Drinking the Written Qur'an
Healing with Kombe in Zanzibar Town

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De geschreven Koran gedronken

Kombe genezingen in Zanzibar-stad

(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

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A Note on Style

Written in English, this thesis builds on fieldwork in which Swahili was the primary language. With two exceptions, all conversations, interviews, or informal chats were conducted in Swahili; thus, if not indicated otherwise, the quoted utterances are translations from Swahili into English which requires certain decisions to be made. Firstly, although gender plays an important role in how social life is organized, the third person singular in Swahili does not mark gender. Since gender was broadly understood to be binary (other gender conceptions were not addressed), I have transported this sense in translating the third person singular as "s/he." Secondly, I have placed punctuation pragmatically, directing the reader towards a certain understanding. My transcriptions did not measure pauses unless they appeared to be important for the content. Lastly, Swahili incorporates a lot of vocabulary with Arabic roots, especially in terminology related to Islam and I was not always able to distinguish between Swahili vocabulary and code switching into Arabic. Especially during my talks with religious authorities, some terms which refer to Islamic concepts were pronounced in an Arabic way (with prominent uses of glottal sounds). I am not in the position to make statements about an "objective validity" of any of these pronunciations, but they did convey the speaker's self-positioning as religiously learned to me as well as they would to most people in Zanzibar. In my writing, I indicate peculiarities where they are important for content related matters and treat Swahili as the norm. I am aware of the language politics underlying and being contributed to by this choice in particular with regard to Zanzibar's situatedness as in-between the African mainland and the Islamic Indian Ocean.

For the transliteration of Arabic words, I rely on the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies' guidelines that indicate which Arabic/Islamic words have become incorporated into English and are to be italicized or spelled in a certain way.

Swahili and Arabic words that I chose to incorporate into my English writing are italicized and can be found in the glossary. Unless a certain word is used extensively, I have usually added the English translation. However, the choice to employ the Swahili (or, less often, Arabic) word indicates that the provided translation is rather an approximation and in each case this is explained with more detail at a convenient moment. The word "kombe" is an exception. Since it does not have a name in English, I introduce kombe and treat the word as if it was English.

A Note on Style

With respect to people's names, I now briefly comment on my politics of anonymization. Speaking about my writing with my interlocutors, I told them about my intention of anonymizing them. However, some of them urged me to use their real name since they wanted to be acknowledged as part of shaping this research. I thus include the real names of those who explicitly expressed this wish and anonymize others, but, given the potential of contestability of kombe and the possibility of swift political changes in Tanzania, I have decided not to mark which names are real and which are anonymized.

My interlocutors' utterances are generally marked with a footnote, indicating the (anonymized) name, the date, and the place where the conversation took place. For reasons of redundancy, I have opted not to indicate in every footnote that the utterances were part of an interview with me, but draw attention to this fact here for the sake of clarity.

Last but not least, I must note that I mostly employ the "ethnographic present" in this thesis. Of course, my fieldwork experiences on which this thesis builds are situated in the past (and leak into the present through social media). They have partially been preserved in recordings and fieldnotes and they have partially become memory. In writing, I present (make present) these encounters. The time of fieldwork becomes entangled with the time of writing and with the time of reading in the formation of ethnographic knowledge (though under conditions that deny coevalness, see Fabian [1983] 2002: 35). Not as a marker for representation, but as a literary device (Hastrup 1990: 49), the ethnographic present does not deny histories (neither of the people with whom situations were shared in time nor of disciplinary conventions that shape what ethnographic writing is today). I deem these histories important and explicitly relate to them (most prominently in chapter 2). As a literary device, the ethnographic present takes part in constituting ethnographic *knowledge* that emerges from the entanglements of different times in this "diffractive ethnogaphy" (see introduction) and thereby is "out of time" (Strathern [1991] 2004: 48, in relation to Hastrup 1990); it abstracts from time and claims relevance beyond narrow time frames.

Figure 1.

Introduction

The picture on the opposite page shows a plate with writing in red. The plate is held by two hands; it is presented for the picture taken. At the lower edge of the picture, a blue jar filled with water can be seen. Next to the blue jar, there are small packages wrapped in newspaper and in the very edge of the picture, hardly recognizable, there is a cup with ink from which an inked twig sticks out. Placed just before this first introduction page, the picture appears to be connected to the title on the cover: "Drinking the Written Qurʾan: Healing with Kombe in Zanzibar Town." What is written on the picture's plate? What is the water in the jar for? How are the plate's writing and the jar's water related to the title's verb "drinking"? And what is kombe?

Lakini, sisi sote tunajua kombe ni nini. "But, we all know what kombe is."[1] When I arrived in Mto Pepo, Zanzibar Town, it was bustling with people. I had been advised to go to that neighborhood and inquire about a person for my research on kombe so I went and found myself surrounded by the busy street life of the late morning hours. I approached a man at a stall who sold bananas to ask about the person recommended to me. Instead of the directions I had hoped for I received the answer: "But we all know what kombe is." This sentence allows to foreshadow important aspects of this thesis. "But" indicates that the sentence is a response, given to me, a researcher. In this introduction it links from the picture on the cover into this ethnographic text. "We all" hints at a group of people that the man—his name is Faki—belongs to. It is not clear where he draws boundaries: the people from Mto Pepo, the people in Zanzibar, the people who are in the street at that moment? Though unclear, it allows me to mention that the constitution of a Zanzibari "we" was important during the time of my research (see chapter 2). The verb "know" points to yet another theme that I address in this thesis: knowledge (see chapter 3). Furthermore, Faki's sentence includes an ontological concern of "what [...] is." This is put in relation to knowledge (to "know

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[1] 21 January 2014, Mto Pepo, Zanzibar Town.

(a) Bi Tufa writing kombe   (b) Bi Salama liquefying the verse

Figure 2.: Preparing kombe

what [...] is") and this relation is central to my conceptualization of how to write this ethnography (as "diffractive ethnography," see below). Lastly, Faki's sentence includes the name of that which I explore: kombe.

Having said this sentence, he looked around himself and pointed at a number of other men who were sitting close by and who were involved in a heated debate while drinking coffee: He also referred to his neighbor who was selling fish. "You are interested in kombe?" the fish seller shouted across. "Yes," I replied and moved a bit closer. "Wait," he said, "I will just finish with this piece of tuna and then I will tell you all about it." Faki invited me to stand in the shade with him while the fish seller cut the tuna into smaller pieces and distributed them to the waiting customers. The bananas were not quite as popular and he had time to

(a) Filling kombe into a bottle   **(b)** Giving kombe to a patient

Figure 3.: Preparing kombe continued

give me a short summary: "First, the use: kombe is used for afflictions. It is a cure. It can be drunk or it can be applied to the skin. The skin of the body. [...] Now, its preparation: It is prepared using the Qurᵓan. There are certain verses [he hesitates], well, the specialists know. You take the verse and you write it. Then you take water. Just a little water." I asked: "Any kind of water?" He said: "Just water, ordinary water. And then after that [after the water has washed off the verses] you fill it into a glass or a bowl or a bottle and then kombe is ready to be used by people." After this short synopsis our conversation continued in another direction until the fish seller joined us and I found out that he was the person I had been looking for: Chombo Juma. He sells fish in the morning and works in a

madrasa in the afternoon. As a Qurʾan school teacher he also prepares kombe for people who seek his help.

This thesis is about kombe in Zanzibar Town: Qurʾanic verses are written with saffron ink on a plain plate or on plain paper and then washed off. The water that then contains the verses is collected, filled into a bottle and finally given to an afflicted person to be ingested. This ingestion of kombe provides direct bodily access to the Qurʾan that heals. Due to its reliance on the Qurʾan's healing power, kombe is framed as Islamic medicine.

So far, this text has provided two different descriptions of kombe: one by Faki and one by myself (in addition to pictoral aid). These descriptions bear many similarities. Both Faki and I include Qurʾanic verses and water in our descriptions; we both state that it is used for afflictions and that it heals. However, our descriptions are not identical. For example, Faki numerates different containers into which kombe can be filled: a glass, a bowl, or a bottle which I do not do. I place more emphasis on the process of washing off which in Faki's description is entirely implicit and only inserted by me with square brackets into my transcription of the translation of his words. Both Faki and I relate to kombe as something that has a name and is describable. In our descriptions, we assume an entity to which the name "kombe" refers.

As Faki pointed out, everybody knows what kombe is. Everybody could give a more or less detailed description and they would all relate to this thing, kombe. Faki hesitated when he mentioned the Qurʾanic verses, portraying the need to select particular ones and acknowledging that not he, but specialists know about these details. Perhaps everybody (in Zanzibar) "knows what kombe is" and perhaps everybody can provide a description of kombe, referring to a common ground of materializations of kombe. However, not everybody knows the relevant details and it is the task of specialists to write kombe.

Interested in an official and possibly legal framing of kombe preparation, I approached the Mufti's office to make an appointment for an interview.[2] Sheikh Fadhil Soraga, the secretary of the Mufti's office in Zanzibar, had half an hour to spare before leaving for the inauguration of a new mosque and welcomed me right in. He asked me to take a seat and I moved closer, took a seat opposite of his desk and then introduced myself and my research about kombe. He thanked me for coming to his office for my research because in the Qurʾan it says, and he recited:

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[2]   14 August 2014, Mombasa, Zanzibar Town.

"Ask those who have knowledge if you do not know" (16:43). Sheikh Soraga folded his hands on his desk and slightly leaned over to me. "We believe, that inside of the Qurɔan, there is cure (*tiba*). [...] The Qurɔan heals."

The Qurɔan's healing qualities are uncontested in Zanzibar and they are at the core of how kombe works. In his further explanations, Sheikh Soraga embedded the use of the Qurɔan for healing purposes in a hadith (al-Bukhari) in which the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have advised such use. I had heard of people who did not approve of kombe and asked Sheikh Soraga about them. In response, he differentiated two groups from each other: those who only recite the Qurɔan and thus evoke healing and those who "say that it is suitable to write the Qurɔan for a person." The reason why the former object to the writing lies in the impermissible appropriations that only few, and Sheikh Soraga stressed this, that only very few people do, such as writing with blood.[3] Concerning the latter, he gave a description of kombe to specify what exactly we were talking about.

SHEIKH SORAGA: They have enabled, that is, they have said that it is suitable to write the Qurɔan for a person. Then this Qurɔan, when you have written it on a white plate, or a tray, then you wash it off. You wash off its water. The sick person is given to drink and it will help her/him and s/he will get healthy.

Sheikh Soraga places his description of kombe in a larger framework. With his reference to a hadith, he grounds his description theologically and with his positioning towards a possible objection to written kombe, he points to a discourse in which the materiality of the Qurɔan is important. I had come to the Mufti's office in order to situate the encounters of my research within an official framing. As the secretary of the Mufti's office in Zanzibar, appointed by the government and responsible for Islamic affairs in Zanzibar, Sheikh Soraga certainly responds to my research in a particular way. His description and its placement in larger frameworks not only provides yet another description that relates to a thing named "kombe" and thus to Faki's and my description thereof, but Sheikh Soraga's description additionally draws attention to the (contestable) materiality of kombe.

The juxtaposition of these descriptions—Faki's, mine, and Sheikh Soraga's—forms the beginning of what I develop as "diffractive ethnography." Placing im-

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[3] The reference to blood is an implicit comparison to "traditional" healing practices (*ya ki-ienyeji*, see chapter 1) some of which involve practices that he, with recourse to Islam, disapproves of.

portance on kombe's materiality, diffractive ethnographic writing about the topic of kombe explicitly links what I write about with how I write about it. In order to map out what such writing about kombe entails, this introduction first portrays its attention to materiality. In connection to a survey of already existing literature in which kombe or kombe-like phenomena are mentioned, it shows how this thesis, taking a material approach, can offer a more profound engagement with kombe than previous studies have done. I then introduce "diffraction" and a semantic field around it as conceptual terms that enable me to link these concerns for materiality with ethnographic writing. Formulating the "ethnographic phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic," the last section concretely attends to the fieldwork conducted on this topic, provides an outline of this thesis, and marks the entanglements of fieldwork and writing.

Possibilities through Materiality

Kombe is written with saffron ink (not blood, as Sheikh Soraga emphasizes) on a white plate or white paper; the verses are washed off with water (ordinary water, as Faki confirmed) and they thus gain biochemical and biophysical properties that make ingestion for human bodies possible. With kombe we are dealing with ink shaped in a particular way to form letters in relation to each other: to form words. Kombe's written words, however, constitute not just any words, but the Qurʾan. "Fire cannot harm it," the title of Travis Zadeh's (2008a) article, speaks for the discursively emphasized textual materiality in which the distinction between message and medium does not hold. What the Qurʾan says is entangled with what the Qurʾan is. Differentiating between the material and the immaterial becomes a complex issue.

In the academic literature, kombe appears occasionally as a curiosity that receives a brief mention. Its materiality is mostly not addressed, let alone taken as entry point with which it could be scrutinized. Instead, in extremely short descriptions, kombe features in various orientalist and anthropological accounts in which "magic" or "folkloristic" healing practices of Muslim societies are depicted.[4] In the following two subsections I start with a survey of kombe-like phenomena around

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[4] Note, how the designation of "magic" and "folkloristic" create a distance to more authorized practices of Islam as a "religion" (for the relation between "magic" and "religion" see Ford Campany [2003: 315] and Pels [2014b: 235]).

the world and then move to an overview of where and how kombe of the Swahili Coast appears in academic literature. Tracing kombe in the literature not only situates the choice of topic for this thesis, but also shows that despite the scarce academic interest, it is geographically wide-spread and has historical depth. Furthermore, it shows how kombe-as-a-topic invites different disciplinary approaches, the combination of which accounts for the occasional superficial mention. Faki claimed that "we all know what kombe is" and many researchers have noted that there is such a thing, but have not scrutinized it further. These two subsections pay attention to these occasional notes and are followed by a theoretical subsection on materiality which opens new possibilities to investigate kombe.

Drinking the Qurʾan in the Islamicate World

Drinking the written Qurʾan is a practice that is wide spread throughout the Islamicate world (see also O'Connor 2004: 176 in the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān). However, despite this spread and the probable transmission of this practice, its name varies with the different localities. The word for the drinkable healing written Qurʾan did not travel with the practices. The word "kombe" does not have Arabic roots and denotes a shell found in the Indian Ocean. It also denotes (and is possibly related to the meaning of) a cup (in the sense of a trophy) and its diminuative, *kikombe*, translates as cup (in the sense of a tea cup). The word carries the sense of a container and is associated with drinking while at the same time it connects the practice to the Indian Ocean. Although it is attributed to Islamic healing and although the practice is wide spread across the Islamic world, the word "kombe" situates the practice in its Swahili sphere; the word localizes the widely-spread practice of drinking the Qurʾan. Similarly, kombe-like practices elsewhere are referred to with local terms, providing numerous names for a practice that appears to be widely spread. I here can only speculate about the reason for these localized names: Informed by anticipated and actual contestations in Zanzibar about the theological legitimacy of kombe, I assume that the ambivalence towards kombe in light of long-established ideas of orthodoxy is not specific to the Swahili Coast. Responding to this ambivalence, the strategy of localizing the practice by localizing the name appears to be as common and wide-spread as the practice of drinking the Qurʾan.

While it is called kombe in Swahili, in Mayotte it is called *singa* (see Lambek 1993: 142). In Mali (see Mommersteeg 1988: 506), Burkina Faso (Bravmann

1983: 34), and in Côte d'Ivoire (Handloff 1982: 186, Launay 1992: 154 and Silverman 2007: 117) it is known as *nasi /nassa-ji /nassi ji /nasi ji /nassi-ji* (translateable as "slate water"). In Wolof it is referred to as *kiis* or *saafara* (see Ware 2014: 58) and in Pulaar as *aaye* (Dilley 2004: 179). In the Hausa used by Muslims in Ghanaian *zongos* it is called *rubūtū* (see Pontzen 2014: 308) and in Northern Nigerian Hausa *rubutun sha* (see for example Tocco 2014: 131-132, for the regional context see also Fischer 1973). In Sudanese Arabic it is named *mihaya* (for his influential article see El-Tom 1985 who has coined the English expression "erasure"; see also El Hassan et al. 2002; Karrār 1994; Mohammed and Babikir 2013 amongst others). Geographically moving away from the African continent, drinking the written Qurʾan is also for example practiced in Hyderabad, India where it is known as a form of *fālitā* (see Flueckiger 2006; mentioned also by Das 2015: 143; and by Lemons 2010: 162-167). It is also practiced by the Bohora in Gujerat.[5] It is known as *annusyrah* in Malaysia where it is undergoing a process of industrialization (see below). In Europe its name depends on the practicing diasporic community or it is simply referred to as "Qurʾanic water" in the host language. For example, "Koranwater," the verses of which are chosen by Abou Chayma who migrated to Belgium from Morocco, is repeatedly mentioned in Chris de Stoop's (2011: 47, 60) book on the female jihadist Muriel Degauque.[6] I do not know of any studies that mention kombe-like phenomena on the American continents, but I assume that diasporic contexts find different ways of enacting and naming kombe-like phenomena. I have also not mentioned central Asian regions since I do not have examples; however, this is most probably due to my biased engagement with literature that focuses on the Eastern African and Indian Oceanic region. Let me mention, though, that I have heard of kombe-like practices in Anatolia and in Berlin. So far I have not included the region of the Middle East as I have not come across any accounts of that region about a contemporary practice of such kind. However, Eleanor Abdella Doumato's book in which she traces women, religion, and healing practices in the early 20th century Gulf region is an important contribution as she gives voice to missionaries' descriptions of the ingestion of the Qurʾan that apparently was not as questionable then as it is today.[7]

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[5] Personal communication with Olly Akkerman.
[6] I sincerely thank Egehan Ünlü who came across this reference and pointed it out to me.
[7] I here specifically refer to water that carries *written* Qurʾanic verses. Water that has received recitations of the Qurʾan is much more widely accepted (see chapter 7.3.3). It is this *ruqya* that has also been described to be used in East London by Yusuf Eneborg (2013) as a "new

On the one hand, the lack of accounts about a contemporary enactment of drinking the written Qurʾan in the Gulf region supports sentiments that I encountered in Zanzibar about kombe's ambiguous stance in relation to current dominant Islamic orthodox thought. In Zanzibar, I have heard many references to Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia and often the entire Arab peninsula was generalized as the place in which these "strict" (*kali*) ideas have prominence. This is not to say that the practice of ingesting the written Qurʾan does not exist there. Hakimu Saleh who describes himself as an Islamic healer and who will be introduced in chapter 1.2 went to Oman and Dubai in 2014–2015 to offer his treatment also there. However, he did not speak much about it later on. On the other hand, the sparse literature on the ingestion of the Qurʾan reflects how terms such as "popular medicine" or "folk healing" bind kombe-like practices to "superstition," "pre-Islamic/non-Islamic 'survivals'," or "isolated expressions of Islamic regional culture" (O'Connor 2011: 40). Katharina Wilkens makes a similar observation and notes how these normative descriptions indicate that "ingesting sacred literature products for the purpose of healing is a topic that seems to have been 'lost' between academic disciplines" (Wilkens 2013: 244). She juxtaposes anthropological studies with work from Islamic studies as these are the two disciplines that feature most prominently. Many of the anthropological contributions have already been mentioned in the last paragraph with respect to the names of what in Swahili is called kombe in their respective regions (although some of these contributions also stem from art history and from Islamic studies). Other contributions do not specify what this practice is locally referred to, but they are nonetheless informative about the context in which they place the practice of drinking the written Qurʾan.

A number of orientalist accounts mention the ingestion of the written and washed off Qurʾan: (Robson 1934: 39, Donaldson 1937: 258, 263, Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich 1962: 61–62, or Ullmann 1970: 253–254) usually in the context of "magical cures" or "talismanic curiosities." Also in the Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān, it appears under the heading "Popular and Talismanic Uses of the Qurʾan" (O'Connor 2004) in which O'Connor's interest in material aspects of the Qurʾan shows. Literature about medieval Islamic medicine (or also "prophetic medicine") equally

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faith healing tradition." Furthermore, I have restricted myself to enumerating publications that deal with practices of washing off the written *Qurʾan*. Ann McCauley's study on Balinese medicine mentions a strikingly similar practice of drinking the washed off writing of copied archaic Balinese manuscripts. She states that "the healing power of the manuscripts [...] is physically in the text, the letters, and the shape and sound of the words" (McCauley 1988: 781) and thereby hints at the importance of its materiality.

refers to it (Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007: 146). Annemarie Schimmel, one of the leading experts on Sufism mentions this practice in relation to the "power of the letters" (1994: 152–153). Whereas the examples in this paragraph solely mention the practice of drinking the written Qurʾan, ranging between a sentence and a paragraph, Travis Zadeh treats this topic more thoroughly from the perspective of Islamic studies and focuses on historical theological debates about bodily engagement with the material Qurʾan (Zadeh 2008a;b; 2009). Zadeh, thus, shows how fruitful an investigation of kombe through its materiality can be.

Throughout all of the here mentioned literature, it is taken for granted that kombe is manufactured manually. There are two exceptions that I know of so far: industrialized bottling of *annusyrah* in Malaysia and the filling of ink cartridges in Togo. "Annusyrah Malaysia Sdn. Bhd." is a factory that produces bottles of *annusyrah* that then can be ordered online. Its webpage,[8] facebook page,[9] blogs,[10] and several promotional but not highly frequented YouTube videos[11] enable a glimpse into the production of bottled Qurʾanic verses in Malaysia. Interestingly, despite all this industrialization (bottling, marketing, sales), the verses are handwritten and recited over for a number of times. Although I have not heard of any other case that is as highly industrialized, in Togo we find another example of how technological means are employed in the production of a Qurʾanic liquid: printers' ink cartridges are filled with food coloring.[12] Thus, the verses can be printed out from the computer and then manually processed further. In the Swahili context I have not come across any of these technological appropriations, so their mention must suffice here.

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[8] Annusyrah Malaysia, accessed 25 February 2019, http://www.annusyrahmalaysia.com/.

[9] Annusyrah Malaysia @annusyrah2015, accessed 25 February 2019, https://www.facebook.com/ annusyrah2015/.

[10] Khairul Azhar, Annusyrah – Perubatan Islam (blog), accessed 25 February 2019, http://islamicsufihealing.blogspot.com/;
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[11] YOUR BRAND- PRODUK ANNUSYRAH, YouTube video, 5:02, posted by "MARAtv," 28 September 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMiMsBtqQA8;
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Iklan Annusyrah, YouTube video, 0:29, posted by "Telok Bayur," 24 August 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LFQpsxVEkno.

[12] Personal communication with Barbara Ogbone (17 August 2013).

Kombe in Academic Literature

Kombe has been mentioned numerous times in the academic literature for the Swahili context. The earliest reference that I came across is not strictly academic, but from the memoirs of Emily Ruete who grew up in the Sultan's Palace as Sayyida Salme, a princess of Oman and Zanzibar. She describes kombe as a medicine for severe illnesses (Ruete [1886] 2004: 260). Regarding the academic literature, the earliest mention of kombe can be found in an article by Hans Zache (1899): "Sitten und Gebräuche der Suaheli." He describes kombe in the context of giving birth which is also found in Mtoro bin Mwinyi Bakari's work. Commissioned by Dr Velten, a German linguist, he wrote and compiled texts about the "customs of the Swahili people" in the late nineteenth century which were initially published in 1903 and in 1981 translated into English. He includes a mention of kombe in the chapter of a child's birth (1981: 3–6) which resonates with other orientalists' descriptions about customs elsewhere.[13] C.H. Becker, however, mentions kombe in the context of war: a power remedy to defeat the Europeans (1911: 42; see also the context of the Maji maji war in chapter 2). Around the same time, John Craster includes some pages on kombe and describes it as protection for everyday dangers, such as devils (1913: 324–326). Whereas Zache, Becker, and Craster write about kombe as a curiosity that is interesting to mention, Godfrey Dale, in contrast, remarks on kombe in passing (not even naming it) while he derogatorily describes the Zanzibaris' trust in amulets (1920).[14] Much later, in the 1960s, two works were published that mention kombe: John Trimingham's book "Islam in East Africa" (1964: 123) mentions kombe in connection to incantations (which he terms *dawa*) while W.H. Ingrams takes note of kombe (written with soot) as a "charm" ([1931] 1967: 457). In juxtaposition, these two authors whose publishing dates are very close to each other show the variety of the practices that receive recognition as kombe. In 1987, Klaus Hock mentions kombe again in the context of giving birth (1987: 91–92) as part of his elaboration on practices of "Swahili-Islam" whereby he attributes kombe rather to the "Arabic-Islamic" as opposed

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13 Although the practice as I have encountered it in my fieldwork was not solely tailored to pregnancy and a child's birth, it is noteworthy how especially in these contexts the relation between the divine word and creation of human life is emphasized. In chapter 4 this relation will be broadened to also include the maintenance of (good) life.

14 Godfred Dale was a missionary who took interest in describing the people and their customs. These descriptions were then published through the missionary society in England. It must be noted how the missionary society's purpose, entangled with colonial activities (Pouwels 1987: 186–190), produces a highly judgmental account of practices, such as drinking kombe.

to "indigenous-African" influences. Furthermore, Ulrich Schulz-Burgdorf includes kombe in his partly historical outline of Swahili popular medicine (1994: 65). In his evaluation of kombe as *dawa* he quotes Adriaan H.J. Prins for whom an amulet is crucial as the "material resting place" of a "spell" that then also protects the ship's [or the body's] material form (Prins 1969: 301). That kombe is part of today's "traditional medicine" is mentioned by Walter Bruchhausen (2010: 251) and occasionally finds repercussions in footnotes, such as in Hans Olsson's dissertation (2016: 88, footnote 156). The literature listed here mentions kombe as part of encompassing descriptions of (increasingly specific aspects of) Swahili culture. In accordance with developments of academic conventions, the more recent literature problematizes certain issues in which kombe appears to illustrate a specific theme.

Laura Fair's (2003) well-founded work about Zanzibar in the period between 1890 and 1945 makes a rather brief mention of kombe as part of her analysis of one of the songs sung by Siti Binti Saad, a famous singer in the 1920s. Her songs frequently reflect solace in God's final judgment, but, as Fair points out, this does not mean that people did not (and do not) "attempt to persuade supernatural powers to come to their aid in the here and now" (2003: 206). One way of doing this is through kombe that she circumscribes as "specially prepared drink [...] often used to invoke divine protection from evil" (2003: 206). Although kombe is still used as protection today, I have primarily encountered kombe in contexts connected to treating afflictions in which it was described as a form of *dawa* (medicine). It is out of the scope of this dissertation to trace historical changes in the understandings of neither kombe[15] nor *dawa*, however, it is noteworthy that the kombe described in this thesis is, of course, historically situated.

In her PhD-thesis on Islamic knowledge in Zanzibar, Allyson Purpura devotes an entire chapter to Islamic healing in which the use of the Qurʾan features prominently (1997: chapter 7). She thus is often quoted for kombe. In that chapter she traces the politics of Islamic expertise—how Islamic expertise is defined and used—within social relations of healing. Also in the domain of healing in Zanzibar, Kjersti Larsen, Françoise Le Guennec-Coppens, and Sophie Mery provide a surprisingly short note about kombe but embed it very well in related practices of astrology in Zanzibar which is the focus of their article (2002: 179). Similarly, Lisa Mackenrodt makes a very brief reference to kombe as part of "traditional

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[15] Ruete's description of kombe as a remedy against severe illnesses, however, suggests that the healing context is more connected to kombe than Fair's short remark implicates.

Islamic medicine" in relation to possession rituals and exorcism (2011: 94). Nadine Beckmann (2009) in a footnote and Felicitas Becker (2007) slightly more extensively portray kombe within the context of HIV/AIDS. Becker notes how the concomitant discursive evaluation of different treatment options among Muslims in Tanzania places kombe not only in a medical setting (informed by western ideas of "medicine," see chapter 8), it also shows the field of contestations attributed to the "Ansuari" (see chapter 2) to which kombe is potentially prone (2007: 28). Much of this will inform also my engagement with kombe in the following chapters.

Also within the field of medical anthropology, Stacy Langwick (2008; 2011a) examines how biomedicine and other forms of healing interact with each other and with the materiality of patients' bodies in southeastern Tanzania amongst Makonde people around Newala. The relations to nonhuman actors do not only transcend the boundaries between different forms of healing, but are also pivotal for writing kombe:

> Writing kombe is a particular practice of diagnosis and treatment […], but it does not require literacy in Arabic. Nonhumans [spirits, or locally termed as *mashetani*] communicate with a healer by working through her to materialize their analysis as abstract images in red ink on a white plate. (Langwick 2011a: 98)[16]

In contrast to how kombe is enacted in Zanzibar, for the Makonde people who took part in Stacy Langwick's research, kombe is an outcome of the healer's conversation with the realm of the spirits and thereby "render[s] the presence of nonhumans visible to others" (2011a: 106). Despite the fascinating differences between what kombe is in Zanzibar and around Newala, the theme of visualization through kombe compellingly pertains to both settings (see chapter 6.1).

Similarly, Janet McIntosh (2009) also describes the writing of kombe during possession in her study on ethno-religious boundaries on the Kenyan coast. The non-Muslim Giriama who are not literate in Arabic but who aspire to a status similar to the Muslim Swahili appropriate the preparation of kombe:

> Giriama manufacture their own versions of kombe, in which the writing of the Arabic prayers is sometimes achieved by a possessing Muslim spirit who uses a scallopine hand to create a rough simulacrum of Arabic, often with paint on a white ceramic plate. (2009: 233)

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[16] Peter Lienhardt in his introduction to Hasani bin Ismail's ballad 'Nguvumali' writes about "Book magic" of which people can become possessed to write charms (1968: 49). The geographical area on which he bases his descriptions is Kilwa, today also in southeastern Tanzania, but in contrast to Newala, Kilwa is at the Indian Ocean coast.

Although she also mentions the potentiality of critique from other Muslims, her focus on the negotiated distinctions between the Giriama and the Swahili places kombe within a contested field of literacy. With this viewpoint, McIntosh's fascinating contribution enriches the existing literature in which kombe is mentioned. She addresses several questions that also emerge from my fieldwork: questions about identity, questions about literacy, questions about borrowing.

David Parkin, too, touches on kombe occasionally (2000b: 62; 2007a: 215; 2017: 542-545). Throughout his anthropological work on Islamic healing in east Africa, he is interested in people's accommodation of various influences in their enactment of Islamic medical practices.

Whereas McIntosh and Parkin describe how kombe is used to negotiate boundaries between religious groups, Katharina Wilkens (2013) employs given boundaries and comparatively juxtaposes kombe with medieval practices of "swallowing the Madonna": the ingestion of poststamp sized prints of Madonna images.[17] Her book chapter is partly based on her previous work on Marian faith healing in Dar es Salaam in which she also mentions kombe as part of the plurality of available religious healing options (Wilkens 2011: 33, 244–245). With this juxtaposition of swallowing the sacred in different contexts and bearing in mind that both practices are locally contested and framed, she approaches a broader question of how academic disciplines evaluate their subjects of investigation as relevant. Situated in religious studies, she argues for "material religion" and the methodologies provided by "aesthetics of religion" (in the German context: "Religionsästhetik") in order to circumvent distinctions between "magic" and "religion" that underpin current power dynamics.[18] The literature on kombe (even including related practices outside the Swahili context) is relatively sparse as I have attempted to make a comprehensive survey.[19] Wilkens ascribes the sparsity to subject making within academic disciplines and argues that the ingestion of the sacred has been "lost" between them:

> Early mentions of drinking the Quran from around the turn of the 20th century firmly place the practice in the realm of 'folk Islam' or 'magical

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[17] Wilkens elaborates on this much more: also images of other saints and of Jesus were sold to be ingested.

[18] Peter Pels has worked extensively on the modernity of "magic." See most prominently the introduction in *Magic and Modernity* (2003), but see also the entries on "magic" in the *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics* (2014b) and in *Key Terms in Material Religion* (2015).

[19] Note, that Wilkens recently published a chapter entitled "Text Acts" in which she refers to my work extensively (2020: 158–160, 162).

practices', thereby disqualifying it from serious study by philology to this day. The supremacy of academic scholarship over 'folk practices' hold true for theology just as much as for other non-denominational disciplines, such as philology and folk studies. […] Anthropologists, on the other hand, seem to place this literate practice of drinking the Quran within the orthodox tradition of Islam and thus pay no further attention to it. (2013: 244)

The brevity with which kombe is occasionally noted in academic publications support Wilkens' argument. However, the instances in which kombe *is* mentioned in relation to questions from various disciplines testify to the potentials of kombe as a topic of academic interest.

I approach kombe ethnographically. Searching for literature that resonates with what and how I have learned about kombe during fieldwork has led me to engage with numerous disciplines and anthropological subdisciplines: Islamic studies/anthropology of Islam, study of religion/anthropology of religion, medical anthropology, anthropology of the body, anthropology of text, anthropology of knowledge, Swahili studies, African studies, Indian Ocean studies, studies of material culture, new materialism, and others. I am indebted to the genealogy of these disciplines and crosscutting academic turns, including in particular the literary and cultural turn, the turn towards (everyday) practices, the ontological turn, and—which is what I want to stress here—the material turn that enable me to approach the topic of kombe with considerable depth.

Theorizing Materiality

Alluded to by my references to Travis Zadeh's and Katharina Wilkens' work, the theoretical implications of materiality are helpful not only with respect to kombe which materializes the textual Qurᵓan in a particular way that makes it ingestible to bodies that access both the immaterial and the material. Paying attention to kombe's materiality is also helpful for the development of a "diffractive ethnography" to which I will turn more explicitly in the next section.

Materiality often evokes connotations with stability. Andreas Reckwitz speaks of "materieller Verankerung" (material entrenchment) that renders social practices persistent and repeatable as these practices are entangled with material bodies and artifacts (2003: 282, 291).[20] The focus on materiality allows the much

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[20] The so-called "material-cultural turn" in the social sciences builds on anthropological and archaeological developments since the 1980s (Daniel Miller and Ian Hodder) that attend to

broadened categories of that which acts and of that which is acted upon to be tied to a tangible world which in these studies serves as the basis of investigation. However, this presupposition of a shared material reality is itself a concern to be scrutinized. Drawing on Annemarie Mol's "The Body Multiple" (2002), John Law states: "The assumption is that while we may live in multiple social worlds we live in a single natural or material reality. But [...] it doesn't have to be that way" (2007: 600).

Law, invested in Science and Technology Studies (STS), is interested in how materials, objects, or substances are continuously enacted and constituted. He argues that "something becomes material because it makes a difference" (2010: 173) and that, consequentially, every thing emerges as "relationally variable effects of practices" (2010: 187). Whereas the sociology of scientific knowledge accentuates how knowledge is constructed and then exists in a more or less stable way, "material semiotics,"[21] as Law terms it, "assumes that knowledge and realities are *continuously* being enacted or performed" (2010: 179, emphasis in original). Given this fluidity and processual quality of realiz*ing* and matter*ing*, Law is interested in how multiple realities hold together and in how ontological politics govern ontological consistency.

Responding and contributing to the debate around what Law has termed "material semiotics" with its fluidity of multiple realities and its "entirely relational treatment of matter" (Hodder 2014: 33), Ian Hodder pleads to take (historical) contingencies seriously. He draws attention to how "humans and things in their physical connectedness entrap each other" (2014: 24). Hodder employs the term "entanglement" to pay attention to the dependency between humans and things rather than symmetrical relations for which he criticizes ANT. These entanglements shape us as humans "since we are only human through things" (2014: 34) and thus Hodder's aim to "rediscover the object nature of things" and its "power

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this entrenchment and thereby seek to surpass the divide of structuralist and interpretative paradigms (Hicks 2010). The focus on materialities triggers concerns for meaning and its relation to ontology that lead to reconsiderations of how the material itself may enunciate meaning as argued by Amiria Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell (2007) in their volume "Thinking Through Things." Furthermore, this focus on materialities leads to discussions of agency, a development that is inspired by Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory (ANT) which advocates "material agency." Arguing further in this direction, the distinction between human and non-human entities becomes superfluous (Knappett and Malafouris 2008).

[21] Under the term "material semiotics," Law groups works of Donna Haraway (1991), Helen Verran (2001), Annemarie Mol (2002), and Bruno Latour (2005).

[…] to entrap" (Hodder 2014: 33) serves to better grasp the contingencies of human becoming and responsibilities for caring.

With kombe, the "entrapments" of humans and things are crucial. Kombe is to be ingested; it is to imbue human bodies. Indeed, the material properties (or, as Hodder terms it, the "object nature") of water, ink, and of human bodies facilitate a human incorporation of liquefied Qurɔanic verses (see also in chapter 1.1 Webb Keane's "natural meanings"). This material potential of kombe to be ingested relates to its enactment as medicinal substance.

As material medicinal substance, kombe does not just have a "social life" in that it "objectif[ies] meanings" and "move[s] from one meaningful setting to another" (Whyte et al. 2002: 5), as material substance, kombe also enters the material body. Examining how medicines and treatable bodies constitute each other, Stacy Langwick points out that

> [w]hile the matter of the body is inescapable when talking about healing in the early twenty-first century in Africa, it is not uncontroversial. Struggles over the ontological status of the body and its threats and its medicine have been (and remain) at the heart of efforts to (re)shape the therapeutic landscape. (2011a: 23)

As chapter 5 lines out, bodies that absorb kombe are bodies that have an inside and an outside. Drinking the Qurɔan internalizes the Qurɔan's healing qualities which are materially constituted through writing and pertain throughout the process of liquefaction (see chapter 4). From within bodies, kombe can have an effect on material or immaterial afflictions: bodies that have ingested kombe mediate the Quran's healing power to afflictions (see chapter 6).

Kombe is described as *dawa ya kiislamu* (Islamic medicine). It is *medicine* and it acts on afflictions through bodies (see chapter 8). Kombe is *Islamic* medicine (see chapter 7) and as such entangled with Islamic conceptions not only of bodies, but also of the world. Presupposing that Islam may be qualified as a "religion" (see again chapter 7), Birgit Meyer's conceptualization of "material religion" is helpful here.

Meyer lines out:

> my aim in proposing a *material* approach is *not to reduce religion to sheer matter*. […] My point is rather that, as practices and materials are indispensible for religion's existence in the world as a social, cultural and political phenomenon, they need our utmost theoretical and empirical attention. Thus, far from constituting an oxymoron, the phrase 'material religion' brings to the fore an irreducible relation. (2012: 23)

With her approach to the materiality of religion, Meyer speaks back to what she identifies as the Protestant bias of academic engagement with religion that emphasizes a mentalistic perspective. Including, but not prioritizing a mental dimension within a material approach, Meyer is interested in how religion concretely alludes to and generates a sense of "the-rest-of-what-is" (Van de Port 2011) through practices in the everyday material world (see also Klassen 2008; Morgan 2008). The everyday material world, enacted and constituted by entrapped humans and things, grounds religious practices in contingent material contexts that provoke repeatable responses and facilitate sensual experiences (see also Keane 2008: S124).

With kombe we are dealing with written words that can be "looked at" as a medium as well as "read" as message (see also Barber 2007: 200-213). However, these words are unlike other written words: with kombe we are dealing with the Qurʾan. Medium and message of Qurʾanic text cannot be disentangled. What the Qurʾan *is* is entangled with what the Qurʾan *says* and questions of differentiating what is material and what is immaterial are a "matter of degree and kind" (Engelke 2005: 136). Thus, the process of writing (manifesting the Qurʾan in) kombe and of its liquefaction (not liquidation) are particularly interesting (see chapter 4) and play a prominent role in describing kombe; Faki's, Sheikh Soraga's and my description of kombe made recourse to these material process of preparing kombe.

By devoting this section to materiality I have introduced some theoretical considerations with which I aim to respond to kombe in its materiality and thereby approach kombe with more depth than previous studies have done. This aim conceptually connects the three parts of this thesis: I introduce kombe's material components and the settings through which I encountered kombe materially (chapter 1) in the concrete context of Zanzibar Town (chapter 2) in part I which is conceptually entangled with the "degree and kind" of Qurʾanic verses' materiality (chapter 4), the degree and kind of bodies' materiality (chapter 5), and their combination when Qurʾanic verses are bodily ingested (chapter 6) of part II. These, again, are conceptually entangled with material practices of Islam or "religion" (chapter 7) and of "medicine" (chapter 8) which shape part III through kombe's denotation as *dawa ya kiislamu*. Threaded through the entire thesis, these considerations of materiality feed into my considerations about knowledge (chapter 3) and about how to write an ethnography which I circumscribe as "diffractive" and to which I turn now.

Diffraction

The kombe that is described in this text emerges from specific encounters of people with each other, with discourses, with materials, with me as a researcher. Situating and contextualizing ethnographic materials with regard to the researcher's positionality in the accumulation of this material is crucial. It has become common anthropological practice to reflexively note how the encounters during fieldwork were conditioned by certain circumstances and characteristics of the researcher. The "reflexive," "post-modern," "deconstructive," or "critical literary" turn (see Fabian 2006; Foley 2002) is mostly attributed to the selection of essays in "Writing Culture," edited by James Clifford and George Marcus (1986b) and fostered engagement with the "Crisis of Representation" since the 1980s.[22] For this engagement I find the work of Johannes Fabian particularly noteworthy.[23]

Thinking through materializations of kombe in combination with thinking through non-representational ethnographic research with its impetus for reflexion, the topic of kombe prompts to go beyond distanced accounts of ethnographically configured topics. As an ethnographic topic, kombe relates concerns for non-representational research to questions of materiality through entanglements

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[22] Note that Peter Pels identifies the material turn and the anthropology of globalization as equally pivotal movements within anthropology's postcolonial history (2014a: 236).

[23] Johannes Fabian's (2002) monograph "Time and the Other" plays an important role for this turn. Contributing to what became known as "critical anthropology" he stresses how we as researchers need to acknowledge that "[a]ll statements about others are paired with the observer's experience" (2002: 91) and that "our past is present in us as a *project*, hence as our future. [...] Past ethnography is the present of anthropological discourse" (Fabian 2002: 93). He engages with the term "reflexion" which he differentiates from "reflection." Whereas the latter marks "a sort of objective reflex (like the image in a mirror) which hides the observer by axiomatically eliminating subjectivity" (2002: 90), the former relates to our ability to "let our experiences 'come back' to us" (2002: 91). The larger concern of his book is the paradox between sharing time in ethnographic practice (coevalness in field research) and placing these events in a "time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse" (the "denial of coevalness," Fabian 2002: 31). With "reflexivity" he targets this paradox advocating to include specifically accomplished intersubjectivity into ethnographic texts which he later reconfigures in terms of performance (Fabian 1990; 2014). Doing and writing ethnography, which is not just communication with people ("fieldwork"), but also communication of findings (a resulting manuscript), shows the complexity of various entangled performances. Arguing for anthropological writing that does not succumb to "autobiographic divagation," Fabian endorses a hermeneutic stance that "presupposes a degree of distancing, an objectification of our experiences" (2002: 89). This distance is not just there, but requires enactment (Fabian 2002: 92) which can be achieved in that we ethnographers write with and through reflexion about the process of presencing our experiences from the past. Entangling experiences, reflexion explicitly attends to an acquired distance of ethnographic writing.

of textualities. Instead of treating the topic and the method as separated, the engagement with kombe prompts me to see the topic of kombe and the method of writing an ethnography in relation to each other. Ethnographic engagement with kombe impels me to take entanglements of kombe's textuality and this ethnographic writing's textuality seriously which I respond to by developing a "diffractive ethnography." With "diffraction," I choose vocabulary that does not only help me to formulate entanglements, but that in their semantic manifestation already enact these entanglements. Ethnographically writing about writtenness that is to be liquefied, I formulate a text that "diffracts" with its topic.

Classic

Employing the metaphor of "diffraction,"[24] I deliberately take recourse to a word that is designed to pick up on the metaphoricity of "reflection" by equally translating a visual physical event into knowledge concerns (see chapter 3, see chapter 6.1) while explicitly taking issue with possibilities of representation. Writing "diffractively" entails not the production of text about something that is "out there," but marks "histories of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. Diffraction is about heterogeneous history" (Haraway 1997: 273). As "diffraction pattern," a description of kombe is an ever-singular result of specific encounters.

 The way that Faki explained kombe to me diffractively emerged from encounters that he had had with kombe before we met, his work selling bananas next to Chombo Juma who writes kombe, the situation of talking to me in the bustling street of Mto Pepo, and many more aspects that I cannot conclusively list but that still are part of the "heterogeneous history" through which his explanation of kombe emerged as a "diffraction pattern." Similarly, Sheikh Soraga's explanation of kombe is marked by diffractions of what kombe is for him, his position as the Mufti's secretary, the interview situation with me, and many other components that diffractively give shape to his explanation of kombe to me. And also my own

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[24] As described in classical physics, diffraction describes that waves bend when they meet an obstacle. Depending on the configuration of this obstacle, the emerging waves are bent and interfere with each other forming a diffraction pattern. These patterns form from the combination of waves upon encounter: the amplitudes of the waves add up, causing constructive and destructive interference. When at a certain position crest meets crest, they become a bigger crest, when trough meets trough they form a deeper trough (both of which is constructive interference) and on the points where a positive amplitude meets a negative amplitude of the same absolute value they cancel each other out (which is destructive interference).

short explanation in the beginning of this introduction diffractively emerged from various experiences, conversations, and considerations as author of this thesis that superpositioned each other. Drawing attention to the context of my inquiry in which these descriptions were formulated, I occasionally hyphenate "kombe-as-a-topic." In tune with much anthropological theorizing about processes of shaping topics of inquiry, the employment of "diffraction" as a conceptual metaphor propels to think with and through a materially contingent emergence of phenomena: "diffraction" accounts for myriad influences and actors who participate in shaping the phenomenon of kombe[25] and reminds of dynamic differences of intensity that reinforce and cancel out upon encounter. Explicitly relating to this diffractive emergence, I speak of the "phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic."

Quantic

With the materiality of kombe's liquefied writtenness and its repercussions with ethnographic writing, however, I target more far reaching implications of "diffraction"'s metaphorical use. Considering the emergence of diffraction patterns with entangled quantic entities, I build on Karen Barad's work in which she "think[s] insights from scientific [that is predominantly quantum physical] and social theories through one another" (Barad 2007: 92). With recourse to double slit experiments with entangled quantic entities,[26] Barad speaks of "spacetimemattering"[27] and

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[25] Note the repercussions with Louis Brenner's (for example 2000) proposal for the study of religion in Africa to foreground participation.

[26] Diffraction, as has been glossed above, occurs with waves, not with particles. Waves can occupy the same space at the same time and thus superpose intensities—particles cannot. When sent through a double slit obstacle, a single "quantic entity" which usually is thought of as particle, such as a photon, an electron, or even an entire atom, can produce a diffraction pattern. Thus, the particle shows wave-like behavior. However, as soon as the experimental set-up is altered to enable detection through which of the two slits the quantic entity passes, the diffraction pattern disappears and the experiment yields results for particle-like behavior: it shows which slit a quantic entity has passed through. Whether there are which-path detection devices or not influences how a quantic entity behaves when passing through a double slit obstacle. The observation influences whether the entity behaves like a wave or like a particle. Needless to say, this infinitesimal glance at this experiment falls short of explanatory power and it is not my aim to provide a physically sound exploration of quantum physic's wave-particle dualism. The experimental set-up was altered in many ways that I cannot outline here to enable observations about factors that influence the behavior of these quantic entities passing through a double slit. None of the clever alterations of the measuring apparatus could satisfactorily provide answers with only classical mechanics.

[27] Space, time, and matter become configured in the emergence of the phenomenon. Barad here takes a philosophical stance that sides with Niels Bohr rather than with Werner Heisenberg

urges to take entanglements[28] seriously. Epistemology is not separate from on-
tology, but entangled as "onto-epistemology." With "Agential Realism," Barad
formulates a theory that accounts for phenomena as always already entangled in
a non-representational form. Matter and discourse, ontology and epistemology,
measurable behavior of a quantic entity and the configuration of an apparatus of
measurement. Key to her argument, she states that "a scientific apparagus does
not represent a concept, but concepts are materially embodied in the apparatus"
(2007: 143). Agential realism pays attention to how differences emerge from within
entanglements which she addresses with the term "intra-activity." This term is de-
signed to express that in contrast to pre-existing entities that then "interact" with
each other, the differences between entities emerge from within their entangle-
ments: they "intra-act" and thereby form their differences which enables renewed
entanglements.[29] Throughout this thesis, I repeatedly apply "intra-action" in this

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in their dispute in the early twentieth century. The dispute was about how to account
for the double slit experiment with electrons that showed particle- or wave-like behavior
depending on whether "which-path-information" was available. Heisenberg proposed the
uncertainty principle as an "epistemic principle—it says there is a limitation to what we can
know": measuring creates a disturbance that enables *knowledge* of one or the other behavior
(explained by Barad 2007: 116). This is still the predominantly accepted interpretation.
Barad, however, sides with Niels Bohr who disagrees with Heisenberg's purely epistemological
interpretation. Bohr proposes that prior to measurement "there are no preexisting values to
disturb. [...] This reciprocal limit relation is not to be given an epistemic interpretation but
rather to be understood in terms of the limits of semantic and ontic determinacy" (Barad
2007: 294–295). In other words, the initially indeterminate quantic entity becomes a wave or
a particle by way of measuring one or the other. The apparatus of measurement is part of the
phenomenon. With recourse to Bohr, Barad emphasizes that not epistemic *uncertainty* but
ontic *indeterminacy* accounts for the different behaviors of quantic entities. A quantic entity
is not *either* a wave *or* a particle, but both manifestations are possible in complex "worldly
configurations" that do not rest on linear causality but incite thinking through quantum
considerations.

[28] It must be noted that quantum entities can be split into entangled pairs. When the set-up
of the double slit experiment is altered to enable a quantic entity to be split after it has
passed through the double slit and multiple screens are provided some of which allow for a
deduction of which slit the quantic entity has passed through in the beginning, both parts
of the entangled pair will behave in the same way. If at least one part of the entangled
pair reaches a screen that enables deduction which slit it has passed through, both will show
particle-like behavior (even if the other part arrives earlier at a screen without detection
device); if both reach screens that do not allow for this deduction, both show wave-like
behavior. This was demonstrated in 1978 by John Wheeler and more elaborately by Yoon-
Ho Kim et al. in 1999 in their "Delayed-Choice Quantum Eraser Experiment."

[29] This emergence of differences enacts agential possibilities where "agency is about response-
ability, about the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power
imbalances. Agency is about possibilities for worldly re-configurings. [...] It is an enactment"

sense in order to challenge distinctions that are often taken for granted and instead approach entanglements from which differentiations are made, such as the entanglement of fieldwork and ethnographic writing.

"Diffraction" in the quantic sense, thus, does not only account for difference upon encounter and for the emergence of phenomena, but attends to entanglements of these phenomena with contingent configurations of the world's spacetimemattering: entanglements of matter and meaning (as the subtitle to her book states, see also the hyphenated "meaning-mattering" in Barad 2014: 176). Barad advocates a "diffractive methodology" where "insights can be diffractively read through one another" (see also Van der Tuin 2014) while accounting for the entangled contingencies of these diffraction phenomena. In this sense, I present a "diffractive ethnography" that pays attention to how fieldwork and ethnographic writing are entangled and become contingently differentiated. This "diffractive ethnography" attends to the entanglements of kombe's writtenness and the writtenness of this ethno*graphy.*

Ethnographic

Writing ethnographic text is an incessant array of making choices: how to select quotes from people and decide on punctuation, how to contextualize, frame, situate them, and how to deal with writing about ethically difficult situations. Furthermore, writing is choosing how to build a linear narrative, how to give rhythm to the text, which vocabulary to choose and how to translate.

"Diffractive" writing is not merely a method for juxtaposing fieldwork sites and letting them interfere with each other—although this is an important aspect of it and my research benefited from Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana's "intra-actively" constituted differences (see chapter 1). It also is not just a structural device to place ethnographic vignettes in relation to each other and to theoretical and ana-

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(Barad in an interview with Dolphijn and Van der Tuin 2012: 55). Rather than presupposing pre-given entities that can "possess" agency and impact on other entities, rather than thinking through pre-given entities that come into contact with each other and "interact," Barad coins the term "intra-action": "The neologism "intra-action" *signifies the mutual constitution of entangled agencies.* That is, in contrast to the usual "interaction," which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action. It is important to note that the "distinct" agencies are only distinct in a relational, not an absolute, sense, that is, *agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don't exist as individual elements.*" (2007: 33)

lytic considerations, to read them "through each other" in writing—although this is also an important aspect and Faki's, my, and Sheikh Soraga's description are juxtaposed to speak to each other and to the literature in this text. "Diffractive" writing, I want to stress, makes explicit that fieldwork encounters and ethnographic writing are entangled. Fieldwork experiences are made present in writing (see Fabian 2002); they constitute the text as ethnographic. This is often acknowledged. Much less acknowledged is the intention of writing a text that (as a future project) is already present during fieldwork. Hakimu Saleh's textual practices make this very explicit as chapter 3 shows. Furthermore and considering a quantic understanding of matter-meaning entanglements, "diffractive" writing attends to the entanglements of content and form, of meaning and matter. Thus, the vocabulary I employ and its metaphoricity matter (in both senses of the word) in that they create meaning of and materialize the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic. "Diffraction," thus, includes this text as part of the phenomenon. Naming it a "diffractive ethnography," I do not only aim to challenge the visual representability of an "object of truth" that is removed from the observer, but to present this text as tangible part of the emerging phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic that resonates with kombe's textuality. It is at this point where I see this thesis about kombe to make a contribution.[30]

Kombe urges to pay attention to the materiality of writing. Like academic text, kombe is also written. The liquefaction of kombe's textuality creates fruitful tensions with the ethno*graphic* method of producing new text about the liquefaction of its textuality. In academic texts, we are used to differentiate between content and form (although occasionally academic authors explicitly draw attention to how their texts are written, how content and form influence each other; see for example Law 2002: 4 and Tsing 2017: x). With kombe, content and form are also entangled to then become differentiated: The written verses, constituting the Qurʾan, by being transformed into a liquid, change their *form* but not their *content* (see chapter 4); here, form and content "intra-act." To the emergence of kombe-as-a-topic, this process matters.

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[30] Recently, Jessica Smartt Gullion has published a book on "diffractive ethnography" (Gullion 2018). While she addresses a number of concerns that I also address, her book is a rather theoretical contribution speaking to sociological methodological questions. I, in contrast, develop this "diffractive ethnography" from within my engagement with kombe as a topic that challenges questions of representation, matter-meaning, and textuality. I am happy to note, though, that it also speaks to larger contemporary academic concerns.

Employing vocabulary that does not support the optical paradigm relying on distance, this text (including the extensive footnotes in this section) is still written to be visually read. Pictures and sketches accompany the carefully formatted text to give further visual impressions of what the text depicts in writing. I write about Faki, Sheikh Soraga, Hakimu Saleh, Bi Mwana, and many others who will be introduced throughout this thesis and I contextualize and translate their words into written English. Their references to and practices of enacting kombe as well as my experiences find expression through this text that materializes the emergence of kombe-as-a-topic. Thus, despite employing vocabulary that denounces the visual paradigm of distanced representation, this text nevertheless relies on visual readability.

Challenging the distinction between form and content, between matter and meaning, between ontology and epistemology, *how* an academic text is written is not only a methodological question but becomes a concern that constitutes *what* the text is about. This "diffractive ethnography" attends to the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic.

The Ethnographic Phenomenon of Kombe-as-a-Topic

Although the idea of writing a text was prominent throughout my research stay, the exact content was subject to gradual change. My initial goal to examine scripture practices in Zanzibar—to understand how script(ure) is dealt with, portrayed, imagined, and conceptualized—narrowed down to a very particular practice with scripture: kombe. As well as permitting me to engage with concrete practices that are exceptionally informative about the portrayal, the imagination and the conceptualizations of scripture, the topic of kombe also provided an entry point through which broader topics were addressed and became important. The topic of kombe thus influenced the way I made decisions during fieldwork, the selection of people I was introduced to, the connotations these people had about my research, and the expectations they had about me. Positioning kombe *as a topic* with the prospect of becoming a thesis, fieldwork and writing was about continuously demarcating this topic.

This thesis is an *ethnography*. It builds on encounters of fieldwork and reads them through already existing academic literature. It is a written text that I design to be recognized as an academic contribution. By formulating kombe-as-a-topic, manifested through fieldwork encounters (which are read through my

choice of relevant academic literature), this thesis entangles the topic of kombe with academia.

Ethnographically, kombe-as-a-topic continuously emerges from the diffraction of how people in Zanzibar variously relate to this topic, their previous experiences with kombe, their framing of kombe for me to understand, my own encounters with kombe, and my engagement with academic literature (see also above). This thesis manifests the ethnographic *phenomenon* of kombe-as-a-topic and fixes it in writing.[31]

As written material that is to be absorbed by people, *kombe* resonates with ethnographic writing and, as stated above, I prompt the relationality of kombe and ethnography to be part of the phenomenon which will unfold throughout the thesis (and specifically in chapter 4). Having stated the importance of fieldwork and how—through the materiality of kombe—it shapes this text in multiple ways, I now juxtapose a brief contextualization about my fieldwork (see also chapter 3 where this becomes explicitly relevant again) with the outline of this thesis. I thereby betray my own plea for entanglements and treat fieldwork and writing as separable; however, since the remainder of this thesis will re-entangle them, I find this parallelism paradoxically productive.

Fieldwork

This ethnography builds on 13 months of ethnographic research spread out between February 2013 to August 2015.[32] This stretch of time was preceded by a seven month research stay in Zanzibar for my Master thesis on which I could build extensively during my doctoral research. Not only was I able to build on various contacts and situational as well as procedural knowledge of this previous fieldwork, but also the text that I had written about the previous research influenced my engagement with the doctoral research and other people's responsiveness to it. Mainly, however, this ethnography builds on my encounters during the time of

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[31] With Barad's reading of Bohr, the term "phenomenon" incites considerations about (in)determinacy. One consideration entails that responses to my inquiry become determinate by way of responding. Another consideration is that relevances of ethnographic encounters are determined in the writing process.

[32] February–April 2013, September 2013–April 2014, June–September 2014, August 2015. Although these time frames denote the periods in which I was physically present in Zanzibar Town, the time spans in-between must also be taken into consideration as facebook and WhatsApp permitted my interlocutors and me to stay in touch beyond the temporal restrictions of my research stays.

my research stay starting in 2013 in which Zanzibar's relation to the mainland was much discussed. In this time period, two main settings have become central for this research: that of Hakimu Saleh and that of Bi Mwana both of whom I visited regularly and with whom I developed close relationships. Hakimu Saleh—I met him in February 2013—accepted me as his student; at Bi Mwana's place—I met Bi Mwana in November 2013—I was an increasingly familiar visitor and was increasingly trusted with small tasks to help out. Hakimu Saleh's way of preparing and framing kombe differs considerably from how kombe is prepared and dispensed in the setting of Bi Mwana. Juxtaposed in my research, these two sites informed each other in that my experiences in one setting generated questions and interests for the other setting; they diffractively shaped my research. Around what I learned from Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana I plotted various interviews and I took note of innumerable informal conversations with people in public transport, in cafés, or on the street. I was permitted to audio record the sessions with Hakimu Saleh and most of the interviews; for all the other encounters I rely on my fieldnotes. Present in all encounters, my positionality mattered with different emphases. I here briefly point to some particularities that I deem important for these comments on how I conducted the research on which this thesis builds.

In the beginning of my research stay I lived in the neighborhood called Mombasa, then moved to Kiembe Samaki for two months and then to Chukwani. In Kiembe Samaki, I lived in a shared house, in which rooms could be rented separately. A friend of mine made it possible for me to stay with her for two months and apart from her, there were two other unmarried girls all of whom had independent employment jobs. We shared the flat with a family with two (and later three) children. The family dominated the communal living room and the kitchen and I was given my role as *Anti Hanna* (Aunt Hanna) first by the children and very quickly by all of the people living in the household. Although I moved to Chukwani after two months, I stayed in contact with almost all of the people who had lived there with me.

Chukwani grew out of an old village in the southern outer skirts of town and the neighborhood was more tightly knit in comparison to Kiembe Samaki. I lived on the compound of a German-Zanzibari family. First I was asked to take care of their dogs and the house while they were in Germany for a month and after they had come back I continued to live on the compound until the end of my stay in Zanzibar. The family is well-established in Chukwani and although I did not engage much with people in this neighborhood, I once heard that I was referred to

as the family's eldest son's *Mama mdogo*, positioning me as the mother's younger sister. My presence was acknowledged with reference to the family.

Irrespective of how well-known I was in a certain neighborhood, my quest for gaining knowledge about *mambo ya kiislamu* ("Islamic matters")—and kombe is mostly considered a medicinal Islamic matter—evoked questions of my own adherence to Islam. As a Christian, I was congratulated for my interest which was often connected with hope for my conversion to Islam. Several times I was explicitly told that the search for knowledge would eventually lead me to see the truth. Being a non-Muslim, I was able to ask "stupid questions" and trigger elaborate explanations (that did not always go into the direction I intended and sometimes were difficult to redirect). For Christians, although I could easily relate to their concerns, the choice of my research topic was more difficult to understand. The possibility of my conversion tainted attitudes towards my research topic: for Muslims this was connected to hope, for Christians it was connected with considerable skepticism. Being a non-Muslim sometimes put me at unease entering Islamic spaces where I felt that I did not belong. Occasionally I wore a headscarf out of respect (for particular interviews and in particular spaces). Although as a woman I did not feel comfortable to join public group discussions,[33] I did not encounter restrictions regarding possible interview partners and many of my informal conversations in the streets both to men and women ended with more or less (usually less) serious offers to get married into their families. My visible European descent sometimes induced expectations about future contact and financial aid that I learned to skillfully navigate through in order to avoid making someone else lose their face while not losing my own face. I often relied on my position as a "researcher" or as "student"[34] through which I placed myself into an established category that not only justified my hesitations concerning monetary and marital commitment, but also gave a reason for my extended presence to which many people could relate and that was considered valuable. As a researcher, the prospect of writing a book accompanied me during my fieldwork. During a short visit in September 2018, my presentation of an advanced version of this text to Hakimu Saleh, Bi Mwana, and selected others stressed this framing as researcher.

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[33] See Kresse 2009 or Loimeier 2007b for an exploration of "public" group discussions at a *baraza*.
[34] See in much more detail chapter 3.3.1.

Out*line* of the Thesis

Building on this fieldwork, kombe-as-a-topic diffractively emerges throughout the progression of this thesis. The chapters and parts are entangled with each other, but still, the text pursues a linear narrative; I thus provide an out*line* here. Following this mainly conceptual introduction, the first part continues to introduce. It introduces kombe in its materiality, following the ink, the plate/paper, and the water in their material specificities; it relates these material considerations to the two settings in which I learned about kombe, that of Hakimu Saleh and that of Bi Mwana (chapter 1). It introduces the historically-informed political context of kombe in Zanzibar in which the Indian Ocean and the Tanzanian mainland are entangled and intra-actively distinguished (chapter 2). Finally, the first part introduces how doing research on kombe hinges on practices of knowledge and how these practices are related to this dissertation (chapter 3). Who and what is invested in this project in which ways and how do these investments influence the portrayal of kombe? This lengthy introductory phase, under the title "materializing kombe," both introduces kombe in its materiality (including the context of learning, the spatial-temporal context and the context of rendering kombe a matter of research) and materially manifests kombe-as-a-topic.

As a next step, part II scrutinizes kombe's inherent mediation processes and attends to their diffraction. In the Qurʾan it is written that it is healing (17:82). The Qurʾan—the physical codex (*msahafu*), the recitation—enables alteration of people's afflictions through their bodies. However, kombe is not considered a *msahafu* as it is not readable anymore, yet it carries healing power. How is kombe's text, script, scripture materially trans*form*ed, losing its defining shape but maintaining its healing characteristics? The writing of kombe and its liquefaction are processes in which the material textual qualities of kombe facilitate and forestall particular mediation processes (chapter 4) that then enter the body (chapter 5). The living body, *mwili*, absorbs the dissolved Qurʾan to unfold its healing power. According to Zanzibari concepts of bodies and healing, *mwili* ("body") is the medium through which the material substance of kombe can be targeted at afflictions and evoke healing. Following chapter 4 and 5 on text and body, chapter 6 develops the notion of a "reading body," a body that "reads" a formless script. As this is not a direct translation of how people in Zanzibar describe what happens in drinking the verses, this contestable choice calls for explicit attention to the diffractive emergence of formulation processes that any ethnographic writing

undergoes. The three chapters in this part describe various mediation processes that are entangled with each other and in their entanglement render the textual Qurɔanic verses present to *mwili*. A bodily "literacy" induces an immediate and affective encounter with the Qurɔanic healing power.

Having paid attention to mediation processes (part II) that the materiality of kombe (chapter 1) gives rise to, part III moves to a more social and discursive examination of kombe in Zanzibar. It takes seriously that kombe is framed as "Islamic medicine" (*dawa ya kiislamu*) and that it is drunk by both Muslims and Christians for healing purposes. Questions of the particular political-religious framework of Zanzibar as an "Islamic" place in contrast to the Tanzanian mainland (chapter 2) play an important role in how kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* is evaluated and enacted by Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar. In chapter 7, the focus is on "*ya kiislamu*" ("Islamic"). It shows how this adjectival phrase evokes questions about the relationality of the concept of "religion" and "*dini*" (often translated as "faith" or "religion") and explores their entanglements and processes of differentiation. This chapter is concerned with how these entanglements and these processes of differentiation, implied in the term "ya kiislamu," establish an antagonistic ground for comparability between Muslims and Christians. Chapter 8 continues the exploration of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* and ponders over *dawa* (medicine) as the realm in which the differentiating entanglement of "religion" and "*dini*" materializes and enables both Muslims and Christians to drink kombe—as *dawa*. The antagonism portrayed in chapter 7 "intra-acts" with a much more encompassing relationality between Christians and Muslims through *dawa* as chapter 8 lines out. Finally, the conclusion draws the different chapters together and makes explicit how not only the chapters within the parts are interwoven, but also the parts with each other. The conclusion also revisits the question of what a "diffractive ethnography" is in relation to kombe and how it forms an ethico-onto-epistemological contribution.

"But we all know what kombe is." Faki's statement puts together a collective "we," "knowledge," and a concern for "what kombe is." This thesis is about kombe and about knowledge about kombe. It also is about the research about kombe in Zanzibar and about how it all comes together in an ethnography. This thesis is not only about "what kombe is," but also about what kombe does, what is done to kombe and what is made of kombe. In their descriptions, Faki and Sheikh Soraga have already provided rich contributions indicating what the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic may entail.

Part I.

Materializing Kombe

On my way to town, I was walking to the spot where I had planned to take the public transport when Paul spotted me and offered to give me a lift. I was running late and I gratefully accepted. While driving along the road towards Stone Town, we eased into a conversation. After arrival and despite my rush we continued this conversation for a few more moments until I reluctantly left the car. My field notes on this ride are short; I remember I quickly went to a café to scribble down some quotes before they were lost to short-term memory even though some people were waiting for me. With urgency I wrote:

> Paul.
> Zanzibari Christian, parents from Mwanza.
> "Kombe heals everything, kombe is the treatment of people; others don't treat with kombe. It depends on belief."
> "Should I explain to you what kombe is?"
> "To learn about Islamic matters is good, but you mustn't change your religion."[35]

His question about whether he should explain kombe to me struck me, and echoed other people's disbelief that I would already know. Apparently, kombe is not something that I was expected to know about. At the same time, it *is* explicable, and he offered to tell me all about it, although our conversation developed in such a way that I had to "prove" myself and give a short description of kombe to which he agreed. Paul is a Christian, a Zanzibari Christian; he knows about Zanzibari practices and can speak about them, especially since he framed kombe as treatment of people, of local people whom he positioned himself as belonging to. However, he left it open whether he himself had ever used kombe or would use it if afflicted. He stated that kombe's efficacy depended on belief, on the trust that you put into it, and he remained carefully ambiguous about his own stance towards treatment with kombe. Despite their brevity, the field notes include another aspect of our conversation in the car: Paul's worry about my engagement with Islamic affairs. According to him, studying Islamic matters (*kusoma mambo ya kiislamu)*—and kombe is generally framed as Islamic—is fine, but it also involves a danger for us Christians: we might be drawn into it too deeply. His offer to explain kombe to

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[35] Paul, 30 August 2014, Zanzibar Town. I took those notes originally in Swahili, capturing his expressions that were still lingering on: "Paul. Mkristu Mzanzibari, wazazi kutoka Mwanza. Kombe inatibu kila kitu, kombe matibabu ya watu, wengine hawatibu na kombe, inategemea amani. Nikueleze kombe ni nini? Kusoma mambo ya kiislamu kuzuri, lakini lazima usibadilishe dini."

me as a Christian, thus, also would have been a spiritually safer way for me to learn.

During my fieldwork I sensed the importance of this brief encounter with Paul—I remember the urgency with which I wrote those few lines—and this brief encounter is important now that I write the introduction to this part. It encapsulates several issues that came to be of relevance to my fieldwork: it shows how my inquiries about kombe "diffracted" in the Zanzibari context, how they "superposed" and gave rise to certain themes (constructive interference) while other themes were rendered less important (destructive interference). The more I learned about kombe, the more difficult it became to explain what kombe was, in particular since my two main fieldsites (that of Hakimu Saleh and that of Bi Mwana) prepared and dispensed kombe in quite different ways. Chapter 1 addresses this question and scrutinizes how kombe is materialized through practices by specific people and in specific contexts and shows different ways of engaging with kombe as part of "traditional medicine." The overall context is provided by Zanzibar in the years 2013 to 2015. During that time, questions of how to demarcate Zanzibar from the Tanzanian mainland were widely discussed. Paul's self-identification as "Zanzibari Christian" stands in contrast to the main narrative of an inherently Islamic Zanzibar; Paul, thus, situates himself clearly in the highly politicized debate that chapter 2 contextualizes with regard to Zanzibar's history. Finally, this part draws attention to how my research on kombe and my writing about it are entangled with learning about kombe ("learn[ing] about Islamic matters"), a quest which was usually positively evaluated, and that Paul also found "good." Chapter 3 scrutinizes how conceptions of knowledge are entangled not only with my positionality during the time of my fieldwork, but also with how the writing of this thesis takes shape. Under the framework of a discussion on "knowledge," that last chapter of this part examines how fieldwork and writing inform each other in such a way that during my time of fieldwork I already sensed the importance of the encounter with Paul and scribbled down my notes with urgency. It is these notes that now guide the first part of this text.

1. Kombe's Mattering: Materializing Kombe with Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana

Practices are formed with concrete material substances by specific people. The preparation and consumption of kombe depend on how it matters to particular people: how they form it and render it meaningful in their social circumstances. Although kombe is enacted in different ways by different people, the name "kombe" still refers to a common ground, a common ground that Paul also relied on when he offered to explain what kombe is. Qur'anic-verses-dissolved-in-water-to-be-ingested is prime to any description of kombe. Next to the Qur'anic verses and water, it is two verbs—"dissolved" and "ingested"—that constitute this minimalistic description of kombe. The presence of the verbs indicates that a description of kombe rests on "practices":

> A 'practice' (*Praktik*) is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge. A practice […] represents a pattern which can be filled out by a multitude of single and often unique actions reproducing the practice (a certain way of consuming goods can be filled out by plenty of actual acts of consumption). The single individual – as a bodily and mental agent – then acts as the 'carrier' (Träger) of a practice – and, in fact, of many different practices which need not be coordinated with one another. Thus, she or he is not only a carrier of patterns of bodily behaviour, but also of certain routinized ways of understanding, knowing how and desiring. (Reckwitz 2002: 249–250)

I have quoted Andreas Reckwitz at length as I find it important how he interweaves the reliance of a "practice" on "elements" that make up a "block" with the multitude of enactments of a "practice" by different "carriers."

Although in this first chapter I will not address all of the "elements" that Reckwitz proposes, almost all of them appear in one way or another in the following chapters.[1] For now, I scrutinize " 'things' and their use" (1.1) and relate these to how kombe is enacted in the settings of Hakimu Saleh (1.2) and Bi Mwana (1.3). As a foundation for the following chapters, the materiality of the 'things' used for the preparation of kombe provides a tangible and shared entry point that allows us to appreciate how Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana materialize kombe in their specific contexts. I thus follow Reckwitz's proposition to relate the "elements" that make up a practice to the "carriers." In other words, I take seriously the "diffraction" of "things and their use" with individual actors to examine the "diffraction pattern" of kombe as I encountered it during my fieldwork. Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana along with the other people who work at her dispensary are key to the way that I learned about kombe. Their local circumstances, their biographies and social situatedness, as well as their relation to me, diffracted with the materiality of kombe and gave rise to how I perceived kombe. It must be noted that they became central to my research because they were engaged in the practice of producing kombe. As practitioners, their "social life depend[s] on material things [such as the product of kombe] and [is] entangled with them; humans and things are relationally produced" (Hodder 2014:19). The way I met Hakimu Saleh and the people at Bi Mwana's dispensary during my fieldwork and the way that they will be introduced in this chapter was and is determined by their materializations of kombe, their entanglement with the product of kombe that they have produced as practitioners. Hakimu Saleh and the people of Bi Mwana's dispensary do not only present different ways of enacting the preparation of kombe, but they are also the principal actors that drive this text and thus will be introduced in considerable detail here.

"Traditional Medicine"

Kombe is part of "traditional medicine." It is thereby embedded in the Zanzibari framework of national healthcare that groups local non-biomedical treatment options as "traditional" (see the Zanzibar Traditional and Alternative Medicine

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[1]   In chapter 5, for example, I acknowledge the importance of exploring the body, however, the rigid distinction between "bodily" and "mental" activities does not hold. In chapter 3 I discuss how different kinds of knowledge are entangled with the practice of preparing kombe, although I do not speak of "emotional" and "motivational" knowledge.

Policy [2002]). Although various medical branches of non-biomedical treatment options are recognized and listed in legal documents (such as Chinese Traditional Medicine, Ayurveda, and the application of local plants, animal substances, and minerals), both the Tanzanian and the Zanzibari documents[2] reaffirm and establish structures that differentiate between biomedical and non-biomedical practices which echo the WHO's categorizations.[3] Set apart from biomedicine, "alternative medicine" includes trained practitioners within internationally recognized structures, such as those of Traditional Chinese Medicine, whereas "traditional medicine" is based on the practices of locally recognized healers who draw on generational experience and employ methods from their social, cultural, or religious backgrounds (United Republic of Tanzania 2002: 6–7). The governmental recognition of "traditional medicine" responds to people's reliance on and trust in non-biomedical practitioners and thereby subjects these non-biomedical institutions to state governance. Under the umbrella of Zanzibar's Ministry of Health, two substructures were implemented: the "Traditional Council" that oversees the promotion of the Zanzibar Traditional and Alternative Medicine Policy and the "Traditional Medicine Unit" that registers practitioners. While the possibility to register is endorsed by most practitioners, the concomitant fees often prove to be a hindrance.[4] The unequal allocation of financial resources points to the differences within the overarching framework of "traditional medicine." Herbal treatment options and their materia medica (as opposed to religious or spiritual treatment options) receive comparatively more attention than spiritual treatment (Stangeland et al. [2008]; for an older study on the social background of "traditional healers" see Gessler et al. [1995]). Pressure comes from international research groups who are interested in potential biomedical and pharmaceutical value of the materia medica used (Langwick 2011b). As Walter Bruchhausen notes, these

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[2]   The Zanzibari differentiation between a "Tanzanian" and a "Zanzibari" framework will be addressed in chapter 2.

[3]   How these categories are entangled and how these policies influence the entanglements and negotiations of the distinction between biomedicine and non-biomedicine is shown with respect to Chinese medicine in Tanzania by Elizabeth Hsu (2002; 2009), with respect to herbal/ spiritual medicine in southern Tanzania by Stacy Langwick (2007; 2008; 2010; 2011a), and with respect to treatment of HIV in Zanzibar by Nadine Beckmann (2009; 2013). For an examination of how religious actors are able to position themselves in this field, especially with respect to HIV for which there is no biomedical cure, see Hansjörg Dilger (2009).

[4]   Interview with Haji Juma Msaleh, 27 August 2014, Magogoni, Zanzibar Town. See also the report by Caroline Meier zu Biesen, Hansjörg Dilger, and Tanja Nienstedt (2012: 20–21).

privileges show how the biomedical system underpins the notion of "traditional medicine" and its modernization (2010: 261).

In Zanzibar Town, "traditional medicine" is often translated into Swahili as *dawa ya asili*. In relation to how state institutions take an interest in "traditional medicine,"[5] the term *asili* has come to carry a sense of "natural" and "original" and it is also used in the context of critical engagement with "modern" issues (*mambo ya kisasa*). Whereas throughout the thesis I mostly employ the term *dawa ya asili*, the political context of a post-colonial state's entanglements with global neoliberal structures (of which the WHO is part) caused me to engage with "traditional medicine" not as a translation of *dawa ya asili*, but as an entity of its own, the implications of which are more global than the term *dawa ya asili* suggests.

Kombe is also *dawa ya kiislamu* ("Islamic medicine"). As "Islamic medicine" it is legitimized with regard to Islam and does not rely on its potential biomedical explicability to attract patients. The legal framework in which the category of "traditional medicine" is constructed includes "spiritual therapies" and as such, religious, and more specifically Islamic, treatment options. Kombe practitioners dispense kombe as "traditional" and as "Islamic" medicine with varying degrees of emphasis. Hakimu Saleh frames kombe with more explicit reference to "Islamic medicine" while Bi Mwana dispenses kombe as part of and supplement to her "traditional medicine." Deliberately making reference to kombe's context of "traditional medicine," I thus start with an investigation of the "materia medica" to then turn to Hakimu Saleh's emphasis on "Islamic medicine" and then to Bi Mwana's enactment of "Islamic medicine"'s embeddedness in "tradtional medicine."

Patients

The minimalistic description of kombe with which this chapter begins contains the verbs "dissolved" and "ingested" that correlate to two practice "blocks": the preparation of kombe and the ingestion of kombe. These two parts go hand in hand

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[5]   Walter Bruchhausen (2010: 251-252) mentions that in Tanzania also the terms *jadi* ("based on ancestry and family descent") and *kienyeji* ("indigenous") are used. The state's employment of the term *asili* broadened its connotations of "ancestry and family descent" to also include "natural" (see also Legère 2000 and the online dictionary glosbe.com, last accessed 27 January 2018.).

and constitute each other. In the preparation, the practice of ingestion is present while in the practice of ingestion the preparation is equally present. These practices are entangled with each other. As in this chapter, I approach kombe through the practice "block" of preparation and as the preparation is geared towards ingestion by patients, I prepend some remarks about the patients[6] for whom and to whom the preparation of kombe—its materialization by specific people—matters.

Widely distributed amongst the social range, people of all ages and various levels of income resort to kombe for the management and prospective treatment of their afflictions. Navigating between different treatment options in Zanzibar, people choose practitioners who dispense kombe with regard to their affliction. Often, kombe also serves as a supplement to biomedical or "traditional" (*ya kienyeji*), herbal (*ya mitishamba*) treatment. People who orient themselves towards a lifestyle of (western) modernity are less likely to choose kombe as a supplement to other treatments they might receive. However, in case of "spiritual" affliction, such as inadvertent spirit possession or other afflictions that biomedicine cannot visualize (see chapter 6), they are likely to consider visiting a practitioner who offers kombe. More than patients' social background, their affliction determines their choice to seek practitioners who dispense kombe. However, the afflictions for which women and men[7] seek help through kombe are often gendered. The most common afflictions for which women turn to kombe include possession by jinn, barrenness (or fear of barrenness), and envy targeted at them. With men, the most frequent affliction by far relates to their "manly power," followed by business problems and hopes of marriage. The patients find their practitioner(s) by following the advice of family members, neighbors, or friends and trust their opinions on what is regarded as the proper way to prepare kombe.[8] The expectations about how kombe should be prepared are often met by practitioners whose healing room's location is not too far. However, the practitioners that live in close proximity are rather avoided to maintain some anonymity and secrecy around one's affliction. Patients, thus, have to negotiate between these contradicting desires of selecting a particular practitioner. Although the choice to visit a practitioner who dispenses

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[6] I refer to those who receive kombe as "patients." The medical term resonates with the medical framework in which kombe is "dispensed" in Zanzibar. With particular attention to the body, I will elaborate on the treatment of "afflictions" in chapter 5 and in chapter 8 I will deal in depth with how kombe is *dawa* (medicine).

[7] I would also include people who neither clearly identify as a woman nor as a man, although during my fieldwork this has never come up as a subject by my informants.

[8] Janzen (1978; 1987) has termed this a "therapy management group."

kombe is primarily determined by the affliction, the choice to visit a *particular* practitioner is influenced by the patients' social relations within their families and their neighborhoods.

