanica, 1998). This definition of the practice is especially hypocritical in its cartography of ritual when juxtaposed to the definition provided by Encyclopedia Britannica for silicone breast implant. It defines a “silicone breast implant” as a “prosthesis made from a polymer gel contained within a flexible casing that is used for the reconstruction or augmentation of the female mammary tissue” (Brittanica, 2009). Although female genital cutting and breast implants are not comparable, the language used by Brittanica to describe each practice is noteworthy. The silicone breast implant is also a ritualistic surgical procedure performed on women, but because the procurers of the language for the encyclopedia have rendered the women who get breast implants to be worthy of the preservation of their humanity, the implantation becomes less about ritual, and more about reconstruction and augmentation, connoting positive implications although implants can also be dangerous, deadly, and painful. These comparative constructions are not included to cite my approval for the practice of female genital cutting because there have been many accounts of the profound impact the practice has had on women globally. However, my word choice regarding the practice and my analysis of word choices by other authors, organizations, and journals paint a verbal picture of the cartographic, medical, and linguistic racism that impacts the portrayal of female genital cutting. In seeking to preserve the humanity of African women and girls, this project rejects the linguistic

othering that envisages African women and girls as alien while also acknowledging the historical and contemporary harm that women have experienced globally at the hands of the practice of female genital cutting.

### **Locating Tanzania in a Neoliberal Economy**

Neoliberal capitalism has operated under a similar linguistic illusion that it is expanding the freedom of humanity, but David Harvey clarifies that freedom in just another word in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. He defines neoliberalism as:

A theory of political economic practices that proposed that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (p. 2).

This definition of neoliberalism uses language that is discontinuous with the history of dehumanization that has defined the democratic notions of life, liberty, and property globally. For example, when these notions were being developed within America, African people were considered three-fifths of human beings. Furthermore, the pairing of the terms markets and trade with free is an elusive misnomer when contextualized with the reality that access to markets and trade is only truly accessible to a select few.

Acknowledging the history of slavery and hierarchy that is consistent with the development of neoliberal capitalism provides the theoretical impetus for understanding how everything becomes commodifiable under its tenets. Sexuality, culture, history, heritage, and nature as spectacle became elements of commodification extracting from originality, authenticity, and uniqueness, putting a price on things that were never actually commodities (Harvey, 2007, p. 166). Due to the commodification of everything that happens under neoliberalism, the young women's narratives, their sexualized bodies, and their existence become an item that never should had a price on it to begin with. The

commodification of the young women's realities serves the upkeep of NAFGEM in keeping their relationship to the neoliberal state tethered.

The commodification of African bodies reiterates the Eurocentric framework of capitalism as dictated by Karl Marx. As Nah Dove insightfully adds in "An African-Centered Critique of Marx's Logic," the Eurocentric framework that informed Marx's language for capitalism and historical materialism did not consider the lives and humanity of African people:

Marx detached himself from African human suffering. He believed that capitalism, a European construct, was the highest stage of human social evolution. It follows that he saw Europeans as the highest form of so-called human evolution. He was unable to give the racist dynamic of the racialized power relations, involved in capitalist social development, prominence as a critical feature of capitalism (Dove, 1995).

Since neoliberalism and NGOization are Eurocentric extensions of capitalism, the racial hierarchy that informs the commodification of everything also extends to NGO discourse and neoliberal hegemonic thought. When "key facts" proclaim that female genital mutilation only occurs in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, it is an iteration of routes of exploitation embedded in Eurocentric history. Although Marx detached how African human suffering was inextricably linked to the formation of capitalism, contemporary rhetoric embellishes and sensationalizes African suffering to ensure that African people are perceived as homogeneous victims still in need of their white savior to escape from their savage realities.

African people on the grounds, such as the young women living at NAFGEM, have a profound understanding of the illusive nature of capitalism due to its personal impact on their lives. As Ronald Aminzade constructs in *Race, Nation, and Citizenship in Postcolonial Africa*:

Whereas most TANU leaders at the national level saw development as a path to prosperity, political independence, and poverty reduction, local leaders who had closer ties to the victims of development saw colonial development in terms of policies that drove poor peasants off the land to make way for white settlers, forced livestock producers to cull their cattle and sell them at low prices, required farmers to implement labor-intensive terracing that did not result in more productive land, prohibited local residents from entering forest reserves, and imposed taxes that made peasants grow cash crops for export rather than food for their families (p. 52).

The people in Tanzania, who are directly impacted by the commodification of everything, provide an imperative voice to conversations about neoliberal capitalism and NGOization. As Aminzade intuitively explains, African people are presupposedly in need of saving because of the path of destruction left by development. Although development, similar to Eurocentric buzzwords like capitalism, neoliberalism, and NGOization, may imply advancement, the realities for the people are starkly different: They have been forced off of their land, had livestock stolen, forced into enacting ineffective farming measures, and made to pay taxes that encourage an export-driven economy. The discombobulation of local economies to further global development coincides with scholars like Walter Rodney's work on the binary between development and underdevelopment and how development has only historically supported the advancement of preexisting structures such as white supremacy and patriarchy.

The KiMaasai people, an indigenous community resonant with many of the young women at NAFGEM, have been significantly impacted by historical development projects that sought to supposedly civilize their way of life. To convey that the Maasai people needed civilizing, the Western optic served to promulgate monolithic narratives about the Maasai people. These images included "static visual images—of men perched on one leg with cattle grazing in the background and women dressed in elaborate beadwork

and colorful clothes milking cows... stereotyped narratives– of ruthless warriors...” (Hodgson, 2011, p. 65). These images miss the Maatic sensibilities of the Maasai people, who value nature and engage in spiritual connectivity with their livestock. Similar to the images disseminated by the Human Rights Watch website of Tigisi and Agatha, the monolithic images captured of KiMaasai people produce narrow interpretations of their humanity by conveying a divergence from development and a reliance on mythical beads, colorful cows, and a warrior like-spirit.

The Western optic of a homogenous Africa often relies on a foggy imagination, attempting to draw the viewer into a mythical land detached from the tangible present. However, the Maasai people have a key sense of their reality and the way it has been impacted by histories of European and Arab conquest, as Dorothy Hodgson explains in *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World*:

...The creation of Maasai “reserves” in both colonies [Kenya and Tanzania] to contain and control the seemingly chaotic movements of the semi-nomadic herders and take possession of their most fertile rangelands and permanent water supplies... and ambivalent colonial policies that either sought to protect and “preserve” Maasai “culture” by limiting their access to education, healthcare, and other “detrimentalizing” influences or to demand immediate, radical changes to their lives and livelihoods in the name of “progress,” “productivity,” and “prosperity” (such as in the Maasai Development Project of the 1950s) (p. 65).

The exploitation of the Maasai people is coated in the language of advancement, development, and salvation, but these notions often leave out the extractive forces of colonialism that left the Maasai people dislocated. The lack of access to education that NAFGEM claims to be amending in its organizational vision was caused by the neoliberal state’s desire to locationally and intellectually confine the Maasai people to control their land and resources for the preservation of capitalist greed.

## **The Numbers of NGO-ization in Tanzania**

Harvard Law School defines nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as “typically mission-driven or service organizations in the nonprofit sector” (Harvard Law School, 2022). However, since Harvard Law School is an institutional embodiment of the Pan-European Academy, its definitional parameters must be put into question. The citation of mission-driven and service already exudes narratives of a white savior complex while not acknowledging the extraction that has historically occurred in the spaces that NGOs are alleging to save. Furthermore, the allegation that these organizations are not aiming for profit while they still have to pay employees and procure money to support the people they are serving engages in a denial of the formality of these organizations. On NAFGEM’s website, they explain their mission to be:

To raise awareness among grassroots communities, where these customs [child marriage and female genital cutting] are still being practiced, through holding educational seminars, training workshops, and sensitization and awareness campaigns at various community events (NAFGEM, 2023).

They continue to explain that through these educational campaigns, they hope to empower young women and put an end to the practice. This explanation of the work that NAFGEM does leaves out the fact that all of these educational efforts cost money, whether that be in transportation, pamphlets, or event supplies and spaces. Therefore, the organization must accrue some degree of profit to accomplish its goals, and the young women that the organization presumes to be serving become emblems for profit.

The National Council for Nonprofits lists one of the myths on its website as nonprofits not being able to make a profit. The website goes on to describe the term nonprofit as a misnomer because “Nonprofits can make a profit (and should try to have some level of positive revenue to build a reserve fund to have sustainability)” (National

Council for Nonprofits, 2023). Therefore, similarly, by its very definition, nongovernmental organizations are counterintuitive and engage in mythical service-driven missions, while the systemic ties to capitalism cannot be ignored. Inderpal Grewal and Victoria Bernal identify NGOs as agents of neoliberalism and imperialism in the introduction to *Theorizing NGOs: States, Feminisms, and Neoliberalism*. NGOs undermine state sovereignty by weakening the social contract between states and citizens (Bernal & Grewal, 2014, p. 4). The presence of an NGO should signify that the government has not fulfilled the needs of its people, prompting the necessity for an external organization to be present to assist. However, NGOs posit themselves as an alleged intermediary between the people and the state when the reality of its presence is situated toward a slated allegiance to the conglomeration of neoliberalism, capitalism, westernism, and hierarchies of domination.

The NGO's allegiance to Western hierarchies of domination has been termed by Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor in *NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions, and Prospects* as the titular process of NGOization. Commonly used among many social movements, activist networks, and academics:

The term NGOization is used to refer to the institutionalization, professionalization, depoliticization, and demobilization of movements for social and environmental change... Partial accounts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) pay inadequate attention to questions of power, dependence, and/or complicity with state, market, and multilateral/international institutions made evident in analyses which consider the political economy of NGOs in an era characterized by a globalizing capitalist colonization of territories, nature, peoples and cultures (p. 1).

The institutionalization of social and environmental movements provides people on the grounds with the illusion that progress is being made while the accountable party is using its invisible hand to ensure that its power and market interests are not put into question

and remain unmoved. Through David Harvey's definition of neoliberalism and Nah Dove's critique of Karl Marx's capitalist orientation, we understand that people throughout the African continent have already been commodified for the sustenance of global capitalism, and NGOs replicate the commodification of humanity by codifying partial narratives of people impacted by hierarchies of domination to invoke monetary sympathy from the West.

Micheal Jennings captures the chronological materialization of NGOs in Tanzania in *Surrogates of the State: NGOs, Development, and Ujamaa in Tanzania*. He describes how "NGOs in the 1960s and 1970s came to function not as an independent actor but as another phalanx in the development front" (Jennings, 2007, p. 92). Jennings's examination of NGOs in Tanzania reveals that they were not operating independently of the state; instead, they were closely aligned with state rhetoric. These NGOs also reinforced the state's narrative of development, which in turn upheld colonial hierarchies of domination. In 1966, the National Council of Social Services recorded twenty-two NGOs; this number increased exponentially to more than fifteen hundred by 2005 (Jennings, 2007, p. 92). These organizations that exponentially grew from the 1960s to 2005 were characterized by their liberal charitable approach and were particularly from Europe, the United States, and Canada, further elucidating the western encroachment in Tanzania through the process of NGOization.

On NAFGEM's website, in the "Our History" section, they explain that they were officially recognized by the government in 1999, after "a small group of female human rights activists united to discuss the broad issue of FGM in Tanzania in 1998" (NAFGEM, 2024). NAFGEM's establishment in 1999 corroborates the chronology

provided by Michael Jennings and the charitable contributions of Europe, the United States, and Canada. NAFGEM lists organizations, such as the German Embassy in Tanzania, UNICEF, and Rotary Canada, as among its supporters. NAFGEM demonstrates the work they have done in Tanzania using statistics that are visible and accessible to their Western supporters. “Although the initial prevalence rate of [FGC] in the Manyara region was staggeringly high at 81% in 2007, after NAFGEM’s interventions, the rate has decreased to 70.8% in 2010, showing progress towards the elimination of the practice” (NAFGEM, 2024). NAFGEM’s statistical reduction exudes progress to their funders under the guise of Western development.

NAFGEM’s utilization of numbers echoes the language of organizations such as the World Health Organization, whose explanations of the types of female genital cutting (1 to 4) decenter the humanity of the people involved. When we see an 11 percent reduction in the practice, we miss the humanity of the people involved for the sake of conveying so-called progress. Sally Engle Merry explains who and what gets lost when numerical statistics get prioritized as knowledge production in *The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*:

Numerical assessments such as indicators appeal to the desire for simple, accessible knowledge and to a basic human tendency to see the world in terms of hierarchies of reputation and status. Yet the process of translating the buzzing confusion of social life into neat categories that can be tabulated risks distorting the complexity of social phenomena. Counting things requires making them comparable, which means that they are inevitably stripped of their context, history, and meaning (Merry, p. 1).

By conveying a numerical reduction in the prevalence of female genital cutting in Tanzania, NAFGEM is speaking the language of development and concretizing its upstanding reputation. The adverse effect of statistical usage by NAFGEM is that the

West believes progress has happened, while there is little to no system accountability from the hierarchies of domination that put Tanzanian people in marginal positionalities, to begin with. Relaying the reduction of the practice of cutting to a statistic disengages from the sense of indigeneity embedded in the practice, the economic history that has disenfranchised African people for centuries, and the human behind the number that gets subsumed to implicate developmental impact.

NAFGEM's use of statistics and developmental discourse will serve as a case study to illustrate NGO complicity in the perpetuation of monolithic narratives about young women impacted by female genital cutting in Tanzania. As highlighted by Robert K. Yin in *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, a case study's unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and direct observations, as well as participant-observation—beyond what might be available in a conventional historical study (Yin, 2017, p. 2). My dissertation will employ organizational websites, interviews conducted in 2019 at NAFGEM, and my recent observations of the work done at NAFGEM in 2022 to provide an Afrocentric critique of NGOization and the ways that it dislocates the humanity of girls and women impacted by female genital cutting. The interviews in 2019 will be analyzed through a mixed methods approach to illuminate how each omission, addition, and mistranslation by the social worker acting as translator was an enactment of a hierarchy of domination (HoD). Mixed methods play on the strengths of quantitative and qualitative studies to address research questions. Quantitative studies offer the possibility of modeling social and behavioral phenomena, while qualitative studies provide a window into personal meaning and lived experience that is lost in the abstractions of quantitative research

(Schrauf, 2016, p. 7). The Afrocentric application to a mixed methods approach allows the possibility for (auto)-Afronographic insights about how narratives about female genital cutting have been told across time-space continuums. For my project, I will be utilizing my previous interviews from 2019, which will be more thoroughly translated, and the observations I made while at NAFGEM in 2017, 2019, and 2022, respectively, to provide a comprehensive understanding of how NGO refusal (*kukataa*) deconstructs the multifaceted magnitude of hierarchies of domination. The following research questions will frame my work: (1) How have numerical statistics and terminologies blurred the humanity of girls and women impacted by female genital cutting (FGC)? (2) In what ways does NGO refusal contribute to monolithic narratives being perpetuated about Black girls and women globally? (3) How does centering the her-stories of young women impacted by female genital cutting preserve human beingness and contradict hierarchies of domination?

### **Afrocentricity as Metatheory**

There has been a significant body of research on NGOs, the Western gaze, scientific racism, and feminist approaches to deconstructing the practice of female genital cutting. However, none of these approaches answer the question that scholar Yaba Blay poses in “All the ‘Africans’ are Men, all the “Sistas” are “American,” but Some of Us Resist: Realizing African Feminism(s) as an Africological Research Methodology,” “From whose center are we operating?” Western media outlets and the Pan-European Academy struggle to answer this question because they operate from a Eurocentric center that prioritizes capitalist gain. By locating this project and myself in an Afrocentric center

based on the work of scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante, Nah Dove, and Cheikh Anta Diop, African people and their agency reign as a priority.

Molefi Kete Asante's Afrocentricity will serve as an insightful metatheory that will inform my analyses of themes such as NGOization, neoliberalism, colonialism, and the employment of African womanism to center the stories of the young women seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM. The Afrocentric metatheory "is a conception that includes a multiplicity of theories; as such, it allows us to develop better interpretations, fuller understandings, and more effective articulations of the meaning of human goals and interactions" (Asante, 1998, p. 65). The use of the Afrocentric metatheory provides one with the tools to construct complex analyses of Eurocentric frameworks such as colonialism and neoliberalism and, in the process, centers the human beingness of the young women seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM. The ways that NGOs have depicted young women impacted by female genital cutting have centered on neoliberal capitalism and left the young women and their stories on the margins. Afrocentricity, definitionally, serves as "a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspective predominate; it is the placing of African people in the center of any analysis of African phenomena" (Asante, 2003, p. 2). By centering the young women at NAFGEM phenomenologically, they are positioned in a radical imagination that envisions them as not in need of saving from mutilation, but as agents of their own destinies rooted in their indigeneity.

Phenomenologically centering the humanity of the young women at NAFGEM is an application of their Afrocentric location. Location becomes a primary tool for phenomenological analysis; from this auto-locative stance, the rhetorical mask behind

power, privilege, and position becomes further uncovered (Asante, 2007, p. 27). When one analyzes the location of the young women at NAFGEM, the rhetorically masked histories of displacement are uncovered and brought to the forefront. Superficially, one might concede that it has been the practice of female genital cutting that has displaced the young women from their homes and caused the need for intervention by NAFGEM, but an Afrocentric analysis of their positionality within European hierarchies of domination informs us that they have always been displaced for the advancement of global white supremacy and patriarchy. A holistic Afrocentric analysis of the practice of female genital cutting unravels how Black girls and women in Tanzania have limited access to health, education, and monetary resources due to white supremacy and patriarchy prompting elders to circumcise and young women to be circumcised to enhance their marriageability and financial prospects. The additional personal application of Afrocentric location through the utilization of an auto-locative stance brings to the forefront the ways that my own identity has implicated this research. When I originally went to Tanzania in 2017, I was an emblem of the Pan-European Academy as I had come in with a global health framework and with an institution that historically advances ideological iterations of global white supremacy. Therefore, for NAFGEM, I represented an entity that would maintain its Eurocentric ideologies about young women being victims of a practice rather than humans marginalized by a system. However, my interactions with the young women made me question the stories that the NGO was telling: they had profound understandings of self and the world around them, even though the organization attempted to confine them to the bounds of the headquarters.

By operating from an Afrocentric center, one does not engage in the Eurocentric propaganda of the Pan-European academy. Disconnection and dislocation serve to support the academic propaganda that claims that Africa is so different culturally, historically, linguistically, spiritually, and psychologically, that there is no similitude (Asante & Dove, 2021, p. 24). Dislocation from one's center can cause vulnerability to the Eurocentric colonialities of power<sup>3</sup> that sees Africa and African diasporic people as embedded within a heart of darkness. The Eurocentric imagination has rendered young women impacted by female genital cutting as mutilated, as part and parcel of statistics, and as helpless victims dislocated into a homogenous Africa that has to be rescued from its white saviors. Contrastingly, an Afrocentric orientation sees the Maatic humanity of young women impacted by female genital cutting and envisages them as progenitors of their pasts, presents, and futures.

The centralization of agency within Afrocentricity carves the space for the young women impacted by female genital cutting to be the writers of their own storybooks. "When Africans, continental or diasporan, view themselves as centered and central in their own history, then they see themselves as agents, actors, and participants rather than as marginal on the periphery of the political or economic experience of Europe" (Asante, 2007, p. 16). Organizations such as NAFGEM and the World Health Organization, through their use of statistics and 'facts,' rhetorically relegate girls and women impacted by female genital cutting to the margins. The fieldwork I conducted in 2019 with the

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<sup>3</sup> "Colonialities of power" is rooted in the phrase developed by Anibal Quijano (2000), which highlights how the globalization of the world began with the constitution of America and world capitalism as a Euro-centered colonial/modern world power.

young women at NAFGEM was an attempt to see them as actors and participants in their reality. However, the interjections by the NGO's social worker who acted as the translator were an illustration of an embodiment of hierarchies of domination rooted in histories of Arab and European conquest.

Molefi Kete Asante and Nah Dove argue in *Being Human Being* that the domination of women by men was the first act of terror that led to the belief that hierarchy is beneficial. In time, the woman and man in this arrangement were able to collaborate in and fashion a pattern of perceiving and instituting a hierarchy of humanity based on their own hierarchical relationship to each other, which justified their domination of others (Asante & Dove, 2021, p. 55). The domination of man over woman operated in tandem with the oppression of darker-skinned people in the early patriarchal cultures of the Hyskos, Persians, Assyrians, Greeks, Romans, and Arabs. This initiated the historicized marginality of Black girls and women as conquerable in the hierarchy of humanity. Through an Afrocentric return to a Maatic sense of self, the positionality that the hierarchy of humanity has thrust Black girls and women into dissolves, and the maintenance of inner truth, justice, order, and harmony is restored.

### ***Methodology***

In tune with the Afrocentric metatheory, I employ the methodology of (auto)-Afronography as a qualitative tool to critique the content on the Human Rights Watch and NAFGEM website, examine the interviews conducted in 2019, and contextualize the refusal of interviews by the organization in 2022. Molefi Kete Asante describes

Afronography in the *Encyclopedia of Black Studies* as:

Akin to what in sociology is called ethnography or case studies, but Afronography begins from a different place and has objectives that are often at variance with

those of ethnography. While ethnography was developed as a Eurocentric way of acquiring knowledge about people other than Europeans, Afronography is a method of gaining access to information about Africans from the standpoint of African culture itself (p. 76).

The narratives constructed by NAFGEM and the Human Rights Watch are ethnographic in nature, telling the stories of young women impacted by female genital cutting from a Eurocentric orientation. By critiquing the Eurocentric narratives told about the young women at NAFGEM and envisaging them through a Maatic lens, an Afrocentric standpoint rooted in African agency will be centralized.

Afronography, as a methodological extension of the Afrocentric metatheory, also includes the importance of an auto-locative stance to understand how hierarchies of domination implicate one's own body. "The Afrocentric accepts personal knowledge as the most radical form of knowing. Personal knowledge is divided into two parts: (1) intense self-knowledge and (2) outside knowledge" (Asante, 2005). My self-awareness of the cognitive dissonance I experienced after returning from my first trip to Tanzania in 2017 and seeing the young women I had met being depicted on the Human Rights Watch website led me to the questions I would explore for my Master's thesis. Additionally, the distortions present in the interviews in 2019 led to the analysis in my Master's thesis of the Tanzanian social worker who acted as a translator and replicated the psychological embodiment of a Europeanized insider-without. The findings from my Master's thesis led to a desire to return to Tanzania and ask the same questions independent of the organization's social worker and in a way that would preserve the young women's agency. However, this Afrocentric location of self that sought to retell the narratives of the young women at NAFGEM in a humanizing way was a loud and resounding alarm in the ears of the personnel at NAFGEM, who were inundated by their capitalistic desires.

In addition to the Asantean application of Afronography, I will be using (auto)-Afronography as a way to analyze how my experiences with the organization in 2017, 2019, and 2022, respectively, informed my desire to deconstruct the narratives that NAFGEM and the Human Rights Watch were telling. Marquis M. Baker and Joyce E. King define auto-Afronography as a means of “describing and systemically analyzing personal experience to understand cultural experience” (Baker & King, 2022). My parenthetical distinction to the methodology is an indication of how I will be bobbing in and out of Afronography and auto-Afronography to paint an in-depth picture of how the young women are impacted by the stories NAFGEM tells about them and how my location in these narrative constructions opened the radical possibilities of both danger and truth.

### **Chapter Outline**

In Chapter 1 of the dissertation, I will provide an in-depth literature review of the origins of female genital cutting, unpack the chronology of alienation of Black girls and women, and locate the multifaceted industrial complexes within the Pan-European academy. Additionally, the concepts of agency, nommo, ubuntu, and being human beingness will be contextualized as pedagogical possibilities for unlocking the past, present, and future potentialities of the girls at NAFGEM. In Chapter 2, I will engage in a literature review of the themes covered in my Master’s thesis, “Lost In Translation: Unpacking the Monolithic Narratives of Girls Impacted by Female Genital Cutting in Tanzania,” and explain what led me to the development of my dissertation project. In Chapter 3, I will provide an Afrocentric methodological analysis of the interviews, which now have more in-depth Swahili-to-English translations, and illustrate the correlation of

how each interjection by the translation was an enactment of a hierarchy of domination through a quantitative analysis. In Chapter 4, I will examine the moments of refusal (*kukataa*) in the interviews while using the methodological impetus of her-stories to re-center the young women seeking shelter at NAFGEM. Furthermore, through the conceptual apparatuses of agency, ubuntu, and Maaticity, we transcend toward the bridge of the girls' word magic that aligns them to their past, present, and future selves. In Chapter 5, my concluding chapter, I will explain how the practice of female genital cutting situates itself into contemporary discourse and how the reliance on ancestral intelligence rather than artificial intelligence as the real AI has the potential to move the nommo or word magic of the young women forward toward an Afrocentric algorithm.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

An exploration of the multifaceted meanings of female genital cutting across media spheres reveals that a predominant amount of the scholarship about female genital cutting is told from a Eurocentric orientation rooted in Europeanized hierarchies of domination. The practice itself emanates from a Eurocentric axis because of the Western gaze's inability to reconcile with the androgynous nature of the Egyptian deity, Amon. Through the application of a body/mind binary to a genderless omniscient being, the practice of female genital cutting became prevalent as a means of differentiating the proverbial man from woman. The Afrocentric orientation toward agency and being human beingness is able to reconcile with the androgyny of Amon because the intellectual contributions of the Kemetic people are seen as complete and not in need of gendered additives that subscribe to the binary of patriarchal structures. Therefore, the young women at NAFGEM are whole humans and do not need the practice of female genital cutting to become women of societal worth and value.

The reliance on the gendered binary and hierarchies of domination serves to perpetually imagine African people as alien to their bodies and in need of enlightenment to save them from the savage practice of mutilation. The analogy of the African body as alien is reiterative of pseudoscientific racism that has imagined African people as inferior with smaller brains, freakish bodies, and drapetomaniac minds. From this vantage point of intellectual inferiority, even before the consideration of African people as mutilators, they needed to be saved from their child-like minds. An unraveling of Eurocentric schooling that is pedestalized in the system of neoliberal capitalism reveals how it is the

hegemonic machinery that produces minds that will ultimately reproduce its Europeanized ideologies. In the case of NAFGEM, Eurocentric schooling has already produced organizational personnel that think the young women who are seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM need to be civilized from their indigenous ways. By sending the young women to Catholic boarding schools, they are also learning distance from their indigeneity to create degrees of separation from the part of them that is deemed primitive.

The young women at NAFGEM, through the narratives told about them during my interviews conducted in 2019 and the stories featured on the organizational website, become vessels of multifaceted industrial complexes situated within the Pan-European Academy. These industrial complexes include but are not limited to, the white savior industrial complex, the university industrial complex, and the NGO industrial complex. When colleges like Cornell University send students on study abroad trips that center global health interventions that can improve the lives of or save people on the African continent, it is an iteration of the white savior industrial complex. Reflexivity about my own complicity during my time in Tanzania reveals a hegemonic embodiment of the machinery within the university-industrial complex, predicated on advancing the pedagogical praxes of Global Health and Social Work. Furthermore, as the young women's stories are myopically depicted by NAFGEM, the young women become embedded in the machinery of the NGO industrial complex because of how the NGO's unidimensional stories ensure that the organization's pockets remain filled. In deciphering the multitudinous nature of these industrial complexes, I argue that it is not only the young women at NAFGEM who are situated within saviorism but also my own body that is implicated by the university industrial complex's desire to save me from

cycles of poverty with the degree and access to study abroad programs that they were granting me access to. However, similar to the young women whom the NGO cannot save because of its subscription to neoliberal capitalism, I cannot be saved by the Pan-European Academy because it is in no position to do any saving.

### **Origins of FGC**

The origins of female genital cutting have been heavily debated in academic circuits. For example, Elizabeth Heger Boyle attempts to trace back the origins of female genital cutting in *Female Genital Cutting: Cultural Conflict in the Global Community*. In her tracing, she emphasizes the practice as far back as the second century B.C, when a geographer, Agatharchides of Cnidus, wrote about FGC as occurring among tribes residing on the western coast of the Red Sea (Boyle, 2002, p. 27). Boyle's deciphering of female genital cutting as chronologically correlated to Agatharchides demonstrates how the practice's origins are placed on a Eurocentric timeline in which the practice only gains validity when 'discovered' by whiteness. However, a Diopian approach to the understanding of female genital cutting connotes the practice as not being performed by "tribes," as Boyle details, but as a means of enacting monotheistic belief systems onto the fluidity of the Black body. Cheikh Anta Diop describes the practice of female genital cutting as an "archaic mentality" in *The African Origin of Civilization Myth and Reality*. The archaic mentality rests in the practice's foundations in monotheism and in response to the androgynous character of Amon (Diop, 1974, p. 136). Diop continues to describe how the practice of circumcision is enacted to fortify the dominant character of a single-sex human being. An Afrocentric orientation of human beingness rejects the necessity of

singularity within the human experience and engages with the circuitousness of ubuntu realities.

The Eurocentric projection of similarity and individualism onto the human experience compared to the circuitousness of ubuntu is emblematic of Cheikh Anta Diop's Two Cradle Theory. In his seminal work *The Cultural Unity of Africa*, Diop explains that there were two cradles of civilization: the Southern Cradle (Africa), where humanity began, and there were matriarchal societies, and the Northern Cradle, which was prompted by migration to colder climates and where there were patriarchal societies. In the Northern Cradle, Indo-European cultures denied women rights and subjugated them under the private institution of the patriarchal family, while the Southern matriarchal system was marked by the sacredness of the mother and her unlimited authority (Diop, 1989, p. xiii). The Northern Cradle, which pedestalizes the institution of patriarchy as the first hierarchy of humanity, was the predecessor for the construction of race as explicated by Nah Dove,<sup>4</sup> and fed into other hierarchies of domination such as racism, sexism, capitalism, etc. The Southern Cradle, on the other hand, opens the ubuntu possibility to imagine the omniscience and androgyny of Amon (Amen) because of its construction of the mother as a boundless reservoir of secrets, mystery, magic, sacred knowledge, and spiritual power.

In the *Encyclopedia of African Religion*, Amen is described as a hidden, unseen power. "Although it is true that the name suggests concealment, it could also mean invisible; hence, Amen is the invisible force that permeates the sky, the Earth, and human

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<sup>4</sup> From "Race revisited: Against a cultural construction bearing significant implications," by N. Dove, 2018, implications. *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*, 13(2), 129-143.

beings and demonstrates his universality by concealing his true identity behind an epithet that means hidden” (Asante & Mazama, 2009). Amon is an all-encompassing force that cannot be pinpointed or discovered, which is divergent to the tangible either/or binary embedded within Eurocentric frameworks. As Ana Monteiro-Ferreira explains in *The Demise of the Inhuman: Afrocentricity, Modernism, and Post Modernism*, under the ideological and philosophical construction of Western thought and, ultimately, the Western gaze, human beings fall into the Western dichotomy of the binary oppositions of body and mind, male and female, individual and community (Monteiro-Ferreira, 2014, p. 135). Female genital cutting is a practice influenced by the impact of the Western gaze where, to reconcile with the androgynous character of Amen and the similarities between male and female sexual organs, the practice of female genital cutting was adopted.

Similar to the practice’s origins being an attempt to ideologically reconcile with the androgynous nature of Amen, the contemporary nature of the practice also attempts to ascribe gender. Some traditions give meaning to the practice as a public rite of passage; some perform genital cutting on boys and girls to formally ascribe gender, believing that the male or female parts of children of the opposite sex must be removed before adulthood (Burrage, 2018). The desire to remove the female or male aspects of children’s genitals to ascribe gender to them is rooted in misinterpretations of the anatomical reality of the clitoris. Claire Zachary articulates that there is more similarity in structure between males and females than has been generally understood, though with “obvious differences” in *The Anatomy of the Clitoris: Reflections on the Theory of Female Sexuality* (Zachary, 2018, p. 23). The inability to acknowledge the differences between male and female genitalia lies in the same “archaic mentality” that Cheikh Anta Diop

describes in *The African Origin of Civilization*. There are elements of the clitoris that are naked to the visible eye and “lack precise contours” to be tangibly pinpointed by the Western dichotomy. Claire Zachary provides clarity about the complexity of the clitoris through the work of Helen E. O’Connell, who described the clitoris as the clitoral complex. “The clitoral complex, composed of the distal vagina, urethra, and clitoris, is the location of female sexual activity, analogous to the penis in men” (Zachary, 2018, p. 17). Although the clitoris is often considered analogous to the penis, the detailing of the clitoris complex provides us with the context to understand the differences between female and male genitalia and why they may be comparable but not similar. The distinction in complexity lies in how female genitalia are receptacles of motherhood and the continuity of life itself.

Nah Dove explains the significance of motherhood to African ways of existence in *Afrikan Mothers: Bearers of Culture, Makers of Social Change*. Afrikan mothers, as bearers of culture, have been the backbone of the struggle to resist the European conquest of Afrika, her resources, and her people’s energies (Dove, 1998, xiii). When the significance of motherhood is disregarded, the magnitude of female genitalia as a distinguished feature in the continuity of life is undermined. By centering African mothers and motherhood, Eurocentric narratives that have decentered women’s bodies become illusory. Additionally, an African conceptualization of motherhood understands that it exceeds the finite binary of genitalia or reproduction but rather encompasses the communal raising of children as an extension that has sustained African life. This is because the African way of knowing is inescapably individual and collective since the individual personality is developed in this process, and that development, at least in part,

inculcates certain values, attitudes, and behaviors that are shared with other members of the social and cultural group, through determining and moderating institutions, rituals, and other collective practices (Nehusi, 2017). Similar to the encompassing and intertwined conceptualization of the Egyptian deity Amen, who was a hidden universality, African motherhood is not localized to the kitchen or is not only enacted by women, but rather, is a collective involvement that transcends into society through practices, institutions, and interpersonal relationships.

The practice of female genital cutting is often thought of as a rite of passage to womanhood and motherhood. Through rites of passage, people undergo a series of transformative processes that will assist them in their development as human beings (Asante & Mazama, 2009). A Maatic orientation toward human beingness suggests that we do not need to undergo these transformative processes to develop as a human being but that we are already a whole human being. “There was no evolution; when a child was born into a family, he or she came into existence as a human with all the powers of humanity” (Asante & Dove, 2021, p. 173). Therefore, from this orientation, a girl does not have to be circumcised to reach womanhood; she already has a sense of empowerment that will inform her transition to womanhood. In settings where they are working to reduce the practice of female genital cutting, Amref, an organization founded by three East African doctors, has developed an alternative rite of passage model. The Amref Alternative Rites of Passage (ARP) Model “begins through structured community entry and intergenerational community dialogues with various community members including men and boys who are actively engaged in addressing norms...” (Esho, Scholten J, Conradi H, et al., 2023). The alternative rites of passage model respects the

cultural connotation behind the practice of female genital cutting while also introducing the possibility for constructive dialogue. This method was enacted by NAFGEM when they went to regions where the practice's prevalence was higher. During these trips, they would converse with all students regardless of gender, circumcisers, and ex-circumcisers to demonstrate how conversations that empower could cause a reduction in the practice. Although there is no denying the efficacy of the fieldwork done by personnel at NAFGEM through the embracing of alternative rites of passage ideologies, in the same breath, there is no reason to denigrate the humanity of the people in Tanzania, KiMaasai or otherwise, to advance as an organization.

In the description of the “Intergenerational Dialogues” that the organization works toward promoting on the website, they reproduce an us/them connotation in their description of fostering these dialogues.

FGM and child marriage are deeply rooted in the culture of the practicing communities. In their minds, it is a normal feature of everyday life in their society. NAFGEM believes that the most sustainable way of bringing about change in local communities is by working with the girls to encourage them to act as agents of change, rather than forcing change upon communities through outside sources (NAFGEM, 2024).

Connoting female genital “mutilation” and child marriage as a semblance of normalcy in the minds of people in the society casts a mentality of primitivity onto the people being described. However, the girls and women impacted by female genital cutting understand the practice to be abnormal enough to seek safety at the shelter and ultimately contact authorities when they feel they are at risk of getting cut. The young women do not have to exist in the binary of NGO-ization where their minds can only be saved from the doctrines they are taught at NAFGEM because this narrative decenters the multifaceted capacities of their humanity.

The practice of female genital cutting is heavily tied to early marriage and educational access for young girls in Tanzania. As with FGC, early marriage prevalence decreases with education and wealth (Cloward, 2016). In Tanzania, 5 percent of girls are married by age 15, and 31 percent are married by 18 (Girls Not Brides, 2024). In regard to access to education, UNICEF reports that 3.2 million aged 7-17 are out of school, of which 1.2 million have never attended (UNICEF, 2024). These educational rates in Tanzania are often correlated to a pathology of primitivity tied to the allegation that African people have no desire to learn or be educated. However, this narrative ignores how African people do not have equitable access to education due to the continued historical and economic disenfranchisement of their humanity. Additionally, the educational systems in countries throughout the African continent replicate doctrines embedded within the hierarchies of domination such as patriarchy and white supremacy. As Walter Rodney highlights, the colonial school system was not an educational system designed to give young people confidence and pride as members of African societies but one that sought to instill a sense of deference toward all that was European and capitalist (Rodney, 1972). Rodney adds that to achieve this sense of domination and exploitation of the continent, a few Africans were selected to participate. This framework applies at the NGO level, where the NGO personnel are participants in the intellectual domination and exploitation of the young women they allege to be saving because of the impact of the Pan-European Academy on their minds, leading them to perpetuate and believe narratives of primitivity.

Rosemarie Skaine discusses a woman impacted by female genital cutting, child marriage, and limited access to education in *Female Genital Mutilation: Legal, Cultural,*

*and Medical Issues.* In the chapter “The Changing Status,” which discusses the practice’s impact in Tanzania, Skaine recounts the story of a girl who experienced circumcision when she was 12 years old. After losing blood and being unconscious for three days and eventually recovering after being rushed to the hospital:

She could not be sent back to school. She was forced to marry. A dowry of twenty-eight cows was paid to her parent. She did not conceive since her marriage.

The young woman described was not able to be sent back to school due to the medical impact of the practice and the financial weight that was put on her family, prompting the decision to marry her off for a profitable dowry. Once married, the young woman’s reproductive health was still impacted by the imprint of the practice on her physical body. The snapshot of the young woman’s life indicated above provides us with the context to understand how women and girls who engage in the process are thrust into an economics of survival because they are no longer a receptacle of profit when they cannot attend school. However, these snapshots paint myopic pictures of the young women impacted by the practice in Tanzania. After Skaine’s illustration of how the young woman described was unable to conceive, we get no additional information that can provide a more human image of who the young woman described really was. The only additional information we get from Skaine is that the woman provided this statement during the Mihingo ward peer educators’ meeting and that the practice is what led to her infertility. This limited narrative goes in tandem with how NGOs, including NAFGEM, see Black women as perpetually orbiting receptacles of conception and victims of their reality. A more thorough interpretation of the woman impacted would depict what may have brought her to the Mihingo ward, why she is interested in peer education, and how she

has maintained a sense of empowerment amidst the circumstances described, but narratives about African women are often imagined without resolution.

Another myopic way that the practice of female genital cutting is imagined is as a Muslim practice, but the practice also occurs in both Muslim and Judeo-Christian countries. “The official view, then, is that female circumcision did not originate in Islam but was later accepted by it” (Hernlund & Shell-Duncan, 2007). The reality is that over millennia, female genital mutilation has occurred principally as a way to ensure the ascendancy of patriarchy (Burrage, 2016). Therefore, the association between the practice of female genital cutting and Islam is an oversimplification of the reality of the impact of Arabization and patriarchy on countries throughout the African continent. Cheikh Anta Diop (1974) mentions Arabization, which he calls Islamization, as a process indicative of the historical modification of history where princes in ancient Ghana transition from Sara to Sankole. Nah Dove and Molefi Asante continue the work of Cheikh Anta Diop on Arabization in *Being Human Being* when they explain how the basis of European and Arab beliefs imposed upon Africa was the domination of women, the color-coded ideas of superiority and inferiority, and the ethnic and religious separations (Asante & Dove, 2021, p. 24). As a means of maintaining the domination of women and the degradation of African women, female genital cutting is implicated to be a Muslim practice, but the Arabization of continental Africa has been impacted by patriarchy as a preceding hierarchy of domination.

The impact of patriarchy on Arabization is explained by Alamin M. Mazuri and Ibrahim Noor Shariff in *The Swahili: Idiom and Identity of African People*. They highlight how “only paternal ancestry qualifies one for Arab identity” (Mazuri, 1994, p.

10). Therefore, if the father is Arab, the offspring is Arab without qualification. In tune with this identification of Arab identity as inextricably woven into patriarchy, when the practice of female genital cutting is attributed to being rooted in Islam, it also is a reification of patriarchy as the first hierarchy of humanity.

The hierarchy of humanity that utilizes patriarchy as its foundational construction and has evident roots in Brahmanism reproduces intellectual hegemony. As cited by Molefi Kete Asante and Nah Dove in *Being Human Being*, when the Aryans arrived in the Indus Valley around 1800 BCE:

The black indigenous Kushites of the Indus Valley complex, known as builders of the Harappan civilization, were a matriarchal, literate people who existed and flourished for well over 1,000 years before the Aryans conquered and destroyed their civilization. Led by their war god Indra, the Aryans slaughtered the Kushite women, men, and children, whom they called *Dasa*, described in the Brahman scripture as dark and ill-favored, bull-lipped, snub-nosed worshippers of the phallus (p. 73).

Similar to the circus freak features of Sara Baartman, the skin tone, lips, and noses of the Kushites were used as a premise for their murder. In this Southern cradle of existence in Kush, which was conquered and destroyed by the Aryans, the partnership of the Kemetic Amun (Amon) and Amunet was preserved. It was not until the conquest by patriarchs like the Hyksos, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Aryans that women's roles were undermined.

Cheikh Anta Diop's work on circumcision clarifies that although the chronology of female genital cutting is often pinned to ancient Egypt or Kemet, the practice originated as a result of monotheistic thought and the inability to reconcile with the androgynous character of the Egyptian deity Amen. An Afrocentric orientation of human beingness applied to Diop's conceptualization of the practice furthers that the practice of

female genital cutting is rooted in a desire to engage in a hierarchy of domination that is inextricably linked to patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism and due to a misunderstanding of the complexity of the clitoris that is often biologically correlated to male genitalia. By rejecting the hierarchy of domination, we also reject the practice of female genital cutting because of how it disbands the agency of young women and due to its incongruence with the Kemetic character of African people. In addition to the Afrocentric critique of the practice itself, Afrocentricity serves to decipher how dowries and the practice of early marriage are also tied to the Eurocentric hierarchies of domination that see the Black woman's body as having a commodifiable price and being a receptacle for capitalist accrual. Therefore, African womanism serves as a juxtaposition to the commodification of Black women's bodies because it envisages Black women as imperative contributors to society. Similar to the misinformed chronology timeline that pins the practice to be Kemetic, the pathology of the practice as disaggregated from whiteness is also seen in how the practice is pinned to have Islamic origin, but this is also debunked because the iteration of Islam that the practice is being chronologically correlated to has already been impacted by a timeline of conquest and patriarchy. The continued mis-education about the significant impact of African people serves to keep them in perpetually alien positions where they are mutilator and mutilated.

### **Mis-Educated Mutilating Aliens**

Eurocentric formulations of history have cast African people to the margins and imagined them as alien to their own humanity. Scientific racism was critical to the chronology of alienation used to justify the subjugation and brutalization of Black bodies. African people were showcased in propagandistic environments that emphasized

freakishness, evolutionary inferiority, and bestiality; the invented fictitious histories emphasized the specimens' alien nature (Washington, 2008, p. 82). By portraying the Black body as a freakish specimen and spectacle, a pathology of oppression was reinforced to justify the subjugation of African people to inferior positionalities. Similarly, the binary of mutilator and mutilated maintains the alienation of African girls and women as strangers to their own bodies. Harriet Washington's description of Saartjie Baartman as the "Hottentot Venus" in *Medical Apartheid* serves as a poignant example of how the Black woman's body has been used as a spectacted site of otherization. Saartjie Baartman was a Khoisian woman who was paraded around as a "circus freak" and displayed for the optic of her large buttocks and elongated labia. Her body was a medical anomaly because of what her sexualized body represented to the eyes of European men. Baartman died an early death, and her body became a scattered experiment, with parts dispersed across the European continent. It was not until 2002 that Baartman's body was rightfully returned to South Africa after her skeleton and sexual organs had been on display in the Paris Museum until 1974.

The alien imagining of Black women's bodies as expendable casts them into a historicization of immobilized subjectivity. They (enslaved Black women) could bear and produce property, not possess it, circulating them outside of the configuration of how matter and bodies as matter come to mean, originate, and generate (Barber in Anderson and Jones, 2017, p. 13). The history of slavery rendered Black women marginal in the sphere of humanity, casting them into essentialized premises of 'un-matter.' Within this dualistic configuration of bodies and matter, Black women can mutilate and be mutilated, just as the rays of a UFO can mutilate a cow. In this metaphorical conceptualization, the

Black woman's body takes on the inhuman personification of both the victimized entity, that is, the cow, and the UFO, an extraterrestrial subjectifier. The UFO, as a site for subjection, echoes the conceptualization of the ship by Christina Sharpe in *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. According to Sharpe's construction, the ship becomes reminiscent of the Middle Passage and the life and humanity lost in the journey toward enslavement. Similar to the slave ship, the UFO renders those inside as aliens as they journey from one positionality to another. In defining the spaces of containment, Sharpe deconstructs the locality of the hold within the slave ship: "The hold is the slave ship hold; is the hold of the so-called migrant ship; is the womb that produces blackness" (Sharpe, 2016, p. 27). As the slave ship became a site of containment through the hold, the Black woman's womb also became a zone of domination under the pretense of confinement prompted by the journey that transpired in the slave ship. Within the space/slave ship, a space of subjecthood for that which has been rendered alien, the Black reproductive body becomes a zone of replication and modification for that which has been relegated to 'un-matter.'

The binary of mutilated/mutilator as an allusion to the alien nature of the Black body is an illustration of the propagandistic lies told about African people under the pretense of scientific racism. Both colonizer and colonized were assiduously inundated with lies, falsifications, and misrepresentations (Nehusi in Exell, 2011). Lies, falsifications, and misrepresentations told about African people made others believe that Saratije Baartman was a circus freak and makes the narratives told about the young women at NAFGEM have soundness and validity without the inquisition of context and detail. As the Western gaze is not constant but rather shifting to the tune of hierarchies of

domination, the very same features that rendered Saratije Baartman a freak are being paid for in contemporary body modification surgeries. By locating African people as complete in their humanity without any need for modification, a sense of African agency is prioritized. However, there “is a necessary and preferred image [of Afrika] which justified the conquest and underpins most European ‘aid’ to Afrika” (Nehusi in Exell, 2011). If African people across the diaspora are constantly depicted as aliens in need of saving, then their colonized development seems validated, and the intervention by NGOs appears productive. Through the centralization of African women’s agency, the detrimental impact of racial, gendered, and economic disenfranchisement can be resisted.

Aime Cesaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* identifies the impact of colonization in relegating African people from human to alien through the equation, “colonization=thingification.” The equation acts as a linguistic directive to the hypocrisy embedded in the language of colonialism:

I hear the storm. They talk to me about progress, about “achievements,” diseases cured, improved standards of living. *I* am talking about societies drained of their essence, cultures trampled underfoot, institutions undermined, lands confiscated, religions smashed, magnificent artistic creations destroyed, extraordinary *possibilities* wiped out (p. 43).