Although with kombe Qur'anic verses are ingested and although it is referred to as "Islamic medicine," Christians, as well as Muslims, turn to kombe. Amongst Christians—and the same holds true for Muslims—the practice of drinking kombe is not uncontested. In both religious groups, there are arguments for and against drinking kombe. Despite sharing the living space of Zanzibar and despite the fact that Christians take part in the practice of drinking kombe, a practice that is simultaneously questioned by Christian and Muslim voices, drinking kombe cannot be essentialized into a shared common practice "block." Chapter 8 will present how kombe in the context of Zanzibar Town complicates the notion of shared practices across different religious affiliations. Across these differences, however, kombe relies on a unique set of " 'things' and their use." The following description of the preparation of kombe is most probably very different from (but intertwined with) what Paul offered when he asked: "Should I explain to you what kombe is?"[9] While he offered an explanation (and translation) of the practice in(to) his narrative as a "Zanzibari Christian," the following description is equally a translation from the practice but into an account that is situated at the beginning of this thesis. Still, the kombe that both my description and Paul's presumed description depict, relies on the common references to the involved " 'things' and their use."

1.1. Kombe in Text: Description of Kombe

Ink in a certain shape on a plate or a piece of paper gives rise to the materiality of Qur'anic verses which are then transferred into water to be poured into bottles. With kombe, the written Qurʾan is materialized and made ingestible by patients: given the materiality of water, kombe with its Qurʾanic power can be physically incorporated (see also Wilkens 2011:183). Its materiality *presents* the Qur'anic power to an afflicted body: it makes it *present* in a material way. Even more, kombe's materiality is hypermediated (Bolter and Grusin 2000:12-14): it mediates the text that mediates the Qurʾanic power whereby the processes of mediation are central to what kombe is. Kombe is the liquefaction of the textualized Qurʾan. In Bolter and Grusin's words: kombe "promises to reform [the mediacy of

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9   Paul, 30 August 2014, Zanzibar Town.

text] by offering a more immediate or authentic experience; the promise of reform inevitably leads to hypermediacy" (Bolter and Grusin 2000: 19). However, kombe does not "represent" the textual Qurʾan, kombe manifests it with materiality of a different "degree and kind" (Engelke 2005: 135). Through kombe's materiality, bodily access to the Qurʾan's healing power becomes *immediate*. What does kombe's materiality comprise? The following paragraphs approach kombe through its material components to understand the "degree and kind" of kombe's materiality.

1.1.1. Ink

One element of the description of kombe is its preparation by writing with *zafarani*, which semantically translates as "saffron." Either orange powder or more often liquid red food coloring is the *zafarani* and is bought in shops that also provide roots, herbs, different kinds of bark, seeds, leaves, flowers, minerals, or various kinds of oil—all of which are used in the context of healing. Orange powder or food coloring that is bought in a different shop is not *zafarani* and is used for preparing food. The prices for *zafarani* and food coloring are the same and sometimes the substance bought as food coloring is only transformed into *zafarani* when it is brought into the healing room. While the orange powder is produced and packed in Zanzibar, the small nicely labeled bottles containing red food coloring come from India, just like many other medicinal substances. When kombe is drunk the trade connections across the Indian Ocean extend into afflicted bodies of people living in Zanzibar.

Figure 4.: *Zafarani*

In the previous short description of what kombe is, I have circumscribed *zafarani* as "saffron ink." Firstly, I find that "ink" circumscribes the liquid used for writing most precisely.

> But what is ink? It is best described as a colored solution, prepared from dyes or from finely grained pigments with strong coloring power. A dye is a water soluble substance, mostly of organic origin. A pigment is a nonsoluble colored compound. Pigments are often inorganic in origin, such as earth pigments or ochres. Dyes used as ink and pigments can be bound onto the surface of paper fibers by means of a binding medium such as gum. The

> major concern is that ink flow evenly so the lines from the pen, or brush,
> are controlled, producing uninterrupted lines or strokes. (Biddle 2011: 8)

However, *zafarani* is usually not described *as* ink (*ni wino*), but *like* ink (*ni kama wino*). It is set apart from ink that is used for writing which is meant to last visually.[10] Secondly, "saffron ink" includes the mention of "saffron" which is fundamental to descriptions of the preparation of kombe. By naming the liquid which is used for writing the Qurᵓanic verses *zafarani*, worth is denoted and it is made precious. This precious *zafarani* materializes the traces of a twig or bamboo stick in the writer's hand (Ingold 2010b: 15); it constitutes the writing—it manifests the Qurᵓanic verses—and in processes of transformation, the materiality of *zafarani* remains stable. Ali Hemedi, a kombe practitioner whom I met several times over my research stay, said that after these processes "*utaona zafarani tupu*" ("you will only see saffron").[11] *Zafarani* materially carries the verses from the plate or paper into the water and from there into the body. Like no other material substance of kombe, "saffron ink" is inseparable from the precious Qurᵓanic verses from which the healing power stems. Lastly, the positive effect of saffron on the healing process is invoked and often featured in the narratives of how kombe functions. Very seldom were other substances used to replace saffron: Cloves, sandal wood, and charcoal (made into ink)[12] in some rare cases could, in light of their equally supporting medicinal effects, possibly substitute *zafarani*.

1.1.2. Plates

When kombe is prepared, it is written with saffron ink either on a ceramic plate or on a piece of paper. Both materials, ceramics and paper, carry with them particular characteristics and connotations and the practitioner's choice is often defended vis-à-vis the respective other possible material. Unlike paper, plates can be washed off completely. After the washing, no traces of the ink remain visible;

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[10] In this context, it is interesting to note the similarities to ancient Greek: "The very word 'ink' is derived from the Greek *enkaustos*, the perfect participle of the verb meaning 'to burn in'" as "permanent inks [...] cannot be washed off the substrate. They literally burn into wood, papyrus, parchment or paper" (Biddle 2011: 21). Although it is beyond the scope of this text to evaluate the conceptual history of "ink," the similarities in the value of visual permanence are compelling.

[11] Ali Hemedi, 26 August 2014, Chumbuni, Zanzibar Town.

[12] Hakimu Saleh, 16 January 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town; see also Zube, 22 August 2014, Jambiani. Zube explained that he used charcoal as charcoal itself has also cleansing properties.

all the ink is absorbed by the water. The plate has not withheld the smallest bit. Due to the completeness of the washing process, kombe washed from plates is said to be more effective. Next to their facilitation of efficacy, plates in Zanzibar evoke sentiments that recall a more prosperous Zanzibari past in which trade across the Indian Ocean (see chapter 2) brought wealth and products on which to spend the wealth including porcelain plates from China. The most common plates that are available in Zanzibar today also come from China. However, today's Chinese-produced plastic plates have a depreciated value. For kombe, I was told, it is necessary not to use plastic plates. The depreciation of the plastic plates derives from their use as everyday objects, which does not correspond well with the esteem of writing Qurʾanic verses. Webb Keane (2001: 70), building on Grice (1975), refers to the entanglement of "natural meanings" (the properties that artifacts have due to their physicality) and "non-natural meanings" (the properties that artifacts receive in social action, their symbolic/semiotic value). In the materiality of a plate used for writing kombe, the "natural meaning" of plates—their material characteristics of not withholding traces of saffron ink—coincides and is entangled with their "non-natural meaning"—their evocation of a prosperous Zanzibari past. Another essential feature of the (non-plastic) plates that could be used for kombe is their plainness. Only plates that did not have any colorful patterns, no floral or other designs, were permitted to be used for kombe. The background that is silhouetted against the ink forming the Qurʾanic verses needs to be as plain and as white as possible, which also holds true for paper. The importance of the plate is further amplified by Hans Zache's suggestion that the word kombe (denoting seashell, used as a plate) was only later replaced by the Arabic-stemming *sahani* and thus speaks for the age of the practice (Zache 1899: 65). Although I cannot speculate about the age of the practice, the importance of the plate is reflected in my research.

1.1.3. Paper

Paper, as well as plates used for kombe, need to be plain white. Lined paper or other paper with preprinted designs must not be used. Plain white paper is much easier to find than suitable plates; therefore many practitioners prefer to rely on paper instead of compromising by using a white ceramic plate that does not have the esteemed quality of the former imports from China. Paper's ordinariness and thus paper's "non-natural meaning's" irrelevance renders it more acceptable

in comparison to compromises with plates of which the "non-natural meanings" are highly relevant (even if the plates' "natural meaning" has clear advantages). Another common argument for the use of paper is that, unlike a plate, a piece of paper can be given to the patients directly and then they can wash the writing off themselves. Not everybody judges the patients' involvement in the washing off as an advantage; however, plastic bottles into which kombe is usually filled are scarce at times and can be logistically difficult to procure. Verses written on paper can also be stored much more easily. Especially for practitioners for whom it makes a difference at what time of which day the verses are written, paper proves to be the preferred choice (see below: Hakimu Saleh). Different verses for different patients can be written and stored independently of the availability of bottles.

1.1.4. Bottles

In many cases, patients bring along their own bottles. In Zanzibar, water and soft drinks are widely available in plastic bottles that then enter numerous cycles of reuse. They are often thrown away by those who can afford it, picked up by others and sold. Many women who prepare juice in their free time rely on these bottles and in some cases the bottles are for sale at kombe practitioners' places for those who have not brought their own. In others, circumventing the bottle-problem, the verses are written on paper to be given to the patients directly or to be washed off whenever the patient returns with a bottle. Although logistically, bottles prove to be an important aspect that has to be taken into consideration by the practitioners and the patients alike and although they partly influence the practitioners' choice of medium on which to write, bottles hardly feature in the explanations of what kombe is and how it is prepared. Their task of containing water that contains the ink that had formed Qurʾanic verses neither requires particular characteristics nor special treatment.

1.1.5. Water

Contrary to the quality of bottles, the quality of water is often commented upon. From time to time, it is used to voice preferences on Zanzibar's independence: the government on the mainland is said to oppress Zanzibar through the administration of water supply (and other infrastructural components such as electricity supply). Reoccurring water pipe leaks in certain neighborhoods (other neighborhoods depend solely on private wells or wells built by aid programs) are blamed on

Figure 5.: Bottle being filled with kombe

the union's government. Governmental water supply becomes an entry point to lamentations about the union's government. Furthermore, oceanic water is what materially separates Zanzibar from the mainland; the narrative of the Zanzibari identity hinges on its embeddedness in the Indian Ocean (see chapter 2). The opinions on whether or not oceanic water is suitable for kombe are divided according to emphasis either on idealism of Zanzibar's independence (yes, it would be very good if, instead of water from the governmental pipes, water from the ocean could be used for kombe because the ocean is crucial to what Zanzibar is and the preparation of kombe is a Zanzibari practice) or on practicality (no, it's too salty for ingestion). Another practical consideration that enhances people's skepticism is the threat of malevolent jinn from the sea. Despite Zanzibaris' connectedness to the water that surrounds the islands, for many people, the sea remains an uncanny place and its water is infested with this uncanniness.[13]

Despite possible associations to the union, mostly tap water or water from the nearest well is used. If asked for alternatives, people express a preference for *zamzam* water or rainwater. *Zamzam* water, water from a spring in Mecca that had sprung up to save Hagar[14] when she was cast out into the desert, is held to have healing properties itself and enhance the healing characteristics of kombe. In Zanzibar, *zamzam* water is not easily accessible; practitioners need to rely on their network of travelers, pilgrims, or family connections that facilitate a supply of *zamzam* water. Although spoken about frequently, I have not witnessed the preparation of kombe with *zamzam* water. Rainwater, similarly, is also often talked about but hardly used. Rainwater, it is usually specified, must not have touched roofs, trees, or anything else that could have polluted it, but must come directly from the sky. In practice, however, the ordinariness of water mattered: tap water or water from wells; water that is stored in the house for cooking, drinking, cleaning. Neutral water. Water that is see-through, taste-less, and pure (Katz 2002: 165). Water that is available almost anywhere, water that is essential to life. Water dilutes: it decreases the intensity of sauces or juices. Water cleans: it absorbs and removes dirt and leaves clothes or dishes clean. Water is neutral.

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[13] Theologically, the skepticism towards sea water finds an analogy in the prescriptions for the water used for ablutions. Ablutions "cannot be made with sea water as under the sea are seven other seas and below them are the fires of hell" (Abu Ghanim al-Khurasani, *al Mudawwana al-kubra* 1:7, quoted in Katz 2002: 144).

[14] Hagar was the second wife of Abraham and mother of Ismael of whom, according to Islamic teaching, the Prophet Muhammed is a descendant.

Neutral water can be charged. Meaningful water is used in uncountable healing practices. Matthew Engelke lists how "water occupies a special place in the therapeutic imagination" (2005: 133) according to which I structure the following sentences. Firstly, healing skills can be acquired underwater, as reflected in the story of Kinjikitile in the run-up to the Maji maji war (Beez 2005; see also chapter 2.2). Underwater, Kinjikitile learned how to turn water into a protective shield against German colonial bullets. Being underwater, however, is also connected to the danger of being exposed to evil spirits.[15] The ability to heal is closely connected to the ability to harm. Secondly, rainmaking and healing coincide. The ability to call for water with its life-nourishing qualities extends to the ability to heal and strengthen bodily life (in central Africa, 200 years ago according to Mario Azevedo[2017: 171]). Thirdly, water can contain a healing agent and can then be used for bathing as in the case of the water provided for Marian faith healing in Dar es Salaam (Wilkens 2011: 75) or of the water used for medicinal baths (Langwick 2007: 102). Of course, water that contains a healing agent can also be ingested, as is the case with kombe and also with the weChishanu apostolics' "holy water" (Engelke 2005: 128). Water is closely connected to healing practices in Tanzania (Green 1996), in Bantu "cosmological notions of causality" (Taylor 1992: 36), and "as material carrier of divine power and blessing in many religions of all parts of the world" (Wilkens 2011: 216). According to the healers that were interviewed for the study of healthcare and traditional healing, "nothing works without water" which they attributed to the Qurʾan (Meier zu Biesen, Dilger, Nienstedt 2012: 23). Water's materiality is crucial to these practices of healing. Its physical qualities that enable bodily ingestion favorably coincide with its neutrality in that it can contain healing powers which are employed in various healing practices.[16] Engelke (2005: 134) draws attention to how water, because it is meaningful and used ubiquitously in different healing practices, becomes "unproblematic" for the weChishanu apostolics who are concerned with the meanings attached to material artifacts—the "non-natural meanings" of material things (Keane 2001: 70). The plethora of "non-natural" meanings renders water neutral again. However, with kombe, I argue against regarding water's containment of the healing Qurʾan as "non-natural meaning," as that would reduce the contained verses to an immate-

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[15] Note also the close relation to Mami Wata (Mami Water), the mermaid goddess in western Africa (see for example Meyer 2015: 210-216; see also Wendl 1991).

[16] Bi Tufa even says that water itself is medicine and therefore it is used ubiquitously. Bi Tufa, 19 November 2013, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

rial attribute. Rather, I take seriously the materiality of the liquefied Qurʾan that is ingested to be "read" by the afflicted body (see chapter 6). Nevertheless, I find the attention to water's "natural meaning," its material ingestibility, and on these grounds its relation to a multitude of other healing practices important. Water connects healing practices.

With kombe, water contains, but does not become the written Qurʾan. It can carry the Qurʾan into the body, *mwili*, but it does not need to be treated like a recitation or a *msahafu* for which there are prescriptions of how to maintain the purity of the materialized Qurʾan. Water dissolves ink; ink that, by taking on a particular shape, manifests a Qurʾanic verse. The ink in this particular shape was visible and its shape discernable against the plain background, the plain plate or the plain piece of paper. Script depends on materials that can carry shape, that can set script apart from a background. Water, however, is a different kind of material. It does not set script apart but contains it. The ink's shape disappears with water, but the ink that forms Qurʾanic material also gets distributed into every drop. A drop of water is water. A drop of kombe is kombe. With water, the script becomes liquefied, but not liquidated. It becomes un-readable to the eye, but it does not lose the healing power of the Qurʾan; it still contains the written verse and possibly its supplements.

1.1.6. *Msahafu*/Text

Although the verses are usually known by heart, the material presence of a *msahafu* (Qurʾan codex, Arabic: *mus'haf*) opened to the relevant page is mostly given; the verses are copied from a *msahafu* rather than from memory. Printed Qurʾanic verses are turned into written Qurʾanic verses through the body of the practitioner, who visually perceives of the verses to then direct his hand with the twig or small bamboo stick to replicate the *msahafu*'s ink's shape onto a plain plate or a plain piece of paper with *zafarani*.

One of the most common choices (and one that addresses all kinds of affliction) is in Sūrat Al-'Isra': "We send down the Qur'an as healing and mercy to those who believe; as for those who disbelieve, it only increases their loss" (17:82). In explanations of how kombe works, the first part of this verse features prominently. Other very common verses are the last three: Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ (112), and al-Mu'awwidhatayn, which combines Sūratu l-Falaq (113), and Sūrat An-Nās (114). These contain the declaration of God's oneness (Arabic: *Tawḥīd*), and the protec-

tion from evil respectively. In addition to the very first sura, Al-Fātiḥa (1), these last three suras belong to the first verses to be learned by heart in Qurˀan schools. Apart from these, many other verses are chosen depending on the affliction according to analogies. For example, patients who feel disturbed by their dreams are given verses from the Sūrat Yusuf (12), in which Yusuf interprets dreams, including the dreams of the Pharaoh, and thereby prevents a famine during seven years of drought in Egypt. Patients who seek treatment because of their jinn provide another quite frequent example. They are usually given Sūrat Al-Jinn (72), in which the jinn are proclaimed to be subordinate to Allah and thus subjected to Allah's will. Not all practitioners apply the principle of analogy to their choice of verses. Some practitioners rely on their choice of booklets and photocopied manuscripts in which afflictions are listed with corresponding verses. Others know which verse to write through God-given intuition, and for yet others there is no superior choice as any verse from the Qurˀan is the Qurˀan and therefore "is healing," as verse 17:82 states. The verses are frequently supplemented by drawings, numbers, and symbols, which will be described in more detail when Hakimu Saleh is introduced (see below), and also in chapter 4 in which the materiality of kombe's writtenness (ink in a particular shape on a plain surface) will be conceptualized: what matters is the particular shape on a plain surface that ink *has* rather than what it *stands for*.

I have repeatedly employed Keane's distinction between "natural" and "non-natural meanings." This distinction has served the purpose of engaging with certain properties that link the described entities to the material world. I must add, however, that, even if entangled, the materiality of the Qurˀanic verses (see also chapter 4) renders this distinction between "natural meanings" and "non-natural meanings" problematic: Qurˀanic verses' healing powers are not socially constructed, but that does not render them physically explorable with the methods that natural sciences have developed. The distinction between "natural" and "non-natural meanings" resonates with the distinction between natural sciences and humanities/social sciences and carries a long genealogy that can be traced back to the Cartesian dualism of matter and spirit, body and mind. The topic of kombe demands taking materiality seriously without essentializing the material/physical as the other of the non-material/spiritual.

Kombe is written. Its preparation is a textual practice that involves particular " 'things' and their use," but the saffron ink needs to be *written* on a plate or paper, *washed off* with water and *poured* into a bottle. Kombe—entangled

with various connotations of its "elements"—materializes through people's practices who relate themselves to this "thing" of manufactured kombe and become what I call "kombe practitioners." Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana are both "kombe practitioners" and they both engage with the production of the material "thing" kombe. However, to both of them, it matters differently, and it is this multiplicity that I find interesting. When Paul offered to explain to me what kombe is, these material elements (save the bottles) would most certainly have featured in his explanation, as they did in many other short descriptions that I have heard. Leaving short descriptions aside, I now turn to the "carriers of the practice" from whom I learned most about kombe, not only in that it was described to me, but in that I witnessed (and participated in) the practices of preparation. I therefore first introduce Hakimu Saleh whom I met first, followed by the setting of Bi Mwana.

1.2. Hakimu Saleh

Dust-filled air clung to me on my way along the narrow paths between the many houses squeezed into the area of Vikokotoni.[17] Just before reaching Hakimu Saleh's door, I passed the two chicken-wired windows of his house, called out "Hodi," already peeking inside to see what Hakimu Saleh was doing. He was not in the room yet, but his wife, Bi Rehema, opened the door and welcomed me in. "Karibu," she said. We exchanged greetings and she assured me that Hakimu Saleh would come back any minute. By that time I had already slipped out of my flip flops and drew back the curtain separating the main room from the entrance area. I stepped inside our teaching place. I had just taken a seat on the floor, when indeed I heard a familiar voice saying "Hodi, hodi, hodi." Hakimu Saleh also peeked through the window before reaching the door and entering. I stood up and replied with a chuckle: "*Karibu kwako.*" "Welcome at your house." Our weekly session began.

Watu duniani wanitambue mganga mwenye uwezo. "The world should see me as an able healer." Hakimu Saleh needed pictures for his Facebook profile that he was in the process of setting up. Equipped with my phone, I was to be his photographer. He changed his clothes repeatedly so as to have a selection of pictures that would depict him as a serious Muslim (see pictures 6a and 6b), as a youthful and active modern person (see picture 6c), and as a learned man (see pictures 6d and 6e. He posed in front of a picture of the Kaaba that decorated his

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[17]   13 February 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

room. He posed with books around him. He posed with an opened physical codex of the Qurʾan (a *msahafu*) on his lap. His wife followed Hakimu Saleh's activities with amused interest. She mockingly scorned him for showing "the world" what he was not. Especially the youthful attire provoked her: *Anajionyesha kijana na tayari ni baba wa watoto wanne.* "He portrays himself as youthful and then he already is the father of four children." As his photographer, I found the lighting conditions inside the room very difficult to work with, and convinced him to take some additional pictures outside (see pictures 6f and 6g). Hakimu Saleh agreed and posed in front of his house, putting on a contemplating or inviting face. Although I was much more pleased with the outcome of the pictures we took outside, they neither show a Kaaba in the background nor his engagement with books, and so Hakimu Saleh has never used them on Facebook. He has presented a number of the pictures that we took inside as profile pictures for periods of time and he emphasized that they come closer to his purpose of portraying himself as *mganga mwenye uwezo*, an "able healer."

1.2.1. How Hakimu Saleh Prepares Kombe

Hakimu Saleh is a practitioner: he prepares kombe and dispenses it with other mostly herbal medicines to people who are afflicted and he is consulted for these reasons. Hakimu Saleh places much emphasis on how he prepares kombe, which preconditions need to be taken care of, and how he communicates what to his patients. When a patient visits him for the first time, Hakimu Saleh first listens to the patient's account of her or his discomfort. While he develops his first assumptions with regard to these accounts, his more systematic inquiry follows afterward and involves retrieving the patient's name, her or his mother's name, and the date of birth. He also makes note of the current day of the week. Written in Arabic letters, these names and the weekday are translated into numbers using Abjad,[18] a system in which each Arabic letter is assigned a numerical value that then can be added up. Depending on what information is required, an array of calculations[19] is made. For example, the letters of the full name and the mother's name added up

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[18] Abjad refers to a former order of the Arabic letters starting with "Alif," "Be," "Jim," "Dal." While a different order, the hijāʾī order, marks today's Arabic alphabet, the use of the abjad order remains in use, especially in Arabic numerology (see also Schulz-Burgdorf 1994: 64).

[19] In mathematical terms, this can be formulated as: index of patient's *asili* = (Abjad sum of patient's name written in Arabic letters)mod4.

(a)

(b)

(c)

(d)

(e)

(f)

(g)

Figure 6.: Hakimu Saleh

and divided by four result in an integer and a remainder that can take the value of 1, 2, 3, or 0 (whereby 0 is often taken as 4). This number is taken to indicate the patient's basic "nature"/"origin" (*asili*). The basic *asili* corresponds to the four classical elements: 1 to water, 2 to earth, 3 to wind, 4 to fire and their influence on human characteristics. People whose name results in 2, for example, like to stay in the country in which they were born.[20] Similarly, the Abjad-value of the addition of the patient's given name and the day of the week when s/he arrived modulated by 7 results in one of seven underlying afflictions: 1 for problems with a jinni, 2 for problems with possession, 3 for witchcraft in one's stomach (often also referred to as jealousy), 4 for the evil eye, 5 for blood problems, such as high pressure, 6 for "yellow bile" resulting in liver problems, and 7 for "black bile." These seven underlying afflictions have corresponding astrological planets (Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn respectively), corresponding days of the week (starting with Sunday), corresponding symbols of the Solomonic Seal (seven symbols attributed to Solomon usually used to protect the writ),[21] corresponding angels, corresponding substances that are also often found in *dawa ya asili* ("traditional medicine"[22]) such as sandalwood, nutmeg, or pomegranate, and corresponding Qurʾanic verses. After these calculations and with the help of these correlations, Hakimu Saleh has a rough idea of what the written work for a particular kombe will comprise and what it could be supplemented with.[23] However, before he can start writing he needs to undertake further calculations to identify an auspicious time to write. These calculations involve the Abjad-value of the day of the patient's birth, the patient's and the mother's given name modulated by 12. The resulting numbers (between 1 and 12) are matched with the zodiac through Indian numerology and correspond to the 12 day- and 12 night hours of each weekday differently.

Each hour of each day is reigned by a specific planetary constellation which is either auspicious and supports the practitioner's aim of writing for a particular purpose, or inauspicious and impedes the writing, or neutral and does not affect the

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[20] Taught by Hakimu Saleh in April 2013.

[21] Note the value of symbols to protect written material. This is explored in more detail in chapter 4.

[22] I here translate *dawa ya asili* as "traditional medicine" because Hakimu Saleh himself often translated it in this way. See also footnote 5 in the introduction to this part.

[23] Though less detailed, Michael Lambek (1993: 210) and Kjersti Larsen (2002: 179) refer to these diagnostic calculations. Larsen emphasizes that under these conditions, literacy is required for Islamic healers which I will take up in chapter 4.

practitioner's work at all. To write kombe at the wrong time, according to Hakimu Saleh, can lead to disastrous effects, to a different framing of the verses, and thus, needs to be considered carefully. Each day starts at sunset and then follows the Swahili time, which has developed into a 6-hour shift from the international time (7 pm is *saa moja usiku* – 1 o'clock at night, 8 pm English time is 2 o'clock at night Swahili time, 7 am English time is 1 o'clock in the morning Swahili time). As the sun sets around 6 pm, the eleventh or twelfth hour of one day may be shared with the eleventh or twelfth hour of the next day. When I asked Hakimu Saleh which time applies in different time zones and what people should do in Germany, he told me that usually, the local time needs to be taken as reference including the six-hour shift to adapt it to Swahili time: "9 am" in Germany would correspond to "3 o'clock in the morning" Swahili time. However, for determining the day in a non-Muslim country such as Germany, it is not safe enough to regard the local sunset, but rather to follow the sunset proclaimed in Mecca. Several time concepts combine into a specific timescape, or "Zeitlandschaft" (Loimeier 2012): time determined by the sun, time determined by the clock, and time determined by Mecca as the center of the global *umma*—all these time concepts are needed to evaluate the appropriateness of a given time to write for a specific purpose. Of course, social time also plays a role. Despite the appropriateness of a given hour to write, there might be visitors or other important social obligations that require the search for another suitable hour to write.

Hakimu Saleh does not only navigate using different time concepts at once, but he also interlinks different medical traditions. The importance of the patient's name is a typical feature of both Arabic and Indian numerology. The patient's mother's name, Hakimu Saleh explained, is often used by Muslims as it is sometimes hard to know who the father is.[24] The use of Abjad and its reliance on names and the weekday to be spelled in Arabic letters refers to the unique value that the Arabic script has in Muslim communities, which will be elaborated on in chapter 4.1. Using modulus 4 to interpret the result in terms of the four classical elements interlocks Arabic numerology with humoral theory from ancient Greece and the Indian subcontinent and stresses the historically rooted interrelation of these traditions that have become known under the term of *unani* (see also Amri and Abu-Asab 2019; Beckerleg 1994). The seven astrological planets and the use of the zodiac equally refer back to Arabic and Indian astrology while employing

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[24] Hakimu Saleh, 17 April 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

the zodiac to determine auspicious and non-auspicious hours points primarily to Indian astrology. The correlations of the seven astrological planets with underlying afflictions (in which, albeit not exclusively, humoral theory reappears), the days of the week, the Solomonic Seal (Arabic mysticism), angels (Islam), herbal medicinal substances (which also appear in Islamic Prophetic medicine, but are often attributed to local "traditional" knowledge: *ya asili*), and Qurʾanic verses (Islam) underline the entanglement of different trajectories on which Hakimu Saleh relies when determining how to write kombe for a certain patient. Writing kombe in such a way as Hakimu Saleh does it, thus becomes a supreme craft that requires proficiency (at least proficiency in application) of various treatment trajectories which are all combined in the preparation of writing kombe. With this merging of differing traditions, writing kombe also becomes a very particular Zanzibari practice referring to its location in the Indian Ocean, which has allowed for historically strong links between Zanzibar, India, and the "Arab world" which had taken up Greek influences.[25] The merging feeds into the narrative of cosmopolitan Zanzibar. The influences that are brought together to diagnose the affliction and facilitate the preparation of kombe mirror the cosmopolitan composition of the Zanzibari people (see chapter 2.1). Last, but not least, it also marks writing kombe as an Islamic practice. The ultimate use of Qurʾanic verses distinguishes writing kombe as an Islamic practice which Hakimu Saleh pays particular attention to: kombe is *dawa ya kiislamu* ("Islamic medicine").

Hakimu Saleh usually writes kombe on paper. He seldom uses plates and states that paper is much easier to transport, although he often dissolves the verses himself. Another reason for using paper in his case is determined by the confinements of auspicious hours during which he writes. As the washing off is not constrained to a specific hour and as the patients often bring their own bottles to then be filled by Hakimu Saleh, he can prepare the writing at a specific time and store the paper until the patient comes with the bottle to pick it up. Hakimu Saleh usually uses a small sharpened bamboo stick that he dips into the *zafarani*. With this pen, the ink does not bleed much and his writing can be clear and small, enabling him to be very economical with his paper use. He usually writes sitting on the floor, leaning against the wall and facing the door so that he quickly notices when somebody comes in or passes the adjacent windows. The entire room is

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[25] See also the healer to whom David Parkin (2000b: 54) refers, who combines "popular Western ideas with existing Arab-derived Swahili astrological cosmology and in fact insists that a person's humorally based character is astrologically determined."

protected by written verses put up on the four walls of the main room in which he sits. He has disciplined his body to remain in a squatting position for many hours and spends his time writing and reading. The presence of books in his work space does not only serve as an indicator of his knowledgeability (see chapter 3), it also places the preparation of kombe, which itself is a textual practice, in a context of other textual practices (see chapter 4). Both his knowledgeability in the reception of text and his knowledgeability in the production of text come together in Hakimu Saleh's practice of writing kombe.

When Hakimu Saleh chooses the Qurʾanic verses, he takes the verses that are matched to the astrological planets into account. However, he also links the choice of verses back to the patient's narration of discomfort and to the underlying affliction by analogy. For disruptive dreams or when advice is needed, for example, he chooses verses from Sūrat Yūsuf in which Yusuf interprets dreams (Qurʾan: 12:46–49). Another common analogy is found in the use of verses in which the outcome of the verse translates into the desired outcome of the affliction: Musa and his people's escape from the Egyptians through the split sea (Qurʾan: 26:63–66) is often translated as the desired miracle in the patient's life. The chosen verses are often written repeatedly and Hakimu Saleh usually protects the verses with the Solomonic Seal, praise particles, and names of appropriate angels (depending on the calculated underlying affliction and depending on the time of writing). Other supplementary particles come in the form of specific numbers that correspond to specific words written in Arabic script (translated through the Abjad system) and are attributed specific meanings by being brought into relation with specific Qurʾanic verses. These numbers often appear in squares[26] and are usually not newly put together, but instead copied from books, booklets, or copies of handwritten material available in Zanzibar. The squares also strengthen the link to Islamic mysticism and its concomitant time-honored proscribed efficacy.

All of these supplements also depend on the geometrical layout of the page. The form and appearance of the then to be washed off writing is important. For example, if a verse does not finish at the end of the line, the line needs to be completed with praise particles. The edges of the paper are often adorned with names of angels, and how to place the Solomonic Seal depends on the space that the paper provides. The size of the paper can be adjusted. It is possible to

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[26]   For a more detailed description of the "magic squares" (Arabic: *waqf*) see Spoer (1935), Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich (1962), Blanchy-Daurel and Said (1989), and Pormann and Savage-Smith (2007).

use more than one piece of paper, but then each part needs to be geometrically balanced. It is equally possible to cut paper into the right size after the writing has been finished to rectify unequal borders for example. The importance of the geometric layout of the writing relates to the ascription of beauty to the Arabic script, which will also be elaborated in chapter 4.1.

Payment for the treatment with kombe is not straightforward. Writing kombe, as Hakimu Saleh frames it, is a pious act, and therefore kombe may not be sold. However, patients are expected to give *sadaka*[27] (an offering), and this needs to be low enough for Hakimu Saleh not to develop greed and high enough for him not to worry about how to make ends meet as that would influence the writing in a bad way. The estimation of an appropriate amount is left to the patient, but when a patient asks how much other patients have given, Hakimu Saleh readily provides answers which are guided by the fairly consistent prices of medical treatment in Zanzibar.

Preparing kombe, for Hakimu Saleh, is part of his profession with which he generates income for the family. However, it is much more than that. Hakimu Saleh continually sets himself the new task of assembling the factors from the different medical traditions into the writing of kombe and adds a complexity to the preparation of the writing process that is rather unusual (although not entirely non-existent either).[28] Hakimu Saleh manages the preparation of writing kombe algorithmically, in a science-like fashion, without challenging the notion that Allah alone can provide healing as is often stressed by people who see the merit of drinking kombe ambiguously.[29] Although kombe may not treat the symptoms directly (as biomedicine is purported to do), it does treat the core of the symptom: the underlying affliction. With Hakimu Saleh, kombe becomes the all-encompassing supreme treatment that takes recourse to knowledge about the humoral system, Arabic and Indian numerology and astrology, Islamic Prophetic medicine, and practical knowledge on how to calculate and write. With the ability to write kombe in such a way, Hakimu Saleh does not only position himself as knowledgeable and competent, as practitioner of *dawa ya kiislamu*, he also devotes himself to his

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[27] The word *sadaka* derives from the Islamic voluntary offering (Arabic: *sadaqah*).
[28] Another practitioner who incorporates calculations based on astrology is Ali Hemedi who lives and works in Chumbuni, Zanzibar Town.
[29] That Allah alone can provide healing is often framed as an argument against drinking kombe as trust in the liquid could be interpreted as *shirk* (idolatry) prohibited in Islam. This will be taken up in chapter 7/8.

destiny which he narrates through his particular biography of becoming an Islamic healer.

1.2.2. Biography: Becoming an Islamic Healer

Hakimu Saleh grew up in Zanzibar Town as the third of four children. Although his father came from Comoros, he does not have much contact with those people. He accounts for this by reference to the matrimonial structure in the Comoros, that would not recognize him as part of the family because he has a Swahili mother.[30] Hakimu Saleh hardly speaks about his childhood and places much more emphasis on the time when he was a young adult, worked in a "herbal pharmacy" and then went to Europe.

He spent ten years in Germany (mid-1970s to mid-1980s), studied in Heidelberg and later moved to Amsterdam in the Netherlands for another ten years (mid-1980s to mid-1990s)[31]. His time in the Netherlands in particular has shaped his understanding of being an "Islamic healer" in Zanzibar today. In the Netherlands, he had two experiences which he now narrates as God's revelatory means of leading him to his destiny, one in which he was protected from evil and subsequently turned to studying the Qurꞌan, and one in which he was proclaimed to be a powerful healer. The first occurrence happened when he was not feeling well and sought spiritual healing with the help of two sheikhs whom he found in the Dutch Yellow Pages:

HAKIMU SALEH: Many problems occurred. So, because of these problems, I read the yellow book ["yellow book" used in English]. Do you know the yellow book? What is it called there [in Germany, where you come from] – gelbe, gelbe what?

HANNA: Gelbe Seiten.

HAKIMU SALEH: Gelbe Seiten, look at that [laughs]. I was looking for Islamic treatment.

The reference to the Yellow Pages points to his ability to adopt a specific textual practice not common in Zanzibar and it shows his expectation of others (Islamic healers that he would equally expect to come from a migrant background) to have

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30 Hakimu Saleh, 21 August 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
31 The dates are my estimations. In different accounts, Hakimu Saleh provided different dates and time frames. The number of 10 years could also be understood in a more relational way as a considerably long time.

registered in such a way that his search would yield results.[32] Having found an address for two Senegalese sheikhs, Hakimu Saleh went to visit them. During his visit, he had an "inspiration" to use his term.

> HAKIMU SALEH: An inspiration ["inspiration" used in English] was brought to me. I was told there is nothing here. You do this, do that. So, I was listening. Ah, but I, I don't believe them. Then, the sheikh was already strong and there was thunder. In Europe, there are no thunders like this. Like that one, the day before yesterday, did you hear it? So, in Europe, there are no things like this. One day, maybe, it could happen outside. Once in a year, it is possible to have such thunder. [...] Then I looked outside. I saw the sun had come out. This thunder, where was it coming from? So, it was God who told me. [...] Here, there is no such thing. This thunder was brought to my ears; it was brought here [points to his head]. So, this is power, spiritual power. It is inside. But I didn't know in the beginning.

After this visit, he returned to his wife who was waiting for him outside.

> HAKIMU SALEH: She told me, [that] here, there was no thunder since we came. Then she listened [to me]. "Well, tell me, where will we get books about mysterious things [*vitabu vya mysterious*]? About the Qurᵓan?" [...][She said:] "Ah, they are there, let's go home, to Amsterdam." [...] So we went there, I looked for books and I took mystic books [*vitabu vya mystic*], books about Sufism [...] and I read, and I read, and I read.[33]

Hakimu Saleh narrates this as one of the two instances in which spiritual power dramatically influenced who he has become today. Due to the experience of hearing the thunder that was not natural and due to his ability to judge it as spiritual power, he changed his lifestyle and developed a deep interest in educating himself in Islamic matters. In particular the Sufi literature helped him to understand his experience. With reference to Sufism, this experience does not only mark Hakimu Saleh's ability to have access to the "spiritual world" (Chittick 1989:163;

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[32] This instance in which Hakimu Saleh mentions the Yellow Pages will contribute to the analysis of how printed text and knowledge interact in Zanzibar in the realm of "Islamic medicine" (chapter 3) and it will be taken up in the discussion on text practices in chapter 4. However, here the focus is on what happened with the successful employment of the Yellow Pages.

[33] Hakimu Saleh, 21 August 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar. He told his biography (with different emphases) multiple times: 19 March 2013, 25 March 2013, 28 March 2013, 17 April 2013, 17 October 2013, 24 October 2014.

1. Kombe's Mattering

Perho 2010: 195-196; Schimmel 1994: 119), it also authorizes and challenges him to deal with other people's problems. By starting this narration in a very mundane way and situating it in everyday life (looking through the Yellow Pages), Hakimu Saleh portrays the spiritual experience in an accessible manner. His explanations about how thunder in Europe compares to the thunderstorm that happened two days before he narrated this story to me equally serve this purpose of accessibility and characterize his communication with patients now.

In this narration, the borders between the "ordinary" and the "spiritual" are blurred. The "ordinary" Yellow Pages are incorporated into the narration of a "spiritual" experience just like the "ordinary" afflictions that he treats are incorporated into the realm in which "spiritual" treatment is effective. In chapter 7, these differences and their blurred boundaries will be taken up. A second revelatory experience shapes Hakimu Saleh's self-conception as Islamic healer. Again, it was a situation in which he sought help. He went to Haarlem to visit a lady with a crystal ball:

HAKIMU SALEH: I met a woman, half Jewish, Hebrew, half, half, half […] half Hebrew, half Egyptian. There in Haarlem. She stays in Haarlem, there in Holland. Do you know Haarlem? So, I took the train to Haarlem and I entered her place. There was a crystal ball ["crystal ball" used in English]. She was alone, an adult woman. "Eh, I fear you, I am afraid of you." Why are you afraid? "You are a great man, you and very great people, you will go to your place, you will be a great healer [*mganga*]." Eh, who told you? "I have already seen you. I have seen that one, you are a great man." [I asked] Where do you come from? She said, "I come from Egypt, but my father is Jewish. I read/studied [*kusoma*] the Torah, the Cabala, I studied the Qurᵓan. And I have already seen this great man. There is no magic/ witchcraft [*uganga*]. Do not take other people's medicine. Nobody is able; we are not able. Go away from here. At your place. you will be a healer [*mganga*]."³⁴

Hakimu Saleh went to Haarlem to receive help for a problem that he never specified. The woman with the crystal ball whom he encountered there, however, did not provide treatment but instead revealed Hakimu Saleh's powers to him. She even advised him not to take other people's medicine as he has greater powers

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³⁴ Hakimu Saleh, 25 March 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town. He gave this account using different voices which made it possible to mark the reported speech.

than others. The repeated identity ascriptions of "Jewish/Hebrew" and "Egyptian" that Hakimu Saleh narrates as standing in contrast to each other place the woman into an imagined "Jewish/Hebrew tradition" as well as an imagined "Egyptian tradition." Although it is unclear how exactly Hakimu Saleh connotes these identity ascriptions, he marks them as important and conveys her knowledgeability (linked to authority, as will be analyzed in chapter 3). Hakimu Saleh relates these two instances to his formation as an Islamic healer. They served as catalysts to his further studies and are now the spiritual foundation on which his profession relies.

While still in Holland, he enrolled in a program in which he learned about *unani*[35] medicine and received a certificate. This is where he learned much about Avicenna (Ibn Sina in Swahili and Arabic) and about humoral therapy, which he later inquired into more deeply. By taking on the title of "Hakimu," he situates himself as a professional of *unani* medicine. He was also in close contact with the Indonesian diaspora in Holland and through them he learned about Ayurveda and Indian numerology. With the help of books he furthered his studies and when he returned to Zanzibar, he opened a

Figure 7.: Sign above the door

small bookshop that mainly sold booklets giving advice on how to treat particular afflictions. While he kept educating himself with these booklets, additional books, and copies of handwritten materials, he started advising his customers. A year before we met he had retreated to his own house to receive patients for whom he prepares treatment or from where he visits patients. In addition to his title, a sign posted on his door points to his interest in and association with Avicenna.

Since February 2014 he has been very active on Facebook where he has created a group dedicated to "Ibn Sina" and through which he gains more visibility, resulting, even, in an invitation to Dubai in September 2015. However, he does not speak much about the time in Dubai where he stayed for several months before he returned to his family in Vikokotoni.

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[35] Graeco-Arabic medicine, see above.

1.2.3. Family

Having broken up with his wife in Europe about whom he does not talk much, Hakimu Saleh returned to Zanzibar. Shortly after his return, Hakimu Saleh married Bi Rehema and they now have four children. Their oldest son is currently in secondary school which takes up much of his time. I seldom saw him. Their second child is in the process of finishing primary school. Their third child, as well as their last-born, are also enrolled in primary school and spend much time in and around the house. If I happened to visit during their free time, the two girls (second and third child) were often in the adjacent room or helping their mother in the kitchen. The youngest was rather fond of spending time with the other children outside and frequently entered his father's working room to ask for some sweets. Like many children in Zanzibar, all of Hakimu Saleh's and Bi Rehema's children go to a Qurʾan school in addition to governmental schooling. The timetables of the Qurʾan schools are very flexible and make it possible for the children to attend primary school either in the morning or in the afternoon[36] and go to the Qurʾan school in the other respective time slot. I thus often saw the three younger children coming home from one form of education, having lunch, changing clothes, and leaving for another form of education.

Bi Rehema oversees the children's daily responsibilities and manages the household. She supports her husband with many small details and also takes care of her extended family. Although she understands much of the work Hakimu Saleh is doing, she has no interest in becoming a practitioner herself. However, she makes sure that *sadaka* which sometimes comes in the form of a slaughtered animal is distributed justly amongst the residents of the immediate neighborhood. As Hakimu Saleh has his working space at home, the whole family takes part in greeting patients, informing them about Hakimu Saleh's timetable when he is not present, and providing help with the preparation of (herbal) medicinal mixtures. Although they do not know how to diagnose or decide on treatment, they are not only part of Hakimu Saleh's life as his family, but they are also involved in providing the framework in which Hakimu Saleh can act as Islamic healer the way that he deems appropriate. Part of this framework is dependent on the neighborhood of Vikokotoni in which each member of the family nurtures her/his network of relationships.

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[36] As the classes are very big, the primary school to which Shinuna, Mariam, and Salumu went provided lessons for half of the students in the morning and for the other half in the afternoon.

1.2.4. Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town

Hakimu Saleh's house is in Vikokotoni. It was given to his uncle after the revolution in 1964 and Hakimu Saleh was able to purchase the house from him when he returned to Zanzibar from Europe.[37] Vikokotoni is a neighborhood that is adjacent to Darajani which links the old "Stone Town" with *Ng'ambo*, the "other side."

> At its most basic level the Ng'ambo "community" was defined by physical geography; Ng'ambo (literally, the other or opposite side) was the quarter of town located on the eastern side of a tidal creek, opposite the "center" of town, known as Stone Town. There were extensive gradations of relative wealth and poverty on both sides of the creek, gradations that meant a lot to those who knew how to read them, but there was a distinct tendency for the wealthiest urbanites to live in Stone Town and for the poorest to live in Ng'ambo. (Fair 2003: 29)

Historically not unrelated to differences in wealth, *Ng'ambo* is also known for its long history of being "African" in contrast to the "Arab" and "Indian" Stone Town, a differentiation that is entangled with political discourse (see also chapter 2.2). Vikokotoni has always been a stronghold of the opposition party[38] and Vikokotoni is amongst the first neighborhoods on which a curfew is imposed during times of elections. Although the historical distinction between "Stone Town" and *Ng'ambo* remains discursively intact, *Ng'ambo* cannot be located as Stone Town's geographic "other" anymore. While Stone Town is geographically relatively fixed and its border is marked by "Creek Road," *Ng'ambo* is not easily locatable, as Garth Myers and Makame Muhajir have noted: "I asked my friends where Ng'ambo was. It certainly was not in Kikwajuni. It wasn't in Mwembetanga either, Mwembetanga residents said. The oldest part of the Other Side was not the Other Side any more: it was 'mjini', the 'downtown'" (1993: 452). Though not in Stone Town, but still very central and certainly part of *mjini*, Vikokotoni is a well-established neighborhood in which the social composition is stable. Families have owned and lived

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[37] Hakimu Saleh, 21 August 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[38] After the revolution the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP), having brought forward the revolution, merged forces with the mainland's party TANU (Tanganyika African Nationalist Union) and eventually formed the CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi*, the "party of the revolution"). In 1992 opposition forces to the CCM formed a new party, the CUF (Civic United Front) which found many supporters in Vokokotoni. Despite questionable results of the ruling party CCM (Chama cha Mapinduzi, "Party of the Revolution"), CUF has not (yet) been in power, but at the time of research had agreed to form a coalition with the CCM, forming the "Government of National Unity" (GNU, see chapter 2.2).

in the houses for a long time and many of them can trace their ancestors either to the Comoros islands or to Pemba. The long-lasting relations to both, the Comoros islands and Pemba, contribute to Unguja's striving for cultural positioning in the Indian Ocean via which the global *umma* is imagined accessible. Pemba in particular is renowned as a site of religious knowledge, including knowledge about matters such as spirit possession.

Although the house was given to his uncle for different reasons, Hakimu Saleh could easily find his niche in this social surrounding of Vikokotoni. Through his profession he draws on the associations to Pemba in Vikokotoni and, like many of his neighbors, he highly values education. He also enjoys analyzing and thinking about alternatives to the current political situation. However, he does not wish to associate himself with party politics and describes himself as apolitical. His personal evaluation of many of the current problems relates to his insight into the spiritual worldview and thus Hakimu Saleh prefers to focus on how spiritual problems can be approached. Corruption and preferential treatment, for example, are two of the problems that he attributes to "unIslamic" influences which would need to be treated through spiritual means. He, however, attends to smaller scale spiritual problems, treating afflicted people who seek his help.

In Vikokotoni, the small spaces between the houses are used as streets and connect the whole neighborhood. It is easy to get lost in this labyrinth, and descriptions of how to find a certain house are often difficult to follow. Patients who come to Hakimu Saleh for the first time are often advised to go to a particular location that is easy to find, and then to ask for the remaining directions there. This proves to be a challenge for some people who would like to remain more secretive about seeking advice from an "Islamic healer," because "Islamic healers" often deal with problems that patients wish to hide. As the situation is similar in other neighborhoods of Zanzibar Town, many patients come from further away and hope that they will remain anonymous and will not be recognized. They have usually heard about Hakimu Saleh from somebody else, often through stories about other former patients (or their relatives) whom they would mostly avoid informing about their endeavor to pay him a visit. Hakimu Saleh, thus, needs to reassure those patients who desire anonymity. At the same time, he needs to gain the patients' trust to convince them to provide him with insight into their problems, which are often rooted in very personal matters. Hakimu Saleh benefits from Vikokotoni's reputation as a place in which people with ancestral links to the Comoros and Pemba—associated with spiritual knowledge—reside. Hakimu

Saleh's situatedness in Vikokotoni constitues part of his portrayal as a professional and knowledgeable "Islamic healer."

1.2.5. Self-positioning, Knowledge, Secrecy

Hakimu Saleh describes himself as *mganga wa spiritual* or *daktari wa asili* which translates as "spiritual healer" and "traditional doctor" respectively. He is invested in Islamic medicine and thus portrays himself as an expert in medicinal issues—of how to treat afflicted bodies—through an Islamic understanding (which for him is the only "true" perspective, see also chapter 3). The self-portrayal is grounded in practices that he consciously does or refrains from doing in relation to a normative understanding of what being a *mganga wa spiritual* entails. With regard to preparing kombe this self-positioning gains importance: Hakimu Saleh states that, for kombe to work effectively, the person preparing the written work needs to be in a pure state. She or he must not be jealous, she or he must be obedient to Allah, she or he must not have distracting thoughts as all of this enters the writing. In order to acquire and maintain this purity, the practitioner must neither live in abundance nor worry about tomorrow's food and shelter. Therefore, God is trusted to lead patients to the practitioner's house and patients are expected to give what they deem reasonable. The spiritual purity of a *mganga wa spiritual* is more important than material security.

As indicated by the title of "Hakimu," with which he introduced himself to me, and as further stressed by the sign above his door, he positions himself as a *unani* practitioner and places himself in the succession of Ibn Sina. The Facebook page that he set up in February 2014 and that is named "Ibn Sina Clinic of Soul" contributes to framing his work within this genealogy. Hakimu Saleh combines the attribution of his work to Ibn Sina with an implicit orientation towards Sufism.

When I asked him about his positionality vis-à-vis the different strands of Islam, he evaded a direct answer and elaborated on Islam as an intrinsic unity as opposed to Christianity which is split into denominations that are opposed to each other. He stressed that all Muslims form a single *umma* and that this is more important than superficial details.[39] According to his view, his affiliation, therefore, should not matter to my inquiry, as he is acting as a Muslim. I later learned that he goes to pray in a Sunni-Shafi'i mosque which is close to his house. Furthermore,

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[39] Hakimu Saleh, 9 April 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

the Islamic publications that he possesses mostly have a Sufi orientation, which corresponds not only to the importance that he attributes to the inspirations that led to his transformation into an Islamic healer, but to the method by which he prepares kombe. However, he is not a member of a Sufi order. Despite his stress on the unifying *umma*, Hakimu Saleh repeatedly countered arguments that he attributed to Shi^ci Muslims or to "those strict Muslims" (*wale waislamu kali*) whose ideas are influenced by the *Wahhabis* from Saudi Arabia.[40]

Given his biography and his transformation into an "Islamic healer" through moments of inspiration, he does not directly depend on endorsement by any particular Muslim group and he repeatedly stressed this independence in our sessions. However, he is embedded in certain ideas about "Islamic healing" derived both from Vikokotoni and the literature which he studies and through which he enhances his knowledgeability. His neighbors' and patients' expectations partially shape how he positions himself as an "Islamic healer" and determine which practices he engages in and how he portrays (or abstains from portraying) these practices to his patients and neighbors. Being an "Islamic healer" is a socially achieved quality that involves a socially situated "doing being-knowledgeable" (see chapter 3.2).

His self-positioning as a learned and knowledgeable Islamic healer was crucial to how I was introduced to him and my presence—which did not go unnoticed in Vikokotoni—indicated my acknowledgment of his knowledgeability and therefore enhanced Hakimu Saleh's attributes of professionalism. As he became entangled with my research, I became entangled in his endeavor of "doing being-knowledgeable."

1.2.6. Negotiating Our Collaboration

Inquiring about someone who knew how to prepare kombe, I was brought to Hakimu Saleh by Nassor with whom I had worked during my previous fieldwork. Nassor said that he would bring me to somebody who was very knowledgeable, and asked me to follow him through the narrow paths of Vikokotoni to Hakimu Saleh's house. Hakimu Saleh, when he first saw me, greeted me with delight and thanked God for sending him a German because he had been to Germany before. Also in subsequent meetings, he repeatedly commented on my arrival at his house

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[40]   More about the contestations and their ascriptions to certain groups in chapter 7.3.

and framed it as a fulfillment of destiny, as an example of how God guides our lives.

The very first meeting conditioned our relationship profoundly. After Nassor introduced us, he left me at Hakimu Saleh's place and followed up on another errand. Hakimu Saleh assured him that he would accompany me back to the main road. From Nassor's introduction, Hakimu Saleh already knew that I was interested in learning about kombe, and after permitting a voice recording of our conversation, he fetched some books to support what he was about to tell me:

HAKIMU SALEH: So, Moment [in German], wait, I fetch my books.

HANNA: OK.

HAKIMU SALEH: Switch it [the recording] off, I fetch the books.

HANNA: Sure.

I switched off the recording and I started it again when he was back in the room.

HAKIMU SALEH: But I know many things about medicine. And this medicine has many aspects. Half of the medicine I do is called *unani*-treatment. *Unani. Unani*-treatment. Greek and Arab. [in English] Ah. Ibn-Sīnā [with Arabized pronunciation]. Ibn Sina [Swahili pronunciation, English: Avicenna] and Hippocrates, Galen... They all did this treatment called *unani*. Now, these matters about kombe are matters that come from Islamic matters. Not from *unani. Unani* is this [points to various powders arranged in small bowls in the room]: Black seeds and whatnot [...] and the Greek have used this. Then there are matters of kombe that are used much for matters of the Qurʾan. Qurʾan, and Solomon, Solomon [repetition in English], and Solomon [...] Now what do you want to know? Do you want it all? Mixture [in English]? Mixed [German: gemischt?] Or [German: oder] one subject [in English]?

HANNA: I think today, I will ... I would like to...

HAKIMU SALEH: Are you not going to come until you depart, every day a little bit?

HANNA: Yes.

HAKIMU SALEH: So, what do you want to know now? Right now I will go to the mosque; you will stay here. Not for long, there are not many people.

HANNA: Are you going right now?

HAKIMU SALEH: In a little bit, like ten minutes.

HANNA: OK, so maybe today we can do this: we could do like an introduction [in English].

HAKIMU SALEH: Sure.

HANNA: For ten minutes you could give me an introduction to whatever you choose. Then I will go home, I will listen [to the recording] and I will come again with questions.

HAKIMU SALEH: This evening?

HANNA: Ahh, I think it is going to be tomorrow, because...

HAKIMU SALEH: How many days are you still staying?

HANNA: I still have one and a half months.

HAKIMU SALEH: Kiswahili, did you study it in Zanzibar? Or Iringa?[41]

[...]

HAKIMU SALEH: Now we will talk about, you will tell me with what you want to begin to know. My name is Saleh. I used to work in a shop of medicines for ten years now since I came back from my journeys of doing research. I returned, and here I pray, I do matters of medicine, I pray over people.

HANNA: Where did you do your research?

HAKIMU SALEH: In the world, I traveled a lot. But not for money. There is no money. I stayed in Germany for ten years. Yes, I speak German. Then I left Germany for Holland. Ten years. In Holland, I studied *unani*-treatment. Because in Holland there are people from Indonesia, India. They live there. They started *unani*-treatment. Yoga. Meditation. Ayurveda. Do you know Ayurveda?

HANNA: Yes, I know.

HAKIMU SALEH: Yes, all of these treatments. Numerology. [He flips through pages in his book.] Do you see? I can take your name, Hanna, then you receive...

HANNA: You can do that?

HAKIMU SALEH: Yes, I can do it all. Look here. Your nature, your life, your future [in English], your future [German: Zukunft]...

HANNA: Maybe, one day, we can do all of this?

HAKIMU SALEH: Yes, bit by bit, I will make it all known to you.

HANNA: OK.

HAKIMU SALEH: Then I, for ten years I sell medicines and I compose a book. A book about the treatment by Ibn Sina.

These first four minutes of recordings of the session with Hakimu Saleh already comprise many of the themes that were to gain importance during our

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[41] Iringa is close to Njombe, a town on the mainland where I stayed before. Apparently my Swahili accent revealed that I had learned Swahili there first. Now people from the mainland often tell me that my Swahili sounds Zanzibari.

subsequent meetings. It starts with him fetching the books (see chapter 3.3.2 and chapter 4) that were to accompany his teaching and reveals his interspersed "doing being-knowledgeable" (see chapter 3.2) with the frequent reference to his biography (see above). It also shows how I became his student and he my teacher, which resulted in an intensive and fruitful relationship.

Hakimu Saleh welcomed me into his world. He urged me to come every day and learn from him. Although I had not anticipated this intensity of instruction, I embraced the offer and committed to his daily teaching for the remainder of the first period[42] of my research stay. During the second[43] and third[44] periods, we continued my education on a weekly basis and during the later periods we met irregularly. Between my stays in Zanzibar, we were in contact via Facebook mainly to exchange greetings and to clarify questions on my part. The shape of how we conducted our sessions also changed over time. In the beginning, he set the agenda and conducted our sessions along the lines of a formal course in which I learned to write kombe and the necessary Islamic theology to do so properly.[45] Over time, my questions increasingly structured our sessions, until during the very end of my research stay, he would ask me to pose the question in advance so that he could prepare for the topic. The content of our sessions was also influenced by the patients' concerns to which Hakimu Saleh would administer first, and retrospectively explain what happened and why he chose to act in the way that he did. The explanations often entailed insights[46] that he would keep secret from the patients or neighbors.

My regular presence in Hakimu Saleh's house did not go unnoticed by the neighborhood. Hakimu Saleh gave different justifications for my regular visits, ranging from me being a medical student inquiring about the remedies of local herbal medicine, to me being his student aiming to treat patients in Germany, to

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[42] March and April 2013.

[43] September 2013 – April 2014.

[44] June 2014 – September 2014.

[45] During many informal conversations, particularly during taxi rides, I used this role to abbreviate an explanation of what I was doing in Zanzibar. Depending on how the conversation evolved, I often asked whether the person would drink the kombe that I as a non-Muslim had written. Some of the answers were affirmative: the Qur'an is the Qur'an and heals. If I have learned how to bring the Qur'an into existence properly, then it does not matter who I am. Others answered that I as a non-Muslim would not have the blessing (*baraka*) and that the kombe that I write would not be effective.

[46] Hakimu Saleh narrated these explanations as insights. They, of course, also served to help me make sense of situations in his terms and thus contributed to our student-teacher relationship.

me becoming his practice partner, to me learning about these "Islamic matters" as preparation to becoming a Muslim. Although I cannot situate these justifications adequately, they point to how our sessions were entangled with his position in Vikokotoni, how my presence became a factor contributing to his "being-knowledgeable."

Hakimu Saleh welcomed me into his world, not only by opening the doors of his house in Vikokotoni, but also by sharing his assessments with me, assessments that he often kept secret from the patients or neighbors. He welcomed me into his world in such a way that we both benefited from our sessions, which shows how the negotiation of our collaboration was not only shaped by certain circumstances, but also shaped them. Our collaboration, initiated by his ability to prepare kombe, also brought his knowledgeability about kombe to matter, both in Vikokotoni and in the present text.

1.3. Bi Mwana

We were on our way back from a wedding. Crammed into the back of a pick-up, all of the people whom I knew from Bi Mwana's place (except for Bi Tufa) and some other distant relatives listened to how Bi Mwana's mother told stories about funny incidents at past weddings. I sat next to Bi Mwaltima, who encouraged me to take pictures. One of the pictures I took was of Bi Mwana, who sat in a somewhat elevated position at the very front of the back part, facing all of us. Bi Mwaltima liked the picture and we handed around my phone for everyone to glance at it. When Bi Mwana saw it, she said approvingly that it clearly showed who the "boss" (English word used) was. Indeed, Bi Mwana was the boss. She is a highly respected middle-aged woman. She is known for her "traditional"/"original" treatment of afflictions and takes care of patients together with several (mostly female) family members: her sister, Bi Halima, three cousins, Bi Mwaltima, Bi Salama, and Bi Zeinab, her children, nephews, nieces, and a woman from the neighborhood, Bi Tufa. Bi Mwana and her family are embedded in the social hierarchies and entanglements of Amani, a neighborhood of Zanzibar Town. Her social status entails her attendance and participation in frequent social gatherings such as funerals or information campaigns about Malaria. Although Bi Mwana is not always present at her house, which during the day is opened and used as a dispensary, the treatment received there is attributed to her. Thus, "Bi Mwana's treatment" is often provided by other people working for her and at her house.

Figure 8.: Bi Mwana

In this section, I explore how "traditional"/"original" treatment (*dawa ya asili*) is enacted at Bi Mwana's place. I introduce the setting in which Bi Mwana's treatment comes into existence and situate it within the neighborhood of Amani, Zanzibar Town. The narrative of how Bi Mwaltima, Bi Mwana's cousin, became a "traditional" healer at Bi Mwana's place is followed by an evaluation of how this intra-acted with my research and my positionality in this context. Kombe, which is part of her treatment, will receive some extra attention, even though at Bi Mwana's place, kombe does not matter much and plays a marginal role. It is precisely this nonchalance about kombe that I find important. In other words, the diffraction of Bi Mwana's place with kombe (producing a sense of triviality about kombe) is vital for this text.

1.3.1. Bi Mwana's House

Bi Mwana's house is a typical structure composed of an inner courtyard that is reached through the main door and to which different rooms are connected. The inner courtyard serves as a waiting area and two of the adjacent rooms are used as healing rooms during the day.[47] In one of the healing rooms, Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima take care of needs requiring their specialized knowledge, ranging from gynecological examinations to cutting the labial frenulum of infants. In the other healing room, Bi Tufa and Bi Salama take care of any other kind of need the patients arrive with. The queues balance themselves as, time permitting, Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima also call in patients with other problems. However, queues are also significant as a marker of Bi Mwana's recognized knowledgeability. During the morning hours, the area of the courtyard does not suffice and many patients wait outside in the shade of nearby houses while keeping an eye on Bi Mwana's main entrance. The queues are well known and thus patients arrive as early as possible. Although the opening hours that are written on the door are from 8 am to 4 pm, only very few people arrive in the afternoon when the queues have considerably shortened. Usually, the working day in Bi Mwana's house finishes even before 4 pm, when all patients have been consulted and the use of the space gradually shifts to household chores. These daily gradual shifts are not a necessary condition for a place that offers *dawa ya asili*, however, they

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[47] During the research period, Bi Mwana was living with her family in that house. In 2016 they moved to another neighborhood and now use this house for consultations only.

differentiate the place from modern professionalized spaces and thereby feed into a sense of "traditional"/"original," *asili*.

In the healing rooms, the ingredients for the main treatment option are directly handed to the patients: small wooden sticks from trees and roots with medicinal properties to be concocted. Amongst others, the wood from the black pepper vine (*pili pili manga*), from the clove tree (*karafuu*), and from the frankincense tree (*ubani*) are used. The sticks are wrapped in pieces of newspaper to form small packages and labeled with the same saffron ink that is also used for kombe. A typical package contains five to six sticks; for children, packages contain three to four sticks. Usually, the patients receive three different packages, the selection of which depends on their affliction. The sticks in two of the packages need to be concocted together and drunk within four days (three times daily) and after that, the sticks in the remaining package need to be concocted and drunk within three days. If a patient's condition has not improved within a week, s/he is encouraged to come back the following week. Certain afflictions are not treated with these wooden sticks only: in the courtyard buckets with other ingredients, such as twigs with leaves from the neem tree (*mwarobaini*)[48] and also kombe as part of "traditional medicine," are stored and dispensed by Bi Zeinab if necessary. If the patients are interested, Bi Mwana, Bi Mwaltima, Bi Tufa, or Bi Salama explain the selected remedies. Most patients, however, are more concerned about their upcoming procedures and seek clarifications about the order and timing of the concoctions. Independent of how much medication the patients receive, payment is made in the healing room and at a fixed price[49] that is in accordance with many other treatment options in Zanzibar.

Bi Halima, daughters, nieces, and befriended neighbors (teenagers and young adults) spend their time at Bi Mwana's place during opening hours, cooking in a slightly shielded corner of the courtyard, taking care of Bi Halima's severely disabled daughter, chatting in one of the rooms that is not used as a healing room, or chopping branches into small sticks outside. Although Bi Mwana's place is dominated by female family members, Abdul and Mussa, Bi Mwana's nephew and her son, are also often around. Whereas Abdul pursues his own business and

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[48]   According to local explanations, the tree's name points to the 40 (*arobaini*) illnesses which it can cure. Its medicinal uses are well known throughout Zanzibar (and beyond).

[49]   When I arrived, the price was 1500 TZS and later was raised to 2000 TZS. As a continuation of its socialist history, the official health sector in Zanzibar is available to almost anyone and prices of alternative treatment compete with this price level. Thus, the price of kombe easily compares with prices for other kinds of treatments.

only sometimes drops by and writes a little kombe or chops some wood, Mussa is present much more regularly and acts as an assistant to Bi Mwana, Bi Mwaltima, Bi Tufa, or Bi Salama, increasingly taking on responsibilities.

Figure 9.: Abdul writing kombe

Although in many other domains gender shapes the distribution of tasks in Zanzibar, in Bi Mwana's house gender matters differently. The tasks are not allocated to specific gendered roles; however, the female majority in Bi Mwana's place still conforms to respected gender-specific communal life. Bi Mwana's husband lives in Unguja Ukuu, a village on the southwestern coast (see below) and cultivates their land. As in many Zanzibari families, she supports the family's income in a way that is acceptable (being a "traditional healer" is not confined to a specific gendered identity) while she is also responsible for the care of the children and grandchildren. Concerning the role of the head of a herbal dispensary, gender matters less than seniority or knowledgeability, both of which vest Bi Mwana with authority and support her position in Amani.

Furthermore, the absence of senior men in Bi Mwana's house even encourages female patients to speak of delicate afflictions more openly. Although the rooms are open and consultations (except for the gynecological examinations which are transferred to another room) can easily be observed, the verbal interaction is conducted in very low voices to conceal the purpose of the visit. The patients' unconcealed presence at Bi Mwana's place suggests to those waiting in the waiting area that their afflictions are not confidential. This suggestion, however, can be employed to conceal delicate issues further (see chapter 3.2). The neighborhood constitutes part of Bi Mwana's situated knowledgeability while it also informs patients' decisions about where to seek treatment.

1.3.2. Amani, Zanzibar Town

Amani is a large neighborhood situated just inside of the outer circuitous road around Zanzibar Town. Between the roundabout from which the route to the island's center begins and the roundabout from which the route to Zanzibar's south begins, Amani is well-connected. Although it is close to the biggest market in Mwanakwerekwe and although it hosts the main stadium, Amani primarily is a residential area with a number of shops mainly along the tarmac roads on which public transport is available. When I walked with Bi Mwaltima from Bi Mwana's place to another patient's house,[50] she jokingly called the interior of the residential area *Uswahilini*, which very roughly translates to the "locality of Swahiliness." The term derogatorily points to the unattractiveness of the areas between the houses that is framed as an intrinsic attribute of Swahiliness (see chapter 2). By jokingly referring to the *uswahilini* of her neighborhood, Bi Mwaltima concedes to the condition of her neighborhood (which at the time might have been influenced by how she imagined me seeing her neighborhood), but her mocking tone also embraces it as the place where she lives and with which she identifies.[51] It is not perfect, but it is hers. Amani is a neighborhood in which people from other parts of the island, like Bi Mwaltima and Bi Mwana who come from Unguja Ukuu, settled in hope for better economic opportunities in the city.

Unlike the nearby area of Daraja Bovu, settlement in Amani is more or less formal. As a neighborhood, it does not have a dominant political leaning: the two main political parties (CCM and CUF) are both represented. As Amani is a large neighborhood, it divides into several parts; the one where Bi Mwana's house is situated is called Amani Nyerere[52] as is the nearby primary school. The name is telling, for it recalls the history of the area, which is marked by the stadium in which the inaugural ceremony of the CCM took place that united the Zanzibari Afro-Shirazi Party and the Tanganyikan independence party TANU and

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[50] Bi Mwaltima, 18 February 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

[51] *Uswahilini* is also used in Dar es Salaam by people who identify primarily with groups other than Swahili coastal people. In Dar es Salaam it thus mocks the Swahili coastal people that seek to differentiate themselves from other mainlanders, and shows the entanglement with them. In Kenya, however, *uswahilini* refers to the neighborhoods in which primarily "Swahili" people (as opposed to Gikuyu, Luo, or other people) live. In Kenya, *uswahilini* does not mock one's own living condition but intertwines space with discourses about ethnic distinction (fieldnotes from a short visit to Kenya, 7 March 2014).

[52] Nyerere was the first president of the independent mainland Tanganyika and also the first president of the union of Tanzania.

thus solidified the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar (Shivji 2008: 152–163, see also chpater 2.2). Julius Nyerere was the first president of independent Tanganyika and with the unification (at the Amani Stadium) became the first president of the union. Apart from Nyerere's name, however, the proximity of this historical event's venue does not diffract with people's daily lives.

1.3.3. Rootedness: Becoming "Traditional" Healers

The following paragraphs portray Bi Mwaltima. She is Bi Mwana's cousin and has only recently started to work for and with her. Nevertheless, her biography features here as it accentuates the intricacies of becoming a "*daktari wa asili*," a "traditional

Figure 10.: Bi Mwaltima with one of her grandsons

healer" in Amani, Zanzibar. Although this larger section is concerned with the setting of Bi Mwana's place and how kombe is produced and framed through a plurality of (entangled) actors in this setting, the biographical account here concentrates on a single person whose position at Bi Mwana's place is very particular and who narrated her biography to me on her own initiative. Furthermore, in this account of her biography, kombe does not matter much, which coincides with its marginalization at Bi Mwana's place, a theme that will be taken up towards the end of this section.

Bi Mwana's family comes from Unguja Ukuu, a village on the southwestern coast of Unguja, Zanzibar. The family has lived there for generations and inhabits a whole area around one of the village's wells whose water is still drinkable and salt levels still neg-

ligible.[53] While part of the family moved to town (Bi Mwana, for example), the majority of the extended family continues to live in Unguja Ukuu. They mainly fish, keep chickens and ducks, and cultivate fruits and coconuts to be sold in town. Bi Mwaltima (and less often Bi Mwana) regularly goes to the village to collect herbs, roots, bark, and branches to be cut up and dispensed later at Bi Mwana's place in town. For Bi Mwaltima, collecting the medicinal plants is a solitary occupation through which she regularly (re-)enhances her connection to the village. She makes her rounds through the bush; she knows where to find what she needs and takes a little from what the bush provides. When I accompanied her on her rounds on which we also passed the beach, we paused on a roofed platform that was built for an abandoned tourist project and gazed over the water. Unguja Ukuu's former importance entered our conversation and left us with a sense of nostalgia vis-à-vis the peripheral role Unguja Ukuu plays today. We continued on our way, collected some more herbs, branches, and roots and arrived in the area of the village where her family lives. We exchanged greetings with several family members whom we met in their houses or on the way and finally arrived at her youngest sister's place. For some time Bi Mwaltima had been taking care of her old and blind mother in town, but the mother preferred to return to the village and was now staying with her youngest daughter. Whenever she was in the village, Bi Mwaltima took time to assist her sister and care for their mother. Bi Mwaltima's visits to Unguja Ukuu show her deep attachment to the village in the bush where she grew up. It shows her bonds to the localized nature on which she rests her life in town, from which she takes and which she treats with respect. These visits also show her affection for her family, particularly for her mother. Despite her permanent residence in town, she nourishes close ties to that part of her family. She does not reduce the entanglements between Unguja Ukuu and Bi Mwana's place to descent, and her visits to Unguja Ukuu do not only serve the function of collecting medicinal plants to be dispensed at Bi Mwana's place, but she also lives and shapes this entanglement in a personalized way (and so do Bi Mwana and Bi Salama when they travel to Unguja Ukuu). Bi Mwaltima's active maintenance of these relations also relates to her further biography.

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[53] Many other wells in Zanzibar have become salty due to excessive well-building in the last years as a project from the University of Karlsruhe has evaluated: Hochschule Karlsruhe, "Sauberes Trinkwasser für Sansibar: Hochschule Karlsruhe – Technik und Wirtschaft an Aufbau dezentraler Meerwasserentsalzungsanlagen beteiligt," 22 November 2011, http://www.hs-karlsruhe.de/hochschule/aktuelles/presse/trinkwasser-auf-sansibar.html.

1. Kombe's Mattering

Unlike the other women at Bi Mwana's place who rarely talk about their husbands, Bi Mwaltima openly shared her story which is quite remarkable for the Zanzibari context and which in my fieldnotes reads as follows:

> Today Bi Mwaltima told me her story while we were sitting in the healing room. At that time not many patients were there and so she left the work to Bi Tufa, sat on the floor with her legs stretched out and began. In her childhood, Bi Mwaltima had always been exposed to the teachings of her father who knew the remedies of the plants that grow naturally in Unguja Ukuu. When she finished schooling, she went to town (Zanzibar Town) and started with a course in nursing. After one year, as life in the city is dangerous, her parents married her to somebody who did not permit her to pursue her studies. Secretly she continued nevertheless, leaving after he had left for work and returning before he came back while simultaneously managing the household chores. Having the dinner ready in time was the most important challenge. She gave birth to two daughters and a son, but she was not happy in this marriage and divorced him while maintaining good relations with her family. Since the divorce, she has been politically active for the CCM, the ruling party. She attends various local meetings of the CCM Amani branch and is involved in activities, such as anti-Malaria or election campaigns. She is also involved in the promotion of a new school project in the close neighborhood which is currently under construction. Only two years ago she started working with her cousin, Bi Mwana.[54]

Bi Mwaltima often took me along when she was on her way to somewhere else. Not only did I accompany her to Unguja Ukuu, but also to a ritual washing of a newborn child, and I occasionally visited her at her house in Amani which is close to Bi Mwana's place. It was through these occasions that we got to know each other quite well. Bi Mwaltima self-consciously lives a self-determined life; she walks upright with a quick pace and protects herself against anything that could compromise her self-determination. She even carries a knife when she walks around on her own, in readiness to defend herself physically. Her divorce, her political activism, and her readiness to defend herself are indicative of her highly valued self-determination shaping her life in Amani.

At Bi Mwana's place, Bi Mwaltima is granted a status of seniority, not only because of her age which is similar to Bi Mwana's, but also because of her knowledge which adds to Bi Mwana's expertise and experience. Although she works at Bi Mwana's place and under the umbrella of "Bi Mwana's treatment,"

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[54] Fieldnotes 19 November 2013.

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she enjoys liberties with regard to her regular presence which facilitate her other responsibilities. Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima often join forces and act as a team not only at Bi Mwana's place, but also during particular events such as the anti-Malaria campaign, in which a number of specialists (including the two of them) went from door to door in Amani, filled the houses with mosquito spray and informed about Malaria prevention measures. Bi Mwaltima repeatedly stressed the importance of nourishing family ties which enables her to work for her cousin Bi Mwana, offering "Bi Mwana's treatment" as a de-facto equal to Bi Mwana herself.

Bi Mwaltima identifies as *daktari wa asili* ("traditional doctor/healer"). The knowledge about medical remedies of plants that she acquired in her childhood from her father and her training as a nurse both contribute to how she enacts being a *daktari wa asili*. She regards her biomedical training as an asset, but as the other people who work in Bi Mwana's place attest, biomedical training is not a necessary precondition. In contrast, knowledge about plants is necessary and it is this knowledge that is passed on within the family. Bi Mwaltima's highly respected social status in Amani as a *daktari wa asili* and her self-determination (which superpose each other) equally contribute to her identification as *daktari wa asili*. Furthermore, her work at Bi Mwana's place enhances her family connections and thereby stresses her biographical rootedness in "traditional/original treatment": she draws on her origins to provide "original treatment," *dawa ya asili*. At Bi Mwana's place, kombe is part of this *dawa ya asili* which triggered my initial interest in paying regular visits. Bi Mwaltima (who does not prepare kombe herself) shows how the ability to prepare kombe at Bi Mwana's place is an optional skill. Nevertheless, she prescribed it to patients and supported my research about it.

1.3.4. Negotiating Our Collaboration

The research at Bi Mwana's place continuously developed over the time of my regular visits. Although Bi Mwaltima openly shared her experiences with me from the very beginning, with increasing familiarity, my visits at Bi Mwana's place slowly turned from an emphasis on observation to an emphasis on participation[55] which was also influenced by my gendered positionality.

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[55] For a critical engagement with "participant observation" see Tim Ingold (2015: 157).

1. Kombe's Mattering

In Kiembe Samaki, I lived in a shared house that also hosted Mama Sue and her family. When I noticed that Mama Sue was wearing a black ribbon on her upper arm, I asked her what it was and where she had received it. She told me about her previous sleeping difficulties, which had not recurred since she began wearing this ribbon. She also told me about *yule bibi* ("that elderly woman"), a woman who was providing treatment with herbs and also with the Qurˀan.[56] I inquired if, one day, I may accompany her and that day came in November 2013,[57] when she went there with her new-born baby Shinuna who was crying a lot. Baba Sue drove us with his car. As soon as we arrived, Baba Sue talked to somebody whom I much later got to know as Abdul. I then learned that he negotiated that we may cut the line ahead of other waiting patients. Baba Sue then resorted to waiting outside whereas we were invited inside. Having stated that I was doing research, *yule bibi* invited me to ask my catalog of questions with which they had presumed I had come, while Mama Sue was waiting for her sticks to be wrapped up. I asked a couple of questions, learned for example, that *yule bibi* is called Bi Mwana and that the treatment she and her associates provide relies on "traditional medicine" (*dawa ya asili*). Most importantly, I asked whether I could come back another day and spend more time with them. Bi Mwana agreed and encouraged me to also come on Fridays as then there would be no patients. However, as I was interested in also meeting the patients, we agreed on the following Tuesday which marked the starting point of my weekly visits.

After some initial confusion about how my presence, as opposed to a survey, constituted research and numerous attempts to explain how I worked, we slowly got accustomed to each other. Over the months, my role gradually changed from an observing visitor to somebody who took part in the routines specific to the place. The dynamics between "participating" and "observing" in the highly valued method of "participant observation" in anthropology and my initial passivity that only gradually eased into a more active role have often challenged me and caused much doubt. I increasingly moved around freely, and Bi Mwana increasingly asked me to adopt small chores which made me feel much more at ease and enabled me to better attune to this setting. One of the turning points was the wedding of Yusra, one of Bi Halima's daughters, which took place in Unguja Ukuu. After that, my presence at Bi Mwana's place was justified to patients by way of my status as

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[56] Mama Sue, 12 September 2013, Kiembe Samaki, Zanzibar Town.
[57] Mama Sue, Baba Sue, and Shinuna, 13 November 2013, Kiembe Samaki and Amani, Zanzibar Town.

quasi-member of the family. This role also marked my farewell just before my departure and our irregular but sincere contact over WhatsApp.

On the day I accompanied Mama Sue, I also went back home with them. When Mama Sue with Shinuna and I stepped out of Bi Mwana's place, Baba Sue was engaged in a conversation with Abdul that he ended immediately to drive us back home. Mama Sue seized the opportunity of being in a car and requested several stops to do some shopping. Shinuna, who had been sleeping for the largest part of our trip, grew increasingly hungry and restless until we arrived at home and she was breastfed. Baba Sue's conversation with Abdul was not mentioned at that time. However, the next day, on my way to town, I met Baba Sue who was returning from another trip to *yule bibi.* I later learned that he had received a washing to increase his manpower (*nguvu ya kiume*).[58] I often encountered men who would openly speak about the reception of treatment for their manpower, so Baba Sue's explanation was not unusual. As I increasingly came to understand the internal dynamics of Bi Mwana's place, I have not witnessed consultations in which these washings were arranged. However, the space in which these washings were done (accessed from outside, not through the courtyard) was shown to me, and I was told that Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima do these washings. This allusion to a realm of treatment that is inaccessible to me but nevertheless constitutes a part of what is considered "Bi Mwana's treatment" highlights the borders of my research due to my gendered positionality.

My gendered positionality, however, also facilitated access to the social dynamics of the women working at Bi Mwana's place: the gossip, the jokes, the pre-marital counseling. It enabled me to move increasingly freely within Bi Mwana's house and eased the progression of my participation in the place's routines. This included primarily wrapping the small wooden sticks into pieces of newspapers that subsequently would be labeled.

1.3.5. How Kombe Is Prepared At Bi Mwana's Place

At Bi Mwana's place kombe is continuously prepared in advance and poured into a bucket from which it is then filled into bottles that the patients either bring along or

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[58] The increase of manpower is a common aim to be achieved through non-biomedical treatment. Most people who raised this topic in my research would state this aim openly and leave it at that, thereby hinting at their masculinity and producing secrecy about the medicalized treatment.

that can be purchased for an extra cost. Abdul, when he drops in, or Mussa, when he is not needed elsewhere, write verses on a white ceramic plate that is stored away for this purpose only. Also Bi Tufa writes kombe; however, she hardly ever has time for such extra tasks, as she counsels the patients. Any verse can be used to prepare kombe which then can be given to anyone, as any verse of the Qurʾan is the Qurʾan, and the Qurʾan is healing as verse 17:82 makes explicit: "We send down the Qur'an as healing and mercy to those who believe; as for those who disbelieve, it only increases their loss." Both Abdul and Mussa stressed that the choice of verses is secondary to the patients' acceptance to imbue the Qurʾan. Abdul nevertheless explained that he uses his "inspiration" to determine which verse he writes.[59] Mussa, on the other hand, always writes the same verses, primarily the first sura (Al-Fathiha) and the last ones: Al-Ikhlaas, or the Al-Mu'awwidhatayn consisting of Al-Falaq and An-Nas. While for Abdul, the physical presence of a *msahafu* is essential for copying the inspirationally chosen verses, Mussa writes them from memory. If a mistake is made, a drop of water is dripped onto the mistake and smeared off, taking the mistake along. The spot dries and the writing continues.[60] These verses, once they are washed off, are all poured into the one bucket and raise the bucket's kombe-level. Mussa's, Bi Tufa's, and Abdul's writing are all mixed in the bucket. Thus, the kombe that the patients receive includes verses that have been chosen differently, but that are all from the Qurʾan and thus are the Qurʾan that heals. Furthermore, the mixture reiterates how "Bi Mwana's treatment" derives as a product of entangled processes by various actors.

Rarely, kombe is written for a particular patient only. In these cases, Mussa or Bi Tufa (or Abdul if he happens to be around) copy a designated verse from a handwritten booklet in which the afflictions are listed with their corresponding treatment verses. In these cases, the name of the patient is also often inserted in curly brackets. Bi Tufa Arabizes the patients' names and then writes them in Arabic letters, whereas Mussa writes them in Roman script, as they are written in any other situation. The afflictions for which the particular kombe is prepared include matters of jealousy, business problems (often related to jealousy), and also pregnancy wishes (again, often in relation to jealousy which prevents conception). However, it is only written when the herbal treatment has not been successful. This specialized kombe sometimes is written on paper, if, for example, the patient

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[59] Abdul, 13 July 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.
[60] This will be taken up in chapter 4.1 as the materiality of the mistake and the materiality of the text to be washed off are entangled in this instance.

Figure 11.: Buckets of kombe in the courtyard

has not come with a bottle and cannot afford to buy one at Bi Mwana's place. The patients then need to wash off the verses themselves; however, they must not look at the verses. How reading the verses with the eyes could impair the efficacy of kombe will be taken up in chapter 5.

At Bi Mwana's place, kombe is often prescribed to patients in addition to the assortment of small wooden sticks. Mama Sue, on that day when I accompanied her,[61] received her three wrapped packages of wooden sticks together with a bottle of kombe that was prescribed to be drunk alongside the decoction for seven days. At home, she started the treatment as it was explained to her, however, the bottle of kombe was finished much too early. For Mama Sue, then, it did not make sense to continue drinking the decoction without the supplementary kom-

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[61] 19 November 2013, Kiembe Samaki, Zanzibar Town.

be and she abandoned the treatment entirely.[62] For Mama Sue, the efficacy of the decoction was dependent on the ingestion of supplementary Qurʾanic verses; kombe, in this case, activates other treatment. Despite Mama Sue's privileging of kombe over the assortment of wooden sticks, she did not frame the treatment as "Islamic," but termed it as *dawa ya asili* ("traditional medicine"). Kombe is a crucial part of "traditional medicine," Islam with the Qurʾan an indicative part of "tradition." On the one hand, this exemplifies how the conception of "tradition" in Zanzibar is entangled with Islam, but on the other hand, it raises questions about how "Islamic" and "traditional" medicine are locally differentiated and how this differentiation matters.

In other respects, Bi Tufa often drinks kombe instead of water. She reasons that kombe is based on water and thus can be used as a refined substitute for water. For Bi Tufa, drinking kombe does not harm and possibly even prevents affliction that with the ingestion of kombe may be diverted even without one's knowledge. Although Bi Tufa herself drinks kombe as a preventive measure, patients usually only receive it as part of *dawa ya asili* to counter an affliction that is already manifest.

The different emphases on kombe as "Islamic" or "traditional" medicine is connected to practitioners whose spatial and biographical situatedness supports a particular framing of the treatment they offer. However, both the situatedness of Hakimu Saleh's practices and of the practices in Bi Mwana's place stress the entanglements in which and through which they shape what kombe is. Nonetheless, the kombe received as "Islamic medicine" and the kombe received as "traditional medicine" both constitute kombe and cannot be disentangled through these categories. I have come to learn about kombe in these two settings and they both inform how I depict kombe in this text. Although the preparation of kombe in these two settings might differ in several ways, they nevertheless both materialize with the "materia medica" of Qurʾanic verses written in saffron ink on a plate or paper, liquefied in water to be dispensed in bottles. "Things and their use" are materialized through practices by "carriers" of the practice who in and from their specific circumstances enact the practice differently (Reckwitz 2002: 249–250). With Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana, the practice of materializing kombe invites a diffractive reading. Because my research is informed by these two

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[62] See also Nieber (2017) and chapter 8.1.3. Taste also played a considerable role in her decision making.

particular settings (and to a lesser degree by even many more settings in which kombe is prepared), some issues matter more than others. In other words: in my research, my engagement with the two settings and their materializations of kombe diffracts to eventually entextualize how drinking the Qurʾan matters in Zanzibar. The next chapter introduces the broader context of Zanzibar. It picks up on references to Zanzibar's relation to the Indian Ocean and the African mainland and connects them to Zanzibar's historical and political particularities. When Paul offers to explain kombe to me as a "Zanzibari Christian," the entanglement of his offer with the Zanzibari context matters.

2. Zanzibari Kombe: Contextualized and Historicized Between the Indian Ocean and the Tanzanian Mainland

Paul introduced himself as "Zanzibari Christian," a designation with which he legitimized his offer to tell me about Zanzibari practices, such as kombe, from an insider perspective. Concerning the contestations over whose claims of identifying as Zanzibari are recognized, I was surprised to hear Paul demarcate space for himself as Zanzibari and as Christian. Did his claim on Zanzibariness modify his Christian belonging, or did his identification as Christian modify a Zanzibariness that is intimately tied to Islam? For Paul, it was important that he was born in Zanzibar even though his parents had migrated from the Tanzanian mainland, Mwanza. In light of the political topicality of Zanzibar's difficult relationship to the Tanzanian mainland during the time of my research, Paul's identification as "Zanzibari Christian" did not only position him to speak about kombe to me, but was also a political statement.

This chapter provides some background to the claim that Paul makes with this self-identification and thereby contextualizes kombe in Zanzibar in the period of 2013–2015. Although the practices of preparing and drinking kombe are widespread (see introduction), people in Zanzibar perceive kombe to be a local—a Zanzibari—phenomenon. This chapter introduces this context and explores how, as a Zanzibari phenomenon, kombe relates to historical and political aspects (and their entanglements with "religious" issues)[1] of Zanzibar in the region. During the period of my research, the (entangled) differentiation between the Indian Ocean

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[1]   In chapter 7, I will discuss the term "religion" as demarcating a specific domain. In connection to that chapter, I thus aim to avoid a structure of this section in which Islam as "religious aspect" is singled out and separated from other aspects, although I recognize that

world and the Tanzanian mainland mattered due to an upcoming referendum on a constitutional reform that would reconsider the question of the Tanzanian union. Indebted to the vast amount of existing scholarship, I recognize that my historical overview is shaped by the concerns of previous studies. Louise Rolingher (2005) has shown how the study of Islam in east Africa has developed through what Ian Hacking calls the (1999: 34) "looping effect." Hacking argues that the way knowledge is expressed and classified influences how objects of further study are shaped within these classifications which in turn produces studies that reify these classifications: a loop emerges. The literature on Islam in east Africa, as Rolingher points out, is entrenched in the divide between "African" and "Arab" elements that nurtur questions of cultural, linguistic, and religious expressions of "Swahili identity." This divide also feeds into people's struggles to define "what it meant to be a Muslim and what it meant to be Swahili" (Rolingher 2005: 18; Larsen 2009: 15). Roman Loimeier (2013: 214) points out how this divide informed and informs history writing about the Swahili Coast by colonial historians (stressing "Arab" influences) and by postcolonial historians (stressing "African" influences). Related to this divide between "African" and "Arab" influences, contemporary Swahili history writing addresses an orientation towards the Indian Ocean and to the African mainland with different emphases. While the largest part of the literature acknowledges the importance of the Indian Ocean, Swahili history is almost entirely categorized as part of African history. Narrating the Swahili Coast as part of "Africa," the particularity of the coast, *pwani*, in relation to the mainland, *bara*, marks the Swahili Coast as a distinguishable entity within and in relation to "Africa." Recently, though, Indian Ocean studies in which the Swahili Coast is equally well placed have gained ground. Negotiations over the extent to which the Swahili Coast is "African" or "Indian Oceanic" do not only build on looping effects of academic engagement, but also foster discourses in Zanzibar today about how its relation to the union is evaluated. With these discourses, the Indian Ocean and the African mainland intra-act: they become differentiated through their entanglements in Zanzibar. In this chapter, the narration of historical underpinnings largely relies on academic literature (and does not escape the looping effect). Its reading is shaped by the matters of concern during the time of my

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the sentences and paragraphs could be attributed to one or another domain. I thus aim to interweave threads that in the respective literature are singled out as "cultural," "economic," "political," or "religious." The politics behind making such decisions will be discussed in chapter 3 (and to a lesser extent chapter 4).

research, in which this precise divide between the orientation towards the Indian Ocean and political belonging to the African mainland were negotiated. In other words, at the time of my research, academic literature and the current debates "diffracted" in a certain way, which is the basis for this narration. At the time of my research, Paul's identification as Zanzibari Christian marked a moment of political possibility that hinged on Zanzibar's relation to the African (Christian dominated) mainland vis-à-vis the (Islamic) Indian Ocean.

Throughout this chapter, I zoom the scope of reference from the Indian Ocean and the Swahili Coast to Zanzibar as part of Tanzania in a roughly chronological manner, given that the recent history is often discussed in relation to entanglements with the mainland, while nostalgic sentiments of Indian Ocean connectivity point to references to a more distant past (see also Nieber 2019). I thereby flesh out key terms that relate to different scales of reference at different times in history, key terms that are pivotal for understanding the contentions of the Zanzibari status today which are enacted in everyday life, including through practices with kombe. Against the background of the Indian Ocean and how it is localized with the concept of "cosmopolitanism," the first half of the chapter provides a brief overview of the Swahili Coast's more distant past and how it undergirds argumentations for (entangled) differentiation from the African mainland. It pays attention to Swahili coastal, cosmopolitan, and Muslim urbanity that formed shifting notions of "civilization" and distinguished the Swahili from other people. With kombe as "Islamic" medicine, a particular focus is on the history of Islam on the Swahili Coast. The second half of the chapter then turns to Zanzibar as part of the Swahili Coast, where during the Omani sultanate, after the abolition of slavery, and especially after the revolution in 1964, the divide between an orientation towards the Indian Ocean and one towards the African mainland became loaded with highly politicized connotations. The union with Tanganyika binds Zanzibar politically to the African mainland. However, a history of differentiation from it (though entangled with it) nurtures Zanzibaris' sentiments of belonging and is key to the debates on the constitutional changes defining the union's structure. Within these debates' stress on Islam on which the distinction between Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland hinges, the delineation of kombe as "Islamic" merges with its delineation as "Zanzibari." While this already situates my research in the larger discursive frameworks of kombe as a "Zanzibari practice," the chapter concludes with some thoughts on the political statement that Paul had made when he introduced himself as "Zanzibari Christian."

2.1. **Zanzibar in the Indian Ocean**

The Zanzibar archipelago is an island group in the Indian Ocean just off the African mainland coast. It is part of the Swahili Coast to which and from which the monsoon winds seasonally have carried dhows across the Indian Ocean for centuries. It is thus historically marked by vibrant mercantile connections, exchanging foodstuffs, timber, wax, ivory, gold and slaves from the African mainland and much later cloves grown in plantations in Zanzibar for Chinese porcelain, Gujerati cloth, copper, dates, and many other goods.[2] Abdul Sheriff (2006; 2010; 2014) traces how the trade network across the Indian Ocean took shape and highlights the relevance of Fernand Braudel's work on the Mediterranean for the Indian Ocean. He delineates how the Sasanid influence over the rims of the Arab peninsula, the west Indian coast, and stretching along the east African coast created a "commercial unification of the Indian Ocean" of which the "major actors were a series of small city-states strung around the rim of the Indian Ocean" (2010: 171). He explores how this trade network expanded to the south including Madagascar and the southeastern African coast, as well as to the east, including Indonesia and China (2010: 317). This trade network, reaching maturity by the fifteenth century, comprised not only commercial exchanges but also social and cultural interaction "that transformed them [the people] as they transformed the Indian Ocean world" (2010: 318). The male sailors and traders did not only transport goods, but also sold these goods in markets for which they had to speak each others' languages, exchanged ideas (for example about navigation), developed technologies to build far-reaching dhows, settled seasonally in various places according to the monsoon rhythm, and married local women.

Michael Pearson, taking seriously the shore as habitat and the vivid exchange between people living along the Indian Ocean shore, suggests describing these deeply entangled relations as an Indian Ocean "littoral society" (Pearson 2006).[3] This suggestion resonates with research on the Indian Ocean as a "seascape" (Deutsch and Reinwald 2002; Reinwald 2002; Indian Ocean Research Initiative 2005), as an entry point to cultural studies (Ghosh and Muecke 2007;

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[2]   For a more detailed list of traded goods, see Horton and Middleton (2000: 13).
[3]   Although Pearson does not quote A.H.J Prins, he draws on the result of Prins' study (1965) in which the maritimity of a particular place, Lamu, is considered. Going beyond the study of "a" place that is topographically limited, Pearson skillfully extends the focus to make "the littoral" a place.

Gupta 2010) or as "public sphere" (Hofmeyr 2008; 2012). More critically, David Parkin (2000a) describes the Indian Ocean area as "fiction, but [...] useful heuristic device":

> It is a fiction to delineate the region as distinctive if we do not include reference to Islamic influences on and from areas of the world away from the Indian Ocean. On the other hand, we need to capture for analysis the centuries-old maritime movements and settlements of peoples along the Indian Ocean rim [...]. These all indicate continuities of belief and practice which are constantly being reinforced in new ways. (Parkin 2000a: 2)

Most of the scholarship on the Indian Ocean that employs its discursive and/or enacted boundedness as an analytical entry point takes note of how the connectedness across the sea distinguished these city-states stung around the Indian Ocean rim from their various hinterlands[4] and became a value in itself and took material shape:

> the emergence of Swahili towns was also structured by a changing worldview; the Swahili were not merely participating more in the Indian Ocean world, they were reimagining themselves as more connected to it, and they effected this transformation through alterations of their material world. (Fleisher et al. 2015: 3-4)[5]

2.1.1. Cosmopolitanism

The romanticizing tendency in this depiction of the Indian Ocean does not only reflect the tone of the relevant literature (problematized by Hofmeyr 2007: 13), but is deliberately re-established here to do justice to common nostalgic attitudes towards the importance of the Indian Ocean for perceptions of Zanzibar today. Focusing on how the entanglements of connectivities across the ocean and self-perceptions of people within the Indian Ocean network unfold on a smaller scale,

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[4] It must be noted, though, that these "hinterlands" are less defined by geographical attributes than by accessibility to the Indian Ocean network. The settlements along the caravan routes from the east African coast to the great lakes in central Africa are thus more part of the Indian Ocean seascape than remote areas without regular direct exchange with the coast. Note, how this complicates the distinction between the coast (*pwani*) and the hinterland (*bara*).

[5] Fleisher and his colleagues bind "a people" to "its place" and thus mark early settlements along the east African coast as early "Swahili" settlements that increasingly became maritime, which has been problematized in the literature, as will be outlined below.

the term "cosmopolitanism" has often been evoked both within academic literature and in contemporary coastal Swahili discourse.

> It [Zanzibar] is by all standards a cosmopolitan society, with a very rich mixture of people originating from the four corners of the globe, and most particularly the Indian Ocean basin who intermingled throughout history and formed what is now a homogeneous Zanzibari Swahili culture. (Saleh 2009: 201)

Although the homogeneity is highly disputable, Mohamed Saleh's celebration of an apparent diversity[6] of the urban population's references to localities of origin draws on well-established discourses on Zanzibar's population. Anne Bang observes:

> Several authors have described Zanzibari society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. One simile that often appears is that of 'patchwork' or 'mosaic'—referring to the overwhelming diversity of its population. However, if Zanzibari society was a patchwork, each patch came with strings attached—links and networks peculiar to their own group and with certain sets of characteristics ascribed to them by other 'patches'. Over time, as the Swahilisation process set in, the strings loosened and the patches blended. (Bang 2003: 5)

Whether "patchwork," "mosaic," or "cosmopolitanism," all these terms convey an egalitarian sense of unified diversity that has become entangled in notions of Zanzibar's exceptionality.

　　With the "strings loosened" and "patches blended," "cosmopolitanism" as an analytic term would have to unravel the difference on which its diversity is built. As an analytical category for descriptions of Zanzibari society,[7] it has its limits. Kai Kresse's take on "cosmopolitanism" as "having the wider world in mind" (2013: 81–82), which he develops to address the context of contemporary

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6   Note how "diversity" requires difference. How these differences were unmade and remade in Zanzibar by British colonial powers is addressed in Anne Bang's work. She shows how "the arrival of the British formed new division lines, or [...] new formulas for cosmopolitanism" (2008: 174; see also Fair 2003). Today, the colonial categories of ethnic difference, mainly centered on the distinction of "Arab," "African," and "Asian"/"Indian" still persist (Ivanov 2014: 209) along with the term "cosmopolitanism." Ivanov (2014: 233) draws attention to how the term itself "still implicitly essentialize[s] 'culture', 'identity' and 'difference', and thus actually first construct[s] the cleavage [it] is then supposed to bridge."

7   Edward Simpson and Kai Kresse put into question the extent to which people physically migrated and whether they were not rather "nodal brokers" who traded with migrating goods. They thus scrutinize "Indian Ocean cosmopolitanism" in its "social contestation based on a struggle with history that is not so much shared as held in common" (Simpson 2008: 13–15).

Mombasa, is useful in that it points to "cosmopolitanism" as a discursive trope that finds expression in material practices.[8]

The "wider world" extends over the Indian Ocean and is unified by Islam. Together with Edward Simpson, Kresse points to different Islamic understandings of how to unite Muslims and argues that "Islamic ideologies can be described as cosmopolitanisms at work" (Simpson and Kresse 2008: 26). The global community of Muslims (the *umma*) is central and provides a theological framework of "having the wider world in mind" that transcends divisions in Islamic thought and practice (Kresse 2012: 42; see also Bang 2003: 130). Whereas Kresse (2013: 97) points out that the *umma* is only one of many possible "wider social communities that [go] beyond people's immediate experience," in Zanzibar today, the global community of Muslims has become the main point of reference for how ties across the Indian Ocean were established and are maintained.[9] The *umma* thus justifies a discourse on cosmopolitanism which describes an inner attitude of being open to the world (Weltoffenheit), relies on experience of the world (Welterfahrung), and shapes the "skill to navigate the world" (Weltgewandtheit) (Kresse 2012: 47), at least the "Muslim world."

However, the perception of unity in diversity in the Indian Ocean region is not static and "the sense of who was an insider and who was an outsider has changed over time" (Simpson and Kresse 2008: 4; Larsen 2009: 16–18), but appears to have always hinged on the inclusion of Muslims. The English term "cosmopolitanism" that today is employed for political purposes and as marketing narrative for tourism stresses the diversity of those included and silences the exclusion of others. Kate Kingsford (2013) shows how in Zanzibari independence discourse the term "cosmopolitanism" is employed, but how this "idea of cosmopolitan Zanzibar

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[8] Kresse refers to the volume "cosmopolitanism" edited by Carol Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi Bhabha, and Dipesh Chakrabarty who take a postcolonial and feminist approach to the analytic term "cosmopolitanism." They stress the need to situate this term heterogeneously and question the universalism of underlying concepts such as "citizen" outside of western philosophy in light of the term's evocation of a universal framework as "cosmopolitanism" is often glossed as "citizenship of the world" (Pollock et al. 2002).

[9] Helene Basu (2005) draws attention to exchange processes of marginal Islamic practices (primarily in the context of slave trade networks) between Zanzibar and Gujerat that bring forth particular forms of how Sufism and spirit possession become entangled. Although epitomizing how Islamic practices are shaped by the Indian Ocean connectivities, these practices are usually not connected to the idea of an *umma* across the Indian Ocean. In the delineation of how to mark the *umma*'s characteristics of connectivity, the distinction of reformists' practices (authorized from a "center," see below) and local practices (authorized locally) is important to consider.

stops there – in the past.[10] Mainland Tanzanians, particularly Christians, are not seen as simply another element in the mix which might further enrich Zanzibar's culture" (2013), but even the discourse of the past's "cosmopolitanism" usually silences groups of people, such as slaves. Nevertheless, "cosmopolitanism" in its inclusive notion of diversity of those with ties across the Indian Ocean (Muslim "Zanzibaris") is celebrated and pitted against those who do not have these ties (Christians from the mainland, "Zanzibara"),[11] and who thus are excluded from this "cosmopolitanism." The discourse on "cosmopolitanism" reinforces Zanzibar as the boundary between the Indian Ocean and the African mainland. With cosmopolitanism, the romanticized notion of the Indian Ocean world becomes inherently Zanzibari while the mainland is discursively obstructed from joining into this narrative.

The materiality of kombe hints at the cosmopolitan ties across the sea: the porcelain plates (evoking sentiments of a prosperous past in which trade across the Indian Ocean enabled purchases of luxury goods such as porcelain plates from China) or the saffron ink (red food coloring imported from India) link kombe's materiality to sentiments about the Indian Ocean. Furthermore, kombe's reliance on the Qurɔan situates it as "Islamic" (see chapter 7) and thus further entangles kombe with sentiments of distinction from the mainland. Kombe's "things and their use" resonate with the notion of a cosmopolitan connectivity across the Indian Ocean which, although problematic as a descriptive indicator for Swahili societies today, serves to project a particular Swahili historicity.

2.1.2. Swahili Coast, Western Indian Ocean Rim

Once,[12] Bi Mwaltima and I were walking through and around Unguja Ukuu to collect herbs, roots, bark from trees, and entire branches to take back to town

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[10] Kingsford and the discourse she describes draw on a notion of "cosmopolitanism" that involves the physical migration of people as opposed to the here favored notion of acting towards a wider world. That the social composition of people who claim descent from elsewhere has decreased in diversity is also pointed out by Roman Loimeier (2006b: 189), who describes how the Islamic scholarly community who descended from Hadramaut, the Comoros islands, and southern Somalia and thereby represented Zanzibari cosmopolitanism was shattered with the revolution in 1964.

[11] Katrin Bromber (2002) traces how the differentiation between "genuine Zanzibaris" and those from *bara* (the mainland) developed in newspaper debates on citizenship between 1948 and 1958, just before the *zama za siasa* (see below) began. The term "Zanzibara" merges "Zanzibari" with "*bara*," the mainland.

[12] Bi Mwaltima, 21 March 2014, Unguja Ukuu.

where they would be chopped into small pieces and dispensed. When, some distance from the village, we arrived at the beach, we found a shady spot and rested on a low wall of the ruins of an unfinished building project while gazing at the beach in front of us. Bi Mwaltima spoke about the owner of the construction site in favorable terms and pitied the fact that he was apparently not able to finish his house. I tried to imagine how living in such a solitary place would be like, but Bi Mwaltima pointed to the few dhows resting on the sand and remarked that in the early morning when the fishermen came back, it would be quite lively here. In fact, she said, this was one of Zanzibar's oldest fishing harbors. Indeed, we were in Unguja Ukuu, not only home to Bi Mwaltima and Bi Mwana's extended family, but also one of the earliest settlements in Zanzibar. Bi Mwaltima directed my thoughts to a past before the sultanate, in which Shirazi settlers inhabited Zanzibar and participated from there in the Indian Ocean trade network (Horton and Middleton 2000). Through Unguja Ukuu's distant past (though probably not particularly influential), Zanzibar ties into the distant past of the Swahili Coast. I wondered about any remaining artifacts from that time, and Bi Mwaltima mentioned that some experts had found some ceramic shards, but that she would not know about these things. To her, Unguja Ukuu was home, full of personal memories, and subject to her professional gaze on the plants. Although she does not know many details about Unguja Ukuu's distant past, traces of a sense of Unguja Ukuu's long history can sometimes be detected in Bi Mwaltima's approach to her village.

There is some debate on when to start a narration of a "Swahili" history and this debate hinges on the Swahili identity as Islamic and connected to non-African descent. I here merely wish to mention in passing that most historical literature takes note of the Kilwa Chronicle.[13] It tells the story of how, in the tenth century,[14] a Persian (Shirazi) Muslim, named Ali bin al-Hasan, arrived with his five brothers and father on the east African coast. They all settled in different places along the coast, including Pemba, Mafia, Mombasa (all at today's

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[13] There is an Arabic and a Portuguese version (see Delmas 2017). I here solely refer to secondary literature on the Kilwa Chronicle that mostly builds on the Arabic version as it is judged to be the more accurate one.

[14] Mark Horton and John Middleton (2000: 49) refer to architectural evidence and date the earliest presence of Islam on the east African coast (Shanga) to the eighth century. This early presence comprised only a small number of Muslims and Horton and Middleton suggest that the wider acceptance of Islam "was through a variety of routes, producing a pattern of variation" (2000: 51).

Swahili Coast), and Anjouan (Nzwani, Comoros).[15] Ali settled in Kilwa (today's southern Tanzania), married the daughter of the king of Kilwa and traded cloth for recognition of him as ruler. The amount of cloth was determined by the size of the island: the length of the cloth needed to equal the circumference of the island. Before Ali arrived, there was already a Muslim family in that town, however, it was with Ali's rule (and the rule of his sons and grandsons) that many more turned to Islam and married into the Shirazi family. By the thirteenth century, Kilwa had developed into a leading commercial center of the western Indian Ocean trade network (second only to the even older and more prosporous town of Mogadishu), due to the extensive gold trade with Sofala (in today's Mozambique) and hosted a predominantly Muslim population.[16] Despite much debate about the exact date (957?) of Ali's arrival (see Prins 1961, see also Chittick 1965) and about the historical accuracy of this narration (see Spear 1984), the Kilwa Chronicle tells of the Muslim Shirazi arrival via the Indian Ocean, their rule over a number of emerging and interrelated towns along the east African coast with shifting alliances amongst each other, and their intermarriages with the African population. This narration is helpful in affirming sentiments of how these towns along the east African coast have been inherently shaped by adherence to Islam and by genealogical ties stretching to the northern Indian Ocean: although usually not referenced directly by my interlocutors, the Kilwa Chronicle supports the narration of a historically established coastal urbanity that is inherently Muslim and based on descent from across the Indian Ocean.[17]

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[15] The Chronicle of Comoros tells an almost identical story (Loimeier 2013: 219).

[16] Ibn Battuta visited Kilwa in 1331 and noted the adherence to Islam by "the Swahili" in his travel account (translated and printed in Freeman-Grenville 1962: 31). However, Loimeier (2013: 212) notes that the term "Swahili" has been in use only since the nineteenth century.

[17] By taking the Kilwa Chronicle as a starting point for a narration of the "Swahili Coast" history, I aim to do justice to sentiments in Zanzibar today of how Islam and ties across the Indian Ocean are inseparable from coastal urban life. I have not included narrations of "Shungwaya" as the site from where the "Swahili" originated and moved to the towns along the east African coast (Kimambo 1974: 197–199; Pouwels 1987: 10–16, 36–37; Middleton 1992: 29; Allen 1993: 38–54; Horton and Middleton 2000: 52–61; Sheriff 2010: 36). Building on the founding narrative of Shungwaya and building on conceptualizations of what "Swahili" is today, a large body of literature is concerned with the question of whether one can already speak of the Swahili people before Islam spread to the east African coast. This literature asks whether the Swahili Coast is inherently Bantu or whether the arrival and settlement of foreigners (the Muslim Shirazi) is constitutive for Swahiliness. (Pouwels 1987; Pouwels 2000: 254; Middleton 1992: 11; Mazrui and Shariff 1994). Tominaga and Abdul Sheriff draw attention to the mythical character of the Swahili's Shirazi ancestry (1989; see also Fair 2003: 36). Moreover, the name "Swahili" only appeared much later in an Arabic geographical

2.1. Zanzibar in the Indian Ocean

Along with Kilwa and the other places named in the Kilwa Chronicle, Unguja Ukuu was one of the early Shirazi settlements. Contrary to how the historical importance of Ungujua Ukuu's Shirazi settlement serves to undergird claims of Zanzibar's participation in this early Swahili history, the beach that Bi Mwaltima and I were gazing at from the ruins of an unfinished construction site in the early afternoon had an air of abandonment. In Unguja Ukuu, Swahili history's ephemerality was present.

The towns on the east African coast developed as relatively autonomous city-states (Prins 1961: 92; Trimingham 1964: 9–18; Nicholls 1971: 23–24), each with their own rulers and with a shared language: Swahili.[18] With time, different genres of Swahili oral literature—the *ngano*, the *nyimbo*, the *misemo*, the *vitendawili*—"came to be complemented with a written literature initially based [...] on the Arabic script" (Mazrui and Shariff 1994: 92; see also Pouwels 1987: 261; Bakari 2014: 189). Notwithstanding questions of how to describe Swahili as a "shared language" with several differing "dialects," the "Swahili-speaking people" (Prins 1961) have come to be regarded as a unified group with shared ways of living and comportment.[19]

Mark Horton and John Middleton (2000: 11; see also Fair 2003: 16) draw attention to how the defining marker of these towns was not their appearance, but

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account by Ibn Sa'id (1214–1275) and then in Ibn Battuta's travel writings in 1331 (Horton and Middleton 2000: 16), which further complicates the question of when to start a "Swahili" history. As this debate contributes little to how Zanzibaris view their historical roots, it will not be pursued further here.

[18] Most academic literature (Prins 1961: 24–26; Mazrui and Shariff 1994: 57; Horton and Middleton 2000: 17) speaks of Swahili "dialects" in the various towns. It thus narrates Swahili identity in terms of Swahili as a common language and thus in terms of linguistic cohesion. Although this corresponds nicely to political group formations as nations that can be identified through their common "language," it is interesting to trace the linguistic dynamics historically of how a common "language" with various "dialects" has come to contribute to demarcate *a* people in eastern Africa as Alamin M. Mazrui and Ibrahim Noor Shariff do (1994: 55–85). Also beyond the Swahili realm, the question of how this link between a people and its language is reified and contested in the present is elucidated in Monica Heller's (2011) work on language and political identity (see also Billig 1995: chapter 2; Bing 2017: chapter 3).

[19] Farouk Topan (2006) pays great attention to how the notion of Swahili identity shifts over time (see also Middleton 1992: 198). Topan remarks that "the sustaining ingredients [of Swahili identity] are likely to be language (Kiswahili), sentiment and memory" (Topan 2006: 65). Although I rely on notions of Swahiliness in Zanzibar today which carry a very particular genealogy, I do not wish to engage in the discussion of the extent to which "the Swahili" were or are "a people" (see foremost Horton and Middleton 2000: 2-4; Caplan 2004: 8; Topan 2006: 58).

their discursive demarcation as *mji* (plural: *miji*, "town"). These "Shirazi"-ruled
city-states that were engaged in the trade networks emphasized their differentiation
from the neighboring settlements. The attributed superiority of Muslim town-
dwellers over rural non-Muslims found expression not only in the use of coral
stone for the construction of a town's main buildings, but also in food, clothing,
and the daily rhythm adjusted to Islamic[20] prayer times. Of course, the towns'
trade depended on the exchange with surrounding areas that were not urban (not
miji); thus the differentiation must be regarded as part of the entanglements of
the rural with the urban,[21] the non-Swahili with the Swahili, the non-Muslim with
the Muslim—but these relations manifested and unfolded within clear hierarchical
structures of Swahili superiority.[22]

After centuries of internal competition between the Swahili city-states and
shifting alliances between them (since 1498 also including the Portuguese, who
became brokers in the Indian Ocean trade), Oman rose to sea power in the seven-
teenth century (Prins 1961: 44; Bennett 1978; Loimeier 2013). Under the Yarubi
dynasty, Oman gained considerable influence over the western Indian Ocean lit-
toral which had several consequences for the development of the Islamic Swahili
Coast: Firstly, Omani assistance against Portuguese Christian influences trans-
formed the challenge to Islamic domination into a strengthening of Islam amongst
the towns of the western Indian Ocean region. Resistance to Portugal was particu-
larly strong (and aided by Oman) in Pate, from where commercial ties to the north

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[20] According to Randall L. Pouwels (2000), the early heterodoxy of different forms of Islam in
the western Indian Ocean (mostly early Ibadi and Shiᶜi groups) gave way to Shafiᶜi Islam by
1100 partially due to the Shafiᶜi dominance in the economically important region of the Red
Sea and Hadramaut. When Ibn Battuta visited Kilwa in 1331, he took note of the people's
adherence to the "Shafiᶜi rite" (Ibn Battuta translated and printed in Freeman-Grenville
1962: 31). The Shafiᶜi school is one of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence. It builds on
the teachings of the scholar Muhammad ibn Idris Al-Shafiᶜi. For the theological framework
see the Encyclopedia of Islam under the entry "al- S̲h̲āfiᶜiyya."

[21] Building on sentiments that derive from this narrative and its enactments in contempo-
rary Malindi, Kenya, Janet McIntosh (2009) shows how the boundaries of the Giriama and
the Swahilis (and their relations to Islam) are a point of contestation and continuous re-
establishment until today.

[22] It is interesting to note how the narrative of the Swahili towns as part of the In-
dian Ocean is based on entanglements—unity through Islam and comprising "a" littoral
society—whereas the narrative of the Swahili towns as part of the African coast is based
on differentiation—urban versus rural, Muslim versus non-Muslim, non-local ancestry versus
local ancestry. Of course, these two viewpoints and the narratives that they comprise com-
plement each other in that the differentiation from others on the African mainland lies in the
partaking in the Indian Ocean world.

were maintained in the seventeenth century (Prins 1961: 43–49; Pouwels 1987: 39). The economically inspired resistance coincided with a "religious renaissance […] in the Lamu archipelago [where] a scholarly tradition in the advanced religious sciences was established locally for the first time, though this remained an avocational path closed to most ordinary Swahili until the nineteenth century" (Pouwels 2000: 261; see also Pouwels 1987: 39; Seesemann 2006: 238–239). Although the Omani maritime dominance, aided by British powers (Pouwels 1987: 98), pushed away the Portuguese and thus Christian influences, the emerging "religious renaissance" was not based on Omani Ibadism. Across the western Indian Ocean rim, the Comoros islands, and Indonesia, the scholarly Islamic elite was almost entirely affiliated with the Hadrami Alawiyya Tariqa, an exclusive Sufi brotherhood whose members were restricted to high-ranking *masharifu*,[23] that is, families that could trace their ancestry back to the Prophet. The Alawiyya follow the Shafiᶜi school of jurisprudence and are devoted to learning—primarily in the disciplines of theology, law, and mysticism (*taṣawwuf*)—and Saint veneration (Pouwels 1987: 40, 138; see also Bang 2003).

Secondly, the aspirations of Omani control exploited and solidified the tensions between various Swahili city-states, such as the rivalry between the Lamu archipelago (including Pate) against Mombasa. Oman eventually conquered the latter with the help of soldiers from Pate. Oman then installed the influential Omani Mazrui family as rulers over Mombasa, who, however, had close ties to Swahili patricians and became effectively independent of Oman (Horton and Middleton 2000: 85). The Mazrui family did not accept the Omani Busaidi dynasty as successors to the Yarubi dynasty (in 1749), causing the Busaidis to "develop Zanzibar as an alternative political focus for their East African empire" (Horton and Middleton 2000: 85).[24] Over the course of a century, the Busaidi trade expanded and other Swahili towns' duties to pay customs to the Busaidi power led to an increasingly centralized commercial structure based in Zanzibar Town that culminated in the relocation of the Omani capital to Zanzibar in the 1830s (Fair 2003: 11–12; see also Pearce 1920: 112-117; Ingrams 1967: 161–163; for a focus on the processual character of this move see Nicholls 1971: 246-249).

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[23] I employ the Swahili term *sharifu* (plural: *masharifu*). Its Arabic equivalent is *sharīf*, female *sharīfa*, plural *shurafāʾ* or *ashrāf*.

[24] More than I can outline here, Omani sovereignty developed slowly: only with time did the Omani control of the mercantile sphere spread to territorial claims (Prins 1961: 47–49, see also Loimeier 2013: 228).

2.1.3. From *Uungwana* to *Ustaarabu*

The ties of the Swahili towns to southern Arabia were strengthened in the nineteenth century not least because of a wave of significant migration from the southern Arab peninsula to the Swahili Coast, which contributed to an increased "Arabization of Swahili culture and religion" (Pouwels 2000: 261). The shift from *uungwana* to *ustaarabu* exemplifies these dynamics that favored Arabness over Swahiliness: the concept of *uungwana* denoting "civilization" of free-born, cosmopolitan Swahili who lived urban Muslim lives that stood in contrast to the *ushenzi* (chaos, barbarity) of the rural non-Muslim non-Swahili population[25] changed into *ustaarabu* still denoting "civilization" with the implication that Arabness serves as a role model. Thus, the habitus connected to *uungwana* (comprising dress, food, vocation, religious practices, housing, and display of sophisticated skills in Swahili) turned into a "mimicry of Arab fashions" (Pouwels 1987: 129) discursively paralleled by the term *ustaarabu*, which many authors translate as "to become Arab" (Pouwels 1987: 72; Glassman 1995: 117-119) and which John Middleton (1992: 192; see also Horton and Middleton 2000: 179 and Bromber 2006) refines as "the condition of being wise and aware of divine knowledge, of observing behavior befitting members of society long settled in permanent towns—living in proper houses and knowing how to dress, eat, and comport oneself correctly."[26] In connection to the shift from *uungwana* to *ustaarabu*, the Alawiyya comported themselves not to "propagate 'African' Islam but stood for the beginning of a religious reorientation which in many ways corresponded to the ideal of *ustaarabu*" (Seesemann 2006: 240).

   The *waungwana* (or then *wastaarabu*), the "patricians," distinguished themselves from other people, most notably from slaves from the African interior (Glassman 1995: 61-62). Bagamoyo (opposite to Zanzibar on the mainland coast) and

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[25] Jonathon Glassman (1995: 61–62) complexifies the notion of *uungwana* in that he addresses how free-born slave-porters made claims to *uungwana* to evade the control of the Swahili Shirazi patricians, although this entailed an abdication of rural identity and acceptance of Islam.

[26] Katrin Bromber (2006) shows how in the 1920s *ustaarabu* conceptually changed to match a western concept of "civilization" in Tanganyika. Meanwhile, the concept of *uungwana* has developed into denoting the value of community-thinking or considering the impact of one's actions for one's fellow human beings. It would be interesting to trace how Tanzania's socialist history has affected the development of the term *uungwana*. Furthermore, Mohammed Ahmed Saleh (2004) shows how in the past few decades *ustaarabu* gives way to *kwenda na wakati*, "going with the times," which is an expression of the decay of moral values.

Zanzibar hosted two of the main slave markets from which African slaves were sent across the ocean (mostly to Oman) (Nimtz 1980: 39–40; Glassman 1995: 55–78). By the nineteenth century when the transoceanic slave trade was abolished, they were increasingly bought as domestic slaves for Zanzibari households as well as for the cultivation of Omani clove plantations in Zanzibar (Sheriff 1987: 48–60; Fair 2003: 11–13). Slaves came from the interior African mainland and were moved along the Arab and Nyamwezi caravan routes: from beyond the Great Lakes (Lake Victoria, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Nyassa) several routes converged at Tabora, a city in the Nyamwezi heartland in what is today central Tanzania, and from there led to the coast (Glassman 1995: 56; see also Beech 1916; Alpers 1974; Alpers 1975; Nimtz 1980).[27] Incidentally, the population of the settlements along these routes became part of the Indian Ocean world (Castryck 2015). Not only did the porters accompany the caravans and thus physically move in the spaces of the Indian Ocean trade goods, but they also occasionally converted to Islam and thus participated in a framework shared across the Indian Ocean (Trimingham 1964: 56; Glassman 1995: 63, 134–137). While for the people who lived along the caravan routes, conversion to Islam was not unusual but also not particularly encouraged, the status ascription that came with allegiance to the Swahili Coast through conversion and a concomitant sense of equality was also longed for by rural communities far from the caravan routes. In times of negotiating social control (see the Maji Maji war below) "villagers went to 'fetch' it [Islam]" (Becker 2008: 239) and thus partake in alternative social stratifications to those of colonialism.

2.1.4. Islam on the Swahili Coast

The relocation of the Omani sultan's center of governance and residence to Zanzibar entailed the introduction of governance structures for the free-born population that differentiated between "Swahilis" and Omani "Arabs." In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these developments solidified Shafiᶜi Islam as that to which the "Swahili" adhered (in contrast to the Ibadi Islam for the Omani Arabs).[28] Zanzibar became a center of religious Shafiᶜi learning in the western Indian Ocean region attracting scholars from Lamu, Mombasa, and the Comoro Islands (Pouwels 2000: 263; Loimeier 2013: 236; see also Freitag 1999). Distinguishing themselves

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[27] Besides slaves, ivory was a major commodity that was transported via these routes.
[28] Amal Ghazal (2005) draws attention to how the Ibadi Omanis in Zanzibar later came to identify with pan-Ibadism and pan-Islamism, projecting their belonging into larger frameworks.

from migrant converts (who also adopted claims to identify as *waungwana*), the "established town populations [...] switched to the term Shirazi to point out their noble descent" (Loimeier 2013: 235). Concerning religious authority, however, scholars with Hadrami background, many of whom were from *masharifu* families, took the lead. More than three quarters—the vast majority—consisted of Hadrami scholars (Hoffman 2012: 186). The blossoming of Islamic scholarship within the Indian Ocean networks as a result of vivid exchanges with other centers of Islamic learning in Cairo, the Hadramaut, Yemen, Mappila, as well as Java, also needs to be understood within the context of pan-Islamism. A.H. Nimtz (Nimtz 1980: 27; see also Becker 1911: 5) takes note of how the name of the sultan of Zanzibar was accompanied by the name of the sultan of Istanbul (as leader of all Muslims) in the Zanzibari Friday khutbas of the precolonial period.

While the Shirazi ulama in Zanzibar gained increasing prominence and nurtured vivid connections with scholarship elsewhere (seeking the "pan" of "pan-Islamism" in the geographical distances), other Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqas*) came to Zanzibar, diversifying the discourse in geographical proximity. The arrival of the Qadiriyya Tariqa from the Benadir towns (by invitation of Sultan Barghash) in 1884 (Nimtz 1980: 57) and later the Shadhiliyya Tariqa (Nimtz 1980: 60) spread and popularized Islamic Sufi practice amongst large parts of the east African population, which comprised large numbers of converts (former slaves and migrants) (Nimtz 1980: chapter 4; see also Loimeier 2013: 236).[29] Unlike the Alawiyya Tariqa, the other tariqas were not restricted to high ranking descendants of the Prophet's family (*masharifu*). New Sufi practices, such as their performances of the *maulidi ya Kiswahili*[30] in Swahili (as opposed to the *mawlid al-barzanji* in Arabic) and their practices of *dhikr*[31] were much contested by the Alawiyya-dominated ulama. As a consequence, Alawiyya scholars propagated new approaches to Islamic education and opened madrasas (Riyadha madrasa in Lamu or the Bakathir madrasa in Zanzibar) that welcomed not just students from *masharifu* families, but all Muslims and even slaves (Loimeier 2013: 239; see also 2009: 94).

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[29] Chiaki Fujii (2008; 2010) lists the activities of the tariqas in contemporary Zanzibar.

[30] *Maulidi* (Arabic: *mawlid*) is the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. It comprises the recitation of a lengthy poem.

[31] *Dhikr* is a meditative Sufi practice in which a group of people utters names or attributes of God repetitively to make God's presence tangible. There is also a silent form, but the contestations of *dhikr* in Zanzibar targeted *dhikr* that was accompanied by *dufu* (small drums) and *dhikr ya kukohoa* ("coughing *dhikr*") that employed a particular breathing technique.

This popularization of Sufi practices paired with knowledge about and literacy skills for amulet-making, numerology, and divination practices was and still is often treated as "Africanization" of popular Islam in the academic literature (see for example Pouwels 2000: 265) although these popularizations were not restricted to the east African coast (as pointed out by Hoffman 2012: 187). Regardless of similar developments across the Indian Ocean, the perception of this popularization as "Swahili" and thus as "local" finds repercussions in today's perception of drinking kombe as "local" practice. Preparing and drinking kombe facilitate a connection across the Indian Ocean not because they are perceived in relation to similar practices elsewhere, but because they operate within the framework of Islam and Islamic connectivity as projected across the Ocean. Furthermore, and complementary to how kombe connects to the Indian Ocean via Islam, kombe's materiality (and in particular the connotations of the plate) connects kombe directly to the Indian Ocean, and thereby underlines its inherently Islamic framework. As a local practice, drinking kombe draws on the Islamic Indian Ocean from Zanzibar.

Notions of "local" enactments of Islam, and thus the foundation for embracing or criticizing them, were enhanced by the spread of reformists'[32] ideas that claimed universal applicability for a singular Islam and developed during times of European colonialism. In addition to the circulation of Egyptian reformists' newspapers, such as Rashid Rida's *Al-Manār* (Ryad 2016), two individuals made reformist thought applicable to the Swahili context (Loimeier 2009: 111). Both of them were students of Sheikh al-Amin Mazrui (1891–1947):[33] Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy (1912–1982) (Loimeier 2003: 249-252) and Sheikh Muhammad Kasim Mazrui (1912–1982, same as Sheikh Farsy) (Kresse 2003). Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy who was first based in Zanzibar left in the Karume era (see 2.2.2). He moved to Mombasa where he replaced Sheikh Muhammad Kasim Mazrui as Chief

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[32] Roman Loimeier interrogates the term "reform" and "reformists" for the Swahili context and other contexts in Africa. He pays attention to how the term evokes comparison with the *reform*ation in Europe and frames "reform" as "a conscious and intentional effort to achieve social, religious, cultural, political or economic change with respect to a specific society or specific aspects of society" (2003: 240; see also Loimeier 2005). Similarly, Kai Kresse (2003) structurally compares the east African reform movement to the European " 'enlightenment' movement."

[33] For a translation of a selection of al-Amin Mazrui's newspaper articles, see (Kresse 2016).

Kadhi in 1968.[34] As reformists, they challenged many Sufi practices (mainly of the Qadiriyya which had also already been criticized by the Alawiyya) and questioned the permissibility of modern[35] developments under the framework of Islam: they started an anti-*bida^c*[36] discourse (Loimeier 2003: 250). The increased attention to reformist thought mainly by Swahili scholars who had been educated by the Alawiyya ulama emphasized the regional connectivity of Muslims (particularly with Egypt) and fostered sentiments towards the greater *umma* that was connected in theological debates. Furthermore, it sought responses to social changes during colonialism although (and partly because) the relationship between the British administration and the religious establishment was characterized by respectful recognition.

Vis-à-vis the influences of reformists' normative ideas about Islam, distinguishing what is *bida^c* from what is permissible, the separation of *dini*[37] from *mila*[38] could be regarded as helpful for the Swahili context. In this constellation,

> dini is associated with theological orthodoxy and 'Arab,' mila with a less pure orthodoxy and 'African,' with the many connotations of the dichotomy in purity and reputation, the distinctions between free and slave, patrician [*mwungwana/mstaarabu*] and commoner, and in many situations between stone-town and country-town. There are many anomalies, blurrings and exceptions to these categorizations [...]. Any group in any town may define dini and mila differently from others in the same town, and indeed most groups take care to define their own beliefs and practices as dini and those of their social inferiors as mila. (Middleton 1992: 162)

Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann explore the theme of their anthology, the "interfaces of Islam, identity, and space" of the "global worlds of the Swahili"

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[34] Farsy's move to Mombasa and his position as Chief Kadhi was marked by tensions not least because his sympathy with *Wahhabi* doctrine (see below: 2.2.3) alienated him from the majority of Mombasa's *umma* (Bakari and Yahya 1995: 180-181; Kresse 2007: 90-91).

[35] "Modernity," "development," and "globalization" are some of the key terms that are employed in this discussion. As a satisfactory delineation thereof in the Swahili context would lead us astray here, I merely wish to point to Pat Caplan (2004) for Swahili "modernity" and "development" as well as to Abdul Sheriff (2010) for "globalization" which he submerges in the history of the Indian Ocean.

[36] The Arabic term *bida^c* denotes un-Islamic innovations which are regarded very negatively as they lead people away from the way of the Prophet (Arabic: *sunna*).

[37] Roughly translatable as "religion," however, see how *dini* and "religion" intra-act in chapter 7.2.

[38] Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann (2006: 7) point out that *mila* is not equivalent to the Arabic *milla*, but rather to the Arabic *^{c}āda*, "custom, customary law, tradition."

through an examination of *dini* and *mila* as a continuum and scrutinize the dichotomous character of this pair. In this examination, they draw attention to how

> binary oppositions function as a tool in local strategies of identifying and 'othering' purported outsiders. At the same time, they obscure [...] the ambiguities and contradictions, the various layers and interfaces of oppositions, the wide variety of possible perceptions, and the different ways of realization of society, all of which are subject to constant negotiation. (2006: 9)

With Karen Barad, we could say that *dini* and *mila* intra-act: their formation into a binary opposition rests on their entanglement with each other. Processes of fleshing out their complementarity are intertwined with questions of Swahili identity. Farouk Topan (2009), for example, shows how practices of spirit possession in Pemba are negotiated within the frameworks that the (differentiating) entanglements of *dini* and *mila* provide.

During my fieldwork, the (entangled) differentiation of *dini* from *mila* was not employed, although questions of Islamic singularity (authority over defining what that comprises was regarded to be claimed by the Arabs) and plural local enactments thereof frequently accompanied delineations of kombe.[39] Eclipsing the *dini/mila* divide, kombe qualified unquestionably as a matter of *dini* although criticism from those "fierce sheikhs" (see below) was anticipated (see chapter 7.3.1). The critical stance towards those "fierce sheikhs" was not a critical stance towards *dini*, but interior to it. *Dini*—and that is Islam—constituted the framework of the Indian Ocean commonalities through which Zanzibar differentiated from the Tanzanian mainland. Although kombe is "Islamic medicine" and although Islam is intimately tied to the Indian Ocean, kombe is regarded as local, as Zanzibari practice.

Even though kombe is portrayed as a "local" Zanzibari phenomenon and defies the *dini/mila* differentiation, classification of kombe as "African Islamic" or "Swahili Islamic" are equally problematic, but on a more academically political scale. Aiming to express particularities of Swahili adherence to Islam, many authors refer to a "Swahili Islam" (Trimingham 1966: 133, 139; Hock 1987; Knappert 1996) as the most common manifestation of the many "islams" (El-Zein 1977)

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[39] I wish to thank Heike Behrend for drawing my attention to the question of this debate's relevance to my research in March 2017.

that can be found along the Swahili Coast.[40] Rüdiger Seesemann (2006) draws attention to academic practices of classifying "African Islam" (or "Swahili Islam" as a distinctive form of "African Islam") and brings it into conversation with its most popular alternative, "Islam in Africa."[41] More than a problem of nomenclature, Seesemann shows how the classifications of "African Islam" and "Islam in Africa" both entail multiple attributes (syncretistic and fundamentalist, local and translocal/global, traditional and modern) that draw on and shape academic notions of both "Islam" and "Africa" and that are subject to local interpretations and adaptations. He concludes that such a "dichotomous approach is unsuitable for explaining the development of Islamic societies in Africa" and that "the challenge [...] lies in analyzing and explaining how local and global elements interact, and how such encounters lead to the emergence of ever new forms of 'glocal synthesis'" (Seesemann 2006: 247). Closely related to Seesemann's proposition, Kresse's anthropological attention to the internal debates shows that practices of what is locally understood as Islam are self-reflexively scrutinized through Islamic paradigms that themselves are subject to constant re-evaluation (2007: 83).

I agree with Kresse and Seesemann and build on their framework. A focus on the intra-action of "local and global elements" furthermore allows for an analytic inclusion not only of those Muslims who also live at the Swahili Coast and who

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[40] John Middleton (1992: 162) circumvents this terminology to prevent a "misleading distinction between 'Islam' and 'custom'" (or *dini* and *mila*, see above) by referring to "Swahili religion" (and thus acknowledges a normative notion of "Islam"). Kresse (2007: 83) also refutes Middleton's circumvention as it bears the "danger of losing sight of the fact that we are still dealing with a Muslim society."

[41] Seesemann explicitly replies to the edited volume by Eva Evers Rosander and David Westerlund (1997) in which this distinction is pronounced. They portray the "traditional" "African Islam" as peaceful, flexible, and accommodating as opposed to the "modern" "Islam in Africa" that they posit as closely connected to dangerous tendencies of Islamism and as a threat to Sufis (Rosander 1997; Westerlund 1997). See also Roman Loimeier's (2013: chapter 1) book on Muslim societies in Africa. He points to the difficulties of supporting the notion of a distinctly "African" Islam although—and this he regards under Talal Asad's framework of Islam as "discursive tradition" (see chapter 7.2.4)—reformers' questions of authority often direct their criticism against "African" (and "Asian") practices that in their understanding are not permissible. (More on contemporary reformist influences below.)

are not of the Shafiᶜi school,[42] but also of Christians of various denominations[43] (and Hindus)[44] from whom Shafiᶜi Muslims nurture their differentiation.

As Seesemann notes, the framework of a globally unifying Islam matters next to local specificities. Taking seriously the also locally enacted centrality of the *umma* (community of all Muslims) that shapes a singular Islam, Talal Asad's (1993) criticism of the plurality of "islams" and his notion of Islam as a "discursive tradition" are well-taken as constitutive part of the "glocal synthesis." For the Swahili Coast, this *umma* was and is connected to the Indian Ocean seascape, connected not least through simultaneous[45] prayer in the direction of Mecca (Parkin and Headley 2000) and through the shared (envisioned or actualized) pilgrimage, the Hajj (Pearson 2007; see also Loimeier 2012; Parkin 2000a). Furthermore, the widespread adherence to Islam across the Indian Ocean shaped shared structures of administration, law, education, and spiritual frameworks that were inextricably linked to the shared culture of trade, which causes Sheriff to speak of the Indian Ocean as "Muslim Lake" or "Islamic Lake" (Sheriff 2010: 239; see also Sheriff 2014: 24-25). Despite various analytical possibilities, the local narration of Islamic Zanzibar refers most prominently to projections across the Indian Ocean to which I wish to draw attention here.

In a brief overview of the more distant Swahili history and its themes to which today's discursive demarcation of kombe connects, I have shown how kombe resonates with Zanzibar's historical embeddedness in the Indian Ocean realm. The processes through which a notion of "the Swahili" and "Swahiliness" as distinct cultural complex have gained ground and how these processes depend on intra-action with others would require much more space than this sub-chapter permits. What is important here for situating today's practices of preparing and drinking

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[42] Ithnaasheri, Aga Khan Ismailis, Bohra (all Shiᶜi groups and the latter two strongly emphasizing and controlling their distinction from the Africans as Indians), as well as Ibadi (mainly Omanis) and small groups of Hanafi, Maliki, and Hanbali Sunnis are often listed in the academic literature (see for example Lodhi 1994: 90) as comprising the Islamic diversity in Zanzibar. Furthermore, in this context, the Sufi brotherhoods are also listed. Whereas membership in most of the Shiᶜi groups is highly restrictive and tied to birth into a community, turning to Ithnaasheri Shiᶜi Islam appears to be an increasingly attractive option for people on the Swahili Coast (Kresse 2007: 81, 188-192).

[43] (Goan) Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans comprise the most established Christian groups. Recently, growing numbers of independent churches have gained visibility (see chapter 7.1.2).

[44] Hindus often are left out in this context, as they, compared to Christians, are not so much seen as the "other." In Zanzibari discourse, it is Muslims and Christians who intra-act.

[45] For the theme of temporality see how Hakimu Saleh chooses the appropriate time to prepare kombe.

kombe, however, is that in the narration of a particular Swahili historicity, coastal, cosmopolitan, Muslim, and civilized urbanity is highlighted as superior and serves as a locus of pride. Zanzibar is unquestionably part of the Swahili Coast and Zanzibar's self-image is deeply rooted in the here outlined attributes of the Swahili Coast. Kombe as a local—a Zanzibari—phenomenon hinges on many of these attributes, but also reverberates with Zanzibar's particularity that stems from the more recent history. Notably, when Paul self-identifies as a Zanzibari Christian whose parents are from Mwanza on the mainland, and who from this position offers to explain the Zanzibari phenomenon of kombe, the inherent tension implicit in Paul's merging of Zanzibari and Christian identity amplifies a normative notion of Zanzibariness as tied to Islam and not Christianity. The second half of this chapter deals with the narrower geographical scope of the islands of Zanzibar and shows how the more recent history challenges and solidifies Zanzibar's distinctiveness from the African mainland.

2.2. Zanzibar and the Mainland

Zanzibar consists of two major islands, Unguja and Pemba, and numerous smaller islands including Tumbatu and Chumbe just off the African mainland's coast. (The close-by island of Mafia does not belong to Zanzibar.) As stated in the preceding section, the town of Zanzibar gained increased importance when the sultan of Oman (Said bin Sultan al-Busaid) shifted his center of governance and residence to Zanzibar in the 1830s, which until then, and compared to nearby Mombasa, was not particularly influential. The sultan's move from Muscat to Zanzibar did not only mark the end of Portuguese (Christian) influence, but also shifted the power dynamics between the Swahili towns. As the Omani sultan and his entourage attracted further business to Zanzibar, the town became comparatively prosperous in the region, thus exerting increasing influence compared to other Swahili towns and becoming a center for Islamic learning. When Sultan Said passed away, the rule over Oman and Zanzibar was divided between two of his sons, Thuwayni and Majid (later challenged by another of Said's sons, Barghash) (Bennett 1978). The orientation of the Zanzibari sultanate, thus, concentrated on the narrower regional scope of the Swahili Coast with Zanzibar as the economic and political center. In this section and with a particular focus on Zanzibar as a political entity, the narration of history shifts its emphasis to Zanzibar's relation with the mainland. Of course, the Indian Ocean with which the mainland intra-acts for the

demarcation of how Zanzibar is different from the mainland remains present, just as the mainland was present in the subsection on the Indian Ocean.

In the late nineteenth century, officially under the sovereignty of the sultan of Zanzibar, Zanzibar and vast territories on the mainland over which the sultan exerted suzerainty came to be of interest of the then emerging German East Africa Company (Deutsch-Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft). The sultanate's friendly relations with the British, who recognized the Zanzibari sultanate, became enmeshed in the European "Scramble for Africa" in which Great Britain and Germany vied over the territories in eastern Africa. After the sultan provided trade rights to Britain and Germany, the enforcement of the abolition of slavery on the mainland damaged the relations with Germany in Tanganyika through which the caravan routes led. Germany and Great Britain had divided claims on territories between them in their Anglo-German Agreement of 1890, also known as Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty. In this treaty, claims on Zanzibar as well as the territories of what today is Kenya and Uganda were granted to Great Britain, and claims on what after independence became Tanganyika, Burundi, and Rwanda (the southern part of the eastern African territories) were granted to Germany. Whereas the inland areas of Kenya were turned into a colony in 1920, Zanzibar and a ten-mile-wide coastal strip remained a protectorate and thus under the sovereignty of the Omani sultanate. Germany solidified its claim on "its" territories as a colony of German East Africa despite Omani and local resistance. The separation of Zanzibar (sultanate and part of the British protectorate) from the Swahili towns in the German colony resulted in different colonial experiences and until today has repercussions in the entangled differentiations of the two parts of the Tanzanian union (their intra-actions).

The differentiation between the island, *kisiwani*, and the mainland, *bara*, as its other runs parallel to the differentiation in Kenya between the coast, *pwani*, and the hinterland, *bara*. That in Tanzania the line of differentiation is marked by the water between the islands and the mainland while in Kenya this line is marked by the colonial ten-mile strip must be seen in relation to the colonial and postcolonial[46] politics in Tanganyika/Zanzibar, later Tanzania, and Kenya. The differentiation set in geographical terms is enacted as a continuation of the Swahili *uungwana/ustaarabu* distinction from an "other." However, parts of the

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[46] I employ the term "postcolonial" here to designate the time that came after the colonial time. As analytical category I would suggest to follow Stephanie Wanga' critique of postcolonialism and her proposal of "Upekuzi" (2019).

(mostly coastal) Tanzanian mainland—towns such as Kilwa or Tanga, but also towns of the former trading routes such as Ujiji that have connections to the Indian Ocean world and that host a considerable Muslims population—take part in the "civilized" Swahili realm (see footnote 4). Similarly, *bara* extends into the ten-mile coastal strip in Kenya. The rigid geographical borders, thus, are rather lines of reference.

The Maji Maji war (*vita vya maji maji*)[47] in 1905–1907 against German colonial rule is not only one of the main uprisings against German colonial power (Gwassa 2005; see also Iliffe 1979), but was also occasionally brought up in conversations about kombe. According to a customer with whom I had a conversation in a small store,[48] my research topic was a historical one, as for him it was clear that as a German researcher on kombe I was interested in the Maji Maji war. He was a senior man and proud CCM supporter and at first, I was surprised by the connection he made between my research topic and the Maji Maji war.[49] Sensitized to this connection, however, I have encountered it on other occasions. Indeed, the medicinal water that fighters drank or poured over their heads to protect their bodies from German bullets (which would turn into water or roll off like water droplets) recalls kombe.[50] Linking kombe to the medicinal protective

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[47] The Maji Maji war—*maji* means "water"—took place in the southern parts of German East Africa. From local narratives entangled with colonial reports, the anti-colonial uprising became defined through the protective medicine based on water. The narrative in which the water was distributed by a snake spirit who acted through his medium named Kinjikitile Ngwale—he is also often depicted as "prophet" (Beez 2005: 62)—was powerful during and after the war.

[48] Informal conversation, December 2013, Chukwani, Zanzibar Town.

[49] During and after the struggles for Tanganyikan independence the narratives of the Maji Maji war were employed to speak of tensions and alliances between various groups of people and to stress a unifying ideology within frameworks of tradition and modernity (Monson 2010; see also Becker 2004; 2005; Beez 2005; Gwassa 2005). For me as a German, the Maji Maji war is a highly sensitive topic as Germany has not officially asked for forgiveness for these crimes of colonialism (Kolonialverbrechen) during the Maji Maji war and during the time of hunger afterwards, when thousands of people starved as a consequence of the German policy of burning soil on which people relied to grow crops (Majura 2005). See also the declaration initiated by "Tanzania Network e.V." and available online at www.tanzania-network.de/front_content.php?idart=167 (accessed 17 July 2017) as well as the official request on 8 February 2017 by the Tanzanian minister for defense and national service, Hussein Mwinyi, for compensation payments (Schwikowski 2017).

[50] According to the literature, the narratives that I have encountered in Zanzibar that interpreted the medicinal water of the Maji Maji war as kombe appear not to be widely spread. Instead, the water-based medicine that was employed in the Maji Maji war appears to be one of many instances in which "magic water" serves to protect from colonial bullets (Pe-

"magic" water of the Maji Maji war situates kombe within the history of the Tanzanian mainland, and could be interpreted as a comment that on the one hand subscribes to the Tanzanian union's shared history. Islamic practices which in the Zanzibari discourse belong to the realm of Zanzibar as opposed to the Tanzanian mainland, are here situated in the German colony and thus provide a narrative that challenges rigid distinctions. On the other hand, situating kombe within the narrative of the Maji Maji war points to a historically wide penetration of Islamic practice and thus, retaining the rigid distinctions, can easily be aligned with discourses demanding more power for Zanzibar (to which the realm of "the Islamic" is attributed) than the union agreements currently provide.

Although not a proper colony, British influence on the sultan's governance was immense. Their effective appointment of the Zanzibari sultan[51] assured the prosperity of British interests and led for example to the legal (as opposed to economic or social) abolition of slavery in 1897. Laura Fair's (2003) intriguing work shows how these legal changes entailed manifold ways of negotiating and re-negotiating status, desires, and respect through practices of everyday life in urban Zanzibar. She draws attention to the shifts in identification, practices of belonging, and the concomitant dynamics in the urban landscape that took place during the course of British rule and that were highly politicized: As many former slaves identified as "Swahili," the term over time became a euphemism for ex-slaves and was increasingly rejected (Fair 2003: 35; see also Arens 1975; Glassman 1995: 25). Instead, people started to identify as "indigenous Zanzibari" in connection to places ("Wahadimu," "Watumbatu," "Wapemba")[52] or descent claims ("Washirazi"), as the British census attests to. Identification as "indigenous" had legal advantages in the colonial system based on race distinctions to which the Zanzibari population, and especially former slaves, pragmatically reacted. More than that, Fair points out,

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traitis 1998). Interestingly then, in Zanzibar, kombe absorbs these notions of "magic water." Thus, other forms of "magic water" have no significance. However, Hussein Bashir Abdallah (2011: 51-56) who narrates the history of the Maji Maji war as Islamic Jihad, frames the Maji Maji water as protective Zamzam water (water from the spring in Mecca, see chapter 1.1.5).

[51] In 1896, after Sultan Hamad (pro-British) died, his son sought to succeed him without British consent which resulted in the bombardment of the sultan's palace in the shortest war in history (sources differ between 37 and 45 minutes) (Bennett 1978: 178–179).

[52] These terms can be translated as "people from the southeastern part of Unguja," "people from Tumbatu," and "people from Pemba."

> these identities as Zanzibaris were by no means fictive. We need to recognize
> that for the majority of former slaves who remained on the islands, by the
> 1920s, Zanzibar was in fact home. These men and women had spent the
> greater part of their lives in Zanzibar; they had built their homes, planted
> their farms, and watched both their children and their trees grow to matu-
> rity on Zanzibar's rich soil. [...] Regardless of where they had come from,
> many former slaves had grown accustomed to coastal life and culture. (Fair
> 2003: 39-40)

Still, free-born, Muslim Zanzibaris sought to distinguish themselves from these
new claims on Swahiliness and the negotiation over *ustaarabu* in colonial times
was used to underline the prevailing hierarchy (Bromber 2006). Furthermore, with
the freed slaves, many Hadrami merchants saw a growing consumer market and
migrated (Horton and Middleton 2000: 185). Along with the already present num-
bers of Hadrami and Omani settlers, they contributed to the social stratification as
"Arabs" who were hierarchically placed above the *wastaarabu* Zanzibaris. For the
wastaarabu Zanzibaris, connectivity to Arabness (and thus to ties across the Indian
Ocean) was central to this hierarchical social system which Farouk Topan (2006)
describes as "Swahili Paradox." He explains how the flexible "Swahili" identity
embodies Arab and African elements to paradoxically distinguish from the lat-
ter. The current stress on Zanzibari distinctiveness from the mainland must be
regarded in light of these negotiations and shifts of Swahili and Zanzibari identity.

   Meanwhile, many Zanzibari Arabs faced economic hardship. As Michael L.
Lofchie (1966: 106-107) points out, in addition to lost investments in freed slaves,
the Arabs' increasing indebtedness to Indian financiers since well before the estab-
lishment of a British protectorate and the fluctuations of the world clove market,[53]
with hit a low in the 1870s and again between 1920 and 1925 had economically
severe consequences for Zanzibar. The end of the nineteenth century, thus, is often
regarded as a turning point, characterized by nostalgic sentiments for a formerly
prosperous Zanzibar. Identifying as Zanzibaris, this nostalgia is shared even by
those whose ancestors were possibly not free-born, as it allows for partaking in
Zanzibari pride in historical importance. For the Zanzibari Omanis, this period of
transformation resulted in revived orientations towards the Indian Ocean. Amal
Ghazal (2005) traces how the Omanis' identification as Arab-Ibadi not only cre-
ated a sense of victimization vis-à-vis the British colonial power, but also connected

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[53]   The sultanate's economy depended to a large extent on the export of cloves which were grown
   in mostly Arab-owned plantations along the north-western coast of Unguja and in Pemba.

them in particular and Zanzibar in general with pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism. Furthermore, in the early twentieth century, Zanzibar nurtured sympathetic relations with the Ottoman Empire—causing some Omanis, but not Sultan Khalifa bin Harub, to fight for the Ottomans with the Germans against the British in the First World War (Ghazal 2005: 50).

2.2.1. *Zama za Siasa*

In the time between the years 1957 and 1964—the *zama za siasa*[54] (time of politics)—the fragmentation of the social composition of people living in Zanzibar found expression in political activities, and thereby this time is said to have "politicized ethnicity" (Shivji 2008: 2; for a detailed examination see also Lofchie 1966: chapter 4; Fair 2003; Loimeier 2009: 34–45; Glassman 2011). Drawing on the prevalent racialized separation and working towards African leadership in Zanzibar, the African Association represented claims for Black African Nationalism. It mainly attracted mainland Africans (who had become "Swahili") and nurtured close ties to the Tanganyika African Association (TAA). The Shirazi Association was divided on their cooperation with the African Association in the Afro-Shirazi Union (ASU), which resulted in the Unguja leaders of the Shirazi Association joining forces with the African Association and led to the formation of the Afro-Shirazi Party (ASP) in 1957, while the Pemba leaders of the Shirazi Association remained independent.[55] However, in 1959 the tensions within the ASP led to a split from which the Zanzibar and Pemba People's Party (ZPPP) emerged, which included the Pemba leaders of the Shirazi Association. The ASP shaped its profile in opposition to its greatest political competitor, the Zanzibar Nationalist Party (ZNP). The ZNP based its rhetoric on the particular Zanzibari "culture" and "*ustaarabu*" instead of "race."[56] It had emerged in 1955 from the consolidation of the conservative Arab Association—the *Hizbu l'Watan l'Riaia Sultan Zanzibar*, a

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[54] The more literal translation "sunken into politics" points to the scale of political activities at that time.

[55] In Pemba, where Omani settlement and better distribution of clove estates created less economic hardship than in rural Zanzibar, the hostility towards Arabs was never as outspoken as it was in Unguja. Rather, in Pemba, the Shirazi Association resented the growing influence of mainlanders. This was not the case for the Shirazi Association in Unguja whose members also comprised former mainlanders (Glassman 2011: chapter 3). This ambivalence of Shirazi nationalism and its rhetoric find repercussions in Zanzibari politics until today.

[56] The tensions between the parties followed the lines of the tensions over authority between the Alawiyya Tariqa and the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya Tariqa (see Nimtz 1980: 183).

party that gained support from peasants from Kiembe Samaki, where the airport was built on their farm lands—and the Zanzibar National Union (ZNU)—a radical and multi-racial group that was connected to independence movements in other countries (such as Egypt) (Shivji 2008: 22; Loimeier 2009: 34–45).

Within these seven years, Zanzibar saw four elections, all of which had very close outcomes. In all four elections, the British nomination system prevented the ASP from receiving a majority in the Legislative Council (LegCo), the governing body. Most audible in the election campaigns of 1960/1961 that turned violent in June 1961, the ASP accused the ZNP of being Arab[57] while the ZNP accused the ASP of selling out to the Tanganyika mainland. The two main parties thus further constituted the cleavage between the orientation toward the Indian Ocean (with Arab domination feared by the ASP) and the orientation toward the African mainland (with Tanganyikan domination feared by ZNP).[58] Various initiatives had potentials to dissipate the divisions of the parties, such as the Nasserist Umma party with its Marxist leader Abdulrahman Muhammad Babu (formerly ZNP) that was only founded in July 1963 (but see Lofchie 1966: 260-263), or the Freedom Committee with its aim of uniting the struggle for independence, but they never gained considerable influence in light of the rivalries between ASP and ZNP.

Tanganyika, which was handed over to Great Britain after the First World War, became independent in December 1961 and then was ruled by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) under the presidency of Julius Nyerere. Its national language became Swahili in 1962, and within the nation-building process, the notion of what "Swahiliness" comprises was expanded to include all Tanganyikan citizens united by their common language Swahili.[59] Meanwhile, in Zanzibar, the July 1963 elections revealed a majority for the ASP, but again

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[57] Allyson Purpura quotes Bwana Mtumwa Checha whom she interviewed: "the ZNP used religion [Islam] and their wealth. But *my* party [the Afro-Shirazi Party] was the party of the Truth, the party of the Oppressed. Many [of us] were Muslim but many were also Christian. There was no discrimination, even *Indians* [his emphasis] were in our party, even Manga [newer Omani immigrants] and even Arabs were in our party" (1997: 181).

[58] Here, the racialized dichotomy is pronounced. Glassman (2011) scrutinizes this discourse's historicity, its connection to British rule and to notions of *ustaarabu*. Furthermore, it must be noted that Unguja and Pemba were divided on party politics and until today the two main islands of Zanzibar have a complicated relation to each other.

[59] Competence in Swahili was already widely spread as the Germans had already introduced Swahili as their language of administration in German East Africa (Mulokozi 2002: 1). However, far from all newly independent citizens were able to understand and speak Swahili. Over time, Swahili became prevalent and many other languages have become endangered (Muzale and Rugemalira 2008). The Swahili spoken in Zanzibar in the 1960s was taken as

the ZNP and ZPPP still received the majority of LegCo seats which caused much unrest (Speller 2007: 285; Loimeier 2009: 45–46; Glassman 2011: 64, chapter 8). In December 1963, both the colony of Kenya and the Kenyan protectorate gained independence and simultaneously the British gave up their claims on Zanzibar. Unlike for the Kenyan territories, in Zanzibar, the sultan remained the head of state. When the British retreated, they thus left Zanzibar in control of the Sultan Jamshid bin Abdullah Al Said[60] and the ZNP-ZPPP coalition. The ZNP's calls for independence from the British colonialists whom they had nurtured throughout the *zama za siasa* (Babu 1991: 225-227) were thus achieved, and the ASP's fears of Arab domination came true.

2.2.2. Revolution, Independence, Union

On 12th January 1964, one month after the British revocation of the protectorate, the revolution broke out. Amongst historians, the exact details of the revolution remain unresolved (Shivji 2008: 41–42; Glassman 2011: 64). It is certain, though, that John Okello, a Ugandan Christian member of the ASP Youth League along with others who later became known as the "Committee of 14," played a major role in the bloody insurrection.[61] The Committee of 14 later constituted half of the "Revolutionary Council" that ruled after the revolution. The attacks on strategic government buildings were followed by a wave of rape and mass killings of mainly Arabs for whose rule and "slave-holding feudal regime" (Cameron 2004: 104) the ASP Youth League's discourse sought revenge. The revolution took place in Unguja and only arrived in Pemba a week later. As a warning, some Arabs and Indi-

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the standard version: *Kiswahili sanifu.* This decision attests to and solidified the notion of Zanzibar comprising elements of an "original Swahiliness."

[60] Sultan Jamshid, who had only come to power in June 1963, was highly inexperienced and unpopular (Clayton 1981: 46).

[61] The most detailed account is given by Anthony Clayton (1981) who relies heavily on John Okello's book (1967). Although his account does justice to academic conventions of the discipline of history and thus could be evaluated to provide a higher degree of accuracy than other accounts, it does not coincide with Zanzibar's official narration of the revolution. My intention of outlining how kombe in Zanzibar relates to its historical situatedness hinges on both people's memories of their experiences during that time but also on the political narration of that time. For diverse perspectives on the revolution that show how the revolution echoes today through various people in various places, see also the recent publication "Social Memory, Silenced Voices, and Political Struggle" (edited by Bissell and Fouéré 2018). Roman Loimeier's chapter in this volume (2018) is a concise historical narration that also addresses the contentions of this narration.

ans were arrested, terrorized, and humiliated, but compared to the mass killings in Unguja, Pemba was hardly involved (Shivji 2008: 53, but see Koenings 2018). Until today, Pemba is a stronghold of the opposition party CUF (see below) that is often accused of not supporting the revolution and its subsequent independence from Omani domination.

Abeid Amani Karume, founding member of the ASP and its leader, Kassim Hanga, a Soviet-educated teacher and supporter of the ASP who had planned his own revolution but was preempted by Okello, and Babu, founder and leader of the Umma party, were all in Dar es Salaam during the revolutionary take-over and returned to Zanzibar immediately. After turbulent weeks of post-revolutionary violence and struggles over authority involving international alliances,[62] Karume became the president, Hanga vice-president, and Babu became minister of external affairs of the then proclaimed People's Republic of Zanzibar and Pemba under the supreme authority of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council. The unpopular Okello[63] was deported. The new regime in Zanzibar was recognized quickly by neighboring African countries as well as by several communist countries, including China, the Soviet Union, and the German Democratic Republic whereas Britain, the United States, and most Commonwealth countries hesitated. Zanzibar developed positive relations with the East bloc, which caused suspicion amongst the western countries who feared an "African Cuba."[64]

In official Zanzibari history, as published a year later in a major newspaper[65] in Dar es Salaam (reprinted in Mapuri 1996; Okello 1967), the revolution was planned and led by Karume. This historical narrative diverts attention from

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[62] Tanganyika under Nyerere was hoping for an Eastern African Federation including Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, and Zanzibar in light of Pan-Africanism (Shivji 2008: 69). His interest in Zanzibar's stability, however, was also nurtured by an interest in Tanganyika's stability. Responding to a request from Karume, Nyerere thus sent 300 policemen to Zanzibar to restore order (Speller 2007: 288).

[63] With his vigorous Christian rhetoric (God told him to liberate Zanzibar), Okello could not find much support in the Zanzibari population that was primarily Muslim. When he was sent off with the help of Nyerere, Karume turned him into a persona non grata and Okello returned to Uganda (Speller 2007: 292; Shivji 2008: 54).

[64] Until the end of 1964, the British formed various contingency plans and waited for Nyerere to ask them for assistance to intervene. As a retreating colonial power, the British were acutely aware of the internal Tanzanian upheaval a British involvement into their affairs would entail and thus resorted to maintaining a state of readiness to forestall a possible evolvement of Zanzibar into an "African Cuba." By the end of the year, the British evaluated the revolution as an "expression of African resentment at their continued subjection rather than an organized communist coup" (Speller 2007: 297) and gave up their state of readiness.

[65] *The Nationalist*, 12 January 1965.

the brutal Christian Okello (but see Okello's own book: Okello 1967; see also Abdallah 2012). It is narrated as consequence of the ASP's vision of Zanzibar as an "African State" (Wimmelbücker 2001: 306). Until today, it is impossible to challenge the legitimacy of the 1964 revolution in Zanzibar: neither the turn-over of an elected government (in a questionable voting system) nor the subsequent violence are addressed critically. Instead, it has become a foundational myth and the ruling party *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM, "Party of the Revolution") continues to portray the revolution extremely positively as liberating and a constitutive part of what Zanzibar comprises. Omar Mapuri, a CCM politician, has published a book on the revolution, which, while engaging with the shortcomings of the "official" history (and that includes taking up and explicitly denying the mass killings of Arabs), also calls on "Zanzibari Africans" to "ensure that the Great 1964 Revolution remains for ever and that Zanzibar remains African" (Mapuri 1996: 83).[66] Until today, *mapinduzi daima* ("revolution forever") is the CCM's slogan and the revolution features prominently in the government's name: *Serikali ya Mapinduzi ya Zanzibar* (Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar).

100 days after the revolution—in light of politics of Pan-Africanism and Cold-War politics[67] in April 1964—Karume and Nyerere decided for Zanzibar and Tanganyika to unite, forming the modern state of the United Republic of Tanzania.

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[66] One must note that, of course, any history writing is political and serves a certain interest. Mapuri's book explicitly draws lessons from the revolution to the 1995 elections in which the CCM only slightly won over the CUF (see below) which he compares to the pre-revolution situation. Mapuri's bias, celebrating the revolution and questioning the merits of multi-partyism, stands in contrast to widely accepted western values for democracy. Thus, the mention of Mapuri's history writing in this paragraph serves to contextualize the history writing that I have based my own narrative on. In a similar vein, Babu's account of the revolution—Babu was the leader of the Umma party—stresses how the involvement of his party and the popular support "helped to minimize bloodshed by avoiding inter-racial and inter-party violence" (Babu 1991: 240–241). The copy of this book at Humboldt University received a pencil marking by an engaged reader: "falsch! Lüge! Leugner!" While Babu was bending "the truth" at this point (according to almost all other academic sources), his decision must be seen in the context of Tanzanian history writing. Loimeier (2007a: 152) observes that "debates in Tanzania are characterized by a general desire to reach a consensus, even at the cost of suppressing historical truth and justifiable (even if particularistic) aspirations." Thus, Babu's statement must be regarded within his politics of writing himself into a history over which Tanzania could find a consensus.