Colonialism masks itself as progress and development, but its path of violence has attempted to leave generations thingified. An Afrocentric interpretation opens the radical possibility to understand that amidst the desire to wipe out the extraordinary possibilities of African people, a Maatic humanity persisted. NGOs replicate colonial thingification through the victimized narratives they tell about young women impacted by female genital cutting and their reiteration of statistics, subtracting from the people behind the numbers whose lives are most impacted.

bell hooks describes the contact between those othered and those doing the othering as a site of imperialist nostalgia. “The desire to make contact with those bodies deemed Other, with no apparent will to dominate, assuages the guilt of the past, even takes the form of a defiant gesture where one denies accountability and historical connection” (hooks, 1992). The work done by NAFGEM is a site of imperialist nostalgia perpetuated by the Tanzanian organizational personnel. The organizational personnel appear to be invested in the best interests of the young women at the NGO, but the narratives they perpetuate position the young women in submissive positions of victimhood to fill the organization’s pockets. Additionally, the statistics and facts provided on websites such as the Human Rights Watch and World Health Organization give the appearance of truth about the reality of the practice through the consolidation of information, but the humanity of the girls and women being described is reduced into a monolithic binary of mutilator and mutilated.

Contrary to the reliance on the Western binary, Afrocentricity understands the circuitry of the human experience. “The Afrocentric writer knows that oppositional dichotomies in real, everyday experience do not exist. The speaker or writer is fully engaged in every way, not merely in ways that seem measurable” (Asante, 1998, p. 17). Writers who describe African women impacted by female genital cutting as mutilated or mutilators are reiterating a pathology of ignorance that has imagined African people as living in huts and exercising animistic spiritualities. Furthermore, seeing girls and women throughout the African continent as only victims is an advancement of narratives of scientific racism that saw Black people as having biologically smaller brains and ape-like bodies that needed saving from white colonialities of power. Not only does Afrocentricity

reject these imaginings of the Black body, but it understands the true thingifier to be hierarchies of domination such as patriarchy, colonialism, imperialism, and white supremacy.

Chinweizu Ibekwu underscores the development of the Western binary and the perpetuation of the origin of hierarchies of domination as correlative to histories of imperialism and colonialism in *The West and the Rest of Us: White predators, Black slavers, and the African elite*. As Ibekwu notes, “In the early nineteenth century, while completing their conquest of India, the British began and led the assault by the industrial nationalism of Europe upon Africa, and upon those parts of Asia to the east and west on India which they called, from their Eurocentric geography of the world, the Middle East and the Far East” (Ibekwu, 1975, p. 11). Locating the binary of the West and the rest of us as rooted in the assault of Europe on Africa points the finger to the real thingifier. The young women in Tanzania who are depicted in victimized ways are in spheres of poverty because of the impact of histories of patriarchy, racism, neoliberal capitalism, and other hierarchies of domination. The NGO cannot save the young women in Tanzania because they are a part of the system responsible for the need for salvation. By disseminating images like those featured on the Human Rights Watch and NAFGEM website, people in the West become distracted by the sensationalist optic of the picture, and they forget the systems and histories that have left the young women dislocated.

The binary between mutilator and mutilated falls even flatter when the women who are considered mutilators are further contextualized by their politics of survival. Within the hierarchy of domination, the women performing the circumcision are engaging in an act of survival in a neoliberal economy. When an elderly Sereer woman

was asked about the banning of the practice in Senegal, she described how “everyone wanted to be a circumciser because of the money” (Shell-Duncan, et al., 2013). To survive in an economy of domination that has financially cast African women in its margins, circumcision becomes an avenue for capitalist gain. This was further evidenced by the anti-cutting efforts I discussed with organizational personnel while conducting my fieldwork at NAFGEM in 2019. As a part of the organizational outreach, NAFGEM took part in the opening ceremony for the installation of a milling machine—to process beans and corn—in Simanjaro, a location where female genital cutting is practiced at an elevated frequency. The milling machine was being installed in the area to provide ex-circumcisers with a financial opportunity beyond circumcision. The installation of the milling machine illustrates how the act of circumcision is not rooted in pathological savagery but instead is rooted in hermeneutics of survival. From this vantage point, the true mutilators are the Western entities who have extracted the vast wealth of resources from the African people they allege to be saving.

In addition to addressing the socioeconomic disempowerment of Tanzanian girls and women, education is another significant facet of the work done at NAFGEM. As they cite on their website, “Through the support of NAFGEM’s donors, there are currently 50 girls attending primary and secondary school or undertaking some form of vocational training” (NAFGEM, 2017). NAFGEM is adamant about presenting the young women as advancing from the dissidence of their indigeneity through education. The numerical representation of the young women receiving an education is an enunciation to NAFGEM’s funders that they are worth the capitalist investment. However, when one digs deeper and analyzes the type of schools that the young women go to in the area, it is

often Catholic schools that reiterate the white savior industrial complex and situate the young women further into a warp of coloniality.

At NAFGEM, by sending the young women to Catholic boarding schools, they are simulating a severance of indigenous self for advancement in a neoliberal capitalist environment— to the further the young women are away from their Maasai selves, the closer they are to financial liberation. The young women are being sold a dream rooted in patriarchy and white supremacy by an organization whose roots are soiled by the system that led to their marginalization. Many of the young women who are sent to boarding schools do not progress onward to college because of continued financial and social barriers that the organization cannot mend. Oftentimes, the young women whose education NAFGEM sponsors return to their communities to speak out against the practice of female genital cutting. Although this sense of voice and advocacy is important, the ways that the young women become cycled back into their communities to advance the organization’s agenda demonstrates how the NGO’s work is merely a Band-Aid to larger socioeconomic issues. If in addition to the mitigation of the practice, colonialism’s historical culpability in the economic disempowerment of Tanzanian people was also acknowledged, then the systems that perpetuate the young women’s disempowerment have the potential to be fully dismantled.

The boarding schools the young women are sent to in Tanzania are ideological conveyor belts of Eurocentric ideologies. Mwalimu Shujaa describes, in “Education and Schooling: You Can Have One Without the Other,” how schooling is a process intended to perpetuate and maintain the society’s existing power relations and the institutional structures that support those arrangements (Shujaa in Mazama, 2003, p. 246). In the

young women's schooling in Tanzania, they are learning about Catholicism and a Jesus that will save them, rather than systems of coloniality that have caused an NGO to have to intervene on their behalf. The Christianization of the young women in the Catholic boarding school is an attempt to not only distance them from the practice of female genital cutting but also their sense of indigeneity for mobility in Pan-European academic institutions.

Distancing the young women from their indigeneity is rooted in a desire to suppress their resistance to neoliberal and colonial infrastructures. Dorothy Hodgson describes the resistance rooted in indigeneity in *Being Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World*:

Many indigenous groups are demanding rights that extend beyond their territorial resources. These demands hinge on the right to self-determination and include the right to determine their own development and to control and protect their cultural knowledge and performances, material remains, languages, indigenous knowledge, and biogenetic material (p. 7).

The work that NAFGEM and their Western funders seek to do is also a mechanism to separate KiMaasai people as far away from their sense of self-determination as possible. If the KiMaasai people in Tanzania are only captured in statistics that see them as propagators of patriarchy, animistic spiritualists, and mutilators, then their desire for the sovereignty of land and humanity will sound more like demonic gibberish. An Afrocentric orientation that centers the circuitry of KiMaasai humanity illustrates that the characteristics that the West demonizes about Tanzanian people are their true salvation.

The manipulation of language acts as an apparatus for the demonization of African people across the continent. Ngugi wa Thiongo describes how language operationalized a Eurocentric coloniality of power in Kenya. "Any achievement in

spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prizes, prestige, applause; the ticket to higher realms” (wa Thiongo, 1986, p. 12). The prioritization of English in wa Thiongo’s classes in Kenya in 1987 parallels the classes I saw in Tanzania in 2019. On a sheet of paper taped to one of the boarding school’s walls (Illustration 1, featured on the following page) was the phrase “Speak English” in red and blue block letters, and on the chalkboard of one of the classrooms I entered were the lyrics to the nursery rhyme “Row Row Your Boat” (Illustration 2, featured on the following page). However, the reality for many of the Tanzania children who were attending this boarding school was different—there was no boat to be rowed because of the prolonged periods of drought occurring due to climate change, illustrating the counterintuitive imprint of Eurocentric education.

Nah Dove illuminates the imprint that Eurocentric schooling has had on African children throughout the diaspora in *The Afrocentric School*. The Euro-Arabic schooling of people has been critical to maintaining power over the spiritual, psychological, political, social, and economic development of Africa and her diaspora across the world (Dove, 2021, p. 9). By sending the young women at NAFGEM to boarding schools that are Catholic and Euro-centered, hierarchies of domination rooted in histories of colonization and Arabization are perpetuated, dislocating the young women further from their indigenous sense of agency. In *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney describes the role Christian missionaries played in sustaining hierarchies of domination. As purveyors of the church, “they often took up the role of arbiter of what was culturally correct...African ancestral beliefs were equated with the devil (who was black anyway) ...” (Rodney, 1972). To diminish the profound contributions of African people from

Kemet and beyond, Christianization painted African spiritualities as a dissident and evil belief system. Illustrating African indigeneity as akin to the work of the devil was the precedent for mutilating discourses that paint African women as alien and in need of rescuing from their otherness.



Illustration 1. Speak English.

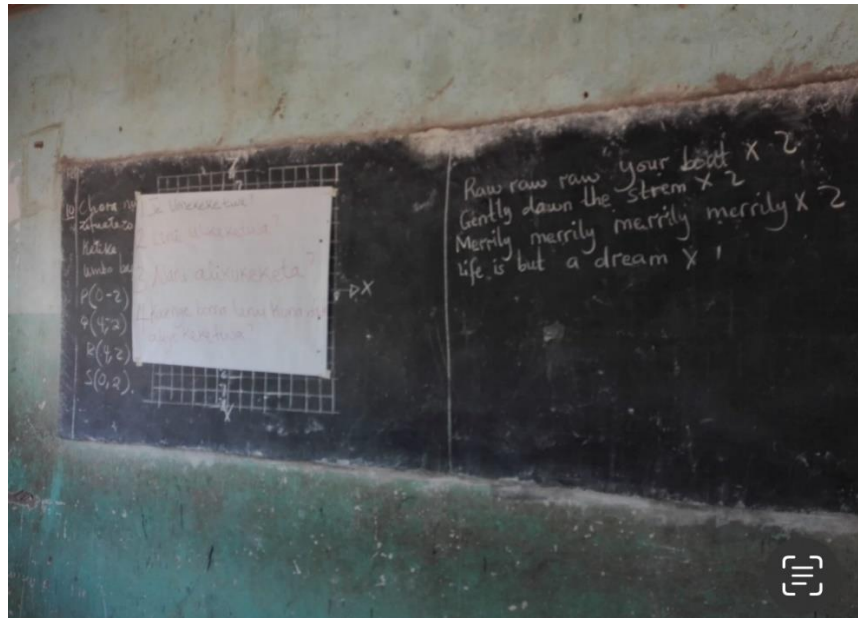


Illustration 2. Row, Row, Row Your Boat.

Carter G. Woodson discusses the impact of Eurocentric schooling in *The Miseducation of the Negro*. In describing the educational system, he notes, “To handicap a student by teaching him that his black face is a curse and that his struggle to change his condition is hopeless is the worst sort of lynching” (Woodson, 1933, p. 3). When the young women in their boarding schools are being taught that they can “row a boat,” to “Speak English,” or that a proverbial white Jesus will save them from their condition, they are being ideologically mutilated. Afrocentricity serves to center the young women in a way that sees them as whole without all of the Eurocentric additives that attempt to inform axes for humanity. The Sankofa return to self and language is a disentanglement from the suggestion that the English language and Westernism will save the African continent and, instead, an embodiment toward the human self that has been whole all along.

## **Locating the Multi-Faceted Industrial Complexes**

The depiction of Black girls and women as alien, mutilated, and miseducated is resonant with the ideological conveyor belt of the white savior industrial complex. Teju Cole constructed the notion of a white savior industrial complex as a response to the Kony 2012 campaign, which depicted African people in the Congo as helpless to the unforeseeable fate of child soldiers and gun violence. He cites that “The White Savior Industrial Complex is a valve for releasing the unbearable pressures that build in a system built on pillage” (Cole, 2012). The white savior industrial complex is embedded in the very fabric of NAFGEM. However, rather than the people operating the complex being white, they are Tanzanian people— acting as co-conspirators to release the valve pressure of the white guilt caused by the ramifications of global white supremacy. The personnel of the organization have also indoctrinated the young women at the organization with white savior ideologies to fulfill their capitalist agenda. During my recent visit in 2022 to the NGO, after one of the young women found masks in my backpack, she emphatically stated that she did not believe in masking because “Jesus would save her [from COVID],” holding tight to her rosary beads as she made this declaration. The young women have attended boarding schools that have led them to diverge from their indigenous selves and believe that a white Jesus will save them, but this detracts from the culpability that the West and the white supremacy industrial complex have had in their disenfranchisement.

Kathryn Mathers expands Teju Cole’s ideologies surrounding the white savior complex in *White saviorism and popular culture: imagined Africa as a space for American salvation* where she deconstructs the tension that transpires in light of the

alleged saving. “The White Savior Complex is at once penetrative and extractive— sending young Westerners into sites of supposed suffering so that they can earn moral, professional, and sentimental capital” (Mathers, 2022, p. 35). This was certainly the case with Cornell’s ties to NAFGEM— I was sent to the NGO with a group of young professionals to build a case study and intern at a “local” organization. The culmination of our experiences would be an instructive experience to include on our resumes; however, the ethics of it all was Western-centered. As a poor Black student who had never been abroad, I was happy to even be considered for a fully funded trip with scholarships and included excursions to Arusha National Park and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. I returned with a reckoning that did not congeal until some years later— in the process of perpetuating a white savior industrial complex as a student, I was also attempting to be saved by the financial mobility of the university industrial complex, but just like the young women at NAFGEM, the Ivory Tower of Cornell was in no position to do any saving.

The university industrial complex, similar to the white savior industrial complex, is the notion that “higher education institutions are turning to a funding, operating, and managing model that resembles the pervasive capitalistic model surrounding them” (Reynold-Cullar, et al., 2022). In the case of Cornell and many other private institutions like it, poor Black students are seeds of state and federal funding to the institutions. For the Global Health opportunity that led to my introduction to NAFGEM, I received almost \$26,000 in scholarships for a trip that cost about \$10,000, ultimately having to give some money back. There was monetary incentivization and support within the university industrial complex to travel abroad to perpetuate Westernization and do “good work.”

The day I began my work at NAFGEM as an intern with Cornell's Global Health program in 2017, I remember seeing the program director slipping the organizational executive Tanzanian shillings. The money exchange was indicative of my embodiment as a capitalistic fixture within the organization.

While at NAFGEM conducting the interviews for my Master's thesis, the social worker for the organization acted as the translator for the interviews. The field of social work is an extension of the Pan-European Academy, as evidenced by the embodied role the social worker played in the interviews. The National Association of Social Workers defines social work as:

A profession for those with a strong desire to help improve people's lives. Social workers assist people by helping them cope with issues in their daily lives, deal with their relationships, and solve personal and family problems (NASW, 2024).

The social worker at the organization, although Tanzanian, is oriented with the social work approach through her interactions with the young women at NAFGEM. She is approaching the young women with the intention of improvement, which is indicative of the white savior complex because of the implication that the young women's lives need refining to begin with. The social work national framework that presupposes that people need to "cope" with their daily lives already posits them in positions of victimhood, suggesting that they are not resilient enough to reconcile with their realities, which would be discontinuous with the girls I interacted with while at NAFGEM. The social work framework that the social worker at NAFGEM embodied echoes the organizational ideologies that the girls inherently have "personal and family problems" because of their family's involvement with their circumcision or marriage. However, these approaches to understanding the practice and the humans involved are often myopic because they

advance a pathology of primitivity and do not acknowledge the actual problem to be hierarchies of domination such as patriarchy, white supremacy, and capitalism that have left Tanzanian girls and women on the margins.

Social work as a discipline reiterates the Eurocentric line of reasoning.

“Eurocentric writers have always positioned Africa in the interior place with regards to every subject field” (Asante, 2007, p. 44). Social work as a field is no different, even if the practitioners of the field are African people themselves. When enacting a polity of improvement, coping, and problem-solving, the underlying assumption is that the people involved exist in lack, of decrepit circumstances, and are suffocated by their problems. Global Health, the intellectual framework that I held when I went to Tanzania in 2017, also subscribes to Eurocentric tenets, which implicated how I interacted with NAFGEM initially and predicated future interactions. The Cornell University Division of Nutritional Sciences defines Global Health as “research, service, and training that addresses health problems that transcend national boundaries and disproportionately affect the resource-poor” (Cornell University Division of Nutritional Resources, 2024). Based on this definition, the people in Tanzania with whom the program collaborates are inherently afflicted by health problems and are resource-poor, which the institution hopes to play a role in amending through their orientation toward research and service. Under this pretense, the young women seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM have no scope or empowerment to escape their mutilation, poverty, and alien subjectivity.

In addition to Global Health’s disciplinary orientation toward research, service, and training, they are also in correspondence with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The goals developed by the United Nations, which they hope to achieve by

2030, include “No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and Partnership for the Goals” (United Nations, 2024). These goals are a cloudy dream when one considers how, to achieve these goals, the world would also need to confront its history of racism, sexism, ableism, environmental degradation, and all hierarchies of domination. However, the very institution that developed these goals, the United Nations, developed on the backbone of hierarchies of domination during the aftermath of WWII. Therefore, this organization, being the curator of development goals, is coated in rhetorical hypocrisy that is reminiscent of the work of scholars such as Walter Rodney and Aime Cesaire, who dismiss the binary of developed and developing as counterintuitive to the histories of imperialism, colonialism, and disenfranchisement enacted by those labeled as developed.

The NGO industrial complex also perpetuates the binary of developed and developing in resonance with neoliberal capitalism. Jude L. Fernando discusses the NGO industrial complex in *The Political Economy of NGOs: State Formation in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh*. He describes how:

NGOs are less an “anti-politics machine” and more a neoliberal political machine. In practice, the post-development school is complicit in the spatial division, fragmentation, and localization of social dissent. In that respect, it helps to perpetuate the type of governmentality that capitalism requires for its reproduction (p. 278).

The NGO industrial complex includes the curation of narratives that are complicit in perpetuating spheres of governmentality that portray young women in Tanzania as victims and in need. Therefore, there is nothing non-governmental about NGOs: their role is more inter and intragovernmental due to its state connectivity to the neoliberal politic.

The notion of industrial complexes became popularized in media circuits due to the prison industrial complex referring to the state's ties to mass incarceration. The Critical Resistance Organization describes the prison industrial complex as a term "used to describe the overlapping interests of government and industry that use surveillance, policing, and imprisonment as solutions to economic, social, and political problems" (Critical Resistance, 2024). The prison industrial complex, like the NGO industrial complex, university industrial complex, and white savior industrial complex, are inextricably linked to neoliberalism and rhetorical body politics. Prisons are an industry intended to surveil and police the Black body to be a commodity for capitalistic production. Similarly, NGOs curate and formulate narratives about humans for organizational profit. Universities also prioritize the accrual of tuition over the daily lives of their students. The white savior complex is also underscored as a means of saving Black bodies from pathologies of violence and primitivity when the industrial complex itself should be adequately addressed and critiqued. The Afrocentric theoretical prioritization of African agency, nommo as word magic, and the Bantu notion of ubuntu serve as a praxis of resistance from these varied industrial complexes and act as a mechanism to humanize the people commodified.

## **Agency, Nommo, Ubuntu, and Being Human Beingness**

Agency, nommo, ubuntu, and being human beingness are Afrocentric ideological orientations that center the humanity of the girls and women impacted by female genital cutting. Agency itself is the ability to provide the psychological and cultural resources necessary for the advancement of human freedom (Asante, 2007, p. 40). In the case of the young women in Tanzania, an Afrocentric sense of agency eliminates the need for the NGO to intervene to ensure that the young women have psychological and cultural resources. Instead, when the young women are centered in a Maatic sense of agency, they can define their humanity for themselves. Although the young women have been implicated by hierarchies of domination such as racism, sexism, ageism, etc., they have enriching interpretations of their humanity. By deconstructing the stories that were sold to me while doing my fieldwork in 2019 with an Afrocentric lens, the NGO's complicity with maintaining hierarchies of humanity is unraveled to uncover the radical possibility in the word magic of the young women at NAFGEM.

Molefi Kete Asante defines nommo as an oratorical tactic of the black speaker passed down from the ancestors. "Nommo, word magic, is the generation and transformation of sounds that contribute to a speaker's power" (Asante, 1998, p. 60). Using this as an ideological praxis for the young women in Tanzania highlights how the words they say are magical because of their ability to ascribe meaning to the world around them. This is the magic that the NGO is afraid of: If the young women can define themselves, their reality, and their surroundings from an axis of indigeneity, then the need for neoliberal intervention dissolves. The young women's knowing of themselves

transcends beyond the disharmony ascribed to the young women by NAFGEM, their boarding schools, and the Human Rights Watch website.

Ubuntu, as an Afrocentric frame of reference, similar to the rhetorical implications of *nommo*, rejects the linear thinking of Eurocentricity and centers the circuitous ways of knowing of our Kemetic ancestors. Ubuntu is a multidimensional concept that represents the core values of African ontologies: respect for any human being, for dignity and for human life, collective sharedness, obedience, humility, solidarity, caring, hospitality, interdependence, communalism, to list but a few (Kamwangamalu in Asante, Miike, and Yin, 2013, p. 227). The ubuntu way of knowing is a contradiction to white supremacist and capitalistic ways of existence that operate on a duplicitous axis. When female genital cutting and the girls and women impacted are reimagined through an ubuntu praxis, their bodily autonomy is respected, and there remains the possibility for interconnectedness within the community without the need for circumcision to reinforce the gendered binary that propagates a historical hierarchy of domination.

The Kemetic idea of *Ma'at* forms the theoretical foundation for human beingness. “Maaticity is a philosophical posture emphasizing the optimum benefits of the ancient idea of *Ma'at* where truth, righteousness, justice, harmony, order, balance, and reciprocity serve as components of being human beings” (Asante & Dove, 2021, p. 9). Seeing the young women through a Maatic eye acts as an antithesis to the NGO discourse that has envisaged the young women as merely susceptible to female genital mutilation and child marriage. The young women, in their indigenous existence, are receptacles of truth, righteousness, justice, harmony, order, balance, and reciprocity in congruence with

their ancestors. Hierarchies of domination funneled through the work of NAFGEM created optimal degrees of separation between the young women and their indigeneity so that their human beingness is contingent upon their complicity to the NGO's neoliberal agenda. However, when the Tanzanian young women were born into this world, they were already complete humans as they were; they did not need to be circumcised to advance to a new level of humanity.

A Maatic posture centers the importance of truth, realness, and reality, which juxtaposes the lies perpetuated by NGOs such as NAFGEM. Theophile Obenga underscores how Maat means that “which is genuine and authentic as opposed to artificial or spurious... the totality of all things possessing actuality, existence, or essence...” (Obenga, 2004, p. 47). By framing the young women at NAFGEM using an (auto)-Afronographic methodology and with a Maatic posture, their word magic emerges as a means of highlighting the existence of their authentic selves across time-space continuums. Chronologically situating Maat as a Kemetic ideology also brings to the forefront how Kemet has exemplified African agency. “The real history of Kemet in particular and of Afrika in general, amounts to an eloquent and profound refutation of myths of oppression” (Nehusi in Exell, 2011). Centering the Kemetic philosophy of Maat undermines the ways that African people have been portrayed as in need of civilizing because a profound understanding of human beingness existed in Kemet hundreds of thousands of years before the European civilizations of Greece and Rome. Molefi Kete Asante presents an honest chronology of civilization in *The History of Africa: The Quest for Eternal Harmony*. In the appendix, he utilizes 10,000 BCE as a time when people arrived in the Nile Valley and introduced ideas of using wild grasses for food, and new

religions as well as clan deities (Asante, 2007, p. 356). By returning to Maatic sensibilities as the optic through which the young women at NAFGEM are envisaged, the young women become phenomenologically centered in the Kemetic history of truth, order, and harmony.

When African people know their ability to be agents of change because of their Kemetic roots, it can be rendered dangerous because of its potential to dismantle Eurocentric matrices of domination. Kemet is an example of outstanding Afrikan agency, humanity, and achievement rendered dangerous to the perpetrators of global domination and oppression because it is a dramatic illustration of the falsity of those inaccurate and demeaning notions of Afrika and Afrikans so necessary for the existing world order (Nehusi, 2011). When a Kemetic orientation is centered as a praxis of humanity, then stories about African girls and women being mutilators and mutilated in need of civilizing from their primitive ways become null because of the ways that Kemet has given humanity its humanity. The African notions of agency, nommo, ubuntu, and being human beingness center on the ideology that African people do not have to lean on Eurocentric ideologies to be considered human and agents of their own destiny; the mere implication of this is an act of Europeanization that centers patriarchy and white supremacy as the predeterminers for humanity. The circuitry of thought of ubuntu and nommo informs us that our ancestors had the keys to the production of intellectual magic in their Kemetic past through their sense of collectivity and interconnectedness with one another. The Maatic notion of being human beingness is a rejection of all hierarchies of domination because it implies that one does not have to do or produce as neoliberal

capitalism and Eurocentricity implicate, but rather, one's human existence opens the pathway for radical possibilities.

## **Conclusion**

Cheikh Anta Diop's deconstruction of the practice of female genital cutting in the context of Kemet unravels the work and rhetoric of authors such as Elizabeth Heger Boyle, who cites the practice as having an Egyptian origin. The attribution of the practice to an African origin attempts to localize a pathology of primitivity on African people and disregards how Kemet had already been impacted by Europeanization embedded within the Northern Cradle, prompting the archaic desire to circumcise in correspondence with a gendered understanding of humanity. The Maatic prioritization of Amen and the gendered fluidity that they embody dispels the necessity for the practice of circumcision. The omniscient presence of Amen was seen as alien to the linear binary of body/mind that is upheld by the pretense of Eurocentricity. To reconcile with the alienness of Amen, circumcision was seen as a differentiating practice. However, the actual alien presence was the intervention of gendered patriarchy in the lives of African people. By creating circuits of confusion by instilling in African people across the diaspora that they are the alien who needs saving and civilizing from their savagery and primitivity, the puppeteer behind the neoliberal curtain remains hidden.

Uncovering the neoliberal curtain reveals multiwoven industrial complexes that are upkeeping the neoliberal puppet show of the Pan-European Academy. The white savior industrial complex is the machinery that seeks to save the young women from their presupposed pathology of mutilation. The university industrial complex provides the intellectual frameworks such as Global Health and Social work that explain why the

young women need saving. The NGO industrial complex circulates the narratives formulated in the university industrial complex to be fact as a means of accruing money for their organizational interests. The untangling of all of the industrial complexes revealed that I also had a thread of each industrial complex tethered to me. I was situated within the Pan-European Academy each time I went to Tanzania, as an undergraduate student in Cornell's Global Health program in 2017 and as a Master's student at Syracuse University in 2019 conducting fieldwork. The Global Health program itself was engaging in white savior complex orientations through its implication that the countries students were going to were resource-poor and had health problems that could be addressed through research, service, and training. While at the NGO, NAFGEM attempted to embody the resource-poor narrative by ensuring that the young women were portrayed as in need of saving from mutilation and bettered by the NGO interventions. Through the Afrocentric framework of the Africology and African American Studies program at Temple University, I have been able to untether myself and the girls from these multifaceted complexes and Pan-European academy through the evocation of nommo.

## CHAPTER 2

### Introduction

In order to reconcile with the cognitive dissonance caused by the pictures featured on the Human Rights Watch website, I returned to Tanzania in the summer of 2019 to conduct interviews for my Master's thesis. The initial hope of the interview was to answer the following research questions: (1) Why do NGOs continue to utilize numerical statistics rather than tell the narratives of young women affected by female genital cutting in Tanzania? (1a) How do these numbers silence girls and women impacted by female genital cutting? (1b) How does telling the personal stories of young women impacted by FGC further capture their humanity? To answer these questions, I interviewed a sample of ten young women who were seeking safe shelter at the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation's (NAFGEM's) headquarters, with the social worker present acting as a translator. I asked the young women the following questions: (1) Tell me about yourself. (2) What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not? (3) What do you like to do for fun? (4) Why do you consider these activities fun? (5) What foods do you like to eat or cook? (6) Tell me about what made you come to the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (NAFGEM). (7) How has your experience been at NAFGEM? (8) Who do you consider a source of safety or trust at NAFGEM, and why? (9) How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?

Upon my return to America and the preliminary transcriptions of my findings based primarily on the translations the translator fed me in the recordings, the data looked consistent across all ten young women I had interviewed. After acknowledging this consistency and with consultation with my Master's thesis advisor, I realized that the

translator had intervened during the interviews and convoluted the young women's responses. The translator and her convolution then became the focal point for my Master's thesis findings, transforming the research questions to be (1) How have narratives about black girls affected by female genital cutting been told sociohistorically? (1a) In what ways do these narrative formulations produce monolithic understandings about both black girls and the practice of female genital cutting? (1b) How are NGO's neoliberal agendas reproduced when the young women's stories become lost in translation?

In this chapter, I will discuss my interview findings as they were presented in my Master's thesis. However, due to the more comprehensive Swahili-English translations that were done for my dissertation fieldwork, they will be more detailed and evocative of what was said by the social worker acting as translator. Additionally, I will summarize the frameworks that I utilized in my Master's thesis research and the ways that it identified me as an outsider-within and the translator as an insider-without. The utilization of an Afrocentric framework for my dissertation project will illuminate the connectivity between the NGO industrial complex, white savior industrial complex, and university industrial complex and how it implicated the words of the translator and the stories she attempted to tell about the young women impacted by female genital cutting, similar to the Europeanized rhetoric featured on the Human Rights Watch website.

### **Lost in Translation Revisited: Unpacking the Monolithic Narratives of Girls Impacted by Female Genital Cutting**

My findings based on the theoretical axis of my Master's thesis entitled, "Lost in Translation: Unpacking the Monolithic Narratives of Girls Impacted by Female Genital Cutting," revealed how the social worker, who acted as translator, added terminological

additives to probe the young women being interviewed with specific responses that shone a white savior light on the organization. For example, I highlight how, in the first interview, the young woman says in Swahili, when telling me about herself, “And in the morning I go to school (*Na asubuhi tuende shule*).” However, the social worker adds in her translation, “She will study until the road stops for education.” By constructing this extensive metaphor to be the young woman’s response, she is attempting to advance the organization’s white savior agenda that the young woman’s sense of self is correlated to their ability to have access to education. Similarly, for the question asking, “What foods do you like to eat or cook?” instead of allowing the young woman’s responses to be in tune with the simplicity of their truth, she probed for add-ons. In response to the question, one of the young women replied, “Ugali and fish.” Rather than allowing this to be the fullness of their response, the interview asks, “Fish na nini? (Fish and what else?)” underscoring that her response was not enough and suggesting that her response should be more indicative of a new and refined palette since coming to NAFGEM.

In addition to the suggestion of a refined palette due to the young woman’s time at NAFGEM, the social worker also uses demands throughout the interviews that pace its direction and prompt responses to questions. For example, she tells the young women, “*Endelea* (Move on)” and “*Niongezee kitu hapo* (You can add something more)” during the interviews, implying that the interviews had to go at a certain pace and that the young women’s responses had to be complete in a way that sufficed for her and ultimately the organization. In this way, the social worker, although a Tanzanian woman herself, acts as a vessel of European epistemological ideologies rooted in Diop’s Northern Cradle, crafting the young women’s narratives in a manner that is correspondent with patriarchal

and white supremacist belief systems. Anibal Quijano describes European epistemological ideologies as one of the results of a history of colonial power: a new racial identity, colonial and negative, involving the plundering of one's place in the history of the cultural production of humanity (Quijano, 2000). This myth of humanity is one that the social worker of NAFGEM has been indoctrinated by; in order for her to complete the white savior work of the organization, the young women have to be in perpetually primitive and inferior positions where they need saving from mutilation.

In my Master's thesis, I noticed how specific questions during the interviews prompted enhanced convolution by the social worker acting as translator. For example, the question asking about the young women's experience at NAFGEM was framed completely differently by the translator. Instead of asking the broadly framed question, "Whom do you consider a source of safety or trust at NAFGEM and why?" she asks, "*Nani ambaye NAFGEM ata kulinda?*(Who in NAFGEM will protect you?)." Asking the young women, "Who will protect you?" leaves no room for the young women to convey whether they are protected and contains the precedent that they are already being protected from their presupposed primitivity, and they should be able to identify who that source of protection is in the organization. Similarly, in reference to asking the young women what they like to do for fun, the interview inserts that their sense of gratification is tied to their education about female genital cutting. When one of the young women states that she likes to teach people about different issues in the community during her free time, the social worker inserts the question, "Why do you like to teach about FGM and pregnancy at a young age (among girls)? (*Kwanini unapenda kuelimisha kuhusu ukeketaji na mimba za utotoni?*)."

woman is attempting to describe what she likes to do for fun, the social worker acting as translator is suggesting that the broadness of the young woman's response was not enough and can only become substantial when it aligned with the specificity of the organization. The affinity to transform the broadness of the young women's responses to specific aligns with the operationalization of white supremacy, which endeavors to protect white advantage by teaching that what is white is universal and that what is Black or African is specific and cannot be human (Asante, 2007, p. 80). By modifying the broadness of the young women's response to be specifically in tune with the organization's message, the young woman's humanity is predicated on the axis of the organization's agenda.

During the interviews, the social worker always inserted interjections to ensure that the organization was depicted in a manner that implicated them as having transformed the young women's lives. In response to the question "How has NAFGEM changed your future, if, at all?" which is posed in a convoluted way, the social worker acting as translator states, "Mention all the things you are given, school fees, clothes, and other items... (*Sema vitu vyote unavyopewa, Ada ya shule, nguo na vingine*), rather than asking the question as intended, "*Je umekuwaje uzoefu wako katika Kituo cha NAFGEM?*" Under the construction posed during the interview, the young women's lives must have changed because of the material items that they are being granted by NAFGEM. In another interview, in response to the same question, which the social worker asked as, "What difference do you see when you here at NAFGEM? What things do you get here or what do you like, compared with home? For example, at home, what could have happened if you had not come here yet? Like until now, you were not enrolled

in school? (*Kuna tofauti gani ukiwa hapa, ni kitu gani unakipata ukiwa hapa, au unafurahia nini ukiwa hapa ukilinganisha na kule nyumabani? Kwa mfano ungekuwa kule nyumabni sasa hivi hujaja huku, ninikinge tokea na sasa hivi uko huku?nin kingekuwa kina endela kule nyumabni, hujapelekwa shule wala nini?")* This is indicative of the perpetuation of the Northern Cradle epistemologies by the organization, implying before the young woman interviewed could appropriately generate a response that she would not be enrolled in school without the intervention of the white savior. In response to this question posed in an affirmative manner, a part of the young woman's response was, "I have changed a lot... (*na pia mabdiliko ya nyumbani...*)." The social worker probes, "What changes?... like ignorance about things..." (*Yapi hayo?... yale ya ujinga...*) The ignorance about things that the social worker is implying during her convolution of the interview aligns with the organization's agenda featured on the website, that they provide the young women with education as a response to the primitive education that they must have received in their indigenous community prior to the intervention of the NGO.

Under the header "What We Do" on NAFGEM's website and the subheader "Promoting Girls' Education," the organization describes:

The most effective and sustainable way to ensure change among communities that practice FGM is through the proper education of girls. Unfortunately, girls' education is regarded by many families and community members as unimportant and as a poor use of limited resources. NAFGEM is helping to change this mentality by helping girls, who have run away from FGM and child marriage, receive an education. Through the support of NAFGEM's donors, there are currently 50 girls attending primary and secondary school or undertaking some form of vocational training. Over the next few years, NAFGEM aims to expand this program by acquiring additional resources to be able to support and change the lives of over a hundred women and their future families (NAFGEM, 2024).

The information featured on the website operates from a Eurocentric frame of reference to imply that the organization is causing change in the young women's lives. Rather than contextually discussing how hierarchies of domination such as racism and capitalism have positioned the young women at NAFGEM to not have sufficient access to education due to financial barriers, education is posed as something that is not desired and worthwhile for the families. NAFGEM positions themselves as a white savior by claiming that they are saving the young women and their families from their primitive mentalities when the reality is that they are providing the young women with an education due to the history of colonialism that extracted from Tanzanian communities, to begin with. The white savior industrial complex, iterative of Northern Cradle epistemologies of colonialism, relies on African people to be the enactors and interlocutors of the complex while they still remain the ultimate epistemological beneficiaries.

The social worker acting as translator embodies the enactment of the white savior complex through her enhanced convolution of the question, "Whom do you consider a source of safety or trust at NAFGEM and why?" Similar to her inaccurate posing of previous questions, she asks this question as, "Who in NAFGEM will protect you? Who will you tell them your things? Who will protect you, and do you trust them, anybody, and why? (*Nani ambaye NAFGEM ata kulinda, ambaye utamwambia kitu chako ambaye atakulinda na unamwamini, mtu yoyote na kwa nini?*)" These questions are asked in a declarative manner, suggesting that the young women must feel protected by NAFGEM because of the "things" that they can do for them. These "things" that are valued in Northern Cradle epistemologies concretizes the reversal of the colonial and neoliberal gaze discussed by Aime Cesaire and asserts that the translator and the donors of the

organization are the true people who have been thingified by their enactment of extraction.

When the tenets of the organization appear in concrete ways in the young women's responses in English, it becomes clearer that the social worker has posed the question wrong and has centered the organization's agenda. In response to the final question of the interview that asks, "How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?" which the translator asks as, "What do you wish in that community you lived in that wanted to marry you off, you wish they knew what type of person you are, and what they wanted to do to you... it is not justice... what do you wish one day they know about you? (*Nini unatamani kwenye ile jamii ilikuwa kuwa inataka kukuoza, unatamani ijue wewe ni mtu wa namna gani, na walivyotaka kukufanyia vile, siko haki yako kukufanyia vile, nini unatamani siku moja waje waje?*)" Similar to the other questions, the social worker acting as translator defines the question for the young women responding before it can be answered. In alignment with the organization's rhetoric, the young women exist in an us versus them binary, so she is from "that community" that wanted to "marry her off" and is riddled by her community's discrepancies. In response to the question posed in this manner, the young woman states, "I want to study so hard, so they can know and see that I am educated so that they should not force them [young women] to get married or mutilate them (*Nataka nisome kwa bidii, ilie waje waone nimesoma, ili wasilzimishe watoto wa kike kuolewa, au kukeketwa*)." The young woman believes that by studying hard and ascending through educational spheres like the organization desires from her, she will be worthy and not be married off or experience circumcision.

There were moments in the interview where the young women understood the question being asked in English, so the social worker acting as translator could not convolute or interject. For example, when asked, “What do you like to do for fun?” the young woman replied in English, “To act like a teacher and play football (soccer). To help my mom and to help my fellow people because I am kind...” When it came to questions that asked the young women about who they were, the translator could not convolute because their sense of human beingness took precedence. The young women’s explanation of self was consistent with the young women whom I met while I spent my time there in the summer of 2022: they had a sense of communalism among themselves. They did not hesitate to collaborate when it came time to cook meals and complete the homework that they were assigned by their boarding schools.

The questions being asked by the social worker who acted as the translator were not only attuned to the agenda of the organization but also sensationalist in attempting to provoke a Europeanized epistemology. Rather than asking the question appropriately, “How has your experience been here at NAFGEM?” she asked, “So tell me, question seven we skipped it, what difference have you seen between living at your auntie’s place, she would have taken you to husband, you could be having how many kids? Or any other issues that are happening in your community, and now with what is going on, start with your community. (*Haya nataka unambie, la saba tuliruka, ni tofauti gani, ilyopo sasa, ungekuwa kule yule shangazi yako sasa kasha kupeleka kwa mume wako, ungekuwa na watoto wangapi, au nini kinge kuwa kinaendlea kule kwenye jamii yako, na hapa sasa hivi nini kinaendelea, anza na kwenye jamii?*) Not only does the social worker adamantly change the meaning of the question to be about the deficiencies at her auntie’s home and

in her community, but she probes for an exaggerative response from the young woman by asking how many children the young woman would have had by now— not allowing for the possibility of her zero to no kids. In a question posed in a similar manner to an additional interviewee, the young woman submits to the probing by the social worker by answering, “When I am here, I am free, but when I am at home, I am not free...” The young woman’s sense of indigeneity is associated with child marriage, teen pregnancy, and lack, which is not a comprehensive understanding of the sense of home and self she left behind, but rather how the Northern Cradle situates her indigeneity.

In some interviews, even when the young women are cued to describe the white savior narrative that the organization had concocted for them, they use rhetorical conditionals to suggest the possibility of beyond for their community. For example, when asked, “What made you be free here, unlike home?” the young woman responds, “There is defense and security here at NAFGEM, unlike at home, when I am here, I am eating good, but when at home, sometimes no food. When I am here, I am not married, but I am at home, I *could* be married, having like two children.” By using the conditional of “could,” the young woman leaves the envelope of possibility for her community to not subscribe to the finite realm of primitivity that has been prescribed to them. Furthermore, the young woman defines the defense and security provided by NAFGEM to be correlated to food security, which cements the complexities of neoliberal capitalism that the young women are impacted by to not only be related to the commodification of their bodies through the practice of female genital cutting but also the marginal access to food that they have due to economic disenfranchisement and environmental degradation.

In addition to the use of conditionalities, the young women interviewed have a sense of agency that they are able to clearly articulate and delineate. In response to the question, “How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?” one of the young women states, “They changed my future because now I know about human rights. Everybody has the right to be educated. Everybody has the right to work. Everybody has the right to be listened to. Everybody has the right to be respected. Everybody has the right to do something he or she wants.” Although these statements can be contextualized to be indicative of statements that align with NAFGEM’s agenda, it is imperative to also complicate how this notion of self may have existed prior to the involvement and intervention of NAFGEM because of the ways that the Maasai people have cemented their cultural identity through an Afrocentric episteme.

The inculcation of NGO-ization and Eurocentric epistemologies such as neoliberal capitalism can be seen in Sahar Romani’s work in “Generation NGO: youth and development in urban India.” She provides an ethnographic description of young people in the ‘red-light areas’ of Kolkata:

Girls spent many of their childhood afternoons and adolescent evenings attending NGO programs for at-risk girls, such as self-defense training, workshops on reproductive health, and discussions on gender violence. They started working in their neighborhood as field-level NGO social workers managing the drop-in center they once attended as children. They transitioned from being targets of NGO development to facilitators of NGO development (Romani, 2016).

I made very similar observations when I spent my time in Moshi, Tanzania, in 2019. Not only had they also been attending self-defense training, workshops on reproductive health, and discussions on gender violence, but the young women who had gotten access to be able to attend a university through the assistance of the organization’s funding were also returning to the organization to work in a social work capacity. The paralleling of the

NGO work in India to the work being done in Tanzania demonstrates how NGOs that may be geographically miles apart are merely elongated tentacles in the octopus of the Northern Cradle epistemology.

When the young women who are allegedly being saved by the organization become vessels for the perpetuation of the organization's ideologies through their roles as future social workers, they become a tentacle of the Northern Cradle epistemology. As a tentacle, they perpetuate the "success" of the organization by not only playing their role as a statistical triumph but also being a vessel for the continued ideological indoctrination of new young women who may interact with the organization. As vessels of white saviorism, they advance a dependence on data, analysis, policy, and prescriptions, which are a major ingredient in eroding sovereignty and marginalizing concerns in the Global South (Gosovic in Benin and Hall, 2002, p. 2). When the young women return to the organization as social workers and success stories of the work of the NGO, they take their indigenous sense of self and community one step further away for a sense of presupposed freedom and economic stability. Therefore, by complicating the process of NGOization and the notion of NGO success by decentering the white savior complex and centering indigeneity, a sense of agency and decommodification has the potential to be reached.

The commodification of the young women through the process of NGOization can be seen in the ways that the social worker acting as translator inserts a preference for schooling into the young women's responses. In response to the question, "Tell me about yourself," she inserts the question, "What number do you get at school? Do you like school? (*Unakua wa ngapi unapenda shule sijui?*)" This occurs after she cues the young woman being interviewed to the tempo of the interview after she asks, "How do I start?"

(*Naanzaje?*),” to which she responds, “Don’t say your name. I study at this primary school, grade what... that’s how you start okay let’s begin (*Usiseme jina lako. Mimi nasoma shule ya msingi hivi, darasa hil... ndio unaanza hivyo haya twende*).” Before the interview officially starts, the social worker acting as translator has prefaced the young women with what their self-description should be. As Peter A. Gourevitch, David A. Lake, and Janice Gross Stein explain in the introduction to *The Credibility of Transnational NGOs: When Virtue Is Not Enough*, NGOs are not passive actors constrained by conditions to be credible or not, but active shapers of their own images, reputations, structures, and thus credibility (Gourevitch, et al., 2012, p. 18). This can be seen in many of the interviews and the translator’s developmental interjections; by prefacing what the young women are going to say with content that aligns with NAFGEM’s goals, the NGO curates credibility for itself through ready-made constructions of its own images, reputations, structures, and thus credibility.

To maintain the preconstructed outcomes of the organization, the social worker acting as translator provided examples of what the young women should say during the interview, ultimately informing their final response. For example, when responding to the question, “What would you like people in your community, the ones surrounding you, to know about you? (*Unatamani watu kule kwenye janii yako watu waliokuzunguka wajue nini kuhusu wewe?*),” one of the young women responds in English, “I want them to know that I am educated...” The social worker acting as translator replies in Swahili, “Okay! What else? For example, I don’t like that issue which they wanted to do... (*eeeh! Na kingine? kwa mfano mimi ningesema sipendi ile issue ninayo fanyiwa*).” The young woman then responds, “I want them to know that I hate female genital circumcision in

our society.” In the desire to secure the NGO’s credibility, the social worker acting as translator ensures that the young woman’s messaging about what she wants people to know about her aligns with the organization’s goals for her life.

During another interview, while one of the young women is telling me about herself, she states that she “will keep trying [in school] so she can manage to reach her goals (*I will keep trying so I can manage to reach my goals*),” which the social worker asks, “Ambayo ni nini (*Which are?*)”. The young woman explains, “To later help those who are not capable... like at NAFGEM (*Kuja kusaidia ambao hawajijiwezi... ya ile NAFGEM*).” Although this portion of the interview is not directly convoluted by the social worker acting as translator at an enhanced magnitude, she later says in this same interview, “Your experience of your stay here at NAFGEM and your home...? Now here, do not let me down, explain everything, girlfriend!... because I know you have a lot of points on this because I know there is a big difference... (*Uzowefu wako ulivyo kaa hapa NAFGEM na kule nyumbani, sasa hapo ndo usiniangushe elezea shoga yangu!, maana najua kuna ma pointi sana, kwa maana najua kuna ma tofauti kibao...*)” The social worker makes it clear that the young women interviewed will let her down if they do not paint NAFGEM in a positive light and clearly explain how much they have been saved. When the young women say that they want to help those who are not capable, like the personnel at NAFGEM, they have made it clear that they know their place in the white savior industrial complex and the role that they must play to keep the European epistemology and Northern Cradle rhetoric sustained.

NGOs continually emphasize the tune of doing, which detracts from discursive degrees of accountability. In “Accountability in Practice: Mechanism for NGOs,” Alnoor

Ebrahim discusses how “NGO culture tends to emphasize action over analysis. NGO staff are, by and large, “doers” that gain legitimacy by helping the poor than by conducting time-consuming and costly evaluations” (Ebrahim, 2003). The social worker, as an NGO staff member, emphasizes this action-oriented orientation through her determination to convey the young woman as having progressed through the work of the organization. However, by focusing on all of the so-called progress that has been facilitated by the organization, we miss the structural systems that have left the young women in positionalities where they have the potential to be circumcised, married, or economically vulnerable.

When the young women are describing what they like to do for fun, even those responses get convoluted. Rather than “What do you like to do for fun?” the translator asks, “What do you like to do when you are here? Like farming, sweeping, say girlfriend...” (*Unapenda kufanya nini ukiwa hapa? kama kulima, kufagia, sema shoga yangu...*).” In response to this posing of the question, the young woman replies, “I love to clean and mop, I love sitting... (*Napenda kufanya usafi na kudeki, napenda kukaa...*)” The question, in its original formulation, did not equate their perception of fun locationally to NAFGEM; it implies that they could have fun anywhere, and they should have the agency to determine what fun means and how it manifests for them. However, not only did the young woman’s sense of fun become associative with NAFGEM, but also with activities that the social worker thought she should enjoy, which is actually the labor they perform for the organization, such as the upkeep of the organizational headquarters through sweeping, mopping, and sitting, usually to bead bracelets that the organization sells.

The organization sees bracelet making as a skill that the young women at the organization can use as a means of making income to support their boarding school education. On the “Our Success” portion of the website, one of the last bullet points included is:

**Women have acquired a sustainable source of income to fund their children’s education.** Young mothers working at NAFGEM’s Simanjiro center have used the profits from bracelet and soap making to pay for their children’s school fees. The money has also been used to pay for their daughters’ bus fare to safe locations during the cutting season, as well as for home improvement projects, hygiene products, and basic needs items (NAFGEM, 2024).

This bulleted point on the website misses the fact that the young women seeking safe shelter at the Moshi headquarters are also engaging in bracelet and soap making.

Although this does provide the young women with a skill set and money for basic need items, the fact that they even have to produce soap or bracelets in order to afford basic need items needs to be contextualized within the neoliberal economy that the young women are situated within. An analysis of the neoliberalization of the young women impacted by female genital cutting reveals that if the people within Tanzania most impacted by female genital cutting had economic means of survival and their basic needs met by the Tanzanian economy, then the practice could be greatly reduced. For example, young women in Tanzania are often viewed as having an unclean vagina that can be amended through circumcision, but if the young women had appropriate access to hygienic products, then stigma would be directly challenged. Similarly, if the practitioners of circumcision had their basic needs met, such as access to food, then they would not turn to the practice as a source of income, as seen by the impact of the installation of the milling machine in Simanjiro.

During one of the interviews, when the social worker acting as the translator attempts to center NAFGEM through her phrasing, the young woman states that she does not understand the question, flagging the social worker's convolution. Rather than stating the original question as it was composed, "What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?" she asks, "In that community you lived or here at NAFGEM or any person, one day, what do you wish for them to one day know about you that they have not known until now...?" (*Unatamani ile jamii yako, au NAFGEM, au mtu yoyote siku moje ajue kwamba wewe uunatamani nini mpaka sasa hivi hawajajua?*) The young woman responds, "I didn't understand the question (*Sijakuelewa*)." When the social worker attempts to make the question about NAFGEM, the young woman is unable to answer the question because of its confusing composition. Due to the confusion the social worker causes the interviewee, she then has to ask the question in a clearer manner, "What do you desire one day in your community to know what about you and what you love, meaning they need to know what about you? (*unatamani jamii siku moja ije ijue wewe unatamani nini na unapenda nini, yani wajua nini kutoka kwako?*)" To this amended and clarified question, the young woman replies, "I hope to be a teacher, help and educate people, and it will be good to teach children so that they are also educated... (*Nataka kama kuja kuwa mwalimu, naenda kuwasaidia na kuelimisha watu, na itakuwa vizuri. Na kusomesha watoto wao wa elimike.*)" Although it can be argued that this response also advances the educational tenet of the organization, this response decenters the organization, so one can infer that it also centers the humanity of young women more than the social worker's original formulation of the question, denying the orchestration of a European epistemology.

The continued attempts to center the NGO as the savior of the young women impacted by female genital cutting decenters the Europeanized institutions of the Northern Cradle, such as neoliberal capitalism that have historically and contemporaneously contributed to the economic disenfranchisement of Black girls and women. Sangeeta Kamat highlights the hypocrisy of NGO interventions in “The Privatization of Public Interest: Theorizing NGO Discourse in a Neoliberal Era” by stating that “Financial institutions that, on the one hand, recommend the withdrawal of state support from the social sector allocate aid to community-based NGOs for these very same social services, an indication that the expansion of the NGO sector has been externally induced by foreign policy decisions” (Kamat, 2004, p. 160). In addition to the influence of foreign policy decisions, the withdrawal of state support for social services and a reallocation of this monetary support to NGOs is a way in which neocolonial entities get to maintain control due to the enhanced ability to monitor NGO monetary flow, rather than governmental spending. Additionally, when the money that is owed to countries throughout continental Africa due to centuries of economic disenfranchisement is given directly to them rather than through a circuitous route such as an NGO, then it implies that they have the ability to save themselves and are not in need of saving from European entities.

During certain moments in the interview, the social worker acting as translator attempted to prompt the young women to say more, especially in regard to how much NAFGEM had done for them or changed their lives. For example, when asking the question, “How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?” the social worker acting as translator also asks, “How has NAFGEM changed you? From not being with three kids

until now...? (*NAFGEM imekubalilishaje? kutoka kuwa na watoto watau hadi sasa hivi?*)” The young woman being interviewed refuses this insinuation and states, “It has changed me as I have gotten an education (*imenibadilisha kupitia elimu...*)” The social worker, not pleased, continues to probe, “What else... Something else... we have taken care of...? (*Kingine ... Kingine... malezi?*) Do you have anything else to add about NAFGEM or about yourself? (*Unakingine cha kusema n ach kungeza, husu NAFGEM, kuhusu wewe?*)” to which the young woman replies, “No, I don’t have...” (*Sina!*)” and the interview ends.

Through the convolution of the young women’s interviews, the social worker acting as translator engages in the act of what Laura Routley describes as mimicry in *Negotiating corruption: NGOs, governance, and hybridity in West Africa*. “The NGO’s role as ‘mimic men,’ translating from the international to the local and back again, demonstrating fluency in both, is performatively produced through the language, demeanors, and styles of the NGO workers” (Routley, 2014). The notion of mimicry and mimic (wo)men takes on a double entendre meaning for the social worker at NAFGEM: she was a living embodiment as an NGO worker of the dualistic translation from international to local and back again, while her translations of the young women’s words were mimicries of their true realities. The social worker’s mimicry of the girl’s words subtracted their localized, indigenous tongue to detract from the implications of European hierarchies of domination, congruent with the Northern Cradle.

The enactment of mimicry can be seen in the interviews when the social worker acting as the translator attempts to pivot the conversation and get expansive responses from the young women beyond what they had already provided. For example, the social

worker asks, “You desire one day in that village you came from or here at NAFGEM or another place you go, that people would know something about you that they had not known before? (*Unatamani siku moja ile jamii yako kule kijijini au NAFGEM, au wapi unapoenda untamani wakijue hadi sasa hivi hawakijui*)” The young woman responds, “I hope they would know how FGM can be painful (*Natamani wajue nanili jinis ya ukeketaji*).” Since this response aligns with the organization’s values, the social worker cues her to continue, “*Eeeh!*” but she declines with an emphatic “Basi! (*That’s all!*)” The social worker goes on to ask, “Seriously?? (*Hiiii!*)” and when the young woman asks her to repeat the question, she says, “I can’t tell you what to say because the interview is being recorded (*Mimi siwezi kukwambia maana kina rekodi...*).” When the social worker then repeats the question and asks it in a more authentic form, “Unatamni jamii ijuue nsiku moja wajue ambacho hwakijui? (*What do you desire or wish your community to know about you that they don’t know yet?*) the young woman replies, “I desire that they would know that people living in Masai villages do struggle; most of them get married at a young age, so I wish they would get the appropriate help... (*Wajue kwamba watu huko umasaini wanateseka, wengine wanaolewa wakiwa wadogo, so ningetamani wapate msaada*).” The young woman’s response, when not as convoluted by the translator, has a comprehensive interpretation of the reality facing the Maasai people in Tanzania. She is capable of articulating the struggle that Maasai people face as interconnected to child marriage. Her desire for Maasai people to get the appropriate help is broadly stated and does not include the NGO, underscoring that the young women are conscious that the NGO is not the only avenue for Tanzanian people to escape their struggles. The young woman’s emphatic “Basi!” after the social worker attempted to

have her talk about NAFGEM when discussing what she wishes people knew about her demonstrates her unwillingness to succumb to the mimicries of the NGO that paints her indigeneity as in need of salvation.

The social worker is emphatic about centering the struggles of young women impacted by female genital cutting to heighten the appearance that they needed to be saved by NAFGEM. For example, she asks, “What difference have you seen between living at your auntie’s place? She would have taken you to our husband, and you could be having how many kids? Or any other issues that are happening in your community, and now with what is going on, start with your community. (*Ni tofauti gani, ilyopo sasa, ungekuwa kule yule shangazi yako sasa kasha kupeleka kwa mume wako, ungekuwa na watoto wangapi? au nini kinge kuwa kinaendlea kule kwenye jamii yako, na hapa sasa hivi nini kinaendelea, anza na kwenye jamii.*)” By formulating the question this way, the social worker answers the question for them and slates their responses. When the young woman responds broadly, “I could be in the village, having two children, and my life would be very hard (*Ningekuwa huko kijijini sasa hivi,ningekuwa na watoto wawili, na maish yangu yange kuwa magumu sana*),” this does not suffice for the translator, who then prods, “Why?” The young woman replies, “Because that’s how the life of the village is... (*kwa sababu maisha ya kijijini ndo hivyo tena...*)” The social worker asks further, “What is it that makes life hard? (*Hamna nini kinachokufanya yawe magumu?*),” to which she replies, “The man takes you home and leaves you there, you struggle with life, and now here at NAFGEM, I am doing well with life, and I hope it will get even better (*Mwanaume anakupeleka hapa ndani anakuacha, unasota na maisha wenywe,na sasa hivi hapa NAFGEM naendelea vizuri maisha yang ni mazuri, baadaye yataendele akuwa*

*vizuri*)." The young woman does not equate the hardness of her life to female genital cutting or the ignorance of her people as the NGO has attempted to formulate but rather understands it as a contingency of day-to-day life.

The young woman's statement, "Because that's how the life of the village is..." though not deemed profound under the social worker's metric, reveals the impact that the discourse of the Northern Cradle has had on indigenous communities in Tanzania. As of 2012, there were ten thousand registered villages in Tanzania, none of which existed before 1975, when the policy creating villages as legal governmental authorities was enacted (Gardner, 2016). Although the consideration of villages as legal governmental authorities may be considered a badge of honor, it is an attempt to surveil a self-sustaining entity that is pre-colonial. In the process of villagization, the Maasai people were not initially included because of their noncompliance with the governmental institutions. However, the Tanzanian government made the program mandatory in 1974, and the government designated villages as either livestock or agricultural development villages to limit the areas dedicated to livestock. Given this historicization of villagization, the village that the young women being interviewed had come to know post-1975 was predetermined by Europeanized governmentalities.

When the social worker acting as the translator did not allow the gravity of the statement that the young women provided to exist in its authenticity, it elucidated the degrees of separation that the social worker had with the young women she was attempting to serve. David Harvey describes NGOs as the "Trojan horses for global neoliberalism" because:

They tend to be elitist, unaccountable (except to their donors), and, by definition, distant from those they seek to protect or help, no matter how well-

meaning or progressive they may be. They frequently conceal their agendas and prefer direct negotiation with or influence over state and class power. They control their clientele rather than represent it. They claim and presume to speak on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, even define the interests of those they speak for (as if people are unable to do this for themselves) (Harvey, p. 177).

The NGO social worker, although a Tanzanian woman herself, has cultivated degrees of distance from the young women at NAFGEM to uphold the Europeanized agenda of the organization. She may have positive intentions for the young women, but this is subsumed by her desire to center the organization's agenda and ultimately keep her job. During the interviews, the social worker attempted to conceal her perpetuation of the organization's agenda by being mindful of the fact that she was being recorded and not wanting to make it obvious that she was answering the young women's questions herself. However, the translations of the interviews reveal that the way she was asking the questions to the young women did not leave space for a response of originality. The social worker's consistent interjections align with Harvey's contention that the NGO felt the need to speak for the young women, implying that they were unable to speak for themselves or that the stories they had to tell were not enough under the organization's standards.

The inability of the young women seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM to speak for themselves and tell their own stories is referential to the question that Gaytari Chakravorty Spivak asks in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" According to Spivak, "In the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak; the subaltern as female is even deeply more in shadow..." (Spivak, 1988, p. 83). The young women in Tanzania become a colonial production of the Northern Cradle, and they are cast into a shadow where their stories and lives are mistranslated and villagized.

Additionally, when they are spoken for by NAFGEM, they are further typified as ahistorical aliens.

The social worker acting as translator not only attempts to speak for the young women, but as she is speaking for them, she ensures that the young women paint the NGO in the best light and as their savior. For example, in her translation of “Who do you consider a source of safety and trust here at NAFGEM and why?” she instead asks, “What kind of person do you trust that you can tell them when you have a problem like I need something... I want to go to school; what person do you trust, people here at the office, [name redacted], [name redacted], me, [name redacted], [name redacted], and anyone else but not the children (*Ni mtu gani unaye amini unaweza kumwabia, aisee nina shida hii, aisee leo nataka kitu Fulani, aisee leo nataka kwenda shule, ni mtu gani? Anyekaa pale ofisini, [name redacted], [name redacted], mimi, [name redacted], [name redacted], yoyote yule lakini sio watoto*). The young woman responds to this haphazardly phrased question, “You (*Wewe*).” By asking the question in such a way and being present when the young woman answers it, the social worker leaves them little to no option in their response. The initial intent of the question was open-ended, to leave the option for the young women to say whether they considered each other a source of safety and trust, but the social worker eliminates this possibility and instead centers herself and the organization.

In addition to having access to trustworthy people throughout the organization, the social worker also wants to ensure that the young women are perceived as taken care of and well-fed. To keep up this narrative of nourishment, when asked the simple question, “What foods do you like to eat or cook?” when the young woman replies, “I

like tea... (*Napenda chai...*)," the social worker prompts, "Don't you like ugali? (*Hupendi ugali kweli wewe?*)." The young woman responds, "No, I don't like it... (*Sipendi...*)" and laughs off the insinuation of the social worker. The social worker then asserts, "Tea is not food (*Chai sio chakula*)." Although tea may not be considered food to the social worker, her response was more than sufficient and represented her authentic likes rather than what the organization perceived as a nourishing food.

During the initial transcription process of the interviews that were only reliant on the social worker's translation, the data aligned like a linear plot line. The consistency of the young women's responses due to the social worker's interjections and fillers throughout the interviews raised questions about the authenticity of the questions being asked and the translations of their responses. The social worker's interjections and fillers were an attempt to convey organizational credibility due to experiential consistency. NGOs undertake significant actions to establish and maintain their credibility because they are at the behest of their donors, who rely on their valuable information and the services they provide (Gourevitch, Lake, and Stein, 2012, p. 7). By painting all of the young women's lives as having improved because of the intervention of NAFGEM and the access to food, education, and trustworthy people that they have provided, the donors can deem the NGO to be reliable. Furthermore, the NGO personnel perceive the information that they have provided me to be returning to the Pan-European Academy and existing in academic spaces that their donor's eyes may land in, so they ensure the stories they tell are artfully crafted and conjured.

During one of the interviews, the young woman rejects the translator's presumption that she would have been married if she were still at home. Instead of asking

the question, “How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?” the social worker asks, “What is the difference between being at NAFGEM, school, and home? (*Gani ukiwa NAFGEM, ukiwa shule na ukiwa kule nyumbani?*)” After feeding her certain responses, the young woman begins to answer the question, “What would I be doing now?... I would have just been around (doing nothing) (*Sasa hivi ningekua nafanyaje, Si ningekuwa tu na kaa (anacheka).*)” This does not fit within the white savior realm that the social worker has ascribed the young woman to, so she retorts, “Probably married or not? (*Umeolewa hujaolewa?*)” to which the young woman replies, “I was not married... (*Nilikua sijaolewa...*)” Still displeased with the young woman’s response, the social worker contends, “But were you studying? (*Lakini unasoma?*)” to which the young woman states, “I don’t know if I would have continued until now... (*Sijui kama ningendelea mpaka sasa hivi...*)” As these responses do not align with the messaging that the organization is trying to send out, the social worker asks for “Another thing... (*Kingine...*)” which the young woman does not give until the social worker asks whether she has ever had school fee problems (*Umesharudishwa ada...?*) and the young woman finally reciprocates with a “No...”

The interviewee did not acquiesce to the white savior narrative that the social worker attempted to situate her within until it came down to a moment of truth. The “subaltern woman,” or woman of the global South, in particular, is written into a rescue narrative, allowing the global North to find redemption in new kinds of interventions of various sorts in the South (Bernal and Grewal, 2014, p. 308). By writing subaltern women, such as the young women seeking shelter at NAFGEM, into rescue narratives, the global North seeks refuge in NGO interventions rather than being held accountable

for the centuries of land extraction and desecration that they have played a role in. The translator, by asserting the narrative of the NGO, solidifies the subaltern status of the young women due to her own internalized Europeanization. K. Nsari identifies collaborators to colonialities of power as facilitators to colonial rule who are given crumbs for their service (Nsari, 1975, p. 110). Although I do not know the compensation the social worker is being given by the organization to uphold their agenda, her desperation to sell the story of the NGO makes it clear that her psyche has felt the imprint of Europeanization that Frantz Fanon describes in *Wretched of the Earth*.

Upon the initial introduction of the interview, the social worker acting as translator inserts her ideas into the young women's answers, ultimately defining progress for them. For example, in her explanation of the first question, "Tell me about yourself," she states, "This here, you describe you and your school studies, how they're progressing and which you love and why you love it... like that. So, I say? I and I... (*Hii hapa unaelezea wewe na shule yako na masomo yako yanaendeleaje na unapenda hipi na kwanini unapenda...hivyo hivyo. Kwa hiyo na sema mimi? Mimi and mimi...*)." The social worker acting as translator attempts to shape the direction of the interview, ensuring that the young woman discusses the correlation between their schooling and progress, ultimately upholding the façade of the NGO. From the Northern Cradle sphere of consciousness that NAFGEM wants the young women to have about themselves, they have experienced progress and are enjoying their new lives due to their interactions with the NGO.

The degrees of coloniality that have become embedded in the social worker acting as translator's psyche have transformed her into what Laura Routley calls a "reformed

recognizable other” in *Negotiating corruption: NGOs, governance, and hybridity in West Africa*. As Routley describes it, there is a desire within NGO discourse for the young women impacted by female genital cutting and seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM to become the reformed recognizable other:

The desire for a ‘reformed recognizable other’ shapes national NGOs whose form and presentation is staged precisely to be other (to be local), but one which can be recognized and engaged with by international actors. However, in becoming this reformed recognizable other authenticity shears off, leaving a subject that can be recognized and engaged, but which is only partial, being neither the same nor the other (p. 120).

The young women in Tanzania are curated to be reformed, recognizable others to accrue profit for the organization. To maintain these narratives, their truths are marginalized in a state of in-between so that they can serve a purpose for the NGO. For the young women at NAFGEM, this means that they can be KiMaasai young women who have experienced circumcision and child marriage or have been impacted by it, but they cannot also appreciate their sense of indigeneity and exhibit a comprehension of European hierarchies of domination and their impact on their housing and food security. In the process of attempting to portray the young women at NAFGEM as being rescued by the NGO, the social worker acting as translator also becomes a reformed, recognizable other: reformed and recognizable for the NGO’s goals, but othered to herself.

As the translator embodies being a reformed, recognizable other, she is also positioning herself in the same spheres of sociohistorical disenfranchisement that she is relegating the young women at NAFGEM to. For example, when the social worker acting as translator asks the question, “What do you wish that community you live in to know about you that they had not known before?” (*Unatamani ile jamii uliotoka ijue nini kuhusu wewe, ambo walikuwa hawajui mpaka leo?*)” rather than allowing the young

woman to form her own consciousness from this question, she adds, “You want them to know a girl-child is what exactly? (*Unatamani wajua kuwa motto wa kike ni nini?*)” To this additional question stem, she replies, “Girl-child has great value in the community (*Mtoto wa kike, ana thamani katika jamii.*)” By asking the question as she did, the translator is asserting the idea that the community does not know that young women have value. Even if this were an idea that the young woman being interviewed also believed herself, the social worker acting as translator does not allow the young woman to form this consciousness on her own and implants a Europeanized consciousness into the young woman’s words.

Even when the young women were discussing what they like to do for fun, the translator added interests that aligned with the NGO’s desires for the young women. For example, when one of the young women states that she likes to “Teach them (her friends at NAFGEM or at school) about different issues of the community (*Kuwa elimisha kuhusu mambo ya jamii.*)” the social worker acting as translator asks, “What issues exactly? (*Kama vile?*)” The young woman replies, “Issues about FGM and being united (*mambo ya ukeketaji, kushikamana.*)” A few moments later in the interview, the social worker acting as translator adds, “Why do you like to teach about FGM and pregnancy at a young age (among young girls)? (*Kwanini unapenda kuelimisha kuhusu ukeketaji (na mimba za utotoni?)*)” She subtly attempts to modify the answer of the young woman and dismisses her desire for unity to be about teen pregnancy instead, one of the tenets of the organization. In the process of diverting the attention away from the young woman’s answer, she reproduces the young woman’s and her own status of being a reformed, recognizable other while also replicating NGO language about the African people

throughout the diaspora. As Sangeeta Kamat argues, “NGOs, conventionally understood to be part of civil society, are part of the remaking of state institutions and state processes, as much as they are part of reconfiguring civil society” (Kamat, 2004, p, 171). The NGO’s social worker is engaging in the linguistic manipulation of NGOs by convoluting the words of the young women and, in the process, reconfiguring the girls’ realities into institutional discursive realms.

When one of the young women is describing the activities she likes to do for fun during the interviews, the social worker acting as translator attempts to define fun for her by adding an activity that she does at the organization. She asks after the young woman has already provided an answer, “Is there anything else you like to do in your extra time? (*Kuna kingine unapenda kufanya wakati wa muda wa ziada?*).” The young woman asks the clarifying question, “When I am at home? (*Nikiwa nyumbani?*).” The social worker responds, “Anywhere, school, even at home... (*kokote shule, nyumbani, hapa*).” The young woman responds, “Here, huh? Maybe to make beaded bracelets (*Hapa eeh? Labda kushona shanga*).” The social worker acting as translator asks, “Why? (*Kwa nini?*),” to which the young woman replies, “To not waste time... (*Nisipoteze muda...*).” From this interaction, it is evident that the young woman recognizes the social worker’s lack of interest in her leisure activities at home and emphasizes the importance of focusing on her experiences at the organization instead. The young women’s response that making the beaded bracelets ensures that they do not waste time demonstrates how the girls are cognitive of their positionality within a European hierarchy of domination.

NAFGEM attempts to position itself as a provider of moral frameworks for the young women as they escape their sense of indigeneity. For example, when the translator

asks, “What has NAFGEM done for you? (*Nini NseAFGEM imekufanyia?*)” the young woman responds, “They enrolled me in school, they taught me not to do bad things and to harmoniously live with people (*Wamenipeleka shule, wamenifundisha nisifanye kitu kibaya, na niishi na watu bila kugombana*).” Within the white savior complex trope, NAFGEM has articulated themselves as conveyor belts of ethics to the young women who were stuck in the disharmony of their primitive pasts before the intervention of NAFGEM. By alluding to the fact that the organization saved the young women from their primitive pasts, the NGO minimizes the values that the young women may have had prior to their engagement with the NGO. In “Negotiating the Boundaries of Voluntarism: Values in the Indian NGO Sector,” Tanya Jakimow argues that values are an essential part of an NGO’s identity, distinguishing them from other sectors and adding to their legitimacy. When NAFGEM can corroborate that they provided good morals to Maasai people tainted by their bad past, they are moving closer to fulfilling their Europeanized mission toward hierarchies of domination.

The social worker acting as translator had a preconceived idea about when the stories of how the young women came to NAFGEM would best fit in the interview, so she tempered the pacing of the interview to reflect the story she wished to convey. For example, in response to the question, “What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?” one of the young women asked follow-up questions, “For them to know about what exactly? For example, where I came from and where I am at... the difference? (*Wajewajue kuhusu nini yani? Kwa mfano hapo nyumabno nilipotoka na hapa hivi... nitofauti?*).” The social worker acting as translator does not deem this as the appropriate answer or follow-up question for the pacing of the interview, so she explains, “What you

said, you will explain later when you tell us about your story... I mean, what do you wish/desire one day that the person who wanted to marry you off or wanted to mutilate you... is what type of a person?... Like it was so unfair to do that to her... what did she deserve... (*Hiyo utakuja kunieleza kwenye historia yako, yani untamani wajua siku moja yule mtu waliotaka kumwozeshwa au kumkeketa ni mtu wa aina gani? Yani ilikuwa sio haki kumfanyia vile, alistahili hili....*)” The young woman responds, “...To educate them so that they would stop what they were doing... (*Kuja kumwelimisha, ili waweze kuacha.....*).” The social worker wants her to say that one thing she wishes people knew about her was that she did not deserve to experience female genital cutting and that it was unfair, but the young woman does not give her the satisfaction and instead confers that the people who wanted her circumcised should be educated.

The ways that the social worker acting as translator fills in the gaps in the young women’s interview mirrors the mechanisms that the NGOs employ to fill in the gaps between the people and the state. NGOs identify certain gaps between the priorities of the people and act as a facilitating buffer between private institutions and the State (Thomas, Muradian, De Groot, and De Ruijter, 2010). When attempting to identify the gaps between the people and the state, NGOs often miss the ways that histories of Europeanization have played in the cultural displacement of the people they are attempting to serve. The social worker acting as translator ensures that the young women are painted as destitute before the intervention of NAFGEM to advance the notion that the NGO has facilitated progress in the young women’s lives. For example, for the question, “What do you wish people knew about you but do not?” the social worker adds, “That your community should know from [name redacted]... the community that wanted

to get wed you... (*Ile jamii yako ungetaka wajue nini kutoka [...] ... ile jamii waliotaka kukuoza...*)” The social worker poses the question in this way to let the young woman know that NAFGEM has changed her life, and the question cannot be answered in a way that suggests otherwise because she could have been afflicted with a life of ineptitude if the organization had not intervened.

Diane Hoffman explains how the white savior complex, a component embedded in the European cultural paradigm, impacted and transformed perceptions of help in response to the aftermath of the 2010 and 2021 earthquakes in Haiti. In comparison to the 2010 earthquake, the 2021 earthquake represented Haitians as capable of addressing their own needs, divergent from the narratives of dependency sensationalized in 2010. Instead of representing the country as dependent on handouts and help from foreigners, recent narratives have illuminated the fact that Haitians have always helped themselves through strong traditions of collective community responses to hardship and disaster (Hoffman, 2022). In a similar fashion, the people in Tanzania are capable of responding to female genital cutting effectively when they have economic access and a liveable wage, as evidenced by the reduction in circumcisers when a milling machine was brought into a community where female genital cutting was prevalent.

When one of the young women begins her interview, the social worker acting as translator begins with the translation of the first question, “Tell me about yourself,” with “What kind of person are you? Where are you? What school do you go to? What class are you in? What position do you hold? What school do you go to? How is your school? (*Wewe ni mtu wa aina gani? Uko wapi? Unasoma wapi? Darasa la ngapi? Unakuwanga wa ngapi? Shule gani? Shule yako ikoje?*)” The young woman responds, “Should I say it

about home or here (NAFGEM)? (*Nasema ya nyumbani au ya huku?*)” The social worker acting as translator responds, “Yes, life here, then when you start talking, don’t stop... I will also continue to translate what you say, like what kind of person you are, what class you are in; I am like this, I have these goals... (*Ya hapa, halafu ukiwa unaongea usisimame ili...na mimi niendeleo kuongea moja kwa moja, yani ukiwa unajieleza, niko hivi, nasoma darasa la ngapi, nakuwa hivi, nina malengo ya hivi, yani wakati unaongea...*)” When the young woman interviewed asked whether she should discuss who she was before NAFGEM, the social worker immediately dismissed that sense of self and centered her identity, her education, and her goals since coming to the organization. It is in the best interest of NAFGEM to construct an image where the young women only see their humanity and selves within the chronology of the intervention of the NGO.

Similar to how the translator attempts to portray the young women at NAFGEM as monolithic due to their identity being primarily tied to the organization, NGOs reproduce the hegemonic discourse of neoliberal capitalism and, by default, the Northern Cradle. Hegemonic development discourse implies that NGOs operate according to a single discursive framework, which leaves no room to take into account that development organizations may be inspired by alternative ideological frameworks (Hilhorst, 2003, p. 9). When an organization replicates the discursive hegemony of development, the people that they are alleging to save can only be envisaged through the singularity of the Northern Cradle, through which African values and beliefs are seen as debased and in need of salvation. In an effort to conform to this Europeanized hegemonic discourse, the translator leaves little room for the young women’s sense of self before coming to the

organization to exist and ensures that all of their responses are emblematic of the success of the organization.

In another interview, when the young woman is introducing herself by answering the question, “Tell me about yourself...” the social worker acting as translator shows frustration when she does not mention that she was in school. After cueing her to mention her education, she asks, “I mean, explain about your school in general, saying, how is the environment, why do you like your school... (*Yani elezea shule yako ki ujumla, tuseme kuna nini kule shuleni kwanini unapenda ile shule...*).” To this prompting, the young woman responds, “I like/love school because we do study and eat. At school, the teachers are good at teaching, there are beautiful trees, the general environment is good, and the students get high grades... (*Napenda kwa maana tunsoma na tunakula kule shuleni, na shule ni nzuri walimu wantufundhisha, na kuna miti na mazingira mazuri na wanfunzi wana faulu...*).” This is the way the social worker wanted the young woman to respond and tell me about herself: by describing the educational environment as good, it demonstrates not only the efficacy of the organization but also the young woman’s gratitude. As a broker of meaning, the social worker acting as translator negotiates relationships by convincing the other parties of the meaning of events, processes, and needs and their own roles (Hilhorst, 2003, p. 223). The social worker acting as translator attempted to convince me and the presumed consumer of my Master’s thesis project that the school environment of the young women was enjoyable as an indication of social mobility in the European hierarchy of humanity.

Although the social worker acting as translator was pleased when the answers about the young women’s homes and sense of self before NAFGEM were short, when it

came time to talk about their experience at NAFGEM, the social worker ensured they told a long and detailed story. She asks one of the young women being interviewed, “Why have you shortened the story, my friend? (*Mbona umekifupisha sana shoga angu?*) to which she replies, “... because the main reason that made me come to NAFGEM are FGM and marriage at a very young age (*...sababu zilizo nifanya ni ukeketaji na ndoa za utotoni, basi*).” The social worker acting as translator, not pleased with this response, adds, “Continue please, just add a little more explanation to the story; what class were you in at that time... how old were you...? (*Nilikuwa darasa la saba, nimemaliza mtihani, nilivyomaliza nikasikia kuwa kuna kuoreshwa, basi ndo nikaenda kureport, ebu ongezea na wewe hapo...*).” The social worker is eager to know how the young women’s lives have been impacted by mutilation and child marriage because that is the moment that their support and salvation became a necessity.

Centering the stories of the young women at NAFGEM as victims of female genital cutting and child marriage negates how the young women have been impacted by the disenfranchisement of European hierarchies of domination. David Harvey contextualizes the contradictory nature of access within neoliberalism in *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. In neoliberalism, there are presumed to be no asymmetries of power or of information that interfere with the capacity of individuals to make rational economic decisions in their own interests; the contradiction lies in the fact that better-informed and more powerful players have an advantage that can all too easily be parlayed into procuring even better information and greater relative power (Harvey, 2005, p. 68). In the context of NAFGEM, the translator is enacting her pedigree of power because of her status as a social worker within the organization. However, she underestimates the power

of the young women who have enacted pedigrees of disruption by not subscribing to the terrain that she has contoured for their narratives.

Amidst the pedigrees of disempowerment that the social worker portrays the young women as situated within, they maintain their sense of happiness. When they were asked what they like to do for fun, many of the young women talked about playing (*kucheza*), laughing (*kuchecka*), and being happy (*inanifurahisha*). Although it can be argued that this was said to appease the social worker who was present, that did align with what I observed while there. When the young women were among one another drinking chai (tea), singing, dancing, cooking, and laughing, they had a good time. During my time spent in Tanzania, I also observed many of the young women navigating the responsibility of household chores, such as cooking and cleaning. Therefore, the presumption that the NGO is saving the young women from gender-based hierarchies is superficially based because their daily life in the organization still upholds structures of patriarchy.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty discusses how gendered scripts are societally maintained and perpetuated in *Women Workers and Capital Scripts: Ideologies of Domination, Common Interests, and the Politics of Solidarity*. Ideologies of domesticity, dependency, and (hetero)sexuality designate women as primarily housewives/mothers and men as economic supporters and breadwinners due to the invisible nature of the women's work (Mohanty, 1997, p. 21). Similar to the invisible nature of women's work due to its occurrence in private spheres, female genital cutting and child marriage happens in privacy, reiterating the ripples of Northern Cradle patriarchy onto women's privatized bodies. At NAFGEM, even though the young women may have escaped

female genital cutting and child marriage, they still are replicating gendered scripts through their cooking for the younger girls at the organization's headquarters and the production of beaded bracelets, a mechanism used to upkeep profit for the organization.

The NGO's white savior complex emerged in figurative and literal ways in the young women's interviews. During one of the interviews, she describes how, in her journey toward coming to NAFGEM, "I was at home... my mother was not home yet. Suddenly a car came to my home... [name redacted] came and some White people. They asked me if I was enrolled in school... I said no, I don't go to school because my father had already paid the bride price for me to be married off... (*Mimi hapa niikuwa nyumbani... mama alikuwa hayupo nyumabani. Nikashanga, magari yanaingia nyumbani, wakaja, wakina [...] na wazungu. Wakaniuliza unasoma, nikawambia hapana, kwasabau baba yangu ameshato mahari*)." In describing her interactions with the organization, the young woman is conscious of the presence of whiteness as correlated to the intervention and arrival of the NGO. Kalpana Wilson deconstructs the white savior complex in "At Once the Saviors and the Saved," where she delineates how "developing world girls" are "fixed in place": the sustainable development they are expected to fuel facilitates the containments of the global South and the consolidation of permanent inequality between North and South (Wilson, 2019). When people in the African diaspora are constantly depicted as in need of saving, then the interventions of NGOs seem necessary, and the net of inequality becomes further entangled, while the reality of systems such as capitalism and white supremacy stemming from the Northern Cradle's hierarchy of humanity that cast African young women in positionalities in need of saving becomes further cast into the shadows.

During the interview, the social worker fills in the answers for the young women about what they wish people knew about them but do not. Under the façade that she was authentically asking the question, she instead asks, “What do you desire one day, from that community you lived in? For example, they wanted to marry you off... what would you wish them to know about you? In a way, they would say, I wanted to marry her off, not knowing that she is smart and she is capable of doing so many things...? (*Ni kitu gani unatamani siku moja yule mtu ambaye alitaka labda kukuoza au kukufanyaje ajue kuwa wewe ni mtu gani na nini ambacho utanamani siku moja ajue kuwa nilitaka kumwoza huyu mtu kumne ana akili amepoleka amefanya hivi na hivi...?*).” Through her postulation of the question, the translator already insinuates for the young woman that she should wish for her community to know that her family wanted to circumcise her and marry her off, and they did not see this as a loss because they did not realize how smart and capable, she was. In response to the slated question she asked, the young woman responds, “In my Masaai community, I would wish that I teach them or to educate them that they should take young women to school; it would change their lives and not to mutilate them (*Yani kule umasanini nakuwafundisha au kuwambia kuwa wawafundisha waototo wa kike, na wao wanaweza kuwasidia na sio kuwakeketa to*). Beyond the words that the social worker has attempted to fill into the young woman’s mouth, she believes she should have access to education, which is something that should be a right in Tanzania and not a privilege that can be provided by the Europeanized white saviors.

During the interviews, the word “lie (nadanganya)” reappears often as the social worker’s dishonesty unravels. For example, when one of the young women is describing her position in class, she responds, “But my results are not so good... (*Lakini sasa*

*matokeo, mbona yako...*)." The translator adds, "Just lie... It's not a must for you to say the real results... (*Wewe danganya bwana... kwani lazima...*)." By dismissing the young women's truths and realities and asserting a white savior narrative, the social worker acting as translator affirms Europeanization as an elevation in the hierarchy of humanity. Chinua Achebe reveals how Joseph Conrad's archaic postulations in *Heart of Darkness* project an image of Africa as the other world, the antithesis of Europe, and therefore, of civilization, a place where man's vaunted intelligence and refinement are mocked by triumphant bestiality. When Maasai people are cited as uneducated, impoverished, and mutilators, they are rendered further alien and cast deep into the Northern Cradle's darkened echelons.

### **Outsider-Within and Insider-Without**

In my Master's thesis project, I describe how I became an outsider-within due to how the translator mechanized my lack of Swahili proficiency, and the translator became an insider-without due to her replication of colonialities of power. Patricia Hill Collins describes an outsider-within as a special standpoint used by Black intellectuals in academic settings to "look both from the outside and in from the inside out... we understand both..." (Collins, 1986). Using this standpoint, I was able to see the full spectrum of the young women's humanity as people who wanted to sing, dance, and enjoy the company of one another while also understanding their positionality within the NGO industrial complex as vessels for the organization to gain capital gain and neoliberal credibility. Additionally, I utilized transnational Black feminist frameworks to further understand the lived realities of the young women being described. The transnational Black feminist frameworks demystified the researcher and researched as

objective instruments of data and replaced it with the recognition of personal involvement, which has the power to admit others into one's life (Roberts, 1981, p. 58). By understanding that objective research is a Eurocentric ideology, I have the empowerment to understand ways in which I am personally implicated by the work that I do and to ensure that the young women impacted by female genital cutting are being imagined in a humanizing way.

As an outsider-within using my previous transnational Black feminist approach, I employed a feminist ethnography as a way of invoking conscious and unconscious realms of connectivity. Feminist ethnography evokes individual connections such as statements, everyday activities, and interpersonal relationships (Abu-Lughod, 1990). The time I spent with the young women while in Moshi, Tanzania, in 2019 and again when I returned in December 2022 provided me with the analytical lens to understand that lies were being told by the social worker acting as translator because the interactions that I was having with the young women did not match the stories that she told during the interviews. During the everyday interactions with the young women, I saw that they were cultivating avenues of resistance amidst the language circumscribed onto their bodies by NAFGEM. Utilizing my (auto)-Afronographic approach when I returned in December 2022, I saw that the young women were ready and willing to tell their stories when I discussed the new plan for the work and interview process during my initial days there, but the organization was unwilling to see that happen because the young women's truths may not reflect the messaging that the organization desires to be told about them.

Although my (auto)-Afronographic approach was useful in opening the door for a myriad of epiphanies during my return from my dissertation fieldwork in December

2022, my status as an outsider-within while conducting research in the summer of 2019 implicated the involvement of the social worker acting as translator who convoluted the young women's interviews to the tune of the NGO's Europeanized agenda. As a Black woman conducting Master's thesis fieldwork in Tanzania, although I may have had the opportunity to get more detailed and graphic information than white researchers, my position of privilege as a Master's and then doctoral student impacted my ability to get the young women's true stories because I was an embodiment of the Pan-European Academy. As a fixture in the web of the Pan-European Academy, the social worker conveyed the story she thought I wanted to hear and that would transmit the best into Europeanized hierarchies of humanity. Due to my language barriers, the presence of the social worker acting as translator, and our statuses as an outsider-within and insider-without, the experiences of the young women became lost in translation.

In addition to the social worker curating a narrative that she thought I wanted to hear as an embodiment of the Pan-European Academy, the manufacturing of the young women's stories through a white savior complex framework replicated the ways that Black women's stories have been historically told into spheres of marginality. In Michelle Wright's *Becoming Black: Creating African Identity in the African Diaspora*, she mentions the work of Michelle Wallace when describing how Black women have been erased from African American discourse since the 1960s, becoming the "Other of the Other," "dangerously unspeakable," and "resistant to theoretical articulation" (Wright, 2004, p. 136). Black girls who experience female genital cutting across the African diaspora are impacted by this discursive marginality, leaving them to be conceived of as alien, mutilators, and mutilated. The Afrocentric framework, which

views African people as the center of their own phenomena, constricts discursive regimes that see Black people as other and unspeakable and allows the space for African girls and women to be human beings.

In tune with the Afrocentric framework, I will be critiquing hierarchies of domination, such as patriarchy and white supremacy, similar to the feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) employed in my Master thesis. The feminist critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a political perspective on gender concerned with demystifying the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology, which offers a corrective to approaches that primarily favor one linguistic mode over another (Lazar, 2005, p. 5). Afrocentricity offers an alternative approach to Eurocentric frameworks that dominate the Pan-European Academy by centering the experiences of African people, and in the process, deconstructing the Northern Cradle that cultivates concepts such as gender, power, and intellectual hegemony. Through my Afrocentric approach to my work, I take the feminist critical discourse analysis to a distinctive route by acknowledging that “Western (read: White) feminisms, given its Eurocentric agenda, cannot adequately address the concerns of African communities” (Blay, 2008). Through Afrocentric and African womanist frameworks, the concept of culture is used as a tool of analysis for understanding the nature of African women’s experiences and used as a tool of resistance to combat hierarchies of domination.

The language of power, gender, and sensationalism was employed by the social worker acting as translator when she mistranslated the words of the young women impacted by female genital cutting and acted as if the stories provided were theirs, even though she ensured their responses reflected the organization’s agenda. Typically, a

translator engages in a “hybrid” role during qualitative research, making assumptions about meaning equivalence that make them an analyst and cultural broker as much as a translator (Turner, 2010). In the case of my Master’s thesis interviews, the social worker was not a cultural broker but rather saw the practitioners of circumcision as culturally broken and ensured that the narratives that were told about the young women were reflective of this. Additionally, the social worker’s hybrid role during the interviews was amplified because of the ways that she embodied spheres of Europeanization as an NGO personnel and a self-identified source of protection and safety for the young women seeking safe shelter at the organization. In my dissertation fieldwork, the interviews were translated by a Tanzanian whose identity will be kept anonymous to maintain their safety. Lisa McKenna suggests qualitative research is not only about language but also reflects the culture in which the data was collected and suggests the importance of selecting translators who have not only language but also cultural affiliation with the people whose words are being translated (McKenna, 2022). It was imperative when approaching the transcription of my Master’s thesis interviews to ensure that the person translating the word was also Tanzanian so she could understand the larger implications of the interview subtleties, such as the inflections of the translator and their extensive meanings. From the discussion already included in this chapter, it is clear that even when translated, the social worker acting as translator’s questions were confusing because the social worker prioritized telling the story of the NGO rather than discursive clarity.

Most theories around translation center the Eurocentric perspective. For example, Douglas Robinson’s *Western Translation Theory: From Herodotus to Nietzsche* takes on a Western orientation and periodizes translation from the mid-fifth century to the end of

the 19<sup>th</sup> century, describing the best type of translator, problems of translating sacred texts, translation and language teaching, translation as rhetoric, translation and empire, and translation and gender. As evidenced by the title, studies of translation trace chronologies of Europeanization, which excludes the languages, translations, and knowledge production that existed before this timeline. By deconstructing translation theory with an Afrocentric orientation, we know that ancient Greeks owed a great deal to ancient Africans as thinkers such as Plato, Homer, Diodorus, Democritus, Anaximander, Isocrates, Thales, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, and many other Greeks studied and lived in Africa (Asante, 2007, p. 45). Therefore, we know that many translations existed before Herodotus, who is known for his work on naming ancient Egyptians as black-skinned Africans, so these Africans had ways of knowing and being before Eurocentric scholars even reached their pen to paper.

The translator replicates a Europeanized understanding of the young women's realities, replicating Northern Cradle hierarchies of humanity and cementing her status as an insider-without. Frantz Fanon discusses how colonialism has impacted the psyche of those colonized:

The colonist is not content with physically limiting the space of the colonized, i.e., with the help of his agents of law and order. As if to illustrate the totalitarian nature of colonial exploitation, the colonist turns the colonized into a kind of quintessence of evil. Colonized society is not merely portrayed as a society without values... The "native" is portrayed as impervious to ethics, representing not only the absence of values but also the negation of values (Fanon, p. 6).

The social worker acting as translator repeats the language of mutilator and mutilated to demonstrate the evil of Tanzanian people and attempts to repeat that the young women have gained values since getting help from the NGO, instituting her place as an agent of supposed law and order. As an agent of Europeanization, the social worker acting as

translator becomes an embodiment of an insider-without: she is also Tanzanian like the young women at the organization, but she must position them as without and in need of saving to institute the need of the NGO.

## **Conclusion**

When the findings of my Master's thesis are further contextualized and analyzed, the Human Rights Watch website feature with the images and one-lined captions align with the message that the social worker acting as translator attempted to provide me with during my Master's thesis fieldwork in 2019. The image of Tigisi with her school uniform and backpack in the forefront of the picture, while her family lies in the backdrop in their KiMaasai clothing and next to their indigenous home, speaks to the progress that NAFGEM has brought into her life. Tigisi's indigenous life remains in the background as she steps forward to a life of education and civility, thanks to the capitalistic support of the NGO, which will catapult her far beyond the hut and traditional clothing of her family. Agatha is pictured in her school uniform with an off-guard smile and in a field of wheat. The picture, evoking a smile that they presume she must not have had prior to her time at NAFGEM, suggests that had it not been for the intervention of the NGO, Agatha would also have been left behind in this field of wheat, stranded and starved by her indigeneity.

In addition to the parallels between the Human Rights Watch website and the narratives told by the NGO social worker, the analysis developed in my Master's thesis research revealed that the stories the social worker was telling were in tune with stories that have always been told about African young women and people: that they are helpless and valueless, needing salvation from a white savior to circumscribe ethics into their

humanity. When the Tanzanian young women are painted as only mutilated, impacted by child marriage, and uneducated, they are akin to the Hottentot Venus-ing of Sara Baartman. The parading of NGO saviorhood ensures that African people are reified as circus freaks and locked into spheres of Northern Cradle subjectivity.

The translator, as an insider-without, becomes an enactor of this Hottentoting when she works to sell a story of the young women that will pedestalize the work of the NGO. From the translator's vantage point, the young women and their stories, whether true or not, are vessels to maintain the capitalistic upkeep of the organization, so they must appear saved at all costs. In the process of portraying the young women as in need of saving and distant from their indigeneity, her own sense of self becomes distant as she replicates degrees of coloniality. My status as an outsider-within allowed me to complete the work for my Master's thesis while illuminating my own culpability as a vessel within the Pan-European Academy. As an outsider-within, the translator deemed the stories she was telling me about the young women as something that was valuable to the Pan-European Academy's hierarchy of humanity. However, the Black feminist framework that I brought with me to the trip and returned with after the fieldwork underscored the importance of not only the integrity of the work but also my own integrity as an African American and Caribbean woman. My revisitation of the work through an (auto)-Afronographic lens underlines that the young women lost in translation by NGO rhetoric must be contextualized to be a byproduct of Diop's Northern Cradle and the Europeanization of hierarchies of humanity. The contextualization of the young women in Tanzania as human beings and producers of word magic opens the radical possibility for the reification of the humanity of African people throughout the diaspora.