[67] Shivji (2008: 74–75) evaluates the formation of the union as entirely masterminded by British and US powers who aimed to control a possibly emerging threat from Zanzibar's close ties to the communist block.

Nyerere became the union's president and Karume its vice-president.[68] Appointing many of his potential competitors and critical voices to union government posts in Dar es Salaam, Karume thus consolidated his own power in Zanzibar. Karume's politics became marked by intransigent Africanization causing many people who were marked as non-Zanzibari to flee the islands.[69] Whereas for Karume the union agreement was beneficial, it is unclear to what extent the union was approved of by the Revolutionary Council, let alone the Zanzibari population which has been causing much distress to the Zanzibari population. Unlike Tanganyika, Zanzibar acquired the status of a semi-autonomous part of Tanzania with its own parliamentary political sub-structure. This structure is unfortunate in that Zanzibaris feel swallowed by the union of which Tanganyika is the much bigger and influential part,[70] while people from the mainland feel that Zanzibar receives too much attention with their extra government which is often termed in both local discourse and academic literature the "Zanzibar problem": although less than 3 percent of the Tanzanian population is Zanzibari and although the two islands comprise less than 1 percent of Tanzania's geographical surface area, Zanzibar receives almost a fourth of the union's parliament seats (Myers and Muhajir 2013: 670) and thus holds disproportionately large share of the union's political power. Matters of religious affiliation are a constant concern for the make-up of the union's parliament. Tanzania's "secularity" is discursively evaluated by monitoring the percentages of the religions represented by the members of parliament (see also chapter 7). With Swahili as the national language since independence, the notion of "Swahiliness" has changed to serve processes of nation-building for the "modern" Tanzanian

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[68] The *ujamaa*-politics, Tanganyika's (and later Tanzania's) enactment of African socialism, provided the ideological program for the union's political decisions during the first years of independence. One of its key goals was to promote development through social, economic, and political equality and thus it sought to abolish discrimination based on hierarchical social structures (Nyerere 1968; see also Westerlund 1980).

[69] Karume's plan to Africanize Zanzibar included not only expelling Arabs ('Manga') from their houses in Stone Town in 1964, but also the declaration that small groups such as Comorians were not citizens in 1968 and a decree for 'Asians' to leave the islands in 1971. Furthermore, Karume's plan involved forced marriages of girls with non-African origin to African men (Martin 1978: 70–71; Loimeier 2009: 52). Martin (1978: 71) states that 35000 people left Zanzibar between 1964 and 1972 under Karume.

[70] The mainland does not have its own political sub-structure (as opposed to what Zanzibar constitutes) so that the mainland's political matters are always dealt with as union matters. Furthermore, union politics are (more or less) developed for the mainland that hosts the majority of union citizens (the 2012 census counted 43.6 million people on the mainland and 1.3 million people in Zanzibar).

state, including its "secular" structure: for the Tanzanian mainland (and that becomes almost identical with the union) "Swahiliness" becomes detached from attributes of coastal and Muslim urbanity (while these attributes are celebrated for Zanzibar). The complex relation of Zanzibar and the union is entangled with matters of religious affiliation.

By the time Karume was assassinated in 1972, Zanzibar had seen years of food shortages, economic hardship, and considerable changes in the demographic composition. Furthermore, Karume had extended his rule to matters of people's everyday lives: allocation of housing (see below), censorship of *taarab* songs (Fair 2002; 2003), prescriptions on everyday dress (Martin 1978: 67), and required registration of all public and private meetings (Loimeier 2009: 54). Such prescriptions severely impacted on people's relation to the state and to each other. While the Karume years were also marked by a commitment to free of charge biomedical treatment, many "traditional" healers fled the islands as their practices were regarded as "non-modern" and "superstitious" (Parkin 2006: 698). In the early 1970s, the provision of free biomedical facilities proved difficult and Zanzibar entered a period of scarce medical services. Instead, people turned to mosques and "Islam appears to have become, more markedly than previously, a partial substitute for medicine and healing" (Parkin 2006: 699). Despite these difficult living conditions, the Karume years are also remembered as years in which Zanzibar was not corrupted by the moral indecency of the mainland. Karume's proclamation that mainland/union decisions[71] should "stop at Chumbe"[72] are taken up by today's reformists in their calls for better moral regulation (Loimeier 2006a: 125-126).

Karume's assassination did not develop into a coup d'état as the ASP was able to keep control. Aboud Jumbe became the new president and very slowly opened up to reforms.[73] In 1977, TANU and ASP merged to form the *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) and passed a new constitution for the union which is still in place today; in 1979 Zanzibar passed its new constitution and has since been governed by the *Baraza la Wawakilishi* (House of Representatives). Ali Hassan Mwinyi, succeeding Aboud Jumbe in 1984, further encouraged economic develop-

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[71] Karume referred to the Arusha Declaration that lined out Tanzania's politics of self-reliance under the framework of *ujamaa* (Tanzania's African socialism).

[72] Chumbe is a small island just off Zanzibar Town that ferries from Dar es Salaam need to pass.

[73] His politics were, however, accompanied by corruption and mismanagement.

ment (tourism, investment from the Gulf) and stressed the Zanzibari CCM's independence from the union's CCM.[74] These measures attracted medical practitioners from India, Pakistan, and China and also "traditional" healers from Zanzibar felt free to practice more openly again (Parkin 2006: 699).

Following the union's "Traditional and Alternative Medicines Act" of 2002, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (in collaboration with the World Health Organization) developed its own "Zanzibar Traditional and Alternative Medicine Policy" in 2008. Both documents recognize "traditional and alternative medicine" as an important part of healthcare and provide frameworks for the inclusion and formalization of these medical facilities (registration, administration, promotion of research); the Zanzibari document has an extra section on the protection of intellectual property rights that addresses traditional practitioners' fear to sell themselves out to biomedicine (Meier zu Biesen, Dilger, Nienstedt 2012: 18). These policies of formalization—to be implemented through a "Traditional and Alternative Health Practice Council" in the case of the union and the ministerial "Traditional Medicine Unit" (*Baraza la Tiba Asili*) in the case of Zanzibar—are targeted at the recognition, inclusion, and regulation of non-biomedical medicine within a broader framework of national health care. Providing the legal framework and the categories through which to identify non-biomedical practices of healing, these documents do not only place Hakimu Saleh's and Bi Mwana's practices in a common framework of non-biomedicinal treatment, but also exemplify daily government practices of enacting the exceptional position of Zanzibar within the Tanzanian union.

Zanzibar Town, where I conducted most of the fieldwork for this study, is the largest town in Zanzibar with approximately 300000 inhabitants and lies on the west coast of Unguja. It is the capital of Zanzibar and hosts all principal administrative offices. Its urban structure reflects Zanzibar's historical developments and gives them a spatial materialization. The oldest part of town (built as a close meshwork of mostly typically Swahili coral-stone houses) is called Stone Town (*Mji Mkongwe*) and is delineated by the "Creek Road,"[75] the road that was built on top of the fill of the creek that had turned Stone Town into a peninsula. The name of the bustling area close to the market and to the former central bus stop, *Darajani* (at the bridge), attests to the importance of the bridge that connected what the

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[74] The list of CCM presidents continues: Idriss Abdul Wakil (1985-1990), Salmin Amour (1990-2000), Amani Abeid Karume (2000-2010), Ali Mohamed Shein (since 2010).

[75] Also named Benjamin Mkwapa Road after the second union's president of Tanzania.

creek separated: the stone town (at the time before the revolution hosting mainly "Arabs" and "Indians") and *Ng'ambo* (the "other side," hosting mainly "Africans" before the revolution). It must be noted that this was neither the outcome of a development that "just happened" nor was the boundary as clear-cut as discursively remembered and as suggested in my writing. William Bissell traces the British colonial plans to transform Zanzibar Town into an orderly space and tells the story of their failures. Despite these failures to materialize, these plans have served, according to Bissell, "to craft Stone Town as a more privileged sphere" (2011: 331). With the revolution and the introduction of Karume's rule, the city center was moved to Michenzani in what then was *Ng'ambo*. This was both a pragmatic and symbolic choice. Okello's immediate occupation of the radio station in Raha Leo (Michenzani) on the night that the revolution started was crucial not only for the announcement of the political changes to Zanzibar's population, it also shifted the space of power into *Ng'ambo*. With striking similarities to colonial urban planning, Karume sought to give Zanzibar a new (architectural) face in which the distinction between Stone Town and *Ng'ambo* was kept intact (Bissell 2011; Myers 1993; Sheriff 1995a). Aided by the German Democratic Republic, large modern housing blocks were constructed in Michenzani, and the people whose houses had to be demolished for this project were allocated to Stone Town, chasing out Arabs and Indians and contributing to Karume's anti-foreigners policies. With this shift of the city center from the Arab and Indian Stone Town to Michenzani, the city center was moved into the "African" part of Zanzibar Town; however, processes of hierarchical urban spatial ordering pertained, and thus *Ng'ambo* has not been centralized, but instead, it has shifted to new outskirts of Zanzibar Town. "The oldest part of the Other Side was not the Other Side any more: it was 'mjini', the 'downtown'" (Myers 1993: 452) which does not imply that Stone Town has merged with Michenzani. Conservation projects, most prominently, continuously mark Stone Town as distinct from the rest, thereby continuing the bureaucratic projections of colonial planning (Bissell 2011: 332).

Vikokotoni (where Hakimu Saleh lives) and Amani (where Bi Mwana's dispensary is located) were and are *Ng'ambo* respectively. Vikokotoni lies close to Darajani where the bridge led over the creek. Close to Michenzani, it is not considered *Ng'ambo* anymore. Bi Mwana's place in Amani, however, although it lies in the immediate vicinity of the stadium in which the union was proclaimed, is part of *Ng'ambo*. However, depending on the perspective, Amani can also be considered *mji*. From the rural villages (*shambani*), the differentiation between

Ng'ambo and *mji* does not matter: urban accessibility to infrastructure and the possibility of an urban lifestyle make *mji* attractive to many. Bi Mwaltima, speaking about the merits of living *mjini* ("in *mji*"), refers to the better conditions with which she could take care of her old mother in contrast to the conditions *shambani*. Even though borders are shifting and even though dichotomies depend on the perspective, the importance of the town (and its center) that is intimately tied to conceptions of Swahiliness (see above) remains stable. Furthermore, Pouwels argues that the Swahili notion of the town can be understood as *umma* (Pouwels 1987: 64).

2.2.3. Politicized Islamic Reform

Even after the one-party system was opened to multi-party democracy in 1992, the CCM has remained in power until today.[76] With official multi-party democracy, the Civic United Front (CUF) developed into the strongest opposition party in Zanzibar. Unsatisfied with the mainland's politics of CCM,[77] CUF channeled a discourse on Zanzibar's exceptionality and distinction from the mainland.[78] The elections of 1995, 2000, and 2005 all of which resulted in a narrow CCM lead and CUF's accusations of fraud were accompanied by conflict and violence. In order to address these tensions, CCM and CUF had three reconciliation agreements, *Muafaka I* in 1999, *Muafaka II* in 2001 (Hirschler 2001), and *Maridhiano* in late 2009 (Paget 2017: 164), the last of which led to a referendum in 2010 on a possible formation of a "Government of Unity" (GNU) after the elections in 2010. This idea of the GNU was both locally and internationally regarded as a move through which Zanzibar could overcome its bipartition. *Nchi kwanza, siasa baadaye* ("country first, politics later") was an oft-repeated slogan expressing the

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[76] The election system is based on the "first-past-the-post system," and a separate "winner-takes-it-all ballot" decides on the presidents (Moss 2016: 320).

[77] CCM is strongly connected to the mainland; however, to justify its leadership in the semi-autonomous Zanzibar, it repeatedly made an effort to showcase its particularly Zanzibari politics. The attempt in 1993 to join the Organization of Islamic Conference (now Organization of Islamic Cooperation, OIC) was such a case in point (see chapter 7.1.3). David Parkin also mentions that this attempt needs to be seen in connection with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the loss of GDR support for Zanzibar (2000b: 58).

[78] Pemba is a stronghold of CUF supporters which attests to the marginalization of Pemba by the union. From its complementary perspective, however, the more ambiguous divide of CCM and CUF supporters in Unguja hints at the complicated relations between Zanzibar and the mainland that are not entirely rejected and that do not always match the discourse on Zanzibar's discursive distinction from the mainland.

hopes that the needs of Zanzibar would receive more attention than the competition between the parties. Referring to Zanzibar as *nchi* (country/state) must be seen in connection with the union prime minister Pinda's statement in 2008 that "*Zanzibar siyo nchi*" (Zanzibar is not an *nchi*) as the reason for why Zanzibar could not join the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). This statement produced considerable outrage in Zanzibar and especially CUF positioned itself as *Chama cha Wananchi* (party of the people-of-the-*nchi*/citizens) (Myers and Muhajir 2013: 668-669). The slogan *Nchi kwanza, siasa baadaye*, thus, is embedded in highly politicized understandings of how Zanzibar relates to the union.

In the campaigns before the referendum, a shared Zanzibari identity was emphasized which further foregrounded Zanzibar's opposition to the remainder of what constitutes the union: the Tanzanian mainland. The referendum turned out in favor of the GNU (on the biased pre-referendum campaigns see Bakari 2012) and, indeed, the 2010 elections had a peaceful turnout, and the GNU was established; it thereby provided room for an increase of anti-union sentiments (Moss 2016; see also Nassor and Jose 2014). In the meanwhile and profiting from the increased attention to Zanzibar's role in the union, the radical Islamist group of *uamsho* ("awakening"),[79] gained prominence. It stressed Zanzibar's distinctive characteristics of being Islamic and also drew on historically situated narratives such as Zanzibar's "cosmopolitanism" (Kingsford 2013); based on these narratives, *uamsho* propagated an independent Islamic state (see chapter 7.1.3, see also Khalid [2005]). Although most people that I spoke to distanced themselves from *uamsho*'s violence (see chapter 7.1.3), the discourse on Zanzibar's distinction from the mainland rooted in Zanzibar's marriage to Islam, historical connectivity across the Indian Ocean (cosmopolitanism), and moral superiority (*ustaarabu*)[80] was broadly endorsed.

Highly visible with *uamsho*, Islamic reform in Zanzibar turned political. Embedded in "traditions of reform" (building on the Qadiriyya's reform of inclusion, the Alawiyya's reform of education, the engagement with what Islam comprises in light of modernity by Mazrui, Farsy and their followers), Loimeier

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[79] Its full name is *Jumuiya ya Uamsho na Miadhara ya Kiislamu* (JUMIKI) which in their constitution is translated as "Association for Islamic Mobilisation and Propagation."

[80] Usually, the moral superiority was circumscribed with negative examples of mainlanders who indulge in alcohol abuse, engage in sexual and unstable relationships with tourists, or make a living as thieves in Zanzibar. Mohamed Saleh (2004) points at the difficult negotiations between adherence to values of *ustaarabu* and *kwenda na wakati* ("going with the times"). Saleh frames this negotiation in terms of "tradition" and "modernity."

identifies two new generations of reformists that have emerged since the Karume years (Loimeier 2009: chapter 3). During the revolution and the Karume years, the ulama, often closely connected with Hadrami or Comorian identity, faced discrimination and were mostly forced to emigrate. As one of the last Islamic scholars, Farsy left Zanzibar in 1967 for Mombasa. Similarly, the identification of many scholars as non-African, but "Shirazi" proved problematic during those years (Hoffman 2012: 192). Instead, Karume himself forcefully implemented the anti-*bida^c* discourse. In subsequent years after Karume's assassination, Zanzibari graduates from the Islamic University of Medina and other comparable universities in Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Egypt (al-Azhar), Malaysia, Kuwait, Iraq, Libya, and Turkey (Loimeier 2009: 118) were invited to fill government posts. Furthermore, graduates from Zanzibari educational institutions, such as the "Muslim Academy"/ "Chuo Cha Kiislamu" as well as scholars from the "Makunduchi group"[81] (similar to Medina-education) (Loimeier 2009: 119) formed the new generation of Islamic scholars in Zanzibar whose theological interests were paired with political outreach. Since the 1980s (and since economic liberalization and propagation of tourism) these Salafi-oriented scholars have been seeking to thwart the "moral decay" in Zanzibar (Purpura 1997: chapter 8). Particularly since multi-partyism, they have been seeking political implementation of their criticisms (Gilsaa 2015). The intensification of post-colonial critique and militant forms of action mark the latest generation of Islamic reformists of which Nassor Bachu and Sheikh Kondo are two of the most well-known activists. Although Karume and later the CCM-Zanzibar supported Medina-type education, some scholars are frustrated by the CCM-Zanzibar's submission to the Christian dominance of the union's CCM. With the GNU, CUF does not provide the function of opposition to CCM anymore. In this light, the politicization of Islamic reform, and *uamsho* in particular, is also an expression for the lack of alternatives of political representation.

In my research about kombe, I was repeatedly warned about those "fierce" sheikhs, *masheikhi wakali*. Hakimu Saleh[82] in particular, but also interview partners, such as one of the imams of the government's mosque in Mwembeshauri,[83] as well as Dr Muhyiddin Ahmad Khamis, the headmaster of the *Chuo Cha Kiis-*

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[81] Makunduchi is one of the larger villages in the south of Unguja.
[82] 13 March 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
[83] Sheikh Ahmed, 20 March 2014, Mwembeshauri, Zanzibar Town.

lamu,[84] and Ali Hemedi who is also an Islamic healer[85] (as well as many others), told me that these fierce sheikhs like Nassor Bachu and Sheikh Kondo would not approve of kombe. I inquired about the reasons why these fierce sheikhs would not approve, and was met with answers in anticipation of their criticism (see chapter 7.3). Searching for the *masheikhi wakali* and interested in voices that would object to kombe, I was directed to a mosque in Raha Leo. As I was not sure whether I had arrived at the right place, I passed the mosque and asked three teenage boys who were lingering closeby.[86] The boys affirmed that it was the right mosque and did not hide their negative judgment: yes, it was the mosque of the *Wahhabis*. By naming graduates of Medina (and the like) and those who sympathize with their ideas *Wahhabi*,[87] the boys employed a much-used term that alienates the propagators of Salafi ideas from Zanzibar. Although many of the graduates from universities with Salafi teachings have indeed been influenced by Wahhabi-inspired Salafi thought, the ascription of *Wahhabi* in this context is more generic and marks the fierceness negatively as "foreign" and "not-Zanzibari." However, the supporters of the "fierce sheikhs" see their task to implement Salafi practices (and the suppression of practices that are not reconcilable with Salafi thought) in Zanzibar as Zanzibaris and not as foreigners—although, as Kresse (2007: 88) notes for Mombasa, "they sometimes accept the challenge of this name." The ambivalent stance towards Saudi-inspired reformist thought in Zanzibar complicates the notion of the singular *umma* that is projected across the Indian Ocean and Zanzibar's role in it. My contact with strictly Salafi oriented Muslims was limited, and I heard more *about* them (as *Wahhabis* or *masheikhi wakali*)[88] than *from* them, but according to Loimeier (2009: 126; see also Gilsaa 2015: 31) they "prefer to call themselves, in Arabic, *Anṣār al-Sunna* (helpers of the Sunna) or,

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[84] 26 March 2014, Mazizini, Zanzibar Town.
[85] 17 March 2014, Chumbuni, Zanzibar Town.
[86] 19 August 2014, Raha Leo, Zanzibar Town.
[87] Named after ᶜAbd al-Wahhāb, a Hanbali theologian, the Wahhabis are known for their strictly literal interpretations of the Qurᵓan and their orientation towards the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad (sunna). Their focus on *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God) and its opposite *shirk* (the sin of idolatry) dissects the evaluation of practices into good and unacceptable. Wahhabism has been termed as "orthodox," "conservative," or "fundamentalist." It is the prevailing doctrine in Saudi Arabia. Similar to my observations, also Kai Kresse noted how reformists were "locally often decried as 'Wahhabi'" (Kresse 2006: 219; see also Hoffman 2012: 190).
[88] Loimeier (2006b; 2009) also notes that they are named by others as *watu wa bidaa* ("innovation people") which does not only emphasize their stress on the discourse of what is considered *bidaᶜ* but ironically marks them as *bidaᶜ* (see also Kresse 2007: 101-102).

in Kiswahili, *waislamu wapya* (new Muslims)."[89] Furthermore, it must be noted, that the landscape of reform is also influenced by other groups of actors, such as the *Tablighi Jamaat* (Turner 2009),[90] and in opposition to the state's institutional bodies that are meant to represent and act for Tanzanian Muslims, such as the *Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania* (BAKWATA, see chapter 7) and the Mufti's office in Zanzibar.[91] As a ground of contestation, the political discourse of Islamic actors and institutions is interestingly framed in terms of human rights, good governance, and global security issues (Cameron 2009; Turner 2009; Bakari 2012).[92] The disputes over how to practice Islam in Zanzibar are entangled with global discourses, with Zanzibar's relation to claims over Islamic authority by Saudi Arabian intellectual developments, and with Zanzibar's "traditions of reform." All of these contestations find expression in Zanzibar's relation to the Indian Ocean and to the Tanzanian mainland. The politicization of Islamic reform has turned questions of Islam into political issues. Thus, drinking kombe as Islamic medicine and as Zanzibari practice is entangled with these political issues of how "Islamic Zanzibar" relates to the "Christian mainland" and to the "Islamic Indian Ocean"[93] (see also chapter 7 and 8).

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[89] Felicitas Becker, for the southern Tanzanian coastal mainland, picks up the Swahili-ized term *Ansuari*. For this thesis, I have chosen to call them "reformists" siding with Loimeier's analysis of the Swahili "tradition of reform" and his fruitful problematization of the term "reform." I also employ people's circumscriptions as "fierce sheikhs" or "Wahhabi"(-influenced) whenever their sentiments towards the most recent reformists' practices are important.

[90] Chande (2000) shows how the Tablighi Jamaat, a proselytizing group from South Asia, are primarily influential in Uganda.

[91] Søren Gilsaa, complicating the lines of differentiation, notes that reformists are not necessarily opposed to the state and draws attention to the involvement of Saudi graduates in BAKWATA, the Mufti's Office, the Waqf & Trust Committee, and the Qadi Court in Zanzibar (2015: 56).

[92] In March 2017 a Tanzanian Muslim delegation visited Germany (and the ZMO [Center for Modern Oriental Studies]). It was interesting to observe how security concerns provided the common interest of Germany (as part of the "west") and representatives of Muslims in Tanzanian governmental institutions.

[93] In the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century British influence was considerable causing Pearson (2003) to refer to the Indian Ocean as "British lake," and Sugata Bose reacting to Pearson to counter this: "The Indian Ocean [...] both was a British lake and it was not" (2006: 274). The "Islamic Indian Ocean'' is not the only way to frame the ocean and indeed, in a postcolonial setting, British influences on the imaginaries of the Indian Ocean must be considered, however, in opposition to the Tanzanian mainland, the discursive merging of the Indian Ocean with Islam is dominant.

2.2.4. "Zanzibari Christians"

The union of Tanzania "shall be a secular state" as its constitution proclaims (United Republic of Tanzania 1977: Preamble). Hans Olsson's dissertation (2016: chapter 6) explores how Pentecostals in Zanzibar frame Zanzibar as in need of emancipation from Islam, which would then allow Zanzibar, as part of the union, to become "secular." Although the Pentecostals mostly nourish their belonging to particular places on Tanzania mainland, they regard themselves as citizens of the union and thus, as Olsson shows, they narrate their stay in Zanzibar as simultaneously spiritual and political duty. The "sacralization" of the union, according to Olsson and within a Pentecostal framework, requires Zanzibar's "secularization" by means of converting Zanzibaris to Pentecostal Christianity (for more detail see chapter 7.1.4). For Paul who identifies with the Lutheran Church, these questions of Muslims' conversion to Christianity were not pressing. Nevertheless, also Paul—by making claims to Zanzibar as a Christian—enacts Zanzibar as part of the secular union of Tanzania.

During the government of unity's (GNU) term (2010–2015), a proposition for the Tanzanian union's constitutional change was to be decided on through another referendum. The precise terms of the union were to be renegotiated and the draft of the new constitution comprised a three-tier governmental structure (one for the union, one for Zanzibar, and one for Tanganyika). However, the idea of a three-tier government was no longer included in the final draft anymore (United Republic of Tanzania 2014: §70; see also Branson 2015; Poncian 2014). During the time of my research (2013–2015), the potential constitutional reforms were debated widely across both Zanzibar and the mainland, and received much support from the population (but see Katundu and Kumburu 2015). In Zanzibar, the three-tier government was seen as a compromise to the calls for independence. The issues of how Zanzibar positioned itself between its political belonging to the modern state of Tanzania and its cultural longing for the Indian Ocean world, entangled with questions of religion, were paramount and shaped the context of how kombe was narrated for my research. As "Zanzibari" practices, the preparation and ingestion of kombe were made to reverberate with the intra-action of the Indian Ocean and the mainland in Zanzibar. The ways in which the distinction of the Indian Ocean world from the Tanzanian mainland is continuously formed matter in various degrees throughout this thesis. Introducing the material "things" used for the preparation, the first chapter has already provided an entry

point to the materialization of the discussions of how Zanzibar relates to both the Indian Ocean and the Tanzanian mainland (see for example the "Chinese" plates that evoke narratives of connectivity across the ocean and tap water unreliably running through the government's pipes).

The referendum for this new constitution was planned for April 2015 and postponed indefinitely due to problems with voters' registration which coincided with preparations for the national elections later that year. CCM and CUF competed against each other with the GNU still in place. However, the annulment of the polls by the Zanzibar Electoral Committee (ZEC) before the votes had been completely counted (the preliminary results indicated a CUF lead), sparked outbreaks of protests and resulted in the immediate abolishment of the GNU. The elections were rescheduled for March 2016, and the CCM easily won due to the lack of consequences of CUF's boycott. For the bigger framework of the Tanzanian union, a strong opposition had also formed under a coalition of opposition parties, UKAWA (*Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi*, "Coalition of the People's Constitution"), including CUF. CCM won; however, it received the lowest margin since multi-partyism was introduced in 1992 and has since reacted with authoritarian measures (Paget [2017]; Macdonald [2018]; for CCM internal dynamics see also Tsubura [2018]). Due to the union's increased media monitoring,[94] political statements over WhatsApp and Facebook have almost vanished and given these circumstances I have not talked to my interlocutors about anything contentious since I have left Zanzibar. From other sources, however, I have heard that calls for independence are unsurprisingly receiving increasing support from the population. I do not know how the recent development impacts on the discourse about or the practices of preparing and drinking kombe: this thesis builds on the context of Zanzibar between 2013 and 2015.

When I scribbled down my memory aid about the conversation with Paul, I took note of his identification as "Zanzibari Christian." It was noteworthy because it functioned as a political statement about the discourse that separated Zanzibar from the mainland in religious terms. For many Zanzibaris, the word pair "Zanzibari Christian" would be an oxymoron: Zanzibar is exclusively connoted as

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[94] The new union's president John Magufuli has been celebrated for his fierce stance against corruption. However, his equally fierce stance against opposition resulted in the shutting down of two critical newspapers causing self-censorship for the remaining newspapers. Furthermore, the Cybercrime Act of 2015 has led to convictions of individuals for insulting Magufuli on WhatsApp which has silenced open online political activity (Roop and Weghorst 2016; Paget 2017: 156).

Muslim. Calling himself "Zanzibari Christian," Paul stresses Zanzibar as part of the union which is not exclusively connoted with either Islam or Christianity and thus identification with one's religious affiliation (in addition to identification with Zanzibar as "geographical" entity and part of the union) is not superfluous. Rather than reaffirming the historically grounded separation of Zanzibar and the African mainland, Paul claims a discourse that overcomes these separations by making use of the politicized discourse on Zanzibar's religious distinction. He challenges Zanzibar's affirmation of a Swahiliness that, unlike on the mainland, stands for adherence to Islam and its connectivity across the Indian Ocean. Paul's political statement, however, was also an invitation to me: As a Christian, Paul offered to speak with authority (as Zanzibari) about this "Zanzibari" and "Islamic" phenomenon of kombe to me, a non-Zanzibari and non-Muslim. In the next chapter, I engage with how knowledge is claimed and portrayed in Zanzibar, and how this matters with regard to my own practices and positionality as researcher feeding these encounters into the academic world of knowledge.

3. Engaging with Doing Being-knowledgeable

Hakimu Saleh knew most Qur'anic verses by heart. However, whenever he wanted to (re-)cite a verse, he made an effort to look it up and show it to me. Regardless of which version he used, the Arabic *msahafu*, the Swahili translation, or the English annotated translation, I was to read along. Moving his finger along the lines, he made sure I knew where on the page he was, even if he was aware of the fact that I could barely follow the Arabic script. The importance of reading along, for Hakimu Saleh, is closely connected to a frequent repetition of verification and, at the same time, to an openness to gaining new knowledge, new understanding, *ufahamu*. If God wishes, he can make you understand the deeper meaning "hidden between the words," as he put it. "Hidden between the words" is a very visual image that firstly links up with the importance of having the *msahafu* in front of you. If you have the written text with lines and words and spaces between the words, it is conceivable to fill these spaces, to have something "between the words." Secondly, "hidden between the words" implies information in the text that is not available to any reader, but only to those who are receptive to it, who have the God-given capacity to gain this kind of knowledge, to understand: *kufahamu*. The connection between the material writing and his argumentation is very closely knit.

One of the days that I took particular note of how Hakimu Saleh urged me to read along was a day that I had asked him about "knowledge."[1] He looked at me with his eyebrows raised. I elaborated that I was interested in what "knowledge" meant and offered *ujuzi* as a first translation. In his immediate reaction, he separated *ujuzi* from *uwezo* and then from *ufahamu* and *maarifa. Ngoja, nakuja!* "Wait, I'll come [right back]!" he said before he left the room to fetch a whole stack of books, in addition to the Swahili/Arabic *msahafu* that was already there and

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[1] 5 December 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

that he cited from throughout his explanations. When he came back, we engaged with a number of other terms, some of which I offered, some of which he thought of while he was explaining a specific aspect, all of which belonged to the Swahili semantic field of "knowledge." After an entire morning spent pondering various nuances through which the different terms related to and differed from each other (interrupted only by short visits of neighbors), Hakimu Saleh ended the session by saying: *Kila kitu kinategemea uwezo wa Mungu.* "Everything depends on God's ability."

When I came back the next week, he greeted me with a smile and stated: *Angalia, mara hii nimefanya utafiti* wangu. "Look, this time I have done *my* research." He then presented to me a compilation of copied, marked and annotated text passages which took up, verified, and added to the explanations he had provided the week before. Apparently, he did not think the elaborate answers he had given a week earlier were sufficient. The compilation was copied out of locally more or less available books and booklets, written in Swahili.[2] I was struck by the fact that Hakimu Saleh felt it necessary to present to me printed material, justifications and verifications of what we had talked about and what I had taped before. Although I had made it known to him, that I placed much emphasis on the traceability of information—noting down book titles he mentioned or asking him for the numerical references of the Qur'anic verses from which he recited—his discussion of what "knowledge" in Swahili unfolded into was, as one particular view on it, sufficient for my inquiry at that moment. Hakimu Saleh, however, situated his explanations within a broader framework. He directed me to a wider examination of the terms for "knowledge" and positioned himself as somebody who was aware of the relevant publications. He adapted to his perception of my western academic understanding of knowledge production. Simultaneously, he also attributed significance to printed text by offering me this compilation. Often, when I visited him, the floor was initially empty, but then covered with books over the course of my visit. He would start explaining one thing to me, look for a certain book in the room next door, bring it to me, show me the relevant passage and move along with the argument, just as he had done during his exploration of the Swahili terms for knowledge. By the time I left, the room was often strewn with several books. The visible reliance on printed text—visible material citation—was important for

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[2] Some other printed material is also available in Arabic or English. Regardless of the books' language, the quotations from the Qur'an are usually (albeit not always) in Arabic script, sometimes they are transliterated, sometimes translated.

his way of presenting an argument. Although I was not the only one to whom this material citation was presented, it did also speak back to me coming from a European university producing text about him.

In this chapter the attention shifts from the materialization of kombe (chapter 1) in Zanzibar (chapter 2) to the frameworks of knowledge in which and through which kombe is entextualized to be "read" (part II). This chapter examines how Swahili conceptions of knowledge are entangled not only with writing and dispensing kombe, but also with my research that is embedded in western conceptions of academic knowledge. Hakimu Saleh and I engaged with the semantic field of knowledge in Swahili which I subsequently divided into three groups. These groups will structure the chapter's first section on *being-knowledgeable*. The chapter then moves to *how* knowledgeability is portrayed, recognized, and reaffirmed. Fetching a stack of books from the other room and guiding my eyes to read along, Hakimu Saleh makes use of textual practices that show his knowledgeability. Bi Mwana's knowledgeability is shown and interpreted as such through the long lines waiting in front of her house. In both cases, knowledgeability differentiates one from others who do not know. Practices of secrecy, showing *that* while concealing *what*, is crucial for an enactment of knowledgeability in the Swahili context and resonates with how kombe works (see part II). With Bi Mwana and Hakimu Saleh, this second section elucidates the situated *doing* being-knowledgeable.

Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana were introduced to me (in the field) and by me (in this text) due to their knowledgeability. Both of them accepted me as someone searching for knowledge, and although the primary roles through which I learned in these two settings were different from each other, they both positioned me as a seeker of knowledge. Hakimu Saleh who welcomed me as his student as well as Bi Mwana who encouraged me to ask my catalog of questions (see chapter 1.3.4) referred to their knowledgeability for which we were acquainted with each other. Their explanations, their narratives, and their practices constantly reaffirmed our relationship against the backdrop of knowledge. This relationship required from them a fair amount of trust in my ability not only to understand but also to treat this knowledge carefully and act responsibly. Hakimu Saleh in particular emphasized the dangers of knowledge acquisition repeatedly: although the power of knowledge can be used to help people in need it can also be used to harm.[3] Moral counseling was inseparable from the presentation of information, an awareness of

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[3] This understanding does not only pertain to this case study but has also been reported in other contexts. Most notably, Joyce Flueckiger's detailed account of Amma's Healing Room

and responsible interaction with "good" and "evil" crucial to a knowledge seeker's quest.

The first two paragraphs of the introductory vignette mention that Hakimu Saleh and I spoke about knowledge and they mention how the session evolved; the third paragraph highlights how my positionality as coming from a "university," a body that institutionalizes knowledge, shaped Hakimu Saleh's practices with me. Furthermore, these three paragraphs, accompanied by all the paragraphs around them, constitute written material that is part of my own "doing being-knowledgeable." Foreshadowed by Paul's offer to explain kombe to me from his particular positionality, in this chapter's last section I ponder how my positionality and my involvement with practices of knowledgeability matter for this PhD project: how do Bi Mwana's, Hakimu Saleh's, and my knowledge practices diffract and materialize in this text?

3.1. Being-knowledgeable

When Hakimu Saleh and I collected terms in Swahili that spiraled around the English term "knowledge" and when Hakimu Saleh spelled out the differentiating nuances, three features repeatedly appeared as defining markers to which all the terms related with different emphases: "information," "understanding," and "potentiality of enactment." They are heuristically used here to structure this section. The paragraphs under "information" give information on which terms Hakimu Saleh and I assembled and how they relate to each other. The paragraphs under "understanding" embed Swahili conceptions of "knowledge" in a framework of Islamic morality, which includes questions of accessibility, acquisition and the body. "Understanding" is tied to God's gift of understanding. Finally, the paragraphs under "practicability" attend to the responsibility of a knowledgeable person to shape her/his practices accordingly. Providing medical treatment hinges on this responsibility of enacting practical knowledge in the material world. It is with respect to this last aspect that the hyphenated "being-knowledgeable" is explored.

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in Hyderabad presents how "black" and "light" knowledge co-exist. (2006: 119) Another rich account is given by Michael Lambek who speaks about the "moral ambiguity of knowledge" in the case of Mayotte (1993: 7).

3.1.1. Information—About Knowledge in the Swahili Context

According to Hakimu Saleh, *maarifa* denotes "information." This information can be gathered through the senses—including the heart (see chapter 5)—and strongly connotes "things as they are outside of us."[4] *Elimu* is also "information"; however, information that is transmitted, conveyed through education, and therefore dependent on *akili* ("mind"/"intellect"). The next group of words centers around *ufahamu*, "understanding"/"being acquainted with." It describes knowledge which is only possible to attain if one's heart is at rest and God wishes to spread this *maarifa* or *elimu*.[5] Hakimu Saleh described *hekima* and *busara* in relation to *ufahamu*. These words suggest a sophisticated level of *ufahamu*, something that could in English be described as "wisdom" (Kresse 2009: 151). For him, *hekima* is connected with "wisdom from God";[6] *hekima* gives birth to silence/peace. He stated that non-Muslims might have access to *hekima kasoro*, "almost-hekima," but the complete *hekima* is only available to very few Muslims and only through God. The third group within this semantic field foregrounds the potentiality of enactment: *ujuzi*[7], "know-how," and *uwezo*, "ability to." These terms describe knowledge put (potentially) into practice. According to Hakimu Saleh, this kind of knowledge does not necessarily depend on the mind, *akili*; it is enacted knowledge. Bi Tufa[8] once used the example of riding a bicycle to explain this same point: in order to know how to ride a bike (*kujua kuendesha baisikeli*) it is not important to receive knowledge on how to assemble/repair a bike (*kupata elimu*

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[4] The Arabic word *ma^crifa* is often used in the Sufi context as knowledge from God, gnosis (Chittick 1989: 148; cf. Rosenthal 1970: 99; Seesemann 2011; Wright 2010: 119; see also Encyclopedia of Islam, second edition, entry of "Ma^crifa"). Contrary to this, Hakimu Saleh used *maarifa* in Swahili as "information" without its necessary direct reception from God.

[5] This explanation resonates with the Shi^ci concept of *Batini*. However, Hakimu Saleh never mentioned this to me and did not recognize it when I explicitly asked him. Also Mattijs van de Port describes a comparable subject matter, "what the people from Candomblé call the cult's 'deep knowledge': the secrets and mysteries that are at the heart of the cult." (2011: 13)

[6] Ibn Taymiyyah divided knowledge into two groups: "knowledge based on reason [which correlates with what I have glossed here as 'information'] and knowledge based on divine revelation [corresponding to *ufahamu*]" (Perho 2010: 195). Irmeli Perho explains how Prophetic medicine draws on the complementarity of these two kinds of knowledge.

[7] Hakimu Saleh did not employ *utambuzi*; however, another practitioner, Ali Hemedi, used it extensively to describe what Hakimu Saleh framed as ujuzi. Ali Hemedi used utambuzi together and synonymously with ujuzi. He explained the plurality of words with reference to the diverse influences (most notably Arabic) on the Swahili language. (Ali Hemedi, 11 February 2014, Chumbuni, Zanzibar Town)

[8] 27 November 2013, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

ya kutengeneza baisikeli), but to brake when it goes downhill. When founded on "information" and "understanding," however, this potentiality of enactment (including the knowledge of when to act and when to refrain from acting) characterizes a "knowledge*able* person" (*mwenye uwezo*). Hakimu Saleh finished his exploration of the terms—their differences and their relations—with the sentence: *Kila kitu kinategemea uwezo wa Mungu* "Everything depends on God's *uwezo*." After his detailed elaboration, he chose *uwezo* as an attribute of God, stressing the importance of a potential enactment within a broad understanding of "knowledge."

Most words in this semantic field derive from Arabic loanwords and, as Hakimu Saleh's explanations made clear, most of the words can be fleshed out in religious terms. Even *elimu*, which today is rather attributed to education and knowledge gained in institutionalized settings, such as schools, used to refer to "knowledge of local narrative traditions and of Islamic doctrine and texts"(Purpura 1997: 69, building on Pouwels 1987). Despite the Arabic etymological roots, the larger part of this semantic field does not necessarily evoke an immediate connection to Islam. Nevertheless, Islamic knowledge, together with "historical knowledge [...], medical knowledge (healing), artisanship (wood carving, for example), and [...] verbal knowledge (knowledge related to the use of language)" is acclaimed as one of the most important realms of knowledge in the Swahili context (Kresse 2009: 161) and often inseparable from the other realms. With kombe, several of these realms meet: religious knowledge, medical knowledge, and language-related knowledge. Furthermore, with kombe, these realms attain practicability rendering it powerful and potentially dangerous while at the same time participating in the materialization of what (enacted) "knowledge" comprises.

3.1.2. Understanding—Knowledge in Islam

The Swahili notion of "knowledge" is closely linked and in Zanzibar often explicitly described with reference to Islamic notions of knowledge in which God's will is the foundation of all other knowledge. In these explanations, *elimu* is treated as the Swahili equivalent to *ᶜilm*, one of the central concepts in the Qurʾan (Rosenthal 1970: 19-32, 97-99). *ᶜIlm* has been given profound attention by Muslims around the globe and themes connected to it, such as intellectual practice (for example Kresse 2009; Lambek 1993), or themes of embodied knowledge (Lambek 1993; Ware 2014), have repeatedly been the focus of academic study. In these studies, Muslims are portrayed as highly valuing learning and the quest to acquire

knowledge (see Berkey 1992; Brenner 2001; Loimeier 2009). In confirmation of the high value attributed to seeking knowledge, I myself was often congratulated in Zanzibar for my interest in Islamic matters (*mambo ya kiislamu*). Despite his worries about conversion, even Paul affirmed: "It is good to learn about Islamic matters." However, most prominently Hakimu Saleh,[9] but also Ali Hemedi[10] and less explicitly Bi Tufa[11] asked me to be careful in my knowledge seeking quest. They cautioned me to be aware of the distinction between kinds of knowledge: good and bad[12] (*uzuri na ubaya*),[13] the distinction of which requires *ufahamu*, God-given understanding.[14]

According to Hakimu Saleh, good knowledge is knowledge (in the sense of *elimu*) that one acquires to receive good, God-fearing understanding (*ufahamu*). It enables one to differentiate between good and bad. Good knowledge is knowledge (*ujuzi, uwezo*) that is used to do good, to act according to God's will, to manifest the good. Bad knowledge, consequently, is the knowledge that leads you away from God and leads to actions that manifest the bad. Neither Hakimu Saleh nor Ali Hemedi addressed the possibility of ambiguous situations, situations that cannot easily be described as either "good" or "bad." However, they both explained that it is necessary to engage with the "bad" in order to counteract it (see also Geschiere 2013: 73). Although others' curiosity about the "bad" was judged negatively by them, their own encounters with the "bad" were accepted, given their knowledgeability and subsequent competence to make "good" decisions. While there is a general agreement (amongst Hakimu Saleh, Bi Mwana, Ali Hemedi, and many other interview partners)[15] about a description of the "bad" as actions that are not acceptable in Islam, there is much less agreement about which concrete

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[9] Hakimu Saleh, 24 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[10] Ali Hemedi, 11 February 2014, Chumbuni, Zanzibar Town.

[11] Tufa, 27 November 2013, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

[12] Joyce Flueckinger also describes this distinction in "Amma's Healing Room" (2006: 119).

[13] This theme has also been observed elsewhere mostly with vocabulary connected to dark and light knowledge (cf. Flueckiger 2006: 119; Lambek 1993: 237).

[14] *Ufahamu* is something that God grants to you or not. Hakimu Saleh (6 September 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town) on a different occasion explained that it is like a computer "chip" in your brain. When the *chip ya ufahamu* is activated you can distinguish good from bad. The electronic metaphors for descriptions of bodies will be taken up in chapter 5.

[15] Most prominently Sheikh Ahmed, Imam of the governmental mosque, 20 March 2014, Mwembeshauri, Zanzibar Town and Dr Muhiddin, 26 March 2014, Principal of Chuo cha Kiislamu cha Zanzibar (Zanzibar Muslim Academy), Mazizini, Zanzibar Town.

examples this entails; spirit possession and divination were framed as the most contested topics amongst my interlocutors.

Related to the distinction between good and bad knowledge, the manner of acquisition was frequently part of conversations or explanations I encountered in Zanzibar. Whereas some knowledge is transmittable and thus potentially available to everyone, taught in schools or at home, available in books or newspapers,[16] broadcast, told, or experienced, other knowledge arrives as inspiration. This can happen anywhere and anytime, sometimes in school or at home, sometimes through books or newspapers, sometimes while other news is broadcast, sometimes through someone else's narrations, and sometimes through particular experiences. Inspirational knowledge differs from non-inspirational knowledge[17] because it comes from God and induces "understanding" rather than mere "information." However, as bad spirits are also capable of planting ideas in one's head that resemble inspiration, the distinction between "good" and "bad" also applies to inspiration-like knowledge acquisition. While inspiration is one form of knowledge acquisition, it does not supersede non-inspirational knowledge, in fact, Abdul[18] pointed out that in order to receive inspirations and interpret them correctly (distinguish good from bad), it is essential to develop one's non-inspirational knowledge: to study (see also Messick 1992).

Most children in Zanzibar visit a Qurʾan school (*chuo*), some only for a short period, others for longer, in which case the study of the Qurʾan is extended to the study of Islam. The youngest children start when they are about three or four years old and continue for varying time spans and with various educational combinations once they have reached the age for primary governmental schooling is reached (see Loimeier 2009). The accommodation of the different educational systems testifies to and challenges the variety of knowledge conceptions. While the legitimacy of one's Islamic studies depends much on the chain of transmission[19]—through whom

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[16]   On the politics of knowledge in text, see Bang (2011: 93).

[17]   This binary of non-inspirational (available) and inspirational (restricted) knowledge is comparable to the binary of *ᶜilm al-ẓāhir* (Arabic: knowledge of the perceptible or the perceptible knowledge) and *ᶜilm al-bāṭin* (Arabic: knowledge of the inner self or internal knowledge, translations taken from Encyclopedia of Islam, second edition under the entry of "Taṣawwuf") and often denoted as "non-hidden" and "hidden" knowledge (Launay 1992: 150–152; Wright 2010). Especially for Sufi knowledge conceptions these types of acquisition and the respective assessments of them are pertinent. (Chittick 1989; cf. Brenner 2001: 6-7; Frede 2014: 50–51; Lambek 1993; Launay 1992: 154; Seesemann 2011: 8; Ware 2014: 205; and Wright 2010)

[18]   Abdul, 29 January 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

[19]   In Arabic, this transmission is denoted as *silsila* (Graham 1993; Heck 2008).

knowledge had passed is part of the acquisition and values or devalues one's knowledge quality (Heck 2008: 321; Graham 1993: 506)—governmental school knowledge does not attribute quite as much importance to this chain of transmission, but has other markers for quality judgement (Aas et al. 2009). The juxtaposition of these conceptions affects their framing, and not only in children's daily lives. As Paul Heck observes:

> A significant tendency today, [...] is to define knowledge as religious not in terms of its source, but to the extent to which it has been religionized, irrespective of source. In short, the decline of the chain of transmission not only implies a significant diminishment of traditional religious authority but also tangibly new conceptions of religious knowledge itself. (2008: 329)

Heck highlights the influence of non-Islamic knowledge conceptions on Islamic knowledge conceptions. Within the domain of *researching* kombe in Zanzibar, western and Islamic conceptions of knowledge meet. They met in my exchanges with Islamic scholars in Zanzibar. They met in the compilation that Hakimu Saleh gave to me. They meet as I incorporate "information" on Islamic knowledge into the "enactment" of writing a dissertation. Furthermore, they meet when Hakimu Saleh comments on my drafts and asks me to include more quotations from the Qurʾan. Whereas questions of what enters this text and how will be given more attention in 3.3, the theme of "entering" bodies will now be pursued with regard to acquiring Islamic knowledge and its link to *ufahamu* (understanding).

Irrespective of changing conceptions, virtually all Muslim children in Zanzibar learn to recite parts of the Qurʾan, memorize them and from then on carry these parts with them. Through memorization, the verses enter the children's bodies. Rudolph Ware has elucidated,

> [m]emorization of texts allowed for a personal possession of the Word in the body, without requiring recourse to a written source external to the self. The people were the books, just as the Prophet was the Walking Qurʾan. Islamic knowledge was embodied knowledge. (2014: 49)

The knowledge of the Qurʾan is made available to the bodies through this memorization that is taught primarily in Qurʾan schools. Embodying this knowledge pertains to embodying *ufahamu* of the Qurʾan. This *ufahamu* in bodies may not be discursively available; however, it lays the bodily foundation for continuously forming a Muslim self, or, evoking Tim Ingold's (2015: 117-118) language, for "becoming"[20] a Muslim. The embodied knowledge draws attention to bodily practices

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[20] Ingold emphasizes the ever-evolving quality of "life-in-the-making" (2015: 118).

on the one hand and to the importance of attending to bodies on the other. The preparation of kombe is not only a practice involving embodied *ufahamu*, but it is also directed towards affecting inflicted bodies, mostly bodies that already carry (parts of) the Qurʾan. Put differently, the preparation of kombe requires embodied *ufahamu* that then is targeted towards protecting and enhancing the *ufahamu* in the patients' bodies. Kombe influences these bodies, on which chapter 5 will elaborate, within the field of "religious" and "medical" knowledge, a realm to which we will turn in chapter 8. Embodied *ufahamu* gains prominence not primarily by being explained and turned into "information," but by influencing people's actions and practices. *Ufahamu* is inextricably linked with "good" practices in the material world.

3.1.3. Practicability—Medicine as (Knowledge-)Ability

Next to "information" and "understanding," one of the key aspects that the Swahili terms for "knowledge" cover is its potential practicability. Most explicitly denoted by *ujuzi* (know-how) and *uwezo* (ability to), the possibility of enactment and of impacting the material world is crucial for the conception of knowledge as it was delineated by Hakimu Saleh. Knowledge put into practice (see Reckwitz 2002) does not only serve as an additional marker of knowledge as such, but it also relates to and complicates the notions of "information" and "understanding." "Practical knowledge" does not necessarily rely on "information"—Bi Tufa explained this by using the example of riding a bike. Practical knowledge has its own mode of making sense. Michael Jackson, speaking more broadly about phenomenology's reflections on practical knowledge states that

> [i]f, as phenomenologists argue, knowledge of the mind is neither ontologically prior nor superior to knowledge of the body, then we have to accept that activity may be meaningful even when it is not couched in words, explicated in concepts, or subject to reflection. In other words, our gestures, acts and modes of comportment do not invariably depend on *a priori* cognitive understanding. Practical skills, know-how, a sense of what to do, are irreducible. The meaning of practical knowledge lies in what is accomplished through it, not in what conceptual order may be said to underlie or precede it. (1996: 34)

While "practical knowledge" is irreducible, it is also entangled with "information" and "understanding." As Jackson points out, the relations are not hierarchical, "practical knowledge" does not *depend* on "information" or "understanding." But,

the different modes of knowledge inform each other and enhance experiences of the lifeworld (see Ingold 2010a: S136). The enhancement is pivotal for the relation between "practical knowledge" and "understanding." "Understanding" often invokes actions in the material world which can be materialized with practical knowledge. Kresse, with reference to the Swahili Coast's conceptions of "wisdom," elucidates that

> [a]part from everything else, perhaps it is a good way of qualifying wisdom through reference to the link between knowledge and practice. Perhaps wisdom, in the Swahili context and beyond, is to have the ability or good sense to put knowledge into action. (Kresse 2009: 164)

Putting knowledge—and here all three (entangled) domains, "information," "understanding," and "potentiality of enactment" apply—into action marks "practice" as an unalienable element of "knowledge" and thus as a central attribute of being-knowledgeable. Reckwitz' theorization of "practice" with which this part began, formulates the relation between practice and knowledge the other way around: he incorporates "knowledge" as an unalienable element of "practice" (Reckwitz 2002: 250). Regardless of considerations of dependency, both Kresse and Reckwitz note the entanglement of knowledge and practice that Hakimu Saleh also emphasized when he elaborated on Swahili terms of the semantic field of "knowledge."

One way of putting knowledge into action is through medical treatment which involves all domains of knowledge: "information," "understanding," and "potentiality of enactment." Both Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana bring these domains together and work with their entanglements. They both draw on embodied "knowledge" and its embeddedness in Islamic notions of practical knowledge.

The importance of living a good (that is, Islamic) way plays a central role for Hakimu Saleh. It is only through leading such a life that he can nurture the preconditions necessary to prepare effective kombe.[21] It also is the precondition for receiving good "information" and "understanding" as his outline of the mutual dependence shows:

HAKIMU SALEH: To understand is a very problematic thing. You hear, you understand me. To explain is difficult because of understanding. Do you see? Then I, there are people who cannot understand me primarily because understanding requires your heart. It must be calm. Have you understood? […] Information, insights [English in original], now that makes good things.

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21   See chapter 2.1.

> They are meant to enter you. Then understanding follows. Do you see?
> This information [English in original] is brought to you. […] Indeed it is very
> important to receive information. Now, the barriers of information must be
> removed. […] Now, I tell you, how are they removed? These barriers that
> hide in the eye of the mind (*jicho la akili*). Eye of the mind, eh? This
> mind of yours. Its eye, there is the eye of the mind. Now, […] this mind
> of yours, from where you come from, how you have been in your real life
> doesn't like the truth, it closes it off. You live worldly with your thoughts
> and the thoughts are not about God, because this is the easy way. Or, of
> the truth, because if we talk about God, we talk about Islam. We talk the
> truth. Because Islam, the religion (*dini*)[22] of God, is the truth. If you are
> truthful, then you follow God. And if you are the opposite, then you are
> outside of God. Therefore, if you live outside of the truth, you will have
> barriers in your mind. If the truth comes, you will necessarily resist [English
> in original]. You will block. Did you hear?[23]

Hakimu Saleh explained the full circle from the entry of "information," followed
by "understanding" provided by God to "living in the truth," that is Islam, which,
however, is only possible if the barriers of one's mind's eye are removed. He also
addressed the circle's counterpart: if one does not live in the truth, then one lives
with barriers in one's mind, and thus cannot receive neither truthful "information"
nor "understanding." Not living in the truth prevents the possibility of removing
barriers. In other words, how to live, the kind of "practical knowledge" employed,
determines and results from the "information" and "understanding" provided by
God. Hakimu Saleh's explanation of the entanglement between "knowledge" and
"practice" bears similarities with Sufi thought.[24] In his commentary on Ibn al-
ᶜArabī's writing, William Chittick very explicitly explains:

> The importance of practice in actualizing certain "gnostic sciences" (*maᶜārif*)
> helps explain why knowledge without practice is not true knowledge. Ibn
> al-ᶜArabī provides a metaphysical explanation for this point by saying that
> knowledge by itself pertains only to the domain of God as the Nonmanifest,
> while knowledge along with practice embraces the domains of both the Non-
> manifest and the Manifest. Hence it is broader in scope and more perfect.
> (1989: 149)

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[22] On the translation of religion as *dini* see chapter 7.
[23] Hakimu Saleh, 5 December 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar
[24] See also Rosenthal (1970: 250–251).

The necessity of knowledge to impact the material world through practices is rooted in its acquisition, in which the learners' bodies provide the link between "information"/"understanding" and the material world. This necessity extends to various bodily practices, most notably to the realm of "medicine" in which knowledge (entangled "information," "understanding," and its "enactment") is put to use in order to affect other bodies in and through which knowledge can be practiced.

As Michael Lambek notes, "[m]edicine is, above all, knowledge put into and emerging from practice" (1993: 16). Hakimu Saleh's and Bi Mwana's practices resonate with this statement. Both put information and understanding (of how to prepare kombe) into practice (manufacturing kombe) and both obtain further information and understanding (about what has worked especially well in which case) through their experience. At the same time, practicing successfully (that is "good" knowledge) within the field of "medicine"[25] equips them both with the status of being-knowledgeable.

Conflicting treatment possibilities based on differing etiological understandings exercised on and through the body almost always play a role in the descriptions of medical knowledge and its enactments. In the Swahili case, these descriptions are paralleled by a vocabulary that linguistically separates different realms of treatment. Of interest here are the changes of these denotations.

> [M]edicine was divided into categories of *uganga* or *elimu* according to its source. *Uganga* […] was medical knowledge that made use of non-Islamic knowledge from nearby mainland or bush country. […] Just as social relations with mainland and bush peoples served as avenues by which the non-Islamic ideological environment found its way into the religious practices and assumptions of the towns themselves, so then did the exploitation of nearby non-Islamic environment serve for medical reasons. (Pouwels 1987: 90)

Randall Pouwels describes this distinction for the time of the Zanzibari Sultanate, in which voluntary and involuntary migration from elsewhere led to a reworking of social hierarchies, with Muslims in a privileged position. *Uganga*, he notes, was the (lower ranked) non-Islamic counterpart to *elimu*, higher ranked Islamic medicine. Pouwels' historical insight supports the entanglements of "medicine"

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[25] Although the use of the English term "medicine" as a purely descriptive term is problematic, it is used here as an umbrella term to capture healing practices. The decision to employ "medicine" in such a way in this chapter will be problematized and complicated in chapter 8.

and "knowledge." Although the word *elimu* does not carry the same sense of medical enactment anymore, the framing of medical treatments as enacted knowledge remains constant. *Uganga* is still connected with suspicious non-Islamic and non-scientific healing practices, however. Rather than in contrast to *elimu*, *uganga* now is compared to a plethora of different kinds of *dawa*[26] (medicine): *dawa* of the hospital, Chinese *dawa*, "traditional" *dawa*, or "Islamic" *dawa* amongst others. The line between practices that belong to a certain kind of *dawa* and practices that belong to *uganga* often is a matter of framing the practices and evaluating the enacted knowledge as good or bad. This evaluation of either positively (*dawa*) or negatively connoted vocabulary (*uganga*) is a social and incoherent process. Although certain practicable knowledge is more likely to be evaluated positively than other, the categorizations are neither fixed nor consistent.

Kombe is "Islamic medicine" and is thus viewed positively, and its preparation in a "good" Islamic way is taken for granted. Writing with blood instead of saffron ink would transform the preparation of the ingestible liquid into *uganga*.[27] More ambiguous is the use of names of archangels or *jinn*: while they are sometimes written surrounding the verses as protection, they can also be regarded as *shirk* (idolatry) within this framework. Although the exact means of preparing kombe is usually taken as an indicator to make these evaluations, the patients are not to know these details (and the liquefaction does not give visual access to the writing's content) as the efficacy of drinking kombe depends on the brain's non-interference.[28] Instead, evaluations of whether the practiced knowledge qualifies as *dawa* or *uganga*, as "good" or "bad," and to what extent this matters, depends on the social dynamics towards individual practitioners.

"Being-knowledgeable" is crucial for practitioners' social acceptance through which they gain possibilities of practicing their knowledge. In a circular manner, the responsible enactment of their knowledge is crucial for their recognition and (re-)affirmation as "being-knowledgeable." Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana show how practices of the entangled aspects of knowledge contribute to "being-knowledgeable." Their use of "information" and "understanding" in practices of providing medical treatment marks them as being-knowledgeable. The hyphen-

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[26] The translations offered here serve to give an impression. A more detailed engagement with these specificities of dawa will follow in chapter 8.1.

[27] Sheikh Soraga, 14 August 2014, Mombasa, Zanzibar Town, Sheikh Ahmed, 20 March 2014, Mwembeshauri, Zanzibar Town.

[28] The verses are to bypass the brain (see part II).

ated "being-knowledgeable" used here to describe how Hakimu Saleh's and Bi Mwana's practices situate them as (knowledge-)able actors links this description to Michael Jackson's existential anthropology. Bringing the philosophical tradition of existential phenomenology into conversation with anthropology, Jackson outlines five themes that are crucial for his endeavor: intersubjectivity,[29] the ambiguity of the subject,[30] the simultaneity of humans' commonalities and individualism,[31] the experientiality of life beyond language,[32] and the dynamic relationships with the world. With this last point, Jackson draws attention to how our interaction with the world changes both us and the world: "[w]hat we know of the world depends on how we interact with it. Our methods and personalities alter and partially constitute the nature of what we observe" (Jackson 2013: 8). He relates this to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, which Karen Barad also uses to distinguish Bohr's indeterminacy principle.[33] In her words, "'each of us'[34] is part of the intra-active ongoing articulation of the world in its differential mattering" (Barad 2007: 381). Within these processes of continuous emergence, stability/fixity equally arises. Rather than a continuously "becoming-knowledgeable," I here stress how a more or less stable condition of knowledgeability (evoked through the English term "being") is vital for how Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana can act as medical practitioners.

"Being," both in English and in German ("sein") is used as a copula to link a noun with a descriptive adjective and as an existential marker.[35] The "is" in the statement that "somebody *is* knowledgeable" can be read as a copula: a person can be described as "knowledgeable" without making existential claims about this

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[29] Although Jackson already includes intersubjectivity as a theme of his existential anthropology, I will suspend this theme and take it up in the next section.

[30] The subject is always both *a* particular individual and embedded in abstract categories of identification. The particular and the abstract are each "the condition of the possibility of the other" (Jackson 2013: 6).

[31] "We both identify with others and differentiate ourselves from them" (Jackson 2013: 6).

[32] Jackson thereby comments on the philosophical question of how our capability to express something in language relates to our experiences of the world.

[33] To be precise, with reference to Bohr, she develops the concept of "agential realism" which is based on a "relational ontology" in which actors emerge intra-actively. The "relational ontology" is also crucial for what I take in a simplified manner from her considerations on "diffraction" (see Introduction).

[34] She puts 'each of us' in quotation marks in coherence with her earlier argumentation of the emergence of entities (including each of us) through intra-action.

[35] In Spanish, for example, a difference is made between the copula (*estar*) and the existential marker (*ser*).

person.[36] The "is" in the statement that "somebody *is* knowledgeable" coincides with the "is" in the statement that "somebody *is*/exists." For Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana "being knowledgeable" is an important attribute of their existence as Islamic healers. Being-knowledgeable (thus marked with the hyphen) for them surpasses a momentary description but becomes part of their embodied existence. The stability of "being" (rather than "becoming") reflects an aspired fixity, that, however, is subject to a constant reconstitution, a constant "doing" to which the person who is knowledgeable as well as her/his surrounding contribute: "being-knowledgeable" is a situated "doing"[37] which takes part in the diffractive dynamics and emerges from the entanglements of "information," "understanding," and the "potentiality of enactment."

3.2. Doing Being-knowledgeable

Bi Mwana is renowned for her positively evaluated knowledgeability in matters of healing even beyond the immediate vicinity of her neighborhood, and thus she is sought after by many patients. In effect, the number of patients waiting in line every day (except for Fridays when she administers only to emergency cases) serves as an indicator of her knowledgeability to potential future patients. When I accompanied Mama Sue to "*yule bibi*" and was about to meet Bi Mwana for the first time, Baba Sue explained to me that there would be many people and that he would try to speak to her son so that we may cut the line, "because, you see, she is very knowledgeable."[38] Indeed, people were not only waiting inside the court-yard where they lined up sitting closely together along one of the walls, but they were also waiting outside and made use of the stone benches (*baraza*) of neighboring houses. The appreciation of medical knowledge as one of the most important realms of knowledge supports Bi Mwana's characterization as being knowledgeable. Her socially recognized knowledgeability enables her to put information and understanding into practice, to have *ujuzi* (know-how) and *uwezo* (ability to), to practice knowledge in a "good" way and thereby stabilize her being-knowledgeable. Her knowledgeability also entails its situated doing: the social recognition and manifestation of her status as a knowledgeable healer. The social situation in which

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[36] Fictional characters can be argued not to "exist," however, they can still *be* knowledgeable.
[37] I use the term "doing" here with respect to the conceptualization by Candace West and Don Zimmermann who stress the social situatedness of "doing" (1987). See next section.
[38] Baba Sue, 18 November 2013, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

Bi Mwana acts co-constitutes her being-knowledgeable—I thus frame it as "doing being-knowledgeable": Being-knowledgeable is socially established, or, to use the words of Candace West and Don Zimmerman,[39] "doing ['being-knowledgeable'] is an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct"(1987: 126).[40]

Although Jackson in his demarcation of existential anthropology already includes "intersubjectivity" as one of the five major themes and although the notion of "being" (see above) arguably already contains an awareness of its social constitution, for this chapter the social situatedness requires more attention. I thus emphasize the social constitution of "being" with the cumbersome conglomerate "doing being." I find the bulkiness of this conglomerate productive as it allows me to focus on the social embeddedness through which knowledgeability matters without losing the sense of existential achievement. It thus is different from "becoming" (Ingold 2015: 117-118), which stresses fluidity and vicissitude rather than the production of achievement and fixity. "Doing being-knowledgeable" is closely related to what I have elsewhere glossed as "performance[41] of knowledgeability" (Nieber forthcoming). However, in line with the larger framework of differential mattering, I opted in this section to focus on the co-constitution of being-knowledgeable by those who *are* knowledgeable and by those from whom the former differ (who are not or less knowledgeable). The term "doing" with its particular focus on an outcome as "emergent feature of social situations" allows me to pinpoint the mutual constitution of Bi Mwana's knowledgeability by both Bi Mwana herself and the people who expect long waiting lines "because […] she is very knowledgeable," as Baba Sue explained to me.

In the case of Hakimu Saleh, the "doing being-knowledgeable" hinges on his textual practices as I have explored with regard to the performance of his knowl-

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[39] I here refer to West and Zimmerman's notion of "doing gender": "When we view gender [or 'being knowledgeable'] as an accomplishment, an achieved property of situated conduct, our attention shifts from matters internal to the individual and focuses on interactional and, ultimately, institutional arenas. In one sense, of course, it is individuals who 'do' gender. But it is a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others who are presumed to be oriented to its production. Rather than as a property of individuals, we conceive of gender [or being knowledgeable] as an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society" (1987: 126).

[40] See also Feierman (1990: 18) on his (albeit functionalist) description of the social establishment of "intellectuals."

[41] With "performance," I rely on conceptualizations within mainly cultural studies and anthropology that develop "performance" to depict targeted and situated actions in people's everyday lives in relation to each other (Korom 2013; Lewis 2013; Tulloch 1999).

edgeability (Nieber forthcoming) and as I have narrated in the introduction to this chapter. In his daily conduct, Hakimu Saleh is surrounded by books which he reads, to which he points, from which he quotes and to which he refers when talking about the meaning hidden between the words (all of which I frame as "material citations"). He thereby invites neighbors who peek through the window or step inside for some greetings as well as patients who witness the process of their diagnosis to perceive his engagement with texts. Given the authority attributed to textual materials (Bang 2011: 91; see also chapter 4), these perceivable "textual practices" (see Stolow 2010) allow for social situations in which patients are directed through Vikokotoni to Hakimu Saleh's house. His being-knowledgeable is "done" which in turn allows him to enact his knowledgeability and thereby constitute himself as "being-knowledgeable." The situated "doing" of certain people's knowledgeability characterizes these people as knowledgeable (such as Bi Mwana and Hakimu Saleh) and differentiates them from other people who are not knowledgeable in the same way.

In both settings, Bi Mwana's and Hakimu Saleh's, the "doing being-knowledgeable" of the practitioners entails an absence of the patients' "being-knowledgeable." Patients wait in line for their turn to talk to Bi Mwana or one of her helpers. Hakimu Saleh's neighbors acknowledge the "material citations" and on those grounds provide directions for seeking patients. These are practices that mark one's own lack of a particular kind of knowledgeability in contrast to Bi Mwana and Hakimu Saleh. "Doing" being-knowledgeable is intra-active: it differentiates healers from patients through their entanglement. The following paragraphs will show how the practitioners' "doing being-knowledgeable" entails others' practices of ignorance and a framework of secrecy.

3.2.1. Knowledgeability and Ignorance

At Bi Mwana's place, Bi Tufa decided for a woman to have a specialized kombe which had to be written then and there and which the patient would receive in addition to the wooden sticks.[42] Abdul was not around, and Mussa was busy with other work, so Bi Tufa took the *msahafu* and the plate and resorted to writing the kombe herself. The ink was already there, and she had already looked up which verse she wanted the kombe to contain. Turning slightly away, she made herself

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[42] 29 January 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

comfortable, balanced the opened *msahafu* on one side, and clutched the plate with her left hand so that her right hand was free to write. In the meantime, the patient, a young woman who had not yet been able to conceive a child, bowed her head and looked at her hands first and then raised her head again and looked around the room, but not at Bi Tufa. I was also looking around, and our eyes met repeatedly, but we did not talk while Bi Tufa was writing. While Bi Tufa washed off the kombe and filled it into the bottle, the patient asked me several questions about my research and emphasized that I must not forget to write about the sticks that Bi Mwana dispenses. She stressed that this knowledge must not be lost. When I asked her whether she knew much about herbal medicine (*dawa za mitishamba*), she hesitated and then said that although she was very interested in these things, she did not know much. Bi Tufa then joined our conversation: she pointed to one of the available piles of wooden sticks, identified it as pepper (*pilipili manga*), and explained what it was good for. The patient listened closely and remarked with regret how little she knew about it. I sympathized. Bi Tufa continued to explain two more kinds of wood and then stated that it was important to find trees or bushes that grow on good ground and which make the medicine strong (*kali*). Their supply, she stressed, came from Bi Mwana's home, and only Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima knew how to identify effective medicinal plants.[43] Bi Tufa, thus, demonstrated her knowledgeability and its boundaries whereby she contributed to "doing" Bi Mwana's and Bi Mwaltima's "being-knowledgeable." Both the patient and I were left with an awareness of how little we knew. The patient gave voice to this sentiment by saying: *Kweli, mnatuzidi kujua!* "Indeed you surpass us in knowing!" *Rahisi kujua* "It is easy to know," Bi Tufa replied, handed her the wooden sticks, and reached for the bottle of kombe. *Lakini hii, siwezi kueleza. Mungu tu, ndiye anaweza.* "But this [referring to the bottle of kombe], I cannot explain. God alone is the one who is able to." Before the patient left, Bi Tufa quickly explained how the sticks were to be boiled in water and when to drink both the decoction and the kombe she received.

Although neither the patient nor I had much knowledge (in the sense of information) about the wooden sticks prior to Bi Tufa's explanations, the patient did know about *dawa za mitishamba* (herbal medicine) and valued it. Furthermore, she knew that her problem (not conceiving a child) was a medically treatable

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[43] Thus, when Bi Mwalima took me to Unguja Ukuu (21 March 2014) to collect new supplies, she granted me the great honor of sharing with me this knowledge that distinguished her not only from the patients but even from other people who worked at Bi Mwana's place.

problem and she knew whom to turn to. As she did with every patient, Bi Tufa explained how to boil the sticks and when to drink how much. For her treatment, the patient did not need to know much more about it in the sense of having "information" or "understanding."[44] In fact, she articulated how little we knew. For the case of Amma's healing room in Hyderabad, Joyce Flueckiger states that "[e]xactly how healing is effected is less of a concern to patients than their perception and experience that it does take place—although [...] they do not have to focus on the how because it is, in its broadest parameters, familiar to them" (2006: 172). Similarly, Bi Tufa's patient was familiar with the broadest parameters. Although in a position to explain the herbal medicine and the preparation of kombe, Bi Tufa redirected knowledge of the herbal treatment to Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima and ascribed knowledge of the kombe that she wrote to God. Bi Tufa's knowledgeability about both, herbal medicine and kombe, enabled her to assemble the combination of wooden sticks and Qurʾanic verses; it enabled her to turn the "information" into practicability. However, she steered the attribution of being-knowledgeable away from herself. Similarly to how the patient and I recognized our own ignorance with regard to herbal medicine, Bi Tufa acknowledged her own lack of knowledgeability and thereby guided our appreciation of enacted knowledge towards participation in the "doing" of Bi Mwana's and Bi Mwaltima's being-knowledgeable for the herbal medicine and towards God for the kombe she wrote and dispensed.

The patient's and my recognition of our own ignorance (and Bi Tufa's redirection of what we ascribed to her knowledgeability) not only reflected an absence of knowledge.[45] Here, ignorance also contributes to "making knowledge" (Marchand 2010) and in the case of kombe enables bodily "understanding" for the patient when she ingests the verses (see chapter 6). Although she does not disclose all of the medicine's details, Bi Tufa does not frame her practices as secretive. The patient and I recognize our ignorance not because we recognize concealment, but rather because Bi Tufa offers explanations about the wooden sticks. Furthermore, when Bi Tufa wrote the kombe, she only turned away slightly: it was the patient's choice not to look (see part II). In contrast, Hakimu Saleh engages thoroughly

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[44] Murray Last outlines the importance of knowing about not knowing with particular reference to medical settings (1981). Whereas he situates the patients' ignorance in a shift from traditional to biomedical treatment, I see the patients' ignorance in Zanzibar as part of the practitioners' doing being-knowledgeable regardless of the medical treatment choice.

[45] In a similar vein, Roy Dilley (2010; 2015) has framed the anthropology of ignorance.

with secrecy and strategically reveals concealment. For him, this socially situated secrecy contributes to his "doing being-knowledgeable."

3.2.2. Secrecy

In Vikokotoni, as discussed in chapter 1.2.4, the patients' choice of going to Hakimu Saleh relates to practices of secrecy. Not only do they shape Hakimu Saleh's position in the neighborhood, but these practices also pertain to the relation between Hakimu Saleh and his patients. He has access to the unknown, the hidden, the secretive through the numerical calculations. This access fortifies Hakimu Saleh's position as a practitioner vis-à-vis the patients—it is part of his "doing being-knowledgeable." Furthermore, this access enables patients to share their problems with him without finding themselves in a moral dilemma grounded in preferred concealment as he would have the means to uncover the problem anyway. Patients know these preconditions when they visit Hakimu Saleh and make choices pertaining to how to narrate their afflictions accordingly. They also carefully choose the time of their visit, as entering Hakimu Saleh's house entails the possibility of being associated with matters that are better left concealed.

In his foundational work on the sociology of secrecy, Simmel (1906) delineates how people require methods of telling and concealing in order to live in respectful relationships. He further states that "the secret of the one party is to a certain extent recognized by the other, and the intentionally or unintentionally concealed is intentionally or unintentionally respected" (Simmel 1906: 462). Simmel's work has been taken up extensively and employed in various work further conceptualizing secrecy. I here merely want to point to Michael Taussig's "public secrets" for which knowledge about "what not to know" (Taussig 1999: 2, 50) is necessary. Intimately linked to this knowledge about what not to know are questions of authority and entitlement to tell that lead to the "paradox" of telling secrets as a communicative event (Bellman 1981) and the authorized performance of secrecy (Van de Port 2011) which is embodied (Hardon and Posel 2012; Crook 2009: 97).

Furthermore, these practices of showing *that* while concealing *what*, practices of "skilled revelation of skilled concealment" (Taussig 2003: 273), practices of "secretism" (Johnson 2002) are embedded in references to Islamic notions of knowledge. That text carries information beyond that which is discernable by anyone's eyes reflects in the differentiation between *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* (see foot-

note 17). Hakimu Saleh glosses this differentiation with *ufahamu* (understanding) that only a few people can receive if they have access to certain secrets (*siri*) situated in the "spiritual" realm. Access to these secrets is linked to learning, and thus, textual sources are pertinent for acquiring not only knowledge but also secrets embedded in other (non-secret) textual knowledge sources (see also Lienhardt 1968: 49). Contrary to how Pentecostal Christians in Ghana evaluate the light, mediatable visuality positively against dark secrecy of traditional religion (Meyer 2006a), Hakimu Saleh presents the visual medium of text as container for secrets, their concealment provided through limited and recognized access to that which lies "between the words,"[46] but which is visually perceptible. Secrets do not transform into non-secrets through their containment in physically accessible (and mediatable) text, rather, secrecy is enacted in textual practices and patients take part in this enactment. Hakimu Saleh's showing *that* he has the ability to "read between the words" while minimizing the disclosure of *what* he therein reads also alludes to his characteristics of integrity as a discreet Islamic healer to whom this powerful ability is granted and accepted in his surrounding. The trust in his confidentiality is grounded in the patients' ability to perceive the conveyance of non-conveyance.

Hakimu Saleh transmitted "signs of the secrets" (Gilsenan [1982] 2008: 117) in moments that he evaluated as appropriate, but he was aware that his power, associated with his involvement with "hidden knowledge," might have a threatening effect also. Peter Geschiere, drawing on Sigmund Freud's analysis of the interrelation between the "homely" (German: *heimlich*) and the "uncanny" (German: *unheimlich*) appropriates these insights into a triangular relation between "witchcraft," "trust," and "intimacy" (2013: 26-28).[47] Although I refrain from designating Hakimu Saleh's practices as "witchcraft," the relations with his patients are similarly marked by trust and intimacy to the degree that Hakimu Saleh anticipates rejection and subsequent feelings of uncanniness and jealousy both from his patients and from his neighbors. Therefore he remains secretive about his entitlement and ability to access secrets through text: to fill the spaces between the words with meaning which does not only protect him from the neighbors' potentially ill-wishing attitude towards him but also strengthens his doing being-knowledgeable.

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46 Hakimu Saleh, 15 April 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
47 See also Lambertz (2015) or Gilsenan ([1982] 2008: 77).

My presence in their spaces contributed to Hakimu Saleh's and Bi Mwana's doing being-knowledgeable. My evaluation of their suitability for my research was recognized by others and enhanced the social constitution of Hakimu Saleh's and Bi Mwana's being-knowledgeable. While my regular presence in their spaces allowed me to participate passively, Hakimu Saleh proactively engaged with his perception of my preconditions for knowledge: as outlined at the beginning of this chapter, he compiled a textual source that underlined his verbal explanations of a week before (which had been dotted with "material citations"). His perception of my reliance on text for practices that increase knowledge is not far-fetched as this dissertation text affirms. Our differentiated knowledge conceptions entail entanglements. In this text, I aim not only to talk about Swahili notions of knowledge and include them as "information," but to draw attention also to how I thereby "enact" knowledge.[48] The following section thus considers aspects of my positionality and concurrent decisions during fieldwork and in my writing.

3.3. Entangling Knowledge

At the beginning of this chapter, I narrated a session in which Hakimu Saleh and I unfolded the semantic field of "knowledge" in Swahili. In my narration, I first focused on his practices with material text in more general terms, how he displayed certain text passages, urging me to read along and thereby providing me with the opportunity to gain *ufahamu* ("understanding"). I then recounted how that particular session developed, how I introduced the topic and how he went to the other room to fetch books. I described this session without yet exploring the *content* of that session in detail (that only followed in section 3.1.1) but focused on *how* the session took place (which I then related to his practices of initiating "doing being-knowledgeable" in 3.2). Finally, I portrayed how he had prepared a compilation for me that provided material textual backing to his explanations of a week before. In this narration, I have already started to examine relational aspects through which the session developed, and I have already introduced the theme of my own textual practices as a Ph.D. candidate of which the narration itself is an example (and so is the entire thesis, including this very sentence). I now turn to this last point by first drawing attention to my positionality as

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[48] I cannot influence whether somebody reads between the lines of this text and gains God-given "understanding."

a researcher, student/apprentice, and author. I then examine the entangling of knowledge through the three paragraphs at the beginning of this chapter and briefly turn to matters of translation. On the grounds of this chapter, I then conclude this part.

3.3.1. Writing about my Learning

Ethnographic research and ethnographic writing constitute each other. Writing this text has accompanied me as a prospect throughout the entire period of my doctoral ethnographic fieldwork. Whereas James Clifford (1986a) addresses the role of writing for ethnographies and focuses on how different factors influence the writing, including the politics that underlie written accounts, I here aim to show how the prospect of writing already implicit during fieldwork is entangled with the ethnographer's encounters in the field and with what is to be written as a contribution to anthropological knowledge[49] (especially when the topic is concerned with writing, see chapter 4). My (then future-) writing shaped choices of whom I contacted and whom I was passed on to, it shaped how I introduced myself as *mtafiti* (researcher), it shaped people's reactions and responses towards me, it shaped how I structured the days, weeks, and months in Zanzibar.

Being a researcher reflected on my university studies. What I see when I walk through Zanzibar Town does not only depend on what is there, but also on what I choose to pay attention to. How I order and interpret my experiences depends on the strategies I have learned to apply. The research that I have done would have been very different if I had had other preconditions. If I knew Arabic, for example, and had studied Islamic studies, I might have decided at certain points to focus on other issues than the ones I chose. These given factors do not only influence what I perceive, but they also influence how other people perceive me. My positionality as a researcher from a European university influences how the topic of kombe is presented to me and even what the topic of kombe *is* and *means*.[50] Rather than attempting to circumvent this particular role through which my interest in kombe in Zanzibar was shaped, I embrace it and note how it is involved in the constitution of kombe as subject matter.

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[49] Mattijs van de Port states about his own text (2011: 44) that it "is itself a result—and example—of the way these impulses [of his field] impinge on the process of world-making."

[50] See also how "doing anthropology becomes an act of performance" (Korom 2013: 4), see also Barad's notion of "onto-epistemology."

    While my affiliation to a European university made me a "researcher," the role I inhabited vis-à-vis Hakimu Saleh made me a "student" (or even "disciple," although I never considered myself as such) in a classical Islamic sense,[51] and an "apprentice" in the sense of anthropological literature. Foremost Paul Stoller (1997) advocated the importance of the ethnographer's bodily involvement in learning, although, in contrast to Stoller, I continuously slipped in and out of my role as an "apprentice." With Hakimu Saleh I was trained to become an Islamic healer myself, and he prepared me to receive understanding (*ufahamu*) through the education (*elimu*), to distinguish between "good" and "bad" in order to practice and prepare kombe for other people. I trained myself to sit on the floor appropriately and learned to recognize sounds and smells associated with spirits or curative recitals. I trained myself to accommodate his timing regardless of the weather conditions or my hunger. While my back and head ached at times, I also felt my patience tested especially in moments when I did not agree with the direction that my education was taking, in spite of my consent to accept his choices. However, he learned to detect my discomfort and I learned to recognize different modes of his teaching mood, so that we, to use the words of Michael Lambek, "had come to a sort of mutual accommodation, creating a new kind of 'dialect' with which each of us had become comfortable" (1993: 151).