## CHAPTER 3

### Introduction

The convolution of the young women's responses by the social worker acting as translator throughout the interviews was an enactment of Northern Cradle hierarchies of domination to portray the young women as perpetually in need of salvation.

Sensationalized narrative formulations are the machinery that maintains the young women's positionalities in the white savior and NGO industrial complexes, while the university industrial complex acts as a mechanism to disseminate these stories. In

Chapter 1 of *Being Human Being*, Molefi Kete Asante and Nah Dove contextualizes the social construction of patriarchy through an Africological lens and its relation to the maintenance of dominance:

Our position is that we acknowledge patriarchy as fundamental to the debasement of women, and we go further to suggest that patriarchy is the cultural root of the construction of race, formed from the patriarchal bond, a covenant fashioned by women and men to "hierarch-ize" themselves above all phenotypes, nature, the cosmos, the divinities, and so on, thereby tolerating and concealing the first injustice, domination, with the compensation of being greater than all others, and empowering one another in the quest to justify the sacredness of that covenant. In hierarchy, there is always something or someone beneath who can be controlled, dominated, disrespected, abused, and so on (Asante and Dove, p. 22).

Using this definition of the hierarchy of domination and applying it to conceptualizations of female genital cutting, the conception of patriarchy reinforced the necessity for the practice of circumcision and the diffusion of the androgyny of Amen. By engaging in the act of circumcision for the ascription of a gendered male and female, men and women attempt to hierarch-ize themselves above the Kemetic, all-knowing Amen. Hierarchies of domination, with roots in patriarchy and Diop's Northern Cradle, have contemporary manifestations in the context of NGOs through the impact that systems of oppression,

such as racism, sexism, ageism, etc., have on the human beings being spoken for. These - isms inform the continuity of the multifaceted industrial complexes, such as the white savior industrial complex, the university industrial complex, and the NGO industrial complex, that the young women and I are inextricably webbed within, although in distinctive ways.

During the interviews, to maintain the rhetorical validity of the NGO, the social worker acting as translator instituted hierarchies of domination throughout the interviews through her mistranslations of the interview questions and responses, whether by additions or omissions of the young women's words. In order to expand the work of my Master's thesis through an Africological lens, I have measured how many times the social worker acting as translator intervened in each of the interviews, quantitatively calculating each interjection as a hierarchy of domination (HoD). A graph will be included for each interview, indicating the quantitative trends of how the HoDs presented themselves in each interview. The quantitative analysis of each interview will also be charted below, alongside a detailed analysis of why the words and phrases identified constitute a hierarchy of domination. In addition to the rhetorical analysis of each interview, all ten interviews will be quantitatively analyzed through the calculation of means to understand the frequencies of hierarchies of domination in each question. Though tracking this pattern, the moments in the interview where hierarch-ization was most frequent will be illuminated to inform how the implementation of a hierarchy of domination at particular points in the interview served to uphold the NGO's agenda and sustain the presence of the multilayered and multifaceted industrial complexes within the Pan-European Academy.

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the interviews initially served to illustrate the young women’s humanity amidst the monolithic stories told about them across geopolitical spaces. However, the presence of the social worker acting as translator fractured that desire because of her desire to curate the young women as victims of their indigeneity and vessels for NAFGEM’s salvation. The young women’s (YW) responses to the social worker acting as translator (SW) throughout each interview are not quantitatively considered as an indicator of a hierarchy of domination because they are not in a position to enact domination due to the marginal positionalities NAFGEM has cast them into to maintain the narrative that will sing the sweetest tune to their funders and sponsors.

**Table 1**

*Interview 1*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	9	SW: Like what class are you in, which school? <i>Yani kama unasoma darasa la ngapi, shule gani?</i>
		SW: Which grade? <i>Darasa lipi?</i>
		YW: A false one? <i>Ya uwongo?</i> SW: Lie... yeah... <i>Awongo... yeah...</i>
		YW: I place first in class... <i>Nakuwaga wa kwanza darasani...</i> SW: She is number one in the class...
		SW: Do you like to study? <i>Unapenda kusoma?</i>
		SW: Environment? <i>Mazingira?</i>
		YW: I keep going to school... <i>Nazidi kwenda shule...</i> SW: She will study until the place where the road stops for education...
		SW: Doctor? <i>Daktari?</i>

		SW: She wants to be a doctor so that she can help the girls in the community and the women, especially the ones who deliver at home...
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	2	SW: What would you one day like people to know about you and now they do not... (That your community should know from [name redacted]...that the community wanted you to get wedded? <i>Ungetamani siku moja watu wajue nini kuhusu wewe na sasa hivi hawajui... ile jamii yako ungetaka wajue nini kutoka [name redacted]...ile jamii waliotaka kukuoza...</i> YW: I would like them to know education is important for any child... <i>Ningetamani wajue elimu ina umuhimu kwa mtoto yeyote...</i> SW: She wants one day for the community and her relatives to know that education is very important, and that education should be provided to all kids without regard on their gender or sex, so all the girls have education...
3. What do you like to do for fun?	2	SW: And another thing you love to do, time to dance to music? <i>Na kitu kingine unachopenda kufanya, muda wa kucheza mziki?</i> YW: I love to dance to music, I love to cook, I love to cook beans with corn... <i>Napenda kucheza mziki, napenda [SW: kupika...] kupika, napenda kupika [SW: kupika nini...?] makande...</i> SW: And she likes to dance very much... She likes to cook... She likes to cook maize with beans...
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	2	SW: You like to cook beans and what? <i>Na unapenda kupika makande na nini?</i> YW: Beans and rice... <i>...Makande na wali...</i> SW: She likes to cook makande and rice... YW: Napenda ndizi <i>I like bananas (plantains)</i> SW: She likes banana with meat...
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	5	SW: Speak up until where we caught that guy, girlfriend! <i>Ongea mpaka tulivyo mkamata yule mkaka,</i>

		<p><i>shoga yangu!</i></p> <p>YW: Second day that man was caught...the old man who wanted to marry me...  <i>Siku ya pili akakamatwa yule makaka... si mbabu alikuwa antaka mwoa...</i></p> <p>SW: And then the man who want to marry her after mutilation is bringing the food to the mother... During the time she was in the police station... and then he's saying he's the son of her mother... pretending he's the son of the mother. Then she said this man.. I know... he's not belonging to my mom.... He's the one who's supposed to marry me... Please police officer catch them and then they catch them...</p> <p>SW: Do not cry now, if you cry you will irritate me!  <i>Usilie sasa, ukilia una ni udhi!</i></p> <p>YW: Then, my parents were interviewed. I returned to be helped here (at NAFGEM) and to get education...  <i>Halafu wazazi wangu wali hojiwa. Mimi nikarudi kusaidiwa hapa (NAFGEM) na kupewa elimu...</i></p> <p>SW: And then her parents... police is making a discussion with her parents... and then they tell the parents... like in prison... you are not going to stay in prison... you are doing the public works [community service]... after that they arrested the man [... work (community service for the mother and father...)]</p> <p>SW: You did not say where you went to school girlfriend (at that time...)  <i>Hujasema ulienda shule wapi shoga yangu...</i></p> <p>SW: And then we brought her to NAFGEM...  YW: Me? No, I have never gone to school..  <i>Mimi? Hapana sijawahi kwenda shule...</i></p> <p>SW: After she was brought to NAFGEM, she went to school... She hadn't ever been at school and NAFGEM helped her to get special school, which is for the girls who are 12-15 who have never been to school... and then she studied in Class 1 and the teacher saw her performance and they jumped her from Class 1 to Class 4 and then this year she is in class 5... and she likes to study...</p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	10	<p>SW: Your experience of your stay here at NAFGEM and your home... Now here do not let me down, explain everything girlfriend! ... because I know you have a lot of points on</p>

		<p>this, because I know there is a big difference. <i>Uzowefu wako ulivyo kaa hapa NAFGEM na kule nyumbani... Sasa hapo ndo usiniangushe elezea shoga yangu! ... maana najua kuna ma pointi sana, kwa maana najua kuna ma tofauti kibao.</i></p> <p>SW: Your experience as you stayed here at NAFGEM and at home...? <i>Uzowefu wako ulivyo kaa hapa NAFGEM na kule nyumbani...?</i></p> <p>YW: If I stayed at home longer, I would have already given birth, and had children <i>Ningezidi kukaa nyumbani, ningekuwa nimesha zaa, na kupata watoto...</i></p> <p>SW: She said if she was home, by now, she is supposed to have two kids... and taking care of the kids and having a lot of cows... goats... but at NAFGEM she's studying... she's getting our protection...</p> <p>SW: Have been given education and everything else...? <i>Si nimepata elimu na vitu vyote...?</i></p> <p>SW: She got education and she was aware about FGM before she was blind... she didn't know anything... and then...</p> <p>SW: Mention all the things you are given, school fees, clothes, and other items... <i>Sema vitu vyote unavyopewa, ada ya shule, nguo, na vingine...</i></p> <p>YW: Aaah... I did not know if you reached that far... (If we were going there..!) <i>Aaah... Sikujua kama umefikia huko...!</i></p> <p>SW: And she got everything like books, shoes, uniform without disturbance... coffee... so she's happy to be at NAFGEM...</p> <p>SW: What do you like to do when you are here? Like farming, to sweep, say girlfriend... <i>Mhojaji: unapenda kufanya nini ukiwa hapa? Kama kulima, kufagia, sema shoga yangu...</i></p> <p>YW: I love to clean and mop, I love sitting... <i>Napenda kufanya usafi na kudeki, napenda kukaa...</i></p> <p>SW: She likes to clean, to wash, to mop, to make bracelets...</p> <p>SW: And your fellows, you do not like to be around younger children...? <i>Na wenzako, hupendi kukaa na watoto wadogo...?</i></p> <p>YW: Yes, I love that too...</p>
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		<i>Ndio napenda.</i> SW: She likes to be with the other kids...
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	1	YW: You... because a girl wants a lot of things... such as under garments... <i>Wewe hapo... kwasabau vitu vingi sana msichana anataka... nikitaja kama nguo za ndani...</i> SW: She said me because there is a lot of things the girls want, so if she want anything privately, she come to me...
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	1	YW: They have changed.. I did not even know how to read, now I know how to read... <i>Wamebadilisha... nilikuwa sijui hata kusoma, sasa hivi najua kusoma...</i> SW: Before she came here, she don't know how to.. to catch a pen to write, but now she knows... she is in the school, so...

### Interview 1 Trends and Analysis

During interview 1, as soon as the first question begins, the social worker acting as translator inserts a hierarchy of domination (HoD) in question 1 when she begins to ask questions about the young woman's schooling, presuming that it is intertwined with her self-definition. However, educational attainment only corresponds with the self-definition of NAFGEM. Through the social worker's line of questioning, she centers the school that the young woman attends and encourages the young woman to lie about her class standing to falsify the success of the organization (YW: A false one? [*Ya uwongo?*]) SW: Lie... yeah... [*Awongo... yeah...*]). The young woman's lack of educational success does not make them any less of a valuable human being, but it depreciates their value in the imagination of the NGO, which sees their success in any form as a key to more money from funders. Instead of maintaining the young woman's truth that she will keep going to school, the translator adds the metaphor, "She will study until the place where the road stops for education," aligning with the belief that the organization has changed her life and instilled a dedication toward education in the young woman's mind. The

social worker acting as translator also defines future career paths for the young woman, asking, “Doctor? (*Daktari?*)” when the young woman should be defining her future for herself. When the young woman interviewed confirms, “Yes,” she extends that the young woman “wants to be a doctor so she can help girls in the community, especially, the ones who deliver at home...” It is not enough to curate the young woman’s future career for her, but she also suggests that the young woman wants to save the young women in her community impacted by at-home births, similar to the ways that they perceive the organization to have saved the young woman seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM (9).

In a similar fashion, when asking the young woman, “What is one thing she wishes people knew about her but do not?” the social worker inserts, “That community you come from... that wanted you to get wedded... (*ile jamii waliotaka kukuozecha...*).” In congruence with the previous question, the social worker acting translator does not leave room for the young woman to self-define but ensures that the young woman makes a cognitive comparison through the inscription of an us v. them dichotomy in the phrasing of her questioning, similar to the dichotomous past versus present selves captured by the imagery of the Human Rights Watch website. When the young woman provides her response to the slated question asking what she would want her community to know, she states that “She would like them [her community] to know that education is important for any child... (*Ningetamani wajue elimu ina umuhimu kwa mtoto yeyote...*).” The social worker acting as translator adds, “that education should be provided to all kids without regard to their gender or sex, so all the girls have education...” (2). Although it may be a reality that the young women headquartered at NAFGEM’s access to education has been impacted by conceptualizations of gender and patriarchy, this was not

something that the young woman deemed noteworthy from her sphere of reference, so the additive insertion of this concept is another moment that the social worker is inserting a consciousness of gendered realities onto the young woman, even though the young woman is acknowledging access issues for all children regardless of gender in a more Maatic fashion. The translator's additives to the interview attempt to present a semblance of NGO-ized meticulousness, reminiscent of the Pan-European Academy. For example, when the young woman interviewed does not give a thorough enough response about what she likes to do for fun, the social worker acting as translator begins to answer the question for her subliminally in Swahili by adding possible responses in her questions, such as "time to dance to music...? (*muda wa kucheza muziki...?*)" or "to cook...to cook what? (*kupika... kupika nini...?*)". Once the young woman affirms the social worker's additives in Swahili, the social worker applies her insinuations to the translation of the young woman's responses, "And she likes to dance very much.... She likes to cook... She likes to cook maize with beans..." (2). In addition to the convolution of the young woman's interests, when the young woman being interviewed is asked about the food she likes to eat or cook, the social worker acting as translator works to ensure that the young woman appears well-fed and has plenty to cook. Therefore, it is not enough that she likes to cook beans; she must like to cook rice and beans, which sounds like a more well-rounded meal. Similarly, it is not enough that she likes plantains (bananas), as the social worker acting as translator adds bananas with meat (2).

When the time comes for the young woman to tell her story about what made her come to NAFGEM, the social worker is excited for an action-packed story of how the young woman had been saved. She wants the young woman to "Speak up!" about the

man who is caught by the police and portrays the young woman as helpless without the police intervention. Although the young woman simply states, “[On the] second day that man was caught... the old man who wanted to marry me... (*Siku ya pili akakamatwa yule makaka... si mbabu alikuwa antaka mwoa...*),” the social worker acting as translator narrates in her translation, mimicking the words of the young woman, “He’s the one who’s supposed to marry me... Please, police officer, catch them...” When the young woman understandably begins to show emotions, possibly in reaction to the story or the translator’s additive interpretation of the story, she retorts, “Do not cry now... if you cry, you will irritate me... (*Usilie sasa, ukilia una ni udhi...!*)” As the social worker for the young women, this should have been a moment where they felt safe and were able to emote, but my Master’s thesis research, which would be brought back to the Pan-European Academy, telling the best story about the work that the NGO does, took precedence over the emotionality of the young woman. In addition to subsuming the emotionality of the young woman being interviewed, the social worker acting as translator adds contexts not stated by the young woman to portray her parents as criminal because of their desire to circumcise her. For example, the young woman only states that her “parents were interviewed, and she returned here to be helped (at NAFGEM) and to get an education... (*Halafu wazazi wangu wali hojiwa. Mimi nikarudi kusaidiwa hapa (NAFGEM) na kupewa elimu...*)” Instead of providing this accurate translation of the situation, the translator adds, “They (the police) tell the parents you are not going to stay in prison... you are going to do [community service]... community service for the mother and father...” According to the young woman’s frame of reference, her parents were not criminalized due to their involvement in the circumcision, but the social worker adds the

presence of community service for the parents as a means of displaying how the parents have been held accountable for their involvement in the young woman's "mutilation." As the young woman is wrapping up telling the story of what brought her to NAFGEM, the translator implies that she should also mention where she went to school at the time, in her indigenous community. When the young woman responds, "I have never gone to school (*Hapana sijawahi kwenda shule...*)," the translator sees this as another opportunity to demonstrate the success of the organization. She adds, "She hadn't ever been to school, and NAFGEM helped her to get [into a] special school, which is for the girls who are 12-15 who have never been to school... and then she studied in Class 1, and the teacher saw her performance, and they jumped her from Class 1 to Class 5 and then this year, she is in class 5..." The young woman said none of this about her schooling or her school performance; she only said that she had never been to school (5).

In conjunction with how the young woman is painted as having experienced educational progress due to the intervention of NAFGEM when asked about how the young woman's experience has been since at NAFGEM, the social worker acting as translator lets the young woman know "not to let her down (*Sasa hapo ndo usiniangushe*)," when describing the difference between her home and her stay at NAFGEM because "there is a big difference (*kuna ma tofauti kibao*)." The social worker acting as translator reframes the question to be a comparison of her life at home versus at NAFGEM to demonstrate how the NGO has advanced the young women's positionalities. When the young woman says, "If I stayed home longer, I would have already given birth and had children (*Ningezidi kukaa nyumbani, ningekuwa nimesha zaa, na kupata watoto...*)," the social worker acting as translator adds, "by now she is

supposed to have two kids... and taking care of the kids and having a lot of cows and goats, but at NAFGEM, she's studying... getting protection..." The young woman does not specify the number of kids she would have had nor make any mention of cows and goats, but the translator envisages these descriptive additives as a way of depicting the young woman as being susceptible to antiquated ways of being, tending to animals and children, whereas now she is being civilized by the organization through the provision of boarding school. The suggestion of the organization as a protective force implies that the young women need to be protected or saved from the dangers of their primitivity, reiterating a history of thingification and casting a hierarchy of humanity onto the bodies of the young women. The social worker acting as translator is adamant about projecting a narrative of saviorhood when she asks, "Have you been given education and everything else...? (*Si nimepata elimu na vitu vyote...?*)" Through the asking of this question, it implies that the young women's experience of NAFGEM should be nothing short of gratitude because of all that they have been given. The white savior complex and necessity for gratitude is crystallized when the translator adds, as a supposed translation of the young woman's words in response to how NAFGEM has changed the young woman's future, "She got [an] education, and she is aware of FGM... before she was blind... she didn't know anything..." Similar to the imagery propagated by Human Rights Watch, the social worker acting as translator upholds the imagination that the young women would be stranded in their past if it were not for the intervention of the organization.

The NGO personnel are eager for the young women to mention the specifics of all that NAFGEM has done for her, including giving her things such as "school fees, clothes,

and other items... (*ada ya shule, nguo, na vingine...*).” When the young woman being interviewed interjects in Swahili that “I didn’t know if we were going there... (*Sikujua kama umefikia huko...*),” the social worker acting as translator adds the word and items herself, citing that the young woman has been provided everything without disturbance, “...books, shoes, uniform, coffee... so she’s happy to be at NAFGEM...” This is not the reality that the young woman was attempting to communicate, but rather the narrative that shines the brightest light on NAFGEM. To convey further happiness, the social worker acting as translator fills in activities that she thinks the young women should perceive enjoyment in, asking the slated question, “What do you like to do when you are here...? Like farming or sweeping... say [it] girlfriend...! (*Unapenda kufanya nini ukiwa hapa...? Kama kulima, kufagia... sema shoga yangu...!*)” These are some of the few activities that I observed them doing while I was there, and through the line of questioning, the social worker is suggesting that the young women should state that they gain a sense of happiness from performing these activities while at the NGO. In response to this performative agenda, the young woman affirms that she likes “to clean and mop... and sit...” The social worker acting as translator dismisses the enjoyment she gets sitting still by translating her response as “She likes to clean, to wash, to mop, to make bracelets...” The young woman does not mention making bracelets, but the social worker alludes to this activity being fun because it is something that accrues money for the organization. By suggesting that this is one of the likes of the young women while spending time at the organizational headquarters, the social worker centers the ways that the young women feed the capital accrual of the organization rather than the actual experiences of the young women. In an attempt to paint a more authentic picture that

would align more with what the young women may actually like, the social worker asks, “You do not like to be around younger children? (*Hupendi kukaa na watoto wadogo...?*)” Once the young woman affirms, the social worker translates, “She likes to be with other kids,” curating a more balanced response that covers up how she has already filled in the young woman’s responses to this question (10).

When the young woman is asked who she considers a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM, the young woman names the social worker. In her reasoning for naming the social worker, she states that when they want things such as undergarments, the social worker gets them for them. After translating her response, the social worker adds, “Only that...? When I go to Dar, I won’t bring you anything... (*Hicho tu...? Nikienda Dar sikuletei kitu kingine...*).” For the social worker, the young woman’s response was not enough, so she threatened that when she went to Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania, she would not bring the young woman back anything. To appease her desire for a more polished portrayal of her work with the young women, the young woman interviewed adds, “Even if I am on my period, I will still come to you... (*Na kama nikiwa siku zangu pia nakufata wewe...*)” (1). The social worker wants to make it apparent that she is a resource for the young women’s “private health problems,” but this is her job, and it should be a right, not a privilege, that the young women have access to menstrual products and undergarments whether at the organization or in their indigenous community. As the social worker ended the interview, she was not short of metaphors to conclusively illustrate the ways that NAFGEM had saved the young woman. When the young woman states that before, “I didn’t even know how to read... now I know how to read... (*Nilikuwa sijui hata kusoma, sasa hivi najua kusoma...*),” the social worker edits,

“Before she came here, she didn’t know how to... to catch a pen to write, but now she knows, she’s in school, so...” (1). For the young women, their involvement with the organization is simple and understandable: they are there for their education and because they have been impacted by female genital cutting and child marriage. However, the translator frames the young women’s realities with circuitous metaphors to center the NGO’s discursive Europeanization of the girl’s humanity.



Figure 1. Interview 1 data analysis.

In Figure 1, illustrating the data trends from interview one’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 1, 6, and 7 have the most hierarchies of domination present, during which the social worker acting as translator is mistranslating the questions, adding words or phrases to the young women’s responses, or engaging in behaviors that center the agenda of the organization, rather than the young women as intended. The presence of a higher number of hierarchies of domination can stem from the social worker’s desire for the young

women's sense of self to be inextricably interwoven with the organization and all they have done for the young women. Similarly, questions 6 and 7, when the young woman is stating what made her come to NAFGEM and how her experience has been at NAFGEM, are disrupted so that the NGO's work can take precedence over the authenticity of the young woman's story. Questions 3, 4, 8, and 9 were less able to be modified to the NGO's tune because the young women's joy, safety, and trust cannot be defined in totality by the NGO, and the young women are definers of their foreseeable futures.

**Table 2**

*Interview 2*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	4	SW: She won't note down your age, what about school environment, do you like/love to study? <i>Hata andika miaka yako, je mazingira ya shule, je unapenda kusoma?</i>
		SW: How is your experience in school? <i>Unafanyaje shuleni?</i>
		YW: I am struggling in my studies... SW: You like your studies? SW: Yes.
		SW: What position are you in, which subject you like to study? And the one you don't like? YW: My favorite subject is mathematics, science and English, and I am the second one in the class position, we are 40 students in one class.
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	1	SW: Oh okay, what else? For example, I would say, I don't like that issue (FGM) which they wanted to do... <i>Eeeh, na kingine? Kwa mfano mimi ningesema sipendi ile issue ninayo fanyiwa...</i>

		YW: I want them to know that I hate female genital circumcision in our society...
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	0	
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	0	
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	4	<p>SW: How has your experience been here (at NAFGEM) ...different from the life in your village...? How could you have been in your village? How many children could you be having by now? How many men would you have relationship with? [name redacted] explained very well than you...you are letting me down....</p> <p><i>Kuna tofauti gani ww kukaa hapa... na ulivyokuwa kule kijinini...? Yani kule kijijini ungekuwaje? ungekuwa na watoto wangapi? na wanaume wangapi ? [heh?! *shock*] [name redacted] anaelezea vizuri kuliko wewe, unaniangusha ...</i></p> <p>YW: When I am here, I am free, but when I am home, I am not free...</p> <p>SW: Like what...what made you be free here unlike at home?</p> <p>YW: There is defense and security...</p> <p>SW: At NAFGEM?</p> <p>YW: Yes, at NAFGEM, but there at home there is no defense... and when I am here I am eating good, but when I am at home sometimes, there is no food. When I am here I am not married, but if I were at</p>

		home, I could be married... SW: And having like ten kids... one... YW: And having like two...
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	0	
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	0	

## Interview 2 Trends and Analysis

During interview 2, when asking the first question, the social worker acting as translator centers the young woman's schooling when the young woman should be talking about herself. Additionally, when asking about the school environment, the social worker does not allow the young woman to define how she feels about the school for herself, but rather asks the charged question, "What about the school environment... do you like/love to study...? (*Je mazingira ya shule... Je unapenda kusoma...?*)" Through this line of questioning, the social worker makes it apparent that the interview is not about the young woman herself but rather about acknowledging her enjoyment of school, even if those are not her authentic feelings. She continues centering the school, adding, "How is your experience in school...? (*Unafanyaje shuleni...?*)" When the young woman states that she is struggling in her studies, the social worker masks over her statement, asking, "You like your studies?" to which the young woman replies, "Yes..." To advance the deceit of her educational progress, the social worker asks, "What position are you in? Which subject do you like? And the one you don't like?" to which the young woman replies, "My favorite subjects are Mathematics, Science, and English, and I am the second one in the class position, we are 40 students in one class..." Due to the young woman's previous statement that she is struggling in her studies, the honesty of her

placement in a class of 40 students must also come into question and is another demonstration of how the social worker acting as translator's questions and phrasing provokes certain answers from the young women, even if they are dishonest (4). When asking the young woman, "What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?" the social worker acting as translator provides a question-response that feeds the young woman's answer to the question. She asks, in Swahili, "What else...? For example, I would say, I don't like that issue (FGM) which they wanted to do... (*Na kingine...? Kwa mfano mimi ningesema sipendi ile issue ninayo fanyiwa...*)" to which the young woman replies, "I want them to know that I hate female genital circumcision in our society..." Prior to this feed-in, the young woman only says, "I want them to know that I am educated..." which does not drive the mission of the NGO forward to its desired benchmark, so the social worker makes it clear that this would also be an opportune moment for the young woman to express her disdain for circumcision.

The presence of hierarchies of domination materializes again in question 7 of the interview when the young woman describes her experience at NAFGEM. The social worker acting as translator poses the same comparative question that she asked in interview 1, "How has your experience been here (at NAFGEM) ...different from the life in your village...? How could you have been in your village...? How many children could you be having by now? How many men would you have a relationship with? [name redacted] explained very well than you...You are letting me down.... (*Kuna tofauti gani ww kukaa hapa... na ulivyokuwa kule kijinini...? Yani kule kijijini ungekuwaje...? Ungekuwa na watoto wangapi...? Na wanaume wangapi...? [heh?! \*shock\*] [name redacted] anaelezea vizuri kuliko wewe, unaniangusha...*)." When the social worker asks

the young woman how many men she could have been in a relationship with, she conveys a sonic sense of shock to the insinuation. However, the social worker is unwavering in demonstrating the NGO's success and lets the young woman know how much she has let her down with her previous responses, which pales in comparison to the responses given by her previous counterpart in interview 1. To appease the desire of the social worker, the young woman states in reference to her experience at NAFGEM, "When I am here, I am free, but when I am at home, I am not free..." The social worker enjoys this new sense of freedom that the young woman claims she has gotten since being at the organization and asks, "What made you free here, unlike at home?" The young woman responds, "There is defense and security..." These notions of safety, freedom, defense, and security seem trivial, considering these sensibilities have been inserted into the young woman's perception of reality. In this sense, the social worker replicates the convoluted notion of freedom emblematic of Westernism and hierarchies of domination. America, an emblem of the West, claims the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness in its Declaration of Independence, while African people were still enslaved and considered three-fifths of a human being during the document's development. The young woman's responses about how NAFGEM provides defense and security paint a contextual picture of how Diop's Northern Cradle becomes written in history as a safe space when it has done the opposite to Tanzanian people by hierarch-izing them into spheres of domination. The young woman adds to her perception of security, "When I am here, I am eating good, but when I am home, sometimes, there is no food... When I am here, I am not married, but if I were at home, I could be married..." Through this statement, there is an acknowledgement of food and financial insecurity, which shows how many of the young

women are married off by family members because of the dowry the families hope to receive. The young woman’s response is demonstrative of her understanding of how she has been imprinted into hierarchies of domination such as patriarchy, capitalism, and racism and how it implicates her access to human needs. In response to the social worker’s previously convoluted question, “How many children could you be having by now?” the social worker attempts to convey a victimizing story but is adequately corrected by the young woman. When the social worker states, “And having like ten kids... one...” the young woman adds, “And having like two...” During this moment in the interview, similar to how the young woman uses the conditionality of could when referring to the possibility of marriage if she was still at home, she attempts to preserve the integrity of her indigeneity, lowering the number of children that she could have had if she were still living in her indigenous community to two (4).



Figure 2. Interview 2 data analysis.

In Figure 2, illustrating the data trends from interview two’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions

1, 2, and 7 have the most hierarchies of domination present. During this particular interview, after the young woman states her response to question 2, “I want them [her society] to know that I hate female genital circumcision,” I interject into the interview, asking the social worker acting as translator if she is telling the young woman what to say. Although she denies that she is and states that she is only asking her to elaborate more on the question, there is a significant drop in the presence of hierarchies of domination in this interview after suspicion builds about the social worker’s involvement in the young women’s responses. In Chapter 4, there will be an (auto)-Afronographic identification of how these moments served to create agency not only for myself but for the young women being interviewed. After question 6, the social worker feels emboldened to continue to interject to ensure that she is shining the brightest light on the NGO and the ways that they have saved the young women from their primitivity.

**Table 3**

*Interview 3*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	3	<p>G: I go to school at Majengo Secondary School.  <i>Nasoma Majengo Secondary School.</i>            SW: Jesus! I mean explain why you are in school <i>Yesuu! yani elezea kwanini uko shule</i>            G: I am supported/ sponsored by the organization  <i>Nimesaidiwa na shirika...</i></p> <p>SW: Mmm! I mean...explain about your school in general, saying like, how is the environment..? why do you like your school...?  <i>Mmm! Yani... elezea shule yako ki ujumla, tuseme kuna</i></p>

		<p><i>nini kule shuleni kwanini...? unapenda ile shule...?</i>  G: I like/love school because we study and eat at school, the teachers are good at teaching, there are beautiful trees and the general environment is good, and students do get high grades...  <i>Napenda kwa maana tunsoma na tunakula kule shuleni, na shule ni nzuri walimu wantufundhisha, na kuna miti na mazingira mazuri na wanfunzi wanafaulu...</i>  SW: She likes the school because they study, they eat at school, the school is good, the teacher taught them very nice or treat them good, there is a lot of trees which make the environment to be good, and most of the students they have good averages...</p> <hr/> <p>SW: Why do the students get good grades?  <i>Kwa nini wanafaulu?</i>  G: Because the teachers do their very best to teach, that is one of the reasons why I like the school...  <i>Kwa sababu walimu wanafundisha vizuri, kwa hiyo ndo maana nimependa hiyo shule...</i></p>
<p>2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>SW: In that community you lived or here at NAFGEM or any person, to know about your desires and they have not known until now?  <i>Natamani ile jamii yako, au NAFGEM, au mtu yoyote siku moje ajue kwamba wewe uunatamani nini mpaka sasa hivi hawajajua</i>  G: Mmm! I didn't understand the question...  <i>Mmm! Sijakuelewa...</i></p> <hr/> <p>YW: I wish/ hope to be a teacher, to help and educate/teach people and it</p>

		<p>will be good to teach children so that they are also educated.  <i>Nataka kama kuja kuwa mwalimu, naenda kuwasaidia na kuelimisha watu, na itakuwa vizuri. Na kusomesha watoto wao wa elimike.</i>          SW: She wishes one day if she could study to become a teacher... She wants her society to know the importance of education... And the community to know to have the ability to send their kids to school and to live like the free society from FGM...</p>
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	1	<p>SW: What do you like to cook? For example, I would say I like to cook banana, what about you?  <i>Unapenda kupika nini?? Kwa mfano, mimi nitasema napenda kupika ndizi na ww je??</i>          G: *silent*          M: Nothing... No, you don't like to cook anything... That's also an option... It could be nothing... did she say nothing...?          SW: No, she said she like to cook everything, so she cannot make a decision...          M: That works... I can write that down...</p>
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	3	<p>SW: Explain every detail about what made you come here... just tell us... if you forget by mistake I will add up and explain...  <i>Elezea kile kitu kilikufanya uje hapa...wewe elezea to...hata kama umekosea mimi nitaelezea wewe endelea...</i></p>

		<p>YW: I said to them... I am a young child who just completed Primary School, and my parents don't want to take me for further studies. They told me to not worry, that they will help me. When I finished talking to them, they asked me if I had a place to sleep/ stay. I told them no I don't have anywhere to go. Then they brought me to NAFGEM. The next day they called my mother and told her to come to the police station, so she went to the station. They asked her to choose where her child would be taken, to school or to be returned home with her. She said we wanted to marry her off, but if she was smart enough to come report at police station, then it is best she goes to school to continue with her studies....</p> <p><i>Nikwambia... ni mtoto niliyo maliza shule, wazazi wangu hawataki kunisomesha. Wakanmbia usijali tutakupatia msaada, nilipo maliza wakanmbia una mahali pa kwenda kulala?...Nikawambia sijui mahali. Akaniletea kituo cha NAFGEM.Kesho yake wakampigia mama yangu simu, mama yangu akaja kituo cha polisi.wakamuliza unataka mtoto wako asome au arudishwe nyumabni? Akasema sisi tulikuwa tunataka tumwozesha lakini, kwa akili yake aliopata akaja hapa,mimi natak motto wangu aendele kusoma. Akasema anataka aendele na masomo basi....</i></p> <p>SW: And she said, I am ready to complete Standard 7 and my parents don't want to help</p>
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		<p>me to study anymore and my brother want to marry her... And police say okay you are in a safe place... And after she finish, the police asked her, do you have any place to sleep for today..? And then she replied no, I am new in this place, I don't know anywhere... And then the police contacted NAFGEM and brought her to the NAFGEM shelter for protection while the case is in court... And the day after they contacted her mother and her mother went to the police station and they asked do you want to marry your girl or you want her to study or what do you want to do to your girl... And her mother she said, she wants her to study and that the person who want her to be married is her brother and they know women are not allowed to talk in front of the man... And she said please help her to have an education because her brother, if he comes back... he will send her to the man...</p> <p>SW: Did they take in your brother?  <i>Kaka yako alikamatwa?</i>  YA: Mmmh (No...!)  SW: Until now, the case is in court...</p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	4	<p>SW: What is the difference between staying here at NAFGEM and home where you came from? Or what do you like different from staying here rather than at home?</p> <p><i>Kunatofauti gani kukaa hapa (NAFGEM) na ungekuwa kule nyumabni, au ni nini kimekuvutia, wewe kukaa hapa na usikae kule</i></p>

		<p><i>nyumabni kwenu?</i></p> <p>SW: Say what things exactly you get... don't just say things...rather, mention them...</p> <p><i>Usiseme kitu, sema kitu gani... ukisema kitu... mimi nitashindwa kusema kitu hicho...</i></p> <p>YW: Okay! It's a good place, that's what they saved us from... and they give us education... we get food, we get everything, and when we go to school...we get everything... school uniform, shoes, and socks...</p> <p><i>haya! Ni sehemu nzuri, ndo maana wametuokoa .... na wanatuka elimu, na tunapata chakula, tunapata kila kitu, na tukienda hsule tunapata kila kitu ....uniform ya shule, viatu, na soksi</i></p> <p>SW: Because... they protect the girls and the kids and they get a good education... they get food... and when she goes to school, she gets everything, like books, pens, exercise books....</p> <p>SW: If you were in your village, say and explain to us how your situation would have been...</p> <p><i>Na ungekuwa kule kijijini, sema sasa ,nieleze, je sasa hivi hali yako ingekuwaje....</i></p> <p>YW: I would have been married off, and would have been pregnant by now, and living a hard/tough life...</p> <p><i>Ungesha olewa, na ingekuwa sasa hivi nimesha beba mimba, na nateseka huko...</i></p> <p>SW: Compared to... If now she was in the rural... She will be married... and she have like pregnant... suffering with hard life...</p>
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8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	1	<p>G: It is you...  <i>Ni wewe hapo...</i>  SW: No, I don't want... why is it me?  <i>Hapana sitaki... kwanini?</i>  When you sick and all that...  <i>Ukiwa unaumwa, ukitaka...</i>  SW: She said me because when she is sick she is free to tell me I'm sick...  SW: Another reason?  <i>Sababu nyingine?</i>  G: I don't have any...  <i>Hamna...</i></p>
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	2	<p>G: It has changed me a lot...  <i>Imeni badilisha sana...</i>  SW: How exactly...? Explain the reasons...  <i>Kivipi...? Lazima uwe na sababu...</i></p> <hr/> <p>G: They take us to school, and they love us, that's all....  <i>Kusomesha, na wantupenda, basi...</i>  SW: NAFGEM changed her future because they brought her to school... they love her... and like, protect her...</p>

### Interview 3 Trends and Analysis

During interview 3, the social worker acting as translator is steadfast about having the young woman interviewed depict her identity as linked to the support of the organization. When asked question 1 to “Tell me about herself,” the young woman explains, “I go to school at Majengo Secondary School... (*Nasoma Majengo Secondary School...*)” The social worker shows frustration with this response, exclaiming, “Jesus! (*Yesuu!*)” because the young woman has not explained what made her able to attend school. The young woman eventually folds to the persistence of the social worker,

explaining, “I am supported/sponsored by the organization... (*Nimesaidiwa na shirika...*).” From the very beginning of the interview, the social worker ensures that the young woman understands that the priority of the interview is not about conveying who she is but rather what the organization has done for her and how it has saved her. The social worker continues probing, “Explain about your school in general, saying like, how is the environment...? Why do you like your school..? (*Elezea shule yako ki ujumla, tuseme kuna, nini kule shuleni kwanini...? unapenda ile shule...?*).” To this inquiry, the young woman responds, “I like school because we study and eat at school, the teachers are good at teaching, there are beautiful trees, the general environment is good, and students do get high grades... (*Napenda kwa maana tunsoma na tunakula kule shuleni, na shule ni nzuri walimu wantufundhisha, na kuna miti na mazingira mazuri na wanafunzi wana faulu...*),” which the social worker translates with accuracy. From this alleged self-identification of the quality of the school, the young woman has made it clear all that the organization has done for her and the ways that the NGO has set her up for success. The social worker ensures that the young woman expounds about how the organization has set her up for success by asking, “Why do students get good grades? (*Kwa nini wanafaulu?*)” to which the young woman ties the savior bow to her response by stating conclusively, “Because the teachers do their very best to teach [us]... that is one of the reasons why I like school... (*Kwa sababu walimu wanafundisha vizuri,kwa hiyo ndo maana nimependa hiyo shule...*).” The young woman ties the symbolic bow on the social worker’s desire for her response by insinuating that the quality of teachers they have access to has made her enjoy attending boarding school (3).

For question two, the social worker acting as translator asks the question in such a convoluted way to advance the agenda of the organization that the young woman does not understand the question. The social worker asks haphazardly, “In that community, you lived... or here at NAFGEM or any person... to know about your desires, and they have not known until now...? (*Natamani ile jamii yako... au NAFGEM au mtu yoyote... siku moja ajue kwamba wewe uunatamani nini mpaka sasa hivi hawajajua...?*)” Even the translation of the question appears to be a bunch of jumbled words; eager to get the young woman to respond in a manner that shines the best light on the organization, the translator creates spheres of inquisitive confusion. The young woman replies, “I didn’t understand the question... (*Sijakuelewa...*)” When she asks the question in a more straightforward manner that does not orient the organization as the central focus, the young woman is able to provide a more comprehensive response. “I hope to be a teacher, to help educate people... and it will be good to teach children so they are also educated... (*Nataka kama kuja kuwa mwalimu, na enda kuwasaidia na kuelimisha watu, na itakuwa vizuri. Na kusomesha watoto wao wa elimike...*)” This response was not what the social worker was hoping for, so she inserted the organization’s tenets into the translation of the young woman’s response, stating, “She wishes one day if she could study to become a teacher... She wants her society to know the importance of education... And the community to know [they] have the ability to send their kids to school and to live free from FGM...” The young woman does not mention female genital cutting in her response, nor does she mention having access to education, but in order for the young woman’s reality to fit into the puzzle of NAFGEM, their responses must be populated

with allusions to mutilation and commentary on educational access to elucidate how the NGO has saved them (2).

There was no space for dissent in the young women's responses. When asked about what foods the young woman likes to eat or cook, the young woman remains silent. I encouraged her silence in my attempt to capture her response, stating, "Nothing... that's also an option..." then I asked the social worker, "... did she say nothing...?" Since this does not prescribe to the perceived compliance that she desires from the young women for the interview, she states, "No, she said she likes to cook everything, so she cannot make a decision..." Although I note that "I can write that down," liking everything does not reflect the young woman's truth. The young woman's choice to remain silent was her demonstration of agency during the interview during a question she more likely than not perceived to be flippant, silly, and insignificant (1). When we arrive at the question where the young woman is explaining what made her come to NAFGEM, the social worker makes it apparent that she will compile the story together for the young woman to make it comprehensive. Although it can be surmised that the social worker is being supportive of the young women as they disclose sensitive information, the way the social worker began to fill in the gaps of the story during the interview transformed the story in a way that seemed disingenuous to the reality of the young woman. For example, when the young woman is explaining the process of arriving at NAFGEM, she states, "When I finished talking to them (the police), they asked me if I had a place to stay.... I told them, "No, I don't have anywhere to go..." Then they brought me to NAFGEM... (*Wakanmbia usijali tutakupatia msaada, nilipo maliza wakanmbia una mahali pa kwenda kulala?...Nikawambia sijui mahali. Akaniletea kituo cha NAFGEM...*)."

The social

worker translates these statements as “And after she finished, the police asked her, “Do you have any place to sleep for today...?” And then she replied, “No, I am new in this place, I don’t know anywhere...” And then the police contacted NAFGEM and brought her to the NAFGEM shelter for protection while the case is in court...” The young woman does not mention anything about a case being in court, only that she came to NAFGEM, nor does she convey that she is lost or “new in this place” in her response, but these additives promulgate the helpless victim mentality that suggests the young women are in need of saving from their alleged blindness. In the young woman’s explanation of the interactions that the police had with her mother, she describes how, “The next day, they called my mother and told her to come to the police station, so she went to the station. They asked her to choose where her child would be taken, to school, or to be returned home with her. She said we wanted to marry her off, but if she was smart enough to come report at the police station, then it was best she go to school to continue with her studies.... (*Kesho yake wakampigia mama yangu simu, mama yangu akaja kituo cha polisi.wakamuliza unataka mtoto wako asome au arudishwe nyumbani? Akasema sisi tulikuwa tunataka tumwozesha lakini, kwa akili yake aliopata akaja hapa,mimi nataka motto wangu aendele kusoma. Akasema anataka aendele na masomo basi....*.)” The social worker adds her own interpretation with the translation, “... And the day after they contacted her mother and her mother went to the police station, they asked...do you want to marry your girl, or you want her to study or what do you want to do to your girl... And her mother said she wants her to study and that the person who wants her to be married is her brother, and they know women are not allowed to talk in front of men... And she said, please help her to have an education because her brother, if he comes back... he will

send her to the man...” The young woman does not mention her brother in her response but instead captures her mother’s to the police officers about returning her to school. Rather than providing an accurate translation of the young woman’s story, the social worker sees this as an opportunity to depict the mother as silenced to speaking up against men. The mother did not beg the police or NAFGEM for anything; there was no “please” from the young woman’s account. Instead, the mother realized the young woman could outwit them by calling on law enforcement to avoid marriage, so it was best to keep her in an educational setting. The social worker attempts to keep this falsified story afloat, portraying the young woman’s brother as an evil villain, asking the young woman during the interview, “Did they (the police) take in your brother? (*Kaka yako alikamatwa?*)” to which she replies “No... (*Mmmh...*)” However, the social worker maintains her story of criminalization with her translation of the young woman’s story, adding, “Until now, the case is in court...” (3).

For the question about the young women’s experience at NAFGEM, the social worker is now cognizant of how she has curated confusion by asking the question in a deceptive way that centers the advancement of the organization, so she directs her line of questioning in a craftier manner. She now asks the young woman, “What is the difference between staying here at NAFGEM and the home where you came from? Or what do you like that is different from staying here rather than at home? (*Kunatofauti gani kukaa hapa (NAFGEM) na ungekuwa kule nyumbani? Au ni nini kimekuvutia, wewe kukaa hapa na usikae kule nyumbani kwenu?*)” Although this framing of the question is still reiterative of an us versus them dichotomy, it is framed more craftfully to get the young woman to the same destination of salvation, without being so obvious about its prearrangement.

When the young woman is not picking up what the social worker is putting down through her unembellished response, “This (NAFGEM) is a nice, comfortable place because I get what I need... (*Hapa ni mahali pazuri kwa sababu, nimepata kile kitu nilikuwa nataka...*),” the social worker adds, “Say what things exactly you get... don’t just say things...rather, mention them... (*Usiseme kitu, sema kitu gani... ukisema kitu... mimi nitashindwa kusema kitu hicho...*).” At this point, the young woman realizes she must provide a response that the social worker would want to hear, so she contends, “It’s a good place, that’s what they saved us from... and they give us [an] education... we get food, we get everything, and when we go to school...we get everything... school uniform, shoes, and socks... (*Ni sehemu nzuri, ndo maana wametuokoa.... na wanatuka elimu, na tunapata chakula, tunapata kila kitu, na tukienda hsule tunapata kila kitu....uniform ya shule, viatu, na soksi...*).” Due to the social worker’s insertions, the young woman explicitly voices how she is a vessel of the white savior complex, just as the social worker wanted her to say. Therefore, it can be presumed from the alleged words of the young woman that due to the organization’s provision, she is safe from the spheres of primitivity and the ineptitude of her indigenous past. The provision of books, pens, food, and socks does not suffice as an illustration of all that the organization has done for her, so the social worker provides the sentence stem, “If you were in your village, say and explain to us how your situation would have been... (*Na ungekuwa kule kijijini, sema sasa ,nieleze, je sasa hivi hali yako ingekuwaje....*).” The young woman provides the narrative provision of villagized victimhood to the ears of the social worker stating, “I would have been married off, and would have been pregnant by now, and living a

hard/tough life... (*Ungesha olewa, na ingekuwa sasa hivi nimesha beba mimba, na nateseka huko...*),” which the social worker translates without hesitancy (4).

For the question asking who the young woman considers a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM, the social worker is eager to hear her name mentioned, although she engages in a sense of false modesty when the young woman finally says it. For example, after the young woman says, “You... (*Wewe...*)” in response to the question, the social worker replies, “No, I don’t want it... (*Hapana sitaki...*),” but when the young woman’s reasoning behind choosing her as a source of safety does not suffice (When you are sick and all that... *Ukiwa unaumwa, ukitaka...*), she pries, “Another reason? (*Sababu nyingine?*), to which the young woman responds, “I don’t have any... (*Hamna...*)” (1). Similarly, when the young woman is asked how NAFGEM has changed her future, she provides a broad response, “It has changed me a lot...” which does not appease the social worker’s expectation, so she asks, “How exactly...? Explain the reasons... (*Kivipi...? Lazima uwe na sababu...*).” When the young woman provides her response, “They take us to school, and they love us, that’s all... (*Kusomesha, na wantupenda, basi...*)” the translator still adds in her translation of the young woman’s response, “NAFGEM changed her future because they brought her to school... they love her... and like, protect her...” prescribing a sense of defenselessness to the young woman who is perpetually in need of the organization’s protection (2).