    Being Hakimu Saleh's student involved bodily challenges and led to the acquisition of bodily knowledge which was recognized by visiting patients and neighbors resulting in their acceptance of my position. Amongst other explanations of my presence (see chapter 1.2.6), Hakimu Saleh often used the training I was enrolled in to introduce me to patients and neighbors (and thereby to also reinforce his situated "doing being-knowledgeable"). I also used this role outside of training situations to initiate meaningful conversations about the implications of kombe as I received much respect for this and immediately arrived at a stage of the conversation in which I was able to ask more complex questions.

    Being a student placed me at the receiving end of knowledge transmissions. Being a researcher also placed me at the receiving end but implied that I would incorporate what I learned into the realm of academic knowledge. Being an author of this text, I draw on what I have learned. The "knowledge" that I have acquired during fieldwork is not detachable from my positionality through which I engaged

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[51]   I once discussed my relationship to Hakimu Saleh and Hakimu Saleh's relationship to my thesis with Roman Loimeier who pointed out that Hakimu Saleh made me learn in a classical Islamic way (Roman Loimeier, 2014, Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin).

with people and learned. Kim Knibbe and Peter Versteeg in their engagement with phenomenology have pointed out that "a fieldworker creates knowledge in interaction with the people in the field: not objectivity, nor pure subjectivity, but intersubjectivity is what an anthropologist should strive for" (2008: 52).[52] Intersubjectivity comes with different roles and with different expectations attached. Intersubjectivity also makes room for a unique subject matter, a "new kind of 'dialect,'" as Michael Lambek's quote spells out above, which, with reference to Karen Barad's "intra-action," calls for the term "intra-subjectivity."[53] The conglomerate "intra-subjectivity" emphasizes that which emerges from the encounters with the people in the field. Simultaneously, it points to how people attune to each other and adapt patterns of (bodily) sense making while always relating to a repertoire of ways of making sense that is grounded in the known. As an anthropologist, I aim to make the entanglements of the knowledge encountered and acquired in different habitats (with possibly different roles and different knowledge conceptions attached) productive and to bring these entanglements into my writing (see the plea by Ingold 2014: 391). Let me return to the account that I presented at the beginning of this chapter to follow up on these entanglements.

3.3.2. Entangled Textual Knowledge

The three paragraphs in the introduction to this chapter about the session in which Hakimu Saleh and I talked about "knowledge" do not only reveal the relation between Hakimu Saleh and material text in the education I undertook with him, but also his anticipation of how material text accompanies my work. (Initially, I had drafted these paragraphs for a paper to be read out loud at a conference and then adapted them to serve as an opening vignette to this chapter.) Thus, Hakimu Saleh's compilation not only presupposes objectivity of the written word available to those who have access (see Lambek 1993: 4–5) and thereby solidifies what he had told me a week earlier, but it prompts me to engage with it subjectively. How does Hakimu Saleh's compilation about something that I had brought up a week earlier and that we had talked about in great detail relate to each of our textual

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[52] Peter Pels, however, cautions to take the long term history of anthropology into account. He shows how intersubjectivity in anthropology is related to a history of objectivity and thus detects "something 'Whiggish' […] about anthropological representations of intersubjectivity" (2014a: 211).

[53] Karen Barad would not approve of this term as she problematizes the notion of "subjects."

practices?[54] Contrary to the interpretation by Julian Millie who has worked on communal (embodied) practices of textual performances in Indonesia and who detects a "tension […] between knowledge in the form of impersonal, textual authority and knowledge as something transmitted, translated and shared through human contact" (Millie 2008: 121), the account narrated here does not point to a "tension" between two poles, but rather complex interrelations that people with various layers of knowledge perception enact through textual practices. Not only did Hakimu Saleh's compilation converge his knowledge practices with mine, but the structure of this chapter was designed to converge with how he delineated the Swahili field of "knowledge" to me. This very text becomes the extension of what I have learned about the relation of textual practices and knowledge from Hakimu Saleh not only as "information" contained in the text but as "enactment." I thus speak of this text as "diffractive ethnography" (see introduction). Material text, in Bruno Latour's words, becomes an actant of knowledge transmission: there is a "practical codependency between knowledge embodied by the researchers and knowledge incorporated in the instruments" (Latour 1993: 11; see also Hodder 2014: 23) that is the present material text in this case.[55] The introductory paragraphs, written on a computer screen for a paper to be read from its printed version with associated further words projected onto a wall behind me and now—although slightly adapted—framing this chapter, is an entanglement of different instances in which material text and my knowledge practices have been inseparable. The contextualization of how this account found entry into this present text highlights the description of "doing being-knowledgeable" in western academia with its emphasis on textual practices.

3.3.3. A Note on Translation

The session with Hakimu Saleh was conducted in Swahili—this text is written in English. My initial question at the beginning of the session made use of the English term "knowledge" (which I then attempted to translate)—I here list (and translate) the Swahili semantic field around the English word "knowledge." Joining and interweaving encounters and conceptualizations with people in Zanzibar in

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[54] Another question would be how his presentation of this compilation as a gift to me shaped our relationship (Mauss 1973), but this is not where this chapter is heading.

[55] The co-dependency between embodiment and incorporation in other materials has a particular relevance to kombe (see chapter 6).

3. Engaging with Doing Being-knowledgeable

Swahili and encounters and conceptualizations with literature from mostly western academia written largely in English, this text is the result of multiple translation processes. In particular concerning the theme of "knowledge," these translation processes pose challenges. Translations of "informational" knowledge are relatively straightforward. It is a linguistic translation. "Understanding" defies translation and also I could only "informationally" write *about* it as it depends on God's benevolence. Lastly, I have also "informationally" written *about* the practicability of knowledge which is only partially possible.

> One knows, too, in context, in place and practice. One's being and doing of particular things 'knows' […]. One knows as a conversationalist, then, but also as a porter and a peasant. One does not always know how best to translate one knowledge into the terms of another. Not all one's knowledge is there to be expressed, never mind translated: not all knowledge can be turned into symbols or even signs. (Rapport and Harris 2007: 328)

While I agree with Nigel Rapport and Mark Harris,[56] I am here interested in how that which *is* turned into letters, both builds on enacted knowledge by other people and as a text constitutes enacted knowledge by itself.

This text is written in academic English which I struggle to mold in such a way that it comes close to expressing my aim. It is meant to contain selected encounters in the field with my contemplations and exchange about them in relation to other academic literature, all of which manifests in written words that make sense to an academic audience. However, this text as translation falls short of *representing* these encounters (especially since they were already entangled with my intended writing as Hakimu Saleh has made very clear) but *presences* them as textual formation[57] in its own right (see Harris 2007; Langwick 2007: 96; see also Spivak's "translator's preface" in Derrida 2016; on the concept of "skopos" see Mohatlane 2014). To use Karen Barad's vocabulary, this textual formation diffractively emerges from encounters with people in Zanzibar, encounters with academic literature, encounters with colleagues and friends with whom I talked about my research, encounters of themes in my academic education, personal interests and preferences.

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[56] A similar point was made earlier with respect to Jackson's existential anthropology and the practicability of knowledge in 3.1.3.

[57] On my take on the term "formation," see chapter 8.

3.3.4. Tying Together

Taking into consideration that the emergence of this text relates to (and diffracts with) Hakimu Saleh's compilation of written material for me and to kombe as a (liquified) textual artifact, I advocate the notion of a "diffractive ethnography" that specifically attends to the inclusion of this ethnographic text as part of the emerging phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic. This chapter has delineated (in the sense of "information") what "knowledge" in Swahili entails drawing on how Hakimu Saleh responded to my inquiry in a particular session. It has shown (still in the sense of "information") how aspects of "information," "understanding," and "practical knowledge" are interwoven with knowledge conceptions in Zanzibar and how these conceptions draw on Islam and need to be put into practice. The chapter has presented how these entangled aspects of knowledge shape "being-knowledgeable" and how this "being-knowledgeable" is socially constituted, entailing practices of ignorance and secrecy. Building on all the "informational" knowledge about the aspects of "information," "understanding," and "practicability," this chapter then has turned to how this writing does not only contain "information," but constitutes enacted knowledge which I make explicit through the term "diffractive ethnography."[58] It entangles knowledge.

"Entangling knowledge" keeps "knowledge" in the singular. It does not identify separate "knowledges," but frames knowledge as entanglement in Barad's sense.[59] Thus, yes, Hakimu Saleh and I might have differentiable knowledge conceptions; however, they became pronouncedly entangled in our session on "knowledge," and this entanglement lives on in this textual formation. Whereas at the beginning of this chapter I heuristically used "Swahili conceptions of knowledge" and "western conceptions of academic knowledge," it is now time to refine this. Knowledge is not quantifiable[60] with regard to a group of people and neither are "conceptions of knowledge." Knowledge, co-constituted "intra-subjectively" (see

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[58] This chapter has not produced knowledge in the sense of "understanding" as "understanding" is only accessible through God (although, according to Hakimu Saleh, God could grant the reader even of this text with "understanding" and this chapter might have been influenced by "understanding" of the people who contributed to its formation).

[59] Barad posits that "entanglings entail differentiatings, differentiatings entail entanglings" (2014: 176).

[60] During the Swahili Colloquium 2017 in Bayreuth, a debate arose about whether knowledge could be quantified in the same way that language made quantifiable through (corpus) linguistics. Under certain circumstances, Benedikt Pontzen argued, the quantification of knowledge indeed is possible (such as in encyclopedias that have a number of entries depicting an entity of knowledge or medical textbooks that give all the answers to a medical exam with a number

above) in ever new constellations of people, places, and circumstances, analytically defies pluralization into fixed categories, such as "Swahili knowledge" or "indigenous knowledge." In its multiplicity, "knowledge" remains singular.[61] However, I recognize that categorizations such as "indigenous knowledge" can be made to matter as a political instrument (see also Green 2014). Furthermore, I recognize the Fallist Movement's questioning of the superiority of a western notion of scientific knowledge and their calls for the decolonization of science while at the same time reactions to a so-called "post-truth" era call for a recognition of science's authority. I recognize that my thesis becomes an object in these highly charged debates. "Entangling knowledge," given the context of these debates, thus positions this thesis as a process of inclusive intra-subjective constitution of knowledge. This last part of this chapter made the "entangling" of this thesis explicit.

This section has mainly dealt with knowledge constituted in this text as academic writing. These considerations of writing were enhanced by the textuality of what this text is about: written kombe. The writing of this text and its entangling knowledge relate to the entangling knowledge of kombe's writtenness. Kombe carries "information" and "understanding," and kombe constitutes enacted knowledge that as a liquefied product defies cognitive engagement (differentiating it from the "information") but gains accessibility by the afflicted body that "reads" (see part II). The "entangling knowledge" of kombe reaches the afflicted body to effect healing.

When Paul offered to explain to me what kombe is, he offered to engage with his being-knowledgeable from his positionality as a "Zanzibari Christian" in a depiction of kombe. However, our conversation continued in such a way that *I* ended up telling *him* what kombe is and thereby justified my positionality as a researcher: we were thus "doing" my "being-knowledgeable." As the author of this text, I continuously interweave the research with this writing which was already present during my fieldwork as I describe in this chapter, chapter 3. My fieldwork took place in the time of the government of national unity (GNU) that also saw the preparations for a constitutional referendum. During that time, the relation of Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland was an underlying discursive trope in which kombe as "Zanzibari" phenomenon mattered. Chapter 2 provides the context for this differentiation and relates to Paul's identification as "Zanzibari Christian." As

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of questions that test the medical student's knowledge). However, this is not the direction I am taking here.

[61] This move is inspired by Annemarie Mol's (2002) "body multiple."

foundation on which this entire thesis builds, this part begins with a description of kombe in its materiality and then introduces the two main settings in which I learned: the setting of Hakimu Saleh and that of Bi Mwana. The following part advances the description of kombe. It scrutinizes kombe's textuality (chapter 4) and the afflicted body (chapter 5) to then develop the "reading body" (chapter 6).

Part II.

Immediating Literacy

I had just arrived at Bi Mwana's place when Bi Asha drew my attention to a room in which Mussa was about to write kombe.[62] I went to that room where I found Mussa in his loose white-blue striped shirt sitting to my left in one of the comfortable chairs. The patient, a middle-aged woman with a tightly bound headscarf, crouched on the opposite side on the tiled floor in front of a comfortable chair, fiddling with her phone in her hands. She portrayed her disconnection from what was happening in the room. I sat down in the chair next to Mussa. He had already positioned the cup of ink with the small twig as writing tool on the armrest. He carefully opened the *msahafu* to the page from which he intended to copy and then positioned it on the other armrest. With curiosity, I noted that Mussa then wrote the verses on paper and not on the plate designated for this purpose. As was expected of me, I used the opportunity to ask questions, and I inquired about the advantages and disadvantages of using the paper instead of the plate to write the verses on. As he continued to concentrate on the writing, he explained that the patient did not have a bottle and therefore needed to take the paper home and dissolve the verses on her own. I was sure that the woman was listening although she did not meet my eyes when I looked at her, and she also avoided eye contact with Mussa. Otherwise, Mussa continued answering my question, the plate is the better option, not only because the ink would be washed off more completely, but also because the patients are not meant to see the verses, but to swallow them bypassing the brain. I then turned to the woman and asked her whether she had heard, and advised with a twinkle that she should hide the verses from her eyes. Allowing to show her attention to the present situation in that room, she nodded earnestly, and when the paper was given to her, she stretched out both hands to take the paper without looking. As she folded it, she accidentally smudged the ink that was still wet. At first, I was worried about having initiated an undesirable destruction of the text, but Mussa assured me that the verses would nevertheless unfold their effect. The woman thanked Mussa, put the folded paper and her phone into her big black leathery handbag, took out money to pay, said goodbye to us and left the room. Mussa got up and resumed his other tasks, and also I got up to go to the room where Bi Mwana was at that time and stayed for a little longer. On my way home, I was still baffled by what had happened. What was the importance of everything I had learned about—the perfection of the written verses and their geometrically balanced appearance on the plate/paper—if then

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[62] Mussa, 5 February 2014, Amani, Zanzibar, see also chapter 3.2.

smudging did not matter? What is the relation between the patients' capacity to visually perceive and to corporeally perceive; what happens in the body that seeing could jeopardize?

The three chapters in this part examine the relation between text and body. Whereas chapter 4 focuses on how textuality matters for kombe and chapter 5 asks how the body is described, chapter 6 brings the two together and explores how the body "reads": how the body is entextualized/how the verses are embodied. While the primary interest of this part is to take seriously the materialities of text and body and thereby to engage with their processes of entangling through *kombe*, it also situates this mattering in genealogies of how conceptualizations of both text and body are tied to power relations. Questions of visuality and mediality are alluded to throughout this part, but only explicitly addressed towards the end. Towards the end, they thus provide a multiplicity of registers to frame the relations between text and body through *kombe*. The intra-action of these multiple registers not only connects the three chapters, but it also provides a more holistic approach to the examination of drinking *kombe*.

4. Tacit Textuality

In stating that the smudged verses would nevertheless unfold their effect, Mussa drew attention to the issue of textuality. Kombe is generally used as the short term for kombe *la kuandika*, written kombe. How does its writtenness matter when smudging does not affect its healing power? And how is kombe's writtenness important when it is liquefied and thus rendered unreadable? After briefly situating textuality and script in Zanzibar, this chapter delineates how Islamic attitudes towards textuality are entangled with understanding kombe's writtenness. It then moves to an examination of the precise "text" that kombe comprises, and how the writing of this text is intimately tied to the prospect of its liquefaction. Before the liquefaction is given full attention, the chapter juxtaposes various conceptualizations of text, all of which focus on writing and contribute to fore-grounding different but complementary aspects of kombe's textuality. Building on kombe's textuality, the exploration of its liquefaction follows. With liquefaction, the explicit textuality is rendered literally implicit. Dwelling on the interplay of explicit and implicit textuality, this chapter concludes with some remarks on how writing mattered during my fieldwork (as part of the "object of investigation") and matters now as a mode through which any ethno*graphy*—and this one in particluar—slowly emerges.

4.1. Zanzibari Writtenness

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Swahili written language (first in adapted Arabic script, Ajami) contributed to the differentiation of the learned, coastal, Muslim, Swahili people from neighboring other (African) peoples (Zhukov 2004).[1] As Andrej Zhukov describes in detail, at that time and in that region

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[1] Pier Martin Larson (2009) shows how reading and writing were taken up in coastal Southern Africa. With regard to local conceptions, his study examines what text did and does in this region. The Swahili Coast features only peripherally in his study.

any written literature, specifically philosophical and religious works, as well as ethical and didactic poetry, "was the literature of the Swahili people" (2004: 13). Although Zhukov's focus is on the written manifestation of this literature (turned into "Swahili" literature) in this specific time frame, he admits that "it is difficult (or even impossible) to differentiate (or separate) the oral tradition from the written one" (2004: 4). By highlighting this as a particular feature of Swahili literature in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he marks the rigid distinction between orality and textuality as normative presupposition. On the one hand, this presupposition relates to English language usage of what is written and what is oral and how they are inherently distinct from each other; any entanglement must be portrayed. On the other hand, it reflects how the distinction was (and also is) enacted in Zanzibar, marking the written text as something different from orally produced words. The early written texts of Swahili literature and the concomitant distinction from neighboring peoples create a narrative that is nurtured as constitutive of Zanzibariness and thus Zanzibari identity politics today (see chapter 2). Taking a perspective focused on the Indian Ocean, Isabel Hofmeyr (2008: 12) tells the story as inclusion into the "network of textual exchange and circulation which built on, sustained and invented forms of universalism across the Indian Ocean."[2] Closely connected to the Arabic language script used at the Sultan's palace and the social prestige it stood for, Swahili literature (in Ajami) was highly valued as part of Swahiliness. In her compelling analysis of the constitution of authority through textual practices, Anne Bang (2011: 91–95), however, traces more carefully how only from the 1850s onwards did a renewed textual orientation emerge with the development of changing Islamic authority structures. She shows how in the nineteenth century, the turn to more textually based authority was accompanied by oral performances that made text socially relevant (see also Pouwels 1987: 146, 161).

Today, Latin script dominates written correspondences in Zanzibar: it is the script learned in primary school education which is mandatory for all children in Tanzania, it is the script used in newspapers, and it is the script that the government employs. Only slowly did Latin script, introduced by missionaries who made use of the regional spread of Swahili as a trade language, replace Arabic script in Zanzibar (Decker 2014: chapter 3). Besides Latin script, most children

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[2] See chapter 2 for the Zanzibari dialectics between the African mainland and the Indian Ocean that is represented here by the two authors.

(a)

(b)

Figure 12.: Upper part of Zanzibar doors with carved Arabic script

(a) Door with chalk marking

(b) Gate with sticker
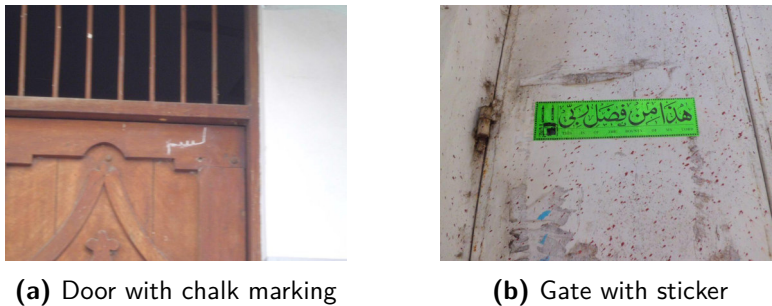
Figure 13.: Recently adorned doors

in Zanzibar also receive basic training and learn Arabic script in a Qurˀan school (*chuo*). As the duration and intensity with which the children learn at the Qurˀan schools is very diverse, the approach to Arabic scripted text is equally diverse. Today, both scripts are highly visible in Zanzibar Town: the Latin script shapes advertisements, names *kanga*s,[3] or marks property and the Arabic script provides references to Islam; it marks spaces as Islamic. Phrases from the Qurˀan, necessarily written in Arabic script (see below), often adorn doors to protect the entrance and thus the space that the door opens to. Whereas the highly esteemed Swahili

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[3]   *Kanga*s are pieces of cloth that are often worn by women. In the lower third they bear a message, a *jina* (name). A *kanga* with its *jina* and its corresponding pattern can be used to communicate and simultaneously disguise the communication while communicating this disguise. (See Beck 2000; 2001; 2005) The communication of disguise resonates with practices of secrecy (see chapter 3.3).

Figure 14.: Car with protection

doors often incorporate such a verse with several other symbols in the design of their carving (Athman 1996; Nooter 1984; Sheriff 2001), other doors are equipped with a verse written with chalk or on stickers from Saudi Arabia or India. Similarly, cars and buses (*madalladalla*) are protected in such a way also. The space that is fit for such content is the upper windscreen. It often stands in contrast to the rear window which can hold more personal messages or identity markers of the *dalladalla-* and *dalladalla*-affiliated scene.[4]

With the presence of Swahili written in Latin script, the presence of Arabic script is now specified to the Islamic context; it serves as a moralizing reminder. The request not to litter that is written on a wall in Stone Town, for example, is preceded by the Bismillah, the phrase that precedes almost all suras of the Qurʾan. The message about not littering is thereby connected to an Islamic context through which the author intends the message to be read with greater care and observed. In other words, written just above a message about not littering, the Bismillah in Arabic script—even to those who do not read

Figure 15.: "Do not litter!"

Arabic—serves as a moralizing reminder for socially appropriate behavior due to the diffractive superposition of Islam and the Arabic script in Zanzibar.

Whereas in the above mentioned examples the Arabic scripted phrases serve as protection (from mischievous jinn[5]) and indicate affiliation with and serve as a reminder of Islamic principles, the activities of the proponents of a more strictly ob-

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[4] The space just below the rear number plate is another potential space for writing. If occupied, it holds personal messages often with double meanings (personal communication with Rose Marie Beck). Interestingly, this space with its potentiality of interpersonal messages corresponds both spatially and content-wise with *kanga*s and their communicative potential.

[5] The jinn, when they see the Arabic script, understand that higher powers are involved. They are understood to then seek easier targets where they can disturb humans' activities and to not interfere with the space where this script appears.

served Islam further increase the presence of Arabic script (often with a translation of the message in Latin scripted Swahili) through posters meant to educate the public, encourage a more pious lifestyle, and advertise upcoming communal hajj pilgrimages for the Zanzibari (Muslim) community.[6] Though translated and equally presencing the Latin script, the visibility of these reminders and their moral messages strengthen moral awareness and thus emphasize the moral sub-message of other Arabic-scripted text present in Zanzibar, including reliance on the Qurʾan for healing purposes (Purpura 1997: 39–43).

4.2. Deep *Msahafu*

Mussa writes Qurʾanic verses. He carefully shapes Arabic scripted letters that then constitute the chosen Qurʾanic verse in which its healing properties are manifest. Beyond the (visual) accessibility of the Qurʾan's surface, the healing properties escape visual detectability though implicated in the Qurʾanic verse qua particular sequence of Arabic letters. This section asks what the writtenness of Qurʾanic verses implies with regard to their healing properties.

It is no coincidence that Qurʾanic phrases in Zanzibar are written in Arabic letters instead of the commonly used Latin script. In some contexts (especially for educational purposes), Qurʾanic verses are transliterated and often also translated into Swahili, or rather interpreted in Swahili. However, in the public sphere,[7] the presence of Qurʾanic verses is required in order to protect, portray Muslim identities, or evoke moral sentiments. The Arabic script is indicative of this presence and facilitates meaningfulness beyond the phrases' literal meanings. It is the script that the auditory message of the Qurʾan was first recorded in; it is the script of the language that God chose, and thus it is potent, perfect, sublimely beautiful, and untranslatable (Graham 2001: 85; see also Schimmel 1994: 156; James 2014: 333; Jacquemond and Selim 2015: 126).

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6 Their activism partly overlapped with political claims and found expression in the activities of *uamsho*. Addressing a Zanzibari community coincides with addressing a Muslim community as within this discourse Zanzibariness comprises being Muslim. More about *uamsho* in chapter 2.2.3 and 7.1.3.

7 I employ the term "public" here to designate the space that is accessible to those who are located in Zanzibar in a very broad and unspecified way rather than referring to a Habermasian concept of a "public."

4. Tacit Textuality

In a mutually supportive relation, the special status of Arabic scripted writings in Zanzibar reconfirms the Qurʾan's exceptionality. The presence of Arabic script used for authoritative purposes both underlines and serves as a reminder of the superior authority of the Qurʾan.[8] Simultaneously, the association of Arabic script with the Qurʾan extends the "feelings of sanctity" also to other contexts in which Arabic script is used. With a Bengali example, Annemarie Schimmel elaborates on the Arabic script's evocation of "feelings of sanctity" that she extends to other Muslims who ordinarily use an alphabet that is different from the Arabic script (Schimmel 1994: 153, see also Mommersteeg 1988: 502 and Ricci 2015: 425). Following her argument, Swahili written in Latin script, thus, facilitates the special status of Arabic scripted writings in Zanzibar as was portrayed with the Arabic scripted Bismillah over the request not to litter in the picture shown above.[9] Of course, literacy in Arabic is not always a given. In this regard, Janet McIntosh (2009: 233) reports on an interesting case in Malindi, Kenya, in which a possessing spirit with the ability to write in Arabic script could be summoned to write kombe. Similarly, Stacy Langwick (2011a: 98) states that in the Newala region in southern Tanzania, literacy in Arabic is not required to write kombe because communication with spirits enables the capacity to write. Although I have not witnessed these instances in Zanzibar, they emphasize the intimate links between Arabic script and the Qurʾan's power. Besides these attitudes towards Arabic script, William Graham further elaborates on the feelings towards the Qurʾan and stresses the "sensual meaning alongside, or in interaction with if not prior to, its discursive or esoteric sense" (Graham 2001: 113). The Qurʾan's sensual meaning is crucial to the healing context: the ingestion of Qurʾanic verses through kombe invokes a sensual experience effecting positive change: healing. At Bi Mwana's place, the choice of verses often does not matter as any verse of the Qurʾan is the Qurʾan and thus has this healing capacity. Therefore, the contents of the mix of verses in the bucket did not need specifications; the verses were all Qurʾanic verses and thus all potent.[10]

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[8] See also Caleb Chul-soo Kim's (2004: 156) reference to the authority of Arabic script in Zanzibar.

[9] This also extends to oral references as Kjersti Larsen mentions: "women and men will often name a certain book or refer to texts in Arabic in order to verify that they possess the 'true' understanding" (2002: 183).

[10] Nevertheless, as explored in chapter 1.1.6, most people who prepared kombe found it important to designate the properties of certain verses to certain afflictions to increase the efficacy. Whether or not the verses were matched to afflictions was not contested. However, judging

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4.2.1. Charismatic Qurˀan

> The centre of Islam is the Koran. Its sound, as has been said, defines the
> space in which the Muslim lives, and its written copies are highly venerated.
> In no other religion has the book/Book acquired a greater importance than in
> Islam, which is, most importantly, the first religion to distinguish between the
> *ahl al-kitāb*, those who possess a revealed scripture, and the people without
> such a Book. The Koran is, for the Muslim, the *verbum visibile*, the Word
> Inlibrate, to use Harry Wolfson's apt expression, which corresponds to the
> Word Incarnate of the Christian faith. (Schimmel 1994: 150–151)

Annemarie Schimmel, within the framework of her study on Sufism, poignantly
delineates the uniqueness of the Qurˀan. She refers to Harry Wolfson's depiction
of the Qurˀan as "Word Inlibrate" (1992: 246) which refers to theological debates
since the late 700s (CE) about the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qurˀan
as it is written down and materialized in our world.[11] Whether the Qurˀan in a
particular form—such as in recitation or in written form—is the Word of God or
merely a representational metaphor thereof, whether it is uncreated or created has
been subject to numerous debates (for a dissemination of these debates see Hawting
1978; Zadeh 2008a). These debates point to a larger concern for understanding
the singularity of the Qurˀan. However, in the context of my research on kombe
in Zanzibar today, I have not come across these debates. For my interlocutors,

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by recommendations found on the internet, this approach of choosing "appropriate" verses
appears to be widely spread. See for example: "Ziyara: Muslim Spiritual Care," accessed 6
February 2018, http://ziyara.org/spiritual-care/healing-verses-in-quran/.

[11] Wolfson has coined this term against "incarnation." He emphasizes the similarities of the
controversies amongst Christian and Islamic theologians about the relation between God and
material manifestations on earth. The controversy about how (the Word of) God relates to a
bodily Jesus—incarnation—resembles the controversy about how (the Word of) God relates
to an actualization of the Qurˀan—"inlibration," or, as Wolfson paraphrases his own term,
"embookment" (Wolfson 1992: 256). Angelika Neuwirth (2011: 165), amongst others, has
criticized Wolfson's Christian lens with which he explains Islamic phenomena. She quotes
Daniel Madigan: "Even more serious is that the here suggested vision of an entelechy of
'book' or 'scripture' seduces to assume that 'While Christians believe in a living, active and
personal Word of God, Muslims would only have a closed canon, dead letters.'" (Madigan
2003: original German, translation mine). I think Madigan's (and thus Neuwirth's) criticism
is justified in that it questions the Christian lens through which an Islamic debate is portrayed.
However, I find the entangled differentiations of worldly materializations of God's word in
Islam and Christianity (and the debates around them) interesting in themselves. The term
"inlibration," though uneasily situated in Wolfson's work that employs a Christian lens for
matters of Islam, in fact, can also be read as a term that depicts this precise entanglement of
Muslim and Christian understandings of God's word in the world (which is not what Wolfson
does).

the Qurʾan is the Qurʾan. No other words can describe what the essence of the Qurʾan is/comprises/entails/does. People's attitudes towards and practices with the Qurʾan are describable, its text is analyzable as "text," and its history is traceable; however, neither for Mussa nor anybody else who addressed this topic in conversations with me even the sum of all of these approaches reveals what the Qurʾan is about and how it heals (see also Zadeh 2008a: 63). Acknowledging my limitations in understanding the Qurʾan, I am left to accept this impossibility for me to describe the Qurʾan in this academic format, and thus I take note of its mysterious power[12] and allude to it by framing it as "charisma."[13] Similarly to how secrets are known (see chapter 3.2, see also Taussig 1999: 50) and to how invisibility is often portrayed (see 6.1.2), William Chittick in his book on the Sufi path to knowledge circumscribes the indescribable:

> The revealed Book is the actual, true, authentic embodiment of God's Speech. Its every letter is full of significance, since the book manifests the divine realities in both its form and meaning. It is true that the same thing can be said about the cosmos, but the written Book has the advantage of having been given a linguistic form that necessarily corresponds with Absolute Truth, which is God. […] It provides the God-given and providential means whereby man can come to know things in themselves, without the distortions of egocentrism. (1989: xv-xvi)

The notable but inexplicable correspondence between the material Qurʾan (the written Book) and "Absolute Truth" comprises the "charismatic" power, power from which kombe's healing properties stem. The frequent allusions to its mysterious characteristics and the explanations of its inexplicability further solidify the Qurʾan's charismatic powers.[14] Though inexplicable, I was frequently taught

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[12] See also Graham and Gilsenan who both note the inability of academic texts to capture this "miraculous source of the umma" ([1982] 2008: 16), its "religious meaning that may exist apart from rational, discursive meaning - and, indeed, apart from mystical or esoteric meaning as well" (Graham 2001: 112). In relation to the linguistic turn, Lambek describes the wearing of amulets as "a kind of 'illocutionary' act" (1990: 27). The use of linguistic metaphors in academic writing will be discussed in chapter 4.5 and in chapter 5.6. Although I emphasize here the particularities of Qurʾanic words, Paul Stoller's (2007) experiences of living with cancer direct attention also to the healing power of words more generally (see also chapter 6).

[13] Building on Max Weber (1954), the term "charisma" has been used extensively throughout the social sciences and especially within political science and management studies (Tal and Gordon 2015: 354–356). I here employ it to designate the awe with which the Qurʾan is met by virtue of its holistic being and is not explicable through one of its particular characteristics (compare with Sanders 1974).

[14] For a historical study of this solidification see Zadeh (2009: 466).

about the Qurʾan. One of the sessions with Hakimu Saleh attests to the ease with which the Qurʾan can be talked about and draws the attention to a point that my writing has alluded to in the beginning but deliberately deferred until now: the entanglement of writtenness and orality.

4.2.2. *Kusoma*: Hakimu Saleh

It was a rainy day in November 2013 when Hakimu Saleh and I had one of our regular sessions.[15] His youngest son Salim was allowed to stay at home that day because he had been sick in the early morning. By the time I arrived, however, he was very energetic, and curiosity repeatedly led him into the main room in which Hakimu Saleh and I sat until he was summoned again by his mother, Bi Rehema. That day, Hakimu Saleh explained how to write kombe for problems involving jinn, spirits who could read the Qurʾan in Arabic, and thus immediately recognize and respect the higher powers at play. In the context of his explanations, Hakimu Saleh mentioned that the Prophet Muhammad had "read" the Qurʾan (*mtume alikuwa anasoma kurani*). Given my understanding of *kusoma* (to read) and my understanding of the Qurʾan as an entity of 112 suras that had become a codified unity, I was surprised to hear this and asked how the Prophet was able to read the Qurʾan when it was not yet written? This question triggered a lengthy and very fruitful exploration of what the Qurʾan is, teachings that Hakimu Saleh partly directed at me and partly at Salim. In the following translation from Swahili, I stick to the Arabic *qaraʾa* ("to read") and the Arabic *iqra!* ("read!" as imperative), to imitate the language switches into Arabic that were important for this explanation. I have also kept the Swahili (*ku*)*soma* and its imperative *soma!* because Hakimu Saleh relates these two at the end, and this relation does not quite work in English. I will discuss this below; for now a rough translation of (*ku*)*soma* as "(to) read"/"(to) recite" can be assumed.

HAKIMU SALEH: You see, in the times that the Qurʾan was revealed, Muhammad was told: "*Iqra!*" Do you see? He was told "*Iqra!*," *Soma!*[16] Now you see, all the suras are different. People forget. But the noble Qurʾan was on earth.

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[15] Hakimu Saleh, 28 November 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
[16] Hakimu Saleh here refers to sura 96 which comprises the very first revelation that the Prophet received and starts with God's call: "*Iqra*," read!

> The words were holy/sacred [Swahili: *matakatifu*[17]]. The Qurʾan is *qaraʾa*,
> words, *iqra.* […]

Hakimu Saleh emphasized that this, sura 96, was the first revealed sura and that
in this first sura Muhammad was told to read/recite. He then went to fetch his
msahafu (Swahili, "Qurʾan codex") from the room next door and while he paged
through it, he said:

HAKIMU SALEH: First they used skin, the skin of trees (bark), they wrote on trees,
they did not yet have this [points to the *msahafu* in front of him] until the
fourth caliph.[18]

I intervened:

HANNA: That is the reason why I have asked. How could he [Muhammad] *soma*
the Qurʾan?
HAKIMU SALEH: Ahh, look, they recorded the book from memory.
HANNA: Yes, but I thought the Qurʾan is this in its entirety.

Now it was my turn to refer to the *msahafu* in front of him.

HAKIMU SALEH: Ah, no. He [Muhammad] came, and they studied. They came,
they sat down. Like this. The people were sitting down. Then, one day, the
Prophet told Ibn Abbas to *soma*. He was one who was very able to *soma*
the Qurʾan, and he was told to *soma*. So he *soma*-ed and he [Muhammad]
listened. And those who came they memorized the *msahafu*. All of them.
It was inside the followers. So when people say this, they only filter, they
memorize. Now, then and there people had competitions. Small people. To
memorize the Qurʾan. But others knew its meaning; most did not know.
But they all had it in their chest.[19] "Memory" [English word used]. Do you
see? So, this is its sura [points at the sura 96, Sūrat al-ᶜAlaq].

He continued our educational program with Meccan and Medinan suras and came
back to the meaning of *iqra!*.

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[17] *-takatifu* is also used for the Christian concept of "holiness"/"sanctity."
[18] He refers to the compilation of what is known today as the Qurʾan by the caliph Uthman
(actually, the third caliph).
[19] The heart is located in the chest, and the heart memorizes. See chapter 5.4.1

HAKIMU SALEH: Now, look, now, Gabriel, when he descended, he said: "*Soma!*"
That is *Iqra!* which is the meaning of the Qurʾan. In short, its meaning in
Arabic is Qurʾan. Iqra!, Iqra is *kusoma. Soma!* Now the Qurʾan is *kisomo*
("a reading"), it is words. It is *kisomo* in the name of the creator. [...]

Our discussion then moved to the question of whether translations were also the
Qurʾan. Hakimu Saleh stressed the permissibility of interpretations in other lan-
guages that do not change the Qurʾan and the importance of the Arabic original.[20]

HAKIMU SALEH: It is crucial, you see, it is an "obligation" [English word used] for
every Muslim to know the language of the Qurʾan because it is the "original"
[English word used]. Did you understand? Now, if you know the Qurʾan
in the future you can challenge [the translations]. You will be able to say:
"This sura does not say this, this sura says 'Iqra!' It does not say 'say!' It
says 'soma!'" Do you see?

I did see many points. I saw how important it was for Hakimu Saleh to teach me
about the Qurʾan and I wanted to be told about the Qurʾan. I was curious about
the intra-action of the spoken (recited) and the written (to be read) facets of the
Qurʾan that I had read about in academic literature and Hakimu Saleh certainly
rekindled my curiosity. Besides directing my attention to the significance of Arabic
and the Qurʾan's charisma (which I have addressed above), he attributed value to
scholarly exchange about the Qurʾan, and most significantly challenged me to re-
think the differentiation between writing and reciting that I had made on the basis
of the distinction between kombe *la kuandika* (written kombe) and kombe *la ku-
somea. Kusoma*—here preliminarily translated as "to read (aloud)"[21]—combined
the textuality in its materiality (the materiality of the bark as first writing surface,
the *msahafu* that he fetched from the other room and that we both pointed to)
with oral recitation. Ibn Abbas, according to Hakimu Saleh, "read" the Qurʾan
for Muhammad and others to listen to. This "reading" (*kusoma*) is different from
"saying," as Hakimu Saleh at the end of this excerpt of our session made clear:
"this sura says 'Iqra!' It does not say 'say!' It says 'read!'" Based on my under-
standing, the difference between reading and saying is the reliance on a written

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20 Justo Lacunza-Balda (1997) has examined how the translation/interpretation of the Qurʾan
into Swahili relates to Islamic revival and reformist dynamics (see chapter 2).

21 In this paragraph, I limit the discussion to the notion of *kusoma* that the English terms "to
read [aloud?]" and "to recite" capture in order to pursue the entanglements of reading and
reciting in this case. That *kusoma* also translates as "to study" and what this additional
sense of *kusoma* implies will be discussed in chapter 6.

basis that "reading" requires and "saying" does not require. Though with kombe *la kusomea* the words are orally transmitted to the water, they are "read." Mostly, a *msahafu* is present from which the verses are recited over the water, but they can also be recited from memory. Whether "written" in memory (Ware 2014: 49) or in a *msahafu* does not make a big difference because, as Hakimu Saleh stated: "They memorized the *msahafu*. All of them. It was inside the followers." "*Kusoma*" bridges writtenness and orality with a sense of direction: from writtenness to orality (whereas *kuandika* stays in the realm of the written). Interestingly, Hakimu Saleh also refers to the first steps of the Qurˀan's transmission: "Gabriel, when he descended, he said: '*Soma!*' That is *Iqra!* which is the meaning of the Qurˀan."[22] Though not explicitly stated in this particular excerpt, Hakimu Saleh's use of the word *soma* in connection to Gabriel points to the heavenly book in which God has written everything that happens (Qurˀan 85:22; see also Lambek 1993: 141; Larsen 1998: 70; Schielke 2015: 349). In Hakimu Saleh's comments, to "recite" and to "read" are entangled in the shared reference to a written basis. This written basis—the bark of trees, the *msahafu* that we could point to, but also the *msahafu* that is memorizable—is crucial throughout his explanations. It is because of this written basis, that kombe *la kuandika* (written kombe) and kombe *la kusomea* (recited kombe) differ from each other.

4.2.3. Written Kombe: Kombe *la Kuandika*

For most practitioners in Zanzibar, the differentiation between kombe *la kuandika* and kombe *la kusomea* does not provide grounds for rigid contestations of one or the other. Sometimes they are even combined, that is, the water receives both the ink that had shaped the Qurˀanic verses and the oral recitation thereof.[23] Instances in which this differentiation emerges comprise elaborations of an anticipated criticism (in which kombe *la kusomea* is more acceptable than kombe *la kuandika*, see chapter 7.3) and, self-evidently, explanations of how to prepare kombe (which usually favored kombe *la kuandika* over kombe *la kusomea*). Mussa's remark that it is advantageous for the verses to bypass the brain also relates to a remark that Hakimu Saleh once[24] made. He stressed that kombe *la kuandika*

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[22] Hakimu Saleh here refers to the etymology of the word "Qurˀan" which builds on the root *qrˀ*, the same root as in the verb *qaraˀa* and its imperative *iqra*.

[23] In Malaysia's bottling company "Annusyrah Malaysia Sdn. Bhd." this combination is the norm (see chapter 1.1.5).

[24] 24 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

can be targeted much better to a particular person, whereas kombe *la kusomea* can be heard in the neighborhood and possibly by the patient who might then think about the recitation.[25] The differentiation between kombe *la kuandika* and kombe *la kusomea* (both based on the renewed constitution of a written source, the heavenly *kitāb*) relates to differentiations provided by the Arabic (Islamic) language:

> The Arabic language differentiation between *qurʾān* ('recitation') and *muṣḥaf* ('codex') and the adoption of these terms into other Islamic contexts shows that the conceptual differentiation between the Qurʾan as oral communication and its text fixed in writing cannot be underestimated. (Neuwirth 2011: 121, original in German, translation mine)

This conceptual differentiation between the recitation and the written form of the Qurʾan, the *msahafu*, is intimately tied to concomitant material attributes and thus to practices that employ the Qurʾan as an object in particular with regard to healing (O'Connor 2011), but also as an object to be studied (Biddle 2011). Furthermore, Rudolph Ware (2014) extends these notions of materializations of the Qurʾan to the body to which the enticing title of his book "The Walking Qurʾan" testifies. Whereas he shows how the body that has memorized (and usually also drunk) the Qurʾan becomes and constitutes another materialization of the Qurʾan, I once had a conversation that subverted this comparability of a body imbued with Qurʾanic verses and a *msahafu.*

One day in August 2014[26] I visited the Ba Kathir madrasa to get an impression of how the heritage of the Islamic scholar Ba Kathir[27] is implemented today. I was led to the teacher's office, where I met three teachers, two of whom were interested in my visit and welcomed me inside. Plenty of books distributed across the room, a computer on one of the desks, and the voices of many children from the classrooms filling the space with Qurʾanic recitations situated my visit in a bustling scholarly atmosphere. I introduced myself to the two teachers, Iddi and Haroun, and they assured me that despite the busy daily schedule at school they were interested in talking to me then and there. After some explanations

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[25] See also Hakimu Saleh's concern for secrecy (chapter 2.1.4).
[26] Iddi and Haroun, 12 August 2014, Ukutani, Zanzibar Town.
[27] Abd Allah Ba Kathir (1860/61 - 1925) was an Alawi with a Hadrami background. He was a student and close companion of Ibn Sumayt. Ba Kathir is not only known for his knowledgeability and his activities as part of the ulama, but also for his educational reforms that took shape in the then established Ba Kathir madrasa (Bang 2003: chapter 6 and 7; see also chapter 2.1.4).

about the school's running and incited by my introductory words about my research, our conversation turned to the question of whether the body becomes a *msahafu* when the Qurʾan is ingested. Speculations were exchanged between Iddi and Haroun and their implications briefly evaluated, until they vigorously agreed that the *mwili* (body) cannot be a *msahafu*. Writers can turn paper into a *msahafu*, but the body cannot become a *msahafu*. Neither does a smartphone become a *msahafu* even when it displays or plays tracks of Qurʾanic verses.[28] Iddi and Haroun maintained the importance of the written Qurʾan as a bounded entity of pages that then can be treated with the appropriate respect.

Similarly, kombe is not a *msahafu* even if it contains written Qurʾanic verses and their healing properties. In their liquefied form, the verses differ from the visually perceptible (readable) form to the extent that the former does not qualify as *msahafu*. Nevertheless, what is written and how it is written is crucial to what kombe is. The verses (and their protection) are not only materially tied to the ink that forms the shape of specific combinations of Arabic letters that constitute the Qurʾan as a written text, but they are also tied to the charismatic healing power that rests in these words and does not disappear with the liquefaction. That these words are not to be "read" but made directly available to the body is particularly interesting with regard to Hakimu Saleh's explanation of the Qurʾan's meaning resting in *qara'a*, to "read." The different manifestations of the Qurʾan in the material world and the possible practices with these manifestations relate to the entanglings (and differentiatings) of kombe *la kuandika* and kombe *la kusomea*. In the following section I examine more closely what is written and how it is arranged; I examine how mistakes are corrected and what they tell about the liquefaction process.

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[28] Murtala Ibrahim's (2017: chapter 7) work on Christ Embassy and NASFAT in Nigeria addresses how smartphones are used in the context of these two religious groups in Nigeria. Contrary to what Iddi and Haroun state, Ibrahim shows negotiation processes of how Qurʾanic material on smartphones changes prescriptions of handling the material carrier of the Qurʾan. For the Zanzibari context, see Aïsha Othman's dissertation chapter on Mobile Qasida (Schmitt 2012: chapter 7.2.2).

4.3. Kombe's Textuality

4.3.1. Textuality in Writing

Writing Qurʾanic verses for kombe makes use of the materiality of the charismatic and powerful Qurʾanic text. It makes use of the durability of its power even when it is washed off, trans*form*ed, contained in water, and ingested. The chosen verses often relate analogically to the affliction for which the patient is seeking treatment (see also chapter 1.1.1; for the practice amongst the Berti, see also El-Tom 1985: 416). Besides the last two or three suras, 112–114 (see also Flueckiger 2006: 67; Lemons 2010: 159–167), which are portrayed as particularly powerful, the practitioner's choice often also includes verses in which the Qurʾan's healing power is explicitly stated (17:82) thereby employing the synergies of the Qurʾan's textual (readable) and ontological (materially accessible) manifestation of its charisma.[29] For particular efficacy, these verses are sometimes written repeatedly whereby the number of repetitions matters. Furthermore, the choice is often guided not by the literal meaning of the words, but by the "hidden meaning" that exists between the lines of the written text and that escapes hermeneutical exegesis of the Qurʾanic text (Schimmel 1994: 130, see also the introduction to chapter 3 and its footnote 5 on "batin"). This "hidden meaning" through which the Qurʾan's power is approachable also resides in single letters (Neuwirth 2011: 152)[30] and thus "magic squares" (Arabic: *wafq*) are often used as an addition to the chosen verses. In magic squares, each sum of the numbers in a row, a column, and the diagonals is the same. The most prominent is the 3 by 3 square in which the numbers 1 to 9 show and in which the numbers in the corners, 2, 4, 6, and 8, using Abjad (each number is assigned to an Arabic letter)[31] correspond to *bdūḥ* - thus the square's name: *buduh* (Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007: 147; Spoer 1935: 244–248; Kriss and Kriss-Heinrich 1962: 69–87; Schimmel 1994: 152–153; see also Blanchy-Daurel and Said 1989).

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[29] See also the selection made by "Ziyara," which provides online "Muslim Spiritual Care Services" and identifies six verses to be particularly suitable for healing purposes: 9:14; 10:57; 16:69; 17:82 (as previously indicated); 26:80; and 41:44 (accessed 6 February 2018, https://ziyara.org/spiritual-care/healing-verses-in-quran/). See also the Quran Reading blog accessed 6 February 2018, http://www.quranreading.com/blog/ayat-e-shifa-healing-verses/or EShaykh.com, "Ayat ash-Shifa (Six Quranic Verses of Healing), posted by Eshaykh Staff, 27 NOvember 2010, http://eshaykh.com/quran-tafsir/ayat-ash-shifa/.

[30] See also Pormann and Savage-Smith (2007: 147) and Schimmel (1994: 123).

[31] See also how Hakimu Saleh does the diagnostic calculations (chapter 2.1.1).
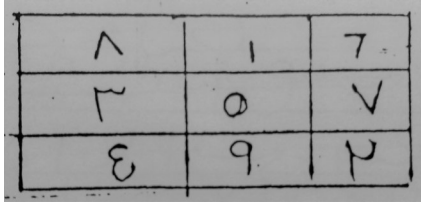
Figure 16.: *Buduh* square (from photocopied manuscript, author unknown).

During my apprenticeship, Hakimu Saleh only hinted at the "mystical"[32] facets of what the *wafq* contain (more details are found in Pormann and Savage-Smith 2007: 147). *That* these mystical facets would enhance the efficacy of kombe's healing power was for him more important than *how* this happened. The use of numbers for these mystical writings is not uncommon in religious mystical practices (Mommersteeg 1988: 503; Largier 2008: 85; Zadeh 2009: 463–464; Biddle 2011: 26). For the context of medieval Christianity, Niklaus Largier points out that images emerge with these written numbers (2008: 86), which resonates with how Hakimu Saleh speaks about and treats numbers in the writing of kombe. Keeping in mind Hakimu Saleh's explanations about how the secrets of texts are to be found between the lines, these emerging images must be regarded as valuable in their own right as they also create spaces to be read beyond the numbers' meanings. Thus, in the case of kombe, the saffron ink's formation in the shape of these numbers defies translation or matching correspondences, as it is the ink in that precise shape of the number in which the power resides.

To protect the verses, sometimes the names of the angels are added to the verses and the magic squares. If they are added, they usually encircle the Qurʾanic verses. My understanding is that the verses are thus protected from the edge of the paper/plate and therefore from outside influences. The material dimensions defined by the writing on a surface with boundaries directly relate to the spiritual boundaries distinguishing the inner content with the Qurʾanic verses from the outside threats to the verses. Encirclement of the verses reifies these boundaries and thus protects the verses. However, writing the names of angels is highly contested and many kombe practitioners explicitly state that they do not include names of angels, as it could easily be understood as a form of venerating the angels instead of God, which is considered to be one of Islam's most serious prohibitions: idolatry, *shirk*.

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[32] Hakimu Saleh himself spoke in this context of the "mystical" and the "mysterious" (English words used).

Figure 17.: Table of correspondences with symbols of Solomonic Seal in the middle row (from material that Hakimu Saleh showed me, author unknown).

Regardless of whether the names of angels are included or not, the Solomonic Seal mostly (not always) completes and protects what is written (see Hakimu Saleh in 1.2.1). It comprises seven symbols all of which have particular meanings, but which only in their particular configuration become the Solomonic Seal (Blanchy-Daurel and Said 1989).

Similar to the numbers of the magic squares, the symbols of the Solomonic Seal correspond to letters that mark attributes of God, and correspond to days of the week and specific angels, as figure 17 shows. They can be further related to planets, matching suras, and to certain ayas of the Fatihah (the Qurʾan's first sura). These correspondences are important, but the precise shape that the ink takes (which is then washed off) defies translation. The Solomonic Seal is powerful not because it *means* something, but because it *is* something.

Numbers, names of angels, the Solomonic Seal. These supplements to the Qurʾanic verses are not decisive for kombe to have its effect—the Qurʾanic verses

alone provide healing. The supplements are often regarded as protection, and I take up the theme of protection in a two-fold way. Firstly, the geometrically balanced layout of the verses and their supplements protects the inner verses from the edge of the paper/plate.[33] The supplements ward off outside influences from beyond the paper/plate. Here, the materiality of what is written—the dimension and shape of the ink that forms the verses—needs to be protected by ink in certain dimensions and shapes around the verses' ink. Writing creates a surface and defines its two-dimensional plane (Ingold 2010b: 23). It exists on the surface it creates, but the so-created surface extends beyond the size of the writing. The protection must guard the inner verses against threats coming from all directions within the dimensional plane of the surface. Hakimu Saleh (see chapter 1.2.1), once he has written the verses and the supplements on paper, uses scissors to excise the edges of the paper that are left empty. He thereby centers the verses on the paper and geometrically balances the position of the ink in relation to the size of the paper. The added value that comes with the geometric balance, again, relates to the material ink in the shape that it *has* rather than what this shape *stands for*.

Secondly, and here I allude to something that will be examined in more detail in 4.5 and in chapter 6, the supplements "close" the Qurʾanic text. Wolfgang Iser (1972: 283) describes how "reading" fills the gap that any text leaves between words and sentences; he explores how "reading" is interpretation and thus "closes" the text of a particular actualization, a particular moment of reading. Following a similar logic, Brinkley Messick (1992; 2018; see also Ahmed 2016: chapter 5) scrutinizes fiqh-texts that are placed around the Qurʾanic text. The fiqh-texts authoritatively give direction to the reading of the Qurʾan, they "endeavored to further define the already definitive" (1992: 17) whereby the already definitive is the Qurʾan. The supplements to the Qurʾanic verses in kombe similarly close the written verses. The supplements protect them from outside influences and substantiate the healing context. The supplements thus preclude other ways to "read" the verses; the danger is associated with mischievous jinn who might influence the patients' perception of the material writing and thus of the potential "reading." Furthermore, the supplements intensify the verses' healing properties for which they were written.

The text of kombe relies on saffron ink in a very particular shape that manifests this text. Apart from forming Qurʾanic verses which contain the healing

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[33] This is similar to the frame (*pindo*) of a *kanga*.

power, the ink also often takes the shape of supplementary numbers, names, or symbols to protect the verses. These supplements not only have meaning in what they illustrate and portray, but the exact shape of the ink manifesting the verses and their supplements as well as the elements' exact position in relation to each other and on the paper/plate also contribute to the material and spiritual protection of the verses. Given the importance of the ink shape's perfection, I now turn to situations of what I call "unwriting" that I witnessed in observing processes of writing kombe *la kuandika*. What to do when ink is not placed correctly? And at what moment is the ink's position on the paper/plate important?

4.3.2. Textuality in Unwriting

Erasing

One day, as Abdul, who works for Bi Mwana, wrote kombe to be filled into the big buckets in their courtyard, he showed and explained to me the procedure he was following.[34] He was eager to finish this task because he wanted to pursue his other business. Swiftly but carefully he wrote verses with saffron ink on the plate. To demonstrate the possibility of dedicating this particular verse to the treatment of an individual patient, he also left some space underneath the verses and marked this space with curly brackets. He then inserted the name of a fictitious patient for whom this particular kombe could be tailored. This, he explained, would only be done for individual cases, but because the kombe he was preparing was to be poured into the bucket for use by potentially everyone, he needed to erase the name. He used some wet paper and wiped the name off the plate. The curly brackets were not erased, and the blank space became a placeholder for any name. The dedication to a fictitious person with a name, a name that could be spelled and thus be formed by the saffron ink, was problematic for the collection of kombe that needs to be dispensable for people with many different names.[35] Having removed the ink that took the shape of the fictitious patient's name to make the remaining ink applicable to anyone again, Abdul then dripped water onto the plate to then pour the liquefied verses (with the marked placeholder for any name) into the bucket. Abdul finished his task with care and then swiftly stored away the

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[34] Abdul, 13 July 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.
[35] By inserting and erasing a fictitious name, Abdul points at the intimate connection of a patient's name and her/his affliction that Hakimu Saleh's calculations using the name of the patient and the name of her/his mother already indicated in chapter 1.2.1.

plate, returned the cup with the remaining ink and the bamboo stick to Bi Mwana from whom he had borrowed it, and was already on the phone by the time he left the courtyard.

Smudging

At that time I assumed that the moment of washing off was the decisive moment in which the ink's shape—forming the verses (possibly with supplements)—had to be perfect: complete and devoid of inappropriate markings. However, as narrated at the beginning of this part, Mussa challenged this hypothesis. Letter for letter, word for word, the saffron ink on paper took on the shape of the *msahafu*'s words and thus manifested the legible Qurʾanic verses. The ink's visual shape on paper materialized the Qurʾanic verses anew with all their attributes, including their healing power. The ink's shape, however, was altered when the paper was folded and the wet ink smudged. The ink's shape that Mussa had taken such great care to reproduce and that I had taken to be constitutive for these written Qurʾanic verses was irrevocably damaged. I thus assumed that the ink on that paper no longer manifested the healing properties of the Qurʾanic verses. Mussa, who noticed my dismay and who could link it to the smudging that had just occured, noted that the kombe would work nonetheless. He thereby reassured the woman who had folded the paper that the paper with ink was still potent and that she could proceed with her leave-taking. At that moment I was relieved (and I think so was the woman), but this incident also uneasily challenged my hypotheses about what kombe entailed. The liquefaction of the written verses (ink in a particular shape against a plain background) apparently was not the entire story: the healing power of the written verses was more robust than I had presumed. How then, did the materiality of kombe, the ingestion of a specific materialization of the Qurʾanic words fit with the healing power that came into being through—but was not restricted to—the shape of the ink? I wondered about the difference between accidental smudging after the writing was completed, rendered unimportant, and the necessary removal of an additional name during the process of writing. In the following paragraphs, I will present yet another incident through which to construe the liquefaction of the ink shape of perfected verses.

Correcting

As I did every once in a while,[36] I sat outside of Bi Mwana's place where some women also sat on a plastic woven mat, chopping particular kinds of wood into small pieces to be dispensed later. The sticks were sorted into several trays made of woven straw, which one of the younger girls occasionally picked up and carried into the house depending on need. The women were in the midst of discussing neighborhood happenings with one of the neighbors who sat nearby, when Mzee[37] appeared with a well-used *msahafu*, a white plate, a small bottle of *zafarani*, and a small bamboo stick. Mzee is a good friend of the family and pays regular visits to Bi Mwana's place. I had become acquainted with him as a result of our visits coinciding on several occasions. As apparently there was the need for a special kombe to be written, and as Mzee happened to be present and to know how to write, he took on the task and looked for a quieter place to write. He sat down next to the neighbor, searched for certain verses in the *msahafu* and, once he had found them, placed the opened *msahafu* on one of his knees. By that time I had moved towards him and asked whether I could watch. Mzee welcomed me to sit beside him. I observed how he carefully dipped the bamboo stick into the *zafarani* and copied the chosen verses onto the plate. He did so rather silently, concentrating on the task so as to ensure that the verses were copied correctly. At one point he realized that he had made a mistake. Without hesitation, he used his T-Shirt to remove the misspelled word. He then nonchalantly resumed his writing. Only when he had finished copying the verses, did he address me and ask how my research was progressing. While we were talking, one of the younger girls came to pick up more chopped sticks, and Mzee asked her to also bring some water and the bottle into which this kombe was to be filled. She brought some water and the bottle and then resumed her task. Mzee and I had moved on with our conversation and discussed the perceived possibilities and experienced hardships of life in Zanzibar. After some time—the ink had started to dry—he picked up the water and slowly poured it onto the inscripted plate, which he carefully held steady. In this way, the ink's shape was not immediately lost and only very slowly did the ink mushroom into the water until the verses were no longer visually legible anymore. Both Mzee and I watched this process silently. I felt that we were

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[36] 31 August 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.
[37] "Mzee" is a respectful descriptive title for elderly men and here functions also to designate this elderly man in Bi Mwana's place.

both mesmerized as the verses slowly gave way to their transformation, coloring the water pink. Only after a while did Mzee pour the colored water into the bottle, and then rinsed the plate again with fresh water that was added to the water in the bottle. The silence reverberated a bit longer, but Mzee's movement had already marked the end of this enchanted moment. It is this moment in which the verses' transformation takes place that is constitutive for what kombe is. Mzee elongated that moment much more than I had witnessed before, and the elongation enabled me to sense the significance of the written verses' material transformation. Somehow the logic[38] of kombe was comprised in the beauty of this transformation: the perfected verses made their way into the water that then was ingestible and thus carried the verses into a patient's body. The silent moment with Mzee certainly was a telling moment and points to the significance of the verses' liquefaction. It shows that the process of kombe's disintegration of the scripted letters' shapes matters, and I aim to address in words what at that moment I perceived without words, in silence.

The vignette of Mzee paves the way for explaining kombe through the liquefaction of perfectly copied Qurʾanic verses. Liquefaction appears to be pivotal to what kombe is and how kombe works. The silence surrounding both the writing and the liquefaction process did not only create a special moment in the midst of a bustling day in Amani, but the silence also marks the distinction between kombe *la kuandika* (written kombe) and kombe *la kusomea* (recited kombe, see above). Mzee's concentrated attentiveness not only to the formation of the verses (writing), but also to their transformation (liquefaction), requires that the trans-/formations of kombe's writtenness be taken seriously. With "formation" I do not only invoke the process of shaping something into a concrete form, but also allude to its social connotations, which I will discuss in chapter 8 under the notion of "aesthetic formations." The term "transformation," then, expresses a change of this concrete materialization "across" (Latin: *trans*) multiple modes of material manifestation: the verses, written to be visually legible, are "transformed" to take on a new "form" and materially manifest in the water. In this process, they are not "*de*formed" but remain the same verses. This resonates with what Birgit Meyer terms the "vertical axis" of "trans-." She develops this with respect to "transfiguration," denoting "a

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[38] I employ the term "logic" here deliberately to tease out my attempts to explain how I understand the textuality of kombe, despite my earlier acknowledgment that I cannot academically grasp the "mysterious" facets of the Qurʾan's healing power (see above, 4.2.1). I thank Rachel Muchira for challenging me on this point.

process […] through which the ordinary—the mundane, human, or 'physical'—is revealed to involve a higher—'spiritual'—dimension existing in excess of, but also within, the ordinary" (2015: 155). Although I do not wish the term "transformation" to be associated with this vertical axis throughout this dissertation, the transformation of Qurʾanic verses in the "enchanted" moment of their liquefaction arguably recalls this notion (but see chapter 7 on Islam in Zanzibar not necessarily denoting a "beyond"). The verses are not *de*formed and remain ontologically the same; they take on a new material existence, a new (liquified) *form*. Thus, both, the formation and the transformation are equally indicative of kombe's writtenness. However, the vignette about how Mussa once wrote kombe points to a different emphasis. Rather than the process of liquefaction per se, the material existence of perfectly copied verses was decisive—even if only for a moment and even if spatially and temporally disconnected from the water in which they were to be liquefied.

On Unwriting

The juxtaposition of these instances in which the perfection of the ink's shape is in question points to two closely related characteristics of kombe's textuality. Firstly, the similarities of the very first and the last instance indicate that, prior to the washing off, the removal of an inked name or a mistake which happens frequently, is important and a common practice for people who write kombe. However, as Mussa's vignette demonstrates, the importance of liquefying a perfected shape does not seem to hold. I hypothesize that the importance lies in the existence of a moment of perfection, a moment in which the ink has taken the precise form of the verses, a moment in which the verses have become manifest on the paper/plate. This manifestation, once it is in place, cannot be eradicated: even smudging (destroying the ink's perfect shape) can no longer threaten the efficacy of kombe. All the more interesting to note that although smudging cannot remove the healing power, the verses still need to be protected by supplements against a threat from the edges of the paper/plate. The protection around the verses is washed off together with the verses; when washed off, the verses are still protected even if, before they are washed off, they are smudged. Secondly, the juxtaposition of these three instances points to the close relationship between the material ink and what it takes the shape of. With Abdul and Mzee, the ink that had manifested the inappropriate dedication or the mistake was taken away: it was made to be

absorbed by the paper (in Abdul's case) or by the shirt (in the case of Mzee) so that the problematic shape's ink is no longer located on the plate and thus will not be washed off and contained in the water. The smudging of the verses that Mussa wrote is not problematic in that sense, as this smudging happened with the ink that had formed the Qurʾanic verses. The ink that will be washed off in this latter case is still the same ink that had formed the verses, and no external ink has interrupted this product of writing. Both from a temporal and from a material perspective, this juxtaposition can be made sense of (and possibly there are even more perspectives that make sense of the co-occurrence of these instances).

It is one thing to make sense of this juxtaposition. Alternatively, Mussa could be understood to take liberties that neither Abdul nor Mzee would regard as permissible. Perhaps this "logic" is not consistent, perhaps also Mussa acts differently in other circumstances. I found it not very important to pursue this question with Mussa at a later stage of my fieldwork (at that moment I did not want to put him in a situation in which he might feel embarrassed), rather, I accepted the instance as one of many telling instances that I thought did not need to be excavated and made discursively accessible to me. The discursive approachability does matter to me now, as I attempt to put it into written words and I am left to wonder and share this sense of wonder. With much more certainty, however, I can write about the liquefaction that follows the writing of the (smudged and not-smudged) verses and that I experienced as a powerful moment with Mzee.

At Bi Mwana's place (as in most other places I have also visited) the verses are usually washed off directly after they have been written. Hakimu Saleh, in contrast, times the washing off more carefully and adheres to the calculated day of the week and the calculated hour of washing off. Thus, his patients often must return to his place to pick up the kombe that then will have been written and washed off at an auspicious hour. In either case, the verses are liquefied and contained in water. Water is neutral (see chapter 1.1.2), and rather than becoming the verses, it contains the verses. The water containing the verses does not become a *msahafu* (see above) and does not need to be handled as such. Furthermore, stored in water, the verses are fit for bodily ingestion; they can be drunk like water without being visually interpreted. In the process of liquefaction, the verses' shape is lost: they are transformed. The ink that manifested the defining shape, however, materially remains present and still constitutes the verses (and their supplements) even if they are rendered shapeless by then. Attributing worth to the ink by naming it *zafarani* (saffron, see below, see also 1.1.1) resonates

with the Qurʾan's charisma. This charisma is, even when detached from the surface (that writing constituted according to Ingold [2010b]), materially upheld in the *zafarani*. The verses—including their protection from the edge of the plate/paper, transformed and stored in water's neutrality, and materially present in the *zafarani*—are the verses that maintain their healing characteristics throughout. Although transformed, they still hold the "mystic" properties of what is hidden between the lines, of what escapes literal exegesis, of its power to heal. All of these characteristics are stored in the saffron-ink that is materially present in the water and thus ingestible.

Visual and thus cognitive perception of the literal text disrupts the "mystic" efficacy (see Hakimu Saleh in chapter 6.1.3). The verses are meant to bypass the brain, not to be visually consumed, read, and thus interpreted in a potentially disruptive way. Thus, they are liquefied. Nevertheless, liquefaction does not render kombe's textuality unimportant: the precise shape of the ink is meaningful as it constitutes Qurʾanic verses (and their protection) in their written textual form. The following paragraphs will examine the textuality of kombe, kombe's quality of being a text that then gets transformed.

4.4. Towards Textuality Through Three Aspects

Questions of kombe's textuality are central to understanding both the process through which kombe *la kuandika* materializes and also the product in which the verses are to be liquefied but not liquidated. What does "writing" (*kuandika*) do? How is kombe a text? When and how does it matter? In order to address these questions, I follow James Watts' proposition of taking seriously the following three functional aspects of written text: semantic, performative, and iconic (Watts 2015). His focus is on scriptures, and he speaks of "dimensions" because he argues that the combination of all three of them, though to different degrees, distinguishes scriptures from other written texts. Although I find his functionalist approach interesting and although I appreciate his call for increased attention to the iconic dimension, I do not aim to position kombe as scripture (for kombe's relation to the "charismatic" Qurʾan, see above: 4.2). Instead, I aim to examine how the writtenness of kombe matters, how kombe's textuality matters and what its liquefaction does. Thus, I take these three dimensions as inspiration to structure the following section and to juxtapose three attempts of approaching kombe's writtenness, the combination of which will be helpful to give a better impression

of how notions of textuality relate to kombe. For clarity and consistency of the vocabulary that I employ, I replace Watts' "dimensions" with "aspects" as I have already used the terminology of "dimension" with regard to the spread of text on a two-dimensional surface to which I return later in this chapter.

As for me neither writing nor text are stable concepts (though they are both stabilized within power structures), I start with some of Tim Ingold's considerations about writing that anchor writing and text in the ever-emerging entanglements of the material world. "How was it that writing, which generally involves the inscription of traces upon a surface, came to be modeled on weaving, which involves the manipulation of threads? How did the thread of the weaver become the trace of the writer?" (2010b: 29). In his extensive work on the line, Ingold scrutinizes how lines constitute the world. Writing and weaving text, entangled with storylines and genealogies situated in ("threaded through") the environment, are central concerns for him.

> On the side of writing we recover the original meaning of the text: not a networked assembly of printed words but a meshwork of interwoven lines inscribed through gestural movements of the hand. To be sure, the line of handwriting traces individual letters in sequence. Yet it lends to the words that these letters spell out an expressive depth and resonance equivalent to what melody and rhythm lend to the words of song. […] Though we have been taught since Roman times to treat letters (especially capitals) as the building blocks of words, and although every letter we write is a copy of letters written before – themselves copies of precursors and so on back into the mists of time – in a cursive script letters are not objects but gatherings, moments of poise or of doubling back in an ongoing flow. Unlike letters that have been typed or printed, they are not strung together on the page but carry on through their iterations. Understood as a weaving of threads rather than a hammering of keys, as melodic rather than percussive, writing is readily comparable to stitching or embroidery, and the idea of the text as something woven is revealed to be not a loose metaphor but an accurate description of what goes on. (Ingold 2011: 178)

Ingold focuses on the process of writing, the life of lines in their becoming, and takes seriously the materiality of writing.[39] Trailing pigments of colors, writing

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[39] Ingold also scrutinizes other ways of writing, such as scratchings and incisions made into hard surfaces from which the term writing stems: Old English *writan* (Howe 1993: 61; Ingold 2011: 43). Furthermore, and as the provided quote alludes to, he is interested in the disappearance of the line of cursive scripted handwriting in printed texts. Although there is no Arabic cursive, his elaborations would be interesting with regard to printed (as opposed to

tools travel across a surface, just as they do in drawing. In fact, writing is "a special case of drawing in which *what is drawn comprises the elements of a notation*" (Ingold 2007: 122, emphasis in original).[40] Writing leaves notational traces that can be picked up by others of whose lifelines these traces will become a part. Oscillating between lifelines throughout time and space and the lines of written text, Ingold relates these lines to each other and presents entanglements[41] of material writing (comprising elements of notation) with the world. He thereby bridges the semantic (elements of notation), performative (writing), and iconic (material) aspects of text, all of which are embedded in lifelines of their own.

4.4.1. Semantic Aspect: Text as Scripted Medium of Communication

Building on the etymology of "text" as woven fabric (Latin: *textus*), the semantic aspect of text has come to be employed and defined in myriad ways. As a starting point, I offer W.F. Hanks' description of text as "any configuration of signs that is coherently interpretable by some community of users" (1989: 95). In this review article, Hanks draws on various disciplinary perspectives, most prominently linguistic, anthropological, sociological, and critical/deconstructionist literary approaches. Although somewhat dated, I appreciate his inclusion of these disciplinary concerns[42] through which he formulates a working definition of "text."

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handwritten) Qurʾanic verses to be washed off like kombe (as it is done in Togo, see chapter 1), and also for the relation of my dissertation-writing to the kombe-writing I write about (see below), but for now I stick with Ingold's discussion on handwriting as kombe is also handwritten.

[40] Furthermore, Ingold also shows how drawing and writing are evaluated differently as "art" and "technology" respectively. He thereby discusses Walter Ong's (1982: 81–82) examination of writing in which Ong states that writing relies on tools and thus needs to be considered a technology. For Ingold, this argumentation does not hold as also most drawing makes use of tools but is still considered art. Ingold finally introduces André Leroi-Gourhan's linear graphism which he relates to his own line-making in order to demonstrate how writing has become distinguished from drawing: writing proper is recognized by this linear graphism and the more it is linearized, the more does writing come to be distinguished from drawing (Leroi-Gourhan: 209–210, cited in Ingold 2007: 150). With Karen Barad I here would draw attention to the ways in which differences between drawing and writing are made from within their entanglements; however, this is beyond the scope of this chapter.

[41] Or, in his words, "meshworks" (Ingold 2007: 80).

[42] These developments have been summarized with much more insight into the disciplinary circumstances than I could possibly provide here. See Knobloch (1990), Adamzik (2002), or Ehlich (2007) for a much-cited examination of German academic engagement with the

Signs, coherence, and interpretability by a community of users—these components of his definition are with different emphases central to most conceptual engagements with text until today. I here briefly deal with them to examine characteristics of the semantic aspect of text in relation to kombe's textuality.

Firstly, configurations of signs signify. They point to and represent meaning. Although the term "sign" in accordance with most scholarship within (text-)linguistics/cognitive linguistics, discourse studies, and "Textwissenschaft" (Van Dijk 1980) amongst others includes verbal articulations as well as visual formations, I here want to narrow the scope and focus on written signs: script (including letters, numbers and other kinds of symbols).[43] This decision to specify signs as written signs (and thus regard text as written text) is made with respect to the goal of framing the textuality of written kombe, kombe *la kuandika*. With this decision, I touch on two major issues: the theme of visuality (see chapter 6.1) and the interplay of orality and literacy (see above: 4.2.2; see also chapter 6.4). Furthermore, the order of these script-signs and their geometric layout on a shared surface, that is, the relation of the signs to each other, contribute to the meaning that these signs are designed to point to (see Krämer 2005; 2012).

Secondly, coherence is seminal for almost all delineations of text. Hanks even marks "textuality [as] the quality of coherence or connectivity that characterizes text" (1989: 96, for the interplay of coherence and cohesion and their relevance for the concept of "text" see Schröder [2002: 108–109] and Klemm [Klemm 2002: 146]). Both the internal and external connectedness of given signs are decisive features of text. In fact, the quality of being woven together is implicit to the very term "text" (see Ingold above).

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term "text" and, as stated, Hanks (1989) for the Anglophone context. After the last decades of the twentieth century, the theme of textuality has increasingly been addressed by the broader framework of media studies through which also digital text has been included more holistically (Meier 2002).

[43] Rather than narrowing the scope, a large body of literature follows Clifford Geertz (1993a closely related to Ricoeur 1971) who described Balinese culture as "text." Many scholars within cultural studies/cultural anthropology have shown how the notion of text can easily be extended to culture and detached from language. Coherence and the interpretability by a community of users remain important factors, although the linguistic sign does not matter in this context. In fact, this scholarship has been coined as "interpretive anthropology"/ "symbolic anthropology" or "interpretive social sciences" (Rabinow and Sullivan 1979). Taking seriously the words and signs written in kombe, I do the contrary and narrow the notion of text for the examination of kombe rather than expanding it and "reading" a "cultural practice" of kombe as "text."

Lastly, interpretability by a community of users, the remaining component of Hanks' description of text, highlights that texts are enrolled in practices. Interpretability presupposes that a given meaning inherent to a given particular combination of signs is accessible to a community of users: the literate readers. Interpretability is highly context-dependent and may change with temporal and spatial variation. It assumes a uni-directional transfer of an encoded message from the text to the community of users. Interestingly, the starting point provided by Hanks' description of what a text is has a focus on the reception of text, while the designation of kombe *la kuandika* stresses the writing of this text. Although this simplistic notion of a stable interpretable text has been refuted repeatedly and evidently directs the discussion away from kombe *la kuandika*, it here serves to complement text's communicative function (Brinker et al. 2014:17; see also Breuer 2002; Gülich and Raible 1977; Utzschneider and Nitsche 2008). As Brinker and others assert, text is closely associated with communication within the language-based disciplines, especially linguistics. While this links to mediality and provides an anticipatory link to the theme of "reading" in chapter 6, I emphasize here that text must not be understood as a neutral container for a message to be transported from producer to receiver, but rather, that text itself impacts on the constellation of writer, reader, message, and materiality. To use Bruno Latour's vocabulary: text is a mediator rather than an intermediate. Or, to stay closer to communication studies, text as a medium is (part of) the message (McLuhan 2003). To regard text as a scripted medium of communication provides one way of approaching the text of kombe. Writing, *kuandika*, reproduces scripted Qurʾanic verses[44] and facilitates a targeted communication between God's healing power and an ingesting and affliction-perceiving body. The materiality of this scripted text that then becomes liquefied is of crucial importance for this medium (and its "message") to reach its "reader" (see chapter 6).

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[44] Describing the Qurʾan as text, of course, does not do justice to what the Qurʾan constitutes in Islam. Debates about the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qurʾan (Zadeh 2008a) circle around the question of authorship and thus converge a theory of the Qurʾan as text (see Neuwirth 2011) with theories of text that stress communication. However, its "message" does not reside in the words' meaning alone and thus does not depend on the legibility of these words (see below). The text that is washed off in kombe still facilitates this mediation, or better, by precluding a visual encounter with the individual words, it facilitates a more immediate bodily access to the written text in its entirety (see chapter 6). Nevertheless, the beneficial trans*form*ation of the Qurʾanic verses—enabling this particular communication—depends on the ink's initial (visually perceptible) *form*ation, on its initial writtenness.

Michael Lambek argues that the semantic aspect of "sacred" texts—and he is referring to the Qurʾan—cannot be paralleled with that of other texts.

> For the most sacred texts signifiers and signified are one, and thus, in a sense, not "writing" at all. "Reading" is then merely the following of the written lines in order to produce the texts in sound—that is, recitation. Each reading is actually a reproduction. […] And, if signifier is inextricably linked to signified, so is the sign itself tied to the world. What is written is what is true (sacred). Neither fiction nor nonfiction, texts are manifestations of things as they are. In fact, there is a sense in which the texts are prior to the world of action and movement itself. "Fate" is that which has been written by God. (1990: 26)

Inevitably, this section relies on kombe's textuality in relation to the particularities of the Qurʾan's textuality (see above: 4.2), and the "reading" of sacred texts that Lambek describes as "reproduction" differs from the mention of "reading as actualization" by Wolfgang Iser (see above, see also chapter 6.2). In tension with Lambek's delineation of textuality on the grounds of engagement with the Qurʾan, kombe suggests a more ambivalent relationship to the semantic aspect of text. On the one hand, and in agreement with Lambek, the manifestation of the "signified" through the "signifier" is central to kombe's healing power that comes into being with writing the "signifier" qua "signified" (see above: 4.2). On the other hand, however, the importance of forestalling the patient's seeing—visually encountering, reading—the verses points to the semantic aspect's relevance. As the vignette of Mussa shows, kombe's text is a semantic text. It consists of signs, geometrically lined out to form connections to each other that in their graphic orchestration create coherence for an interpreting agent, including potentially the patient. It is precisely to prevent a cognitive interpretation by a particular community of users (the patients) that kombe is liquefied. The semantic aspect of its textuality matters in that it is problematic and yet necessary; its semantic communicative function stands in the way of a purely bodily engagement with the text. The ambivalence of how kombe relates to the semantic aspect of its textuality necessitates a closer examination of what Watts terms the "iconic dimension" (and which I rephrase as "iconic aspect").

4.4.2. Iconic Aspect: Text as Material Artifact

Though texts are mostly valued for their temporally durable communicative function, their material life entangles them in practices that go beyond an encoded

message. The ink spread in particular shapes on paper of a codex is often enacted as meaningful in itself, leading James Watts (2015) to speak of "iconic texts and books."[45] Watts acknowledges the affective response to the presence of material text (in particular scriptures) and the value attributed to them as objects.[46] He primarily speaks to the discourse in religious studies and theology in which engagement with the semantic aspect of relevant texts has been taken very seriously and become the norm. Related disciplines, in particular, book art, art history with its themes of picture theory and iconology, or the discipline of philosophy of language, have embarked on scrutinizing texts as objects in themselves. Thus, within these parameters, comparable foci to the one that Watts advocates have been developed, some of which will be introduced after I take a closer look at the materiality of kombe's textuality.

As explained, kombe is written with saffron ink on a piece of paper or a plate before being liquefied in water (see 4.3, see also 1.1.1). The required plainness of the surface to be inscripted on and the neutrality of the water that after the liquefaction contains the verses stand in stark contrast to the ink that is portrayed as valuable, as indicated by its name *zafarani*. Formerly, I was repeatedly told, the ink was saffron, and thus the ink *was* valuable. Although food coloring imported from India and other saffron substitutes have replaced saffron for the manufacture of kombe, the ink's name has been kept consistently and thus maintains its connotation of value. Reliant on a surface (paper/plate) and a container (water) it is the ink that forms the Qurʾanic verses (and the supplements): ink is made to constitute the Qurʾanic verses that, including their physical presence, are valuable. Bringing these valuable verses into material being in such a way that the value of the verses is partially matched by the material substance that constitutes these verses reflects an appreciation towards the text in its becoming. This material expression of appreciation is particularly important as the Qurʾan's material presence is valuable as such; however, similar entanglements of physical and ontological esteem can also be found in bibliophilic practices or questioned in book art.

Numerous artists have embarked on scrutinizing "texts" and "books" as such, thus creating an artistic genre of "book art" that plays with the entanglement of books as mediating a content and books as spatial, tactile objects. Writing

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[45] See also Terje Stordalen (2008: 673) on the iconicity of the Torah.

[46] Note the distinction that Christopher Watts (2008: 194–195) (not James Watts) makes between material icons and non-material symbols with respect to Charles S. Peirce.

about what he terms "bookwork," Garrett Stewart states that "[b]ook-works are *texts by other means*, not to be read *in* as discourse but rather—as denatured things, alienated, dysfunctional—to be read whole" (2010: 435), which does not correspond to the text that he writes as a means to investigate the texts of his study. Stewart shows that pieces of bookwork (book art) often de-mediate the initial textual quality of books to highlight affective responses that the presence of books triggers (see also Stewart 2015: 54). "Without giving you anything for reading but the fact of its prevention, without putting words in your head, such unbooks keep reading in mind—and hence keep on reading our need for the cultural experience they suspend" (Stewart 2010: 431). Stewart draws attention to the cultural situatedness of engagement with text, which, for Zanzibar, has shaped the beginning of this part. The textual demediation that he describes with bookwork is very similar to the prevention of visual reading that the liquefaction causes for kombe. In the moment of liquefaction, kombe appears to be textually demediated, or as I propose, it becomes transformed so that visual access to the semantic content of the previously written "text" is prevented. The comparability of kombe and the artists' engagement with the entanglement of books' semantic content and their physical (iconic) presence calls for a closer examination of the relation between the text as mediation of semantic content and text as a two-dimensional graphic picture.

W.J.T. Mitchell's groundbreaking "imagetext" (1994), in which "image" and "text" are not separated by a blank character but converge into a single word (the singularity of which is visually perceptible, readable) derives from his engagement with the historically and culturally situated distinction between images (or rather pictures)[47] and text, or within art studies, between painting and poetry (1986: 47–52).[48] Mitchell begins his discussion with the statement that poetry and painting "are not merely *different* kinds of creatures, but *opposite* kinds" (1986: 47) in that they are concerned with the invisible realm and the visible realm respec-

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[47] Mitchell develops this only in his subsequent book *Picture Theory* (1994; see also Mitchell 2008: 16). This term has also been taken up by David Morgan (2011: 65) who uses it to examine Islamic and Jewish calligraphy that defy distinct categorizations into either text, image, music, or architecture. Related to this, see also Hans Belting's (2011: 1) unease with the "translation" of "Bild-Anthropology" into "anthropology of images" which does not capture the merging in the German language of "image" and "picture."

[48] Although Mitchell hardly refers to him, Roland Barthes engages similarly with scrutinizing the relation between image (pictures, paintings) and text (letters, signs, writing and reading) (see most prominently Barthes 1985).

tively. He then moves on to show their entanglement in this differentiation (and their differentiations in their entanglement) causing him to state that "there is no *essential* difference between poetry and painting, no difference, that is, that is given for all time by the inherent natures of the media" (1986: 49). Building on these entanglements, Mitchell graphically glosses "imagetext" to designate "composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text" (Mitchell 1994: 89). However, Mitchell does not stop here. He also shows how image and text are made to differ from each other, leading him, conversely, to focus on their similarities as the subject of his work. The dynamics that he describes could also be glossed with Barad's words of "entangling differentiatings and differentiating entanglings."

Within the German context of the philosophy of language, Sybille Krämer (2005; 2012) has developed the concept of "Schriftbildlichkeit" (script-imagery) with which she extends the language-based notion of script to include spatial characteristics such as its ordered two-dimensionality and characteristics of graphism, such as its juxtaposition of indexicality and arbitrariness, which carries meaning potential. Including these characteristics leads to the need for an examination of the entanglements of the sensual and sense (meaning),[49] the entanglements of bodily and cognitive spheres. Krämer draws attention to how all scripts involve this double characteristic in that they carry texture and textuality,[50] materiality and interpretability, opacity and transparency, presence and representation.[51] From two different disciplinary directions, both Mitchell and Krämer scrutinize the entanglement of image and text. Both take seriously the graphic, visual manifestation of text in connection to its semantic aspect.[52]

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[49] Das "Sinnliche" und der "Sinn," translation mine.

[50] "Textur" and "Textualität," translation mine. Note that she restricts "Textualität" to denote meaning and interpretability (I have introduced this as "semantic aspect"). Her usage of "Textualität" differs from how I use "textuality" in so far that I intend to extend the term "textuality" to include what Krämer denotes as "Textur" rather than regarding them as an intra-acting pair.

[51] Krämer's engagement with these pairs shows how closely her work is related to media studies in which the same pairs matter (see Bolter and Grusin 2000). These strong links draw attention to the primacy of text's semantic communicative function (see above) and are crucial for the examination of the process of liquefaction (see below). Text's mediality will accompany us for a while.

[52] Note how there is yet another relation between "image" and "text," and that is the mental, imaginary image that is created when semantically reading texts. While the focus here is on text as images, reading texts is also a practice of imaging.

My interest in the relation of image and text derives from my aim to attain a better grasp on how kombe's textuality matters. A reduction to its semantics does not provide a satisfactory explanation. Writing (*kuandika*) kombe *la kuandika* produces shapes on the piece of paper or the plate that do not only constitute Qurʾanic verses, but as geometrical formation also constitute an image of a written entity. When Hakimu Saleh writes kombe (usually on paper), the geometric balance, the distance between lines of ink and free spaces, and the relation of the written entity to the edge of the paper matter as much as the semantic content of the Qurʾanic verses and the circumscripted supplements—the mysterious characteristics of which is partially accessible by "affectively reading" (see chapter 6) the entanglement of the geometric "image" and the semantic "content." Furthermore, when Mzee and I watched the slow liquefaction of what he had carefully copied before, this silent moment was not special because of the semantic content alone, but also because we witnessed how the two-dimensional graphic image dissolved into the three dimensions of our material world.

4.4.3. Performative Aspect: *Form*ing and Per*form*ing Text

Concerning Arabic script, this chapter has already touched on the theme of authority and power. I here take the "performative aspect" to dwell on how kombe's textuality is (to be un-)performed and thereby how performative notions of authority and power tied to text are both partially suspended and employed. Mussa performs his writing as text. He dips the pen into the ink repeatedly and moves the pen with the ink to create certain shapes on the paper so that the pen leaves an ink trace: he writes. Furthermore, he speaks about its undesirable visual readability, which causes the woman to fold the paper. This shows that the woman takes seriously the semantic-textual quality of the ink traces that Mussa has formed. Mussa is the practitioner, the one who writes and on whose writing the woman relies. He performs himself as a practitioner by choosing the verse(s) and writing (the liquefaction will be done by the woman herself). If Mussa performs his practitioner's authority through writing, how does it relate to the power that is inherent in the product that Mussa forms? This section, under the umbrella of the "performative aspect," aims to examine this question in relation to kombe's particular setting in Zanzibar.

The introductory paragraphs to this part presuppose that the performance of text and scripture is important. Mussa and the woman are described as perform-

ing (and thus bring into existence) the writing as textual practice and scriptural object.[53] Writing against a purely textual interpretation of Islam, Michael Lambek states that

> [t]exts by themselves are silent; they become socially relevant through their enunciation, through citation, through acts of reading, reference, and interpretation. Therefore, we need to examine how texts are used and by whom, when recourse is made to textual authority, and what kinds of entailments such actions bring. (Lambek 1990: 23)

His focus on how texts are embedded in practices that create texts' social function resonates with Robert Orsi's oft-quoted expression that "[t]he world of the text is really not the world" (2005: 164). Similarly, in her broader concern for an anthropology of text, Karin Barber pays attention to institutionalized structures that enable and disable certain textual practices:

> [I]t is not the textual forms alone that are important in the process of entextualisation. Equally important are the formal and institutional arrangements set up by the owners, producers or users of these texts. Texts are not memes that in and of themselves survive or fail to do so. They survive because of the efforts that human beings go to, to mark them out, bind them up and project them across time and space. (2007: 28)

Both Lambek and Barber build on William Graham's influential contribution to historical studies of scripture:

> [F]rom the historian's perspective, the sacrality or holiness of a book is not an a priori attribute of a text but one that is realized historically in the life of communities who respond to it as something sacred or holy. A text becomes "scripture" in active, subjective relationship to persons, and as part of a cumulative communal tradition. (Graham 2001: 5)

Graham's, Lambek's, and Barber's turn to social practices involving texts are part of an important academic development that surpassed the previous engagement with text-based religions predominantly through their textually accessible characteristics.[54] Ever since, the question of how (scriptural) texts are made to serve

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[53] This attention to "textual practices" and their materializations resonates with Jeremy Stolow's (2010) work in which he pays attention to texts' materiality with a particular emphasis on a religious context. Stolow examines practices that the products of ArtScroll, an Orthodox Jewish publishing house, induce. Although his focus is decidedly on printed material, and although I do not explicitly refer to him other than in this footnote, I find his delineation of textual practices inspirational for my own work.

[54] To include rituals, symbolic actions, and practices that were not literally text-based, the expansion of the notion of text (Geertz 1993a) was utilized and strengthened the centrality

certain purposes has been central. James Watts' tripartition of semantic, iconic, and performative aspects of text, which structures this section, must be placed within the context of this genealogy.[55]

Writing is situated in histories of power relations. Annemarie Schimmel in her work on Sufism states that "since time immemorial, the very act of writing has been considered sacred" (1994: 151) and thus intimately tied to authority (see also Heck 2008: 324).[56] Washing off the written traces could be read as an interesting commentary on resistance to the link between writing and power; however, the ethnographic material does not resonate with this interpretation. The writing of kombe recreates Qurʾanic verses; copying from a *msahafu* constitutes a text that in itself is powerful rather than performing the person as powerful who has shaped the ink traces. (However, Hakimu Saleh also uses his textual practices to solidify his situated knowledgeability, his "doing being knowledgeable" as described in chapter 3.3.) Even if practitioners are mostly chosen to take on the role of writing, manuals that are sold on the streets also explain which verses to use for which kind of kombe and thus potentially enable non-professionals also to write. Thus, rather than foregrounding the writers and portraying writing as an instrument of power that then becomes part of social economies (Goody [1986] 1996), with kombe the attention shifts to the powerful text itself: writing is a constitutive part of the process of preparing kombe *la kuandika*, but the healing power derives from

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of textualism for academic scrutiny. See footnote 43, see also Bachmann-Medick and Clifford (2004). Maintaining a narrower definition of text and building on the much critiqued heritage of philology, the program of "Zukunftsphilologie" ("Future Philology"), initiated in 2009 at Freie Universität Berlin and headed by Islam Dayeh, seeks to engage with neglected texts (primarily non-European) in a postcolonial way and thereby critically addresses the problematic history of philology and its place in the evaluation of knowledge in universities in a productive way.

[55] See for example Thomas Kirsch (2011) for textual practices in a Zionist Church in southern Zambia and Anne Bang (2011: 93) for how changing text practices legitimized the *ulama* as Islamic authority in Zanzibar. For a non-religious example see Matthew Hull (2012), who, similarly to Kirsch, shows how texts become meaningful not solely as constituting communication, but also as objects of palpable management of material text as such which is entangled with practices of authority.

[56] Interestingly, Erhard Schüttpelz, who is not concerned with religious topics, equally stresses the power gained by the act of writing. He draws on Latour's "immutable mobiles" and develops this point taking into consideration historical and geographical circumstances of enacted textuality (2009: 102). Similarly, Francis Cody 2009 addresses the performative power of signatures in India. In chapter 7, the concept of "religion" will be addressed which takes part in separating the scholarly discourses to which Schimmel (placed in the main text) and Schüttpelz/Cody (placed here in the footnote) speak.

the (written) Qurᵓan. Thus, the examination of kombe in relation to performative power/authority entails an intra-action of writing and drinking kombe (the process of production and consumption) and the Qurᵓanic verses' charisma (see 4.2.1). The process and the product are entangled.

Manuel Vásquez (2011: chapters 8 and 9) provides a much more elaborate examination of academic developments with regard to textualism in the study of religion than I am able to cover here, and concludes by stressing the importance of practices of production and consumption:

> Ricoeur has argued that texts, whether they be manuscripts, oral testimonies, inscriptions in *stupas*, tattoos, or web pages, are material realities in their 'being-thereness.' While this is a useful insight, the fact that texts are objectified activity should not lead us to forget their processual character. And while it is legitimate and fruitful to explore how texts 'say something about something,' we should be careful not to reduce their materiality to signification. Texts are always the result of (and we always meet them through) practices of production and consumption. (Vásquez 2011: 255)

Indeed, the production and consumption (literally) of texts are important as Vásquez argues (writing is constitutive of kombe *la kuandika* as well as drinking), but—essentially agreeing with Vásquez, but arguing the other way around—the texts' "being-thereness" must not be forgotten (with kombe the Qurᵓanic text's charisma is crucial). Kombe *la kuandika* is written, and the power lies in the product. The authority of writing and the power of the product are entangled, but in the further processing, this entanglement turns into differentiation. Writing is a constitutive part of the process of forming kombe, however, in the liquefaction, the verses become detached from the shapes that constitute the writing. In its liquefaction, the written product, a Qurᵓanic verse, is not disturbed; it remains the written product—made with ink—that has inherent healing power. However, it is not constituted by the process of writing anymore. The authority of writing and the power of the product become disentangled. Liquefaction renders the written verses whole: it eclipses the teleological narrative of their becoming. The performance of kombe's textuality stops with the liquefaction. After liquefaction, neither the production nor the objectified activity of kombe's textuality is performable anymore. Kombe, however, retains the power to perform healing after liquefaction.

Addressing three aspects of kombe's writtenness, namely the "semantic aspect," the "iconic aspect," and the "performative aspect," I have enlisted literature from various disciplines and brought it in relation to my ethnography. Kombe's

textuality cannot be understood from one entry point only: it is neither only communication nor only material nor only practice. The assembled plethora of disciplines indicates that not one rather than another, but all of them in juxtaposition to one another give a sense of kombe's writtenness and are crucial for this and the subsequent chapters. I here suggest that firstly, kombe's textuality is only one of many possible examples where ethnographic approaches to textuality require engagement with disciplines that are less commonly mobilized in anthropology. The anthropology of text alone, given its preoccupation with practice and materiality, does not suffice. Also important insights gleaned from the meeting points of critical literary approaches, "Textwissenschaft," the philosophy of language, book art, communication studies, scripture studies within the study of Islam and of religion, as well as theology. Secondly, I call on the here enlisted disciplinary approaches to text to take note of kombe's writtenness. In light of its liquefaction, kombe's textuality holds rich theoretical implications that, I trust, could be of interest to discourses within these disciplines. With kombe, I propose regarding writing in relation to un-writing, the manifestation of text in relation to its dissolution, outspoken textuality in relation to tacitness.

4.5. Tacit Textuality

In the instances that kombe and kombe-like phenomena are briefly mentioned in the academic literature (see introduction), they mostly occur in relation to a specific case of amulets[57] and indeed, the (mostly unseen) writing used in amulets and the writing in kombe have many similarities not only with regard to their "semantic" and "iconic" aspect, but also with regard to how they make use of writing's potency.[58] Abdullahi El-Tom, who also relates what he calls "erasure" to amulets, marks the disadvantage of wearing Qurʾanic verses, compared to drinking them, as they are "liable to be lost, left behind or rendered ineffective by exposure to ritual pollution" (1985: 416). In chapter 5, I show how the distinction between an inside and an outside of a body is made and is made crucial and thus argue here that amulets and kombe are complementary to each other in that they pertain to complementary spheres of bodies. The power of a written product, whether

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[57] See O'Connor (2004) for more generally Islamic practices and Dale (1920) for Zanzibari practices, see also literature on Islamic "talismans."
[58] See Emilio Spadola's (2009: 155) work on amulet writing that goes "beyond [a] present visible and audible social life."

washed off or folded away, remains stable. James Robson (2008), in his study on talismans of Chinese Buddhism, for example, traces the power of the used signs and engages with the visibility of that which is hidden which does not only relate to conceptualizations of secrecy (see chapter 3.2), but also poses questions about the primacy of the visual (see chapter 6.1.4, see also Cancik-Kirschbaum 2007; Zadeh 2009). Webb Keane (2013) proposes that the materiality of writing—and thus its entanglement with the material world including writing's destructibility and potential for rematerialization—serves as "transduction across semiotic modalities," such as material transformations to translate between living humans and God. His argument resonates in numerous ways with what kombe does and provides a possible entry point to an explanation of the liquefaction. In this framework, the process of liquefaction is a material transformation that is, to use Keane's words, "a means of taking advantage of certain features of writing in order to deal with the problem of presence posed by an ontological gap" (2013: 9). Keane's inspiring article takes seriously the materiality of writing, the specifics of shaped ink on a surface that as such is part of the material world and the transformation of which does something. However, in Zanzibar, there is no ontological gap with which "religion" deals and across which kombe could "transduct." The spiritual realm is part of this—the material world's—realm (see chapter 7). Furthermore, the writing involved in kombe constitutes the Qurʾan with its healing power (see 4.2) that is ontologically stable across "semiotic modalities." Keane's argument that the change—the "transduction" from written to dissolved—makes the power accessible does not hold as the paper could also be swallowed.[59] Kombe's liquefaction still "does something": it prevents the patient's cognitive encounter with the verses (see the vignette about Mussa) and its change from two- to three-dimensionality transforms the text to enable a different kind of textual mediation.

4.5.1. Liquefaction: Unfolding Possibilities

In the examination of how the protective supplements are written around the verses (4.3), Tim Ingold's considerations of how writing creates surface are conducive in revealing how the supplements shield the inner verses from outer danger (coming from the edge of the paper/plate) within the two-dimensional surface.

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[59] See comparable practices in medieval European Christianity (Wilkens 2015) or in contemporary Hyderabad (Flueckiger 2006).

In liquefaction, this two-dimensionality turns into three dimensions. Again, Ingold's take on writing as a manifestation of lines is helpful. On multiple occasions throughout his work he distinguishes between traces and threads (see amongst others 2007: chapter 2; 2010b: 20; see here 2010a: S130):

> [T]races are formed on surfaces; threads are strung through the air. […][T]hese two manifestations of a line are readily interconvertible. In the formation of surfaces, threads are converted into traces; in their dissolution, traces are converted into threads (2010a: S130).

In his work, he refers to knotting, weaving, embroidery, and writing to give examples of the former (how threads turn into traces) and for the latter, he turns to cases in which mazes, loops, and designs (tattoos) are indicative of how people's life paths (as threads) unfold. When kombe is washed off, the traces that had formed the letters on the plate/paper are also converted and, once drunk, affect the patient's life path (become part of the "thread" of a person's life). However, also recitation, amulets, or other enactments of the Qurʾan may affect a patient's life path: the liquefaction of kombe prompts engagement with a more literal "dissolution" of the surface in which ink traces are transformed. I argue that the written traces' *transformation* (rather than their conversion) from two- to three-dimensionality renders their textuality tacit. The verses are not converted into something else; they do not cease to be the verses. Instead, they are *transformed*: their textuality is kept intact (it is still kombe *la kuandika*) in a different (three-dimensional) form. The text's characteristics—the letters, words, punctuation, their protective supplements, and the spaces that ink had left untouched—are maintained throughout the process of liquefaction. However, the writing has become tacit (the "traces" are potential "threads"): the verses' textuality has turned materially implicit to potentially "unfold" in different kinds of mediations—and finally to affect a patient's life path.

That texts and textual practices have an effect on how people's life paths unfold is emphasized in a striking way by the Masowe apostolics that Matthew Engelke portrays (2004). The Masowe apostolics reject the material book of the Bible and thereby contest what the Bible as a material entity does. Not only has the Bible been used as an instrument of colonial superiority, but as a material medium, it also stands in the way of "live and direct" communication with God. The Masowe apostolics' rejection of practices involving the material Bible posits the entanglements of the Bible's mediatory function as material text and its tacit iconic magnitude as negative, and thereby reaffirms these entanglements. To

Figure 18.: "Nova Scotia," (1972), ©Robert Frank.

frame this in Ingold's language: the Masowe apostolics regard the traces already as threads that are enmeshed with people's life paths including their relation to God. The possibilities (and dangers) do not need to "unfold" in the transformations, they already exist within the tacit "iconic aspect" of the text's materiality. Solidifying the engagement with texts in their (trans)formed tacit materiality, the following paragraphs introduce two artists who also engage with textuality's tacitness and thus, in being placed here, provide commentaries on kombe's textuality.

4.5.2. Deconstructing the Materiality of Textuality: Two Artists

In his engagement with conceptions of the image, Robert Frank (1972), a photographer and film-maker, chooses to close his auto-biographical album with the following image. It shows a clothes line to which two pictures are pegged, one of which shows the word "words" in white against a black background. Hans Belting (2014), who discusses this picture in the framework of his book on the anthropology of images, states:

> It is a picture in both a literal and a figurative sense, for writing is a picture of language: we do not see words, after all, but letters. The individual written 'word' here escapes the analogy of writing and content through the use of

> the plural form 'words.' We see a single word, but it signifies an indefinite number of words. (2014: 167)

With this picture of the picture of the word "words," Frank highlights the mediality of text and allows access to its iconic aspect. Similar to the liquified verses of kombe, the word "words" points to something that is contained in what is depicted. What Belting terms the "indefinite number of words" that are "signified" by this single word has considerable parallels with the washed off Qurᵓanic verses contained in the liquid of kombe that forgo visual legibility. Whereas the picture of the word "words" draws attention to the semantic signifying function of written text and reduces the word "words" to an empty signifier (thereby emphasizing its iconic aspect), the text in kombe after liquefaction, though not visually legible, retains the text also in its semantic aspect, I argue. Despite this difference, conscious access to the referenced "words" and the liquefied Qurᵓanic verses in kombe are very similar. Traces of the words that "words" insinuates and traces of the Qurᵓanic verses that the water's color as well as its name "kombe" reveal are accessible in the visual sense and thus cognitively approachable.[60]

Even closer to the accessibility of text that has lost its visual legibility is a piece of art by Fabian Saptouw. His interest in materiality, book-making, text-image studies and the history of the printed word has led him to organize his work around transcription, translation, and reproduction. The piece of art that I introduce here belongs to "transcription." It consists of process images entitled "On Writing and Difference" that mirror the textual transformation that occurs in the liquefaction of the Qurᵓanic verses of kombe. He takes a digital print version's page, displayed on an e-reader, of Jacques Derrida's "Writing and Difference" and first transforms ("transcribes") it into handwritten text with the exact same semantic content by using a pencil and lined paper. He then scrubs across the inscripted paper's surface with a rubber causing the handwritten text to be transformed yet again. Although the pencil pigments are contained in the eraser shavings, they are no longer legible: they are erased from the paper. The similarities with the process of preparing kombe are striking. In both cases, a given text is handwritten and then removed from its surface. Though transformed, with kombe, the Qurᵓanic verses are still contained in the water and their healing qualities have not been affected, in fact, they have been made accessible to a body directly. Sim-

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[60] The link between cognition and visuality, again, is an underlying principle here (see chapter 6.1.3).
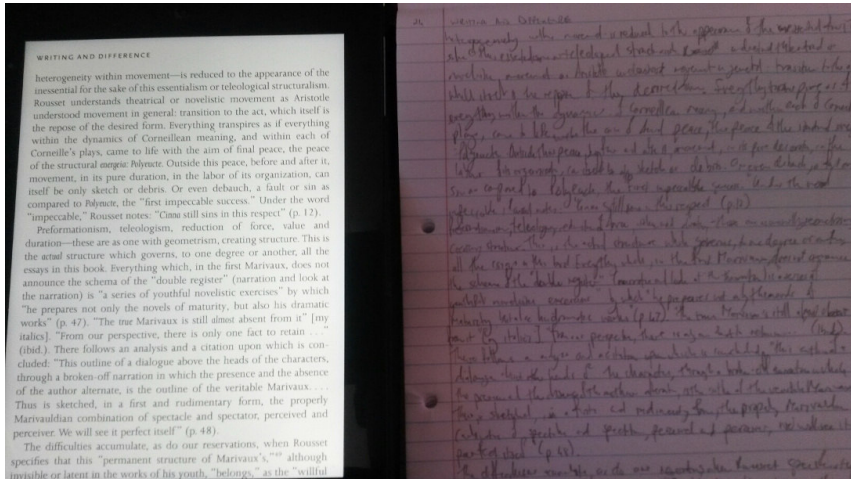
(a)

(b)

Figure 19.: Process images of "On Writing and Difference," (2015), included with kind permission of Fabian Saptouw, ©Fabian Saptouw.

ilarly, in Saptouw's work, the content of Derrida's work becomes enacted (rather than erased). In fact, Saptouw deconstructs Derrida's deconstructionist writing, giving it a materiality that might not conform to the visual legibility of text, but that rather facilitates access to the content of Derrida's text in a different way. Saptouw further relates his work to its situatedness in South Africa and comments on how "Africa has been written out of text history" (Saptouw 2015). As academic writing, this chapter is embedded in the politics of writing about writing in Africa. Taking seriously the material textuality of kombe, this chapter seeks not only to show how kombe's writtenness is enacted in the shaping of the ink to form Qurʾanic verses (and supplements) but also how the liquefaction of kombe *la kuandika* retains its textual—albeit tacitly textual—quality.

The tacitness of kombe's textuality after liquefaction has been made explicit through writing that itself is mostly implicit in academic practice. I have introduced these two artworks in order to facilitate yet another way of approaching kombe's textuality, an approach through which the tacitness of academic writing can be made explicit. While my main mode of accessing the theme of kombe's textuality has been through typed text (often voiced to myself in front of the computer), the here printed pictures of the two artworks provide a different avenue to approach the topic. Instead of letting the pieces of art matter in and through themselves, however, I have embedded them in even more text. Text is the medium through which ideas, examinations, observations, and feelings are turned into knowledge to be absorbed, evaluated, criticized, and referred to in yet further writings in the humanities of western academia to which this text speaks. The inclusion of two pieces of art that comment on textuality in a non-textual way—and thereby visualize textuality's transparency or tacitness—along with the surrounding text in which the images are embedded, not only diffractively relates to kombe's textuality, but also accentuates the link of textuality-as-a-topic to textuality-as-the-mode-of-engaging-with-this-topic in this academic thesis.

4.5.3. On Ethno*graphy*

Ethnographies are "'-graphies": graphic materials[61] that rely on graphicized language—that is, written and printed—to tell a story of an "other." Needless to say that this disciplinary preoccupation with the "other" has rightfully been subject to criticism and academic reflexion. See, for example, the drive in Germany to rename university institutes, by moving away from "Ethnologie" to "Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie" (from "ethnology" to "social and cultural anthropology") (Rein 2015). So far, the term "ethnography" that the currently dominant English language does not provide a better alternative for has resisted these changes and is still in use, both in German and Anglophone academia. Despite a necessary engagement with the term in its entirety, I here solely refer to its latter half: "'-graphy." Mattijs van de Port describes writing ethnographies as an act of framing:[62]

> the act of writing is to invent forms for experiences that in and of themselves are ill-containable, boundless, fluid, formless, always in excess of the words we use to pin them down. The act of writing is to create frames: word-frames, sentence-frames, paragraph-frames, chapter-frames, book-frames. It is to punctuate the flow of being with full stops. (2015: 86)

It is the creation of an object in its own right.[63] This very text is in the process of becoming an object in its own right. Black letters on a white surface, this text

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[61] Detlef Thiel (2005) asks about *the graphic* in "'-graphies" and surveys numerous "'-graphies" ranging from "agraphy" (organic inability to write) via "logography" to "calligraphy" and "typography." His short observations on "'-graphies" within the broader realm of medicine or geo*graphy* are interesting in so far that, in contrast to most other "'-graphies," they point to the graphics of non-verbal materials, such as results of physical descriptions: numbers, statistics, or diagrams. Astro-, iono-, petrography next to the more widely known magnetic resonance tomography (MRT) and topography are just a few examples. Nevertheless, his survey shows that most "'-graphies" rely on written language-based materials to which the "'-graphies" of the humanities contribute, such as historio- or ethnographies. Though Thiel does not elaborate on this, I find the intra-actions of these "'-graphies" interesting: how do calligraphy and typography relate to each other and how do they relate or not to ethnography? The easy (even necessary though often silent) correlation of ethnography and typography stands in opposition to the oxymoron of an academic calligraphic ethnography which does not comply with academic requirements.

[62] To be precise, the here quoted sentences build up to his statement that writing is an "act of closure." Although I am inticed by his work, I cannot follow him entirely as his "closure" does not coincide with how Wolfgang Iser demarcates the act of reading as closure. I thus abridge Van de Port's statement and make use of his interim word choice of "framing."

[63] Jacques Derrida deconstructs the practice of signification through writing. He glosses writing as "clothing" that "veils the appearance of language" ([1967] 2016: 38). Although not a deconstructivist, Van de Port's description of writing as "framing" is very similar to the

does not only have a semantic aspect (although this aspect matters immensely), it also is enacted in a specific way in a specific context. Furthermore, but this probably only applies to few people who are emotionally attached to the semantic content or the performative context or both, it might develop an iconic aspect even if only for a limited time. Black letters on a white surface forming lines of words, sentences, paragraphs, this text invites visual detection of the encoded graphic language (Krämer 2005): it invites reading. Black letters on a white surface in the hands of academics, it invites handwritten questions and comments squeezed into the margins or on post-its stuck in spatial proximity to the black letters on a white surface to which they refer. After being written, formatted, and printed (after being formed) ethnographic writing also thus becomes transformed (though still legible). Trans-/formations that in western academia are intimately tied to knowledge production are not necessarily comparable to kombe. Kombe, especially for the patients, is framed as healing rather than as knowledge production (although it participates in the enactment of healers' knowledge). However, in this thesis the textuality of ethnographic writing diffractively superpositions the textuality of kombe's writtenness. As with *this* chapter I *write* about kombe's *writtenness*, I take this opportunity to hint at the relevance of the visual-textual hegemony that finds expression as *solution* with kombe for western knowledge production more generally and in this thesis in particular. Deploying the method of writing in a less explicit way again, the next chapter temporarily turns away from kombe's tacit textuality to explore the question of how to *describe* the body in Zanzibar and how it relates to afflictions.

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metaphor of "clothing" that Derrida uses. Both Van de Port and Derrida comment on the insufficiency of writing to neutrally depict what it proposes to depict while at the same time it constitutes a material object.

5. Script in Body—Body in Script: Describing *Mwili*

Mussa, as described earlier, gave the verses to the woman for ingestion. Although the woman was fiddling with her phone and avoided eye contact, I am certain that she was listening when Mussa said to me that seeing the verses with the eyes was unfavorable compared to a direct, unprejudiced encounter of the body with the dissolved verses. Apparently, the eyes provide a different access to the verses than the body does. This does not mean that the eyes are distinct from the body. The eyes facilitate engagement with the written verses at a spatial distance; ingested, the verses are literally incorporated into the body. "Seeing" the verses, despite the distance, affects the body's reception of the verses. What is accessed through eyes is entangled with bodies of which eyes are a part. It is also entangled with how the absorbed verses unfold their healing effect within and through the materiality of a body. As Mussa gave his explanations, the woman sat slightly removed, opposite to where Mussa sat. Although she was attentive to what was happening around her, she had already bodily turned away from what was happening in the room when I entered. She projected her disconnection from the spatial presence in the room and instead fiddled with her phone. Her avoidance of eye contact further indicated the complicated relation between visual encounters and bodily materiality, a bodily materiality that was about to be imbued with kombe targeted at an affliction.

In Swahili, the "body" is referred to as *mwili*, and in this chapter I write about *mwili*. After a short discussion of affliction, I engage with the difference between seeing and imbibing the verses through the body/mind complex. As one of the main afflictions for which treatment with kombe is provided, but also as means of treatment itself, this chapter continues with some details about spirit possession that further the preceding section's theme of body/mind entanglements and differentiations. Taking recourse to Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, Hakimu Saleh, and Mussa, this chapter's central part comprises descriptions of *mwili*. The metaphoricity im-

plicit to these descriptions and my visual aids to them are subsequently addressed and set in relation to theory. To close this chapter—and in relation to the previous chapter—I attend to the politics of body-writing. Crosscutting this chapter, the issue of bodies' capacities to mediate links various sections. With regard to kombe, *mwili*'s capacity to mediate and access affliction is central.

5.1. A Short Note on Affliction

The Swahili word *maradhi* is usually employed in the context of healing with kombe and translates as "disease, illness, sickness."[1] Medical anthropology's clear distinction between disease and illness[2] as well as its questions concerning the universality of concepts such as "sickness," "medicine," or "health"/"wellbeing" (Pfleiderer 1993: 364)[3] is embedded in the process of declaring "medical anthropology" a discrete sub-discipline detached from the "anthropology of religion," which prior to the emergence of "medical anthropology" dealt with many issues concerning "healing" (Obrist et al. 2004: 27). Although the disciplinary disengagement certainly had its benefits and ignited various topics for anthropological investigation (see Kleinman 1980: chapter 2), it also (artificially) disentangled "medical" from "religious" issues. In Zanzibar, as Allyson Purpura (1997: 278–344) makes clear by

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[1] Both major internet dictionaries (glosbe.com/sw/en/and africanlanguages.com/swahili/, both retrieved on 11 October 2016) provide these translations. Sacleux (1939) with the French translation "maladie" goes into the same direction.

[2] In 1980, Arthur Kleinman influentially distinguished "disease" from "illness" and posited both as aspects of "sickness": "A key axiom in medical anthropology is the dichotomy between two aspects of sickness: disease and illness. *Disease* refers to a malfunctioning of biological and/or psychological processes, while the term *illness* refers to the psycho-social experience and meaning of perceived disease. [...] illness is the shaping of disease into behavior and experience" (1980: 72). Implicit in Kleinman's argumentation is the assumption that every sickness has a biomedically explicable root. Only then is it possible to speak of diseases that are clinically traceable and only then can one scrutinize the meanings of sicknesses. Furthermore, Kleinmann presupposes the separability of a biomedical problem from its meaning; however, in some cases the biological and/or psychological is inextricable from the psychosocial experience and its meaning. Despite the presupposition that all sicknesses can be evaluated biomedically—which is contestable—the multiple layers of sickness become visible through Kleinman's elaboration.

[3] In contrast to these arguments about the universality of human suffering and the universality of intervention to alleviate the suffering, Steven Feierman argues for the cultural situatedness of experiences of bodily malfunctioning. He states that "the universality of pain and the desire for relief [...] is misleading, for 'pain' and 'relief' change from one society to another, even from one individual to another" (2000: 318). This relativistic approach to affliction and healing is already present in his earlier work (see for example 1985: 76).

attending to healing in her work on social relations of Islamic expertise, sickness is an integral part of "religious" concerns.[4] Similarly, Susan Beckerleg concisely addresses the entanglements of "medical" with "religious" concerns: "Swahili conceptions of illness and its treatment are inseparable from changing local Islamic ideology and practice" (1994: 300). Several years after both "medical anthropology" and "anthropology of religion" had developed further as independent fields, Katharina Wilkens strongly advocated a re-integration of "medical" concerns into studies of "religious" practice, as "the whole field of affliction and healing is integral to religious practice in general" (2011: 255).

Wilkens employs the term "affliction" here, coined by Victor Turner (1968) (see below), which I have also chosen to employ throughout this dissertation.[5] In combination with some very explicitly medical word choices, such as "patient" and "dispensary," I consistently use "affliction" rather than "disease," "illness," or "sickness" (see footnote 2). Thereby, I aim to echo the broad spectrum of (physical) discomfort that includes, for example, stomach aches, business problems, itching skin, or concerns over a neighbor's jealousy. At the same time, I acknowledge that these "afflictions" are medically treated through "patients'" bodies in settings that are shaped by biomedical conventions. I am inspired by medical anthropologist Stacy Langwick, whose work is closely related to my research and who consistently employs "affliction" rather than "sickness" in contexts that relate to biomedical settings. Veena Das (2015) in her work entitled "Affliction: Health, Disease, Poverty" reflects on the repercussions of the term "affliction" and links it to Christian mysticism which she intends to transgress and make suitable for her questions about how people engage with suffering in its ordinariness. For her, the distinctions "between a subjective experience of suffering and the objective conditions that account for the unequal distribution of suffering" (2015: 2) need to be overcome and she aims to shape the term "affliction" in this way, thus giving it a political edge. The connection of the sensory experience of suffering and proximity/distance from God through which Das introduces the term "affliction" bears great potentials in the context of writing about kombe. The "religious" undertone that was abandoned in conceptualizations of "sickness" in medical anthropology remains present in the term "affliction." Thus, inspired by the Swahili

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[4]   The entire field of prophetic medicine, most prominently advocated by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (Al-Jawziyya 1998; Perho 2010) to which Talib Ali and Hakimu Saleh also refer attests to this entanglement (see also the introduction to Hakimu Saleh in chapter 1.2).

[5]   Alternatively, David Parkin suggests the term "ill-being" (2006: 705).

word *maradhi* that my interlocutors used and sympathizing with Das' call for situating subjective experiences of suffering in objective parameters in and through which this suffering occurs as a way to write politically, my choice of the term "affliction" is also motivated by its inherent "religious" tinge.

Furthermore, the term "affliction" links up to Victor Turner's "drums of affliction" (1968) that John Janzen (1992) takes up in his seminal study on *ngoma* ("drums"). Janzen juxtaposes *ngoma* which he glosses as "rituals of affliction," "cults of affliction," or as just mentioned "drums of affliction" from Kinshasa (former Zaire), Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), Mbabane-Manzini (Swaziland), and Cape Town (South Africa). In accordance with the above paragraphs, Janzen notes that

> current scholarship [of the late 1980s, early 1990s] tends to break down into a distinction between religion and healing, but this distinction is not so useful in the present setting. A fundamental ambiguity that will need to be worked out in this study is that between the indigenous categories and terms, on the one hand, and the analytical models we devise for such an institution as the rite, cult, or drum of affliction, on the other hand. (1992: 4)

The influence his work exerted and exerts attests to the value of his conceptual work in which he argues for the advantage of making *ngoma* productive as analytical term for an engagement with the performance of such healing institutions.[6] He does not name the Swahili term *maradhi*, but his broad take on "affliction" resonates with how I came to understand *maradhi*. As an option for healing in the Zanzibari context, *ngoma* with its reference to spirits' power, is different from kombe and evaluates afflictions differently,[7] but both the *ngoma* that Janzen refers to and kombe attend to a common framework of affliction. Thus, although I do not directly take Janzen's work as a starting point, I appreciate the academic genealogy that the term "affliction" carries through Turner and Janzen.

"Affliction" is not restricted to a body-mind complex and includes, for example, the neighbor's jealousy and business problems. The term "affliction," unlike

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[6] For a critique thereof including a response by Janzen see Van Dijk et al. (2000).

[7] See the section on spirit possession below. Furthermore, the distinction between *ngoma* as an option for healing and kombe resonates with the distinction between Zanzibar and the mainland (see chapter 2), although *ngoma* as cultural phenomenon is incorporated into Zanzibar's self-portrayal not least for the tourism industry (Kirkegaard 2001). On the *ngoma*-politics in Zanzibar in the early twentieth century see also Fair (2003: chapter 5). For an early study on *ngoma* in eastern Africa see Terence Ranger (1975) and particularly on the *lelemama-ngoma* in Mombasa see Margaret Strobel (1979: chapter 5).

"illness" and "disease," does not call for a body/mind dualism. However, as this chapter will argue, affliction is treatable with kombe through bodies (not minds). Kombe targets afflictions through bodies—material bodies that with kombe are both distinct from and entangled with a non-physical "other."

5.2. Kombe and Body-Mind Entanglements

The distinction between seeing the verses and imbibing the verses matters for Mussa, and indicates that neither a body-mind monism nor a body/mind dualism can provide a satisfactory account of what is at stake here. His explanation of why the plate and the immediate washing off is preferable to paper and a delayed washing off *both* juxtaposes brains (minds) and bodies *and* entangles them: body⁄mind (with the separating slash under Derridean erasure which doubles as an interruption of the connecting dash).[8] Seeing the verses is problematic, according to Mussa, because the verses received in this way interfere with bodily reception through ingestion: cognitive engagement (through seeing) influences the bodily engagement with the verses.[9] A brain's engagement with the verses is both different from a body's engagement with these same verses and entangled with it.

Considering that the verses are ingested and thereby quite literally embodied by an ingesting body, the anthropology of the body[10] and its conceptualizations of "embodiment" are helpful in accentuating the ambiguities that the relations of

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[8] It must be noted here that I relate to the body-mind discourse, although, as will be discussed below, *mwili* does not neatly map onto "body" and neither does *roho* or *nafsi* map onto "mind." Although the question of distinguishability has different blurrings, it diffracts with the body-mind problem.

[9] In his study on sacred images, David Morgan (Morgan 2012) notes that vision includes both cognitive and embodied aspects. For now, I jump ahead and link vision primarily to "mind," the reason for which will be provided in chapter 6.1.3.

[10] Tracing the body/mind dualism to René Descartes' influence in the seventeenth century, the phenomenologically inspired anthropology of the body strives to overcome the object/subject dichotomy on which until today much western thought is based. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's critique of Descartes' dualism rests on conceptualizations of one's own body (of that we know and that we are), through which perception of one's outside world as well as perception of the idea of one's own bodily subjectivity is lived. His "rediscovery of one's own body" ([1945] 2012: 241) is central to the interest in the body in western humanities. Mary Douglas' (1966; 1970) and John Blacking's (1977) contributions to what then became the "anthropology of the body" must be noted here. In various ways, the anthropology of the body revolves around the relation between the physical and the social body as well as questions of how to approach these issues anthropologically (for the development of the concept of embodiment see also Hardon and Posel 2012). See also Anne Koch who explores how attention to bodies in the

seeing and ingesting the verses evoke. Building heavily on the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty and the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, Michael Jackson (1983; 1996) and Thomas Csordas (1990; 1994) have coined the concept of "embodiment" for anthropological inquiry. Their engagement with the "mindful body" facilitated a deeper understanding of the bodily known and often unspeakable.[11] In Csordas' words, an "approach to embodiment begins from the methodological postulate that the body is not an object to be studied in relation to culture, but is to be considered as the subject of culture, or in other words as the existential ground of culture" (1990: 5). Consequently, Jackson and even more explicitly Paul Stoller (1997) refer to their own bodily experiences during fieldwork as crucial for their ethnographic studies.[12] Csordas further posits that the "paradigm of embodiment has as a principal characteristic the collapse of dualities between mind and body, subject and object" (1990: 7). "Embodying" Qurʾanic verses, within this paradigm, pertains to a body as a whole which—with respect to kombe's holistic healing power—is a plausible way to approach the ingestion of the Qurʾan.

Michael Lambek, however, questions the validity of the collapse of the body/ mind duality and criticizes Lakoff and Johnson, who developed the concept of the "embodied mind" (see footnote 11), for neglecting linguistic expressions that go beyond the corporeal and that indeed mark a distinction between body and mind (or "soul," or "spirit" 1998: 107). Grounded in his fieldwork in Mayotte (in the ever-implicit, sometimes explicit, comparison to the anthropologist's own positionality and the situatedness of the anthropologist's writing), Lambek proposes a much more widespread distinction between body and mind (at least "in thought"):

> It is my contention that body/mind or body/person distinctions are widespread, and probably universal, although obviously they need not take the

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humanities and social sciences (and particularly in religious studies) serves as a "critique of the privilege of intellect" (2012: 27).

[11] The "mindful body," or in the terminology of Andrew Strathern (1996) the "thinking body" of "embodiment" acts as a counterpart to the "embodied mind" that had been conceptualized by cognitive sciences (including cognitive anthropology) elaborating on how thinking depends on bodily experiences. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's study on metaphors (1980) has been groundbreaking for these studies. It is interesting to note how language here serves as a window into the mind. The intra-action between thought and language (their distinguishability as well as priming of one over the other) marks extensive philosophical debates since (at least) antiquity (Gorgias). Furthermore, it is interesting to note that although both analytical frameworks, the "thinking body" and the "embodied mind" are designed to overcome the body/mind dichotomy, their juxtaposition reifies its binary structure.

[12] In this chapter I will only implicitly comment on my own body during fieldwork as I have dealt with this more explicitly in chapter 3 already.

same form, divide the terrain in the same manner, or reach the same proportions or significance as the Cartesian version. My argument is that mind/body dualism is at once everywhere transcended in practice yet everywhere present, in some form or other, in thought. (1998: 105)

For Lambek, body and mind are "incommensurable" in thought (in mind), whereas in practice (in body) they are "integrally related" (Lambek and Strathern 1998: 112). Restating his claim in 2015, he explicitly argues for an embrace of both monism and dualism regarding the mind/body problem[13]: a "both/and argument" which includes *both*, a "both/and position" *and* an "either/or position" (2015: 76).

   Despite the plausibility of the "embodied" Qurʾanic verses stated above, Mussa's distinction between seeing the verses and encountering the verses bodily (and the articulated preference for bodily encountering them), resonates with the Cartesian body/mind dualism. But, seeing the verses is problematic precisely because *miwili* ("bodies," plural of *mwili*), are not distinct from *akili*, "minds"[14]: seeing the verses influences how the verses unfold their healing effect in and through *miwili*. The term "mind" becomes a placeholder for the realm that is affected through visual encounters (see chapter 6.1.3). That the verses are ingested (and literally "embodied") does not render the distinction between body and mind obsolete. Lambek's "both/and argument" is helpful to a certain extent: body and mind are *both* entangled with each other *and* distinguishable from each other. However, in contrast to Lambek's proposition, with kombe, the entanglement is not merely an issue of practice and the distinction is not merely an issue of thought. In particular, the distinction between practice and thought which relies on the Cartesian dualism becomes problematic when the body/mind dichotomy needs to be contested. Academic engagement with kombe calls for a different contestation of the body≠mind complex. *Mwili* (body) and *akili* (mind) intra-act: they differentiate from within their entanglement which, I am convinced, pertains to many other cases, too, but always constitutes different manifestations of differentiations and entanglements. Universal statements about how body and mind relate do not do justice to the ever-emergent body≠mind dynamics that can be (but do not have to be) stabilized in particular power constellations. In order to scrutinize the here considered intra-action of body and mind, I first turn to spirit possession as a practice that differentiates *mwili* from *nafsi* (self/soul; Arabic: *nafs*) to then,

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[13] And many other theoretical problems as well that rely on a binary structure.

[14] I employ the term "minds" preliminarily in accordance with the academic debate on the body/mind dualism.

as a second step, explore how four of my interlocutors discursively framed this entangled differentiation in the subsequent section.

5.3. Shared Bodies of Spirit Possession

Spirit possession is one of the main reasons for which treatment with kombe is sought and is revealing about how *miwili* are enacted in Zanzibar. The domination of one's *mwili* from inside by an external entity is usually (but not always) regarded as an unfavorable condition and thus as affliction. However, contrary to the evaluation of spirit possession as affliction that *requires* healing, spirit possession can also be seen much more favorably as *providing* healing. In the following subsections I will engage with these two stances towards "healing spirit possession" (reading "healing" both as verb and as adjective, although the topic of healing is suspended until chapter 8).

5.3.1. Spirits in Zanzibar

In Zanzibar, spirits (*masheitani*, *majini*, or *mapepo*),[15] similar to humans, have desires, opinions, and preferences; they have religious affiliations, belong to *makabila*[16] and speak the corresponding languages. In accordance with the Qurˀan, humans were created from clay whereas spirits were created from fire (Qurˀan 15:27). Though not created from clay, spirits can impact the bodily substance of humans and cause affliction. This happens on a personal level: a spirit creates and sustains its relationship with a human. Humans assess these relationships differently, partly depending on what kind of spirit has chosen them. In Zanzibar, the most common groups are the *masheitani ya ruhani* (Muslim spirits from

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[15] Plural forms of *sheitani*, *jini*, and *pepo*. Although some people differentiate between these terms, they are mostly used interchangeably. *Masheitani* has a slightly more negative connotation than *majini* or *mapepo*. Within the context of speaking about Islamic matters, mostly *majini* is used and directly linked to sura 72: The Jinn. For more detail see also Caleb Chul-Soo Kim (2004: 103-105).

[16] *Makabila* is often translated as "tribes" or "ethnic groups." However, the Zanzibari understanding of *kabila* (plural: *makabila*) does not carry the Eurocentric interpretative burden associated with "tribe" or "ethnic group." For a more detailed discussion of *kabila* see Larsen (2004a: 122–123) or Larsen (2004b: 14). Veena Das translates *kabila* in the Indian context as "lineage" (2015: 144), which of course, is closely related to the Zanzibari context. Nevertheless, I here prefer not to translate *kabila* to take the local translation into English seriously and not impose another translation (from the Indian context) while also distancing myself from the derogatory repercussions that "tribe" ignites.

Arabia), *masheitani ya kibuki* (mostly Christian spirits from Madagascar), and *masheitani ya rubamba* (pagan spirits from Pemba). Kjersti Larsen (1998: 71–73) also mentions *masheitani ya habeshia* (Christian spirits from Ethiopia), but I have not learned about them in Zanzibar. Each group is characterized by specific cultural markers: specific social orders amongst them and specific musical, olfactory, and culinary tastes as well as specific preferences for garments. The *masheitani ya ruhani*, for example, only intermingle amongst each other and enjoy Qurʾan recitations, rose water, and white "typical Muslim" dress, whereas the *masheitani ya kibuki* are organized as a kingdom, prefer to smell a mix of *udi* (aloewood) and *sandarusi* (gum gopal), enjoy drinking Brandy excessively and disapprove of covering their heads. (For much more detail see Larsen 2008: chapter 4, see also below.) Although spirits from certain *makabila* are more accepted than others, they all constitute entities that compete for the bodily space provided by humans (Nisula 1999: 78). Spirits do not have material bodies, however,

> Zanzibaris hold that spirits, like humans, have bodies of their own—although the spirit's body is invisible in the human world. […] The spirits are said not to have bones;[17] they have no substance. […] Spirits are said to have no material form: they are invisible and formless, although they are able to take human shapes [especially in dreams]. (Larsen 2008: 45)

Furthermore, they are able to enter human bodies and rise to the head (*kupanda kichwa*) to take control. For this time, the body is the spirit's body and the human host does not witness what the spirit does, apart from the transition phase. A certain degree of consent is necessary, although the spirits usually leave little leeway for their human host to protest. With spirit possession, the human body becomes the spirit's seat (*kiti*) and the human, suppressed in her/his own body, is rendered absent for that time.

Spirits ascend to the head to take control over a human material body and thereby attain a material existence. The head (*kichwa*) is crucial for human-like bodily existence within the realm of potential and actual spirit possession. Before climbing to the head, *kichwa*, spirits materially enter their chosen host. Despite their lack of a material body, their lack of substance, and thus their lack of a material form, spirits exist spatially, prefer certain spaces (such as the toilet) over others (such as the mosque interior) and can be repelled from certain spaces.

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[17] Bones give stability to the body and are connected to an unnegotiable (hard) physicality. Spirits have and use other parts of the body (such as eyes), but they do not have the physical stability of bones.

5. Script in Body—Body in Script

Human bodies are such spaces, the properly protected boundaries of which can prohibit spirits from entering. Decisive are the 32/33 naturally occurring openings: two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, one mouth, 20 times where the nail departs from the bed of the nail, two breast nipples, and two (male) to three (female) openings in the genital area.[18] Once spirits have transgressed this boundary between a body's inside and outside, they are said to travel through that body's veins and enjoy lingering in the joints. Though formless, spirits move in and through a spatial body and seek material presence. Michael Lambek, based on his experiences with spirit possession in Mayotte, emphasizes that "what is intrinsic to spirits is that they appear and withdraw from materiality. […] The presence of spirits—in what they say and do—is no more significant than their repeated *coming into presence*" (2010: 17, emphasis in original). Bodies are the medium through which spirits gain and let go of material presence, as they are also the medium through which an immaterial *nafsi* (self/soul) gains presence (see next section). This oscillation of spirits moving in and out of materiality—thereby oscillating the suppression of the host's *nafsi* through the ascension to *kichwa*—marks the relation between the *nafsi*, its *mwili*, and its head, *kichwa* (and can be translated into body-mind entanglements). Although *miwili* appear to be detachable from *nafsi* (and with spirit possession *mwili* and *nafsi* intra-act, forming their detachability from each other through their entanglement with each other), spirits seek living bodies, *miwili* from which the *nafsi* has not (yet) departed.

Usually this suppression of *nafsi* is regarded as highly problematic. However, during possession ceremonies, the spirits are explicitly invited to materialize through living bodies of those who are initiated.[19] Taking the example of the *Kibuki* ceremonies, the following paragraphs exemplify nurtured relationships that spirits can have with their hosts.

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[18]   Hakimu Saleh, 27 March 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[19]   Possession ceremonies are spread across sub-Saharan Africa. John Janzen's (1992) study compares phenomena that he groups as *ngoma* in eastern, central, and southern Africa. Furthermore, Adeline Masquelier's (2001) work on the *Bori* spirits in southern Niger and Janice Boddy's (1989) work on the *Zar* in Sudan could be added to such a comparative framework. Furthermore, these spirits are not tied to localities, but travel: for the Sudanese *Zar* spirits in a diasporic context in Iran see Müge Akpinar's dissertation project (forthcoming).

5.3.2. Possession Ceremonies

In possession ceremonies,[20] space for spirits to move in and out of bodies is deliberately created by participants and with an audience. The specificities of a ceremony depend largely on the *kabila* of the involved spirits. A *ngoma ya kibuki* (ceremony for *Buki*-spirits) is held by and for people who are possessed by *Buki*-spirits (regardless of the hosts' religion and descent). Spirits are invited to inhabit *miwili* of participants by facial paintings, loud music, and the burning of special resin, mostly aloe wood (*udi*) and gum gopal (*sandarusi*). As in every other type of possession ceremony, the *ngoma ya kibuki* has particular rules about who is allowed to act in which way. When possessed, only initiates are allowed to dance on their feet, the not-yet-initiated can only dance on their knees. Everybody's head must be uncovered and no one must show the soles of their feet. Brandy offered by spirits must not be refused, even by the audience. The inner hierarchical structures of the ceremony are complicated and depend on both the social position of the possessed person and the social position of the possessing spirit. Inhabiting their human host, the *Buki* king or queen watches over the ceremony while the other spirits move from host to host in order to dance. The spirits who may have chosen more than one person but who can only be present in one body at a time, shift bodies throughout the *ngoma ya kibuki*, so that there are swift changes between being possessed and not being possessed. While the spirits are dancing with each other, talking, and flirting, the initiated human hosts are preparing their bodies by drinking brandy and inhaling resins for the next possession, and the human audience is entertained. Every spirit has a distinct dancing style, and while dancing they interact with each other and with the audience.[21] Once the spirits appear and rise to the heads of human hosts, the possessed bodies are not human, but part of the spirit's existence in that moment. "Spirits who appear during a ritual transform the body they possess. Although spirits speak through the mouth of their human hosts, participants and the audience are convinced to see, speak and interact with a spirit, not a human being" (Mackenrodt 2011: 109).

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[20] In the literature, these ceremonies are often termed "possession cults." Although the alternative word "ceremony" that I employ here indicates the festive character of the meetings, it does not, unlike "cult," capture the group-character through which they are organized. For a more detailed description of the implications of these terms and their suitability with respect to possession in Zanzibar see Nisula (1999: 164–175).

[21] Instructions to my visit to a *ngoma ya kibuki* with Lizzy Brooks, 10 March 2012, Kilimani, Zanzibar Town.

As mentioned above, these ceremonies are held by and for people who are possessed by *Buki*-spirits. Ceremonies are embedded in a framework of healing. They are organized to appease the spirits and, in return, the spirits ameliorate their hosts' afflictions to their abilities and likings. The ceremonies with the audience often take place as preparation for an individual healing treatment of one of the participants (the one who has funded the ceremony) in which humans negotiate with the appeased spirits. The search for effective treatment occasions people to get involved in *kibuki* ceremonies. The husband of a *kibuki*-healer explains:

> Now, no one knows your illness better than you.
> You say, let me do a treatment.
> Afterwards you examine yourself.
> The treatment cures the problem.
> So you say, that problem was a Buki.
> At first I didn't believe in this stuff.
> I said that's impossible.
> But after the treatment she [the wife] became pregnant.
> We got the first, second, third child.
> Here we are now.
> She fell ill again for another treatment.
> Until today she's become a healer.
> It's real. But you won't believe until you've encountered it. (subtitled interview in a movie by Brooks 2012)

The issue of believing in being possessed by a spirit and taking action to alter this condition forms an extensive part of conversations about possession ceremonies. Elizabeth Brooks, an initiated member, writes: "After my *ngoma*, I became like many Zanzibaris who both believe and don't believe in the Kibuki spirits. I came to accept that belief in this context is not an absolute, but rather an ebb and flow" (2015: 156). In these conversations, issues of rational "scientific" explicability are often furthermore entangled with issues of morality concerning Islamic practices normatively perceived as "proper," both of which spirit possession needs to be justified against.

5.3.3. Zanzibari Evaluation of Spirit Possession

The temporary submission to a spirit and the lack of control over one's *mwili*'s actions is seen as problematic by most people in Zanzibar. As Hakimu Saleh explained (see next section), in the end bodily actions will be judged, and thus allowing for an external entity to supersede one's influence on one's own *mwili*

and its actions is perceived as dangerous, in particular when the spirits are not Muslim. With spirit possession, an other is (reluctantly) embodied: the "other" of a different *kabila*, the "other" of the opposite sex, the "other" in terms of religious affiliation (see chapter 7), the "other" that is not one's *nafsi*.

Furthermore, the practices involved in preparing the bodily submission to a spirit are, for the majority of Muslims in Zanzibar, not permissible or at least controversial. A table similar to an altar is built on which bottles of brandy are lined up. The ceremony starts with a small ritual in front of the table in *kibuki*-language. The head scarf that has become so fundamental for Islamic clothing practices is dismissed. These practices, enacted by humans prior to possession, are often seen as an affront to Islamic principles: they touch on worshiping something different from God and thus on practices of idolatry (*shirk*). Especially those Muslims who are Wahhabi-influenced argue (and are expected to argue) in this way although such practices are acknowledged to be part of local Swahili culture (Giles 2009: 88).

Zanzibaris who participate in these possession ceremonies, however, do not question their affiliation to Islam. Helene Basu explains:

> If one conceives of the Indian Ocean region as a landscape that is constituted by translocal themes, then not only Islam will come to light as a unifying force, but also possession practices [...]. However, neither clear dichotomies—Islam and possession—nor fluid resolutions of boundaries mark these themes, but local constellations of Islam (spirits and Sufis) that have emerged from historical movements of people, ideas and bodily practices. (2005: 191, translation mine)

I have perceived possession ceremonies to be much more controversial than Basu proposes. As far as I am aware, none of the kombe practitioners that I met supported possession ceremonies and discussions amongst the passengers in public transport, when the topic arose, mocked participants of these *kibuki* ceremonies. Other ceremonies, such as ceremonies of and for *ruhani*-spirits were not ridiculed in such a way. Part of the explanation for why possession ceremonies with *ruhani*-spirits are much more accepted surely lie in the Islamically unproblematic practices that bodies subscribe to before and during possession, bodily practices that will not be negatively valued on judgment day.

In Zanzibar, the spirits take control over a host's body only; the human person to which this body belongs is absent during the time of possession.[22] Material bodies are possessed, not immaterial minds. Kjersti Larsen poignantly states:

> The reality of spirits and their materialization through human bodies depends upon a conceptualization of personhood that includes a separation of body and mind. Crucial to this discussion is the empirical fact that although people and spirits may share a body, people still make clear distinctions between human beings and spirits, and between what can be seen as the human-self and the spirit-self. (2008: 95)

Although during the period of possession the spirit supersedes *nafsi*, these bodies remain living bodies, *miwili* that contain *nafsi* and that carry a person through life to God (see next section) and thus need to be taken good care of. According to this line of thought, the spirit disrupts the desirable unity of *nafsi* and its *mwili* which through the expulsion of the spirit would be aligned again. Whether treatment of affliction through engagement with spirits and providing them access to one's *mwili* and thus to material presence constitutes such care of one's *mwili* is contested. However, the unquestioned possibility of such bodily relations with spirits accounts for the recurrent topicality of what I translated into the body≠ mind complex during my research.

5.4. Explaining *Mwili*: Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, Hakimu Saleh, and Mussa

In Swahili, the "body" is referred to as *mwili*. What this *mwili* does—what it comprises, which references are evoked when it is talked about, in which way it relates to what and what these relations do with *mwili*—these questions are the main interest of this section. With the possibility of spirit possession material bodies are objectifiable. *Mwili*'s entanglement with (and distinguishability from) *nafsi* (self/soul) is a concern that repeatedly surfaced in conversations that I had in the context of researching kombe. Although with kombe *mwili* is not unambiguously merged with *nafsi*, the rigid distinction enacted in spirit possession is

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[22] The same is described for other contexts, too. See, for example, Adeline Masquelier's work on the *bori*-cult in Niger (2001). In a fascinating article (2011) she describes the ambiguities of the extent to which spirits take control over a menstruating body while possession is not permitted during the days of menstruation.

implicitly contested by my interlocutors. In this section, the explanations of four people (three of whom are kombe practitioners), namely, Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, Hakimu Saleh, and Mussa, are consecutively introduced and set in relation to each other.[23] This section, thus, builds on the discursive demarcation of *mwili* while our bodies were engaged in the practice of conducting these conversations. This latter aspect, though, will only be discussed at a later stage whereby the ambiguous distinguishability of *mwili* and *nafsi* echoes the distinction that this section draws between discourse and practice despite the entanglements of *mwili* that we talked about and our bodily presence during the conversations.

5.4.1. Talib Ali

After hearing about me from a mutual friend, Talib Ali[24] invited me to interview him in his house in the neighborhood of Mombasa in Zanzibar Town. When I arrived he greeted me from his seated position on the carpeted floor where he was just finishing answering an e-mail. His wife brought us some biscuits and I seated myself. Talib Ali closed the laptop, took off his glasses and turned his full attention to me. When I asked him to tell me a bit more about himself, I learned that he had studied in Sudan and not only instructed on Islamic matters at the nearby Mazrui mosque, but that he was also part of a family planning program run by the government's health ministry, *wizara ya afya*. For Talib Ali, talking about *mwili* was imperative because he first understood my research to be about *pombe* (alcoholic beverages) instead of kombe. As a respected scholar in Mombasa, Zanzibar, he wanted to give me a theologically sound argumentation for why indulging in alcohol was not permissable. When we both realized the misunderstanding, we had a good laugh and he was relieved about my morally preferable topic. As *mwili* is equally important for the topic of kombe, we continued the conversation and Talib Ali's statements about *mwili* encapsulate what I have often heard in informal talks: *Mwili* is physical and as such it is the counterpart to *roho* (spirit/soul; Arabic: rūḥ) which is not physical (see also De Boer 2012). "When you die," Talib

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[23] It has to be noted that all of them happen to be men. My unbalanced selection in terms of gender was not intentional and can partially be explained with regard to a majority of male interview partners with whom the conversation would go into minute details. Because of the lack of equally telling statements by women in the framework of my field research, I decided to introduce these four people despite their exclusively male gender. See, however, that none of them pay much attention to the stomach—a shortcoming that I address in chapter 8.3.2.

[24] 17 July 2014, Mombasa, Zanzibar Town.

5. Script in Body—Body in Script

Ali explained, "*mwili* dies, but *roho* lives on. However, the relation between the two subsists awaiting the day of resurrection."[25] Interestingly, he did not use the term *maiti* (corpse) here, but by retaining *mwili* he alluded to the temporariness in which death (and thus the distinction between *mwili* and *maiti*) matters from the perspective of Islam.

Resonating with Talib Ali's choice not to employ the term *maiti* (corpse), Khawaja Abdul Hamid (1940) vigorously rejects ideas related to the body/mind dualism for Islam. With reference to the Qurʾan (see for example sura 56), God's final judgment and the here-after involve a bodily resurrection and subsequent bodily experiences of paradisaic pleasures or hellish agonies. On these grounds, Hamid advocates the inseparability of body and soul and campaigns for the consideration of the wholeness of the "organism" or of "man" (see also Herzog 2015: 7). The inseparability of "material" and "spiritual" components of a person are not only prevalent in descriptions of an Islamic here-after, but also with regard to Sufi saints whose bodies emit *baraka* (blessings) even after their earthly death (see Kugle 2007).[26] Furthermore, this inseparability manifests in spiritual trainings of one's body, such as fasting, meditations (for more detail see Mayeur-Jaouen 2006), or in the incorporation of the Qurʾan.

The conversation with Talib Ali continued and turned towards *nafsi* (self/ soul; Arabic: *nafs*) which, unlike many other people, he equated with *roho* (spirit/ soul; Arabic: *rūḥ*), although for reasons not presented to me the term *nafsi* appears to be his preferred choice between them. "*Moyo* [the heart] itself is *nafsi* and it is," he claimed, "the source of everything. Even *akili* [intellect, mind; Arabic ᶜ*aql*], what makes us think, comes from *moyo* at first and then later happens in the *kichwa* [head]." To underline his point, he made references to Ibn Qayyim

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[25] In Islamic eschatology it is consigned that there will be a "Day of Resurrection" on which all the deceased will rise from their graves.

[26] Scott Kugle draws attention to the paradox of a material and ephemeral human body, limited in space, which at the same time is a living human body, infused with *rūḥ* and therefore eternal, unbounded by space. God's creation of Adam from clay and his breathing of divine *rūḥ* into this clay marks the simultaneity of God's transcendence and immanence in human bodies (2007: 30) and thus highlights the distinctiveness of human bodies as material-spiritual locus: as whole.

al-Jawziyya[27] and Mohammed al-Ghazali.[28] Talib Ali then stressed the three-foldedness of *nafsi*: *nafsi* of sin (*maasi*), *nafsi* of calmness (*utulivu*),[29] and *nafsi* of "conscious[ness]" (which is ideally shaped by Islam, English term used). Referencing the three-fold characteristics of *nafsi* in literature about Islam, *ammāra* (commanding to evil), *lawwāma* (upbraiding), and *muṭmaʾinna* (tranquil) (see Calverley and Netton 2012),[30] Talib Ali directed his answer to my question about *mwili* to concerns for morality. This led him to the inseparability of *akili* (the mind) from *moyo* (heart), a physical body part: "When you engage with ideas [literally conversations: *mazungumzo*] that you like," he said, "you can't locate this only in *akili* (intellect/mind), because the positive judgment is made in *moyo* (the heart)." The physical body *mwili* is a space in which *moyo* is central for questions of morality.

Talib Ali is well acquainted with jurisprudence of the four Sunni schools and proudly showed me his personal library during our conversation. Identifying as a Shafiᶜi scholar, he particularly pointed to the Maliki literature which he greatly values, and thereby highlighted his knowledgeability. His deep engagement with Islamic scholarship of various Sunni schools and his references to al-Jawziyya and al-Ghazali situate his elaborations about *mwili* within larger Islamic frameworks and thus coincide with academic literature that takes recourse to the same sources. Louis Gardet and Jean-Claude Vadet (2012), for example, accentuate the heart (Arabic: *qalb*) "as source of knowledge and conscience." They furthermore state that

> for al-Ghazālī and Ṣūfī tradition as a whole, the bodily organ of the heart (and not the brain) is the seat of ᶜaḳl, the faculty of knowledge. [...] Ḳalb is

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[27] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (1292–1350 CE) was a student of Ibn Taymiyyah and belonged to the Hanbali school of jurisprudence (sunni). His scholarly writings primarily on matters of jurisprudence and mysticism are influential until today and contested by Islamic reformist movements.

[28] Mohammed al-Ghazali (1058–1111 CE) was a Shafiᶜi scholar who integrated Sufism into mainstream Islamic thought. His numerous writings were well-received by both Muslim and Christian philosophers and until today honored for their contribution to medieval Islamic philosophy.

[29] *Utulivu* is seen as a very positive attribute. It stands in contrast to negatively connoted hot-temperedness and is one of the values associated with "civilized" behavior (see chapter 2.1.3) and dignity.

[30] Hayati Aydin (2010) offers an interesting comparison to Sigmund Freud's "Id," "Ego," and "Super-ego." Although mostly these three characteristics are examined, note that sometimes more characteristics (or "stages") are listed primarily with reference to Sufism (see for example Frager 1999: chapter 3).
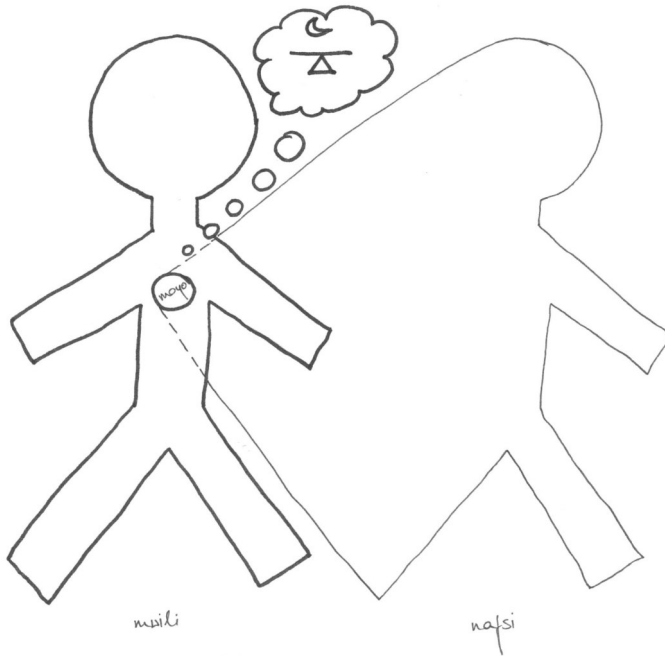
Figure 20.: Talib Ali: As counterpart to *mwili*, *nafsi* is *moyo* from where moral judge-
ment stems.

> not only the faculty of knowing, it is also the seat of all moral impulses, both
> evil desires and instincts and the struggle to be free of them and attentive
> to divine teaching.[31]

Deeply entrenched in Islamic scholarship, Talib Ali's explanations of *mwili*
propose that through the heart, *moyo*, the materiality of *mwili* is intimately tied
to the immateriality of *nafsi* (which he equates with *roho*). *Moyo* is not only a
part of *mwili*, but also the source of *nafsi* and the locality of moral judgment
(but see Chebel 1984: 74-76). In my attempt to give visual aid to a fraction of
Talib Ali's explanations in figure 20, I aim to emphasize how *moyo*, situated in the
material *mwili*, is its immaterial counterpart, *nafsi*, and the source of everything.
In particular, *moyo* is the source of moral judgement.

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[31] See also Arthur Tritton (1971: 493) who circumscribes this *qalb* as "rational soul."

For the ingestion of kombe, Talib Ali's explanations become more specific:

TALIB ALI: When you drink medicine, it passes here [points to the stomach]. It passes through the *tumbo* [stomach], right? And then it circulates. But before that, you know, the afflicted person has an *imani* [belief/trust]—which *imani*? The *imani* that it will help her/him. So, the information was already given to her/him. It is already in the *moyo* and has started circulating before it [kombe] reaches the *tumbo*.

The circulation of kombe in a physical body passing through the stomach, is intimately tied to the heart's prior knowledge. Thus, according to Talib Ali, kombe immaterially circulates even before it materially reaches the stomach.[32]

5.4.2. Ali Hemedi

Ali Hemedi, a kombe practitioner from Chumbuni,[33] whom I visited several times and who loved testing me on my knowledge about kombe in his untiringly good-humored way, one day[34] also explained the relation between *mwili* and *roho* to me. He commenced his explanation by setting apart the mortal *mwili* from *roho*, which "neither gets hurt nor lives." *Roho* is ever-present, "it does not die, but *mwili*, indeed, is what carries all issues." He then introduced an interesting metaphor that relates *mwili* to a town in which all kinds of houses find their space. *Roho* is inside the town, and so is *nafsi*. Mentioning *nafsi* in this metaphor in passing triggered a more thorough engagement with it that started with the pronouncement of *nafsi* as a troublesome, but integral part of *mwili*: "*nafsi* may receive problems. You've already understood me. And if the bodily substance (*kiwiliwili*) receives problems, then the *nafsi* also receives problems. Because *nafsi* is closer to *kiwiliwili* than *roho*." Although he ordered *kiwiliwili*, *nafsi*, and *roho* according to proximity to each other, he then stressed that they all belong together and introduced another

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[32] The stomach is an interesting trope to follow as it is the location inside of *mwili* where kombe first arrives and as it is also that which at Bi Mwana's place is predominantly used to diagnose the afflictions of children. However, more research is needed to follow up on what the stomach does in this context.

[33] Chumbuni is a relatively poor neighborhood adjacent to Daraja Bovu, the most well known informal settlement in Zanzibar. Ali Hemedi is well-established in Chumbuni and besides Islamic adult education, giving advice with reference to his knowledge about Islamic standpoints, and treating afflictions, he also takes care of his elderly parents and his sister's family, which includes a mentally disabled child. His own wife and children helped him especially with the care of the elderly parents who also lived in the same house.

[34] Ali Hemedi, 1 July 2014, Chumbuni, Zanzibar Town.

metaphor: an airplane that, if it has a problem, crashes as an entity. Given the unity of *mwili* that this metaphor stresses, Ali Hemedi's delineation of treatment with *kombe* follows logically.

> ALI HEMEDI: So, when we say that we use kombe to treat a specific place in the *mwili* and look for kombe that relates, it goes there to hit (fight) in the *mwili* and to block *nafsi* from following these other issues. Because, if *nafsi* already wants something, *roho* follows. […] The leader of all things here is *nafsi.*

After small hints to what the Prophet says and how this applies to the four humors (in Greek and *unani* medicine), he also made some remarks about morality: "*Nafsi*, indeed, brings many desires. In the Qurˀan [it is said that] *nafsi*'s job is to command bad things if it wasn't for a God of mercy."[35]

To support these descriptions, in figure 21 I take up Ali Hemedi's imagery of the plane through which *kiwiliwili*, *nafsi*, and *roho* are bound to each other and face a common trajectory. The drawing also shows how *nafsi* is closer to *kiwiliwili* than *roho* is and that *nafsi* steers toward problems.

Ali Hemedi's account closely relates to Talib Ali's view. Both addressed similar themes with regard to my interest in *mwili*: the temporariness of the physical body, its relation to a spiritual counterpart (*roho* and *nafsi*), and matters of morality. They both also used many spatial references: Talib Ali spoke about the location of ideas (conversations) and the location of *moyo*, the heart, inside of *mwili*. Ali Hemedi, equally, described *mwili* as a container in which *nafsi* and *roho* are located.[36] In Swahili, the grammatical locative markers highlight these spatial references (see also the linguistic work on the term *mwili* by Kraska-Szlenk 2014: 102–104): distance and proximity, as well as the differentiation between inside and outside play a crucial role. Despite these contrasts, Ali Hemedi also stressed the unity of *nafsi*, *roho*, and the physical bodily substance: like in an airplane, they share the same fate together—if it crashes, they all crash. He only

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[35] This statement corresponds to aya 12:53: "I do not pretend to be blameless, for man's very soul incites him to evil unless my Lord shows mercy: He is most forgiving, most merciful." Hakimu Saleh also quotes this aya during his explanations of the body (see below).

[36] Angelika Neuwirth refers to the body as "organic resonating space [Resonanzraum] that is capable of absorbing spoken words and cantilena" (2011: 180, translation mine). Her metaphor of the "resonating space" emphasizes not only the spatial physicality of the body, but also the inherent amplification that this space provides. The body's relation to "spoken words" and "cantilena" for which this "resonating space" is connected will be approached in the next chapter.
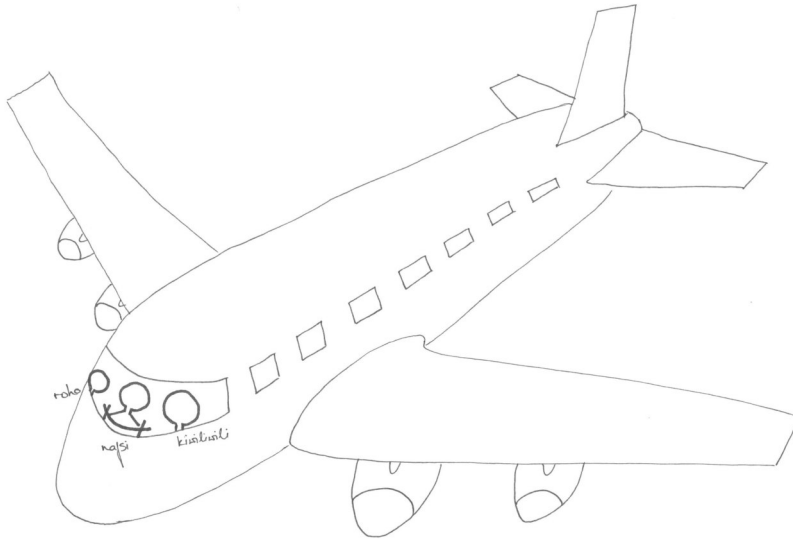
Figure 21.: Ali Hemedi: Bounded in an airplane, *nafsi* between *kiwiliwili* and *roho* steers towards problems.

mentioned this metaphor briefly and did not elaborate on how exactly it mapped onto his discussion about *mwili* (What takes the role of a pilot? *Nafsi*? What is the plane and what is the cargo?), but he used the boundedness of an airplane in flight (and in falling) to illustrate the boundedness of *kiwiliwili*, *nafsi*, and *roho*. Interestingly, he mostly employed *kiwiliwili* rather than *mwili*. *Kiwiliwili* stresses the physicality of the body's substance. Thus, on the one hand, the demarcation between body and *nafsi/roho* becomes semantically more pronounced. On the other hand, the use of an extra word to replace *mwili* with a stress on the substance renders any use of *mwili* more complex, comprising the notion that is covered by *kiwiliwili* and also hints at more. In juxtaposition to *kiwiliwili*, *mwili* becomes a word that bridges physical with non-physical properties of the body.

5.4.3. Hakimu Saleh

As with many other topics, Hakimu Saleh also responded with great detail to my inquiry about *mwili*. In fact, my questions were preempted by various remarks about bodies and taken up again in subsequent sessions where he repeated and emphasized one or the other statement. I here rely on a selection of these remarks taken together.[37] Throughout his explanations, Hakimu Saleh drew on various sources, most prominently a book entitled "Prophetic Way of Treatment" by Badr Azimabadi who builds on works of As-Suyuṭi and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya. Besides "doing being-knowledgeable" with this material citation (see chapter 3.2), he equated *mwili* with Islamic notions of the body. For Hakimu Saleh, as for Talib Ali and Ali Hemedi, *mwili* is physical, earthly, like a "statue." It is visually perceptible with the eyes. Hakimu Saleh stressed that it is important to speak about the *living* body.[38] He repeatedly described *mwili* through its vessel-functions. Not only does it comprise the four bodily fluids and the four elements (in different ratios to one another) which are responsible for a person's temperament that he elaborated on in the context of *unani* medicine,[39] but also, it encloses the skeleton, muscles, blood, and the four main organs: the brain, testicles/ovaries, the liver and the heart (for a similar enumeration see Chebel 1984). In the context of discussing *mwili*, Hakimu Saleh did not say much about the brain and the testicles apart from designating them to their biomedical functions. Although the liver, *ini*, is one of the body parts in which emotions are situated (see also Tramutoli 2015: 89), he also did not further expound on *ini*. The heart, *moyo*, however, played a crucial role in his explorations of *mwili*. It is one of the three constitutive parts that make up a person, namely *moyo*, *akili*, and *nafsi*. To introduce them, he circumscribed them as "charity/love" (*mapendo*), "lust" (English term used), and "God's power inside of the body" (*nguvu ya Mungu ndani ya mwili*) respectively. Despite the short circumscription of *moyo* as *mapendo*, which closely relates to a western notion of the heart being the locus of love, his details about *moyo* took him into another direction.

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[37] Hakimu Saleh, 5 December 2013, 6 February 2014, 24 July 2014, 6 September 2014.

[38] Although there is another word for a corpse, *maiti*, for Hakimu Saleh (as was also the case for Talib Ali) *mwili* comprises the living as well as the (temporarily) dead body. The body must not be destroyed and Hakimu Saleh criticized the Hindus for burning their corpses. Nevertheless, in his explorations of *mwili*, he mentioned this in passing and concentrated instead on the living body.

[39] For more details on *unani* medicine see chapter 1.2.1.

"Desires come to *moyo* a lot. [...] We are talking about *moyo*, which indeed brings desires. Especially this *moyo* [of which we speak] is able to bring problems. [...] *Moyo* can eat money." This *moyo* that he described as potentially troublesome (because desires are located there) was also described by him as indicative for a person's life: "This thing [*moyo*], if it sits/dwells well, then the person's life will also be good." Rather than the constitution of *moyo*, he described its position in the body (how it "sits"/"dwells": *kukaa*) as decisive. The spatial relation of *moyo* (which brings desires) to *mwili* in which it "sits"/"dwells" is of utmost importance for the shape of a person's life. Talib Ali described *moyo* in relation to morality; Hakimu Saleh's explanations also point in this direction, although unlike Talib Ali, Hakimu Saleh clearly separated *moyo* from *akili*.