Figure 3. Interview 3 data analysis.

In Figure 3, illustrating the data trends from interview three's quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 1, 2, and 6, 7, and 9 have the most hierarchies of domination present. As seen in previous interviews, at the beginning of the interviews, the social worker makes clear that the interviews are less about the young women's experiences and are more about portraying the organization in the best light. At the start of question 6, when the young woman describes what made her come to NAFGEM, the social worker explicitly states that she will add to the young woman's response as needed. While that may be perceived as being supportive during a time in the interview when the young woman is discussing a sensitive topic, her additions to the responses maintained a narrative of disempowerment when discussing how the young woman came to NAFGEM. Although the phrasing of question 7, asking how the young woman's experience has been at NAFGEM, may be considered as more precise in this iteration of the interview, the social worker's villagization of the young woman's experience before being saved by NAFGEM remains consistent. As the

interview comes to a close, the social worker is eager to hear how the organization has saved the young woman and is unwilling to settle for broad responses that do not describe her salvation in detail, cementing the NGO's role as a propeller for the young women's success.

**Table 4**

*Interview 4*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	1	<p>YW: I am at NAFGEM for the purpose of going to school because I need to study, so that I can help people in my village/community. Here in NAFGEM we are well taken care of, I want to be educated so that I can help my fellow Masaai community members and other people...  <i>Mimi niko hapa NAFGEM kwa kusoma, nahitaj kusoma ili niwasidie huko kijijini, na hapa NAFGEM tunalelewa vizuri, natami kusoma ili niwasidie huko umasaini na huko kwingine ...</i>            SW: She is now at NAFGEM... She is studying in order to help the other people in her community... For now, she is in NAFGEM under safe protection... She is a student...</p>
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	3	<p>SW: You desire one day in that village you came from or here at NAFGEM or another place you go, that people would know something about you that they had not known before...?  <i>Unatamani siku moja ile jamii yako kule kijijini au NAFGEM, au wapi unapoenda untamani wakijue hadi sasa hivi hawakijui...?</i></p> <p>YW: I desire/hope they would know how FGM can be painful/detrimental...  <i>Natamani wajue nanili jinis ya ukekettaji...</i>            SW: She want to her community to know the pains which are involving FGM...            SW: Eeeh! (Continue)            YW: That's all!  <i>Basi!</i>            SW: Hiiiii! (Seriously?)</p>

		<p>YW: Please repeat the question...  <i>Ebu nambie tena.</i>  SW: I can't tell you what to say because the interview is being recorded...  <i>Mimi siwezi kukwambia maana kina rekodi...</i></p>
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	0	
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	1	<p>YW: When I just arrived at my grandmother's place, she took a motorcycle (bodaboda) and took me straight home to my father, I started crying, we arrived in the evening, everything was set, and they had arranged everything just waiting for party the next day. The school head teacher called my grandmother she handed-up the phone, that's when he realized they have already taken me. The next day early in morning they came with police to take me back to school so that I could continue with my national examinations. The next day they gave me a phone to talk to the police and they were recording the conversation. The next day [name redacted] (from NAFGEM) came and together we went at the ward executive's office and they talked to my father asking him if I he wants me to continue with school or he be imprisoned? My father agreed and said take her I don't even want her anymore, they said we are just taking her to help you, he said just take her, then they took me back to school.</p> <p><i>Nilipofika to hivi bibi akanichukua na pikipiki ananipeleka kwa baba.nikaanza kulia, aknipeleka, ikafik ajioni, nikakuta washajiandaa. Wameshapanga kila kitu wasubiri kesho to sherehe, ndo mwalimu mkuu akampigia bibi yangu akakata simu.akajua kwamba nimechukuliwa.kesho akaja asubuhi na mapolisi. Waja kunichukua wakanirudisha shule, nikaendele kufanya siku ya pili huo mtihani. Ndo kesho yake akanipa nionge na simu ya polisi nikaonea wakani rekodi, kesho yake [name redacted] (NAFGEM) wakaja.halafu wakaja pale wakanipeleka pale ofisi ya kata, wakaenda kuongea na baba yangu, unataka mtoto asome au hutaki? Wakasema kama hutaki tutakuja kukupeleka kwa mapolisisi, baba yang undo akakubali, akasema tena mchukua kabisaa mimi simtaki tena, wakamwmabia tunaenda tu kumsaidia.akasema wewe mchukue tu.ndo wakanipeleka hiyo shule.</i></p> <p>SW: And then her grandmother sends her to her father and she start again crying on the way... And the time she reach</p>

		<p>home it was night... And they found some celebration there... And then they wait for the next day for the wedding... And that moment her headteacher was communicating with her grandmother and her grandmother was refusing to pick up the phone... and then he announced that [name redacted] was being sent to the man... And the day of wedding, the headteacher went there early in the morning... And he took her and bring her back to the school and then she continued her studies... And then the other day they contact the police officer... And then after speaking with the police and then the next day NAFGEM went there... And they bring her to the police station as well as social welfare office... And then go there to speak with her father... and ask if he want the girl to be married or to study... And then at that moment, her father said he's 50/50 (I don't want/I want)... And at that time... he runs again... And then NAFGEM took [name redacted] to here... Until now, she is at NAFGEM studying...</p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	5	<p>SW: The life you living now and your current situation, comparing it to life in the village what can you say about it? <i>Maisha ya sasa hivi na hali ya sasa hivi, ukilinganisha nakule kijini ipoje?</i></p> <p>G: If I was still at the village, I would be struggling... <i>Ningekuwa kule kijini ningekuwa nateseka...</i></p> <p>SW: If she was there at the community, she would be suffering... SW: Struggling with what? <i>Unateseka na nini?</i></p> <p>SW: Would you have not been married yet? <i>Ungekuwa hujaolewa wewe kweli?</i></p> <p>SW: How many kids would you have? <i>Ungekuwa na watoto wangapi?</i></p> <p>SW: Here (in NAFGEM) ...how is life? <i>Na hapa... maisha yakoje?</i></p> <p>SW: I get to go to school, I eat well and I am well take care off... <i>Ninasoma, nakula vizuri, nalelewa vizuri, nasi...</i></p> <p>SW: And here she is studying... eating very nice... a balanced diet... she is in protection and taken care of...</p>
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	2	<p>G: [name redacted]... because she is the one who received her the first day... when she come to NAFGEM... <i>[name redacted]... kwa sababu mimi nimeanza kumjua...</i></p> <p>SW: Anyone else? <i>Kuna mtu mwingine?</i></p>

		<p>SW: Anyone else?  <i>Nina mwingine?</i>  G: [name redacted], because he sent me to the safe-haven (camp) in which I stayed for some time until they found school for me to be enrolled at. And you because you took care of us when we got here at NAFGEM...  <i>[name redacted], kwa sababu alienda kunipeleka kwenye kile kituo nika kaa mpaka wakanitafutia shule. Na wewe, kwa sababu tulivyokuja yeye ndo alitulelea hapa...</i></p>
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	1	<p>G: They educated me, taught me how to be brave and confident...  <i>Kwa nisomesha, na kunifunisha niwe mjasiri; basi...</i>  SW: By sending her to school... And taught her on how to be with confidence and courage... and self-determination, self-defense, self-what...</p>

#### Interview 4 Trends and Analysis

During interview 4, when the young woman answers question 1 describing herself, the social worker acting as translator mistranslates the actuality of the young woman's words to center her status as a student thanks to the monetary support from the organization. The young woman answers the question where she is supposed to be talking about herself with: "I am at NAFGEM for the purpose of going to school because I need to study, so that I can help people in my community. Here at NAFGEM, we are well taken care of... I want to be educated so that I can help my fellow Maasai community members and other people... (*Mimi niko hapa NAFGEM kwa kusoma, nahitaj kusoma ili niwasidie huko kijijini. Na hapa NAFGEM tunalelewa vizuri... natami kusoma ili niwasidie huko umasaini na huko kwingine...*)."

The translator does not mention the Maasai people in her translation of the young woman's response; she instead states, "She is now at NAFGEM... She is studying to help the other people in her community... For now, she is in NAFGEM under safe protection... She is a student..." Although it can be

deduced that she omitted the name of the Maasai people because she did not think I would understand it from my Western frame of reference, its omission engages in continued othering of the sense of indigeneity that the young woman originates from and cements degrees of separation from her past self. Furthermore, the additive of “She is a student...” at the end of the social worker’s translation concretizes that this is the lasting impression of self that should be correlated to the young women (1). The social worker ensures that the young woman substantiates that she has advanced from her past Maasai self through her translation of question 2. Instead of asking the young woman the more broadly based question asking what is one thing she wishes people knew about her but do not, the social worker asks, “You desire one day in that village you came from or here at NAFGEM or another place you go, that people would know something about you that they had not known before...? (*Unatamani siku moja ile jamii yako kule kijijini au NAFGEM, au wapi unapoenda untamani wakijue hadi sasa hivi hawakijui...?*)” By phrasing the question in this way, the social worker is announcing to the young woman that she is now in a land far, far away from that village she has once known. Once the young woman has caught wind of the social worker’s insinuation for the question, she states, “I hope they would know how FGM can be painful...” which the social worker expediently requests that she continue because she is aggrandizing the necessity of the work of NAFGEM, but the young woman refuses (That’s all... *Basi!*). When the social worker expresses her disapproval of the young woman’s refusal to push the agenda of the NGO further through her responses, the young woman asks the social worker to repeat the question, almost creating a diversion to not have to dive any deeper into her response. The young woman’s diversion serves a purpose, ultimately subsuming the social

worker's response to a subliminal "I can't tell you what to say because the interview is being recorded... (*Mimi siwezi kukwambia maana kina rekodi...*)" (3). Although from the social worker's vantage point, she has not told the young women what to say during the interviews, it is clear from the recordings that the social worker's questions, interjections, and translations are suggestive of the responses that NAFGEM wants from the young women.

To maintain the image of NAFGEM as a site of protection for the young women, the social worker translates the young women's words to paint a picture of Happily Ever After. When the young woman is describing her journey to NAFGEM, she recalls the conversation that her father had with the police after he was found wanting to marry her off. She recounts how, "[Name redacted] (from NAFGEM) came, and together, we went to the ward executive's office, and they talked to my father, asking him if he wants me to continue with school or be imprisoned. My father agreed and said take her. I don't even want her anymore; they said we are just taking her to help you... he said, just take her; then they took me back to school... (*[Name redacted] (NAFGEM) wakaja, halafu wakaja pale wakanipeleka pale ofisi ya kata, wakaenda kuongea na baba yangu, unataka mtoto asome au hutaki? Wakasema kama hutaki tutakuja kukupeleka kwa mapolisisi, baba yang undo akakubali, akasema tena mchukua kabisa mimi simtaki tena, wakamwambia tunaenda tu kumsaidia. akasema wewe mchukue tu. ndo wakanipeleka hiyo shule...*)."

In the social worker's translation of the father's interactions with the police officer, she states, "And then after speaking with the police, NAFGEM went there.... And they [brought] her to the police station as well as the social welfare office... And then [we went] there to speak with her father... and asked if he wants the girl to be married or to

study... And then at that moment, her father said he's 50/50 (I don't want/I want)... And at that time... he runs again... And then NAFGEM took [name redacted] to here...Until now, she is at NAFGEM studying..." This is not the way that the young woman tells the story; she makes it clear that her father is not undecided about giving her away to the organization. However, by framing the father as undecided and stating that he ran away, he is cast as a criminal and dangerous to the legalities of the Tanzanian government, which the NGO is then able to protect the young woman from. In addition to casting the father as criminal and dangerous, the social worker's conclusion to the story that the young woman is now studying seals the deal that the organization has saved her from her endangered fate in a land far, far away (1).

In this interview, when it is time for the young woman to begin discussing her experience at NAFGEM, the social worker makes it clear that this is an opportune time to compare her life now to what it could have been, this time explicitly using the verbiage. She asks plainly in Swahili, "The life you are living now and your current situation, comparing it to life in the village, what can you say about it? (*Maisha ya sasa hivi na hali ya sasa hivi, ukilinganisha nakule kijini ipoje?*)" The young woman yields to the insinuation, responding, "If I was still at the village, I would be struggling... (*Ningekuwa kule kijini ningekuwa nateseka...*)", but this response is not specific enough, so the social worker inquires, "Struggling with what...? (*Unateseka na nini...?*)" When the young woman only responds, "life in general, water is scarce and food... (*si na maisha, maji ya shida, chakula...*)", the social worker redirects the interview so that the young woman does not forget all that NAFGEM has done for her. She asks, "Would you have not been married yet? (*Ungekuwa hujaolewa wewe kweli...?*)" and "How many kids would you

have? (*Ungekuwa na watoto wangapi...?*)” When the young woman provides the social worker with the appropriate numerical data of “Yes and two...” the social worker then looks for the lasting conclusion that will tie the bow on the young woman’s gift of salvation from the NGO by asking, “Here, (in NAFGEM)... how is life? (*Na hapa... maisha yakoje?*)” to which the young woman responds, “I get to go to school, I eat well, and I am well taken care of... (*Ninasoma, nakula vizuri, nalelewa vizuri, nasi...*).” The social worker adds to her translation of the young woman’s response, stating, “And here she is studying... eating very nice... a balanced diet... she is in protection and taken care of...” It was not enough to say that the young woman is eating well, but the additional step of mentioning that she is eating a balanced diet prescribes that the organization is going above and beyond to take care of the young women and fortify their protection (5).

In question 8 of the interview, the social worker acting as translator sees this as an opportunity for the young woman to mention her as a source of safety and trust within the organization. After asking her translation of question 8, “Who do you consider a source of safety of trust at NAFGEM?” the translator keeps asking, “Anyone else? (*Kuna mtu mwingine?*)” until the young woman being interviewed finally mentions her. After the second advance of “Anyone else? (*Nina mwingine?*),” the young woman mentions, “And you because you took care of us when we got here at NAFGEM... (*Na wewe, kwa sababu tulivyokuja yeye ndo alitulelea hapa...*).” Similar to the social worker’s engagement in previous questions during the interview, rather than the questions being an opportunity for the young woman and her story to be centered, the social worker makes it about herself and sees it as another opportunity to demonstrate how she has played a role in saving the young women (2). To divert attention from the ways that the translator has

filled the words of the young women during the interview, the translator repeats the phrase “self” to make it appear as if the words are coming out of the young woman’s mouth and are not a prescription of the organization’s hierarchy of domination. Although the young woman claims that NAFGEM changed her future by “educating her and teaching her how to be brave and confident,” the translator adds to the young woman’s response that NAFGEM “sent her to school... And taught her to have confidence, courage... self-determination, self-defense, self-what...” It is clear from her formulation of this translation that she has added on to the young women’s responses. By adding that the organization provides the young woman with a sense of self-defense and self-determination, it casts the young women into spheres of self-deprecation, substantiating the need for the organization to save the young women from themselves.



Figure 4. Interview 4 data analysis.

In Figure 4, illustrating the data trends from interview four’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 2, 7, and 8 have the most hierarchies of domination present. The translator saw question 2 as a space to highlight how much the young woman’s life had evolved through the help

of the organization beyond the detriment of mutilation. The social worker also shows cognizance of the presence of the tape recording and the subsequent necessity to be mindful of her words. In question 7, the social worker is adamant about having the young woman mention her village life, the husband she could have had, and children as quantifiably instrumental to her salvation by NAFGEM. Lastly, question 8 became a site of decentering the young women’s experiences and centering the social worker as a savior through being named as a source of safety and trust for the young woman. The translator ends the interview by saying that the young woman has a sense of self-determination and self-defense because of the work of the NGO, even though these were not the self-determined words of the young woman.

**Table 5**

*Interview 5*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	5	SW: This here... you describe you and your school studies, how they’re progressing and which you love and why you love it... like that. So, I say I and I. <i>Hii hapa... unaelezea wewe na shule yako na masomo yako yanaendeleaje na unapenda hipi na kwanini unapenda...hivyo hivyo. Kwa hiyo na sema mimi? Mimi and mimi...</i>
		SW: Don’t say your name. I study at this primary school, grade what... that’s how you start okay let’s begin... <i>Uiseme jina lako. Mimi nasoma shule ya msingi hivi, darasa hil... ndio unaanza hivyo haya twende...</i>
		SW: Continue (smirks)... you’re annoying me now

		<p>continue...  <i>Endelea (anaguna) unaniuzi kubabeki endelea...</i></p> <p>SW: What number do you get at school...? Do you like school...?  <i>Unakua wa ngapi...?</i>  <i>Unapenda shule sijui...?</i></p> <p>SW: I wish it... I would... with [name redacted] it was better than it is with you...  <i>Yani naomba iwe... yani ninge.... na na na [name redacted] karibu vizuri kuliko wewe...</i></p>
<p>2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>YW: The one thing that I have...  <i>Ni kitu gani ambacho mimi nacho...</i></p> <p>SW: Your desire that is deep in your heart you would like one-day someone to know, oh so she was capable of that blah blah blah... like that  <i>Unatamani kipo rohoni kwako unatamani siku moja mtu aje ajue kumbe kumbe flani alikua na uwezo huo nyenyenye vitu kama hivyo...</i></p> <p>*Later in the interview*</p> <p>SW: Come listen to the question... From your community... you would like people to know what you desire in your heart that they didn't know... maybe because they didn't give you the right to send you to school or what...? What would you like them to know one day...?  <i>Njoo sikiliza swali... Unatamani mtu au watu... kwenye ile jamii unayotoka watambue nini kilichokua ndani yako ambacho walikua hawajakigundua... kwa ajili ya awakukufanyia haki yako labda kukupeleka shule au nini, nini... unatamani wajue</i></p>

		<p><i>siku moja...?</i></p> <p>SW: What would you like for them to know that one day... if you stood up and said this is who I am... that they didn't know until... for example your uncle who wanted to marry you off..? What did you want him to know that you are this type of person?</p> <p><i>Nini unatamani wajue siku moja... kwamba mimi ndo eni nikisimama ni hivi mhh, ambacho wao kama wao walikua hawajakijua mpaka wakataka kama kwa mfano mjomba wako hadi akataka kukuoza, wewe ulikua unataka ajue nini, yani ajue naom nani eni ni mtu wa namna namna gani?</i></p> <p>YW: A lot... like they have to know that I am an important person...</p> <p><i>Mengi... ajue kama ni mtu muhimu...</i></p> <p>SW: She said she want one day the society to know she is important in that society...</p>
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	6	<p>YW: Ugali, not ugali...hehee..! With fish... <i>Ugali, Ah, ah eti ugali.. hehe.... Naa fish...</i></p> <p>SW: She likes fish...</p> <p>SW: Another...</p> <p><i>Kingine...</i></p> <p>YW: Did she only write fish? <i>Ni fish yenyewe tu kaandika?</i></p> <p>SW: Yes... fish and what else...? <i>Mmhh... fish na nini?</i></p> <p>YW: Fish and let's say what else... <i>Fish na tuseme nini tena...</i></p> <p>SW: You should say it... <i>Wewe ndo useme...</i></p>

		<p>SW: With what banana what fish and what? Its cooked rice and fish and rice  <i>Na nini ndizi? nini? Fish and nini? Ina nakua wali na samaki na mchele...</i>  M: You said fish only...?  YW: Yes, fish and rice...  <i>Eh, samaki na mchele...</i>  SW: Fish with rice...</p> <hr/> <p>SW: What do you like to cook?  <i>Unapenda kupika nini?</i>  YW: I like to cook rice...  <i>Napenda kupika wali...</i>  SW: She likes to cook rice...  SW: With what else..?  <i>Na nini, na nini kingine...?</i></p> <hr/> <p>YW: I don't know, because I don't even know how to cook and no no...ugali... I can cook but I don't like to...  hahaha..  <i>Sijui, kwa sababu hata sijui kupika na aa... ugali ...najua kupika lakini sipendi...</i>  hahaha...  SW: She hates to cook ugali...</p>
<p>6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>SW: You just stayed... you haven't gone to school till today...?  <i>Ukabaki... tu hujawahi kwenda shule hadi leo?</i>  YW: No... I was taken to Saint Anne Primary.  <i>Eeh... Nikapelekwa shule ya Saint Anne.</i>  SW: Did you ever go to school before that...?  <i>Ulikua ushawahi kuendaga shule?</i>  YW: Yes..  <i>Ehe..</i>  SW: At your home place?  <i>Kule kwenu?</i>  YW: Yes...  SW: What class where you in?  <i>Ulikuwa darasa la ngapi?</i>  YW: Third grade... but when</p>

		<p>I got here, I restarted from grade one...  <i>Darasa la tatu, lakini nilikuja hapa nikaanzishwa la kwanza...</i></p> <p>SW: And then she was in Standard 3, but because of her bad education background, she started standard 1 when she was at NAFGEM at the school called St. Anne Primary School...</p> <hr/> <p>SW: Ok so, how was your first day at school...?  Enhe, ilikuaje siku yako ya kwanza kua shuleni...?  YW: How was I...?  <i>Nilikua sisikuaje...?</i></p> <p>SW: Yes.. I mean how you felt about the school you came from... and your results how did that feel...?  <i>Mhm... yani ulijisikiaje shule ile uliyotoka... na matokeo uliyotoka uli jisiskiaje pale yani...?</i></p> <p>YW: My results were good because I placed sixth...  <i>Matokeo yangu yalitoka vizuri kwa sababu nlikua wa sita...</i></p> <hr/> <p>SW: I mean, before the results... did you see anything there that.. oh, there are schools like this here that have food and all...?  <i>Yani, kabla ya matokeo kuna kitu labda ulikiona pale eh kumbe kuna shule kama hizi huku chakula nini...?</i></p> <p>YW: I felt good...  <i>Niliona vizuri...</i></p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	10	<p>SW: Ok... Who... I mean what is the difference, between being at NAFGEM, school, and home...?  <i>Aya... Nani.. Yani kuna tofauti gani ukiwa NAFGEM, ukiwa shule, na ukiwa kule nyumbani...?</i></p>

		<p>SW: Start with home... if you were home how would you be like, how are you like here, and if you were in school how would it be like those three scenarios. If you were home, for example what would have happened...? What you would be doing... continued studying... what would you have done apart from here and school...?</p> <p><i>Anza na nyumbani... ungekuwa nyumbani sasa hivi ungekuaje, hapa ukoje, na ungekua shule ingekuaje yani hivyo vitu vitatu. Yani ungekuwa nyumbani, kwa mfano, kule nyumabani nini kingekutokea...? Ungekua unafanya nini...unaendelea kusoma... ungekua umefanyaje na ulivyo kua hapa na shule yani...?</i></p>
		<p>YW: What would I be doing now; I would have just been around... doing nothing...  <i>Sasa hivi ningekua nafanyaje; Si ningekuwa tu na kaa... anacheka...</i></p> <p>SW: Probably married or not?  <i>Umeolewa hujaolewa?</i></p>
		<p>YW: I was not married...  <i>Nilikua sijaolewa...</i></p> <p>SW: But were you studying...?  <i>Lakini unasoma...?</i></p> <p>YW: I don't know if I would have continued till now...  <i>Sijui kama ningeendelea mpaka sasa hivi...</i></p>
		<p>SW: *interrupts* So if she was home, she was not sure if she would be... she would still be married or staying at home or studying... so, she never knows what will happen if she was there at</p>

		<p>home...</p> <p>SW: Another thing...? <i>Kingine?</i></p> <p>SW: Would you have food...? <i>Ungekuta unapata vyakula...?</i></p> <p>SW: What is the difference between here and there...? <i>Kuna tofauti gani ukikaa hapa na kule...?</i></p> <p>SW: Yes... what do you get here that you couldn't get at home...? <i>Mhm... unapata nini ambacho nyumbani ulikua hupati...?</i></p> <p>SW: Another thing... have you ever had school fee problems...? <i>Kingine... umesharudishwa ada...?</i> YW: No... Mhmh... SW: She is happy because everything at school is paid...</p>
	2	<p>SW: Why..? <i>Kwanini?</i></p> <p>YW: I don't know... <i>Sijui sasa...</i></p> <p>SW: And why...? Why did you say me and not anyone else [name redacted], [name redacted], or [name redacted] ... why? <i>Na kwanini...? Kwanini unaniambia mimi na sio sio umwambie [name redacted], [name redacted] au [name redacted]... kwanini?</i></p> <p>YW: Because I am used to you... <i>Sababu nimeshakuzoea...</i></p> <p>SW: Because she trusts me... that's why she has not said anyone else...</p> <p>SW: Another thing...? <i>Kingine...?</i> G: Yes..? mhh..? SW: Another...?</p>

		Kingine...?
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	3	<p>SW: Who do you what to be...?  <i>Unataka kua nani...?</i>          YW: I want to be a doctor...  <i>Mimi nataka kua daktari...</i>          SW: And she wants to become a doctor...</p> <hr/> <p>SW: And your dream if you were at home... how would it have been... would you be a doctor or what would your dream be like...?  <i>Na ndoto yako ungekua kule nyumbani.... Ingekua je... ungekua daktari au ndoto yako ingekua je yaani...</i>  <i>Na ndoto yako ungekua kule nyumbani.... Ingekua je... ungekua daktari au ndoto yako ingekua je yaani...</i>          YW: If I was home...  <i>Ningekua nyumbani...</i>          SW: Yes...  <i>Mhmm.....</i>          * Leaves*</p>

### Interview 5 Trends and Analysis

When interview 5 begins, the social worker immediately fills the words of the young woman through her introduction of question 1 to the interview. She translates the question for the young woman as, “This here... you describe you and your school studies, how they're progressing and which you love and why you love it... So, I say I and I...

*(Hii hapa... unaelezea wewe na shule yako na masomo yako yanaendeleaje na unapenda hipi na kwanini unapenda... hivyo hivyo. Kwa hiyo na sema mimi? Mimi and mimi...).*”

From this framing of the questioning, the young woman’s school experience can only be framed through progress and her love for school, even if that is not her true feeling.

Furthermore, the phrasing of the question is disingenuous to what the question is actually

asking, which is about the young woman herself and not the school she attends or her feelings towards it. The social worker acting as translator continues with her centralization of the schooling, recommending to the young woman that she say, “I study at this primary school, grade what... that’s how you start, okay let’s begin... (*Mimi nasoma shule ya msingi hivi, darasa hil... ndio unaanza hivyo haya twende...*)” The social worker’s directional “that’s how you start” makes it clear that it is not about the young woman being able to truly speak about herself but instead about how the appearance of her speaking about herself can illuminate the organization in the best light. When the young woman asks the social worker, “Do I mention the school? (*Ya nataja shule ya shule?*)”, the social worker responds in the affirmative. After the young woman mentions the school she attends, the social worker reprimands, “Continue... you’re annoying me now... continue... (*Endelea... unaniuzi kubabeki... endelea...*)”, insinuating that it should not have taken the young woman this long to understand that this question was about mentioning her school and the education she receives on behalf of NAFGEM. The social worker encapsulates her preferred description of the young woman with her final line of questioning, asking “What number do you get at school...? Do you like school...? (*Unakua wa ngapi...? Unapenda shule sijui...?*)”. Based on the evident frustration that the social worker has already displayed with the young woman, there is little to no room to display anything other than excellence and enjoyment toward her schooling, leading to the young woman’s response that she is “Number 1” in school and “She likes school...” As the translator’s displeasure with the young woman’s inability to get the direction of the interview as a mechanism to shimmer a light on the organization heightens, she states at the end of question 1, “I wish it... [was]... [name

redacted]... [she] was better at this than you... (*Yani naomba iwe... yani ninge.... na na na [name redacted] karibu vizuri kuliko wewe...*)." The translator makes it a competition with who is providing the best responses for the interview, rather than it being a moment for the young women to speak their truths (5).

As the interview continues, the social worker acting as translator makes sure that she asks the question in a manner that ensures the young woman is providing the most polished response. For question 2, asking, "What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?" the social worker provides the young woman with a sample of how her response should sound by interjecting after the young woman has begun to answer the question with, "The one thing that I have... (*Ni kitu gani ambacho mimi nacho...*)." The social worker formulates the young woman's response for her, stating, "Your desire that is deep in your heart you would like one-day someone to know, oh so she was capable of that blah blah blah... like that... (*Unatamani kipo rohoni kwako unatamani siku moja mtu aje ajue kumbe kumbe flani alikua na uwezo huo nyenyenye vitu kama hivyo...*)." Her instructive "like that..." makes it clear that the young woman's self-description should be indicative of how she was incapable when she was in her indigenous community, and she is now capable because of who she has become after being rescued by the organization. When the young woman laughs at the implications being made by the social worker's interjection and responds, "I don't know... (*Sijui...*)," the social worker skips the question for later, reminding the young woman that she is "eager to laugh, [but should] concentrate, and answer the questions... (*Ana hamu ya kucheka mshenzi we jibu swali...*)." When the translator circles back to the question later in the interview, she still fills the question with ideas about how the young woman should

respond, asking, “You would like people to know what.... you desire in your heart that they didn’t know... maybe because they didn’t give you the right to send you to school or what...? What would you like them to know one day...? (*Kwenye ile jamii unayotoka watambue nini kilichokua ndani yako ambacho walikua hawajakigundua... kwa ajili ya awakukufanyia haki yako labda kukupeleka shule au nini, nini... unatamani wajue siku moja...?*)” If the young woman reiterates the beliefs of the organization and their interpretation that her community did not believe in her right to educational access, then the organization’s purpose is crystallized. However, since the young woman continues to not endorse the social worker’s subliminal innuendos, the social worker asks the question again in a way that reminds the young woman of who she could have been without the salvation of the NGO. The social worker prods, “What would you like for them to know that one day... if you stood up and said this is who [name redacted] is... that they didn’t know until...for example, your uncle who wanted to marry you off? What did you want him to know that [name redacted] is this type of person...? (*Nini unatamani wajue siku moja kwamba mimi ndo [name redacted] nikisimama ni hivi mhh, ambacho wao kama wao walikua hawajakijua mpaka wakataka kama kwa mfano mjomba wako hadi akataka kukuoza, wewe ulikua unataka ajue nini, yani ajue naom nani [name redacted] ni mtu wa namna namna gani...?*)” After the young woman is reminded of her trauma, she finally responds, “They have to know I am an important person (*Ajue kama ni mtu muhimu...*)” The initial formulation of the question connotes that the young woman does not need the people who wanted to marry her off to believe that she is important to be important, but rather that the belief in her self-importance is more than enough (3).

When the young woman begins talking about the foods that she likes to eat, she jokingly mentions ugali, a corn meal or porridge, as a food that she likes, which she then rescinds for fish. To the social worker, fish alone is not enough food, so she asks for another, “Fish and what else...? (*Kingine... fish na nini...?*)” To this, the young woman suggests, “Let’s say what else (*Tuseme nini tena...*),” requesting that the social worker help her answer the question, which makes sense considering the social worker has filled in their answers for them throughout other portions of the interview. However, the social worker responds, “You should say it... (*Wewe ndo useme...*),” conscious that it would appear too obvious if she filled in this response for the young woman. Impatient with the young woman’s hesitancy in response to what she likes in addition to fish, the translator begins to provide suggestions, “With what? banana...? Fish and what...? Is it cooked rice... fish and rice...? (*Na nini ndizi? nini? Fish and nini? Ina nakua wali na samaki na mchele...?*)” When I began to catch on to the fact that the social worker was adding to the young woman’s response and asked the young woman, “You said fish only...?” the young woman added, “Fish with rice... (*Samaki na mchele...*)” When asked what she likes to cook, “Unapenda kupika nini?” the young woman responds, “I like to cook rice... (*Napenda kupika wali...*),” but when the social worker pokes further, “With what else...?” the young woman responds with her truth, “I don’t know because I don’t even know how to cook... (*Sijui, kwa sababu hata sijui kupika...*)” In the middle of this response, the young woman course corrects, stating, “No... ugali... I can cook, but I don’t like to... haha... (*Na... ugali ...najua kupika lakini sipendi... hahaha...*)” The laughter at the end of her disclosure that she can cook but does not like to can be deduced to be nervous laughter because the young woman is aware that this answer is something

the translator would appreciate more, which she confirms by translating her response as “She hates to cook ugali...” omitting the rest of what the young woman said (6).

When the young woman is explaining what made her come to NAFGEM for question number 6, the social worker asks questions that curate a juxtaposition of betterment between who the young woman was before she was at NAFGEM and who she became as a result of help from the organization. The social worker asks, “You haven’t gone to school till today...?” (*Tu hujawahi kwenda shule hadi leo...?*),” showcasing her desire to portray the young woman as having no history of education before her time at NAFGEM. However, when the young woman refuses this narrative and lets the social worker know that she had gone to school before in her home place (*kule kwenu*), the social worker asks questions that build her desired puzzle pieces. She inquires, “What class were you in? (*Ulikuwa darasa la ngapi?*)” inquisitive of her class status before she came to NAFGEM, to which the young woman replies, “Third grade... but when I got here, I restarted from grade one... (*Darasa la tatu, lakini nilikuja hapa nikaanzishwa la kwanza...*)” The social worker proudly translates, “Then, she was in Standard 3, but because of her bad education background, she started Standard 1 when she was at NAFGEM at the school called St. Anne Primary School...” Even if the young woman did have access to education before coming to NAFGEM, it was not a quality education, so it is without a doubt that the NGO led to the young woman’s advancement. It is not enough that the social worker states that the young woman’s educational history was poor, but she also wants the young woman to capture the quality of appearance of her boarding school compared to the school she attended before. The social worker asks, “How was your first day of school...? (*Ilikuaje siku yako ya kwanza kua shuleni...?*)” hoping that

the young woman catches her drift and paints imagery of nice trees and buildings, compared to the desolation she was in before. However, when the young woman asks, “How was I...? (*Nilikua sisikuaje...?*),” she is confused about what the social worker acting as translator wants her to confirm with this question. When the social worker adds, “How did you feel about the school you came from... and your results... how did that feel...? (*Ulijisikiaje shule ile uliyotoka... na matokeo uliyotoka.... uli jisiskiaje pale yani...?*)” The young woman disregards her first insinuation and responds, “My results were good because I placed sixth... (*Matokeo yangu yalitoka vizuri kwa sababu nlikua wa sita...*).” Since the young woman has not delineated enough of a transformation since coming to NAFGEM, the social worker nudges again, “I mean, before the results... did you see anything there that... oh, there are schools like this here that have food and all...? (*Yani, kabla ya matokeo kuna kitu labda ulikiona pale eh kumbe kuna shule kama hizi huku chakula nini...?*) to which the young woman replies, “I felt good... (*Niliona vizuri...*)” (3).

The social worker communicates diligently to portray a pathology of difference when asking how the young woman’s experience has been at NAFGEM. She asks, “Who... I mean... what is the difference between being at NAFGEM, school, and home...? (*Nani.. Yani kuna tofauti gani ukiwa NAFGEM, ukiwa shule, na ukiwa kule nyumbani...?*)” By asking the young woman about the difference between school, home, and NAFGEM, the focal point is no longer NAFGEM but innately becomes about all that NAFGEM has done for the young woman through comparison. The social worker clarifies her line of questioning by explaining exactly what each facet of comparison should consist of from the young woman. She states, “Start with home... if you were

home, how would you be like... how are you like here? And if you were in school, how would it be like... those three scenarios? If you were home, for example, what would have happened...? What would you be doing... continued studying... what would you have done apart from here and school...? (*Anza na nyumbani... ungekuwa nyumbani sasa hivi ungekuaje, hapa ukoje, na ungekua shule ingekuaje yani hivyo vitu vitatu. Yani ungekuwa nyumbani, kwa mfano, kule nyumabani nini kingekutokea...? Ungekua unafanya nini...unaendelea kusoma... ungekua umefanyaje na ulivyo kua hapa na shule yani...?*)” The social worker alludes to the young woman’s answer for her, letting her know that if she stayed home, she would more than likely not have continued her studies. The young woman does not fold to her suggestions, stating, “What would I be doing now... I would have just been around... doing nothing... (*Sasa hivi ningekua nafanyaje; Si ningekuwa tu na kaa... anacheka...*)” After adding a chuckle to her response, the social worker intervenes by asking, “Probably married or not? (*Umeolewa hujaolewa?*)” The young woman combats this suggestion, stating, “I was not married... (*Nilikua sijaolewa...*)” Since this does not align with the story of progress that the young woman’s body should be transfixed within, the social worker asks, “But were you studying...? (*Lakini unasoma...?*)” to which the young woman answers with a dose of honesty, “I don’t know if I would have continued until now... (*Sijui kama ningeendelea mpaka sasa hivi...*)” The social worker interrupts the young woman’s implication that she would have had a quality of life without the organization with her translation, “So if she was home, she was not sure if she would be... she would still be married or staying home or studying... so, she never knew what would happen if she was there at home...” The young woman seemed certain that she was not married, may have been in school,

and would more than likely been doing nothing at home, but this is discontinuous with the pathology of helplessness that the NGO has sold to the Pan-European Academy and media circuits to keep its funding afloat. By speaking over the young woman and siloing her narrative into a fate of marriage or circumcision, the young woman maintains her stasis as a deprecated vessel in need of saving.

After interrupting the young woman with her own translation of how the young woman's experience had been at NAFGEM, the social worker asks, "Another thing? (*Kingine?*)," hoping the young woman will fold an envelope of helplessness somewhere in her story. To make it clear exactly what she wants the young woman to say, the social worker asks, "Would you have food...? (*Ungekuta unapata vyakula...?*)." When the young woman adds, "Yes," the social worker responds, "You just keep saying yes... (*We sema tu mhh...*)," making it seem as if the young woman is confused or does not understand the question when in reality, the young woman is unwilling to give her the desired answer. Hoping for the young woman to evoke a sense of void before coming to the organization, the social worker asks again, "What is the difference between here and there...? (*Kuna tofauti gani ukikaa hapa na kule...?*)." The young woman responds, "I get to go home, pardon, school... (*Naenda nyumbani eti nyumbani shuleni...*)" Although it is unclear whether the young woman is using this supposed Freudian slip to convey her appreciation for the ability to go back to her indigenous home, the social worker takes the crumbs of hopeful gratitude from the young woman and turns it into a loaf, translating her response with, "Now at NAFGEM, she is going to school..." To ensure that the young woman's home is adequately depicted as a site of destitution, the social worker asks, "What do you get here that you couldn't get at home...? (*Unapata nini ambacho*

*nyumbani ulikua hupati...?)*.” The young woman replies, “I get security (*Nakua na security*),” which the social worker translates as “She is protected,” advancing a consistent message of danger and vulnerability regarding the young woman’s sense of home and indigeneity. To further cultivate the narrative of destitution, the social worker asks, “Another thing... have you ever had school fee problems? (*Kingine... umesharudishwa ada...?*)” to which the young woman replies, “No,” and the social worker translates as “She is happy because everything at school is paid...” The young woman never stated that she was happy; she simply said that her school fees were paid (10).

When the social worker gets to the question asking the young woman who she considers a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why, she sees this as an opportunity to instantiate herself as trustworthy after concocting convoluted responses from the young woman throughout the interview. After the young woman states that she considers the social worker a source of safety and trust, she asks, “Why...? (*Kwanini...?*)” to which the young woman replies, “I don't know... (*Sijui sasa...*)” She asks again, “And why...? Why did you say me and not anyone else [name redacted], [name redacted], or [name redacted] ... why? (*Na kwanini...? Kwanini unaniambia mimi na sio sio umwambie [name redacted], [name redacted] au [name redacted]... kwanini?*)” attempting to pedestalize herself as distinctive from other NAFGEM staff. When the young woman responds, “Because I am used to you... (*Sababu nimeshakuzoea...*)” she translates her response as, “Because she trusts me... that’s why she has not said anyone else...” Through this translation, it becomes more about the fact that the social worker considers herself a stellar employee rather than being an actualized

trustworthy and safe space for the young women (2). When the young woman answers the final question of the interview, stating that NAFGEM has changed her future by sending her to school (*Kwa kunisomesha...*), the social worker asks for more (*Kingine...?*), hoping that she would paint a more vivid picture. To begin to put the writing on the wall for the young woman, the social worker asks, “Who do you want to be...? (*Unataka kua nani...?*)” to which the young woman replies, “I want to be a doctor... (*Mimi nataka kua daktari...*)” The social worker assembles the perception that NAFGEM planted the aspirational seeds for the young woman with her translation, “And she wants to become a doctor,” alluding to the change within her since being at NAFGEM. The social worker hopes to crystallize the idea that NAFGEM cultivated a civilized mind in the young woman by asking, “And your dream if you were at home... how would it have been... would you be a doctor or what would your dream be like...? (*Na ndoto yako ungekua kule nyumbani.... Ingekuaje... ungekua daktari au ndoto yako ingekuaje yaani...?*)” The young woman asks a clarifying question, “If I was home...? (*Ningekua nyumbani...?*)” and attempts to leave the interview, unwilling to grow the tree from the social worker’s planted seeds of dishonesty. The young woman is called back to answer the question that was skipped, expected to water the roots of the social worker’s fallacies.



Figure 5. Interview 5 data analysis.

In Figure 5, illustrating the data trends from interview five's quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 1, 5, and 7 have the most hierarchies of domination present. The social worker acting as translator saw question 1 as a means of centering the schooling of the young woman and letting the young woman know that her performance in the interview was important in conveying the message that NAFGEM desired, as one of the other young women had successfully done. In question 5, fish becomes a site of imbalance when being conceived of as a preferred meal, and the young woman's dislike for cooking is completely disqualified as useful information in portraying who the organization has transformed the young woman to be. Question 7 contained a record number of hierarchies of domination in this interview because the young woman would not concede to the desired messaging of the social worker, ultimately not subscribing to the pathology of destitution that the social worker attempted to inscribe onto the young woman's body. The young woman's attempt to leave at the very end of the interview demonstrates her desire to maintain

dignity in how she and her community are represented beyond the practices of female genital cutting and child marriage.

**Table 6**

*Interview 6*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	2	<p>SW: What subject do you like...? what position are you in class...? How is the general school environment...?  <i>Unapenda masomo gani labda...? Unakuwa wa ngapi darasani....? Kama hivyo yani, shule yako ikoje...?</i></p> <p>G: I go to school at Assunta primary school, I am in grade (class) seven...  <i>Nasoma Assunta Primary School.. niko kidato cha saba.</i></p> <p>G: I like English, Mathematics and Science. Also, our school is good... they teach us well and also, we do have time for sports and plays, other times... we use tablets...  <i>Napenda English, mathematics and science. Na pia shule yetu ni nzuri... tunafundishwa vizuri na tunacheza pia na saa nyingine tunatumia tablets...</i></p> <p>SW: She likes English, Mathematics, and Science... And her school is very good. She is studying and the teachers try to teach her very nicely... And they play a lot of games... And they use tablets to play which makes her to be happy....</p>
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	3	<p>SW: What do you desire from the community you lived in before to know about you that they had known before... like what they wanted to do to you by then, they should know that they have not lost anything, rather what they should know you are capable of doing more...?  <i>Ni kitu gani unatamai mtu au watu kule kwenye jamii yako siku wajue nini kiko ndani yako... walichotaka kukufanyia, kwamba hapana, kuwa kuacha kunifanyia sio kwamba wamepoteza, naweza nikafanya kitu, nikitu gani hicho...?</i></p> <p>SW: I mean...! What do you desire one day, from that community you lived in... take an example they wanted to marry you off... what would you wish for them to know about you, in a way that they would say I wanted to marry her off.... not knowing that she is smart and she is capable of doing so many things?  <i>Eeeh....! ni kitu gani unatamani siku moja yule mtu ambaye alitaka... labda kukuozesha au kukufanyaje ajue kuwa wewe ni mtu gani na nini ambacho utanamani...siku moja ajue kuwa nilitaka kumwozesha huyu mtu kumne ana akili amepolekwa amefanya hivi na hivi?</i></p>

		<p>G: In my Maasai community, I would wish that I teach them or to educate them that, they should take girls to school, it would change their lives and not to mutilate them...</p> <p><i>Yani kule umasanini nakuwafundisha au kuwambia kuwa wawafundisha waototo wa kike,na wao wanaweza kuwasidia na sio kuwakeketa to ....</i></p> <p>SW: She wishes one day she goes back to the community to educate the community... they can send the girls to school... because she believes this will help the community instead of mutilating the girls and sending the girls to be married or to the man....so she wish one day for the community to understand that...</p>
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	0	
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	3	<p>G: I was at home... my mother was not home yet.... Suddenly, a car came to my home, [name redacted] and some White people (from NAFGEM)... They asked me if I was enrolled in school... I said no.... I don't go to school because my father had already paid the bride price for me to be married off...</p> <p><i>Mimi hapa niikuwa nyumbani... mama alikuwa hayupo nyumabani.... Nikashanga, magari yanaingia nyumbani, wakaja, wakina [name redacted], na wazungu.... Wakaniuliza unasoma, nikawambia ... Hapana ... kwasabau baba yangu ameshato mahari...SW: She was at home... her mother was not at home... and suddenly she saw a car arriving at her home...[name redacted], [name redacted], and police... went there... And they asked her a lot of questions like are you studying and she said no I am not studying... She is not studying because her father has already received the bride price for her to be married....</i></p> <p>SW: I don't know what age he was... but he was young, my father was not at home, but someone told him what had happened and he rushed home.... He wanted to take me to be mutilated and then be married off... My mother went back to NAFGEM to tell them, then NAFGEM came with police and took my father... he denied for me to go to school, then NAFGEM professionals took me to Moshi then I was enrolled to start preschool...</p> <p><i>Sijui hata... mdogo, hasa baba yangu alikuwa hayupo nyumbani, mtu akamwambia alivyosikia akaja nyumbani... Akataka kunikeketa na kuni beleka kwa bwana.... Mama ndo akarudi NAFGEM kuwambia, ndo NAFGEMA wakaja</i></p>

		<p><i>wakamchukua baba yangu... wakatufikisha polisis, lakini baba yangu akakata nikasome, ndo nikachulukiwa na NAFGEM wakanileta huku Moshi.ndo nikanza chekechea....</i></p> <p>SW: Her father was not there... someone gave him information and he come to the home... And he said he's hungry and at that moment he wanted to mutilate her and send her to the man at that moment and her mother ran to the police station and the police station contact NAFGEM... And then NAFGEM went there and caught her father... And then bring her father to the police station together with her, but her father is refusing for her to start [school] and then the police requested NAFGEM to take care of her, so that the third day NAFGEM bring her to the NAFGEM shelter, while her father was arrested at the jail for three months...</p>
		<p>SW: How old were you at that time? <i>Ulikuwa na umri gani?</i></p> <p>G: Miaka nane... sijui.... <i>8 years old... I think...</i></p> <p>SW: ... At that moment, she was 8 years old and she started studying in Kindergarten, so that she could learn how to write and to read at the school mentioned until today...</p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	4	<p>SW: What is the difference between now that you are in school and when you were at the village... what could have happened...? <i>Kuna tofauti gani? Sasa hivi si unasoma, ungekuwa hausomi na uko kule kijijini... nini kungekutoka...?</i></p> <p>SW: If she was there at the community, she would be there and having children...Watoto wangapi? G: Two... <i>Wawili...</i></p> <p>SW: Like two children...</p> <p>SW: What else? <i>Na nini kingine?</i></p> <p>G: Life could be very hard... <i>Ningekuwa na maisha magumu...</i></p> <p>SW: And she's like suffering and hard life...</p> <p>SW: Why could life be hard...? <i>Kwanini ungekuwa na maisha magumu?</i></p> <p>Because I don't have the capabilities of taking care of children yet... <i>Kwa sababu bado siwezi kulea watoto...</i></p> <p>SW: Because she is not aware of how to take care of the family...</p>
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	0	

9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	3	SW: How has NAFGEM changed your dreams and goals? Like different from back in village where you would have been married by now? <i>NAFGEM imekubadilishaje ndoto zako wewe? Yani kule kijijini umesema ungekuwa umeshaolewa?</i>
		G: They have changed my dreams and goals, now I can read and write, I am confident and know myself... <i>Wamebadilisha ndoto zangu, sasa hivi naweza kusoma, najielewa...</i>
		SW: NAFGEM changed her life because now she is studying, she is understanding herself... SW: How well do you know yourself? What exactly have we given you to say you know and understand yourself? <i>Unajielewa na nini ni vitu gani wamekupa unaweza kusema eeh unajielewa?</i>
		SW: Don't we protect you...? <i>Hawakulindi...?</i>

### Interview 6 Trends and Analysis

In interview 6, the social worker acting as translator not only centers the provision of education from the NGO but also enhances the young woman's enjoyment of her schooling. When the social worker asks, "What subject do you like...? What position are you in class...? How is the general school environment...? (*Unapenda masomo gani labda...? Unakuwa wa ngapi darasani....? Kama hivyo yani, shule yako ikoje...?*)," the young woman responds, "I go to school at Assunta primary school, I am in grade seven...I like English, Mathematics, and Science. Also, our school is good... they teach us well, and we do have time for sports and play; other times... we use tablets... (*Nasoma Assunta Primary School... Niko kidato cha saba... Napenda English, mathematics, and science. Na pia shule yetu ni nzuri... tunafundishwa vizuri na tunacheza pia na saa nyingine tunatumia tablets...*)." The social worker translates this as, "She likes English, Mathematics, and Science... And her school is very good. She is studying, and the teachers try to teach her very nicely... And they play a lot of games..."

And they use tablets to play, which makes her happy....” The young woman only mentions using her tablets, but the social worker must tie the bow of gratitude to her response by making it crystal clear that she is happy that she has access to tablets at her boarding school (2).

In addition to conveying the young woman’s words as tied to gratitude, the social worker asks the questions in a manner that makes it clear that the young woman should be aware that her community lost someone capable and valuable when she left to stay at NAFGEM. She phrases the question, “What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?” as “What do you desire from the community you lived in before to know about you that they had known before... like what they wanted to do to you...? They should know that they have not lost anything, rather what they should know... you are capable of doing more...? (*Ni kitu gani unatamai mtu au watu kule kwenye jamii yako siku wajue nini kiko ndani yako... walichotaka kukufanyia, kwamba hapana, kuwa kuacha kunifanyia sio kwamba wamepoteza, naweza nikafanya kitu, nikitu gani hicho...?*).” The social worker is alluding to her desired response from the young woman to be something comparable to the fact that her community should know she did not deserve female genital cutting and child marriage because she is capable of more, but because of the muddled way that the social worker asks the question, the young woman is confused and asks the social worker to please repeat the question (“*Ebu rudia*”). Frustrated that the young woman has not caught wind of her preferred response, she enunciates, “I mean... What do you desire one day from that community you lived in... take an example: they wanted to marry you off... what would you wish for them to know about you, in a way, that they would say, I wanted to marry her off.... not knowing that

she is smart, and she is capable of doing so many things...? (*Eeh.... Ni kitu gani unatamani siku moja yule mtu ambaye alitaka... labda kukuoza au kukufanyaje ajue kuwa wewe ni mtu gani na nini ambacho utanamani...siku moja ajue kuwa nilitaka kumwoza huyu mtu kumne ana akili amepolekwa amefanya hivi na hivi?*)." Although this seems like a clarifying question, the social worker has already answered the question for the young woman. The young woman follows the pathway carved by the social worker with her answer, "In my Maasai community, I would wish that I teach them or to educate them, that they should take girls to school... it would change their lives... and not to mutilate them... (*Yani kule umasanini nakuwafundisha au kuwambia kuwa wawafundisha waototo wa kike,na wao wanaweza kuwasidia na sio kuwakeketa to....*)." The social worker proudly provides her translation of the answer, "She wishes one day that she [would] go back to the community to educate the community... [that] they send the girls to school... because she believes this will help the community instead of mutilating the girls and sending the girls to be married or to the man... so she wishes one day for the community to understand that..." (3). The young woman only mentions female genital cutting and not child marriage in her response, but the social worker's addition of child marriage to the translation covers the multifaceted ways that the organization believes the Maasai community should be saved, in tune with NAFGEM's mission.

When the young woman is describing her experience of what made her come to NAFGEM, she mentions seeing white people when she is picked up from her mother's home, but the social worker does not mention this in her translation. The young woman recalls, "I was at home... my mother was not home yet.... Suddenly, a car came to my

home, [name redacted] and some White people... They asked me if I was enrolled in school... I said no.... I don't go to school because my father had already paid the bride price for me to be married off... (*Mimi hapa niikuwa nyumbani... mama alikuwa hayupo nyumabani.... Nikashanga, magari yanaingia nyumbani, wakaja, wakina [name redacted], na wazungu.... Wakaniuliza unasoma, nikawambia... Hapana... kwasabau baba yangu ameshato mahari...*)." The social worker translates the young woman's story as "She was at home... her mother was not at home... and suddenly she saw a car arriving at her home....[name redacted], [name redacted], and police... went there... And they asked her a lot of questions like are you studying, and she said no I am not studying.... She is not studying because her father has already received the bride price for her to be married..." Rather than mentioning the presence of white people, consistent with the young woman's recollection of events, the social worker fills in the gaps with the presence of other NAFGEM employees whose names have been redacted and police, contriving the need for authorities and law enforcement to save the young woman effectively. Additionally, the social worker ensures that the young woman's father is portrayed as a criminal by detailing the jail time that he gets, although this was not a detail mentioned by the young woman. The young woman continues to detail how "My mother went back to NAFGEM to tell them... then NAFGEM came with the police and took my father... he denied for me to go to school, then NAFGEM professionals took me to Moshi then I was enrolled to start preschool... (*Mama ndo akarudi NAFGEM kuwambia, ndo NAFGEMA wakaja wakamchukua baba yangu... wakatufikisha polisis, lakini baba yangu akakata nikasome, ndo nikachulukiwa na NAFGEM wakanileta huku Moshi.ndo nikanza chekechea....*)." The social worker translates the young woman's

story with, “And then [we] bring her father to the police station together with her, but her father is refusing for her to start [school], and then the police requested NAFGEM to take care of her, so that the third-day NAFGEM bring her to the NAFGEM shelter, while her father was arrested at the jail for three months...” The young woman does not mention that the police requested NAFGEM to take care of her or that her father was in jail for three months, and given that the social worker stated during one of the previous interviews that she would add stories together to make it fit, the accuracy of the father’s jail time and the process of the young woman going into NAFGEM’s jurisdiction must be put into question. The social worker concludes the story of what made the young woman come to NAFGEM with tangibly constructed evidence that NAFGEM changed the young woman’s reality from the time she entered the organization to her present. Although the young woman only states, “8 years old... I think...” (*Miaka nane... sijui...*),” when she is asked how old she was at the time she was brought to NAFGEM, the social worker adds, “At that moment, she was eight years old, and she started studying in Kindergarten so that she could learn how to write and to read at the school mentioned until today...” The young woman does not mention that she started Kindergarten or did not know how to read or write before coming to NAFGEM, but this detail adds the stamp of susceptibility in the young woman’s life that necessitates the intervention of NAFGEM (3).

The social worker extends the comparison between the young woman’s life before and after coming to NAFGEM by asking the question, “... What could have happened [to you before NAFGEM]...?” After the social worker translates the young woman’s response that if she were in her community, she would be having children, the social worker asks the clarifying question, “How many children...? (*Watoto wangapi?*)”

The number of children the young woman could have had without the intervention of NAFGEM (two... *wawili...*) does not depict the most striking imagery of deprivation, so she asks, “What else? (*Na nini kingine?*)” hoping the young woman will describe another way that her life before the NGO was riddled by deficit. The young woman interviewed provides the broad statement, “Life could be very hard... (*Ningekuwa na maisha magumu...*)” The statement “Life could be hard” is not descriptive enough in the formula of salvation, so the social worker asks, “Why could life be hard...?” to which the young woman responds with, “Because I don’t have the capabilities of taking care of children yet... (*Kwa sababu bado siwezi kulea watoto...*)” The futurity of NAFGEM rests on the monolithic image of a young African woman who is pregnant, poor, married to an older man, and suffocated by her circumstances (4). The social worker makes sure the young woman clarifies this distinction when she asks how NAFGEM has changed her future, adding, “...Like different from back in the village where you would have been married by now...?” Through the social worker’s line of questioning, she leaves the young woman no room to define how life in the village would have been for her before her time at NAFGEM; she informs her that she would have been married by now. When the young woman attempts to insert the self-awareness and confidence she has accrued since being at the organization, noting that she knows herself, the social worker acting as translator asks, “How well do you know yourself? What exactly have we given you to say you know and understand yourself? (*Unajielewa na nini ni vitu gani wamekupa unaweza kusema eeh unajielewa?*)” Through this framing, the translator clarifies that the young woman can only understand and have a vision of herself through the items the organization has given her. The social worker follows up that insinuation with, “Don’t we

protect you? (*Hawakulindi...?*),” making it evident that the young woman’s definition of her future should be interwoven with how the organization has saved her, irrespective of who the young woman may have been before her time at NAFGEM (3).



Figure 6. Interview 6 data analysis.

In Figure 6, illustrating the data trends from interview six’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 1, 6, 7, and 9 have the most hierarchies of domination present. The social worker acting as translator saw question 1 as a means of ensuring that the young women appeared happy due to the education that they were receiving at NAFGEM. In question 6, the social worker omits the presence of white people from the salvation formula and replaces them with police to enhance the image of criminality transcribed by the young woman’s father and to curate the sense of danger that the young woman is being saved from. Question 7 followed the same script of previous interviews where the social worker makes sure the young woman discusses how hard her life was in the village before being saved by the organization, referencing her pathologized life of pregnancy, parenting, and

circumcision. In question 9, the social worker is steadfast in reminding the young woman that she would not have the same sense of self-knowledge without the protection that NAFGEM has provided her with.

**Table 7**

*Interview 7*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	1	G: I am a girl/lady... <i>Si msichana...</i> SW: I mean, where do you go to school, where did you complete school, where do you hope to go...? <i>Yani, umesoma wapi, uemaliza wapi, unatarajia kwenda wapi...?</i>
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	3	SW: What do you wish that community you lived in to know about you, that they had not known before? You want them to know a girl-child is what exactly...? <i>Unatamani ile jamii uliotoka ijue nini kuhusu wewe, ambo walikuwa hawajui mpaka leo, unatamani wajua kuwa motto wa kike ni nini...?</i>
		G: Girls have great value in the community... <i>Mtoto wa kike, ana thamani katika jamii...</i> SW: She wishes one day the society to know... she has values... she is valuable... and having feelings like a boy or a man... like she has feelings like the other kids...
		SW: Anything else...? <i>Kingine...?</i> G: For them to know the level of education I have attained... <i>Wajue elimu niliyo nayo...</i> SW: And she wants one know the community to know that education is very important...
3. What do you like to do for fun?	1	G: To teach them about different issues of community... <i>Kuwa elimisha kuhusu mambo ya jamii...</i> SW: On her fun time, she likes to tell her fellow students about social issues... SW: What issues exactly...? <i>Kama vile...?</i> G: Issues about FGM and being united... <i>Mambo ya ukeketaji, kushikamana...</i> SW: Like FGM, early marriage, and early pregnancy...
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	2	G: No, really... maybe to make bead bracelets... <i>Hapa eeh... labda kushona shanga...</i> SW: And she likes to make bracelets during her fun time... SW: Why?

		<p><i>Kwa nini?</i>  G: To not waste time...  <i>Nisipoteze muda...</i>  SW: She said bracelets because... it's not a lot of time... but it makes her to have a lot of money...</p> <p>SW: Why do you like to teach about FGM and pregnancy at young age among young girls...?  <i>Kwanini unapenda kuelimisha kuhusu ukeketaji na mimba za utotoni...?</i>  G: So that the community knows about its effects...  <i>Ili jamii ijue madhara yake...</i>  SW: So that the community can know the effect of FGM, the effect of early marriage, and the effect of pregnancy because most of them, they don't know...</p>
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	0	
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	2	<p>SW: Had they already received the dowry?  <i>Mahari walikuwa washapokea?</i>  G: One cow (that's a lie though) *social worker speaks over her when she says this...*, they bought clothes for my mother and blanket for my grandmother...  <i>Na ngombe moja (huo ni uwongo lakini), akawaitea kina mama nguo, kina bibi blanketi...</i>  SW: And one cow... and bringing cloth for her mother... and bed sheet for her father... tailoring a dress for the wedding... a shoe for her...</p> <p>SW: What else?  <i>Na nini kingine nini?</i>  G: No, truthfully nothing else...  <i>Hamna, kweli hakuna...</i>  SW: How were days left for you to be married off? Didn't you run off (escape)?  <i>Ili baki siku ngapi mpaka uoelewe? Kabla hujakimbia?</i>  G: No, I didn't run off or (escape), only a month was left...  <i>Nilikuwa sijakimbia, kama mwezi hiv....</i>  SW: And she managed to escape to the police and the police contacted NAFGEM... and NAFGEM went there to bring to bring her to NAFGEM...</p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	1	<p>SW: How do you see the difference...? If you could still be living in your village until now...? What could have happened, like now you are at school...? I mean at the village what could have happened to you... your life in general how could have it been? Different for where you are now...?  <i>Unaona labda ungekuwa...? kule mpaka sasa hivi nini kinge kutokea...? sasa hivi uko shule,yani ungekuwa kule hadi sasa hivi mini kingekutokea...? maisha yako yangekuwaje? Tofauti na hapa ulipo sasa hivi...?</i></p>

		<p>G: At my village, at the moment, I would already have three children, no food, no water and lacked any basic needs Different from here at NAFGEM, I am happy, because I understand how to plan my goals... I am taught about different entrepreneurship skills, which can make me reach my goals.</p> <p><i>Ningekuwa kule sasa hivi ningekuwa na watoto watatu,hamna chakula, hakuna maji, hakuna mahitaji yoyote, basi halafu, upande wa kuja NAFGEM, nimefurahi kwa sababu, naelewa jinis ya kupangilia mipango yangu, na nimefundishwa urasiria mali wa kila aina, kwa hivyo vinaweza kunifikisha katika malengo yangu.</i></p>
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	0	
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	3	<p>SW: How has NAFGEM changed your dreams and future hopes? And how? Like your dreams when you're in the village... you could have three children, and now you go to school... What is the difference?</p> <p><i>NAFGEM imebdilishaje ndoto yako, na kama imebdilisha? Ni kivipi, ndoto yako kule kijijini... umesema ungekuwa na waototo watatu sasa hivi unasoma... kuna tofauti gani hapo?</i></p> <p>G: The difference is that they have enabled me to know my value as a young girl/lady so know I am aware and confident about myself and I know what is good and bad. You can add something more.</p> <p><i>Tofauti yake hapo ni kwamba imeniwezesha kujua thamani yangu kama msichana,kwa hiyo najitambua, najua baya na zuri.niongezee kitu hapo.</i></p> <p>G: I honestly don't remember, who do you want to be...? <i>Kweli sikumbuki, na unataka kuwa nani...?</i></p> <p>SW: Be an accountant...</p> <p><i>Nataka kuwa accountant (hard to hear)</i></p> <p>SW: And she wants to be an accountant... and an accountant woman at high level in the nation...</p>

### Interview 7 Trends and Analysis

In interview 7, when the young woman begins self-describing in response to the question, “Tell me about yourself,” she says, “I am a girl/lady... (*Si msichana...*).” This is a great response to the question as it authenticates how the young woman has chosen to

describe herself. However, the social worker specifies what she is looking for from the young woman's response, clarifying, "I mean, where do you go to school, where did you complete school, where do you hope to go...? (*Yani, umesoma wapi, uemaliza wapi, unatarajia kwenda wapi...?*)."

The young woman's identification of her gender identity is not relevant to the work that NAFGEM does, so the social worker does not even provide a translation of this response but rather provides an answer consistent with other interviews: "She started at Nabarera Primary School and after Nabarerea, she will join Ursula Secondary School..." (1). Although the young woman's identity marker may not have been relevant for the first question when the young woman describes herself, the social worker sees this self-definition as perfect fodder for the response she would like in question 2. As an extension to her translation of the question, "What do you wish that community you lived in to know about you, that they had not known before? (*Unatamani ile jamii uliotoka ijue nini kuhusu wewe, ambo walikuwa hawajui mpaka leo...?*)," she adds, "You want them to know a girl-child is what exactly...? (*Unatamani wajua kuwa mtoto wa kike ni nini...?*)." The framing of this question implies that the young woman's community does not know the value that a young woman brings. The young woman responds to the translative cue with her answer, "Girls have great value in the community... (*Mtoto wa kike, ana thamani katika jamii...*)." The social worker acting as translator adds to the translation of the response, "She wishes one day the society to know... she has values... she is valuable... and having feelings like a boy or a man... like she has feelings like the other kids..." In the social worker's translation of the young woman's words, she wants to elucidate that the young woman's community is unaware that she has as much value as her male counterparts, highlighting the urgency of the NGO

as a vanquisher of patriarchy. When the social worker asks the young woman if she has anything else to add in her response to the question, the young woman states, “For them to know the level of education I have attained... (*Wajue elimu niliyo nayo...*)” The social worker translates this as, “And she wants [them] to know that education is very important...” (3). The young woman does not believe that her community does not understand the value of education; instead, they should know the level of education she could attain. By mistranslating the young woman’s words, her community remains marginalized in the Northern Cradle’s pseudoscientific spheres of ignorance.

Each question being asked is seen as a moment to pinpoint the utility of NAFGEM, even if it should be about what the young women like to do for fun. For example, when one of the young women says that she likes to “Teach them [her community] about different issues of the community... (*Kuwa elimisha kuhusu mambo ya jamii...*)” the social worker asks, “What issues exactly...? (*Kama vile...?*)” hoping the young woman would cover all of the tenets of the organization in her response. When the young woman responds, “Issues about FGM and being united... (*Mambo ya ukeketaji, kushikamana...*)” the social worker still adds, “Like FGM, early marriage, and early pregnancy...” The conception that the young woman desires unity among her people does not fit within the scope of primitivity and underdevelopment that substantiates the presence of NGOs, so that part of the response is omitted for something that matches within the NGO-ized discursive landscape (1). In other moments in the interview, when the young woman was attempting to make meaning of her reality, her words were modified to ensure that she remained a vessel of the Pan-European Academy’s hierarchy of humanity. For example, when the young woman explains that

she likes to make beaded bracelets, which the organization sells to tourists who visit the organization, the social worker asks, “Why?” to which she replies, “To not waste time...” However, the social worker does not translate her response accurately, instead modifying it with, “She said bracelets because... it’s not a lot of time... but it makes her a lot of money...” The young woman does not mention money once in her response, but she must appear eager to accrue Tanzanian shillings so that donating to the organization seems worthwhile and appears as a mechanism to rescue her from her poverty. The young woman’s awareness that she should not be wasting time at the organization embodies how the young women have become commodified chess pieces in the NGO’s chess board in tangible and intangible ways. The bracelets are symbolic emblems of the capitalistic fodder that the young women produce bead by bead. Most of the bracelets are sold to tourists visiting the NGO, and each contains a window representing the four elements of the organization that the social worker has continuously inserted in the interview: child marriage, teen pregnancy, female genital cutting [mutilation], and access to education. As the young women work tirelessly to bead more bracelets for international buyers, they are stitching together stories that are mere plastic compared to the multifaceted humanity they exude. The social worker continues her insertion of the organization’s tenets when she asks the question, “Why do you like to teach about FGM and pregnancy at a young age among girls...? (*Kwanini unapenda kuelimisha kuhusu ukeketaji na mimba za utotoni...?*)” The young woman never mentions teaching about pregnancy in her original response to the question asking what she likes to do for fun, so she provides a generic answer to the social worker’s additive question, “So that the community knows about its effects... (*Ili jamii ijue madhara yake...*)” Since this

response is too broad, the translator decorates her translation, adding, “So the community can know the effect of FGM, the effect of early marriage, and the effect of pregnancy because most of them, they don’t know...” Through this decoration, the translation portrays the people in the young woman’s community as dilapidated by their ignorance, so the young woman becomes a source of enlightenment with the impeccable education she has received because of the help of NAFGEM (2).

When recalling the story about what made her come to NAFGEM and discussing the dowry that her family was paid for the marriage, the young woman begins describing the items that were given as a part of the dowry and interjects, “That’s a lie though...” She recalls the dowry as “one cow (*that’s a lie, though...*), they bought clothes for my mother and a blanket for my grandmother... (*Na ngombe moja (huo ni uwongo lakini), akawaleteta kina mama nguo, kina bibi blanketi...*).” The social worker attempts to speak over the young woman when she states she was lying about the cow, but it is still caught on the recording. Ultimately, the social worker still provides the translation of the dowry’s elements with this lie and even further embellishment, naming the dowry as “one cow... cloth for her mother... bed sheet for her father... tailoring a dress for the wedding... a shoe for her...” The young woman does not mention a wedding dress or shoe, but the addition of these items and the inclusion of the cow is a more stereotypical itemized list of what dowries look like in Maasai communities, so it will fit effectively within the hierarchy of humanity that the young women are situated within. When framing the timeline of what made the young woman come to NAFGEM, the social worker wants to make it clear that she escaped barbarous circumstances, even if that is divergent from the young woman’s truth. When the social worker asks the young woman

if she ran off or escaped from the marriage, she responds, “No, I didn’t run off (or escape) ... (*Nilikuwa sijakimbia...*),” but the social worker translates her response as “And she managed to escape to the police and the police contacted NAFGEM... and NAFGEM went there to bring her to NAFGEM...” Although it is unclear how the young woman really got to NAFGEM, the social worker fabricates the presence of the police and NAFGEM in the story as adjudicators in the young woman’s salvation process (2).

For the next question asking how the young woman’s experience has been at NAFGEM, the social worker ensures that the before and after picture is upheld by the young woman and that the discursive distinction between who she was in her indigenous community and her life now is clear. The social worker asks a line of questioning iterative of previous interviews, “If you could still be living in your village until now...? What could have happened, like now you are at school...? (...? *kule mpaka sasa hivi nini kinge kutokea...? sasa hivi uko shule...?*).” Like clockwork, the young woman responds, “In my village, at this moment, I would already have three children, no food, no water, and lacking any basic needs... Unlike here at NAFGEM, I am happy because I understand how to plan my goals... I am taught about different entrepreneurship skills, which can help me reach my goals...” (*Ningekuwa kule sasa hivi ningekuwa na watoto watatu, hamna chakula, hakuna maji, hakuna mahitaji yoyote, basi halafu, upande wa kuja NAFGEM, nimefurahi kwa sababu, naelewa jinis ya kupangilia mipango yangu, na nimefundishwa urasiria mali wa kila aina, kwa hivyo vinaweza kunifikisha katika malengo yangu.*.)” The young woman’s words fit like plots on a line graph, creating a sense of linearity in their stories; the moments where the lies are uncovered reveal ripples in the NGO matrix oriented for the Pan-European Academy (1).

When it comes time to talk about how NAFGEM has changed the young women's futures in the interview, the social worker reminds the young woman of her antiquated past and the three children she could be having. She asks, "How has NAFGEM changed your dreams and future hopes? And how? Like your dreams when you're in the village... you could have three children, and now you go to school... What is the difference? (*NAFGEM imebdilishaje ndoto yako, na kama imebdilisha? Ni kivipi, ndoto yako kule kijijini... umesema ungekuwa na waototo watatu sasa hivi unasoma... kuna tofauti gani hapo...?*)."

The social worker informed her of how NAFGEM changed her future before she could answer the question for herself. When the young woman responds to the social worker's convoluted question, she states that the difference is that the organization has enabled her to know her value as a girl and to become confident and aware of what is good and bad. The young woman ends her response with, "You can add something more... (*Niongezee kitu hapo...*)," referring to the social worker. After the social worker provides her translation of the young woman's words accurately, the young woman asks, "Who do you want me to be?" referencing what the social worker wants her future goals to be. Although the sound becomes harder to hear in this portion of the interview, the young woman then says, "To be an accountant... (*Nataka kuwa accountant...*)," consistent with the future career aspirations of other young women interviewed and the social worker adds to her translation, "And she wants to be an accountant... an accountant woman at a high level in the nation..." At this point in the interview, it becomes clear that this may not have been what the young woman has said, and I interject, "Is that what she said?!" which I also did during other interviews and will contextualize further in Chapter 4 as "Moments of *Kukataa* (Refusal)." The young

woman asking the social worker, “Who do you want me to be?” when discussing how the organization has informed her future aspirations exhibits that she will be whoever the organization needs her to be to advance in the Tanzanian hermeneutics of survival implicated by Northern Cradle hierarchies of humanity (3).



Figure 7. Interview 7 data analysis.

In Figure 7, illustrating the data trends from interview seven’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 2, 4, 6, and 9 have the most hierarchies of domination present. The social worker acting as translator saw question 2 as a space to illuminate how young women impacted by female genital cutting are not seen as equals to the young women in their community through the way that she filled the young woman’s words. In question 4, the beaded bracelets that the young women weave become figurative emblems of the ways that the young women’s words and realities have been strewn by the organization to advance the four pillars of NAFGEM. When the young woman is telling her story of how she came to NAFGEM in question 6, the young woman lies about the components of the

dowry with the social worker's corroboration and is posed to be an escapee of child marriage to ensure that the organizational tenets hold weight and purpose. The social worker curates a discursive fate for the young woman in question 9 when she plays an active role in defining the young woman's future aspirations, illuminating how the NGO has saved the young woman and cultivated her future self.

**Table 8**

*Interview 8*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	1	SW: No... continue... what about the environment of the school...? <i>Mmh... endela... shule ikoje na mazingira yakoje ...?</i> G: The school's environment is good, the teachers teach very well, the leaders, and administration are very good too... <i>Shule nzuri na mazingira mazuri, walimu wanafundisha, vizuri, na pia uwongozi ni mzuri.</i>
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	2	SW: What do you desire someone to know about you, in which they had not known before... in that community you lived in... you desire one day for them to know what about you...? <i>Ni kitu gani unatamni mtu ajuwe kuhusu wewe amabo hadi sasa hivi kwenye jamii yako hawajui... unatamnai siku moja waje waje nini?</i> G: For them to know...? About what exactly...? For example... where I came from and where am at... the difference...? <i>Wajewajue...? Kuhusu nini yani...? Kwa mfano... hapo nyumabno nilipotoka na hapa hivi... nitofauti...?</i> SW: What you said... you will explain later in when you tell us about your story.... I mean what you wish/desire one day that person who wanted to marry you off or wanted to mutilate... is what type of a person.... Like it was so unfair to do that to her... what did she deserve...? <i>Hiyo utakuja.... kunieleza kwenye historia yako... yani untamani wajua siku moja yule mtu waliotaka kumwozeshau au kumkeketa ni mtu wa aina gani.... yani ilikuwa sio haki kumfanyia vile... alistahili hili...?</i>
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these	0	

activities fun?		
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	1	<p>G: Food...? I like to eat rice..  <i>Chakula...? Napenda kula wali...</i>  SW: She likes rice...  SW: With what...?  <i>Na nini?</i>  G: With beef...  <i>Na nyama...</i></p>
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	3	<p>G: When I was complete my grade seven, my mum was on maternity leave, my father was not around... I just stayed home most times.... Before my dad came back, my sister came...  <i>Nilivyo maliza la saba, mama yangu, alikuwa mzazi, baba yangu alikuwa yuko ....mimi nilikuwa nakaa nyumbani ... halafu kabla baba yangu hajarudi, dada yang undo alirudi...</i>  SW: When she finished Standard 7, her mother was at home delivering a baby... she was a little baby... she was having a little baby... and her father was not home, he was very far... She was only staying at home... She was only at home taking care of the cows and cooking... Before her father came back, her sister came from school...</p> <p>G: I mean, when I completed grade seven, I was already mutilated...  <i>Yani nilivyomaliza la saba, ilikuwa tayari...</i>  SW: I should lie now, right...? Okay, continue...  <i>Nadangnya hapo sindio? Endelea...</i>  G: Mmmhmm...  SW: And then her grandmother suddenly came to her home and arrest her and mutilate her and her grandmother wanted her to be married...</p> <p>G: So, my sister rescued me, and we escaped, when she came at NAFGEM... that's when they told us to remain here...  <i>Dada yangu undo akanitorosha, alivyokuja huku ndo akatuelezea siku hiyo ndo tukambiwa tubaki huku...</i>  SW: Her sister ran to the police station to report... And the police contacted NAFGEM and together with the police, we went there to pick up her... and then the case remains on the court until now... but her father/her mother/her grandmother stayed in the jail until five months... that's when they released her...</p>
7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	4	<p>SW: What difference do you see when you here at NAFGEM... what things do you get here or what do you like comparing with home...? For example... at home, what could have happened if you would not have come here yet...? Like until now, were you enrolled in school?  <i>Kuna tofauti gani ukiwa hapa, ni kitu gani unakipata ukiwa hapa .... au unafurahia nini ukiwa hapa ukilinganisha na kule nyumbani...? Kwa mfano... ungekuwa kule nyumabni</i></p>

		<p><i>sasa hivi hujaja huku... ninikinge tokea na sasa hivi uko huku...? nin kingekuwa kina endela kule nyumbani, hujapelekwa shule wala nini...?</i></p> <p>SW: How many kids would you have until now? <i>Ungekuwa na watoto wangapi?</i></p> <p>G: Three kids... <i>Watatu...</i></p> <p>SW: And having maybe like three children...</p> <p>G: Here... I have managed to get an education, I go to school, and I have changed a lot... <i>Hapa... Nimepata elimu, naendela na shule, na pia mabdiliko ya nyumabani...</i></p> <p>SW: Here, she is getting education, protection...</p> <p>SW: What changes...? <i>Yapi hayo...?</i></p> <p>G: Like ignorance about things... <i>Yale ya ujinga...</i></p> <p>SW: And her capacity to do things and to know things are high...</p>
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	2	<p>SW: Who do you tell when you're sick... when you want to go to school or even when you need anything... you can comfortably face them here at NAFGEM, especially those at the administration office... [names redacted]...? <i>Nani ambayo wewe kama wewe ukiwa labda unaumwa... au ukitaka kwenda shule au ukitaka kitu chochote... unaweza... hapa NAFGEM walioko ofisini sio watoto... [names redacted]...?</i></p> <p>SW: Now the previous question... [names redacted]? <i>Hili swali lilopita sasa... [names redacted]?</i></p> <p>G: Why are you mentioning them for me...? <i>Mbona unanitajia sasa...?</i></p> <p>SW: Who among them can you tell about your things? <i>Nani amabye unaweza kumwambia kitu?</i></p>
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	1	<p>SW: How has NAFGEM changed you...? From not being with three kids until now...? <i>NAFGEM imekubalilishaje...? Kutoka kuwa na watoto watau hadi sasa hivi...?</i></p>

## Interview 8 Trends and Analysis

During interview 8, as the interview begins and the young woman is responding to the question, “Tell me about yourself,” the social worker ensures that the young woman discusses her school environment, asking the clarifying question, “What about the environment of your school?” When the young woman responds, “The school

environment is good, the teachers teach very well, the Leaders and the administrators are good too (*Shule nzuri na mazingira mazuri, walimu wanafundisha, vizuri, na pia uwongozi ni mzuri...*),” the social worker acting as translator gladly translates with pristine accuracy (1). In question 2, the social worker poses the question, “What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?” with the clarifier, “In that community you lived in... you desire one day for them to know what about you...? (*Kwenye jamii yako hawajui... Unatamani siku moja waje wajue nini...?*)” This phrasing makes it clear that the young woman’s community must not have known the totality of who she was, causing them to circumcise her and marry her off. When the desired projection for this question does not make sense to the young woman, she asks, “For them to know...? About what exactly...? (*Wajewajue...? Kuhusu nini yani...?*)”, to which the social worker clarifies her desired response, “I mean what [do] you wish one day that person who wanted to marry you off or wanted to mutilate [you]... is what type of person... Like it was so unfair to do that to her... what did she deserve...? (*Yani untamani wajua siku moja yule mtu waliotaka kumwozeshwa au kumkeketa ni mtu wa aina gani.... yani ilikuwa sio haki kumfanyia vile... alistahili hili...?*)” The social worker sees this question as an opportunity for the young woman to discuss how what her community wanted to do to her was unfair and she did not deserve it. The young woman responds to the social worker’s question with: “To educate them [her community] so that they would stop what they were doing... (*Kuja kumwelimisha, ili waweze kuacha...*)” The way that the social worker asks the question maintains the hierarchy of humanity, prompting the young woman to see herself as renewed with the help of the organization and as distinctive to her indigenous past (2).

In order to enhance the before and after effects, the social worker must ensure that the young women's palettes have also been refined since coming to NAFGEM. Therefore, when the young woman is asked what food she likes to eat or cook, it cannot be "just rice" but instead must be "rice [with beef] (*Na nyama...*)," because beef is more expensive and harder to access in remote regions in Tanzania (1). The social worker depicts the young woman's life before her time at NAFGEM as villagized through the additions that she makes when translating the narrative of what made the young woman come to NAFGEM. For example, the young woman describes how she "just stayed home most of the time... (*Mimi nilikuwa naka nyumbani...*)," which the social worker translates as "She was only staying at home... She was only at home taking care of the cows and cooking..." The young woman does not mention cows or cooking when she describes her time at home, but by imagining the young woman in this light, the social worker casts her into a sphere of gendered subjectivity that necessitates NGO intervention. The social worker also skews the timeline of circumcision to curate a consistent rationalization for NGO intervention. The young woman says in her initial timeline, "When I completed grade seven, I was already mutilated... (*Nilivyomaliza la saba, ilikuwa tayari...*)." However, the translator asks whether she should lie at this point in the interview, and when the young woman affirms, she continues that the "grandmother suddenly came to her home and arrested her and mutilated her, and her grandmother wanted her to be married..." If the young woman is already circumcised before the NGO intervenes, it diminishes the efficacy of the organization in executing the Europeanized saviorism, so the social worker edits into the timeline that the grandmother was about to circumcise the young woman before they arrived, making their interference

appear necessary. The social worker ensures that the young woman's family remains in spheres of criminality and primitivity by adding details to the young woman's story about court cases and jail time. The young woman described her interpretation of events as "My sister rescued me... and we escaped...when she came to NAFGEM... that's when they told us to remain here... (*Dada yangu undo akanitorosha, alivyokuja huku ndo akatuelezea siku hiyo ndo tukambiwa tubaki huku...*)." The social worker adds to the young woman's timeline, "And the police contacted NAFGEM, and together with the police, we went there to pick her up... and then the case remains on the court until now... but her father/her mother/her grandmother stayed in the jail until five months... that's when they released her..." The young woman mentions nothing about the police picking her up but rather how her sister brought her to the organization. The social worker's addition of the police presence, the family member's jail time, and the court case being unresolved is an embellishment that makes it seem as if danger is still imminent for the young woman, prompting the need for protection from the organization (3).

The social worker wants the young woman to continue to imagine herself as endangered before the intervention of NAFGEM based on how she translates the question, "How has your experience been at NAFGEM?" She asks, "What could have happened if you would not have come here yet...? Like until now, were you enrolled in school...? (*Ninikingi tokea na sasa hivi uko huku...? Nini kingekuwa kina endela kule nyumabni, hujapelekwa shule wala nini...?*)." The social worker does not want the young woman to really imagine the truth of what could have happened if she had not come here, which is why she insinuates what her response should be with the follow-up question asking whether the young woman would be in school. The young woman concedes to her

line of questioning, responding, “I would probably be married... (*Ningekuwa tayari nishaolewa...*).” To create consistency with the data the social worker provided with the other interviews, she asks, “How many kids would you have until now? (*Ungekuwa na watoto wangapi?*),” to which the young woman recites, “Three...” The young woman strives to ensure that she appears transformed due to the intervention of the organization, a tune to the social worker’s ear, stating, “Here... I have managed to get an education, I go to school, and I have changed a lot... (*Hapa... Nimepata elimu, naendela na shule, na pia mabdiliko ya nyumabani...*).” The social worker adds to this response, “Here, she is getting education and protection,” crystallizing the young woman’s story of salvation. To enhance the transformation narrative, the social worker asks, “What changes?” prompting the young woman to reflect on exactly how she has changed a lot. When the young woman responds, “Like ignorance about things... (*Yale ya ujinga...*),” the social worker adds, “And her capacity to do things and to know things are high...” The young woman does not mention anything about her capacity or ability, but this translation of her words makes it clear that the NGO has transformed the young woman into a knower and do-er, a productive member of society under the pretense of Europeanization rather than as embedded within her Southern Cradle humanity (4).

When the young woman is supposed to be asking about who the young woman considers a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM, the social worker centers the NGO administration as a zone of comfort for the young woman. The social worker asks, “When you want to go to school or even when you need anything... you can comfortably face them here at NAFGEM, especially [with] those at the administration office... [names redacted]... (*Au ukitaka kwenda shule au ukitaka kitu chochote... unaweza...*

*hapa NAFGEM walioko ofisini sio watoto... [names redacted])?”* Similar to how the social worker has framed other iterations of this question, she is asking the young woman what the NGO has done for her, which detracts from creating a genuine sense of safety and trust for the young woman headquartered at the organization. The social worker does not want the young woman to mention her peers in her response (*sio watoto*), even though that may be who she has fostered community, trust, and sisterhood with. When the social worker transitions back to question 8 as she accidentally skips it, she transitions with, “Now the previous question... (*Hili swali lilopita sasa...*),” and lists the names of the administrators at the NAFGEM office, whose names have been redacted. The young woman responds, “Why are you mentioning them for me...? (*Mbona unanitajia sasa...?*),” demonstrating how the social worker has not even created a safe space for the young woman to answer the question at her own discretion. The translator circumvents the young woman’s question with, “Who among them can you tell about your things? (*Nani amabye unaweza kumwambia kitu?*)” and the young woman responds with the name of an NGO administrator who can be heard saying something to the other young women in the background as she is answering the question. The young woman’s response was informed by who was in her line of vision at that moment as per the request and intimation of the social worker (2). The social worker acting as translator concludes the interview with an additive to the question “How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?” with, “From not being with three kids until now...? (*Kutoka kuwa na watoto watau hadi sasa hivi...?*)” ensuring that the young woman makes it clear that her life has undergone a significant transformation through her time at NAFGEM (1).



Figure 8. Interview 8 data analysis.

In Figure 8, illustrating the data trends from interview eight's quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 2, 6, 7, and 8 have the most hierarchies of domination present. The social worker acting as translator saw question 2 as a means for the young woman to let the people in her community who wanted to circumcise her know that she has a lot more value than that, etching the degrees of separation further in the hierarchy of humanity. In question 6, the young woman is rescued from the cows, cooking, and mutilation of her past to a presupposed safe space provided by NAFGEM because of the educational access and shelter they are able to grant her. The timeline of how the young woman came to NAFGEM becomes fissured with discontinuous criminality to corroborate the allegedly endangered reality that the young woman is being rescued from. In question 7, the possibility of continued endangerment and the three children the young woman could have had become further pieces of evidence for her presence at the organization's safe shelter. The social worker's adance about the young woman's protection, education,

and liberation from ignorance makes it abundantly clear that the young woman would be absolved into dimensions of helplessness without the organization's intervention, further substantiating the work of salvation that they do. In question 8, the social worker names NGO administrators as sources of safety and trust for the young woman, illuminating how the Europeanization of the social worker culminates in curated narratives of destitution that rest on the historical Hottentotting of Black girls and women's bodies.

**Table 9**

*Interview 9*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	4	SW: So she is saying... what kind of person are you? Where are you? What school do you go to? What class are you in? What position do you hold? How is the general environment of the school? <i>Haya... anakwambia hivi... Wewe ni mtu wa aina gani? Uko wapi? Unasoma wapi? Darasa la ngapi? Unakuwanga wa ngapi? Shule gani? Shule yako ikoje?</i>
		G: But my results are not so good... <i>Lakini sasa matokeo, mbona yako ...</i> SW: Just lie... not a must for you to say the real results... okay continue... <i>Wewe danganya bwana... kwani lazima ... haya tunaendelea...</i>
		SW: Okay.... The environment... just say in general... the school's environment, the teacher, how are they...? <i>Mhmm... Mazingira... ongelea kiujumla shule yako... walimu nini, yani wapoje..?</i> G: The teachers teach very well, and the environment is very beautiful... <i>Walimu wanafundisha vizuri, na mazingira ya shule yako vizuri...</i>
		SW: How...? What makes the environment beautiful...? <i>Kivipi...? Nini kinayafnya yawe mazuri?</i> G: There are trees, beautiful flowers, and the buildings... <i>Kuna miti, kuna maua, kuna majengo...</i> SW: There is a lot of trees, flowers, nice buildings...
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	1	G: Should I go? <i>Kwa hiyo niende?</i> SW: You...? There are nine questions, where do you want to go...? What do you wish in that community you lived in that wanted to marry you off... you wish they knew that

		<p>you are what type of person... and what did they want to do to you... it is not justice... what do you wish one day they knew about you...?</p> <p><i>Wewe...? Maswali tisa yamesiha, uondoke wewe....? nini unatamani kwenye ile jamii ilikuwa kuwa inataka kukuoza... unatamani ijue wewe ni mtu wa namna gani... na walivyotaka kukufanyia vile... siko haki yako kukufanyia vile... nini unatamni siku moja waje waje...?</i></p>
3. What do you like to do for fun?	0	
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	
5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	3	<p>SW: Yes, what food do you like...? Don't you like ugali...?</p> <p><i>Ndio chakula gani unapenda? Hupendi ugali kweli wewe...?</i></p> <p>G: No... I don't like... (laughs)... I like tea...</p> <p><i>Sipendi... (anacheka)... napenda chai...</i></p>
		<p>SW: Tea is not food...</p> <p><i>Chai sio chakula...</i></p> <p>G: Ugali...</p> <p><i>Ugali...</i></p>
		<p>G: I love rice...</p> <p><i>Napenda wali...</i></p> <p>SW: Rice with...?</p> <p><i>Wali na nini...?</i></p> <p>G: Rice with meat/beef...</p> <p><i>Wali nyama...</i></p> <p>SW: She likes rice with meat..</p>
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	1	<p>SW: The man who wanted to marry you what age was he...?</p> <p><i>Na huyo mtu aliyotaka kukuoa anamiaka mingapi...?</i></p> <p>G: He was an old man... older than my father...</p> <p><i>Ni mbabu... kubwa kuliko baba yangu...</i></p> <p>SW: Just estimate the age... eighty years or seventy years...?</p> <p><i>Kadiria kama miaka mingapi... themanini, sabini...?</i></p> <p>G: Eighty years is my father's age... he was older than my father...</p> <p><i>Themanini si ndo baba yangu... Ni mkubwa kuliko baba yangu...</i></p> <p>SW: And the man that is supposed to marry her is like 92 years old...</p>
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	2	<p>SW: Question eight... what kind of person do you trust that you can tell them when you have a problem... like I need something... I want to go to school... what person do you trust... people here at the office... [names redacted] and anyone else but not the children...?</p> <p><i>Swali la nane... ni mtu gani unaye amini unaweza</i></p>

		<p><i>kumwabia.... aisee nina shida hii... aisee leo nataka kitu fulani... aisee leo nataka kwenda shule... ni mtu gani... anyekaa pale ofisini... [names redacted] yoyote yule lakini sio watoto...?</i></p> <p>G: You...  <i>Wewe...</i>  SW: Why...? You have to say...  <i>Kwanini...? Lazima useme kwanini...</i>  G: I am so used to you, most of the time we are together...  <i>Nimekuzoea wewe, maana muda mwingi ndo tunakaa wote...</i>  SW: You; because she's like "kuzoea"  SW: Have any other reason...?  <i>Kunasabau nyingine tena...?</i>  G: No...  <i>Hapana...</i></p>
<p>9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>SW: How has NAFGEM... changed you from where you came from... you could have had kids and a husband who is old... how has NAFGEM changed you now... do you have a husband or kids... do you study...?  <i>NAFGEM imebadilishaje... wewe kutoka kulee.... ungekuwa na wototo wako na mume wako huyo mzee sasa hivi.... imekubadilishaje, hapa huna mume huna motto... unasoma...?</i>  G: I don't know what to say...  <i>Sijui nisemeje...</i></p> <p>SW: Say anything... it is a simple question... what has NAFGEM done for you?  <i>Sema chochote... swali ni rahisi... ni nini NAFGEM imekufanyia...?</i></p> <p>G: They enrolled me in school, they taught me to not do terrible things, and to harmoniously live with people...  <i>Wamenipeleka shule, wamenifundisha nisifanye kitu kibaya, na niishi na watu bila kugombana...</i>  SW: NAFGEM send her to school, educate her about gender-based violence, how to live with people, how to forgive people...</p>

### Interview 9 Trends and Analysis

In interview 9, when attempting to translate the question, "Tell me about yourself," the social worker translates the question to the young woman, "So she is saying... What kind of person are you? Where are you? What school do you go to? What class are you in? What position do you hold? How is the general environment of the

school? (*Haya... anakwambia hivi... Wewe ni mtu wa aina gani? Uko wapi? Unasoma wapi? Darasa la ngapi? Unakuwanga wa ngapi? Shule gani? Shule yako ikoje?*)." The social worker phrases the question to insinuate that I want to know about their educational status when I really want the young woman to be able to vocalize who she is and describe what aspects of herself she finds important. After the social worker makes the question about the young woman's educational status rather than who she is, the young woman tells the social worker in Swahili, "But my [school] results are not so good... (*Lakini sasa matokeo, mbona yako...*)." The social worker responds, "Just lie... [it is] not a must for you to say the real results... (*Wewe danganya bwana... kwani lazima...*)." Based on this interaction the social worker had with the young woman as she describes the reality of her grades in school, it is evident that it is not about the young woman truly being able to portray herself, but rather how she can portray her best self to advance the mission of the organization. Once the young woman realizes that the organization really wanted her to transcribe to the Pan-European Academy, she says, "I am in form one, at Majengo Secondary School. I hold the second position in class... (*Ninasoma form one, shule ya sekondari majengo, nashika namba mbili...*)," cognizant that her words are a lie that will uphold the organization in the highest regard. The social worker continues to ensure that the young woman is pedestalizing the reputation of NAFGEM by asking, "The environment... just say in general... the school's environment, the teacher... how are they...? (*Mazingira... ongelea kiujumla shule yako... walimu nini, yani wapoje...?*)." The young woman replies, "The teachers teach very well, and the environment is very beautiful... (*Walimu wanafundisha vizuri, na mazingira ya shule yako vizuri...*)," but the social worker wants to make sure that the imagery of the

education that the young woman has received is elevated to its highest descriptive frequency, so she asks, “How...? What makes the environment beautiful...? (*Kivipi...? Nini kinayafnya yawe mazuri...?*)” to which the young woman responds, “There are trees, beautiful flowers, and the buildings... (*Kuna miti, kuna maua, kuna majengo...*),” which the social worker translates precisely (4).