In the accounts of Talib Ali and Hakimu Saleh, both of which are informed by Sufi literature, *moyo* received particular attention as it links the material *mwili* to the immaterial *nafsi*/*roho* and in this link addresses questions of morality. Part of Lambek's argument is that body and mind are linguistically separated. The explanations of *mwili* outlined here appear to attest to Lambek's claim, foremost by relating to more than one word. Relying on his fieldwork, Lambek is indebted to his interlocutor's Islamic notions of the body∕mind complex. Whereas Islamic notions of the body are often portrayed in terms of bodily wholeness (Hamid 1940; Herzog 2015; see above), the body and soul/spirit/mind are not only linguistically distinguishable but are also discrete in *unani* medicine: "According to the Greco-Islamic medical theory, the body and the soul are separate entities that can influence each other; the health of the soul and the health of the body are thus interdependent" (Perho 2010: 206). Though interdependent, the categorization of afflictions including "illnesses of the soul" (or, as Penelope Johnstone in her translation of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya's "Medicine of the Prophet" [1998: 12,150] prefers, "illnesses of the heart") as separate from other afflictions points to ambiguous demarcations similar to those of the Cartesian distinction between body and mind. With *unani* medicine, questions of afflictions relate to questions of morality.

Hakimu Saleh described *akili* (mind/intelligence) quite unfavorably.

HAKIMU SALEH: It is a thing that acts on sources of 'sensation' [English word used]. [...] It is the seat of 'sensation' [English word used]. It can only decide, this *akili*, but it cannot make you go somewhere. You can sit at some place and don't have any feet. Will you go? [laughs] Now, feet can go, but if you don't have feet– [implies that the brain can decide without action being taken by

> the other body parts]. The brain cannot command [other body parts] unless
> you yourself already have the intention and the intention comes from *moyo.*[40]

Akili, situated in the *bongo* (brain) which is in the *kichwa* (head) and thus can
be found in the physical *mwili* is mainly receptive of external influences and thus
the location of "sensations,"[41] according to Hakimu Saleh. Although it can make
decisions, *akili* is not able to command the body and thus it did not interest
Hakimu Saleh much. "On judgment day," he stated, "it will be important what
your lips have said, not what your brain has ordered [them so say]."[42] In Hakimu
Saleh's framing, the focus was on actions that the body takes. *Akili* is in the brain
(*bongo*) which is in the head (*kichwa*), but it is distinct from other body parts
("not inside other body parts"), that can also act without *akili* and will be made
responsible for it on judgment day. The ability to perceive and receive external
influences which might affect the body is internally externalized through *akili.* This
is very different from how Talib Ali positioned *akili* as emerging first from the heart
(*moyo*) and only later in the brain. Whereas they had different stances towards the
relation between *moyo* and *akili*, they agreed on *akili* (eventually) being located
in *kichwa.* Note how this positioning of *akili* in *kichwa* resonates with spirits'
control over the body, which they gain by climbing to the head (*kupanda kichwa*,
see above, 5.3.3).

On another day, Hakimu Saleh connected *akili* to education, *elimu*, which
could also be seen as an external influence that becomes a "sensation," internalized
through *akili.*

HAKIMU SALEH: *Elimu* comes with *akili. Akili* controls your *nafsi.* Do you hear?
I see this body [English word used] and *nafsi* play soccer. Education, espe-
cially knowledge of the Qurʾan is central to living a good life as a Muslim.
Almost every sura of the Qurʾan starts with summoning to read/study/re-
cite.[43]

Although Hakimu Saleh regarded the "sensations" attributed to *akili* as negligible
to explorations of *mwili*, the visually perceptible, the readable (learnable) rendered

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[40] Hakimu Saleh, 31 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
[41] Hakimu Saleh uses the English word "sensations" here. Although he often inserted English
vocabulary into his Swahili explanations for me, the term "sensations" also hints at his
engagement with literature in other languages (predominantly English and Arabic) that he
makes sense of for his context. As I understand his explanations, "sensations" are external
influences that evoke feelings inside *mwili.*
[42] Hakimu Saleh, 31 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
[43] 24 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.
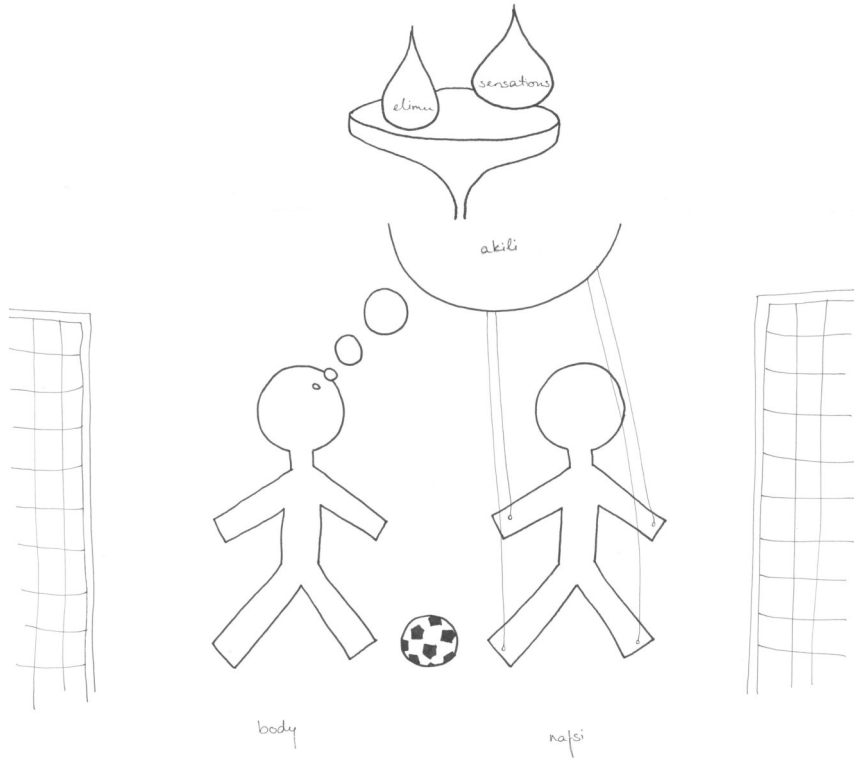
Figure 22.: Hakimu Saleh: the body and *nafsi* play soccer while *akili* from the bodily head, *kichwa* and into which *elimu* and "sensations" are funneled, controls *nafsi*.

akili important here: the visual was set apart and in this context *akili* became crucial because it can control *nafsi* which relates to *mwili* in an ongoing struggle that Hakimu Saleh compared to playing soccer. In figure 22, I take up the metaphor of playing soccer and visualize the "control" that, according to Hakimu Saleh, *akili* has over *nafsi* with yet another visual metaphor: a marionette the movements of which are controlled by *akili* into which *elimu* and "sensations" are funneled.

Talib Ali and Hakimu Saleh both refered to *akili* in relation to knowledge and both addressed morality in relation to *akili*. In their examination of *ᶜaḵl* with reference to Islam, Tjitze de Boer and Fazlur Rahman make the same connection:

" *ᶜAḳl* is thus a natural way of knowing what is right and wrong" (De Boer and Rahman 2012). Talib Ali located moral judgment in the heart which is inseparable from *akili.* However, for God's final judgment, Hakimu Saleh emphasized the importance of actions done by the body that *akili* cannot entirely control. On this topic of *akili*'s control, Tritton (1971: 495) comments: "Intellect [...] does not control the body but influences it." Furthermore, De Boer and Rahman state that "[t]he philosophers of Islam followed in their accounts of ᶜaḳl Aristotle and his Greek commentators [...] According to them ᶜaḳl is that part of the soul [...] by which it 'thinks' or 'knows' and as such is the antithesis of perception" (De Boer and Rahman 2012). Although Hakimu Saleh also voiced the opinion that *akili* has a capacity to think, to read/learn and know, for him this did not imply an antithesis of perception; in fact, he stated that *akili* receives external influences that become "sensations." *Akili* is affected. The debate in Greco-Arabic doctrine about the individuality of intellect does not mark today's conceptualizations of *akili.* However, traces can be found in the role that *akili* plays vis-à-vis the body at God's final judgment. According to Hakimu Saleh, although *akili* cannot control the body and bodily actions will be scrutinized, the body and *nafsi* "play soccer" with each other, struggling for dominance and thus influence on the person.

With regard to *nafsi*, Hakimu Saleh cites the Qurᵓan 12:53 in which it is stated that the soul (*nafsi*)[44] would be incited to evil if it was not for God's mercy.[45] With God's mercy, God's word has been received by *akili* and, according to Hakimu Saleh, the believer's "soul is 'conscious' [English word used] and fears God. If you have a 'strong faith' [English expression used] in God, the soul will relax because it is 'controlled' [English word used] by God."[46] The conscious soul submits to God: consciousness is not only intricately linked to the soul but thereby

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[44] In the English interpretation of the Qurᵓan that he uses, *nafsi* is translated as "self" in aya 12:53. He prefers the translation of *nafsi* into "soul." Although he does not specify why he chooses to provide the additional translation, I assume firstly, that the boundaries between "self" and "soul" are blurred when speaking about *nafsi* and secondly, that Hakimu Saleh here links up to other conversations (or theological lectures) that we had about "soul" beforehand.

[45] The same verse was referred to by Ali Hemedi in his statements about *mwili* (see above).

[46] Hakimu Saleh, 24 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town. In these sentences Hakimu Saleh used a number of English terms. I can only speculate what caused this code-switching. Perhaps he relies on something that he himself has read in English and thus finds it more accurate to employ the English expressions, perhaps he adjusts to what he considers will be easier for me to understand.

also to Islam.[47] Whereas *moyo* and *akili* are given very precise positions in the body, *nafsi* is located vaguely "inside the body." No details are given about its precise location. However, in the context of a different conversation, he stated that the "soul [English word used] is physical because it is inside the body and without the soul *mwili* does not function."[48]

In all three accounts, Talib Ali's, Ali Hemedi's, and Hakimu Saleh's, the physical body (*mwili/kiwiliwili*) was juxtaposed against a less physical *nafsi* which mostly serves to emphasize *mwili*'s physicality, and leads to the question of how *nafsi* relates to these physical bodies. All three agreed that, when a person dies, the physical body is distinct from *nafsi/roho*. (Like Talib Ali and unlike Ali Hemedi, Hakimu Saleh did not differentiate between *nafsi* and *roho*.) Edwin Calverley and Ian Netton also circumscribe *nafs* as "not embodied in and […] not close to the body, but […] attached as the lover to the beloved," and thereby make use of a metaphor that functions comparably to Ali Hemedi's metaphor of the airplane. The distinction between a physical body (*mwili/kiwiliwili*) and *nafsi* resonates with practices of spirit possession. This *nafsi* is intimately linked to the living body (*mwili*) and in all three accounts incited allusions to or discussions about morality. Whereas for Talib Ali *nafsi* was threefold and only one part of it was *nafsi ya maasi* (*nafsi* of sin), Ali Hemedi and Hakimu Saleh both pointed to aya 12:53 to substantiate their message of the soul's inherent evilness which can only be overcome with God's grace. Calverley and Netton similarly observe: "The *nafs* […] is the seat of the blameworthy characteristics" (2012, see also Tritton 1971: 493). These "blameworthy characteristics," as Hakimu Saleh assured, can be defeated with God's grace through *akili*'s reading/studying (*kusoma*) that influences *nafsi* and, according to Talib Ali, emerges in *moyo*. This *moyo*, Hakimu Saleh noted, needs to sit/dwell well in a physical and living *mwili*. Attending to the physicality of bodies as well as attending to *akili* by studying (*kusoma*), therefore, are morally valuable practices. The former point was emphasized with yet another metaphor that Hakimu Saleh offered.

As a vessel (*chombo*) for *akili*, *moyo*, and *nafsi*, *mwili* serves as a boat/dhow (*jahazi*) that finds a way through a worldly life to God.

HAKIMU SALEH: This, indeed, is the meaning of the body [English word used].
This body is like a *jahazi*, do you hear? Until you arrive before the one who

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[47] Islam as *dini*, see chapter 7.2.
[48] Hakimu Saleh, 5 December 2016, conversation via Facebook.

> created you. Do you see? Now this *jahazi*, if you have not prepared it [well], will it not break? Water will enter, you will drown. When you drown, now, that is it. […] You will go far, but not in the sense that we [Muslims] think of, you will not make use of the things we wish for. Do you see? […] The wealth is the boat. This. [With] your body you help your *nafsi*, your soul [English word used] to return to the one who created [everything].[49]

Mwili needs to be taken great care of so that the way through this world is secured and God safely reached. Protecting one's body from anything that could compromise its ability to travel to God, thus, is in everyone's interest.

All three people whose explanations of *mwili* have shaped this section so far—Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, and Hakimu Saleh—have an interest in Islamic scholasticism and all three of them are used to explaining matters of Islam (often related to healing) to other people. Therefore, their responses to my inquiry were richly articulated and studded with references to conceptualizations situated within a long Islamic trajectory. In particular, Talib Ali's and Hakimu Saleh's explicit reliance on works by al-Ghazali (Talib Ali), or Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (Talib Ali and Hakimu Saleh) positioned them as Islamic scholars (in the particular settings of the conversations with me).

5.4.4. Mussa

Most other people's statements, gathered in informal conversations, related less explicitly to established Islamic scholasticism. Mussa told me about *mwili* several months after he had written the verses on paper that the afflicted woman was to avoid seeing with her eyes (as narrated at the very beginning of this part). It was a short informal conversation we had while he was waiting to be called for another task and in my notes I scribbled:

> He said that the body is everything that is inside. The skin is part of it and when you wash yourself there are channels in the skin that direct the outside inside. Nafsi and roho are inside the body and when you die then everything dies. Important is the heart, because everything emerges from there. And the heart is also inside the body.[50]

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[49] Hakimu Saleh, 24 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[50] Fieldnotes from 13 July 2014. Originally in German: Er meinte, der Körper ist alles, was innen drin ist. Die Haut gehört dazu und wenn man sich wäscht, gibt es in der Haut Kanäle, die das Äußere nach innen leiten. Nafsi und roho sind im Körper drin und wenn man stirbt,
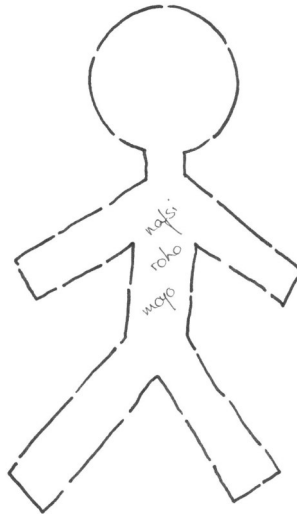
Figure 23.: Mussa: *nafsi*, *roho*, and *moyo* are inside and the skin has channels.

Echoing Ali Hemedi's metaphor of the airplane, Mussa highlighted the boundedness of *mwili* with *nafsi* and *roho* which, in the context of healing, gives importance to the care for the unity of these components. The special role of the heart as provider of "everything" has repercussions with Talib Ali's statement: *moyo* as source of everything. In addition, Mussa drew attention to the clear boundaries between inside and outside of the body as a vessel that Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, and Hakimu Saleh in their explanations of *mwili* took for granted. He did not only assume a clear inside and outside, but he also addressed the permeability between this inside and outside provided by the skin (which I depicted in figure 23). Interestingly, he was more concerned with movement from outside to inside

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dann stirbt alles mit. Wichtig sei das Herz, denn alles geht von dort aus. Und das Herz ist im Körper auch drin.

than with movement from inside to outside.[51] Although the body's boundaries matter enormously in the discourse on ritual purity as prescribed through references to sharia law (see Katz 2002; also Mussa's remark was made in relation to washing),[52] the work invested in the maintenance of ever-deteriorating boundaries was hardly addressed by my three other interlocutors.[53] In contrast, in her work on the relation between biomedicine and other medicines in southern Tanzania, Stacy Langwick elaborates in great detail on how medicines applied to the skin close bodies off in order to prevent spirits from entering.[54] She argues: "Bodies are not essentially discrete objects; their separateness, solidity, and stability are created through the interventions of healers. In other words, bodily boundaries in southern Tanzania are created and maintained through medicine" (2011a: 224). With his comments on the skin's permeability, thus, Mussa addressed an issue that is regionally embedded (including on the "African" mainland). By not addressing the issue of the permeability of *mwili*'s boundaries, while taking these boundaries for granted, Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, and Hakimu Saleh positioned themselves as removed from those who enact practices of boundary-making (those who are more closely related to the mainland). The intra-action of "African" and "Islamic" influences that in Zanzibar constitute their differentiability (see chapter 2) finds repercussions in the conceptualization of the body in Zanzibar.

Regardless of bodily boundaries, Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, Hakimu Saleh, and Mussa, all discursively distinguished between, and stressed the entanglements of *mwili/kiwiliwili* and *nafsi/roho*. Bodily materiality is complementary to *roho*'s immateriality (see Talib Ali); it enables *mwili* to be a vessel, a *jahazi*, that carries a person through this material world (see Hakimu Saleh); it gives immaterial *nafsi/roho* a temporary spatial and material existence (see Talib Ali and Ali Hemedi).

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[51] See Iwona Kraska-Szlenk (2014: chapter 18) for a linguistic analysis of *jasho* (sweat) which moves from inside to outside. See also Malek Chebel (1984: chapter 4) on sperm, saliva, and tears in an Islamic framework which also move from inside to outside.

[52] Marion Katz examines the problematization of the bodily clay substance's hollowness into which God's *rūḥ* was breathed, but that was also hungry and thus voracious and greedy. Katz shows how close observance of what enters and leaves the "fallen" bodily substance requires regular ritual attention and is the foundation of Sunni purity law (2002: 176–179). In her overarching narrative, she traces how these prescriptions have been negotiated over time.

[53] Note, however, that with regard to spirit possession, Hakimu Saleh also pointed out that there are 32/33 openings through which spirits can enter bodies (see chapter 5.3.1).

[54] Although geographically quite distant, Jean-Pierre Warnier's fieldwork in the Cameroonian grasslands provides a comparable engagement with bodily boundary-making (2007).

As a living body, *mwili* constitutes boundaries between material and immaterial, between inside and outside (see Mussa)—an inside that needs to be protected on its way to God (see Hakimu Saleh), an inside that can be spatially intruded upon by spirits. Through its entanglements with the material world and its constitution of an inside in which *nafsi/roho* resides, *mwili* also transgresses these boundaries and mediates across them (see below) in ways that are connected to questions of morality. Apart from Talib Ali, all of my four interlocutors prepare kombe themselves and their remarks on *mwili*, including those of Talib Ali, relate to a possible ingestion of Qurᵓanic verses to counter afflictions. Afflictions are treatable through this *mwili*; *mwili*'s superposition of materiality and immateriality enables the ingestion of physical substances, such as water containing Qurᵓanic verses, to be targeted at afflictions that affect the patient.

5.5. Affective Mediation: *Mwili* and Afflictions

Afflictions occur as bodily (and biomedically recognizable) illnesses, undesirable mental conditions, problems concerning one's business or one's neighborhood, as well as combinations of any of these here-employed categories: afflictions occur in a "body-mind-world meld[ed] into one organism" (Venn 2010: 131). *Mwili*'s transgression of material-immaterial boundaries and inside-outside boundaries is crucial for this process. In juxtaposition, Talib Ali's, Ali Hemedi's, Hakimu Saleh's, and Mussa's explanations evoke a multiplicity of ways in which body, mind, and world relate to each other. Building primarily on two metaphors, namely the airplane of Ali Hemedi and the *jahazi* of Hakimu Saleh that were introduced in the preceding section, this section examines how the intra-action of bodily physicality and *nafsi*'s/*roho*'s immateriality unfolds in *mwili* (as entanglement) and how this intra-action marks a transgressable bodily boundary (as differentiation): an inside and an outside. Furthermore, it scrutinizes these relations in terms of mediation and alludes to questions of morality.

      Consider Ali Hemedi's brief but compelling imagery of the airplane in which *roho* and *nafsi* together with a physical bodily substance (*kiwiliwili*) face a shared destiny in their journey through the air. In this metaphor, any kind of disturbance

(affliction) affects the entire flight and thus the airplane's material future.[55] Likewise, Hakimu Saleh's metaphor of a *jahazi* that sails through troubled waters and secures the passage to God stresses this boundedness. Similar to the airplane, the *jahazi* serves as a means of transport and implies the need to relate the body-mind complex (*akili*, *moyo*, and *nafsi* contained in the physicality of *mwili*) to the world (the waters).

The bodily necessity to resonate with the world challenges the fixity of boundaries where body and world meet.[56] The airplane and the *jahazi* are affected by the air and water that they travel through; wind and waves are intensities that touch, pull, and carry the plane and the *jahazi* through the world. Movement of and with a plane or a *jahazi* is always a movement of air and water. The air surrounding a plane forms currents that carry it; the water equally forms displacement currents corresponding to the boat's hull (thereby determining its maximum speed). In relation to the world, a person travels through her/his life being affected by the world in which s/he is placed and absorbed in a very tangible, material way, becoming a material part of the world. Elaborating on the metaphors in this way allows me to approach how Ali Hemedi and Hakimu Saleh, when speaking about the relationship between *nafsi/roho* and *kiwiliwili*/body, did not only address a bodily wholeness for which physical situatedness is constitutive, but also marked *mwili* as that which constitutes and transgresses boundaries.

The movement of the plane and the *jahazi* in these metaphors is inseparable from the movement of air and water, however, these metaphors also speak of boundaries, an inside and an outside. From the entanglements of body-mind-world, their differentiations take form: inside and outside intra-act. The plane and the *jahazi* provide an inside for *nafsi/roho*, an inside that is constituted in relation to an outside, moves with and through an outside, but is distinguishable from it. Mussa mentioned the channels in the skin through which entry (from outside to inside) is possible: *mwili* provides a material skin to that which is immaterially contained inside. The importance of this boundary and the vulnerability

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[55] As Ali Hemedi did not specify how to interpret this metaphor, I here merely elaborate on the point that he made with this metaphor: *roho*, *nafsi*, and *kiwiliwili* are bound together in the life of a person.

[56] For a different context, but also dealing with the dialogue of the (female) body and nature in which bodies are embedded, see Ana Mendieta's art work in which she challenges and partially dissolves the boundaries between body and world.

through porous skin is particularly important with regard to spirit possession.[57] Ali Hemedi's and Hakimu Saleh's metaphors together with Mussa's attention to channels in the skin and the possibility of spirit possession mark *mwili* as medium. They show how *mwili*—by constituting a boundary—provides the means to engage anew with questions of materiality and of insides and outsides. Living one's life (moving through the air or water on one's destined path and towards the final judgment day) requires this boundary between inside and outside, and thus careful attention to that which moves through the channels of the skin and at what moments (for example in instances of spirit possession). For the movement of body-mind-world, *mwili* mediates between inside and outside, between immaterial and material.

It has been argued that the body constitutes "the unproblematic medium through which I experience life" (Leder and Krucoff 2008: 322) which is the ground for any phenomenological work (although bodies are not always quite as unproblematic as is suggested by Leder and Krucoff). From a different starting point, Bernadette Wegenstein (2006) is also drawn to the relation of bodies and mediations and thereby to questions of surfaces and of inside and outside. Investigating current (western) trends in architecture and new media art and relating them to modernity and post-modernity, she concludes that

> [in] popular culture the body and all its organs no longer simply serve as a medium of expression, as a semiotic layer toward the outer world. Rather, the body and its parts themselves have adopted the characteristics of a medium, wherein lies the return to a holistic body concept. (2006: 161–162)

Not taking into account that Wegenstein here delineates a temporal development, the parallels to the mediations of *mwili* are striking. *Mwili* is not merely a semiotic layer, but constitutes a medium in itself. Wegenstein, however, pushes this point further:

> the current body discourse has 'gotten rid' of the body insofar as the medium has become corporealized itself, and has therefore taken the place of the actual body […]. The body no longer is a medium for something else, standing in for a truth or a reality that lies beyond the surface. Rather, the surface has collapsed, merging inside and outside, refusing to relegate itself to the

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[57] See the anthology edited by Adeline Masquelier (2005), *Dirt, Undress, and Difference: Critical Perspectives on the Body's Surface* for anthropological work on bodily surfaces. For considerations from a philosophical and feminst perspective, see also the volume edited by Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey (2001) *Thinking Through the Skin.*

> subservience of one last mediation. The medium, in other words, has become the body. (2006: 160–161)

In contrast to current western developments that Wegenstein describes for new media art and architecture, the mediality of *mwili* does not result in the disappearance of the body, rendering that which is mediated immediate, but rather emphasizes its presence as medium that overrides distinctions of body, mind, and world.

Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, and Hakimu Saleh connected their explanations of *mwili* to moral[58] negotiation processes. As God's final judgment is based on one's bodily enactments in the material world (see Hakimu Saleh), the internal struggles between good and bad are crucial and were described as a struggle between different facets of *nafsi* to be judged in *moyo* (Talib Ali), as a struggle against *nafsi* which always steers towards trouble (Ali Hemedi), or as a struggle between the "body" and *nafsi* playing soccer (Hakimu Saleh). While these struggles take place inside, *mwili*'s mediation to the outside determines bodily actions to be judged in the end. Whereas Talib Ali placed this struggle in relation to *moyo*, the heart, Ali Hemedi's and Hakimu Saleh's metaphors emphasized the teleological orientation of these struggles. Ali Hemedi's metaphor of the airplane as well as Hakimu Saleh's metaphor of the *jahazi* and the soccer match provide a framework of technologies of movement oriented at death and judgment day as fixed points of destination, the end of the game. Until then, however, the journeys and the game are marked by movement, movement that the circumstances of the air, the water, or the soccer field shape and restrict. This movement expresses internal struggles over moral enactments to be mediated through *mwili*.

Disturbances can manifest in a *jahazi*'s crew, an airplane's pilot, the cargo, the material conditions of the building materials of the *jahazi* or plane, the weather conditions outside; these disturbances (afflictions) affect[59] the intended movement and relate to a body-mind-world as a whole.[60] *Mwili*'s capacity to mediate renders

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[58] Notwithstanding the vast amount of literature on morality (see for example Zigon and Throop 2014), I here employ an everyday understanding of morality as differentiation between proper and improper as socially negotiated in Zanzibar with reference to Islam.

[59] Throughout this section I employ vocabulary that is associated with the so-called turn to affect. In relation to worries about how kombe's healing effect on bodies could be disturbed by a cognitive engagement with the written Qurʾanic verses, my take on affect will be elaborated in the next chapter.

[60] Furthermore, Hakimu Saleh's other metaphor of a soccer match supports the notion that affliction affects the entire match (although it was used to depict the internal struggles between

various kinds of afflictions bodily accessible and some of them sensually perceptible. With these considerations, the ambiguity of spirit possession is entangled with *mwili*'s mediations. Spirit possession targets the very mediation through which afflictions turn into an issue affecting a person webbed in body-mind-world relations. While this might divest affliction, the process of interrupting the mediation is seen as highly problematic by those who oppose spirit possession. Wegenstein's framework might be expanded in interesting ways if brought to bear on spirit possession (a realm on which Wegenstein herself does not touch), given that spirits are regarded to employ human bodies as mediums, replacing the material presence of humans with their own. With Wegenstein, one could argue that spirit possession provides access to the very mediation that bodies facilitate, merging and differentiating between outside and inside, between material and immaterial. Rather than a temporal phenomenon, this influence on bodily mediation addresses the qualitative change in living with spirits and navigating an airplane or a *jahazi* through life. To what extent this impingement on bodily mediation constitutes or counters affliction (made approachable through *mwili*) remains contested.

5.6. Politics of Body-Writing

In Mussa's explanations of why the plate is preferable to paper, *mwili* and *akili* are entangled insofar as *akili*'s perception of the verses (through eyes, see chapter 6.1.3) would influence a bodily engagement with these verses; however, in unison with bodily wholeness, *mwili* and *akili* were also separable from each other as not *akili* (through eyes), but only *mwili* is meant to engage with the verses, bypassing *bongo*, the brain where *akili* is located. In connection to the ensuing ingestion of kombe, *mwili* and *akili* intra-act. While this intra-action is crucial for my engagement with kombe, writing about it bears many difficulties that exceed translation issues (which also constitute part of the difficulties) and include problematic genealogies of writing about "bodies." Accepting the offer that my interlocutors provided with the metaphors they employed and in anticipation of the following chapter, I conclude this chapter with some considerations on navigating through the politics of writing a "body-chapter," of narrating and writing *mwili* in the Zanzibari context.

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nafsi and *akili*). Impairment of one or the other player, of the ball or the ground: affliction affects the entire match.

5.6.1. On Metaphors and Drawings

Metaphors employ language to deploy imagery that, in relation to what the metaphor stands for, expresses more than the name of a phenomenon does. Metaphors create excess meaning and thus invite questions of what this excess meaning does.[61] Ali Hemedi's metaphor of the airplane, taken together with his metaphor of the town in which all kinds of houses find their place, as well as Hakimu Saleh's metaphor of the soccer match, equip the mostly abstract explanations of *mwili* with vitality. They relate the contents of the spoken explanations to my lived reality as the recipient of these explanations. Not only was Ali Hemedi well aware of my journey to Zanzibar via flight and our shared residence in Zanzibar Town, but I had also told Hakimu Saleh before that I was following the world cup of soccer. Their spoken explanations were crafted to resonate with my lived experiences; they were crafted to affect me. Discourse and practice are entangled in these explanations, just as they are in medical counseling situations. Eeva Sointu (2016: 317; see also Bennett 2015; Saunders 2016) writes about the "affective clout of discourse" through which patients experience affliction and relief from affliction. Ali Hemedi and Hakimu Saleh, skilled in discursively framing afflictions for their patients in such a way that the explanations are affective and become part of the treatment, transferred their skill to the explanations of *mwili* and rendered them applicable to me.

The use of metaphors to render explanations of *mwili* less abstract and more relatable to one's concrete life worlds appears to be paradoxical. Phenomenology, in particular, rests on the dynamics that stem from bodies that we *are* and *have* (Merleau-Ponty [1945] 2012) and makes this collapse of *being* and *having* a body productive as the crucial condition through which perception (and thus engagement with our life world) is possible. The metaphors of my interlocutors detach *mwili* (or, in the case of Ali Hemedi, *kiwiliwili*) that we *have* as an entity to think and talk about from the situation in which we *were* our bodies that were having a conversation in a particular location and seated in particular ways relating to each other. That these metaphors then re-attach to the life world seems to be paradoxical. However, the metaphors' excess meanings do not just relate that what the metaphors stand for, *mwili*, to the listeners' life worlds, but they provide a

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[61] John Law (2004: chapter 5) touches on similar issues to mine in his exploration of "allegories." Note that already in footnote 11, the use of metaphors has been addressed as part of the contextualization of the body-mind debate.

different kind of access to the topic: a kind of access that is discursively triggered and that has implications about how we sense our bodies that we *are* and *have* (see also Margaret Wetherell [2012: 74–76] who points to affective practices of discourse).

In return (and within the confinements and possibilities that to-be-printed material offers), I provided drawings as additions to the written (and initially spoken) explanations. Similar to how metaphors are designed to relate abstract explanations to different modes of experience, the drawings are included to invite readers to access the topic in a non-singular way, combining linguistic and non-linguistic means. Needless to say, these drawings fall short of meaningful artistic expression but instead visualize a selection of statements that have been said by four of my interlocutors, recorded, and written into this text. In drawing these pictures, I select and visualize a particular aspect of the spoken explanations and thus emphasize a particular interpretation. These pictures rely on visual conventions that themselves, of course, are situated and become part of my translation of the conversations into this text. I employ the circumference of stick figures as an attempt to depict a "neutral" body-like figure (the ubiquitous use of stick figures is taken as an indicator for "neutrality")[62] with an inside and an outside (thus the circumference). To stress this neutrality, especially in their juxtaposition to each other, I have crafted a template with which I drew all of the stick figure outlines. The images also depict symbols, such as the scale under a crescent in figure 20 indicating judgment (the scale) according to moral values of Islam (the crescent) and the funnel in figure 22 indicating the insertion of *elimu* and "sensations" into *akili*. Furthermore, I employed the visual conventions of comics (thought bubbles, see figure 20 and 22) and introduced another visual metaphor for control: a marionette whose hands and feet are tied to the realm of *akili* (see figure 22). In order to draw the airplane in figure 21 I made use of a YouTube tutorial, teaching me how to sketch a plane.[63] Lastly, it has to be noted that the depictions—drawn, scanned, and included into the flow of this text—are adorned with captions: as aid to access alternative representations these captions function

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[62] Stick figures already appear in prehistoric mural paintings and are used internationally in pictograms. For a short overview see Wikipedia, accessed 5 February 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stick_figure.

[63] Thanks to "Wie zeichnet man ein Flugzeug? Zeichnen für Kinder," YouTube video, 8:57, posted by "Merlin - Zeichnen für Kinder," 28 June 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IABr8sRXVc.

through renewed linguistic textual representation.[64] In this respect, the drawings are similar to written conceptual translations although I cannot include (translated) quotes. The added value that I aim to address with the inclusion of these drawings lies in the readers' potentially different affective response in comparison to that of reading plain (though carefully formatted) text.

5.6.2. Muslim Bodies in Zanzibar

For my interlocutors, especially for Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, and Hakimu Saleh, speaking about *mwili* in the context of my research on kombe necessitated an explicit recourse to an Islamic framework through which *mwili* is constituted.[65] Despite their explicit references to Islam, *mwili* as described by them cannot be described as "Muslim body" in general and in particular not in my academic writing. As Gregory Starrett (1995) notes, Victorian European accounts of Muslim bodies have been used to normatively differentiate "the" Muslim body (in motion) from "the" "modern" (still) body. His main concern with this problematic history is the muteness of bodies in these accounts. He argues instead for a discourse "in which we can perceive in detail the ways in which the body is *made* symbolic, interpreted, and experienced as ideologically significant" (1995: 965, emphasis in original). Innumerable studies show their investment in complicating how bodies are "*made* symbolic, interpreted, and experienced as [...] significant" and have moved beyond Victorian European accounts, nevertheless the genealogy of a scholarly interest in "Muslim bodies" is problematic and requires mentioning.

Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, and Hakimu Saleh share an interest in framing their explanations of *mwili* with reference to Islam. Their explanations, certainly, resonate with what many people would nominally agree with, however, their explicitness must not be taken to be representative for how many other people would respond. Mussa, for example, did not discursively relate to Islam quite as explicitly as the others. Kjersti Larsen epitomizes that

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[64] In the introduction to their edited anthology *Beyond Text?* Rupert Cox, Andrew Irving, and Christopher Wright argue for the value of artistic means for anthropological expression. However, they also note that "the potential for multiple interpretations of the image means that within academic circles there is invariably an attempt to constrain and direct its meaning by surrounding it with devices such as narrative structure, voice-over, subtitles, captions and explanations" (2016: 6-7). Similar to many other anthropologists who employ images, I also felt the need to direct the interpretation of these drawings through these captions.

[65] For example, in his capacity as member of the government's family planning program, Talib Ali possibly would have provided different emphases.

> for most Zanzibari women and men […] Islam is not an intellectual or the-
> ological exercise. Rather, Islam means the regular observance of prayers,
> ablutions and proper family and community behaviour, supported and made
> meaningful by the knowledge that comes from the recitation of the Koran
> and the life of the Prophet and discussions of these. (1998: 62)

The intra-action between bodies and knowledge about Islam is thus portrayed as
decisive (see also chapter 3.1), however, many Muslims do not engage in those
practices regularly and often postpone the favorable regularity to a later phase in
life as their current daily lives are not exclusively oriented towards the pursuit of
an Islamically desirable way of life, but also shaped by other interests (see also for
the case of Egyptian Muslims: Schielke 2015; Schielke and Debevec 2012).

   Despite these other interests, the current social development in Zanzibar
increasingly attributes importance to questions of morality and refers to Islam in
the judgment of daily practices. The woman for whom Mussa was writing kombe
and who preoccupied herself with her phone lowered her gaze, as is often pre-
scribed in contexts of Islamically good female behavior. Although I did not ask
her about this specifically, the combination of her avoidance of looking at Mussa
even when he handed her the paper, her reception of the paper with both hands,
and her headscarf arranged tightly around her face indicated that these behavioral
prescriptions (propagated as good Islamic behavior by popular preachers) are im-
portant to her. Mussa who in similar situations talks, gossips, and jokes with other
patients, partly adjusted to her integrity: he took unusually great care placing the
msahafu from which he was to copy the verses appropriately and expressed his an-
swers to my questions with much sobriety. Perhaps for Mussa, Islamically proper
behavior (as negotiated in Zanzibar) was not always the highest priority, however,
in this situation he easily adopted the required *habitus* vis-à-vis the female pa-
tient to whom it mattered. Mussa's bodily adjustment was shaped by a larger
framework in Zanzibar where the evaluation of practices with respect to Islam is
increasingly gaining importance.

   Furthermore, as Mussa had also done, almost all children in Zanzibar visit
Qu'ran schools (for different time spans) that form the Muslim body distinctly.
Rudolph Ware has multifariously shown how in the case of west African Qurʾan
school pupils (*Talibé*), the process of memorizing the Qurʾan involves training the
whole body:

> The careful, painstaking, and even tedious transmission of the Qurʾan as a
> line of recitation and interpretation was not intended simply to preserve the

> text and its integrity—any written copy would have done this. It was designed instead to inculcate Islamic sensibilities in human beings, to instill the character of the Qurʾan within living agents. It sought to cultivate embodied human beings who would be able to draw on their intimate knowledge of the Qurʾan and its intrinsic power as God's verbatim speech to shape and reshape the world around them in the face of any contingency. *The Walking Qurʾan is not only the Qurʾan embodied but also the Qurʾan in action.* (Ware 2014: 14, emphasis in original)

The embodiment of the Qurʾan—decisive for Muslim practice—does not only relate to body concepts that stress a vessel-like attribute, it also provides the materiality through which physical engagement with the material world is possible. As my interlocutors in Zanzibar have stressed, this physical engagement is the basis for God's final judgment of the person as a whole.

5.6.3. Writing Bodies

Writing about bodies is writing bodies. This does not only contribute to the problematic genealogy of Muslim bodies in academic literature, but also directs attention to feminist and gender theories that seek to productively take ownership in "writing the body," thereby conceptualizing and enacting it (and thus enacting themselves since writers also have and are bodies) in complex, non-binary, queer ways. In the context of this chapter and this part in which the relationship of body and text is crucial, Vicky Kirby's (1997) work is interesting. She draws on her particular reading of Jacques Derrida and extends the notion of "text" to "there is no outside of text"[66] to react to and build on Jane Gallop, Drucilla Cornell, and Judith Butler. Kirby scrutinizes and collapses matter and signification through which she investigates corporeal politics. In conversation with constructivism and de-constructivism and with reference to Karen Barad's intra-action, Kirby asks how to go beyond "nature" and the physicality of bodies in a "transformed and transformative landscape where our theories have ontological weight" (2012: 204) and are "eventing" that which is under critical investigation. The politics of writing lies in the practices of already-articulating that which is to be argued. The corporeal politics that this chapter engages with do not only rest in the written-

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[66] Although work that constitutes and employs this extended notion of "text" is highly interesting, I stick to a more pronounced link to visible letters as *kombe* relies on the dissolution of literal letters. See also chapter 4.4.1, footnote 43.

ness of this chapter (and the inclusion of drawings) about *mwili*, but also find expression in metaphors and how they feature in this text.

Metaphors create excess meaning. Throughout this chapter I have started to increasingly employ vocabulary that features prominently in the literature of the "turn to affect" and thus carefully hints at (or, to be consistent: transmits) a sense of what I will partially address in the next chapter. Similar to how the here-presented metaphors transmit more than that which they are made to stand for, the careful introduction of affect-vocabulary is designed to transmit more than a translation of my thoughts into writing. Anticipating the conceptual rhetorics in the following chapter, the introduction of certain vocabulary is part of the political process of body-writing. By relating to and borrowing selectively from affect theorizations of a feminist context (though note, that all four interlocutors were male), this chapter and this part benefit from their scholarly intervention that challenges the dichotomousness of body/mind, nature/culture, and ontology/epistemology.

Considering how Mussa pointed out that a direct *bodily* encounter with the verses (bypassing the brain) is preferable to *seeing* the verses because seeing would impair the bodily healing experience, the challenge of a body/mind dichotomousness is analytically necessary. This chapter, starting with some considerations on "affliction," has taken seriously how Mussa intra-acts body and mind by providing washed off Qurʾanic verses for healing purposes. After an introduction to one of the most common afflictions for which kombe is prepared, namely spirit possession, the explanations of *mwili* by four of my interlocutors (Talib Ali, Ali Hemedi, Hakimu Saleh, and Mussa) followed. Their explanations, set in relation to Islamic studies literature and to each other, provide rich accounts of how *mwili* mediates between and discloses the intra-action of materiality and immateriality, a bodily substance and *nafsi/roho*, an outside and an inside, and how these mediations are connected to questions of morality. Building on *what* my interlocutors have said, their deployment of metaphors elicits engagement with *how* they linguistically framed *mwili* and thereby both set *mwili* apart as something that could be talked about and related it to lived experiences without collapsing it with the bodies that we *had* and *were* during the conversations. Discourse and practice are entangled here. I translate this move not only in terms of telling about it, but also in terms of enacting the entanglements between telling about *mwili* and providing a different kind of access. This different access is provided both through complementary drawings and also through choosing vocabulary with which I express and

situate the politics of writing bodies academically. These politics are one small aspect marked by the diffraction of chapter 4 and chapter 5, relating the dissolved Qurʾanic verses to *mwili*. A much bigger aspect of this diffraction, however, is the healing power of the liquefied Qurʾanic verses that unfolds in *mwili*. Although the ink was smudged—which was caused by my question and Mussa's explanations that the verses are preferably not to be seen—the healing power of the written verses, Mussa assured, would nevertheless unfold inside of *mwili*. In the third chapter of this part, chapter 6, I now turn to the dynamics of liquefied Qurʾanic verses and *mwili* that the ingestion of kombe induces.

6. *Mwili* "Reads": Visuality and Mediation

Liquefied Qurʾanic verses are drunk—*miwili* ("bodies," plural of *mwili*) receive liquefied textual material. Liquefied Qurʾanic verses become present in *miwili*—*miwili* are entextualized. Liquefied Qurʾanic verses are geared towards afflictions—*miwili* mediate liquefied textual material to reach afflictions: *miwili* read.

The woman folded the paper (and thereby inadvertently smudged the ink) in order to follow Mussa's advice and prevent her eyes from reading the written verses. She folded the paper to suspend her bodily engagement with the textual qualities of the ink on one side of the paper. She folded the paper to place it into her hand bag, take it home, and liquefy it there, so as to be able to drink the Qurʾanic verses, manifested by saffron ink, to treat her affliction. In preventing her eyes from engaging with the verses, she was preparing her *mwili* to later ingest the verses in an impartial way, to directly "read" the verses—to allow them to bypass the brain.

The bodily mediation between the material and the immaterial (see chapter 5) facilitates the material water carrying the verses to arrive materially in the body and to be "read." How can *mwili* be described to "read"; what does the ability to "read" insinuate in this context? Perhaps the translation of the practice into western concepts, linguistically expressed in English, challenges the use of the term "reading" and perhaps this translation also challenges the limits of the representational quality of an anthropological text. Does a "reading" body matter outside of this text? To whom does it matter? On the one hand, the use of the term "reading" and its detachment from its literal translation *kusoma* makes the translation processes of anthropological writing hyper-present. Translation is always incomplete, always an interpretation from an original, always a creation in its own right (see chapter 3.3). On the other hand, I deem these tensions fruitful with regard to conceptualizations of a body *both* being distinct from a mind *and* intricately entangled with it. The term "reading" poses questions about

engagement with text that mirror those that drinking kombe raises. Furthermore, "reading" takes up the importance of the written textual material—as indicated by the specification of kombe *la kuandika* vis-à-vis the water that is recited over (kombe *la kusomea*).

Integrating the previous two chapters of this part, this chapter begins with an examination of the theme of visuality, a bodily function with which access to text is mostly associated but which is foreclosed with kombe. Building on this association and stretching it further, I turn to "reading" and explore the ways of textual implementation that this term suggests. Adapting these explorations to practices of enacting kombe *la kuandika*, the textuality of which I acknowledge by retaining the textual associations of "reading," I specify this term as "affective reading" which I have already instigated in the last chapter. Engaging with the limits of such a heuristic analytic translation, I then turn to *kusoma*, the most common Swahili literal translation of "to read," and address emerging themes that arise from this juxtaposition of *kusoma* and "to read." In particular, the entangled differentiation between "literacy" and "orality," made explicit by this translation, is important with regard to the *oral* ingestion of *written* kombe. Throughout this chapter, the resonances of the combination of the previous chapters are central and thus, this chapter closes with a section on mediation with which not only this chapter, but the entire part is revisited and concluded with first references to the next part.

6.1. Visuality

Part of the process of preparing kombe is the verses' liquefaction (chapter 4), a preventive measure for visual engagement and a measure that facilitates direct bodily engagement. Mussa emphasized that the woman must not *see* the verses, as *seeing* is inextricably linked to *reading* them. Preventing the eyes from seeing (and thus reading) the verses forecloses a cognitive engagement with the verses and their semantic content. (Interestingly, the patients' ability to *read* Arabic scripted Qurʾanic verses did not matter for the decision to foreclose *seeing*).[1] Seeing the liquefied verses, however, is unproblematic. The liquefaction has stripped

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[1]   It is difficult to know whether patients are able to read or recognize the Qurʾanic verses. Most patients will have had basic training at a *chuo* (Qurʾan school). To what extent this training facilitates their ability to *read* the verses written for kombe is as difficult for me to evaluate as it is for Mussa.

the verses off their visual legibility and provided them with different material qualities—qualities that prohibit the eyes (and thus cognition) from accessing the verses' semantic dimension.[2] Kombe highlights and problematizes the verses' visual approachability and visuality's link to cognition.

6.1.1. Literary Visualcy

As Mussa makes clear, the iconic dimension of kombe's textuality plays with different modes of seeing (see chapter 4.4). Both, "to read" and "to look at" are ways of seeing, but reading a text is different from looking at a text. Text as a visual representation of language calls for visual modes of engagement (Holly 2013).[3] W.J.T. Mitchell, more than twenty years after his book *Iconology* (1986) was first published, reflects on the developments (both in and outside of academia) of visuality in a chapter entitled "Visual Literacy or Literary Visualcy?" (2008) and poses questions of accessibility. He applies scholarly conceptualizations of "*visual literacy*, that is, connoisseurship: rich, highly cultivated, and trained experiences and techniques of visual observation" (2008: 13) to his interest in visual literacy as precondition of verbal literacy, thus turning around the metaphor of "visual literacy":

> Seeing, [*visual literacy*] suggests, is something like reading. But how exactly? And how is seeing different from reading? What are the limits of this metaphor? Even more interesting, what would happen if we reversed the positions of tenor and vehicle in the metaphor, and treated reading as the 'tenor'—the thing to be explained—and vision as the vehicle that might help explain it? (2008: 11)

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[2] Very similarly, Joyce Flueckiger describes the importance of illegibility of Amma's writing in Hyderabad, India, which is equally used for healing: "Patients [...] do not know specifically what is written on the paper, and I never heard anyone ask. The Quranic words, verses, and names and the number substitutes of these lose their semantic content when written on slips of paper as they are spatially manipulated within various diagrams or written in such haste as to be illegible" (Flueckiger 2006: 68).

[3] See also Ingold (2010c: 15), who expresses his puzzlement "concerning the inclination [...] to describe the written text as a *non*visual medium, by contrast to the medium of the image." Contributing to a different theoretical debate, Ingold's aim to emphasize texts' visuality converges here with Werner Holly's objective and is closely related to W.J.T. Mitchell's work on the imagetext.

Although he does not employ it further, the second metaphor in the title of his chapter, "literary visualcy," denotes precisely this switch[4] and allows for reflections on the visual regime that not only reading is embedded in.

Mitchell and Sybille Krämer (2005; 2012) provide an entry point to examine this *entanglement* of how the semantic content matters along with its graphic format in the writing of kombe (see chapter 4.4). Their theoretical work also allows for taking seriously the *diffractions* of these dimensions in the process of liquefaction: the semantic content of the verses (including the protective supplements) are transported into the water; the graphic, two-dimensional, visually accessible texture (and here I rely on the terminology Krämer introduced in her distinction) of the written kombe, however, is transformed into three-dimensionality, not visually accessible in the same way anymore, but accessible to a body, *mwili*. Mitchell's and Krämer's stress on visuality is inspiring not only for their argumentations, but also for the imagetext that kombe displays before it is washed off. When Mussa advised that the woman should preferably not see the verses, he linked the possible visual accessibility of the verses to undesirable effects.

6.1.2. Visuality's Ambiguity in Eastern Africa

Practices of visuality, in eastern Africa (and probably beyond), are intimately tied to practices of secrecy (see also 3.2) and so the concealment of the verses' semantics (liquefaction) and the revealing of this concealment through the water's significant color after the liquefaction are embedded in broader concerns for the visualization of the invisible. Heike Behrend's (2003; 2013) inspiring work on photography in eastern Africa shows[5] how the medium of photography (including carefully arranged photo-collages) negotiates the visuality of human depictions and the power that arises from and through these visual representations. She terms this an "aesthetics of withdrawal" in which "local notions of (female) propriety and piety have translated into new strategies to theatricalize the surface

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4 Mitchell is highly influenced by Jacques Derrida and his critique of logocentrism. Derrida, who takes seriously the graphic and material dimension of writing, highlights the "meaning of writing as metaphoricity itself" ([1967] 2016: 16).

5 Using both pictures and script, she *shows* both in a literal and in a figurative way. Paradoxically, the "literal" way here refers to the pictures and the "figurative" use of the verb "to show" refers to the script, which in itself is also visually perceived. This occurence of the verb "to show" that is intimately tied to visuality points to the hegemony of the visual in the English language (through which this text comes into being).

of the photography by veiling, masking, concealing, and creating new opacities" (2013: 149–150).[6] Behrend historicizes the contestations over the medium of photography not as a successor of painting (as is commonly done in the west, see also the discursive framework in which Mitchell [see 4.1.2] moves and argues), but as grounded in practices of visualizations through textiles, scripture, and spirit mediumship (Behrend 2013: 65). The concern with revealing concealment that is inherent to all of these media was transported to the medium of photography, in fact, as with scripture and spirit mediumship, the visually perceptible depiction of someone/something became a manifestation thereof. Behrend (2003) describes how in Kenya, beginning in the 1950s, photographs were embedded in practices of witchcraft and how harming somebody's picture could harm the person. If the person in the picture was carrying a Bible, however, s/he was protected. The image of both the person and the Bible facilitated presence (though temporally limited until the "paradox of simultaneous absence and presence and of real unreality dissolve again in favor of the depiction of an absence" [2003: 142]).

While these practices of presencing (and absencing) relate both to practices with a *msahafu* (see chapter 4.2.1) and to practices of spirit possession (see chapter 5.3), I briefly address here how the quality of visibility facilitates practices of creating ambiguities that are enacted in communication through imprinted textiles. Rose Marie Beck (2000; 2001; 2005) delineates how the *kanga*—an imprinted rectangular piece of cloth with a saying, usually wrapped around the hips, bound as a headscarf, or presented as a gift—serves to communicate the unspeakable by recourse to ambiguity. The simultaneity of the *kanga*'s saying's semantic message (visible as printed text on the cloth) and the possibility of folding away the letters creates an ambiguous presence of the text, especially since *kanga*s are identifiable through their distinctly colored and patterned design.[7] Thus, as Beck shows, communication is facilitated through the *kanga* as a visual object that keeps the intention of communication in suspense by not only playing with the visual presence of the saying's letters, but also by making use of the non-restrictive quality of visual artifacts—everybody (who is not blind) can see the *kanga* that one wears which obfuscates the target of the communication. Furthermore, the very possi-

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6   In a similar way, Sandra Dudley (2011: 65) investigates visuality of dress and textiles and in this context notes how the (Islamic) veil "makes invisibility very visible – it makes an overt and visual point out of concealment."

7   Due to optics' reliance on the eyes' linear access to the object to be seen, the text on textiles can be folded away, thus preventing spatial linearity to any eye from any potential angle. However, the cloth itself from which the text was folded away remains visible.

bility of creating these ambiguities enable the wearer to abstain from hiding the message as this choice, again, creates ambiguity around the intention of communicating, let alone concealing communication, in the first place. The very qualities of visuality (partial concealability and equity for all those who can see), thus, relate to practices of secrecy: they reveal concealment and obscure clarity; the visual is a site/sight of ambiguity.[8]

Though beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be very interesting to comparatively investigate visual practices of eastern and western Africa in relation to religious contexts and different modes of mediation. The "aesthetics of withdrawal" that Behrend describes in her work on Muslim contexts in eastern Africa, supported by Beck's work on the centrality of ambiguity in visual communication by means of *kanga*s diffracts in intriguing ways with attitudes towards visualization in western Africa that Birgit Meyer engages with. The link to revelation and concealment (see also Taussig 1999: 117, 223), addressed by both Behrend and Meyer for their respective contexts, gives rise to different moral evaluations that curiously converge partly in terms of the medium's materiality. In contrast to visual materials' evocation of ambiguity and in contrast to what Behrend terms the "aesthetics of withdrawal," Meyer delineates how pentecostal-inspired movies in Ghana are placed within the context of a spiritual struggle against "occult forces" and how their revelations are evaluated positively. The omniscient perspective and the targeted use of audio-visual special effects grants movies the potential to reveal the secret realm of the otherwise invisible and thereby to contribute to pentecostal narratives of a continuous struggle against the "powers of darkness" (2015: 168, see more comprehensively her entire chapter 4). The fleeting images of movies allow for this positive stance in contrast to stable artifacts, including pictures of Jesus,[9] from which the spiritual power of the occult can be mediated (Meyer 2010: 101, 119–121). Despite insufficient attention to details that would question the comparability of these evaluations of visual revelations, I wish to

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[8]   In this context, the threat of being targeted by an "evil eye" contributes to the complexity of the visual realm. Furthermore, the virtue of lowering the gaze as a form of respect and modesty (Swahili: *haya*) which is informed by Islamic gender-specific norms of conduct (Kurz 2017), could be regarded to feed into visual practices. Hhowever, in Zanzibar I have met few people who observe this prescription. Usually, those people who do observe it do so in a way that emphasizes their piety, thus my evaluation of the women's actions in the situation with Mussa that I describe in chapter 5.6.2.

[9]   In relation to the materiality of images, see Roland Barthes' essay "The Photographic Message" (1985: 3–20), in which he scrutinizes the dialectics of *denoted* and *connoted* message that unfold in the simultaneity of press photography's content and form.

point to the broader scope in which "vision and visuality should be viewed as part and parcel of a dialectics of revelation and concealment" (Meyer 2006a: 435; see also 2003: 219).

6.1.3. Vision and Cognition: Seeing and Knowing

The caution with which visuality is approached in eastern Africa furthermore differs from (and in the differentiation it is entangled with) the firm trust placed in visuality in post-enlightenment western science.[10] Referring to the philosophy of antiquity (mainly Plato), Hans Jonas (1954) praises the dominance of sight within this extensive historical trajectory. The "spatial rather than temporal quality of vision," the "absence of intercourse," and the "dependence on distance" are the three characteristics of sight that are key to Jonas' argument and are taken up by Evelyn Fox Keller and Christine Grontowski (1983: 219), who take a more critical approach towards the dominance of the visual (male)[11] logic. They portray how the logic of vision has become entangled with conceptions of knowledge and truth (for a critical stance towards this link, see also Rapport 1997: 19-20). In other words, the mediality of vision is entangled with the immediacy of "truth" (see below). The scientific explanations that led to the characteristics that Jonas spells out are crucial for this development; theories of optics have tied the eye to a regime of spatial, independent, and distant perception solidifying claims about an objective truth that is visually accessible. Whereas Keller and Grontowski extend the notion of "looking at" on which the connection to an "objective truth" builds with the notion of "looking into" ("locked eyes" as visual experience that is neither distant nor objective), I would like to underline their questions about visual metaphoricity.

> We speak of knowledge as illumination, knowing as seeing, truth as light. How is it, we might ask, that vision came to seem so apt a model for knowledge? And, having accepted it as such, how has that metaphor 'colored' our conceptions of knowledge? (1983: 208)

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[10] Note, however, that this evaluation of vision's trustworthiness is an outcome of historical developments in which this trust was challenged in processes of religious renewal. The Byzantine "Bilderstreit" and the resurgent debate about images during the reformation are two of the key moments through which today's trust in visual apprehension was theologically established (see Müller 2014).

[11] Keller and Grontowski take a very pronounced feminist stance in their overall argument, which deserves much more attention than I am able to provide here.

Based on the context of my research, I would like to add: how does this entanglement of vision and knowledge unfold in Zanzibar?

Hakimu Saleh and I had already been sitting together for a while.[12] That day he was not in a hurry to meet another appointment; the younger children were playing in the room next door, occasionally going to the kitchen to help their mother who was preparing dinner. We sat on the floor, Hakimu Saleh close to the wall with the picture of the Kaaba, I diagonally across from him with my back leaning against a pillar. His explanations that day about *moyo*, the heart, were complex and I had to ask repeatedly for clarifications.

HAKIMU SALEH: There is blindness, it's not like blindness of the eyes. When you don't have eyes, you don't see, but your *moyo* still sees. And it can desire things. Do you see? This is the philosophy of the Qurʾan.

He then searched for a corresponding aya while telling me that the subject of *mwili* was truly a vast topic. He proceeded to question his own decision to intermingle *moyo* with his explanations of *mwili*. Moving on, he said:

HAKIMU SALEH: The eyes see, observe [Zanzibari Swahili: *kutizama*], do you see? They send information to *akili* ["intellect, mind"] and then *akili* returns this information to the eyes. Do you see? OK, nice. […] But then you meet somebody who does not have eyes. But s/he is still desiring, there is still badness.

From that statement he returned to the blindness of *moyo* through which these negatively connoted desires flourish.

Framed within broader concerns for morality that accompanied my studies with Hakimu Saleh, *moyo* is likened to the eyes in that it can be blind (while it is clear that the blindness of the eyes and the blindness of *moyo* are different). *Moyo*'s blindness is connected to desires and thus to badness. The binary that he sets up between *moyo* and the eyes in order to speak about blindness is interesting not only with regard to the body∤mind complex (see chapter 5.2), but also with regard to how it ties the eyes to *akili*. "The eyes see, observe, do you see? They send information to *akili*." What the eyes see arrives in *akili*—preventing the eyes from seeing something from outside (see chapter 5.3) then also hinders this something from arriving (at least via the eyes) in *akili*. Furthermore, Hakimu Saleh's incessant

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[12]   24 July 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

questions about whether I have *seen* or *understood* his explanations assert this link of the eyes with *akili* or cognition and knowledge.

Hakimu Saleh mentions the link between vision and knowledge (connected to morality, see also chapter 3.2) which is quite strong in Zanzibar (and beyond). However, this strong link is evaluated ambiguously and tied to practices of secrecy. The distant directness of the visual encounter and its potential of access/communication (knowing the content and in the latter case identifying as the recipient), as Behrend's study on photo magic and Beck's study of *kanga*s show, is embedded in practices of keeping the possibilities of flipping (or even double flipping) the purported directness open. In fact, it is only through their ambiguities that visual messages of *kanga*s in their contexts provide that the suspension of accountability and thus the conveyance of the unspeakable is possible. With kombe, the link between visuality and (cognitive) knowledge is much more direct: cognitive engagement with the verses is to be prevented, thus visual encounter of the text qua shaped ink on a surface must be forestalled. Very clearly, the visual contact with the verses is unavoidably linked to possibly deviating cognition: preventing the latter is achieved through preventing the former. Though valued as negative for the patients' healing processes, the need to circumvent this link underlines how visually encountering the verses is tied to cognition and thus to a certain understanding of knowledge and its need for secrecy (see chapter 3, see also Bravmann [1983: 36]).

6.1.4. "Seeing" in Religious Contexts

Focusing on images with which people interact, David Morgan (Morgan 2008; 2011; 2012) challenges the purely cognitive engagement that visual encounters facilitate. "An image is a signifier," he argues, "but also more than that since it can become the thing to which it also refers" and thus the thing with which people connect and interact (Morgan 2012: 296). Building on Robert Orsi's understanding of religion as web of relationships and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, Morgan engages with images through bodily experiences and insists on seeing as an embodied practice. He argues that visual encounters with sacred objects and images account for intimate religious experiences in which practices of viewing do not only situate bodies materially *before* images, but also empathetically/anthropomorphically *in* and culturally/socially *beyond* images. Religious viewing, according to Morgan, therefore entails practices of connecting and in-

teracting with what he terms the "sacred." Morgan's compelling work could be argued to map onto the visual aesthetics of seeing Qurʾanic verses. Seeing (and visually decoding) the verses facilitates embodied responses that, however, are of a different kind from a direct bodily encounter and might jeopardize the efficacy of the verses' healing effect. This difference of the visual encounter (including embodied experiences of viewing) and a direct bodily encounter through ingestion point at the suspicion with which visual experiences are evaluated.

My writing about kombe relates the liquefied (devisualized) Qurʾanic verses of kombe to practices of the visual realm (writing, reading, occasional pictures) and thereby takes part in the visual paradigm of western academia in which vision (especially visualized language) and knowledge are closely connected. Next to choosing the significantly shaped letters that form words, sentences, and paragraphs and next to making certain typographic decisions of how the picture of the text is to look like to then be printed in black ink on white paper, the semantics of the words themselves allude to this visual bias. I employ words such as "highlight," "focus," "underline," "show," "regard" (see introduction), throughout this text with great awareness, sometimes attempting to avoid them, sometimes as semantic double layer. I also use words such as "describe," "depict," or "define," all of which contain the prefix "de-" that connotes besides the etymologically accepted meaning of "completely" an almost silent meaning of forming "the opposite of."[13] To "describe," "depict," or to "define," thus, can also be read as to undo the "writing," "painting," or "limiting." Furthermore, as outlined in the introduction, I employ vocabulary such as "diffraction" that specifically targets this visual bias in knowledge production and fosters a critical engagement with it. This small excursion to the visuality of the text produced about a certain devisualizing practice *highlights* visual regimes (including the dimension of power that the word "regime" suggests) in which both this text and the text of kombe to be washed off are situated as visual artifacts. Although anthropology has paid considerable attention to nonvisual and even nonlinguistic methods for fieldwork (on "sensuous scholarship" see primarily Stoller [1997], but see also Cristina Grasseni [2007] for a productive engagement with academic critique of the visual paradigm), the primacy of portraying the experiences and analyses thereof in ethno*graphic* writing (see chapter 4.5.3) has remained relatively unquestioned. Exceptions are recent

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[13] See Online Etymology Dictionary, "de-," accessed 7 April 2017, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=de-&allowed_in_frame=0 .

trends in "visual anthropology" that take seriously "visual media" (the "visual" being the "nontextual") as modes of expressing anthropological concerns. That text is also a "visual medium" (Ingold 2010c: 15, see also footnote 3) and that these media are called "visual media" although they are not purely visual, but "mixtures of sensory and semiotic elements [...] combining sound and sight" (Mitchell 2008: 15), ties into the logic of the visual regime.

Despite the hegemony of visuality, a number of studies about text in general and about text in religious contexts in particular, stress the entanglement of visual with oral aspects of text surpassing the narrow focus of (sub-)vocalization in *reading* written texts. The oft-quoted work by Walter Ong (1982) takes the differences of orality and literacy as a subject of investigation (and thus also pays attention to their relations).[14] Written in the early 1980s, Ong's interest tied into the emerging anthropological work on "oral literature" or "orature" that especially with Ruth Finnegan's work (1978; 2007) gained prominence.[15] The persuasive narrative of Africa as the continent of oral literature facilitated analyses of the stories and the story-telling that thus enabled the inclusion of African (oral) literature in broader literature studies. This approach has been very popular, however, its popularity silenced practices involving material texts in Africa. Finnegan's introductory words to her monograph with the subtitle "Doing Things With Words in Africa" attest to the silence:

> The volume's prime focus is on people doing things with words *orally*–spoken, vocalised, unwritten. It is true that, contrary to some preconceptions, writing too is an established medium for doing things with words in Africa, and that in any case the apparent split between written and spoken, enscribed and performed, even verbal and non-verbal eventually dissolves. But 'the oral' has increasingly become a topic of interest and scholarship over the last half century or so and it is this which serves as the point of entry here. (Finnegan 2007: 2)

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[14]   Or, in Barad's language: Ong's analysis shows how differentiating between orality and literacy entails entanglings. I will not comment in depth on his problematic categorization of cultures into "primary oral cultures," "cultures with craft literacy," and "cultures in a transition phase" as it has been commented on repeatedly (for a critique based in Islamic textual practices, see Messick 1992: 24), but rather appreciate the scholarship that has built on and in opposition to his work.

[15]   Around the same time other disciplines, especially disciplines that were (and are) mostly interested in the semantic dimension of text, made the inclusion of orality a prominent concern. In this context the materiality of the (non-oral) text receives increased attention (see most prominently responses to Derrida [1967] 2016, see also Fix 2008).

6. Mwili "Reads"

Textuality on the Swahili Coast, as Islam ties it to the textual materials of Islam, has received slightly more attention as was outlined in the beginning of chapter 4. Furthermore, the entanglement of oral and written practices with textual materials in Islamic societies (Graham 2001; Messick 1992; Rosenthal 1970; Schoeler 2009; Zadeh 2009) is applicable and comparable to practices on the Swahili Coast. In Islam, the distinction between orality and literacy only makes sense with reference to their entanglement. The written book in heaven, the oral revelation through the arch-angel Gabriel to Muhammad, the processes of writing, collecting, and codifying the oral revelations into a singular Qurʾan, the practices of memorizing and reciting, the concerns of purity surrounding any contact with a *msahafu*, the distinction between *qurʾān* and *kitāb*, all these angles from which to approach the subject of orality and literacy in Islam point to the importance of the links between them.[16] In fact, Islam's textual practices have often been described in terms of "aurality," designating the space between the oral and literal (Bowen 2012; Schoeler 2009).[17] While the conceptualizations of "aurality" aim at the co-constitution of oral and literary textual practices that in their entanglements give weight to the texts' semantic contents, drinking kombe requires a closer look at these entanglements of literary and oral practices, including the prevention of a visual-literal engagement and fostering the *oral* ingestion of the written verses.

In this subsection on visuality I have picked up on the undesirability of patients' *visual* encounter with the verses of kombe which divorces the written Qurʾanic verses from accessibility to them through visual reading. In eastern Africa, visuality is embedded in sites/sights of ambiguity and secrecy. In Zanzibar, visuality's distant directness—a quality that not only in the west is highly valued and links vision to an understanding of "objective knowledge"—is approached with suspicion. On the one hand, the direct access that vision provides to cognition is positively valued as it underpins the entanglement of vision and knowledge (see also chapter 3.2). On the other hand, it provokes doubt and, as in the case of

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[16] Furthermore, the Sufi approach to textual materials, including to Sufi writing, is shaped by ambiguities. Zachary Wright describes them as the "paradox of Sufi writing: putting the ineffable experience of God into words," and states that "[w]hatever the blessing or lofty purpose of a Sufi text, the reader […] should not forget the suspicion with which Sufis have generally 'treated writing' " (2010: 109, 123). The suspicion described here for this particular (Sufi) approach to writing kombe resonates with the suspicion of the distant directness of visuality in eastern Africa.

[17] Building on the scholarship about Islam, aurality has also been conceptualized for Christian contexts (Stordalen 2008; Kirsch 2011: 145).

kombe, even causes an expropriation of the ink's visual legibility. That I now *write* (thus employ a *visual* technique) to portray processes of *de-visualization* of the written Qurʾanic verses and that my *writing* is embedded in linguistic and visual regimes of *de-scribable* knowledge is paradoxical and worth noting. The entanglement and differentiation of these visual approaches to text with oral ones are as much part of my writing process qua writing process (including various presentations of this work at conferences, but also including the (sub-)vocalization of the text as I write) as they are part of my writing process about kombe as a particular textual practice in Zanzibar that relates to scholarship on "orature" in Africa as well as to entanglements of orality and literacy with respect to Islam (see also the engagement with *kusoma* below: 6.4). With kombe, however, the entanglements of visual and oral aspects of text differentiate in yet another way: the *oral* ingestion of the verses that have been prevented from visual apprehension require a closer examination of kombe's material textuality (chapter 4.5.2) that is to be ingested by a material body (chapter 5.4). I approach these entanglements by engaging with "reading" as a textual practice of transferal.

6.2. "Reading" and the Implementation of Text

As the most common engagement with text, "reading" is a practice that is culturally situated. Most particularly, the silent reading prevalent in the west is a rather recent development and pays tribute to the availability of text and society's increased literacy. Reading is usually seen as a visual practice: a practice through which we can visually perceive letters, words, sentences, make sense of their arrangement together, and receive the content of what has been encoded in these letters by an author.[18] Visually we transfer the text into our "mind" through "reading." Scrutinizing this process of transferal from textual material to a person, I expand the notion of "reading" to denote the non-visual mediation of textual materials into *mwili*. Whereas this section builds the foundation for my take on "reading," its translational use will only be developed in the ensuing sections.

Today's notion of the English word "to read" is closely connected to literacy, however, etymologically it stems from *ræd/rædan*, which denoted "to give advice

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[18] See various dictionaries, i.e. Oxford English Dictionary or Merriam Webster.

or counsel," "to exercise control over something," and "to explain something obscure" in early medieval England (Anglo-Saxon England). This meaning is still ingrained in the German *(be-)raten* as the medievalist Nicholas Howe (1993: 61) points out. By historicizing the semantic development of "reading," Howe shows how the engagement with text and its entanglement with the Latin-reading clergy shaped a textual community "at once textual and spiritual, written and oral, in which intellectual and spiritual life is created through the communal interchange of reading" (1993: 71). Reading was social and literacy was not a prerequisite for being part of the textual community that *rædan* shaped and that shaped *rædan*. Although the word *rædan* acquired meanings of the Latin *legere*, it retained the sense of "solving a riddle, explaining something obscure and thereby offering advice," as "to read a situation" implies, for instance.[19]

With the focus on the German "reading" which is more closely tied to a gathering/collecting (of letters)—Latin: *legere*, German: *lesen*—the historian Erich Schön (1993) shows how practices of reading changed in western Europe around 1800. At that time, reading slowly turned into a solitary and silent practice which, as a closely connected development, was complemented by increased attention to rhetoric and the oral presentability of texts for a reception via voice and ear (Meyer-Kalkus 2015: 286–287). The partial shift to silent reading involved disciplining the body in new ways and necessitated furniture that facilitated these bodily postures, such as a chaiselongue with adjustable book rest (Schön [1993: 76–77]). Schön stresses that "it would not suffice [...] to speak only of textual and non-textual factors. Rather, it should be noted that a particular bodily experience is part and medium of the textual experience" (1993: 81, translation mine). Although this silent and comprehensive "reading" evolved under particular western circumstances, Brinkley Messick argues that this notion of "reading" (1992: 90–91; 1997: 396) was more widespread, including in Islamicate settings, despite different reading-reciting practices in the Qurʾan schools. Schön's analysis of the emerging habitus of reading—and Messick's work's relation to it—draws attention to the processes involved in the development of the individualized encounter between reader and text that has become prevalent.

Wolfgang Iser scrutinizes this interaction between a reader and text and describes literature as consisting of the artistic creation of the text by the author

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[19] The Gothic (Modern German) development of *rædan* did not incorporate the Latin *legere*, but kept them separate: *rêdan* (*(be-)raten*) and *lisan* (*lesen*) are semantically distinct.

and the aesthetic realization accomplished by the reader (1972: 279). He places great importance on the gaps between the sentences and the reader's filling of these gaps. Thus, according to Iser, the reader becomes the subject that (co-)creates and experiences the text's meaning; reading is a manifestation of the text. With Qurʾanic verses, evidently in Arabic script, reading involves processes of completion even more directly, as Messick points out:

> The act of voweling, whether by marking in the vowel signs over and under the consonantal string or by voicing them in recitation, is an interpretive act, lending the script a particular significance in the process. This is important because written texts often allow alternative vowelings. While script preserves a string of consonants, recitation unites consonants and vowels, enabling the production and reproduction of a whole. Given the nature of its script conventions, there is an identifiable physical loss in 'reducing' something in Arabic to writing. In comparison with a fully vocalized 'word,' a written text can be considered an incomplete consonantal fragment. Preserved in its voweled-consonant recitational form, by contrast, a memorized text is one that has been embodied complete. (1992: 26)[20]

The reader's subjective involvement in creating the text, the reader's embodiment of the text—whether by filling the gaps between words and sentences, or by filling in the vowels, or both—dismantles the subject-object (reader-text) division as Iser puts forth:

> If reading removes the subject-object division that constitutes all perception, it follows that the reader will be 'occupied' by the thoughts of the author, and these in their turn will cause the drawing of new 'boundaries.' Text and reader no longer confront each other as object and subject, but instead the 'division' takes place within the reader [her-/]himself. (1972: 298)

With this analysis, Iser touches on a number of issues that have been addressed in chapter 5. Firstly, the removal of the subject/object division is intimately tied to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological argument for a necessary move beyond the body-mind dichotomy. Secondly, locating this division in the reader, Iser makes a similar move to what Lambek poignantly describes as the difference between "body and mind in body" and "body and mind in mind": both Iser and Lambek suggest that while the division does not matter in the former, it does matter in the

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[20]   The reader's completion of the Qurʾanic text is problematic as the Qurʾan already is deemed complete. Thus, the "correct" vowelization is learned in Qurʾan schools and, as Messick contends, commentaries on the actual "text" open it up and provide interpretation to close it again (see below: 6.4).

latter. Thirdly, and related to the second point, Iser implicates a bounded body, a body with an inside and an outside, an inside that is reached by the read text. *Mwili*'s inside and outside were not only crucial for my interlocutors' descriptions of *mwili*, the intra-action of inside and outside through *mwili* constitutes its mediality. Lastly, Iser shows how with the reader's engagement with text (her/his reading), an "other" (related to the author and mediated through the text) is embodied (or, to use Messick's words, the reading "entextualizes" [1992: 89]).[21] Thereby, Iser's work on reading as an embodying practice complements Schön's dissemination of reading as an embodied practice (the bodily posture, the distance to the text, and the eyes' movement co-create the "experience of the text's meaning" [see Schön 1993]). Furthermore, this embodiment of an "other" through the practice of reading as described by Iser is similar to the embodiment of an "other" through spirit possession. As with spirit possession, an "other" is internalized which nurtures the relation of a specific "other" and "self" and marks their differentiatability; as with spirit possession, the "other" and "self" intra-act.

Describing visual reading in terms of embodiment alludes to the connection I emphasize between the English term "reading" and the ingestion of kombe. However, with kombe this kind of visual "reading" misses the point and, as Mussa made clear, it jeopardizes kombe's efficacy. In contrast to the holistic approach towards body and mind that the literature on embodiment suggests, with kombe, only a body and not a mind is meant to receive/perceive the content of the verses in order to circumvent the mind's reading (solving a riddle and giving advice: the mind's filling the gaps). That the Qurʾan is not an ordinary text to be "read" in the way that the English term "reading" implies, as the text of the Qurʾan is significant beyond that which the sum of the letters signify, was discussed in chapter 4.2.1. The issue will be scrutinized with respect to *kusoma*, the Swahili approximation of "to read" (see below: 6.4). The extent to which this "reading" is nonetheless useful with regard to a bodily ingestion (solving a riddle and giving advice: directing it towards an affliction) will be considered in the following section. Washing off the ink trans*form*s the verses (but it does not de*form* them); their shape is not visually perceivable any longer although they still exist: after it is washed off, kombe consists of ink that *has* shaped letters and that is then contained in water. Washing off the verses replaces the possible visual engagement

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[21] See also Andrew Kipnis' (2015) Latourian analysis of reading in which the text is positioned in the dialogical encounter with the reader, shaped by the author and moving the reader.

with possibilities of non-visual experiences thereof. In order to take seriously this foreclosing of visual encounters, I approach these non-visual and non-cognitive experiences in terms of "affective reading."

6.3. Affective Reading

The liquefied written Qurʾanic verses are to bypass the brain: they are not to be visually incorporated, but to circumvent cognitive interpretation. *Mwili* is to receive these verses and engage with them without the mind's potentially questioning interruption. Thus, I argue that kombe facilitates an "affective reading" (based on Van Alphen 2008: 27) of written Qurʾanic verses in that it forecloses the visuality of co-creational reading (which Iser [1972] examined).

Ernst van Alphen (2008), interested in art's and literature's transmission of affect, develops a distinction between "affective reading" and "reading for meaning" from Derek Attridge's (2004: 32) distinction between "literal reading" and "allegorical reading." Whereas "reading for meaning" foregrounds interpretations of what a piece of art or literature is *about*, Van Alphen coins "affective reading" as "grounded in the experience of reading as an event" (2008: 26). Although the Qurʾan cannot be equated with art or literature, Van Alphen's emphasis on the relationality of that which is read and the reader as well as his attention to the intensities that emerge from this relationality resonate with how many Muslims experience reading the Qurʾan. Although van Alphen stresses that "affective (literal) reading and reading for meaning (allegorical reading) should not be seen as separate from each other, let alone opposed and hierarchized, but as an interplay in which one substantiates the other" (2008: 30), the liquefaction of the Qurʾanic verses primes the possibility of affectively encountering the textual artifact and forecloses "reading for meaning." Before I engage further with the link between Van Alphen's "affective reading" and the ingestion of the written Qurʾan, I briefly and very selectively delineate some considerations concerning the word choice of "affect."

6.3.1. A Note on Affect in Academia

In the introduction to their affect theory reader, Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg state that

> affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body […], in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, *and* in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. […] With affect, a body is as much outside itself as in itself—webbed in its relations—until ultimately such firm distinctions cease to matter. (2010b: 1–3)

As I am interested in the bodily relationalities with the Qurʾan—its non-cognitive transmission through *mwili*—and as the concern for the doing and undoing of differences resonates with my work, especially the difference between inside and outside, I find the discourse that "affect" calls for helpful. Van Alphen develops his notion of "affective reading" with recourse to Deleuzian "intensities" (that Seigworth and Gregg also take into account) that are "automatic reactions on the surface of the body as it interacts with other entities" (2008: 23), intensities that have "no content or meaning, although [they] produce feelings, emotions, and thoughts" (2008: 24).[22] This presupposed gap between intensities and content (or between affect and signification) gives rise to affect theorists' object of investigation. On the one hand, affect theories thereby appropriate neuroscientific, psychological, and biological findings into a philosophical project, challenging the binary of the "natural" sciences and the humanities.[23] Brian Massumi's (2002) work is most influential in this regard. On the other hand, however, this gap is intimately tied to dichotomies of instinct-like responses and contemplation, of body and mind, and by extension also of nature and culture. Singling out affect—which in Massumi's vocabulary stands for "inhuman," "pre-subjective," and "visceral" forces—appears to negate entanglements of body and mind, nature and culture.[24]

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[22] The precise demarcations of "affect" in relation to "emotion" and to "feelings" differ considerably throughout the literature and revolve around the question of whether affect can be described outside of awareness, social interpretability and concomitant linguistic fixing. For analytic clarity, I here stick to Ernst van Alphen's Deleuzian approach and occasionally interweave authors from other camps.

[23] I am aware that psychology takes an ambivalent position in relation to the distinctions between natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities that order western academia. Interestingly, affect theorizations are often criticized for neglecting the field of psychology (and psychoanalysis) that deals with similar concerns (see most outspokenly Wetherell's forthright opinion on this topic [2015]). Few authors who expore affect engage with psychological theory (see for example Wetherell 2012: 127-129; see also Blackman 2008: 132–134; Brennan 2004: chapter 4).

[24] Monique Scheer (2012) criticizes this reduction and argues for a more integrative approach in which emotions are experienced and done. In connection to theorizations of bodily knowledge and practices, she does not distinguish between "bodily changes […] and the mental percep-

Ruth Leys criticizes the conditions through which theorizations of affect facilitate this "conversation" between the disciplines:

> That coherence [between neurosciences and affect theory] concerns precisely the separation presumed to obtain between the affect system on the one hand and intention or meaning or cognition on the other. […] What the new affect theorists and the neuroscientists share is a commitment to the idea that there is a gap between the subject's affects and its cognition or appraisal of the affective situation or object, such that cognition or thinking comes "too late" for reasons, beliefs, intentions, and meanings to play the role in action and behavior usually accorded to them. The result is that action and behavior are held to be determined by affective dispositions that are independent of consciousness and the mind's control. (2011: 443)[25]

Next to this concern for uni-directional disciplinary convergence, contributing to a meta-narrative about affect theorizations as a philosophical project but having little influence on neurosciences, social psychologist Margaret Wetherell (2012: chapter 3) voices her unease with the stark separative force that "affect" unleashes in relation to the content. Although she is interested in the potentials that Massumi, Patricia Clough, and Nigel Thrift promise in their engagements with affect, "something that has not been closed down, represented, labelled, communicated, shaped and structured" (Wetherell 2012: 59), she doubts the "pragmatic value of violently severing parts of the assemblages recruited in bursts of affect and using a verbal scalpel to extract just the body/brain responses." She continues:

> It is a mistake to try to remove pre-conscious visceral perception from its usual and habitual world/brain/body/mind contexts, and to artificially freeze and isolate affect as a separate element from the dynamically integrated sequences in which these things normally operate. No easy distinction can be made between visceral and cultural meaning-making, and why should we make one – where is the advantage? (2012: 67)

Starting from and engaging with these problematic preconditions, much exciting work is being done within frameworks of affect that employs the critique

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tion and interpretation of them in the brain," but emphasizes their "mutual embeddedness in minds, bodies, and social relations" (2012: 195, 199). Interiorizing emotional practices, she argues, is a process that "erects and maintains a boundary between 'inner' and 'outer'" (2012: 212). Her integrative approach is well taken, in particular the focus on how the boundaries of bodies—that are key to such distinctions—are themselves something that is achieved rather than given. However, as will become clear later, I choose to make use of an analytical distinction (advocated by certain advocates of affect theory) to approach the ambivalent relation of body and mind that my interlocutors put forth.