The social worker provides a discursive arrangement in her phrasing of question two to cue a specific response from the young woman regarding what she wishes people knew about her but do not. She asks the young woman, “What do you wish in that community you lived in that wanted to marry you off... you wish they knew that you are what type of person... and what did they want to do to you... it is not justice... what do you wish they knew about you...? (*Unatamani kwenye ile jamii ilikuwa kuwa inataka kukuzesha... unatamani ijue wewe ni mtu wa namna gani... na walivyotaka kukufanyia vile... siko haki yako kukufanyia vile... nini unatamni siku moja waje wajue...?*)” From the way that the social worker phrases the question, it is clear that the young woman should read between the lines by understanding that she should say that she wishes her community knew she was a good person and was not deserving of their injustices. The young woman corresponds with the social worker’s indication in her response, “I want to study so hard, so [that] they know and see that I am educated so that they should not force them to get married or mutilate them... (*Nataka nisome kwa bidii, ilie waje waone nimesoma, ili wasilzimishe watoto wa kike kuolewa, au kukeketwa...*)” The young woman has been inculcated to reiterate the Northern Cradle ideologies of the organization and the belief that if she studies hard and goes to school, she will be able to counteract systemic hierarchies of domination. However, if she continues to be liminally defined by

the organization as a young woman who has experienced female genital cutting and child marriage and needs saving, the systems remain intact, and the history of colonial othering remains corroborated (1).

The young women's stories are deeply kept under the myopic microscope of NAFGEM's handbook, and even their eating habits and interests are chaperoned. For example, the social worker asserts to the young woman, "Don't you like ugali...? (*Hupendi ugali kweli wewe...?*)," hoping the young woman would confirm her palatable desire to be a nourishing food staple in Tanzania. The young woman retorts, "No, I don't like [it]... (*Sipendi...*)" and laughs at the insinuation. Instead, she states, "I like chai (*Napenda chai...*)," a delicious morning staple that the young women often shared with one another in the morning. However, the social worker is not satiated by this response and lets the young woman know, "Tea is not food... (*Chai sio chakula...*)," so the young woman concedes with "ugali..." After the young woman asks the social worker, "Now what do I say? (*Nisemeje sasa?*)," seeking approval for her response, the social worker responds, "Say what your heart loves and enjoys... (*Useme hapa roho yangu imesuzika...*)," acutely aware of the presence of the tape recorder. The young woman responds, "I love rice... (*Napenda wali...*)," to which the translator cues for the completed meal of "rice with meat (*wali nyama*)" (3). Similar to the satiated story that culminates from the detailed addition of meat to the story, when the young woman is describing what made her come to NAFGEM, the social worker desires the added detail of the specific age of the man she was set to be married to. The social worker inquires, "The man who wanted to marry you... what age was he...? (*Na huyo mtu aliyotaka kukuo anamiaka mingapi...?*)." The young woman replies, "He was an old man... older

than my father... (*Ni mbabu... kubwa kuliko baba yangu...*)." This answer was descriptive enough, but the social worker excavated for more, asking, "Just estimate the age... Eighty years or seventy years...? (*Kadiria kama miaka mingapi... themanini, sabini...?*)." The young woman responds, "Eighty years is my father's age... he was older than my father... (*Themanini si ndo baba yangu... Ni mkubwa kuliko baba yangu...*)," which the social worker translates as "And the man that is supposed to marry her is like 92 years old..." This is an estimate that the social worker makes so that the young woman's stories can be exacted on the plot lines of the Pan-European Academy's data grids (1).

Beyond the data points, the social worker makes it evident that the young woman should concoct a grid of comparison when discussing her experience at NAFGEM and how that differs from who she was before the organization. When phrasing question 7, she asks, "What is the difference between or what is that thing at home... you said earlier they wanted to marry you off...? You could probably be having kids... and now, here at NAFGEM, you are going to school... Please tell us, if you were at home, what could have happened now...? You don't go to school... You are just at home... What could have happened...? You could have been married to that old man...? (*Kuna tofauti gani, au kuna kitu gani, kule nyumbani ulisema walitaka kukuoza, sindio...? Ungekuwa na watoto wako kadhaa.... na hapa sasa hivi unasoma.... Hebu nambie ungekuwa kule nyumabni sasa hivi nini kingetokea....? Huendi shule....huedni kokote uko to nyumabni... nini kingetokea...? Ungekuwa umeolewa na yule mbabu...?*)." The social worker has filled in the plot lines for the young woman by making her cognitively aware of what her fate could have been if NAFGEM had not saved her (1). The young woman further etches

the lines of demarcation in the hierarchy of humanity when she responds to the question with, “I could be having kids, and they would have a hard life, and in general, life is going to be hard... (*Ningekuwa na watoto, na wangekuwa wana teseka,basi, na maisha yangeuwa magumu...*).” Consistent with the social worker’s desires, the young woman has expressed how she would be located in a wilderness of poverty and destitution if it were not for the intervention of NAFGEM.

When the young woman expresses who she considers to be a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM, the social worker eliminates the possibility of the other young women being that source. She phrases the question as, “What kind of person do you trust that you can tell them when you have a problem... like I need something... I want to go to school... what person do you trust... people here at the office... [names redacted] and anyone else but not the children...? (*Swali la nane... ni mtu gani unaye amini unaweza kumwambia.... aisee nina shida hii... aisee leo nataka kitu fulani... aisee leo nataka kwenda shule... ni mtu gani... anyekaa pale ofisini... [names redacted] yoyote yule lakini sio watoto...?*).” Similar to how the young women are framed as incapable of being agents of their own stories and realities, the social worker does not believe the young women are worth mentioning as possible sources of safety and trust for one another and instead sees this as a moment to pedestalize the work of the personnel at the organization, whose names have been redacted. When the young woman mentions the social worker as a source of safety and trust, she provides an immediate translation and is impatient for the reasoning behind her selection, telling the young woman, “You have to say why... [you have selected me...] (*Lazima useme kwanini...*).” When the young woman replies, “Because I am used to you... (*Nimekuzoea wewe...*),” the social worker is adequately

pleased by the mention, but prods for another reason (*Kunasabau nyingine tena...?*), hoping to be further satiated by the young woman mentioning all the work she has done at the organization, but the young woman concludes the question, stating, “No... [She does not have anything else to add...] (*Hapana...*)” (2). The social worker looks for a similar moment of satiation when she asks the final question, “How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?” instead, asking the young woman, “How has NAFGEM... changed you from where you came from... you could have had kids and a husband who is old... how has NAFGEM changed you now... do you have a husband or kids...do you study...? (*NAFGEM imebadilishaje... wewe kutoka kulee.... ungekuwa na wototo wako na mume wako huyo mzee sasa hivi.... imekubadilishaje, hapa huna mume huna motto... unasoma...?*).” Since the questions being asked are procured for a yes or no response, the young woman replies, “I don’t know what to say... (*Sijui nisemeje...*).” After the young woman has not fallen for the bait of her Europeanization and is almost rendered speechless by the social worker’s insinuations, the social worker makes sure the organization’s desired response from the young woman is received, telling her, “Say anything... It is a simple question... What has NAFGEM done for you...? (*Sema chochote... swali ni rahisi... ni nini NAFGEM imekufanyia...?*).” This is not a simple question for the young woman and is certainly not what the originally formulated question is actually asking. When the young woman provides her response to the question, “They enrolled me in school, they taught me not to do terrible things, and to live with people harmoniously... (*Wamenipeleka shule, wamenifundisha nisifanye kitu kibaya, na niishi na watu bila kugombana...*), the social worker acting as translator ties in her bow of deception. She translates the young woman’s response as “NAFGEM sent her

to school, educated her about gender-based violence, how to live with people, how to forgive people...” The young woman’s initial response that the organization taught her not to do terrible things substantiates the ways that the young woman has begun to imagine herself through the gaze of the organization as being saved from her own transgressions. The young woman does not mention the word or phrase gender-based violence or forgiveness in her response. Still, the social worker adds this translation to make it appear as if the young woman is aware of the patriarchal and gendered impact of female genital cutting and connotes how the Europeanized gaze—that the young woman is taught in her Judeo-Christian boarding school—will wash away those transgressions (3).



Figure 9. Interview 9 data analysis.

In Figure 9, illustrating the data trends from interview nine’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 1, 5, 8, and 9 have the most hierarchies of domination present. In question 1, after the social worker establishes that the young woman should be mentioning her school, she

tells the young woman to lie about the position she holds in the school to upkeep the image of the NGO as a repository for the young woman’s success story. Question 5 becomes a site of the organization’s surveillance as the foods that the young woman describes liking must be something considered a balanced meal and not just tea. The young woman’s salvation at the NGO as a mechanism for organizational satiation becomes interwoven into the narrative the social worker wants the young woman to tell about the hard work the NGO personnel has done, including how they are sources of safety and trust for the young women headquartered at the organization. In question 9, the social worker sees this as an opportunity for the young woman to describe how NAFGEM has saved her, overtly asking, “What has NAFGEM done for you?” When the young woman provides the social worker with the response she desires, discussing her ability to go to school, attain values, and live peacefully with others, the social worker adds the notions of gender-based violence and forgiveness to her translation of the young woman’s response, illuminating how the organization has saved the young woman from her own primitivity and reifying the omnipresence of the Northern Cradle’s hierarchy of humanity at the NGO.

**Table 10**

*Interview 10*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination	Examples
1. Tell me about yourself.	4	G: How exactly about me, my life, or...? <i>Kuhusu mimi kivipi? Maisha yangu ama...?</i> SW: What school are you in...? Where did you complete... where do you hope to go...? Say it to me in Kiswahili and I will translate it to her, or if you can tell us in English, it would be better, so I can leave you with her... <i>Umesoma wapi...? Umemaliza wapi.... unatarajia kwenda wapi...? Nieleze mimi kwa kiswahili, halafu mimi</i>

		<i>nitamwelezea, au kama unaweza kumwelezea kwa kingereza ingekuwa better; nikuache niondoke zangu...</i>
		<p>SW: Okay, say something... answer the question...  <i>Sema sema... sema jibu...</i></p> <p>G: I went to school at Mama Clementina Foundation...  <i>Mimi nimesoma Mama Clementina Foundation...</i></p> <p>SW: She will study at Mama Clementina Foundation...  SW: Why don't you say it is called Kilimanjaro Academy...?  <i>Kwa nini umesema Mama Clementine, inaitwa Kilimanjaro Academy...?</i></p> <p>M: She will study where?  SW: At Kilimanjaro Academy...</p> <p>G: I started form one until form four and my expectations are...  <i>Nimeanza hapo form one mpaka form four, na matarajio yangu ni...</i></p> <p>SW: So she finished form 4 and her expectations are to join college...  SW: Okay... keep talking... we are wasting time...  <i>Sema sema... ukisimama tunapoteza muda...</i></p>
2. What is one thing you wish people knew about you, but do not?	0	
3. What do you like to do for fun?	1	<p>SW: Not work... fun things, games, or anything else...  <i>Sio kazi, fun things, michezo, nini...</i></p> <p>G: If games... I don't like games... may also be to sit somewhere quietly...  <i>Kama ni mchezo... sipendi mchezo... labda kutulia na kukaa sehemu...</i></p> <p>SW: Like where exactly...?  <i>Kama wapi...?</i></p> <p>G: Just to sit some place quietly.... plan my things...  <i>Kutulia kukaa sehemu... yani na panga mambo yangu...</i></p> <p>SW: Stop lying...  <i>Acha wongo...</i></p> <p>G: Okay, I like to sit around and make noise/shout/scream...  <i>Basi mimi na kaa napiga kelelee...</i></p> <p>SW: Why...?  <i>Kwanini...?</i></p> <p>G: Just to waste time...  <i>Kupoteza muda tu...</i></p> <p>SW: She wants to scream (AHHHHH!) because she wants to waste the time at that moment...</p>
4. Why do you consider these activities fun?	0	

5. What foods do you like to eat or cook?	1	<p>G: I like to cook ugali...  <i>Napenda kupika ugali...</i>  SW: She likes to cook ugali...  SW: Ugali with what?  <i>Ugali na nini...?</i>  G: With green vegetables...  <i>Na mboga za majani...</i>  SW: Ugali and green vegetables....</p>
6. Tell me about what made you come to NAFGEM.	7	<p>SW: What question number? What made you... About your story, so now you can choose/ change it to anyone's story, then you don't say your story... what made you come to NAFGEM...?  <i>Swali la ngapi...? Nini kili kufanya... hapa ni ile historia, sasa igeuze unaweza sema ya funali halafu ukaacha ya kwako.... nini kilikufanya uwe hapa....?</i></p> <p>G: Ooh... Now the story will be too long...  <i>Eeh... Sasa si inakuwa ndefu mpaka huko ...</i>  SW: Yes, that's what is needed, so I told you can make it short or say someone else's story or you can choose to say yours...  <i>Ndio, ndo hicho anachotaka ndo maana nikakwambia, ifupishe, iongelee ya mwingine, hata kama sio ya mwingine...</i></p> <p>SW: Who wanted to mutilate you?  <i>Nani alikuwa anataka kukuketeka?</i>  G: Mhmm....  SW: Her aunty... Her aunt wanted to mutilate her and send her to the man...</p> <p>SW: Speak now... Stop playing stupid...  <i>Ongea sasa... Acha ujinga...</i></p> <p>G: You are talking, so I am listening to you....  <i>Si unaongea nakusikiliza...</i>  SW: Talk now... because I will forget.... yes continue, what did they do...?  <i>Ongea sasa.... mimi nasahau... eeh hee....</i>  <i>Walifanyaje....?</i>  G: They heard that...  <i>Waliskia kwamba...</i></p> <p>G: They found my uncles at talked to them...  <i>Walikutaka na wajomba zangu waka ongea...</i>  SW: And they found her uncles there at home and they talked with her uncles... but her uncles ran away because they knew what they wanted to do...</p> <p>SW: Why are you laughing...? This is your story...  <i>Sasa mbona unacheka...? Sio historia yako...?</i>  G: Yes, it is my story I just remembered it that why I am laughing...  <i>Ndio, ni historia yangu mimi nakumbukia nacheka...</i></p>

7. How has your experience been at NAFGEM?	3	<p>SW: So, tell me... question seven... we skipped it, what difference have you seen between living at your aunties place, she would have taken you to a husband... you could be having how many kids...? Or any other issues that are happening in your community, and now with what is going on, start with your community...?</p> <p><i>Haya nataka unambie... la saba... tuliruka, ni tofauti gani, ilyopo sasa, ungekuwa kule yule shangazi yako sasa kasha kupeleka kwa mume wako... ungekuwa na watoto wangapi...? Au nini kinge kuwa kinaendlea kule kwenye jamii yako, na hapa sasa hivi nini kinaendelea, anza na kwenye jamii...?</i></p> <p>SW: What is that which makes life hard? <i>Hamna nini kinachokufanya yawe magumu?</i></p> <p>G: The man takes you home, and leaves you there, you struggle with life, and now here at NAFGEM I am doing well with life, and I hope they will get even better... <i>Mwanaume anakupeleka hapo, ndani anakuacha, unasota na maisha wenywe, na sasa hivi hapa NAFGEM naendelea vizuri maisha yang ni mazuri, baadaye yataendele akuwa vizuri...</i></p> <p>SW: Because in the community, when you are married, the man does not provide anything to you... and they always take care of the animals (cows) instead of taking care of [you]... And now at NAFGEM, she is continuing good, life is changed... and she sees in her future, she will be good...</p> <p>SW: Becoming... who (<i>nani</i>)? G &amp; SW: A social worker... (<i>in unison</i>)</p>
8. Who do you consider a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM and why?	1	<p>SW: Eighth question... what person can you tell him/her you need this, or tomorrow I want to go to school, maybe I want to go to hospital, anyone from the office, not the children, [names redacted], or me? <i>Swali la nane... ni mtu gani ambaye unaweza kumwambia leo unataka hiki, kesho nataka niende shule, labda nataka kwenda hospitali, pale ofisini sio watoto, [names redacted], mimi?</i></p>
9. How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?	0	

## Interview 10 Trends and Analysis

In interview 10, when the social worker asks the young woman to describe herself, the young woman asks a clarifying question, “How exactly about me, my life, or...? (*Kuhusu mimi kivipi? Maisha yangu, ama...?*),” the translator dismisses the significance of the young woman’s sense of self, clarifying “What school are you in...? Where did you complete... Where do you hope to go...? (*Umesoma wapi...? Umemaliza wapi...? Unatarajia kwenda wapi...?*)” When the young woman says that she will be studying at Mama Clementina Foundation (*Mimi nimesoma Mama Clementina Foundation...*), the social worker asks, “Why don’t you say it is called Kilimanjaro Academy...? (*Kwa nini umesema Mama Clementine, inaitwa Kilimanjaro Academy...?*)” When I asked for clarification about where the young woman would be studying, the translator filled in the gaps with her desired response, “At Kilimanjaro Academy...” Mama Clementina Foundation is a local non-profit in Tanzania that is also dedicated to educating young women. “Mama Clementina Foundation offers a high standard of academic and vocational training like cooking or tailoring and also aims to strengthen its students' self-confidence and character...” (MCF, 2024). The honesty of the young woman’s response reveals that she is a vessel of NGO-ization, transitioning from one non-profit to another. By pretending her answer was Kilimanjaro Academy, it ascribes an unwarranted success story to the NGO as a component of the young woman’s salvation. When the young woman is describing her educational expectations, the social worker completes the young woman’s response and answers the question for her. The young woman begins her response with, “I started Form One until Form Four, and my expectations are... (*Nimeanza hapo form one mpaka form four, na matarajio yangu*

ni...),” which the social worker completes with “So she finished form four and her expectations are to join college,” hoping that the young woman’s connection to Mama Clementina Foundation will be unheard and dismissed. The social worker was adamant about not having her time wasted and upholding the appearance that these were the young women’s responses, telling the young woman, “Keep talking... we are wasting time... (*Sema sema... ukisimama tunapoteza muda...*).” If the young woman keeps talking, it will appear like the responses provided are her own, even though they have been convoluted and modified by the translator (4).

When the young woman is asked what she likes to do for fun, she provides an answer that is true to who she is, “I don’t like games... Maybe somewhere to sit quietly... (*Sipendi mchezo... labda kutulia na kukaa sehemu...*)” The translator asks the clarifying question, “Like where exactly...? (*Kama wapi...?*), hoping to get a more thorough response from the young woman. When the young woman then says, “Just to sit someplace quietly... [and] plan my things... (*Kutulia kukaa sehemu... yani na panga mambo yangu...*),” the translator rebukes her response with a “Stop lying (*Acha wongo...*)” because she does not believe that this is an activity in which the young woman could find fun. As a satirical counter to the social worker not acknowledging her honest response, the young woman retorts, “Okay, I like to sit around and make noise/shout/scream... (*Basi mimi na kaa napiga kelelee...*).” Enticed by this distinctive response, the social worker inquires, “Why...? (*Kwanini...?*)” and the young woman responds, “Just to waste time... (*Kupoteza muda tu...*).” The response is deemed worthy of the social worker’s translation, which she translates as, “She wants to scream (AHHHHH!) because she wants to waste time at that moment...” The young women just

existing, just liking tea, or just wanting to sit somewhere do not fit into the Europeanized imagination that the social worker and the organization have deduced for the young women; the young women should always be producing in perpetuity, whether that be bracelets, stories, or knowledge (1). By depicting the young women as eating balanced meals, they also become a part of the well-fed machinery of the organization. Rather than the young woman only enjoying cooking ugali, she is driven to be cooking the well-balanced meal of ugali and green vegetables after the social worker asks, “Ugali with what...? (*ugali na nini...?*)” (1).

When it is time in the interview for the young woman to talk about what made her come to NAFGEM, the social worker lets her know that her story can be open to modification. “About your story... so now you can choose/change it to anyone’s story, then you don’t say your story... what made you come to NAFGEM...? (... *hapa ni ile historia, sasa igeuze unaweza sema ya funali halafu ukaacha ya kwako.... nini kilikufanya uwe hapa....?*)” Although one can argue that the social worker may have said this to the young woman to open a space for more comfortability during the interview, the fact that the social worker permitted and told lies throughout all of the interviews demonstrates that the priority is ensuring that the organization is staged in the best light. When the young woman realizes her story is becoming very long, she stalls with, “Now the story will be too long... (*Sasa si inakuwa ndefu mpaka huko...*)” The social worker responds, “That’s what is needed, so I told you, you can make it short or say someone else’s story, or you can choose to say yours... (*Ndio, ndo hicho anachotaka ndo maana nikakwambia, ifupishe, iongelee ya mwingine, hata kama sio ya mwingine...*)” The request that the young woman have a content-filled story illustrates how it is not about centering

the young women and their stories but rather having a story to tell to corroborate the young woman's placement in the NGO-industrial complex. When the young woman is asked, "Who wanted to mutilate you...? (*Nani alikuwa anataka kukuketeka...?*)," the young woman signifies her discomfort by answering with a discernible, "Mhmmm..." The social worker fills in her response with a constructed translation, "Her aunty... Her aunt wanted to mutilate her and send her to the man..." The social worker also displays displeasure with the young woman's unresponsiveness, letting her know, "Speak now... Stop playing stupid... (*Ongea sasa... Acha ujinga...*)." The young woman curtly responds, "You are talking, so I am listening to you... (*Si unaongea nakusikiliza...*)." The social worker lets the young woman know that she is in command of her interview by saying, "Talk now... because I will forget.... Yes, continue, what did they do...? (*Ongea sasa.... mimi nasahau... eeh hee.... Walifanyaje...?*)," to which the young woman cautions, "They heard that... (*Waliskia kwamba...*)," indicating her awareness that the social worker's words have been caught on the recording. Eventually, she continues her story, noting how "They [NAFGEM personnel] found my uncles and talked to them... (*Walikutaka na wajomba zangu waka ongea...*)." The social worker embellishes this portion of the story, adding, "And they found her uncles there at home, and they talked with her uncles... but her uncles ran away because they knew what they wanted to do..." The young woman never describes her uncles running away, but this addition frames the uncles as criminals in an action-packed Europeanized story where NAFGEM always emerges as the hero. After this embellishment, the young woman begins laughing. When the social worker asks her, "Why are you laughing...? This is your story... (*Sasa mbona unacheka...? Sio historia yako...*)," the young woman responds, "Yes, it is my story... I

just remembered it, that's why I am laughing... (*Ndio, ni historia yangu mimi nakumbukia nacheka...*),” but the young woman is really laughing because she is aware that the social worker has just added aspects to her story that she did not tell her (7).

When the social worker asks the young woman what made her come to NAFGEM, she curates a pathology of difference to make evident the work that the NGO has done. She notes in her question, “What difference have you seen between living at your aunt's place...? She would have taken you to a husband... you could be having how many kids...? Or any other issues that are happening in your community, and now, with what is going on, start with your community...? (*Ni tofauti gani, ilyopo sasa, ungekuwa kule yule shangazi yako sasa kasha kupeleka kwa mume wako... ungekuwa na watoto wangapi...? Au nini kinge kuwa kinaendlea kule kwenye jamii yako, na hapa sasa hivi nini kinaendelea, anza na kwenye jamii...?*)” From this line of questioning imbued with hierarchies of humanity, the young woman's community is a location riddled with issues and the starting point for her story of salvation. The young woman takes heed to the social worker's question, responding, “I could be in a village, having two children, and my life could be very hard... because that's how the life of the village is... (*Ningekuwa huko kijijini sasa hivi,ningekuwa na watoto wawili, na maish yangu yange kuwa magumu sana... kwa sababu maisha ya kijijini ndo hivyo tena...*)” The young woman does not fall into the crevice of destitution that the social worker has carved for her, acknowledging that hardship was just a part of life in the village, not a result of the pathologies that have been cast onto her KiMaasai indigeneity. The social worker still attempts to ensure the narrative of rescue is kept afloat, asking, “What is that which makes life hard? (*Hamna nini kinachokufanya yawe magumu?*)” to which the young woman responds, “The man

takes you home and leaves you there, you struggle with life, and now here at NAFGEM I am doing well with life, and I hope it will get even better... (*Mwanaume anakupeleka hapo, ndani anakuacha, unasota na maisha wenywe, na sasa hivi hapa NAFGEM naendelea vizuri maisha yang ni mazuri, baadaye yataendele akuwa vizuri...*)." The young woman addresses the financial abandonment that happens after a young woman gets married and a bride price is received, but the social worker affixes in her translation, "In the community when you are married, the man does not provide anything to you... and they always take care of the animals (cows) instead of taking care of [you]... And now at NAFGEM, she is continuing good, life is changed... and she sees in her future, she will be good..." The social worker wants to make it divergently clear that for the men, the animals are more important than the young women, which the young woman being interviewed does not say. Additionally, the young woman does not say that her life has changed or that she sees that she will be good in her future; instead, she more realistically hopes that there is goodness in her future. The social worker aims to emphasize that the young woman has a bright future ahead of her by asking, "Becoming... who (*nani*)?" and they both respond in unison, "A social worker..." confirming the overlapping and overt ways that the organization has worked to define the young women's past, present, and future selves (3). The social worker confirms the perceived weighted role of the organization and NGO personnel in the young women's lives when she asks, "What person can you tell him/her you need this or tomorrow... I want to go to school, maybe I want to go to the hospital, anyone from the office, not the children, [names redacted], or me...? (*Ni mtu gani ambaye unaweza kumwambia leo unataka hiki, kesho nataka niende shule, labda nataka kwenda hospitali, pale ofisini sio*

watoto, [names redacted], mimi...?).” From this phrasing, the social worker makes plain the significant role that the NGO personnel must have played in the futurity of the young women’s lives, even if the context of that significance has been embellished, modified, and positioned accordingly (1).



Figure 10. Interview 10 data analysis.

In Figure 10, illustrating the data trends from interview ten’s quantitative analysis of the presence of hierarchies of domination detailed above, it is apparent that questions 1, 6, and 7 have the most hierarchies of domination present. In question 1, the social worker dismisses the young woman’s insinuation that she should talk about herself, instead centering the educational attainment that the NGO has afforded her. Question 6 becomes a whirlwind of discourse, both honest and dishonest, curated from the social worker acting as translator to portray a detailed and action-packed Europeanized imagining of who and what made the young woman come to NAFGEM. The young woman is cognitively aware of the social worker’s dishonesty and alerts her to the fact that her comments are being captured on the recording while laughing at how much of

the story the social worker is falsifying. After providing a fallacious story about what made the young woman come to NAFGEM, the social worker seals the deal in question 7 by ensuring that the young woman sheds light on the issues in her community when explaining how her experience has been at NAFGEM. Evidently, from the social worker's translations, the young woman's experience has been filled with happiness and protection because she is no longer in the stranded wheat fields of her indigeneity. When the social worker answers the question about whom the young woman hopes to become in the future in unison with her, it is a sonic exemplification of how the voices and narratives of the young women are the oil that mechanizes the machinery of the Pan-European Academy.

### **All Interviews Trends and Analysis**

**Table 11**

*All Interviews*

Questions	Hierarchies of Domination
1	3.4
2	2
3	0.4
4	0.2
5	1.4
6	2.8
7	4.6
8	1.1
9	1.7



Figure 11. All Interviews Data Analysis.

Based on the following calculations of the presence of hierarchies of domination in all ten interviews, it is evident that question 7, asking “How has your experience been at NAFGEM?” had the highest presence of hierarchies of domination, which exemplifies how the social worker used the interviews to paint the organization in the best light and color the experiences of the young women to be different from their time at home. Questions 1 and 6 also had a demonstrably high number of hierarchies of domination as the young women discussed who they were and what made them come to NAFGEM. By convoluting question 1, the social worker set the precedent for the rest of the interview, preemptively painting the type of picture she desired from the young women, an illustration that embodies how NAFGEM has saved the young women from the barbarity of their indigeneity. Question 6 was also an enhanced point of convolution because the young women’s stories must be beaded with conceptualizations of helplessness so that the necessity of the Northern Cradle hierarchy of humanity is indisputable. The final question of the interview has an average of about two hierarchies of domination,

revealing how the social worker acting as translator ensures that the NGO's impact on the young women's lives is palpable to the Pan-European Academy's discursive scapes.

## **Conclusion**

Similar to how patriarchy as the first hierarchy of domination was used to foster dominance above phenotypes, nature, the cosmos, and divinities, the presence of the social worker acting as translator maintained this frame of dominance by envisaging the young women at NAFGEM as victims in perpetuity. The practice of female genital cutting itself rests on the prominence of gender as a social construct and the desire to hierarch-ize the Egyptian god Amen, who had an androgynous character and did not fit into the binary of man or woman, existing with an omniscient omnipresence incomprehensible to the bifurcated Western eye. By deconstructing the hierarchies of domination that materialized in the interviews through the translator's additions, omissions, and mis-translations, the lines of demarcation of the Northern Cradle's hierarchy of humanity become more visible to the naked eye because of the human beings whose authentic stories muffles the Europeanized imaginings of the Black body as savage, primitive, and Hottentot circus freaks.

The social worker's interjections throughout the interviews revealed her desire to ensure that the young women were constantly positioned within the discourse of the Pan-European Academy. By characterizing the young women's lives as shaped by nothingness before their interactions with the NGO, the young women's indigenous selves become null for the sake of presumed advancement and development. Through enhancing the spheres of primitivity that existed when the young women were indigenous

and prior to their salvation by the NGO, their animistic blindness is brought to the forefront for the clarified vision of socioeconomic advancement and educational access. Once the young women are detached from their past selves who wore embellished adornments, Maasai shukas (wraps), and herded cows, the cultural paradigm of Europeanization can function in its fullest glory. The NGO personnel, such as the social worker, become channels for the young woman's salvation, and their investment in how the young women's stories are told is also an investment in the continued lining of their own pockets. The social worker's contortion of the interview questions and the convolution of the young woman's responses reveal the impact that hierarchies of domination are having on the social worker's reality and how, in the process of attempting to hierarchize the young women's realities, the social worker's own positionality in the hierarchy of domination becomes exposed.

## CHAPTER 4

### Introduction

The social worker acting as translator's additions, omissions, and mistranslations analyzed in Chapter 3 blanketed over the young women's actualized realities and authentic narratives. By refusing to adhere to the stories that the social worker attempted to tell about the young women, the hierarchies of humanity sustained by the NGO are resisted. By capturing and contending with the moments in the interviews where the young women refused, we open the radical possibilities that culminate from their demonstrations of agency. Additionally, by telling the young women's her-stories in an expansive way based on the morsels of truth that were unearthed during the interviews, we go steps further than the one to two-sentence captions provided on the Human Rights Watch website. The information featured on the website is not a discursive anomaly but rather a rhetorical configuration that echoes the European paradigmatic discourse of the bodily subjugation of Black bodies, such as the baseless belief that Black people have smaller cranial measurements than their white counterparts. Institutions within the Pan-European Academy, such as the Harvard Education Review, Universitat Hamburg in Germany, and the University of Western Cape, have replicated information similar to the Human Rights Watch website, which will be discussed to illustrate how the Pan-European Academy is an engine in the maintenance of hierarchies of domination. Furthermore, NAFGEM and Equality Now's websites present case studies that replicate the information I was told by the translator in 2019, validating the circuitous nature of the sensationalist narratives and their attempts to see the young women as perpetual subjects in the global hierarchies of domination.

By centering a praxis of refusal in my research, translated in Swahili as *Kukataa*, limits can be placed on the conquest of knowledge production in a way that is not done in other fields such as Global Health, which was my institutional introduction to NAFGEM, and social work, the field undergirding the social worker at NAFGEM. Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang define the r-word of refusal as “attempts to place limits on conquest and the colonization of knowledge by marking what is off limits, what is not up for grabs or discussion, what is sacred, and what can be known” (Tuck and Yang, 2014). In the case of the young women at NAFGEM, some of them refused to give the social worker the story that would convey them as victims in need of saving. I also refuse to re-share the photos disseminated by the Human Rights Watch website that paint the young women as having advanced from their life of antiquity and underdevelopment and refuse to co-sign the haphazard narratives shared by the social worker in 2019 that are mechanics for Eurocentric propaganda. My refusal of the NGO-ized narratives of the young women is also a refusal of my past selves that have been entrapped by the lure of the Pan-European Academy and its desire to save Black students from stories of poverty. In the process of presupposed salvation, university students are able to travel abroad through scholarships to see lions, zebras, and warthogs while the people in the country become camouflaged into the voyeuristic landscape.

### **Moments of *Kukataa* in the Interviews**

The moments in the interview where the young women concluded their answers with a *Basi* (*That's all*), answered in silence or laughed at the social worker's mistranslations of their answers are instances when the young women are demonstrating consciousness and expressing agency amidst the organization's desire to silence them.

During interview one, when the social worker acting as translator asked the question, “How has your experience been at NAFGEM?” which she perpetually mistranslated as “What is the difference between NAFGEM and your home? (*Uzowefu wako ulivyo kaa hapa NAFGEM na kule nyumbani?*),” she tells the young woman, “Now, here, do not let me down, explain everything, girlfriend, because I know you have a lot of points on this, because I know there is a big difference... (*Sasa hapo ndo usiniangushe, elezea shoga yangu, maana najua kuna ma pointi sana, kwa maana najua kuna ma tofauti kibao...*).”

In response to the implications made by the social worker about the various ways that the young woman had undoubtedly been saved by the organization, the young woman replies, “Pardon, repeat the question... I am confusing things.... (*Ebu, rudia swali... Nina changanya*).” While it can be argued that the young woman was genuinely confused by the wording of the question, the young woman also uses her confusion as a form of resistance to the ways that the social worker has already supplanted her narrative for her, certain that there was a stark difference between who she was before and after the intervention by NAFGEM. Additionally, when the social worker asks the young woman to mention all of the items that she has been given by the organization, such as school fees and clothes, the young woman lets her know, “I did not know if we were going there! (*Sikujua kama umefikia huko!*).” The young woman delineates a line of demarcation of her boundaries toward what she wants to be deemed private information. After she tells the social worker she does not believe we are going there, the social worker has to fill in the young woman’s words with the items she received from the organization, mentioning “books, shoes, uniform, and coffee,” an instance of convoluted caught on the tape recording.

While recording interview two, when the young woman states her answer to question two about what she wishes people knew about her but do not, she states, “I wanted them to know that I am educated” in English. The social worker then states in Swahili, “What else? For example, I would say, I don’t like that issue [FGM] which they wanted to do... (*Na kingine...? Kwa mfano mimi ningesema sipendi ile issue ninayo fanyiwa...*).” After the young woman states, “I want them to know that I hate female circumcision” in English, it is more apparent that the social worker may be interfering in their responses, so I stated to the social worker, “You didn’t tell her to say that, did you...?” to which the social worker responds, “No, you want me to tell her...?” and I retort, “No... she can say whatever she wants... It’s up to her...” I then confirmed directly to the young woman that this should be her story, repeating, “All you!” After confirming to the young woman that the interview should focus on her, the social worker adds, as a means of covering up how she has already filled the young woman’s words, “I just told her... Elaborate more on this question...” Although I now know that to be a complete lie, catching her in the moment and calling her out on filling in the young woman’s words reduced the number of interjections and the presence of hierarchies of domination in this interview. As captured in the data in Chapter 3, after question two in interview two, the hierarchies of domination present were consistently zero until question seven, when the young woman is supposed to explain how her experience has been at NAFGEM.

When the young woman discusses the things she likes to do for fun in interview three, the young woman mentions telling stories with her friends. When the social worker asks as a follow-up, “What stories do you talk about with your friends? (*Na ni story gani*

*mnapiga na marafiki zenu?)*” the young woman replies, “Nothing, really! (*Hamnaa story!*)” and laughs. She refuses to disclose the content of the stories she tells with her friends and maintains the privacy of their shared moments. Additionally, when the young woman is asked what she likes to cook, she is silent even after the social worker provides an example in her phrasing of the question, “For example, I would say I like to cook banana, what about you? (*Kwa mfano, mimi nitasema napenda kupika ndizi na wewe je?*).” Her silence in answering the question is a resounding confirmation that she does not like to cook, which I attempt to confirm during the interview by inserting, “Nothing... No, you don’t like to cook anything... That’s also an option...” The social worker is displeased with the possibility of nothingness, interjecting, “No, she said she likes to cook everything, so she cannot make a decision.” Although I told the social worker that I could write that down, there was nothing to write down because the young woman did not provide an answer to this question. When the social worker is attempting to configure the story about what made the young woman have to come to NAFGEM, she asks the young woman whether they [the police] took her brother. The young woman replies, “Mmmmm,” verifying that her brother was not arrested. The social worker translates that the case is still in court, but the young woman’s denial of the assertion of criminality onto her brother’s body is a refusal to subscribe to the Eurocentric pathologies that the NGO is seeking to cast onto her family’s indigenous bodies. When the social worker asks in a dilapidated way whom the young woman considers a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM, the young woman replies, “You [the social worker] ... because when you are sick and if you want [something...] (*Ni wewe hapo... Ukiwa unaumwa, ukitaka...*),” alluding to how the social worker is a resource if they get sick or need

anything. When the social worker fishes for another reason, asking if she has anything else to add, the young woman replies, “I don’t have any... (*Hamna...*),” refusing to subscribe to the pedestalized role that the social worker believes she has played in the young woman’s life. In the final question of the interview, when the young woman is asked how NAFGEM has changed her future, if at all, and the young woman replies, “It has changed me a lot...” the social worker asks her to explain exactly the reasons (*Lazima uwe na sababu...*). Although the young woman is reeled in by the social worker’s initial pole by stating, “They take us to school, and they love us... (*Kusomesha na wantupenda*),” she ends her response with a pointed, “that’s all... (*basi...*),” connoting how she refuses to extend further to the hierarchy of humanity of the NGO.

In interview four, when the young woman discloses something personal regarding what she wants people to know about her in her community, but they do not, she also uses the referential “Basi (*That’s All*)” to indicate that she has answered the question to her fulfillment, in an attempted demonstration of refusal and agency. For example, after she responds that she hopes her community knows “how FGM can be painful... (*Natamani wajue nanili jinis ya ukekettaji...*),” the social worker intimates that she continues with an additional response (*Ehehhh...*). When she refuses to continue and tells the social worker, “Basi (*That’s all*),” the social worker does not accept this response to be the finality of her answer, pushing further with a “Hiiiiii (*Seriously?!?*).” When the young woman asks her to “Please repeat the question (*Ebu nambie tena...*),” the translator reminds her that she cannot tell her what to say because the interview is being recorded (*Mimi siwezi kukwambia maana kina rekodi*), implying that the young woman should not waste this question not expounding on all the ways that the organization has

saved her. Despite the young woman eventually discussing the desire for her people to know about child marriage in the Maasai communities, the refusal she initially poses cannot be dismissed as it reflects a moment when the social worker had to be audibly aware of the tape recorder holding her accountable for her words during the interview. When the young woman is asked why she likes to do the activities she enjoys for fun, she calls out the simplicity of the question, implicating how the answer should be obvious. She counters with, “Seriously?! Because I just like it, it makes me laugh, [I am] happy when I play and win... It also makes other people have fun... (*Jamani! Kwa sababu napenda tu, inanisaidia nicheke, nikicheza na nikifunga, unanifurahisha saa nyingine...*).” In this moment, the young woman is directly rejecting the r-word of research by calling out the self-explanatory nature of the question. Even though these questions may have seemed idiosyncratic for the young woman, the questions that asked for the young women’s interests and the rationale behind their interests were the few moments in the interview that their truths had the potential to be erected because it was something the social worker and NGO could not fabricate. When the social worker tries to outline how the young woman’s life has changed since she has been at NAFGEM through her line of questioning, the young woman provides a sonic indication of refusal by sucking her teeth. When asked, “How many kids would you have [if still at home]? (*Ungekuwa na waototo wangapi?*),” the young woman sucks her teeth before answering, “Maybe two (*Wawili*)...” In her actualized response, the young woman does not give the social worker the total satisfaction that she wants, answering with a phrase of reasonable doubt.

During interview five, I called out the social worker for filling in the young woman's words during the interview. When the young woman was supposed to be self-describing, the social worker asked, "What number do you get at school... do you like school...? (*Unakua wa ngapi? Unapenda shule sijui?*)." As I had studied the phrase "Do you like school...?" while taking Swahili classes at Cornell, I was aware of what the social worker was asking the young woman, so when the young woman replied, "Yes, I like school, yes I get number one... (*Eheh, napenda shule, nakuwa wa kwanza...*)," and the social worker translated her words as "She likes school..." I countered her translation with, "You don't have to tell them to say that..." The social worker responded, "It's like telling her what to say more so to understand it... Like more elaboration for the question..." However, we know now from more elaborate translations of all the interviews that it was never about the young women elaborating on the questions and was more so about the organization producing the best data about the young women. Upset that she was caught filling in the words of the young woman, the translator belittles the young woman being interviewed by letting her know that she wishes it was another young woman, "I wish it was [other girl named] ... she was better with this than you... (*Yani naomba iwe... yani ninge. na na [name redacted] karibu vizuri kuliko wewe...*)."

After this moment in the interview, the young woman becomes resistant to answering the questions. When she takes her time answering the question, "What is one thing you wish people knew about you but do not?" and the social worker attempts to fill in her answer for her, the young woman begins to laugh, frustrating the social worker even more:

SW: You desire deep in your heart... you would like one day someone to know... she was capable of that blah blah blah... like that...

*Unatamani kipo rohoni kwako... unatamani siku moja mtu aje ajue... kumbe kumbe flani alikua na uwezo huo nyenyenye vitu kama hivyo...*

G: hehehehhe (Giggling)

SW: You're eager to laugh and not concentrate and answer the questions...

*Ana hamu ya kucheka mshenzi we jibu swali...*

G: Huh..? I don't know...

*Eh...? Mi sijui...*

Although the young woman claims not to know the answer to the question, she is well aware of what she is doing. After the social worker told her how she appreciated the presence of one of the other young women and their participation in the interview over her own, she began to giggle at the suggested responses to the questions and claims that she did not know, unwavering to the ideological pressure toward salvation that the social worker so desperately desires.

After the social worker is forced to skip that question, she moves on to the next question, asking the young woman what she likes to do for fun. When the young woman says, "Just tell stories... (*Napiga stori*)," and that does not satisfy the appetite of the translator, she asks, "What type and what else? (*Ni ya aina gani, na nini kingine?*)." When she responds, "Just that... (*Iyo iyo...*)," the social worker prods further, asking twice, "What else? (*Kingine ni nini?*)," which the young woman laughs in response to initially before finally stating, "[I like] to play... (*Kucheza...*)." When the social worker finally gets around to asking, "What do you play...? (*Nini unacheza nini...?*)," the young woman responds with, "I don't know... (*Sijui...*)." The social worker acting as translator becomes frustrated with the young woman's "I don't know" and states, "You just play around... what else...? (*Unachezaga tu hehehehe... kingine...?*)." The young woman attempts to finalize her answer to the question, responding, "That's all... (*Basi...*)." After the social worker continuously prompts for more details, the young woman eventually

tells her that she likes to play because it keeps her body active and makes her strong. When the social worker asks, “After you become strong, then what...?” the young woman dismisses the simplemindedness of her question by replying, “I don’t know after I get strong... Just continue... (*Sijui nikishakua strong... Endelea bana...*),” which the social worker takes heed to and continues on to the next question.

When the social worker wants the young woman to concoct a distinctive difference between how her life was like before and after NAFGEM, the young woman is unwilling to get ensnared by the social worker’s implications. For example, after the young woman says she would probably be doing nothing if she were still at home, the social worker asks:

SW: Probably married or not?

*Umeolewa hujaolewa?*

G: I was not married...

*Nilikua sijaolewa...*

SW: But were you studying...?

*Lakini unasoma...?*

G: I don’t know if I would have continued till now...

*Sijui kama ningendelea mpaka sasa hivi...*

Although the social worker then speaks over the young woman to provide the translation that the young woman would probably have been married and that she does not know what would happen if she were there [home], the translations of the young woman’s words make it clear that she does know that she was not married and that she was studying before coming to NAFGEM. The young woman refused to conform to the propagandistic image that the social worker attempted to construct about who she was before coming to NAFGEM, prompting the social worker to interrupt her to maintain the Europeanized image of her.

After the social worker interrupts the young woman to fill in her words, she asks the young woman if she has another thing to add (*Kingine?*). The young woman replies, “At home? That’s it... (*Nyumbani? Basi...*).” The social worker is displeased with the young woman not expanding on the different ways that the organization has saved her, so she asks in an attempt to get a cued response, “Would you have food...? (*Ungekuta unapata vyakula...?*)” When the young woman responds, “Yes (*Mhm...*)” the social worker attempts to make it appear as if the young woman does not understand the question, responding, “Okay, you just keep saying yes... (*Aya we sema tu mhmm...*)” but the young woman was maintaining her agency by not portraying herself as starved and malnourished before her interactions with NAFGEM. In a similar light, when answering the final question, “How has NAFGEM changed your future, if at all?” the young woman keeps it concise, stating, “For sending me to school... (*Kwa kunisomesha...*).” The social worker attempts to get a more salvation-oriented response, compelling the young woman to consider the possibility of other ways that NAFGEM had saved her, asking, “Another thing? (*Kingine?*)” but the young woman remains resolute by responding, “Mhmm...” The social worker then asks, “Who do you want to be?” and the young woman replies, “A doctor...” which returns the organization’s prescribed bow onto the young woman’s story of salvation.

In interview six, when the social worker phrases question 2 in a circuitous way, adding to her question, “like what [did] they want to do to you by then... they should know that they have not lost anything rather what they should know you are capable of doing more...? (...*Walichotaka kukufanyia, kwamba hapana, kuwa kuacha kunifanyia sio kwamba wamepoteza, naweza nikafanya kitu, nikitu gani hicho...?*).” The young woman

replies, “You mean! Please repeat the question! (*Yani! Ebu rudia!*)” The social worker acts the question in a mishmashed way, confusing the young woman to the actualized substance of the question, and the young woman is likely disjointed by what the social worker wants her to intimate in her response to the question, prompting the young woman to ask her to repeat it. The social worker is annoyed by the young woman’s request for her to repeat the question, responding with a reprehensive “Ehhh!” hinting to the young woman that she should understand what the question is implying. At the very end of interview six, when the young woman is describing how NAFGEM has changed her future, the social worker asks, “Don’t we protect you? (*Hawakulindi?*)” and the young woman concedes, “They protect me, and care for me...” (*Wananilinda, wananijali...*)” However, when the social worker asks the young woman if there is “Anything else she [would] like to add...? (*Kuna kitu kingikingine ungependa kuongezea...?*)” she responds with a resounding “No (*Hapana*)” and concludes the interview, no longer interested in her words being filled by the social worker.

Similarly, in interview seven, after the young woman describes how NAFGEM has changed her future by helping her understand how to plan her goals and teaching her about different entrepreneurship skills, the social worker asks if she has anything else she would like to add, which the young woman responded undoubtedly with a “No (*Mmhmm...*)” prompting the social worker to have to move on to the next question. Additionally, when the young woman is explaining how NAFGEM has changed her future in interview seven, she asks the social worker, “Whom do you want me to be...? (*Unataka kuwa nani?*)” contextualizing that she “does not remember” who the organization wants her to be. Although the sound in the recording gets hard to hear at this

portion, the young woman eventually says, “I want [to be an accountant...] (*Nataka kuwa accountant...*).” After the social worker translated the young woman’s answer with “And she wants to be an accountant... and an accountant woman at the highest level in the nation...” this appeared disingenuous, even to my ear of limited Swahili. I can be heard on the recording asking, “Is that what she said?!” The social worker adds to her mountain of lies, “Yeah, she said that... I’m not lying to you, Courtney... I’m saying the truth from my heart...” Although, at a base level, that may have been partially what the young woman said, the social worker added fluff to her response, conveying that the young woman wants to be an accountant at the highest level; it is also evident from the young woman’s question that this is the career path that the organization desires from the young woman and whom the organization wants her to be. By calling out how the response seemed disingenuous to who the young woman actually was, I refused to co-sign the concocted dreams of the young women’s futures that the organization had carved out for them.

In interview eight, when the young woman is supposed to be discussing who she considers a source of safety and trust at NAFGEM, the social worker begins to fill in the response for her, naming the personnel at NAFGEM who she should mention as sources of safety and trust. The young woman interrupts the social worker, asking, “Why are you mentioning them for me? (*Mbona unanitajia sasa?*).” Although the social worker repeats herself, asking, “Who among them can you tell about your things? (*Nani amabye unaweza kumwambia kitu?*)” and the young woman answers in accordance to her request, her inquisition about why the social worker mentioned them for her was an act of resistance and a refusal to the ways that the NGO attempted to tell her story of trust and

safety for her. The young woman interviewed engaged in a similar act of resistance during the interview when the social worker attempted to define for her how the NGO had changed her future. She asks the young woman a follow-up to the original question being asked, “From not being with three kids until now...? (*Kutoka kuwa na watoto watau hadi sasa hivi...?*)” The young woman completely disregards her indication that she could have three kids by stating, “It has changed me as I have gotten an education... (*Imenibadilisha kupitia elimu...*)” The young woman refuses the staging of primitivity being performed by the social worker and deducts the provision of the organization to be relegated to educational access, acknowledging the dignity of one’s indigenous self.

In interview nine, when the social worker is supposed to be asking about how NAFGEM has changed her future, the young woman does not respond in the way that the social worker insinuates. The social worker asks the question as “How has NAFGEM changed you from where you came from? You could have had kids and a husband who is old... how has NAFGEM changed you... now you don’t have a husband or kids... [Do] you study...? (*NAFGEM imebadilishaje wewe kutoka kulee, ungekuwa na wototo wako na mume wako huyo mzee sasa hivi, imekubadilishaje, hapa huna mume huna motto, unasoma...?*)” The young woman does not know how to respond to how the social worker has defined her future for her, ultimately saying, “I don’t know what to say... (*Sijui nisemeje...*)” The young woman is unwilling to succumb to the connotation of the social worker’s question. Frustrated that the young woman does not catch her drift, the social worker asks that the young woman “Say anything [as] it is a simple... what has NAFGEM done for you...? (*Wamenipeleka shule, wamenifundisha nisifanye kitu kibaya, na niishi na watu bila kugombana...?*)” The simple fact is that this is not what the

question was asking the young woman; the question was not about what the organization had done for her but rather how they had changed her future, which allows the space for more self-definition. The young woman's trepidation in answering the social worker's question is a demonstration of agency for who she was before her interactions with the NGO. The social worker ends the interview by making it clear who the interview is about, asking, "Do you have anything else you need to add to tell NAFGEM, your community, your government, to tell them anything...? (*Unakitu chochote unataka kuongezea kwabia NAFGEM, jamii yako serekali, kuwambia kitu chochote...?*)" The young woman responds, "I don't have [anything to say...] (*Hamna...*)," refusing to center the NGO's agenda. By concluding the interview with an allusion to NAFGEM and the government, the social worker acting as translator suggests that the young women's narratives should serve a purpose for governmental discursive advancement.

In interview ten, when the young woman tells the social worker that she likes to sit quietly in her free time, this is not an acceptable answer for the social worker, so she tells her to stop lying. The young woman begins to answer the question vindictively since her initial response was not enough for the social worker:

G: If games... I don't like games... maybe to sit somewhere quietly...

*Kama ni mchezo sipendi mchezo, labda kutulia na kukaa sehemu...*

SW: Like where exactly...?

*Kama wapi...?*

G: Just to sit someplace quietly and plan my things...

*Kutulia kukaa sehemu, yani na panga mambo yangu...*

SW: Stop lying...!

*Acha wongo...!*

G: Okay, I like to sit around and make noise/shout/scream...

*Basi, mimi na kaa napiga kelelee...*

SW: Why...?

*Kwa nini...?*

G: Just to waste time...

*Kupoteza muda tu...*

SW: She wants to scream (AHHHHH!) because she wants to waste the time at that moment...

The social worker does not allow the young woman to say that she likes to sit and plan quietly in her spare time because this is not the answer that she believes fits into the Europeanized imagination of the young woman, so she suggests to the young woman that she is lying. However, when the young woman's truth of her reality is rejected, she provides the social worker with an answer that defies the expectations for her response even more, refusing to fit into the box that NAFGEM has laid out for her.

During this interview, the young woman also called out the social worker for adding her own words to the interview, as this young woman had more English proficiency than others because of her older age. She begins laughing during the interview after the social worker adds her own words, and when the social worker asks her why she is laughing, she says, "I am laughing because you are adding your own words... (*Nacheka maana unaongezea maneno mengine...*)."

The social worker moves on to her next question, hopeful that the recording missed the young woman's words. When the social worker continues adding her words, the young woman continues laughing, and the social worker tells her, "Why are you laughing? This is your story... (*Sasa mbona unacheka? Sio historia yako...*)," hopeful that the young woman's laughter does not bring attention to her addendums to the story. The young woman replies to her question sarcastically, stating, "Yes, it is my story... I just remembered it... that's why I am laughing... (*Ndiyo, ni historia yangu mimi nakumbukia nacheka*)," knowing that she is really laughing because of the ways that the social worker has added to her story and her laughter is a refusal to subscribe to the lies the social worker acting as translator is telling.

The young women's refusal to succumb to the social worker's chosen stories for their lives takes them from the propagandistic background constructed by organizations such as the Human Rights Watch to the forefront of their realities. As Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang explain in "R-Words: Refusing Research":

Refusal prompts analysis of the festive spectators regularly backgrounded in favor of wounded bodies, strange fruit, and interesting scars. Refusal shifts the gaze from the violated body to the violating instruments—in this case, the lynch mob, which does not disappear when the lynching is over, but continues to live, accumulating land and wealth through the extermination and subordination of the Other. Thus, refusal helps move us from thinking of violence as an event and towards an analysis of it as a structure (2014).

In the case of NAFGEM and the stories concocted by organizations such as the Human Rights Watch, the young women's bodies are constructed to be wounded, strange, and marginal, while the scars that they hold either from their experience of female genital cutting or emotionally from escaping child marriage are perpetually brought to the center. By choosing to center their stories of refusal, the gaze of accountability is shifted from the way that their bodies have been cast to the backdrop of the systems doing the casting. The social worker acting as translator is not only illuminated as a festive spectator but also as an African person holding the violating instruments of Europeanization for the progression of hierarchies of humanity. Her subscription to the ideologies of Diop's Northern Cradle in Tanzania provides the social worker with the luxury of accumulating wealth at the young woman's humanized expense.

### **The Otherizing Symphony of NAFGEM**

The story that the social worker attempts to tell about the young women during the interviews through her additions, omissions, and mistranslations are concurrent with the stories that they have featured on their website and the narratives that they have told

other students to feed the gaze embedded within Pan-European Academy. On their website, they have a section dedicated to Case Studies, dated July 18, 2018, almost a year before I came to the organization to do my Master's thesis fieldwork. The stories they feature preserve confidentiality by only including letters to represent the young women's names: J, M, K, G, S, R, and N. They share significant similarities with some of the narratives that the social worker attempted to tell me, the young women's stories becoming emblems of hierarchical domination. Due to the length of the stories, highlighting the emboldened lines featured in the case study will serve as soliloquies to demonstrate how the organization has attempted to advance its Eurocentric agenda. The case studies start with the emboldened cliché line, "Dreams come true with empowered girls," but based on what has been revealed from the detailed translations of my interviews in 2019 and the quantitative analysis of hierarchies of domination, one must question whose dreams are coming true and if the young women are truly being empowered or if that is the symphony that the NGO wants the listening ear to hear.

The website continues in its description of the young woman's past, quoting them as saying, "At home, I felt really, really bad..." Although the young women talked about how they had struggled in their village due to not having appropriate access to food and water, they did not talk about feeling really, really bad at home. Furthermore, the comparisons of their life in their village versus the life they have at NAFGEM were only stated based on prompts from the social worker, confirming that this is the story that the organization has transcribed onto the young women to substantiate the need for them to be brought to NAFGEM. The NGO's website also centers the schooling that the young women have received due to the organization's support. On the website, they feature the

following: “In school, there is enough time to discuss topics with others. I like being together with students from so many different regions because we can learn a lot from each other.” These sentences, emboldened and similar to the content on the Human Rights Watch website, curates the contrast that the young women’s time is limited when they are in their village, but at their boarding school, they know the true meaning of freedom. However, from the photo evidence I got while visiting one of the boarding schools, this sense of freedom in time and self is defined by proximity to Judeo-Christianity and whiteness, as indicated by the “Row, Row, Row Your Boat” featured on one of the chalkboards and the Speak English sign on the classroom wall.

On the website, they quote the young women’s words to portray a sense of finality with their departure from their families. When quoting a young woman whom they assign the pseudonym K., the website states, “I don’t have a bad conscience because I left my family; they were doing bad things to me.” However, by reflecting on the social worker’s translations of what made the young women come to NAFGEM, there were blurred lines and an average of 2.8 hierarchies of domination present, demonstrating how the young women’s relationship to home does not exist in a good/bad binary. The stories about how the young women began seeking safe shelter at NAFGEM are a patchwork of NGO-ized fabrications utilized to blanket over the realities of the young women and their intrinsic relation to self and home. To advance the agenda of safety and protection that the social worker also presented during the interviews, the website quotes two of the young women, whom they name as M and K, as stating, “At the shelter house, we feel safe. We can live in peace, and nobody is disturbing us. We have time to play and laugh, and sometimes we feel happy.” In one of the young woman’s interviews, she stated that if

she was at home, she may have been doing nothing, possibly married or maybe not getting an education, but certainly not riddled with disturbances. The projection that the young women would be endangered by their disturbed family members is a theme the social worker acting as translator consistently inserted into the interviews to paint the binary of familial criminality that the young women had to escape with freedom bestowed at the NGO's doors.

The presence of the white savior industrial complex, rooted in a Europeanized frame of salvation, is seen on the website through one of the quotes featured in the case study. The young woman named G. is quoted stating, "At home, I felt very sad about my future and prayed to God every day to help me. I am so grateful that he did." Through this quote, the work that the organization did is equated to an answered prayer from God. Due to the young woman's presupposed salvation from the organization, her future is now framed as a possible Land of Milk and Honey, distant from the devastated life she lived in her village. To evoke the hierarchy of humanity that precludes the practice of female genital cutting as gender-based violence, the website features alleged quotes from the young woman painting the men in their community as unwilling to listen. A young woman with the pseudonym S. is quoted as saying, "If I don't do it, nobody will. If you are a woman and have no education, nobody will listen to you." Before this indented quote, there is contextual information discussing how S. wants to return to her community to change the attitudes of her parents and her community. The suggestion that the young woman is the only hope for her parents and her community because of the education she has received is an exemplification of how the young women at NAFGEM have become emblems in the hierarchy of humanity and facilitators in the NGO's

patchwork of deceit. To advance how an access to education will put the young women in advantageous positionalities, the website quotes the young woman S. as saying, “They will realize I have something in my head and listen to me.” This is similar to the language of blindness that the social worker portrays the young woman as having in the interviews before coming to the organization. The young woman’s indigenous community knows that she has something in her head as the Maasai people often trust young people with the responsibility of tending to the cows, but depicting the extremity of the community needing to realize that the young woman is capable at all verifies the young woman’s rescue as adamant.

To crystallize the notion of the young woman’s blindness prior to her interaction with the NGO, the organization features an alleged quote from one of the young women detailing what the young woman has done with the help of the organization. “Without NAFGEM, I wouldn’t know where I was today. We girls need to know that there is someone behind us who is supporting us so we can complete our education and plan our future. If NAFGEM didn’t pay for the costs, I wouldn’t be able to do any of this.” During the interviews, the young women had the perception that they would still be someone beyond the organization, a human being existing in their Maasai reality. Although the organization is a financial support system for the young women, they also simultaneously embed them in discourses that suffocate the young women’s voices into hierarchies of humanity to ensure that NAFGEM surfaces as the sovereign savior. The sentence declaring that if NAFGEM did not pay for the costs, they would be unable to move forward is a declarative statement that should put the gaze of accountability back onto the Tanzanian government for not effectively providing the Tanzanian people with financial

sustenance to be able to send their children to school, to begin with. For the Maasai people, specifically, their unwavering self-determination toward the maleficent directives of the Tanzanian government's attempts to shape their land and humanity has cost them and prompted Maasai women to engage in practices such as circumcision to make a livable wage. Under the quote that declares how the coverage of educational costs from NAFGEM has changed the young women's future, there is a picture of the young women in their school uniforms exiting the organizational truck and heading to one of their boarding schools, consistent with the imagined advantage of access that is depicted on the Human Rights Watch website.

The NAFGEM website takes the messaging a step forward and ensures that the young women display a sense of gratitude to their saviors. Young women named as N. and J are quoted as saying, "I am so grateful for the support from the sponsors because it gives me the chance to constantly learn new things which help me to change my life." It is important on the website where many of the sponsors and their associates may be looking to know that the work they have done and the money they have provided to the organization is changing the lives of the young women. In addition to the change that the sponsors have provided, the website also explicates how only the young women can be instruments of change in their communities. The young women, N and J, are also quoted as saying, "Only I as a Maasai will have a chance to bring able change in Maasai society because I know how it functions; the Maasai won't accept changes from the outside." This is counterintuitive to the Community Education initiatives of the organization that primarily includes organization personnel, even though they also include Maasai young women. Additionally, when a milling machine was installed by an outside source to

mitigate the continuance of the practice of female genital cutting by providing the people with an external source of financial sustenance, it was a successful strategy in the community. By sketching the Maasai people to be rigid to ideas and their reality, they blur the lines of who have put the Maasai people in marginal positionalities to begin with.

To ensure that the Maasai people are enveloped in the preconstructed heart of darkness, the website transcribes the Maasai people into a good/bad binary. In the final emboldened quote, the young women N. and J. are quoted as saying, “They [The Maasai people] weren’t aware it was possible to reach this high. If they are in the village, their minds are in the dark. They get told what is right and wrong and, as they don’t know anything else, they believe it.” The website attempts to delineate the Maasai intelligence as situated within a zone of obscurity, unaware of the heights that they could reach as a people. However, through a more holistic study of the Maasai people, their minds are far from siphoned and darkened by the village. As Dorothy Hodgson details in *Being*

*Maasai, Becoming Indigenous: Postcolonial Politics in a Neoliberal World:*

Over the past hundred years or so, as resources such as land and livestock became commoditized, men were targeted as political leaders, household “heads,” and livestock “owners” by first colonial and then postcolonial authorities, and women’s moral authority and spiritual significance were dismissed; pastoralist women and their children occupied increasingly vulnerable and dependent positions in their households and homesteads. Most women now held only limited rights to livestock, lacked inheritance rights and significant decision-making power, and had few ways to earn cash. Yet they were increasingly responsible for feeding and caring for their children, including paying any school fees or healthcare costs (p. 73).

Hodgson captures the conflicting realities that the young women and their families have to navigate. Her chronology of events points the finger of accountability back to the institutions and economic forces that have arranged the Maasai people in Europeanized hierarchies of humanity. Describing Maasai men as being targeted as political leaders,

household heads, and livestock owners specifies the impact of Diop's Northern Cradle characterized by patriarchy and subsequently white supremacy as the framework that drives the pedestalization of Maasai men. It is the Northern Cradle, patriarchy, and white supremacy that should be painted as criminal institutions, not the Maasai families who have been impacted by them, as is portrayed on the website. Since Maasai women had few ways to earn cash because of the marginal positionalities they were casted into in their households, many elders often turned to circumcision as an economic source, corroborating the circuitous nature of the impact of the Northern Cradle on the young women's lives.

NAFGEM concludes the Case Study portion of their website by discussing how the young women can take NAFGEM's message to their community and beyond. As featured on the website:

As has already become clear from the girls' personal stories, the girls see themselves as torch-bearers heading back into their communities to share their experiences and inform them about NAFGEM's work and message. This is also NAFGEM's approach: As they have only a limited capacity to support girls directly by hosting them in the Safe Shelter, they see them as multipliers of NAFGEM's vision and mission. Thus, NAFGEM is able to reach far more people with their concerns: girls, parents, and village leaders, to hopefully abolish FGM and child marriage in the near future (NAFGEM, 2024).

The stories that the social worker attempted to tell during the interviews, consistent with the stories featured on the website, were a strategy to ensure the story of the organization was multiplied, even if it portrayed the young women as ignorant, mutilated, and saved from their criminal family members. Therefore, the moments of refusal in the interviews affirm the young women as more than receptacles of the NGO's narrative and Europeanized hierarchies of domination.

Equality Now<sup>5</sup> also featured a story about a young woman named Leah who they report was introduced to NAFGEM. They quote Leah as saying, “If it wasn’t for NAFGEM, I definitely wouldn’t be in school and would probably be married with a child. NAFGEM is very important because it has helped a lot of young women like me who have suffered” (Equality Now, 2024). Since this reiterates the same language fed to me by the social worker acting as translator, which did not accurately come from the young women’s mouths, the validity of this statement must be questioned. Many of the people who go to capture the stories of the young women at NAFGEM often do not speak Swahili, so they rely on the translations from personnel at the organization and the hope that there are transcribing the young women’s words rather than their NGO-ized realities.

The Pan-European Academy is also an additional site for the multiplication of the organization’s mission, so they saw the interviews being conducted for my Master’s thesis as a platform for the organizational work. Information featured by students at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa, Universitat Hamburg in Germany, and the Harvard Education Review in their published works are all mechanisms to highlight the importance of the work being done by NAFGEM. A student at the University of Western Cape included in their thesis for the Master of Law how, “the Network Against Female Genital Mutilation (hereafter referred to as NAFGEM) has reported that, as a result of these measures in the year 2000, 190 mutilators abandoned the practice in areas like Kilimanjaro” (Yusuf, 2012). In the thesis, NAFGEM is touted as a positive outcome towards the eradication of female genital cutting from a policy-oriented perspective based

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<sup>5</sup> A feminist organization using the law to protect and promote the human rights of all women and girls.

on the National Plan of Action to accelerate the elimination of female genital cutting and other harmful practices in Tanzania. Furthermore, the people engaging in the practice are casted off as alien mutilators. It was hoped that I would be singing a similar symphony about the work that NAFGEM does through the translations that the social worker provided during the interview.

In a thesis entitled, “Investigation of Successful Intervention in Mitigation of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) Among Selected Kenyan Communities: Maasai, Kisii, and Kuria,” they discuss NAFGEM as an organization conducting a comprehensive sensitization campaign against the practice of FGM. They also highlight some of the achievements of NAFGEM, sourced from Equality Now as:

1. Maasai leaders have publicly denounced the practice and are now engaged in the campaigns against FGM.
2. Successful use of the media in creating awareness about the dangers of FGM, especially in those communities who do not practice it.
3. Successful sensitization campaigns have empowered girls to say NO to the practice, with many running away or threatening to report their parents to court.
4. Successful use of the anti-FGM law by arresting and imprisoning those who are caught doing the practice.
5. Broad-based approach has led to ex-circumcisers laying down their tools, local animators who disseminate information against FGM and church leaders condemning the practice (Buttia, 2015).

Even if these success stories hold truth for the organization, they are often framed in an either/or binary synchronized with the European hierarchy of humanity to substantiate the legitimacy of NGOization. Therefore, when the girls do not see their family as criminal or when they see their lives as having substance beyond being a mere escapee of the practice, this is a discursive fissure in media circuits that the NGO has already operationalized to advance their agenda.

In another paper published by the Harvard Education Review, entitled “Education in Tanzania: “Kitanda usichokilialia humjui kunguni wake (*You Cannot Know the Bugs of A Bed Until You Have Laid Upon It*),” they discuss the work of a NAFGEM worker in Maasai tribes. They describe how:

She [the NAFGEM worker] is influencing the tribes through education about the dangers of female genital mutilation, a practice in about 90% of Maasai tribes. Sex for the Maasai women is not a pleasurable act [name redacted] tells me. The Maasai women are mutilated at a young age when the transition from a girl to a woman takes place between the ages of 12-17.... [Name redacted] also told me the story of four Maasai women who ran away from the tribe to escape mutilation and found NAFGEM, where they were taken in for protection. They learned basic skills such as reading, writing, and craft making to include sewing and soap making. They now have their own business making soap and other cleaning products they sell to support themselves. These women now have a choice in life and control of what happens to them because they were educated and have a way to make a living (Yahl, 2015).

Marie Yahl, the publisher of this piece for the Harvard Education Review, discusses how they were able to meet with an “English-speaking Maasai boy” who was able to assist in asking the questions for their project. NAFGEM has been able to capitalize on the language barriers of onlookers from the West for telling the stories that would paint the organization in the best light. Through these linguistic detours, the Maasai people remain tribal, blinded, and mutilated escapees. Yahl is also attuned to the symphony of salvation that NAFGEM has historically sung, ensuring that they are depicted as saving the young women through skill sets that grant them control over their lives and futures. Through an Afrocentric lens, we can never accept the use of terms such as “primitive,” “pygmy,” “tribe,” “Black African,” “hut,” and “Bushman” (Asante, 1998, p. 44). The application of Afrocentric lens in this project seeks to not only dispel the quilted lies of Europeanized hierarchies of humanity, but also to provide the stories of the young women’s likes and interests as an instrument toward their Maatic future.

Afrocentricity provides the intellectual framework for the denial of falsehoods told about African people. As Molefi Kete Asante states in *An Afrocentric Manifesto*:

The contradictions in the persistent exaltation of the individual are many. False equations give false results. That is true whether the people are Africans or Europeans. Our problem stems from the fact that we have often taken their beliefs as our historical truths about society. We have done this because we have moved off our own terms and have not sufficiently interrogated European concepts, values, or ideas (p. 71).

The information provided by NGOs such as the World Health Organization, the Human Rights Watch, and NAFGEM is rooted in false equations of truth and honesty, but the equation is slanted toward elevation in a Europeanized hierarchy of humanity. When we think about Tanzanian people from an Afrocentric orientation and reject the Eurocentric grounding of NGO data, statistics, and nomenclature, we see that Tanzanian people can define their own realities for themselves and in their own words in powerful ways that center the Maatic nature of their human beingness.

The Eurocentric orientation of previous works on female genital cutting must also be interrogated for the ways that they have centered the ideologies of the Northern Cradle and become situated in the Pan-European Academy. For example, in the preface to Alice Walker's *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, she discusses how her introduction to the practice of female genital cutting was when she was "just twenty [and] first overheard something about female genital mutilation (FGM) while helping to build a school (out of sisal stalks, all that these very poor, dispossessed-by-British colonialists people had) for children near Thikka, Kenya" (Walker, 1992, p. viii). Similar to Alice Walker, I had been introduced to the practice through the Study Abroad program that I participated in at Cornell. However, the intellectual foundations I built at Cornell's Africana Studies program and Syracuse's Pan African Studies program that were later furnished in the Africology and African

Studies program at Temple University allowed me to see the young women as more than mutilated and suspended in the dispossession and poverty of colonialism. Instead, the Afrocentric orientation provides the intellectual framework where the young women in Tanzania can be seen as agents of their destinies rather than subjects of the practice of female genital cutting.

### **Agents of Reality: The Her-Stories of the Young Women at NAFGEM**

Rather than the stories of young women impacted by female genital cutting only being imagined in myopic ways where the young women are mutilated by a criminal mutilator and saved by an altruistic NGO in a homogenous Africa, their her-stories can serve to preserve their status as agents of their realities. The moments in the interviews, when there was little to no interjection by the social worker acting as translator, will serve to define the her-stories and shine the most human light on the young women at NAFGEM. During the interviews, the young women oftentimes did not understand why I was asking them what they liked to do for fun, eat, or cook. However, it was these very moments that contributed to the young women's humanity being able to radiate beyond how the organization wanted the young women to be seen, as vessels of salvation from the primitivity of their indigenous past.

#### ***Interview 1's Her-Story***

She likes to dance and cook. During the moments when she is dancing and cooking, she is able to enjoy the time spent with friends. She also likes to spend time sitting with her friends. She understands reading as a key element to how she has imagined her future.

### ***Interview 2's Her-Story***

She wishes for people to know that she is educated. In her spare time, she likes to play teacher, play soccer, and help others. She likes to play teacher because she aspires to be a teacher when she is older. She likes to play soccer because she is a skilled player. She likes helping others because she is a kind person. She likes to eat chipsi (french fries), avocado, papaya, and mango, with a special interest for cooking chipsi (french fries) as well. She sees human rights as an important concept that everyone should know about because everybody has the right to work, everybody has the right to be listened to, and everybody has the right to be respected.

### ***Interview 3's Her-Story***

She likes to play and have conversations about different stories with her friends. Playing and telling different stories is how she makes the best use of her time when she is on a break from school. The stories that she shares with her friends are usually funny. She likes to eat pilau (flavored rice) and eat bananas and pineapples.

### ***Interview 4's Her-Story***

She likes to dance to music, play with friends, and make her friends laugh. She also enjoys resting or reading in her free time and playing cards. She likes doing all of these things because it makes her laugh and happy, especially when she wins. She likes to eat foods like bananas, watermelon, and chipsi mayai (French fries with eggs). She also likes to cook rice and drink milk.

***Interview 5's Her-Story***

She likes to tell stories. She does not specify what type of stories, but judging by her laughter, they must be good. She also likes to play. She likes to tell stories and play because they make her happy and keep her body active. When she is active, her body can maintain its strength.

***Interview 6's Her-Story***

She likes to chit-chat and converse with friends at school, home, and here at NAFGEM about different stories. She also likes to play *naghe* (Maggie in the Middle) with friends to refresh her mind. When she tells stories with friends, it is a good outlet to talk and share a moment of happiness. She likes to eat rice with beans, chicken, and French fries. She also likes avocados and bananas and likes to cook rice, beans, and meat.

***Interview 7's Her-Story***

She likes to make beaded bracelets in her free time. She likes to cook ugali (stiff porridge) with vegetables. She likes to eat avocado and ugali.

***Interview 8's Her-Story***

She likes to play games, such as *naghe* (Maggie in the Middle) and to dance in her free time. She likes these activities because they keep her body and her brain active. She likes to eat rice and beef, mango, and avocado. She likes to cook spaghetti.

***Interview 9's Her-Story***

She likes to play soccer because it helps to keep her body active and because it is something that she enjoys when she plays it with other people.

### *Interview 10's Her-Story*

She wishes for her community to learn from her and to educate their children. In her free time, she likes to sit quietly and plan things. She also likes to cook ugali and green vegetables and she likes to eat corn, beans, watermelon, and ugali.

The use of her-stories as a methodological extension of (auto)-Afronography opens the radical possibility for the African young women to be seen beyond the colloquialisms of European and Arab invasion and hierarchies of domination. As Nah Dove states in *Afrikan Mothers: bearers of culture, makers of social change*:

The construction of herstory, moves toward an authentic representation of the Afrikan story. For Afrikan women and men, it is critical to understand the nature of our relationship to European women and men. Inconsistencies in the European version of our story raise questions and doubts about the validity of European history concerning global relations (Dove, p. xv).

In the case of the young women at NAFGEM, telling their her-stories is a more authentic representation of their African and indigenous realities. It allows us to see who they are beyond the confines of the practice of female genital cutting, child marriage, and the salvation of an NGO. Furthermore, the her-stories clarify that the captions and imagery featured on the Human Rights Watch website and other organizations are evocative of the discourse of the Northern Cradle that saw Europeans as superior to African people. A rejection of the inconsistencies in the narratives constructed by NGOs and other organizations revalidates the human beingness of African people rooted in Maaticity.

Providing the space for the her-stories to sit still in its existence on the page takes away the onus of do-ing that is so consistent with the commodity capitalism of the Northern Cradle and allows the young women just to be. Dancing, cooking, or sitting with friends contribute more to the conscientization of the young women's future than the

instrumental change that NAFGEM perceives itself to be providing. The young women eating their favorite foods and knowing that they have rights reveals the young women's ability to attain self-definition and determination independent of salvation from an NGO. Sharing funny stories with friends illustrates the sense of kinship the young women had before interacting with NAFGEM. Playing cards and the desire to keep their body fit is a strategy for self-preservation and survival that they knew before the organization. Happiness amidst turbulence was who the young women knew themselves to be before being saved by NAFGEM. Each moment of silence, laughter, or disruption in response to the social worker's interjections was reminiscent of this knowing of who they were prior to their insertion into the discursive scapes of the Pan-European Academy.

### **The Kukataa (Refusal) of Truth: Fleeing from the Lies**

When I returned to Tanzania in December 2022, I was excited by the possibility of finally being able to capture the young woman's voices and stories beyond what the translator attempted to tell me in the Summer of 2019. I intended to ask questions similar to the questions I asked in 2019 with more of a focus on how the young women defined home and self. I was hoping to see whether the young women's responses would change if they were not in the presence of the translator, but this was a direct threat to the concocted stories of victimization that NAFGEM had worked so hard to preserve. When I told the young women about my idea to exit the organization's headquarters for a day to have a conversation and answer questions as they had done before, they seemed excited to have a day away from the monotony of the headquarters. However, one of the young women was trepidatious and stated that she did not feel comfortable leaving unless she had permission from the NGO executive. When I went to the NGO executive and

requested that the young women be able to leave the organization to participate in my dissertation research and be asked questions, the NGO executive began explaining that the young women were unable to leave NAFGEM without his permission as he was their legal guardian. He also stated as he pointed to a framed certificate of verification with a governmental seal, that if I said anything bad about the government, “bad things could happen...” He used an example of someone who came to Tanzania and commented on the ethics of Tanzanian fishing practices and was unable to reenter the country.

Unbeknownst to the NGO executive, I had already written my Master’s thesis, “Lost In Translation: Unpacking the Monolithic Narratives of Girls Impacted by Female Genital Cutting,” and it was publicly accessible. Therefore, his words were not a flat threat but rather posed significant dangers if the Master’s thesis was found. The organizational executive made it clear that the only way he was going to let me ask the young women questions was if the organization’s social worker was present again. Since I had already been threatened and I could hear the organizational personnel whispering to each other when I entered the room along with other suspicious behaviors, it was not worth staying at the organization’s headquarters to possibly replicate the same information that I received when the social worker was present during the interviews in 2019.

The organizational executive was not as worried about bad things being said about the government but was more concerned that bad things could be said about the organization that would be a poor reflection on the government and all that it had granted them. Since I was unable to get authentic narratives from the young women that were not influenced by intel from the NGO, I was intentional about creatively preserving the young women’s agency amidst the siloing of the young women into spheres of

victimhood and rescue narratives. Although the primary features of the her-stories are the young women's likes and dislikes due to the pronounced convulsion during the interview, it is one of the few moments that captured them being young women rather than vessels for the organization's capital gain. The dancing, cooking, game playing, and laughter that the young women described in the interviews were realities that I also observed in 2017, 2019, and 2022 when I went to Tanzania, and it ultimately is what caused the dissonance when I returned back to America in 2017 to find narratives on the Human Rights Watch website describing how NAFGEM had saved the young women. The girls were agents of their own destinies; they did not need the organization to save them. By resisting the discourse that has been reinforced in the Pan-European Academy of white saviorhood, the human interactions that I had with the young women that transcended a fleeting moment of informational extraction were preserved.

The desire to resist the stories that I was being told at NAFGEM and was observing on the Human Rights Watch website was rooted in how I had made sense of all that I had borne witness to during my first trip to Tanzania. When I arrived at NAFGEM as an undergraduate, I saw one of my professors slide money into the hands of the organizational personnel's hand. Although they attempted to be discreet in their exchange, it became clear that our presence at the organization was voyeuristically paid for. When I visited in 2019 to conduct my dissertation research, one of the organizational personnel asked me to take a video of the young women singing "Happy Birthday" to one of the sponsors in front of one of the cars they had purchased for the organization, but I refused as the performance that was requested from the young women was too uncanny to capture on camera footage. The interviews in 2019 were no different from the

performance they began to do for their German funder: the Once Upon a Time fairy tales that the social worker concocted was yet another strategy to accrue more money from the West.

My unwillingness to partake in these stories was a rejection of the ways that I had felt commodified by the very Pan-European Academy that had brought me to Tanzania. The scholarship money that had brought me on my first international trip filled with kinship, safaris, and other excursions was entwined with the subtle othering of Tanzanian people with the hopeful distraction of lions, warthogs, giraffes, and zebras. However, being one of the few Black people in the cohort from Cornell University, I was cast as just another muzungu in the Tanzanian landscape, but I was aware of the cognitive dissonance I had experienced and would experience when I returned to America as a Black woman attending an Ivy League university. In the same way I had hoped people would not cloud their vision of me as an impoverished affirmative action admit to the university who had not earned her way in, I was unwilling to succumb to the clouded interpretations of the young women at NAFGEM that the Pan-European Academy so desperately wanted me to believe in. The (auto)-Afronographic approach to my work opens the radical possibility to see the young women at NAFGEM as so much more than just plot lines on a graph or propagandistic photographs on a website, but it also provides the framework for the multiplicitous ways that I also had almost become complicit in their commodification. My denial of the fallacious objectivity of research elucidates how the multifaceted industrial complexes also had me webbed in its lies.

## **The Young Women's Word Magic: A Bridge to Agency, Ubuntu, and Maaticity**

When the young women at NAFGEM speak and exist in their human beingness, in addition to revealing the hierarchized terrain of the Pan-European Academy, they also exude the word magic of nommo. As they generated and transformed sounds to contribute to their speech during the interviews, they not only were able to resist the convolutions by the social worker, but they also produced the magical sonic reverberations embedded within their existence. Contrary to how the social worker attempted to portray the young women, they were able to maintain the ubuntu sensibility of who they were through their laughter and silences. Beyond the practice of female genital cutting and child marriage, they still have respect for their Maasai selves, including the dignity, collectivity, obedience, humility, solidarity, caring nature, hospitality, interdependence, and communalism that is ingrained within their indigenous way of knowing. The centering of the ubuntu sensibility of the young women is also a denial of the hierarchies of domination that have dislocated the human beingness of the young women. Maaticity, in conjunction with ubuntu, recognizes Maasai indigeneity as being fundamental to the preservation of the humanity of the young women at NAFGEM, not the NGO's intervention efforts. Maaticity's critical perspective toward hierarchies of domination crumbles the foundation on which NGOs rest. Maaticity reveals that the young women were far from blind before they came into contact with NAFGEM, so there was no pathological primitivity to save the young women from. The narratives of helplessness that the NGOs tell about the young women are often mechanisms to save governmental institutions from having to be accountable to the decades of pillaging and devastation that they have waged on the people they allege to be saving. The young

women's words are bridges to a return of culpability to the wagers of devastation and a preserver of who the young women and their indigenous community have always been, human. If the young women were able to tell their stories when I went to the organization in 2022, this human self that was always there would have only been able to shine that much brighter, but that knowledge could cost the organization, and it was a price they were unwilling to pay.

The notion of African fractals as understood by author Ron Eglash, when applied to the concept of Maaticity, provides the framework for considering how when NGO-ization tries to bead the narratives of homogeneity onto the young women, the self-similarity of their indigeneity remains supreme. Eglash defines fractals as the repetition of similar patterns at ever-diminishing scales that are present in indigenous African spaces (Eglash, 1999, p. 4). Through the centering of Maaticity and ubuntu, the agency of the indigenous people engages in a self-similarity that preserves past, present, and future selves. As Eglash highlights, "Design themes [of fractals] are like threads running through the social fabric; they are less a commanding force than something we command, weaving these strands into many different patterns of meaning" (Eglash, 1999, p. 4). Similarly, Maaticity and ubuntu are not a commanding force like the fabric of the hierarchies of domination, but instead, they are stranded into the existence of indigeneity allowing the people to make meaning of their realities amidst historical dehumanization.

The young women's indigenous selves as a defiance of Europeanized hierarchies of domination and as a self-defining thread of existence coincides with the approach Reynaldo Anderson and Charles E. Jones highlights in *Afrofuturism 2.0: The Rise of Astro-Blackness*:

Afrofuturism 2.0 is the early twenty-first century technogenesis of Black identity reflecting counter histories, hacking and/or appropriating the influence of network software, database logic, cultural analytics, deep remixability, neurosciences, enhancement and augmentation, gender fluidity, posthuman possibility, the speculative sphere, with transdisciplinary applications and has grown into an important Diasporic techno-cultural “Pan-African” movement (p. x).

Framing the past, present, and future selves of the young women impacted by female genital cutting and seeking safe shelter in Tanzania as Afrofuturistic is imperative as it encompasses the multifaceted ways that their bodies, stories, and humanity have been threaded by hierarchies of domination across time and space continuums. Analyzing the stories of the young women as they are discussed on websites such as the Human Rights Watch and World Health Organization with an Afrocentric lens identifies the algorithms of oppression that are embedded within how African girls and women are depicted in technological landscapes. The human interviews that were conducted at the organizational headquarters, even with the social worker present and infiltrating, still acted as an example of a discursive hack amidst the presence of algorithmic hierarchization. The gender fluidity and posthuman possibility of Afrofuturism 2.0 allows one to open the window to understanding the androgyny of Amen as a delegitimization of the practice of female genital cutting and that the true “posthuman” possibility is ultimately a Sankofa return to ancestral intelligence as the real AI.

Safiya Noble’s definition of algorithms of oppression provides a recognition that the decisions behind many technological platforms are driven by human beings. She argues that those digital decisions reinforce oppressive social relationships and enact new modes of racial profiling, which she names as technological redlining (Noble, p. 1). The young women at NAFGEM are situated within these technological platforms and are positioned within the demarcations of the redlining. As a result, the oppressive social

relationships that already saw the young women's bodies as Other, sexualized, and commodity are amplified in media spaces. Therefore, when the World Health Organization lists women and girls in only Africa, Asia, and the Middle East as impacted by the practice of female genital cutting, this confirms ways that these organizational platforms are reproducing racial and gendered hierarchies of humanity about young women. The young women's stories, then, are mechanisms to cut through the divide of the technological redline to reassert the Maatic human beingness of Black girls and women that existed since the times of Kemet.

The centering of the stories of the young women in Tanzania is an enactment of the praxis of refusal as described by Tuck and Yang. "Refusal understands the wisdom in a story, as well as the wisdom in not passing that story on. Refusal in research makes way for other r-words—for resistance, reclaiming, recovery, reciprocity, repatriation, regeneration" (Tuck and Yang, 2014). In the case of my work in Tanzania, there was refusal in understanding the wisdom that the young women exuded by existing and resisting the lies the social worker was attempting to tell about their lives. Additionally, by choosing not to pass the story of victimization that the social worker acting as translator was telling for the Pan-European Academy, an act of indigenous preservation was enacted. The radical possibility embedded in ancestral wisdom and furnished by an Afrocentric return to our Kemeti selves leaves the Maatic potentiality for the other r-words of resistance, reclaiming, reciprocity, repatriation, and regeneration.

## **Conclusion**

The culmination of the young woman's her-stories with detailed translations that captured their dynamic interactions with the social worker acting as translator is a needle

in a haystack that almost went unnoticed. When you Google NAFGEM, you find primarily stories about all of the success that the organization has had in mitigating the practice and the featured stories of young women such as Tigisi and Agatha being saved by the work at NAFGEM. Unless you are on the grounds and in space with the young women in Tanzania, you may begin to recognize these stories in technological landscapes as fact and not be able to see young women impacted by female genital cutting as more than vessels for salvation. Refusal, translated in Swahili as *kukataa*, functions in multifaceted ways to critique the myopic ways that young women impacted by female genital cutting and child marriage are portrayed and provides a canvas to ensure that the young women do not become further lost in translation. Each time the young women refused to subscribe to the social worker's lies, they asserted their Maatic agency into the sonic recording of the interview, emanating an Afrocentric word magic that connects them to their past, present, and future selves. By deciding to center the her-stories of the young women, I am refusing the discourse of the Pan-European Academy that reiterates the pseudoscientific fallacy of the Black woman's body as alien, othered, and circus freak. The real AI of ancestral intelligence rooted in an ubuntu human beingness has always seen the young women's human bodies as balanced, harmonious, and complete, without the circumcised cut to connote their gendered rite-of-passage toward humanity.

## CHAPTER 5

### **Conclusion: Situating Female Genital Cutting in the Here and Now**

More recently, conversations about female genital cutting have hit media circuits with a burgeoning flame because of the possibility of Gambia reversing the ban on the practice. The discursive buzz is stemming from the campaign of Gambian lawmaker Almaneh Gibba to overturn the 2015 ban on female genital cutting. The desire for the reconsideration of the ban comes after three circumcisers were charged a fine for their involvement in circumcision practices. Many media circuits are covering the issue and merging terminologies to convey the gravity of the issue, highlighting the mutilations that occur in Gambia and quoting Gambian lawmaker Almaneh Gibba as saying, “We will not be dictated by Western philosophy and their views on what we do... Who are they to tell us our culture, our religion, our traditional beliefs?” (Christensen, 2024). Lawmaker Gibba does not realize that a desire to uphold the practice of female genital cutting is a perpetuation of Western philosophy and views because of the ways that African young women’s agency is not taken into consideration. Furthermore, the practice’s origins are replicative of what Cheikh Anta Diop calls an archaic mentality and the inability to reconcile with the androgyny and omnipresence of Kemetic deities. Female genital cutting is not emblematic of African cultural beliefs but rather is indicative of how a Europeanized cultural paradigm of primitivity has been cast onto African people and perceived to be their own. African people are whole and complete Maatic beings without circumcision, courses of development, and other additive components within the Northern Cradle hierarchy of humanity.

Many algorithmic spheres throughout the US have curated many articles, such as those entitled “Gambia lawmakers refer a repeal of the ban of female genital cutting to more committee decision” (AP News) and “Gambia Moves Toward Overturning Landmark Ban on Female Genital Cutting” (NY Times). AP News describes the practice as “causing serious bleeding, death, and childbirth complications but remains a widespread practice in parts of Africa” (John and Donati, 2024). The New York Times Article describes the practice as “a centuries-old ritual tied up in ideas of sexual purity, obedience, and control” (Maclean, 2024). AP News replicates the cartography of primitivity that ensures the locality of the practice is predominated in the African continent. The New York Times description reifies the ritualization of the practice as something that is only engaged with by the othered Hottentot circus freaks and is critiqued by Human rights experts, lawyers, and women’s and girl’s rights campaigners that have done decades of work to mitigate the practice. Media circuits infiltrated by the discourse of the Pan-European Academy are in no position to cast morality onto African people because when the looking glass is reversed, we see a significant rollback in reproductive rights for women in the United States, such as through the reversal of Roe v. Wade and maternal mortality rates of Black women. The reversal of Roe v. Wade was an implantation of a Northern Cradle hierarchy of humanity that even those in the Northern Cradle could not escape. However, Black women who are already impacted by health complications, pregnancy-related morbidity, and even death during pregnancy have been disproportionately affected by the legislative reversal. Black women are also three more times as likely to die from a pregnancy-related death than White women. The reversal in reproductive justice in Gambia is a symphony in tune with what has been going on in

America, a cartographic emblem of the Europeanized hierarchy of humanity. Similar to the myopic or nonexistent stories told about young women impacted by female genital cutting, we often do not hear the stories of Black mothers whose children do not make it to the third trimester or the Black women who do not survive their pregnancy and are cast into the numericization of statistics that render them alien. Furthermore, we are not told about the lived realities of women who turned to desperate and perhaps deadly measures to abort a child due to the lack of appropriate medical access— these are realities that are typically only painted in sub-Saharan Africa alongside images of a famished child who can be saved with a donation of only five cents a day.

### **Female Genital Cutting, The Northern Cradle, and Hierarchies of Humanity**

However, these images of a homogenous African's elongated belly and famished arms are not emblematic of African indigeneity. They are iterative of the theories developed in Cheikh Anta Diop's Two Cradle Theory, which informs the Europeanized hierarchy of humanity. The Northern Cradle, which produces the fodder for Eurocentric hierarchies of domination, is rooted in patriarchy as the basis for the construction of race. Conversely, the Southern Cradle embraces a Maatic sensibility that sees African people as vessels of truth, righteousness, justice, harmony, order, balance, and reciprocity. Centering the stories of the young women impacted by female genital cutting in Tanzania through the Afrocentric metatheory and an (auto)-Africanist and African womanist methodology envisages the young women as agents of their reality and having stories that matter, are worth telling, and contribute to human beingness. NAFGEM understood the young women's truths to be divergent from the single story of the nongovernmental organization that reiterates Europeanized hierarchies of domination to sustain multi-

faceted industrial complexes. African people on the grounds—such as the social worker—who have become inculcated by Europeanization and the debasement of African values, a fundamental belief system in the Pan-European Academy, are instrumental artisans in the calligraphy of hierarchization. When the Europeanization of African minds is refused, the radical possibility for connectivity that defies algorithms and time-space continuums persists.

The Swahili word for Refusal, *Kukataa*, contains an extra -a of distinction that distinguishes it from the Swahili word meaning to cut, *kukata*. In the same way that James Turner added “-a” to “African Studies” to emphasize the interconnections between and multiple geographies throughout the Black world, illuminating the her-stories of the young women exposed how narratives about Black women’s bodies have always engaged in an Othering that defies geographies of reason. Artificial intelligence has amplified this otherization by expanding how the Black body has been and can be rendered alien. Facial recognition software is slyly being operationalized to collect phenotypical imagery of Black humanity. Black minds are curating information and responses that are feeding the presupposed autogenerated responses of ChatGPT. The AI that African people should be relying on is the ancestral intelligence that has gotten us to where we are now, an ubuntu sensibility of I am because we are.

### **The Real AI: Ancestral Intelligence and the Power of Words**

Authors such as Ron Eglash are vastly aware of the modes of consciousness that exist in indigenous African communities. When examining African fractals in architecture, traditional hairstyling, textiles, sculpture, painting, carving, metalwork, religion, games, and practical craft, Eglash observed self-similar patterns in ever-

diminishing scales that can inform the fields of biology, geology, and other natural sciences. When African people across the diaspora steer away from STEM because of the spheres of exclusion that it concocts in the Pan-European Academy, the prioritization of Maatic sensibilities of ancestral intelligence reminds us that our ancestors have always known and developed information in the STEM fields. This information later became discoverable in Europeanized discursive spheres and used as the gunpowder for hierarchies of domination.

Therefore, by shining a light on African existence and beingness as contradistinctive to the do-ing embedded within dogmas of European culture such as capitalism, the indigenous ways of knowing that are captured in the every day have the power to be cultivated. The everyday experiences that I had while spending time with the young women in Tanzania at NAFGEM cultivated cognitive dissidence when I returned to the United States to see websites with unilateral information about the young women who I had met. As I spent time with the young women in Tanzania in the summer of 2019, we shared moments of laughter as young Black women, making sense of the subtleties of the reality, such as the mandazi and chai that we would be eating and drinking for breakfast. As they completed their homework for their boarding school and I completed the work for my Master's thesis, we were circuitously interconnected to the word magic of our past, present, and future selves in ways that transcend the algorithms of linear time-space continuums.

### **Moving the Word Magic Forward**

The instance of the NGO-ization of the young women's words at NAFGEM to uphold European hierarchies of humanity is a microcosm of how discursive spaces in the

Pan-European Academy are painting Black girls and women as perpetually primitive, savage, and alien. The rhetoric being used to describe the repeal of the ban on the practice in Gambia is one of many examples that will continue to infiltrate technospaces and media circuits. Imagining Afrocentric algorithms through the pedagogical application of Maatic sensibilities such as ubuntu and the Sankofa return to ancestral intelligence provides the intellectual framework to humanize African people in a global world that seeks to kill, steal, and destroy. Given the currency of what is happening in Gambia, African girls and women throughout the diaspora may be left with little to no choice but to rely on the provision of NGOs on the grounds to survive, but Afrocentric algorithms of accountability prioritize the necessity of seeing African girls and women as human and not as mere receptacles for Eurocentric salvation.

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