[25] For a response to Leys, see the article by John Cromby and Martin Willis (2016).

of differentiation productively and shows patterns of intra-action or queers these differentiations in innovative ways. Patricia Clough (2007; 2010) regards these engagements as academic "turn" and suggests that

> the importance of a turn to affect is the way it pushes for a reformulation of methodology and presentational style, so that thought can become resonant with the current condition of generativity in a neoliberal political economy, unhinged from what goes by the tag 'a logic of capital', as well as offering lines along which a critical cultural studies can be formulated. […] How is social, political, and cultural change to be gauged, when measure is no longer a matter of linear time but one of relationality, and where the frame of the relation also changes with the measuring? (2010: 229)[26]

The resonances with new materialism are not coincidental; in fact, Seigworth and Gregg (2010a: 6–9), in their widely perceived outline of eight "affectual orientations," point to various genealogies and agendas that studies of affect resort to and contribute to, many of which are shared by studies of new materialism. Concretely (and of particular relevance to my engagement with kombe in an academic format), this entails overlapping concerns for the emergence of differentiations between bodily inside and outside (see Probyn 2010: 76) as well as for an academic development that scrutinizes the relationality of ontology and epistemology (but see Hemmings 2012: 147).

Carefully exploring how affect theorizations with their genealogies of western philosophy can fruitfully be adapted to anthropological work, several anthropologists have started to embrace the turn to affect and its marked intervention into larger academic concerns as a way to approach visceral responses to situations, sensorial relationalities with the world, or "vibrations" (Henriques 2010) suspending and going beyond structures, meanings, or significations (in reference to Massumi 2002: 26-27). In her review article Danilyn Rutherford (2016: 286) positively describes the study of affect "as a bellwether for theoretical advances in the field" to "understand interactions that take a decidedly nonnormative form." Engaging with Emily Martin's criticism of affect theorists' "craving [for] generality" (Martin 2013: S157) and thus their "willingness to have recourse to universalizing descriptions of the human being" (Rutherford 2016: 187), Rutherford regards the anthropological study of affect as offering "less a new account of how the world works than a sharper awareness of the premises that cultural anthropologists implicitly set forth when they make empirical claims." For her, affect studies are

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[26] For a particular emphasis on relationality, see also Burkitt (2014).

interesting in that they provide new "tools"[27] that are part of analytic apparatuses created by and creating "phenomena" in Karen Barad's sense (Rutherford 2013). Kathleen Stewart (2017: 197) goes even further and posits that "[a]nalytic attention to the forms and forces of moving bodies and events invites experiments with description and with the conceptual." Taking note of Isabelle Stengers, Donna Haraway, and Karen Barad, Stewart is inspired to link ethnographic theory and critique to the "process of mattering," in which "things come to matter in both senses of the term" (2017: 196).[28]

Given this (selective) framing of "affect," the ingestion of kombe can be described as "affective" encounter with the Qurʾan. Similar to affect theory's (much criticized) attention to distinctly non-cognitive relationalities with the world, Mussa's emphasis on the necessity for the verses to bypass the brain affirms the importance given to the establishment of a visceral, bodily, and non-cognitive connection to these written and liquefied verses. Hakimu Saleh, who regards "sensations" very skeptically (see chapter 5.4.3), explained how these external stimuli become sources for *akili* (mind/intellect); with Hakimu Saleh, the verses' "bypassing" still have an effect on *akili*. Relating the ingestion of kombe to "affective reading," thus, entails three aspects: Firstly, with "affect," it takes seriously *both* the separability of body and brain *and* their entanglements (see chapter 5). Secondly, with "reading," it takes note of drinking kombe as a textual practice—it is, after all, kombe *la kuandika*, "written kombe" (see chapter 4). Thirdly, as this section indicates, it takes part in an academic discourse that critically engages with spheres of experience that fall outside the representational paradigm and, as such, this discourse integrates attention to academic writing and its affects—or affective academic writing.[29] I have marked the first point at the end of chapter 5 and throughout this subsection already. I have engaged with the third point through-

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[27] On "affective methodologies" see the volume edited by Britta Timm Knudsen and Carsten Stage (2015). Similar to how Rutherford is interested in affect as a tool, the chapters of this volume scrutinize the researcher's affective responses to fieldwork as a resource (see for example Rytter 2015).

[28] Stewart's article is part of a collection of articles, published in "Cultural Anthropology," that are devoted exploring trajectories and genealogies of affect theories within anthropological discourse. Other contributors include Daniel White, Catherine Lutz, William Mazzarella, and Yael Navaro.

[29] Kathleen Stewart has experimented with affective anthropological writing in her book *Ordinary Affects* (2008). Commenting on Stewart's work, Anna Gibbs' contribution to the volume on *Affective Methodologies* draws attention to the academic practices in the humanities and social sciences of writing that "emphasizes the *relationality* of empirical research" and is "a process, implicitly dialogical, in conversation with the world, with other writing, and reflex-

out this thesis in terms of this text's self-referentiality, and leave it here with the suggestive remarks in the footnote. Instead, I now turn to the second aspect that "affective reading" proposes: taking seriously kombe's textuality.

6.3.2. Affectively Reading and Reciting

"Reading" is deliberately chosen here to evoke connotations relating to practices of textual absorption. With Iser, "reading" is the actualization of text; "reading" entextualizes the reader (see above). Mussa noted that the verses are meant to bypass the brain, thus, it is important to note that this manifestation of the ingested Qurʾanic verse happens *inside* the body and forecloses visual reading, or, in other words, forecloses a different bodily entextualization in which the Qurʾan as text could potentially be "read" and complemented with doubt. Describing the bodily absorption of Qurʾanic verses in terms of "reading" and taking seriously the difficulties of treating the Qurʾan as text (although that is precisely the danger that Mussa refers to, see also chapter 4), I do not wish to claim that ingestion "fills gaps" (contrary to how Iser builds his argument), but point to the parallels to vocalizations of the Qurʾan (Messick 1992: 26) that have been recitationally transmitted and memorized as whole. Messick describes how the Qurʾan is actualized not as a completion, but as manifestation. Similarly, the ingested Qurʾanic verse is not an outcome of a complementary process, but a manifestation. As I am concerned here with the ingestion as process of absorption, and as I also wish to take seriously the writtenness of kombe *la kuandika* (in contrast to kombe *la kusomea*), I choose to describe this process in terms of "reading" rather than "reciting," the latter of which I engage with in connection to healing, see below.[30]

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ively, with itself" (2015: 224). Gibbs frames her argument in terms of rhythm: "subjectivity produces rhythm, but rhythm in turn acts on subjectivity […], rhythm opens an aspect of writing anterior to meaning but to which we respond corporeally before we have understood what is being 'said'. Rhythm in writing provides, perhaps, a way of attuning to the forms of vitality that suffuse the present, without being entirely subsumed by them" (2015: 233). On this analogy with rhythm see also Julian Henriques' (2010) work on the "vibrations of affect."

[30] This process could also be described in terms of "touching." The ingested verses "touch" *mwili*'s inside and thereby, as David Morgan commented on my article (2017), "bodies are made from the inside by the consumption of this sacred substance" (2017: 481). As conceptual framework, "touch" is evoked in a considerable body of literature on healing (see for example Leder and Krucoff 2008), in relation to religion (see for example Heo 2014), and is often entangled within larger frameworks of "affect" (see for example Blackman 2012; Khanna 2012; Manning 2006). See also María Puig de la Bellacasa's *Matters of Care* (2017), where

Iser's attention to how the practice of reading rests on the relation of reader and text that (co-)creates the text's meaning resonates strongly with how the physical relation of the written Qurʾanic verse and *mwili* anticipates healing.

Ingesting kombe facilitates an *affective* reading in which the "intensities" of written Qurʾanic verses are transmitted to *mwili*'s inside. "Affective reading," building on Van Alphen's theorization of the "experience of reading as an event" (2008: 26), emphasizes a *bodily* encounter with text and points to how the practice of reading evokes visceral bodily responses to text. The ingestion of kombe materially fosters a visceral relation of the ingested written verses with an ingesting *mwili*. Through this relation afflictions are targeted: the verses are ingested to create resonances, sensorial relationalities with the world, "vibrations" (see above) and to effect change with regard to an affliction. The verses are ingested to affect.

While I have described the process of *mwili's* absorption of Qurʾanic verses as "affective reading," these affects are transmitted to reach an affliction. Kombe is *dawa* (medicine), it has "transformative power" (Wilkens 2013) and one way to direct this power to an affliction is through the ingestion into the afflicted patient's *mwili*. Non-vocally, non-semantically, *mwili* mediates the written and "affectively read" verses for them to unfold their transformative power. *Mwili* affectively "recites" the ingested verses.

As consequence of my (and anyone else's) inability to explain the "mystic" characteristics of the Qurʾan (see chapter 4.2.1), I am also limited in my ability to explain how the Qurʾan evokes healing once its relation to *mwili* is established. I can take note of the charismatic written Qurʾan (see chapter 4.2.1), I can take note of how Hakimu Saleh "reads" between the lines (see beginning of chapter 3), I can take note of how metaphors were employed to explain *mwili* through which excess meaning was created and remained partially implicit (see chapter 5.4 until 5.6). I can also attempt to find conceptual and stylistic tools to approach the phenomenon of kombe, to translate what I have ethnographically learned into an academic text. Building on "affective reading," "affective recitation" functions to hint at this ultimately inexplicable process in which written Qurʾanic verses, ingested into and transmitted through *mwili*, manifest their power in relation to an affliction. Before I engage further with *mwili*'s "reading" and "reciting" in terms

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she develops "visual touch" in order to gain a more speculative understanding of "touch." In contrast to "touch," the vocabulary of "reading" and "reciting," however, allows me to do justice more evocatively to kombe *la kuandika*'s textuality. Therefore I have restrained myself to merely mentioning "touch" here.

of "mediation," I insert some considerations on the Swahili approximation of "to read" and "to recite": *kusoma.*

6.4. *Kusoma*

As indicated earlier, I chose to employ the English concept of "reading" not because it is an approximation of the Swahili *kusoma*, but because of its specific delineation. With respect to its intricate link to textual practices, the genealogy of "reading" allows for analysis of what is happening in *mwili* once kombe has been ingested. In Zanzibar, this process is not talked about in much detail. The Qurʾan then heals: *Kurani inaponyesha.* As a notion from outside, the English term "reading," in addition to its specific delineation, thus creates a critical distance between this analytical text and how the ingestion is talked about in Zanzibar. It emphasizes that the kombe I describe here arises from (not only linguistic) translations and points at the diffractive emergence of "kombe-as-a-topic" (see introduction). Nevertheless, and although drinking *kombe* in Swahili is not described in terms of a body that "reads" (*kusoma*), I briefly engage with the term *kusoma* to point at telling overlaps.

In Swahili, the verb *kusoma* translates into "to read," "to recite," and "to study." In response to my puzzlement over how the Prophet Muhammed could "read" the Qurʾan when it was not yet written, Hakimu Saleh took recourse to the Arabic *qaraʾa* which, like the Swahili *kusoma*, comprises an entangled notion of what English separates as "to read," "to study," and "to recite" (see chapter 4.2.2).[31] Textual engagement and attaining knowledge (*elimu*) are closely connected: encounter with text is key to the practice of studying and memorizing, of internalizing given contents.[32] Connected to this understanding of *kusoma*, Islamic textual practices give weight to reading/studying the Qurʾan in order to render it present as memorization in the "Walking Qurʾan" (Ware 2014) and thereby as ever-possible recitation. While I have already engaged with *kusoma* with respect to the Qurʾan in chapter 4.2, I here engage with it again, placing particular emphasis on its relation to *mwili.*

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[31]   Hakimu Saleh, 28 November 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[32]   To attain more practical knowledge, to "learn" is rather covered by another term, *kujifunza*, through which *kusoma* (to "study") is specifically attributed to contexts in which institutionalized acquisition of knowledge, mostly with extensive engagement with text, takes place. See also chapter 3.1.

Once, a young man who was in love with a woman and wanted to marry her visited Hakimu Saleh. Unfortunately that young man did not have sufficient funds to meet the woman's parents' expectations. Seeking spiritual help to find a well-paid job, the man consulted Hakimu Saleh.[33] Hakimu Saleh asked him to sit cross-legged in the middle of the room, spread a cloth over the man's head that hung down to his chest and prepared incense to be burnt throughout the session. He also placed an open bottle of water on the floor. The first part of the treatment consisted of prayers that Hakimu Saleh performed while walking around the man. These prayers were studded with spatial references, asking for protection from the four directions of the earth as well as from above and below. The words that his sonorous voice rendered present encircled the man and filled the room. After these prayers, Hakimu Saleh squatted behind the man and started to recite for/to/over him (*kumsomea*). After a while, he interrupted himself and asked the man to recite (*kusoma*) a certain different sura. The man was unsure, and so Hakimu Saleh quickly reminded him of the sura which the man recognized and softly continued to recite. On top of the man's recitation, Hakimu Saleh picked up his recitation where he had left off, and enveloped the man's low voice with his own. Furthermore, Hakimu Saleh took the bottled water and occasionally sprinkled some over the man's head. The entire treatment lasted for more than an hour and afterwards the man received the bottle with the remaining water to take home and use during further recitations at home.

There are two points with regard to *kusoma* to be taken from this example. Firstly, the word *kusoma* and its derivative *kusomea* (that denotes its targeted application *to* or *for* a specific recipient) take on the meaning of "recitation" which does not require simultaneous visual contact to a *msahafu* but relies on memorization for the auditory actualization. In this sense, *kusoma* expresses a textual practice of presencing closed (already-studied and memorized) Qurɔanic verses. Secondly, the spatiality of the voice in connection to the spatial references that Hakimu Saleh makes verbally and in practice allows for a space-filling presence of the Qurɔanic verses, whereby the man's own recitation keeps *mwili*'s boundaries intact. Let me elaborate.

Kusoma marks an intra-action of different engagements with text that Messick also comments on for the case of Yemen: "Verbs that have come to mean separate activites (sic!), such as 'to recite' (*tala, tilawa*), 'to read' (*qaraɔa*), and

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'to study' (*darsa*), were once much closer in their referents" (1992: 85). *Kusoma* retains these entanglements and thus challenges the separation between literacy and orality (see also Decker 2010). The physical presence of a *msahafu* is not required for every instance in which Qurʾanic verses are given auditory presence in the sense of *kusoma*; memorization of that which has been studied (the "walking Qurʾan") equally serves as textual source.

Messick furthermore explores the text/commentary relationship as one in which the commentary is "inserted in spaces opened up in the original text" (1992: 31). *Kusoma*, linking "to read," "to study," and "to recite," is the engagement with text and its commentary; *kusoma* does not close a text, *kusoma* presences an already closed text-commentary conglomerate (whereby traditions of transmission are part of what here is glossed as "commentary"). Liquefaction, as I have discussed in chapter 4.5.1, however, renders the written text of the Qurʾanic verses tacit so as to "unfold" in different kinds of mediations through bodily engagement with the verses' tacit textuality. In this sense, similar to how commentaries are oriented at gaps of visually approachable "original texts," *mwili* closes the liquefied verses. *Mwili* "reads" kombe.

Mwili's "affective reading" of liquefied Qurʾanic verses challenges the separation of literacy and orality beyond that which is usually denoted as "aurality" (see Schoeler 2009: 37). Furthermore, the *oral* ingestion of the dissolved *written* text is anticipated to be contested by "reformists" (see chapter 2.1.4) on grounds of the ambivalent approriateness of such "orality" and such "textuality." The engagement with this "anticipated criticism" (see chapter 7.3) thereby reinvigorates "orality" and "textuality" as concepts with which to explain (and contest) written kombe (kombe *la kuandika*) against the backdrop of recitations over water (kombe *la kusomea*): with the discursive framing of drinking kombe (the oral ingestion of liquefied written Qurʾanic verses) orality and textuality intra-act (see also chapter 4.2.3).

As mentioned already at the beginning of this chapter (6.1.4), Walter Ong, in his book *Orality & Literacy* scrutinizes the social effects of the oral and the written.[34] In his examination of sound he highlights the interiority of sound as

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34 Again, I stress that Ong's distinctions between "primary oral cultures" and "literate cultures" are extremely problematic, and he has rightly been criticized for that (see for example Messick 1997: 24-25; see also footnote 14). In this context, especially his very short and shallow comment about the "Arabic culture" having "known writing for centuries but [...] never fully interiorized it" (Ong 1982: 26) marks his Eurocentric and Orientalist approach. Despite his

opposed to the exteriority of vision. Sound exists as resonance of a sounding body while vision perceives of the external boundaries of objects and bodies. "Sight isolates, sound incorporates" (1982: 72).[35] He then phenomenologically relates these conceptions of interiority and exteriority to one's own bodily experiences of oneself in the world and embeds his discussion on sound in psychodynamics of orality.

> In a primary oral culture where the word has its existence only in sound […] the phenomenology of sound enters deeply into human beings' feel for existence, as processed by the spoken word. […] The centering action of sound (the field of sound is not spread out before me but is all around me) affects man's sense of the cosmos. (1982: 73)

Although my interest is not in psychological explanations of orality and literacy as separate entities and although I regard the stark separation as highly problematic, I find that the link between sound's and orality's interiority as opposed to vision's and literacy's exteriority has interesting repercussions for my examination of *kombe* as an (oralized) textual practice and the body's mediality between inside and outside.

As narrated above, Hakimu Saleh asked the man to recite a sura in addition to the recitations with which he filled the room and surrounded the man. He thereby asked the man to fill his own body's interior with the Qurᵃan in addition to Hakimu Saleh's recitations that were external to his body. Whereas the man's voice transgressed his bodily boundaries, resonating with his inside and softly streaming to his outside, Hakimu Saleh's voice primarily filled the space around the man; the auditory intrusion into his inside could not be taken for granted. As with the liquefaction of kombe, the man's vision was impeded. The cloth prevented him from visually having access to his surrounding and in this case the entire attention rested on the sonic treatment which was not to be disturbed by visual encounters. The task that Hakimu Saleh asked the man to undertake, namely to recite (*kusoma*) a specific verse while preventing him from visually detecting anything, points to the complexity of *kusoma* in which binaries of textuality and orality, visuality and audibility, as well as bodily inside and outside are entangled.

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short-sighted understanding of literacy, his examination of sound vis-à-vis vision is quite helpful here.

[35] Note, however, that Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus (2015) challenges the turn away from orality that the emphasis on visual (silent) reading has supposedly undergone (see also above).

Drinking *kombe* is not the same as *kusoma kombe* and glossing drinking *kombe* with the Swahili approximation *kusoma* has different implications from glossing it with the English-language "reading." In the translation process that this dissertation constitutes, it is the latter that I employ in order to carve out particular aspects of what the ingestion of kombe entails. The resonances with *kusoma* indicate that the themes of bodily engagement with textual material go beyond my engagement with kombe.

6.5. Mediation

Guided by kombe's *prevention* of visually reading written Qurʾanic verses, this chapter commenced with some considerations on "visuality" and thereby drew together the preceding two chapters. Now, by way of concluding this chapter and this part (thus again drawing together the preceding chapters), I turn to "mediation"[36] so as to address that which kombe *promotes* as was preliminarily mentioned in chapter 4.5 and 5.5. Mussa writes kombe in order to facilitate a "mediation" of the Qurʾanic verses' healing power to the woman's affliction. The writing that Mussa produces and the woman's *mwili* both fulfill certain mediatory functions in the process of kombe's unfolding. They are not solely intermediates[37] that stand between sender and receiver but *constitute* the practice complex. Mussa's

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[36] Sybille Krämer's work on the physics of mediality (2008) distinguishes mediation as transmission (drawing on Shannon and Weaver) from mediation as understanding (drawing on Habermas) and she develops the "postal principle" and the "erotic principle" respectively. While with mediation as transmission she refers to the process in which spatial distance is overcome by a message that must be stabilized through this distance, with mediation as understanding she stresses how sender and receiver become unified to overcome distance and difference (2008: 13-15). I am not sure about distances in the spiritual world in which kombe acts; thus, I use the term naively as denoting the process through which something (a "message") becomes fit to be received in a certain way. The Oxford English Dictionary's most applicable entry of "mediation" entails: "Agency or action as an intermediary; the state or fact of serving as an intermediate agent, a means of action, or a medium of transmission; instrumentality" (2a).

[37] The term is used with reference to Latour's differentiation between "mediators" and "intermediaries." Although I am reluctant to describe the practice complex of preparing and drinking kombe in terms of the text's and the body's "agency," a Latourian description indeed would stress the importance of the text's and the body's mediality and their impact on the practice complex as "mediators." My reluctance is not based on this helpful distinction, but rather on Latour's givenness of a network of mediators that we can trace. I side with Barad who emphasizes the "diffractive mattering" of the subjects under investigation (see introduction).

note that the woman should not *see* the verses (that a visual mediation of the written artifact is to be prevented) and the subsequent accidental smudging was an extraordinary instance in which and through which textual and bodily aspects of the process of preparing and drinking kombe became manifest in ways that I was able to more clearly apprehend. Furthermore, this instance points to the entanglements of how the written and liquefied verses are stripped off their visual mediality to be directly and affectively "read" by a *mwili* to counter an affliction. This concluding section explicitly targets the involved processes of mediation, contained already throughout this chapter in the vocabulary of "reading," and relates these processes to larger frameworks, in preparation for the following part. In this section, I first turn to Birgit Meyer's notion of religion as mediation before briefly engaging with the mediality of text and then more elaborately with the mediality of *mwili*. I close this section, this chapter, and this part by revisiting the vignette of Mussa for the last time.

6.5.1. Religion as Mediation

Taking seriously the materiality of religious practices, Birgit Meyer describes religion as mediation. From this perspective, media, "connect[ing] people with each other and the divine" (2011: 27) do not only "tak[e] part in effecting the divine or transcendental [and] produce belief" (2011: 29, see also 2009: 11), they also invoke a sense of immediacy. For Pentecostals in Ghana, on whom she bases her studies, technological mass media, such as TV-screens or loudspeakers, invoke experiences of immediacy as in these moments these media devices disappear as such (2011; see also Eisenlohr 2009).[38] Concisely, "mediation and immediacy do not belong to two opposing realms, but are intertwined" (2011: 26–27). Meyer develops her argument by questioning a given medium's intrinsic property of mediality and draws amongst others on Matthew Engelke, who shows how the materiality of a given medium matters. For the Masowe apostolics that Engelke studies, a pebble stone, "special-because-it-is-not" (Engelke 2005: 131), water which is "so meaningful […] that it becomes meaningless" (2005: 135), and honey which "occupies a more ambiguous therapeutic role" (2005: 136) are differently material from each other and

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[38] Sybille Krämer (2008: 27–30), with reference to Walter Seitter, traces the theme of "medialer Selbstneutralisierun" (medial self-neutralization) from Aristotle through Thomas of Aquinas to contemporary theorizations of media.

thus differently suitable to serve as religious media.[39] Brian Larkin also comments on the materiality of media, a materiality that at times diffuses practices in how a certain medium is used:

> it is important to recognize that the loudspeaker displays a meta-reflexive desire, that is, the desire to be *seen* relaying a message as well as simply relaying a message. It reminds us that a loudspeaker is a visual device as well as an aural one, drawing attention to itself as a medium of relay. (2014: 990)

For Meyer, the disappearance of the medium in moments of experiencing immediacy depends on the precondition of its presence that Larkin has stressed (Meyer 2009; 2011: 32; 2015: 197), both of which are embedded in social processes of power relations that authorize (religious) mediation (Meyer 2011).

In a review essay on "Religion and the media turn," Engelke sums up:

> The dynamic between the mediate and immediate is a defining feature of what scholars have come to call 'religion' […]. Visible and invisible, immanent and transcendent, material and spiritual, natural and supernatural, mortal and immortal, human and divine, here and not here, known and unknown (knowable and unknowable), revealed and concealed, present and absent—all of these extremely productive yet extremely problematic conceptions are the inspirations for and products of religious mediations. To make sense—even to be debunked, made into nonsense—every one of these pairings is grappled with in and through media. What the media turners have done is suggest that the pairs are interesting not in themselves but for the conjunctions that join them. These conjunctions—these *ands*—are not the recognition of binary oppositions but tokens of a dialectic; these ands are the scrolls, icons, books, videos, radio broadcasts, and networks in cyberspace that define, substantiate, and challenge the relationships between the visible and invisible worlds. (2010: 377)[40]

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[39] Though beyond the scope of this text, Carla Bellamy's (2011: 102) evaluation of what she terms the "paradox" of smoke's presencing (people's gathering at a shrine) and absencing (people's experiences of temporal erasure) provides interesting points of comparison.

[40] Couched in different words but not dissimilar to Meyer's or Engelke's focus on mediation as a process that matters as such, Tim Ingold advocates the *in-between*, the *midstream* and distances this from the *between*, the crossing between two poles: "Between has two terminals, in-between has none. Any movement in the between, like the undergoing that is framed in doing or the growing framed in making, is merely from here to there, from an initial to a final state. In the in-between, however, movement is the primary and ongoing condition. *Where between is liminal, in-between is arterial; where between is intermediate, in-between is midstream*" (2015: 147). For a thorough engagement with the "inbetweenness of things," see also Paul Basu (2017), who proposes to read and think "inbetweenness" through the

With the preparation and drinking of kombe, there are two "*ands*": firstly, the written Qurʾanic text and secondly, the afflicted *mwili*. This double mediation involved in healing bodily accessible afflictions with written Qurʾanic verses comprises the immediate presence of the divine *and* the presence of the text as material medium as well as *mwili*'s provision of an inside to an outside, an outside to an inside, materiality to the immaterial, the "reader" of "liquefied text."

6.5.2. Textual Mediation

Text is a pronounced medium. In the process of writing, ink is *formed* into Arabic scripted Qurʾanic verses and thereby becomes an instantiation of the Qurʾan that carries and is the message.[41] With the liquefaction of this text, its presence as medium to be visually encountered is preempted, which supports its healing qualities. The foreclosure of text's characteristics *as visually decodable medium*, the "demediation" of its semantic aspects (see Stewart 2010 in chapter 4.4.2), plays a crucial role, but kombe also shows how for the people involved, Qurʾanic verses are not mere text, but maintain their healing power throughout their liquefaction. Furthermore, kombe's color attests to the ink contained in the water, thus, in kombe, the written text is "remediated" (Bolter and Grusin 2000; Chakravorty 2010): the textual characteristics, though suspended, are mediated through kombe *la kuandika*'s color.

Media and processes of mediation are socially situated and authorized. Meyer develops the notion of "sensational forms"[42] to "capture that religious mediations, to which media are intrinsic, require particular authorized forms through which people are enabled to have sensations of the transcendental which they experience as genuine" (Meyer in Seremetakis 2010: 2). The written kombe imagetext, authorized to be encountered with the eyes (because it is text), bears potential problems for healing purposes; its liquefaction circumvents this potentially problematic visual encounter, thereby maintaining both its textuality (as

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following metaphors: "fetish," "rhizome" (where he references also Ingold's "midstream"), "gift," and "prism." As objects, these metaphors are differently situated at the "intersection of the between and inbetween" (2017: 17). Engelke's focus on *and* is also related to Lambek's structuralistic theorizations about *both/and* (Lambek 2015; see chapter 5).

[41] The form in which it appears, the medium, is (part of) the message as McLuhan (2003: 7) famously pointed out.

[42] Sensational forms will be further explored in chapter 8 with regard to how Muslims and Christians experience drinking *kombe*.

kombe's color remediates it) and its healing qualities (because it is not mere text, but the Qurʾan) to which *mwili* has socially situated authorized access. Along with the healing power of liquefied Qurʾanic verses, a mediating *mwili* is central to how kombe unfolds its efficacy.

6.5.3. Bodily Mediation

Kombe acts on afflictions that are not restricted to bodies of a biomedical understanding and that are often made sense of with reference to Islam. *Mwili* contains and binds together organs *nafsi* (soul/self) and *roho* (spirit) (see Ali Hemedi, chapter 5.4.2), it provides potential space for external spirits (see chapter 5.3); like a *jahazi* it provides security from the outside world on the journey to God (see Hakimu Saleh, chapter 5.4.3). *Mwili* has and constitutes an inside and outside the boundaries of which are permeable (see Mussa, 5.4.4). Constituting the differentiation between inside and outside, *mwili* is the medium through which inside and outside meet and intra-act. The (sensual) perceptions describe *mwili*'s reaction to external influences and are located (with *akili* ["intellect, mind"] according to Hakimu Saleh, chapter 5.4.3) inside the body. *Mwili* acts in and influences the outside world; through *mwili* internal intentions but also desires can manifest and thus become externalized (see Talib Ali, chapter 5.4.2). Concomitantly, *mwili* bridges the material and the immaterial. It is material and thus materially approachable; it contains immaterial entities (*nafsi*/*roho*) which by way of their containment become tangible. Given *mwili*'s constitution of inside and outside and thereby its capacity to bridge the material and the immaterial, *mwili* is the locus in which affliction (situated subjective experiences of suffering with a "religious" tinge [see chapter 5.1], occurring inside and outside[43] of the body, material and immaterial) can be countered. Inside of *mwili*, *dawa* ("medicine"), such as the dissolved Qurʾan, can unfold its transformative power to act on these afflictions.

Given *mwili*'s constitution and transgression of inside and outside, *mwili* (both distinct from and entangled with *akili*/*nafsi*/*roho*) is key to healing in that it is able to internalize externally manifested Qurʾanic verses and mediate them towards afflictions to which patients affectively relate. With *mwili* going beyond

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[43] Despite *mwili*'s material bridge between an inside and outside, those afflictions that occur outside are usually not materially linked to *mwili*. They are however internally perceived either in the form of understanding what causes unease or in the form of other symptoms that the practitioners interpret: they affect *mwili*.

the bodily substance, *kiwiliwili* (Ali Hemedi, chapter 5.4.2), this internalization goes beyond a physical ingestion and entails an engagement with ("reading of") the swallowed Qurʾanic verses. Reading the Qurʾan (both visually and/or affectively) is an actualization of the Qurʾan; it is a manifestation, a materialization of the verses through one's body (see also Lambek 1993: 141). Although reading of any kind of text is embodied and embodying, the Qurʾan requires a different kind of embodied reading in which the heart, *moyo* understands.[44]

Placed inside of *mwili* as seat of moral judgment, *moyo* (the heart) is an integral part of the living and physical *mwili* (see Talib Ali, chapter 5.4.1). Although *moyo* is central for knowledge and understanding, the materially ingested kombe is not understood to arrive in *moyo* specifically, but in *mwili* more broadly, invoking mediations between outside and inside, between the material and the immaterial. Through a mediating *mwili*, prepared by *moyo*'s prior "knowledge" about it (see Talib Ali, chapter 5.4.1), kombe "circulates" (Talib Ali), searches for *nafsi* (see Ali Hemedi, chapter 5.4.2), and thereby targets afflictions so that healing can happen: *mwili*'s engagement with the textualized and liquefied Qurʾanic verses, *mwili*'s "affective reading," "co-creates" the experience of the text's meaning (see 6.2) and thereby directs the Qurʾan's healing power towards the affliction.

6.5.4. Mediation as Transition

When Mussa emphasized the preference for *mwili*'s direct encounter with the Qurʾanic verses to preclude a prior visual encounter, he evoked *mwili*'s mediality through which the liquefied Qurʾanic verses are directed at an affliction. The woman was not to *see* the verses; *mwili*, and not the eyes was meant to "read" the verses. When the woman folded the paper with the verses and thereby smudged the ink, she did not destroy the verses' healing power. The healing power is not tied to the verses' visual approachability, but once they manifest in writing, their healing qualities are immanent.

Kombe mediates the Qurʾan's healing power and makes it accessible by *mwili*; *mwili* mediates the Qurʾan's healing power and directs it towards an af-

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[44] I acknowledge that *moyo*, the heart, is important for my engagement with kombe. I must also acknowledge, though, that I cannot do justice to the allusions that my interlocutors have provided. The sketchy details that I have incorporated into this and the preceding chapter do not amount to a satisfactory delineation and more research would be needed to examine *moyo*. I thank Clarissa Vierke for her suggestion to also consider Swahili poetry with regard to *moyo* (8 May 2016, Bayreuth).

fliction. For this process, a visual encounter with the verses is foreclosed and the woman folds the paper; "reading" is not to be visually achieved, but achieved bodily. The woman's *mwili* is to embody Qurʾanic text the ink of which, although liquefied, manifests the Qurʾan, written by Mussa. Deeply situated within Muslim practices with the Qurʾan, the embodiment of the entexted Qurʾan—the entextualization of *mwili*—links drinking kombe to practices of learning, reciting, and memorizing the Qurʾan. By approaching the process of the written Qurʾan's embodiment in terms of the English-language "reading," I do not completely uncover how the embodied verses act on and influence the affliction; rather, I examine the diffraction of a translation process that takes seriously the textuality of the embodied Qurʾan as well as *mwili*'s mediality through which affliction in- and outside of *mwili*, material and immaterial, is treated. "Reading," with its rich etymology and its historical situatedness, describes an embodying and embodied textual practice. To gloss *mwili* as "reader," therefore, emphasizes that the textuality of the written Qurʾan is crucial to the ingestion after its liquefaction. The qualification of kombe as kombe *la kuandika* (written kombe) equally accentuates the importance of kombe's textuality maintained throughout its liquefaction. Furthermore, *mwili* as "reader" points to its involvement in the unfolding of the Qurʾanic healing properties. *Mwili* facilitates the Qurʾanic verses' presence vis-à-vis an affliction: it mediates.

At the beginning of this concluding section, I introduced conceptualizations relating "religion" to "mediation" with which I have already alluded to the next part. In part III, I will engage with how kombe's mediation of Qurʾanic verses into a body to counter an affliction is entangled with social and sensual ("sensational") practices of mediating and immediating "religion" in Zanzibar. How is kombe as "traditional medicine" in Zanzibar enacted by whom, and how does the liquefaction of Qur'anic verses and their ingestion into *miwili* of Muslims and Christians relate to people's understandings of living in and enacting a Zanzibar that is Islamic?

Part III.

Enacting *Dawa ya Kiislamu*

Omar and I were sitting on a small wall in the shade next to the mosque in which he had just finished his noon prayers.[45] He was born in Zanzibar, has lived and studied there all of his life and prays in this mosque that the people in the neighborhood term *Wahhabi*. We were talking about drinking kombe and how it is a widely accepted practice in Zanzibar. We discussed how kombe is often expressed as *dawa ya kiislamu*, and Omar took this opportunity to talk about one of his most preferred topics: Zanzibar's way of being Islamic. He expressed dissatisfaction over the religious situation in Zanzibar, because many people's practices deviated from rules prescribed by what he considered to be the "one Islam." He glanced sideways to evaluate whether the two young men who were hanging out with their vespas nearby were eavesdropping. They were not. Christians' practices, he continued, influenced the character of Zanzibar to such an extent, that it did not qualify as "real Islamic" (*kiislamu kikweli*). Another sideways glance. The two young men really had not overheard this. This statement would have triggered a reaction of some sort. Zanzibar not Islamic? Impossible.

"In Zanzibar, we have a mix of Christians and Muslims. They say, that the *tabia* ("attitude"/"habit"/"character"/"culture"/"nature"/"behavior") is Islamic (*ya kiislamu*), but it is not real (*kweli*) Islamic *tabia*," Omar explained. With this statement—and of course my interpretation of this statement is informed by our longer talk—Omar picked up on the description of kombe as *ya kiislamu* and used this as an entry point to highlight the presence of Christians in Zanzibar which equally is connoted with Islam. He framed Christians as the "other" of Muslims and attributed the plurality of accepted practices in Zanzibar to Christian influence, a plurality in which drinking kombe plays an ambiguous role, a plurality that in his view undermines Zanzibar's classification as "Islamic" place. Contrary to the dominant discourse of Zanzibar being an Islamic place (see chapter 2), Omar gave weight to Christians influence on practices in Zanzibar. "They say, that the *tabia* is Islamic." "They" is a vague reference to voices that shape and have shaped a notion of Zanzibar's identity with reference to Islam, a notion that he challenged. Thus the sideways glances.

Omar's use of the pronoun "they" (or rather, in Swahili, the pronoun marker *wa-*) primarily points to the dominant discourse in Zanzibar (and in Tanzania more broadly). This discourse in Tanzania about Zanzibar being "Islamic" (see chapter 2.2) is entangled with scholarly engagement about Zanzibar across various

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[45] 19 August 2014, Raha Leo, Zanzibar Town.

disciplines of western academia.[46] Attributing Zanzibar to the Indian Ocean world and distinguishing it from the mainland relies on references to Islam and thereby marks its uniqueness (see also the overarching structure of chapter 2 where I deliberately employ this narrative).

Contrary to Omar's statement, the presence of Christians is usually not acknowledged as shaping Zanzibar's *tabia*. Despite their small-numbered presence, the Christians do not consider themselves a "Zanzibari minority," as they do not make claims to belong and rather emphasize their connections to the mainland. Nevertheless, their presence nourishes tensions that led to the development of an "interreligious dialogue," and triggered a renewed examination of the parameters under which cosmopolitanism (see chapter 2.1.1) is claimed and acclaimed—again, both in the mainstream discourse in Zanzibar and in the academic engagement with Zanzibar. While Christians and Muslims are discursively strictly separated, the practice of drinking kombe, of which also Christians partake, accounts for Christians' participation in practically negotiating Zanzibariness—a Zanzibariness of which the attribution as Muslim place remains uncontested.

The two chapters of this part are structured around the description of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu*. Chapter 7, paying attention to the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*," shows the ambiguities of how Muslims and Christians are made commensurable and comparable in Zanzibar. Building on this ambiguous commensurability, chapter 8 pays attention to "*dawa*" and attends to the medical context of kombe that allows for what I term "formational healing." The two chapters of this part, therefore, are concerned with social aspects of dispensing and drinking kombe in Zanzibar and scrutinize how kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* relates to intra-actions of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar—the enaction of which is critically evaluated by people like Omar.

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[46] See for example the historical studies by Abdul Sheriff (1995b), Mark Horton (2000), Katrin Bromber (2002), Anne Bang (2003; 2008; 2011), Laura Fair (2003), and Roman Loimeier (2006b; 2009; 2012). Within the field of Islamic Studies, see for example Allyson Purpura (1997), Roman Loimeier (2007b; 2011), and Mohamed Saleh (2009). See also examples within the field of political and social sciences: Simon Turner (2009), Garth Myers (2013), as well as Sigrun Moss and Kjetil Tronvoll (2014). Furthermore, see also anthropological examples: Tapio Nisula (1999), Kjersti Larsen (2008; 2002), Elisabeth Hsu (2007), and very prominently David Parkin (2007b; 2014). Far from being an exhaustive list, these examples have in common that they account for Islam as a reference point for Zanzibari identity formations. Note that there is a long-standing academic pre-occupation with identity formation in Swahili Studies. See also the overarching narrative of chapter 2.

7. *Ya Kiislamu*: Towards Comparing Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar

The adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*" ("Islamic") specifies the description of kombe as a particular kind of medicine. On the one hand, it indicates that there are other specifications and Islam is one of several options. On the other hand, it appeals to Islam which is all-encompassing. Omar, connecting the designation of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* to a critique of Zanzibar's character (*tabia*), departs from kombe's embeddedness in Zanzibar and points to a negative evaluation of Zanzibar's current conformity with Islam in light of Christians' presence. Omar thereby renders encounters with Christians central to his assessment of Zanzibar's Islamic *tabia*.

Academia with its division between studies of Islam and studies of Christianity is poorly equipped to deal with these encounters which Birgit Meyer addresses (together with Brian Larkin [2006] and with Marloes Janson [2016]). As early as 2005 Roman Loimeier published an article entitled "Is There Something Like 'Protestant Islam'?" (2005), in which he poses the question of how to grasp similarities between Muslim and Christian developments. In 2006, a volume on Muslim-Christian encounters, edited by Benjamin Soares, was published, responding to interactions between Muslims and Christians in Africa that are "still not properly understood" (Soares 2006: 1). Published in the same year, Larkin and Meyer (2006) suggest placing evangelical Pentecostalism and reformist Islam in west Africa in a relation of "doppelgängers" to each other, because of their references to each other, their actions that "mirror" each other, and their "largely intertwined" "fates." Sympathetic to their intervention, J.D.Y. Peel (2016) critiques their consideration of similarities for their insufficient regard to context, to which Meyer responds again in the same special issue where Peel's article appears

(2016b).[1] Equally part of this special issue, Marloes Janson's study of "Chrislam" in Nigeria advocates a more Deleuzian-inspired approach to these encounters, employing "assemblage" (see Collier and Ong 2005) in opposition to conceptualizations of "syncretism" (Janson 2016). Janson's object of study, "Chrislam," is particular in its outspoken practical, discursive, and even lexical merging of Christianity and Islam. Most other studies that engage with Muslims and/or Christians, including my own, are tasked with both doing justice to interlocutors' self-attribution to either Christianity or Islam and accounting for varied references to the "other." Eva Spies (2014), for example, engages with religious diversity in terms of (in)commensurability which is intimately connected to her attention to and conception of "relationality" (see most prominently her most recent article: "Being in Relation" [2019]; see also her publication with Rüdiger Seesemann: "Pluralicity and Relationality" [2016]). Throughout these engagements, questions of comparability continuously arise and are addressed with varying degrees of explicitness. Building on the specificities of my ethnography, I am less interested in mapping out similarities and differences of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar, than in tracing how such a comparability is established and how a designation of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* iteratively (re-)configures differences and non-differences of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar.

With recourse to the conversation with Omar, in this chapter, I scrutinize how the specification "*ya kiislamu*" matters in Zanzibar. After providing more detail on Muslims and Christians and the history (and historicity) of their relations in Zanzibar, this chapter explores firstly which sentiments the historically given entanglement of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar evokes. Omar's reaction to my research already serves as indicator here. Secondly, attention is drawn to the "interreligious dialogue." Building on a conversation with Hakimu Saleh about the inter*religious* dialogue, the underlying conception of "religion" and its relation to the Swahili approximation "*dini*" is scrutinized. The third section deals with Islam as a coherent entity. Through the anticipation of criticism with regard to kombe, that section examines how contradictions apparently require accounting for and how the anticipation of this need itself constitutes Islam as coherent. Thus, within the first three sections, Zanzibar as place, conceptual work around "religion," and Islam as an entity are established as prerequisites for practices of

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[1] The evolution of this debate is delineated in Marloes Janson and Birgit Meyer's introduction to this special issue (2016).

comparing Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar. By making the establishment of comparability explicit, this chapter concludes by also drawing attention to how comparability matters and how the three preceding sections do not only establish comparability, but also its ambivalences. As Omar indicates, the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*" that is intimately tied to the description of kombe, is equally relevant for Zanzibar's *tabia*, and thus drinking kombe diffracts in a specific way with Zanzibar through this common designation as "Islamic."

7.1. Big Funeral: Islam, Christianity, and the History of Muslim-Christian Relations in Zanzibar

Omar's sentiments towards Islam and Christianity in Zanzibar do not only relate to Muslims' and Christians' co-habitation in Zanzibar, but these sentiments are also connected to a broader concern for how a growing Christian presence influences Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*." This section first provides some detail on Islam and Christianity in Zanzibar. It continues with a brief history of Muslim-Christian encounters in Zanzibar to then pick up on the sentiments that Omar expressed.

7.1.1. Islam

Omar advocates an understanding of an indivisible Islam, and thus he does not refer to different schools of thought with different histories in Zanzibar to explain difference. Likewise, Hakimu Saleh (see chapter 1.2.5) and numerous other people circumvented questions about classifications in Islam, including their own belonging to a certain school of jurisprudence, in order to stress the unity of the *umma*.[2] Others, such as Talib Ali,[3] identified as Sunni Shafi͞i, but made sure not to emphasize this as identity marker, but instead to focus on his other interests in predominantly Maliki literature (see chapter 5.4.1). Whether implicitly or explicitly stated, most people follow the teachings of the Sunni Shafi͞i school, as has been lined out in chapter 2. Amongst them, many people belong to a Sufi tariqa, most notably the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya (see chapter 2.1.4). Fewer people, usually those who have close ties to Oman, are Ibadi, and they share many practices with the Sunni Shafi͞i, including preparing and drinking kombe.

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[2] Thus, I only come back to this common classification here in this last part of this thesis.
[3] 17 July 2014, Mombasa, Zanzibar Town.

Furthermore, a number of people identify as Shiᶜi Muslims. Whereas the Khoja Ithnaasheri do not have restrictive membership with regard to descent, the Khoja Ismaili and the Bohra, both of which are groups that emphasize their ties to South Asia, nurture a pronounced differentiation from "non-Indians" (and in particular from "Africans")—a social distance that does not pertain to business ties. These two groups make their distinction from more mainstream Islam in Zanzibar explicit in that access to their places is highly restricted and, especially in the case of the Bohras, in that the women's dress is easily identifiable. Whereas most Zanzibaris that I spoke to took little issue with these "Indian" groups,[4] they often did take issue with the growing number of Saudi-influenced reformists. Along with his identification as Zanzibari, Omar's criticism of Zanzibar's *tabia* and his statement that Zanzibar is not "real Islamic" implicitly claims to appropriate the further development of Islam in Zanzibar; thus, Omar's statement denounces people's concrete practices of living (Islamically). In response, many people who do not share this vision for Zanzibar mark the reformists as *Wahhabi* and therefore as foreign (see chapter 2.2.3 for a more detailed delineation of *Wahhabi* ascriptions).

Overarching the different Muslim groups in Zanzibar, the government appoints a Mufti who is in charge of matters concerning Islam in Zanzibar. Although the appointment through the government (and the pro-governmental stance of the Mufti's office) is seen rather skeptically, and although the Mufti's secretary was the target of an acid attack in 2012 (which was attributed to his clear position against interreligious violence),[5] the office's authority over Islamic issues in Zanzibar is principally respected and endorsed. The internal differences outlined in the preceding paragraph are secondary to the notion of a common ground of being Muslims as opposed to Christians. Zube,[6] a restaurant owner in Jambiani,

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[4] See David Pocock 1957 on how "Indians" in Africa become what they are through responses to African conditions.

[5] See local news coverage on this: Mwananchi, "Katibu wa Mufti Zanzibar apata ahueni," 9 November 2012, http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/1597578–1615822-i3n5oO/index.html; Zanzinews, "Kumwagiwa Tindi Kali Sheikh Soraga," 11 November 2012, http://www.zanzinews.com/2012/11/kumwagiwa-tindi-kali-sheikh-soraga.html ;

JamiiForums (blog), "Katibu wa Mufti Zanzibar (Sheikh Soraga) amwagiwa tindikali," 6 November 2012, https://www.jamiiforums.com/threads/katibu-wa-mufti-zanzibar-sheikh-soraga-amwagiwa-tindikali.349793/;

Muhidin Issa Michuzi, Michuzi Blog (blog), "Katibu wa Mufti Zanzibar Sheikh Fadhil Soraga Amwagiwa Tindi Kali," 6 November 2012, https://issamichuzi.blogspot.de/2012/11/katibu-wa-mufti-zanzibar-sheikh-fadhil.html.

[6] 22 August 2014, Jambiani.

once stressed this equality through Islam in Zanzibar: "We are all the same, we are all Muslims." He later refined this statement: "In the *original* [English term used] Zanzibar, there are no Christians." For Zube, the Christians serve as the Muslims' "other" that do not feature in his presentation of an egalitarian Islamic—"original"—Zanzibar of the past. Zube's perception of an "original" Zanzibar of the past resonates with how Omar denounces contemporary practices as deviation from what is "real Islamic" (*kiislamu kikweli*). They both direct their critical stance towards Christians whose influence in Zanzibar, as Omar explicitly states, jeopardizes Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*." It must be noted, however, that Omar and Zube pronounce an extreme stance. For many other Muslims in Zanzibar, Christians do not constitute such fundamental antagonists, but are neighbors, colleagues, or acquaintances. Everyday practices amongst Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar do not mirror the sentiments of Omar and Zube. Despite much more amicable everyday practices, the pointedness of Omar's or Zube's expressions is often endorsed when speaking about religion in Zanzibar as an abstract topic.

7.1.2. Christianity

Despite the presence of Hindus and other people who do not identify as either Muslim or Christian, solely the Christians feature as the Muslims' "other." While the unity of Islam is stressed, the fragmentation of Christianity with its different denominations is foregrounded.[7] As already briefly stated in chapter 2, the two churches in Stone Town, namely the Catholic twin-tower church St. Joseph, *minara miwili*, and the Anglican Christ Church, built on the grounds of the former slave market, are not only sites that recall a history of Christian presence and influence in Zanzibar (see below), but the Catholic vocational training facilities, secondary school, kindergartens, the home for old people, and most prominently the dispensaries run by three Catholic nunneries spread across Zanzibar's two islands, as well as the Anglican primary school on the premises of the Anglican church provide medical and educational facilities that are much-frequented in Zanzibar. These well-established Catholic and Anglican institutions are joined by the Lutheran Church that has was established in Tanganyika, and which only founded a congregation in Zanzibar after the formation of the union of Tanzania. The Lutheran Church hosts the "Zanzibar Interfaith Center" through which it

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[7]   Hakimu Saleh, 28 November 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

repeatedly marks its presence in public discourse. How the work of the Lutheran Interfaith Center became relevant for my research on kombe will be outlined below (in 7.2.2). Finally, there are a number of small evangelical and pentecostal churches spread across Zanzibar Town's "other side," *Ng'ambo*, whose missionary activities are often seen as provocative and disruptive to "Zanzibari culture." When Omar stated that Zanzibar's *tabia* is no longer "Islamic," his criticism resonated with the unease that is commonly voiced with regard to the activities of the small independent churches. Although Christianity's fragmentation into different denominations is well-known and often taken as argument for the comparative superiority of a "unified" Islam, Omar here extends the negative sentiments related to the small churches' missionary activities to the entirety of Christians in Zanzibar and posits Christians in Zanzibar as threat to Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*."[8]

For most Christians who live in Zanzibar, the islands provide opportunities for work within Tanzania of which they hold citizenship. Although Christians living in Zanzibar are fewer in number than Muslims living there,[9] the Christians do not form a "minority" as they do not make claims to belonging and participating in being Zanzibari.[10] Saba Mahmood (2012; 2016: 66–107) has elucidated how the formation of a particular "minority" group depends on a subjective acceptance of the attributes marking the "minority" group and setting it apart within a national context. In her study on the Copts in Egypt, she illustrates how the label comes with political rights for juridical protection and international support and how this subjective embrace of Coptic Christianity as a marker for differentiation from Muslims in Egypt was not pre-given but has developed within the context of particular national and international circumstances. Mahmood's problematization of the minority label resonates with the framings of Christians living in Zanzibar, although different frames matter. While the Copts initially rejected the minor-

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[8] Many other people in Zanzibar differentiate between the denominations or exclude those Christians they know from this discourse. Still, people like Omar are successful in shaping a simplified and powerful dichotomy.

[9] Numbers are very difficult to attach to any of these groups not least because the last census that indicated religious affiliation was conducted in 1962. The CIA-Factbook states that Zanzibar is "almost entirely Muslim (2010 est.)" (Central Intelligence Agency 2016). Although quite a number of Christians also live in Zanzibar, their sense of belonging is mostly directed towards the mainland. Thus, the ascription of Zanzibar as "almost entirely Muslim," does not only apply to a probable statistical statement, but also to the ascribed identification marker of Zanzibar (see chapter 2.2).

[10] Thus, even if there was a more recent census that indicated the religious affiliation, these numbers would have to be considered against the background of who identifies as Zanzibari.

ity label by stressing the lack of difference from non-Coptic Egytians (Copts as part of the bigger frame of Egypt), most Christians in Zanzibar also do not label themselves as minority, stressing the lack of difference between Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland (Zanzibar as part of the larger frame of Tanzania). Christians who live in Zanzibar but do not identify as "minority" because Christians are not a minority in Tanzania, thus, emphasize Zanzibar's belonging to Tanzania (see chapter 2.2) which, according to the constitution "shall be a secular state."[11]

In his dissertation, Hans Olsson shows how for Pentecostals in Zanzibar the theologically grounded

> responsibility to uphold peace [marks the] confluence between social (and political) responsibilities as a saved Christian and the responsibilities as a Tanzanian citizen, situating the moral weight of proper Christian practice in relation to being a Tanzanian citizen. (2016: 201)

In this regard, the Pentecostals' impact on Zanzibar is a spiritual and political endeavor aimed at "liberating Zanzibar from evil" (Olsson 2016: 185) and more concretely "emancipat[ing] Zanzibar from the influence of Islam" (2016: 192–193) to enact the union as a secular (nation) state (see below, see also chapter 2.2.4). Although not all Christians in Zanzibar share this commitment with the Pentecostals, the rationale of secularizing Zanzibar to strengthen the union of Tanzania is well understood. While the Pentecostals regard this work of secularization as part of a Christian framework of "sacralizing the union" (see 2016: 184-186), the more established churches (Catholic, Anglican, and also Lutheran) prefer to invest in the "interreligious dialogue" (see below).

In most conversations that I had with Christians, the designation of the place that they, their parents, and their grandparents came from was an important aspect of introducing oneself. Stressing these trajectories marked identifications with an elsewhere and designated their stay in Zanzibar as temporary (see also Olsson 2016: 76-77). Exceptions include Paul, who stated that he was a "Zanzibari Christian"[12] whose parents came from Mwanza (see part I). This designation prominently demonstrates how he needed to use his Zanzibariness as complement to his being Christian, a conflation that implicitly addresses this contested identity complex. Another exception is Pastor Daniel's self-ascription as Zanzibari. Al-

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[11]   For a similar observation, though less politically framed, see Hans Olsson (2016: 139).
[12]   30 August 2014, Zanzibar Town.

though he came to Zanzibar from Shinyanga[13] only twenty years ago, he claimed to be a Zanzibari due to God's grace. God gave him the vision to go to Zanzibar, he provided the means for him to instantiate an evangelical church, and he chose him to be its pastor.[14] Despite the lack of recognition as Zanzibari,[15] his self-induced identity marker enables him to view (other) Zanzibaris as belonging to the same group that he identifies with and thus they become a desired potential part of his flock. These two exemplary exceptions account for the prevailing inherent tensions in the identification conglomerate: "Zanzibari Christian." To most Christians, Zanzibar's attribution as "Islamic" is not contentious. As a Muslim inclined towards reformist thought, Omar, however, expressed Zanzibar's Islamic identity to be threatened by Christian presence. The Christian influence on Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*" was a major concern for him. Similarly, Zube stated that Christians have effected a change from the " 'original' Zanzibar" where "there are no Christians" (see above). The history of Christian presence and Muslim-Christian encounters in Zanzibar is not acknowledged by either of them.

7.1.3. Historical Muslim-Christian Relations in Zanzibar

Zanzibar's historicity of Muslim-Christian relations is marked by rather peaceful entanglements.[16] During the time of the Sultanate, missionaries and Muslim scholars enjoyed friendship-based theological debates. The friendship between Edward Steere, an English missionary who lived in Zanzibar from 1864 to 1882 during which he became Bishop of Zanzibar, and Shaykh Abd al-Amawi (1838–1896), a Somali scholar whom Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy[17] praises as "one of East

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[13]   Shinyanga is a district in the north of the Tanzanian mainland that has the reputation of being very "traditional," "non-Islamic," and therefore "non-Zanzibari."

[14]   Pastor Daniel, 3 February 2014, Mbweni, Zanzibar Town.

[15]   When I told other people about this, they did not agree with Pastor Daniel's identification as Zanzibari.

[16]   The Portuguese arrived as early as the late fifteenth century and established a Catholic mission to which the Goa community traces its historical roots in Zanzibar. The main interest of the Portuguese was, however, not in the proliferation of religious concerns, but in the establishment of dominant economic networks throughout the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese were forced to leave again and the narration of Muslim-Christian relations in Zanzibar as an "oasis of tolerance" (Royer 2006) becomes interesting with the arrival of French and English missionaries in the time of the Sultanate.

[17]   Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy (1912–1982) is one of the leading Shafiᶜi scholars of that time in east Africa. He was a student of Sheikh Abu Bakr (1881–1943), the son of Sheikh Abdullah bin Abu Bakr Bakathir and of Sheikh Al-Amin Mazrui (1875–1947). See also chapter of 2.1.4.

Africa's cleverest shaykhs" (Farsy 1982: 44), exemplifies the narrations of these positive relations (Hoffman 2005: 61–64, 72–73). Sultan Sayyid Barghash, who is known for his interest in modern technologies, donated the church clock of Christ Church (Royer 2006). The time in which these amicable exchanges were situated also saw the movement for the abolition of the slave trade which put a strain on these relations and accounted for the British political ascendancy. Sheikh Soraga, however, in his speech on Christian-Muslim relations in Zanzibar at the "Africa Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders Conference on Peace and Development," portrays the Christians' efforts against slavery as positive and labels the Christians in nineteenth century Zanzibar as "liberators" (published in Mwanyumba 2012: 58).

With independence and the creation of the union of Zanzibar and Tanganyika the dynamics changed drastically. Muslims on the mainland who impelled the independence movement of Tanganyika were disappointed over the structural disadvantages they continued to face even after their considerable contributions to the successful struggle (Said 1998: 167–188, chapter 10). Their hopes for more equal education and leadership opportunities were addressed insufficiently by the then ruling missionary-educated elite (Heilman and Kaiser 2002: 701). Muslims were also structurally excluded from the early independence government (Loimeier 2007a: 140). The then newly formed ruling party *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM) and its president Julius Nyerere fostered "African-socialist" *ujamaa*-politics in which neither ethnic discrimination nor religious intolerance were to be acceptable.[18] The "East African Muslim Welfare Society" (EAMWS), an Aga-Khan organization that advocated unity amongst Muslims in eastern Africa, was required to restructure in times of African nationalisms and was turned into the CCM-affiliated *Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania* (BAKWATA) to represent Muslims in Tanzania. BAKWATA also supported the *ujamaa*-politics (Chande 2000: 361; see also Nimtz 1980: 186-189; Said 1998: chapter 11; Ludwig 1999: 97–98) and until today is tied to CCM's policies. This support for *ujamaa*-politics situated Muslims in a politically privileged position compared to Christians (and Catholics in particular) who were strident opponents to Nyerere's socialist politics. However,

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[18] See chapter 2.2.2, footnote 68 on *ujamaa*-politics. On how the *ujamaa*-politics impacted on the state's relation to religion see Lissi Rasmussen (1993: 71–75). See also Frieder Ludwig's (1999) elaborate dissemination of the relationship between the church and state in Tanzania before, during, and after times of *ujamaa*-politics. Ludwig delineates the dynamics of the churches in relation to Muslims vis-à-vis the project of building the Tanzanian state.

BAKWATA was not able to transform this position into improvement of Muslims' relative educational disadvantage (Loimeier 2007a: 142). With the end of *ujamaa*-politics and the turn to the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, this educational rift allowed Christians to prosper comparatively. Furthermore, new and independent Muslim organizations challenged BAKWATA as the sole voice of Muslims in Tanzania (for a list of the most important organizations see Loimeier 2007a: 143-145). Furthermore, Tanzania's withdrawal of the Zanzibari membership of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in August 1993 (which Zanzibar had joined the same year, see Ludwig 1999: 212–214) due to the union's constitutionally proclaimed secularity (see below) is seen as illustrative of the union's Christian dominance by many Zanzibaris (Lodhi 1994: 92; Rukyaa 2007: 192; Poncian 2014: 162), in particular since diplomatic relations with the Vatican are upheld (Wijsen 2014: 200).

Although perceptions and rhetoric about Muslims' marginalization in Tanzania are only partly historically justifiable (Loimeier 2007a: 149–150), they have gained their own life (Ndaluka 2014). Christian "crusades" as well as Muslim *mihadhara* ("lectures") target the respective other's insufficiency and delineate theological arguments to bolster their own superiority (for a critical evaluation thereof see Sheikh Soraga's speech published in Mwanyumba 2012: 59; see also Loimeier 2007a: 145–146). Supported by these aggressive polarizations, the tensions between Muslims and Christians have repeatedly turned violent. The 1993 butcheries incident, (allegedly pork was sold to Muslims and in the course of events Muslims attacked three butcheries in Dar es Salaam) and the 1998 Mwembechai Riots in Dar es Salaam[19] both erupted as a violent call for Muslim rights. During the latter riots, the police shot at least two Muslims in their attempt to control the situation, which was followed by a peaceful sit-in initiated by Muslim women a month later (Njozi 2000: 34–36;[20] see also Chande 2000: 363). Since then, Tanzania has seen a number of religiously-connoted violent outbreaks, one particularly large one in Zanzibar in 2001, which led 2000 Pembans to seek refuge in Mombasa (Rukyaa 2007: 193, see also Magesa 2007: 170). Furthermore, riots took place in Zanzibar in May 2012, including attacks on churches, such as the Pentecostal

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[19] This was also the same year that the US-Embassy was attacked in Dar es Salaam by al-Qaeda.
[20] This book is banned in Tanzania, but available online (Wijsen 2014: 200).

City Christian Center[21]; in November of the same year, there was an acid attack in Zanzibar on Sheikh Soraga, the Mufti's secretary, attributed to his clear stance against religious violence;[22] in December 2012 and February 2013 there were gunned attacks against Catholic priests, one of whom died;[23] in September 2013, a Catholic priest was also attacked with acid;[24] in June 2014 a bomb exploded in a mosque where a sermon calling for peace had just ended.[25] All of these incidents are attributed to interreligious tensions that became prevalent during the time of the radical Islamist group *uamsho*'s strive for political intervention and Zanzibar's independence (see chapter 2.2.3).

The preamble of the Tanzanian constitution states that: "THIS CONSTITUTION IS ENACTED BY THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, on behalf of the People, for the purpose of building such a society and ensuring that Tanzania is governed by a Government that adheres to the principles of democracy and socialism and shall be a secular state" (United Republic of Tanzania 1977: Preamble). In the draft of the new constitution, "socialism" was replaced by "rule of law and self-reliance" (United Republic of Tanzania 2014). The preamble of the Zanzibari constitution has a very similar wording: "THIS CONSTITUTION IS ENACTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES [...] on behalf of [*sic*] People for the purpose of building such a society and ensuring that Zanzibar is governed by a government that adheres to the principles of democracy and socialism." Whereas for a great part, the two constitutions are very similar, the phrase "and shall be a secular state" is omitted in the Zanzibari constitution. Although not specified as such, this omission provides space for an understanding of Zanzibar's attribution as primarily "Islamic." Fur-

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[21]   See news coverage by Habari Leo: Daily News Reporter in Zanzibar, "Rioters torch church in Z'bar," 28 May 2012, https://www.habarileo.co.tz/habari/rioters-torch-churches-in-z-bar.aspx ; see also Olsson (2016: 55).

[22]   See above: footnote 5.

[23]   See news coverage by Mwananchi: Waandishi Wetu, "Padri ashambuliwa kwa risasi Zanzibar," 26 December 2012, http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/1597578-1652000-i621y9/index.html and "Mauaji ya Padri Zanzibar, JK ataka uchunguzi ufanyike," 18 February 2013, http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/Kitaifa/1597296-1697102-9spmdqz/index.html.

[24]   See news coverage by Mwananchi: Mwinyi Sadallah, "Padri amwagiwa tindikali Zanzibar," 14 September 2013, http://www.mwananchi.co.tz/habari/Kitaifa/Padri-amwagiwa-tindikali-Zanzibar/1597296-1992012-y11dwq/index.html.

[25]   See Reuters: Fumbuka Ng'wanakilala, Zanzibar mosque bombing kills one, wounds seven, 14 June 2014, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-zanzibar-blast-idUSKBN0EP0IQ20140614.

thermore, both constitutions state that "[e]very person has the right to freedom of thought or conscience, belief or faith and choice in matters of religion, including the freedom to change his religion or faith" (in both constitutions 19.(1)). They differ however, in article 19.(2). Whereas the Tanzanian constitution points to the accordance with law, the Zanzibari consitution expands this point and states that "the profession of religion, worship and propagation of religion shall be free and a private affair of an individual; and the affairs and management of religious bodies shall not be part of the activities of the state authority." I cannot outline the juridical consequences, however, I find it noteworthy that, unlike the constitution for the union, the Zanzibari constitution does not proclaim a "secular state" and explicitly renounces state structures that manage religion (although the Mufti is tied to the governing party), let alone religious diversity or secularity. With reference to the specific Tanzanian case, I employ "secularity" in this thesis to provide an analytical term for "institutionally as well as symbolically embedded forms and arrangements for distinguishing between religion and other societal areas, practices and interpretations" (Kleine and Wohlrab-Sahr 2016: 3).[26] The lack of managing religion and these distinguishing arrangements—I argue that distinctions happen nevertheless, differently by different actors in different situations—is enmeshed with the polarization of the discourse about religion in Zanzibar.

Drawing on sentiments of structural religious discrimination within union politics,[27] a political movement known as *uamsho* ("awakening") formed in Zanzibar, that, entangled with the reformist movement in Zanzibar, channeled the political tensions into a vision of Zanzibar as an independent Islamic state (Khalid 2005,

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[26] I lean on the conceptualizations of the research program "Multiple Secularities - Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities" in Leipzig for which the theoretical groundwork of Marian Burchardt, Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, and Matthias Middell (2015) are central. Their attendance to the "modality of making distinctions" resonates with my aims, as does the possibility of multiplicity, although I am more indebted to a Deleuzian notion of "multiplicity" than the research program on "Multiple Secularities" appears to be. I much regret that I cannot do justice to this theoretical debate here and only hint at the implications the Tanzanian context provides. Let me point out, however, that debates around secularity in Africa need to be considered as part of historical formation of "religion" in Africa (see Chidester 1996; 2014). Matthew Engelke illustrates that "[a]s a principle of statecraft, secularism simply isn't part of the core vocabulary of African modernities" (2015: 89) and relates this to the historical development of "religion" in Africa as well as to the newly independent socialist regimes: "African socialism was rarely an atheistic socialism" (2015). The uneasy relation between Zanzibar and the Tanzanian (African) mainland complicates the notion of secularity in Zanzibar even further.

[27] For a delineation of which religious institutions take which stance towards these sentiments, see Mohammed Bakari's (2012) article.

see also Turner 2009: 241–242; Myers and Muhajir 2013: 675; Poncian 2014: 168–172 and chapter 2.2.3).[28] As the most recent violent attacks against Christians are attributed to *uamsho* sympathizers, most of the Zanzibaris that I spoke to regard *uamsho* at least ambivalently, if they do not reject their radicality all together. With the movement's leaders imprisoned, *uamsho* lost its drive. Discussions on the draft of a revised Tanzanian constitution provided a platform for Zanzibaris to voice their perception of inequality, and this draft of the constitution replaced the centrality of *uamsho* to foster these debates. The framework of Zanzibar as a place and political entity with a distinct history that separates it from and ties it to the Tanzanian mainland has been outlined in chapter 2. It has been shown how in relation to a "Christian" mainland, Zanzibar is constituted as an "Islamic" place with ties across the Indian Ocean. Mentioned in chapter 2, but more clearly addressed in the beginning of this chapter, Zanzibar hosts a number of Pentecostal Christians who, employing the union as a reference rather than the Indian Ocean seascape, engage with the dominance of Islam in Zanzibar as an obstacle to the union's proclaimed secularity. Zanzibar as place with an overwhelming Muslim majority and as place where few Christians live without being a minority is a place of co-habitation and interaction. Zanzibar as political entity—as semi-autonomous part of the Tanzanian union with recurrent calls for independence—is tied to practices of differentiating Muslims from Christians. Thereby, practices of co-habitation of groups of Muslims and Christians that undergo processes of differentiation can be and are framed as politically relevant. Zanzibar as place where people live and as political entity is thus constituted as framework in which Muslims and Christians relate to each other through concrete practices.

7.1.4. Zanzibar's Spiritual Landscape

Zanzibar is a place where spiritual forces act. Firstly, Zanzibar is home to innumerable spirits with whom people can engage. As spirits, just like humans, belong to different *makabila* ("ethnic groups," see footnote 16 in chapter 5.3.1) and have different religious affiliations, interaction with them may entail lending one's *mwili* (body) to the other's practices. Secondly, with reference to Pentecostal narratives,

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[28] Interestingly, the rhetoric of the independence discourse references Zanzibar's cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitanism that includes those with ties across the Indian ocean—Muslims as part of the *umma*—and excludes those without these ties—Christians (see chapter 2.1.1 where I delineate this argument).

Zanzibar is a place where the "spiritual warfare" of celestial forces has effects on human practices. Thereby, struggles in the spiritual sphere materialize in the worldly sphere of Zanzibar.

The *Buki*-spirits[29] are said to have arrived in Zanzibar via the Comoros from Madagascar and they are said to be Christian (Brooks 2012, personal communication; Larsen 2008: 68, 75).[30] During a *Kibuki* ceremony, to invite the *Buki*-spirits into the members' bodies, much brandy is consumed, which is justified by reference to the *Buki*-spirits' inclination towards the alcohol that the French missionaries brought to Madagascar and the Comoros.[31] Few people relate this to the historical event, when French Catholic missionaries moved their headquarters from la Reunion to Zanzibar in 1860 (Royer 2006). Only brandy and no other alcohol is accepted by the *Buki*-spirits, referring to the missionaries' selective taste. With regard to women's smoking of cigarettes, which is equally attributed to Christian consumption habits, the label of the cigarettes is less important. During each ceremony, one of the members provides a mix of incense, including frankincense, to be inhaled by the other members. Although frankincense is also used in the Catholic Church, the *Buki*-spirits' attraction to bodies that have inhaled frankincense is discursively not connected to the spirits' affiliation to Christianity, but rather to their being spirits. Also in other contexts in Zanzibar, spirits from various *makabila* are gratified by incense. Whereas members of a *Kibuki* group use brandy, the cigarettes and the incense to actively invite the *Buki*-spirits, further preconditions must be met amongst all participants, including the audience, to avoid the spirits' possible resentment. The most important of these preconditions is the removal of headscarfs and coverings from foot soles, but also the heavily amplified dancing music plays a crucial role in successfully pleasing the Christian *Buki*-spirits. These attributes underline the Christians' otherness from Muslims. Muslim women need to cover their heads, Muslims do not necessarily need to cover the soles of their feet (in fact, the feet are an integral part of ritual washing), Muslims are also

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[29] Although *Kibuki* ceremonies are contested and although they are enacted by a small number of people only, *Kibuki* spirit possession provides an interesting case that also in Zanzibar is often discursively addressed by those who do not attend the ceremonies and thus included in this chapter.

[30] Although I have not encountered them, Larsen also writes about *Buki*-spirits who have converted to Islam (2008: 68). As part of the *kibuki* ceremonies, however, they would be termed "bad Muslims" (see also Giles 1987: 240).

[31] See, however, a different narrative that Elizabeth Brooks presents in her article (2015: 132).

portrayed as favoring calm and soothing music[32]. As such, the neglect of all of
these attributes emphasizes a deliberate otherness from Muslims. Mostly (female)
Muslims are possessed by these *Buki*-spirits and nourish the relationships to their
spirit(s). They lend their bodies, *miwili*, with which and through which they are
Muslims of the *umma* (see chapter 5.2.1, see also Ware 2014: 239–241) to Chris-
tian spirits with whom they have a relation. *Miwili* here oscillate between being
Muslim and being Christian. On the one hand, the relationship between a human
and a spirit with different religious affiliations marks an instance of lived Muslim-
Christian relations, but on the other hand, shared bodies are very particular and
intimate spaces of encounter that complicate how Muslim-Christian relations need
to be described. In possession ceremonies, such as the *Ngoma ya kibuki*, these
interreligious relations happen in the "and" (see chapter 5.2.3, Lambek 2015):
because *mwili* is *both* detachable from the self/soul (*nafsi*) *and* inseparable from
it, spirits who in the instances of possession climb to the head and take control
over *mwili* engage in a bodily interreligious encounter. Human hosts who cele-
brate their relation to a particular spirit equally participate in this encounter by
agreeing. However, the human *nafsi* never meets the spirit while s/he has climbed
to the head and taken over the control of *mwili*. These particular interreligious
relations matter within the context of healing whereby the Christian *Buki*-spirits
can cause afflictions that are healed through a well-maintained relationship with
the respective afflicting spirit. Justified through the theme of healing (see next
chapter), the *Kibuki* ceremonies inspire Muslims to engage in practices specifically
ascribed to Christians and to lend their *miwili* to "interreligious" relations within
the spiritual landscape of Zanzibar.

The spiritual landscape of Zanzibar is also prevalent in Pentecostal Chris-
tian narratives that identify the increasing violence in Zanzibar as indicator of
the advancement of a spiritual warfare. As Tanzania's place of Muslim majority,
Pentecostal Christians project Zanzibar as dominated by evil powers that allow
for Muslims to thrive in Zanzibar. Their Pentecostal evangelization activities un-
balance the spiritual stability which manifests in outbursts of violence:

> acts of violence against Christians were interpreted as acts of desperation un-
> dertaken by the enemy because the allies and collaborators of the Devil were
> losing ground in the spiritual realm. In despair over their loss of spiritual
> influence they could only do one thing: try to scare the Christian presence
> away from the islands by turning to violence. (Olsson 2016: 160)

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[32] This is also connected to *ustaarabu* (see chapter 2.1.2).

Other Christian groups, namely Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans, do not approve of the Pentecostals' intervention as it disrupts their efforts of establishing and nurturing amicable relations to Muslims in Zanzibar, for example through the "interreligious dialogue." To them, the Pentecostals' outreach into Zanzibari society—much disliked by Muslims—disconnects Christians from Muslims. Nevertheless, the spiritual landscape to which Pentecostals refer with regard to their social (evangelizing) engagements also connects Muslims and Christians in a shared environment: Zanzibar as place where Muslims and Christians live and as place that is influenced by spiritual turmoil.

Including the spiritual realm, Zanzibar as place of encounter is established through techniques of relating and differentiating Muslims and Christians and thereby enacting the concomitant categories: "Muslim" and "Christian." For (Pentecostal) Christians, Muslims in Zanzibar nurture the dominance of Islam in Zanzibar and are thus a threat to the union's proclaimed secularity (see above: footnote 26). Meanwhile, for (many) Muslims, such as Omar, Christians' presence and their partaking in Zanzibar's everyday life are evaluated as jeopardizing Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*." Zanzibar as place in which these differentiations matter, with different frames of references, is employed by both Muslims and Christians. Through daily practices of co-habitation and discursive framings of difference, the place Zanzibar with its attribution as "Islamic" is enacted. Thus, both Muslims and Christians endorse Zanzibar as place of encounter—the place of Zanzibar, because it is "*ya kiislamu*," relates Muslims and Christians. Omar has shown that this relationality is not a mere descriptive tool, but part of a discursive framework. I now turn to an example in which this relationality is critically engaged with to provide grounds for judging the current situation in Zanzibar.

7.1.5. Big Funeral: The Mixed *Dini* Is Coming

The national curriculum for Tanzanian schools includes the non-obligatory subject "Divinity" and "*Elimu ya Dini ya Kiislamu*" ("Islamic Religious Studies") for Christians and Muslims respectively. In 2013 there was a debate on whether these two subjects should be merged into a single subject *Dini na Maadili* ("Religion and Ethics") to be attended by both Christians and Muslims.[33] During the time of this debate, the headlines of *An Nuur*, a weekly Zanzibari newspaper that claims

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[33]   This move, though on a different level, partially resonates with the merging of the disciplines "philosophy" and "religious studies" at the University of Dar es Salaam.

to be the *sauti ya waislamu*, "voice of Muslims," were adorned with bullet points of the contents of each article (marked by the asterisks) and posted on a well-known blog *Zanzibar Yetu* ("Our Zanzibar"). I here quote the entire blog entry with the newspaper's headlines:[34]

> **Msiba mkubwa: Dini Mseto yaja**
> * Waislam, Wakristo kufundishwa dini moja
> * Ni Heri Zanzibar watakuwa na nchi yao
> * Bukoba kuna nini? Bakwata walitoka huko
> **Hakuna Mahakama ya Kadhi-Tume**
> **Zanzibar walilia Benki Kuu, Uraia**
> * Wasiotaka Dola kamili wajitokeze
> * Mgombea Urais asitokee Dodoma
> * Wakumbusha ya 'Kura za Karume
> **Vita kubwa ipo mbele**
> * Ni vita ya kuondoa dhulma, ubaguzi
> * Bila kung'oa 'MFUMO' hakuna salama
> **Tahariri:** *Kama hizi ndio 'First Class' zetu nchi haiendi kokote*
> **Polisi kichaka cha uhalifu?**
> **Wakristo na Waislam:** *Panapotokea vita majeruhi wa kwanza ni ukweli*
> **Hatari ya kuharakisha 'kulaani' matukio ya ugaidi**
> **Ya akina Bush, Clinton yasijirudie kwa Obama**
> **Hizbullah waangamiza waasi 20 Lebanon**
> **Misri wapinga ujenzi wa bwawa Ethiopia**
>
> **Big Funeral: The Mixed *Dini* is Coming**
> * Muslims and Christians are taught one religion
> * It is the good fortune of Zanzibar that they will have their own land
> * What is in Bukoba? BAKWATA comes from there
> **There is no Kadhi Court-Commission**
> **Zanzibar has cried over the main bank, Uraia**
> * Those who don't want Dollars at all, they better leave
> * The presidential candidate should not leave Dodoma
> * They recall the Karume Polls
> **A big war is ahead**
> * It's a war to abolish injustice and discrimination
> * Without uprooting the 'SYSTEM' there is no peace
> **Editorial:** *If this indeed is our 'First Class' the country won't go anywhere*
> **Is the police a bush of crime?**
> **Christians and Muslims:** *Where the war breaks out, the first casualty is*

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34 Zanzibariyetu, "Soma gazeti lako" An-Nuur Ijumaa, 7 June 2013, https://zanzibari-yetu.wordpress.com/2013/06/07/soma-gazeti-lako-an_nuur-ijumaa/.

truth
It is dangerous to speed up the 'condemnation' of terrorism events
People around Bush, Clinton don't come back with Obama
Hezbollah destroyed 20 rebels in Lebanon
Egypt opposes the construction of the dam in Ethiopia
(translation aided by Jasmin Mahazi [18 December 2016], bold and italics
in original.)

Certainly, *An-Nuur* is a decidedly Islamic and pro-independence newspaper and certainly the newspaper's leaning must be taken into consideration, but still, the juxtaposition of *An Nuur*'s headlines of this particular day in June 2013 (and Salma Said's re-posting of them on the *Zazibar Yetu*-blog) showcases the sentiments of discontent with regard to politics in Zanzibar that I have addressed above. The leading article on the proposed shared school subject "Religion and Ethics" is entitled "Big Funeral: The mixed Dini is coming." It links the political proposition to syncretism that the term *dini mseto* invokes[35] and thus to negative connotations and fears that are associated with syncretism: "Muslims and Christians are taught *one* religion." The bullet points, added only in the blog, mainly summarize the article, however, the point about Zanzibar's good fortune indicates the interpretative framework of Salma Said's reading. Whereas the article doubts that any sheikh in Zanzibar could agree to "*dini mseto*" being taught to any Zanzibari child and states that it would be good for Zanzibar to become independent before "Religion and Ethics" is implemented as a school subject, Salma Said's point suggests that the separation of Zanzibar and the Tanzanian mainland is inevitable. Her point highlights that subjects that touch on the topic of the government's management of "religion" are immediately connected to a discourse on Zanzibar's independence. Salma Said's last point on this article reifies the unease with which the Tanzanian government's relation to Islam is viewed in Zanzibar. Bukoba, a remote town in north-west Tanzania that hosts important Christian dioceses (for the Catholic and the Lutheran Churches), was the place in which a pro-*ujamaa* group split from the "East African Muslim Welfare Society" (EAMWS) and formed BAKWATA, which had good relations to Nyerere's government and until today claims to represent Muslims politically, effectively replacing EAMWS. The founding members of BAKWATA are regarded to be highly influenced by the Christian dominance in Bukoba and until today BAKWATA is perceived to be too tolerant of the "Christian" government. Salma Said's question about what

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[35] See interview with Daniel Madsen, 3 January 2014, Stone Town, Zanzibar Town.

is in Bukoba reinvigorates the issue of the Christian influence over BAKWATA. She thereby comments that BAKWATA's involvement in the establishment of the school subject "Religion and Ethics" does not meet the requirements of including Muslims' concerns. Surfacing in the leading article, the concerns for the country's future, entangled with questions of religion, can be traced throughout the entire issue of the newspaper. Stretching from domestic issues (jural structures, economics, social equality, security) to global dynamics (terrorism, US-presidency, Middle East conflct, Egypt's water supplies), the entire issue can be read in light of Zanzibar's decidedly Islamic orientation that is situated in opposition to a Christian "other." In the context of Zanzibar's tensions with the Tanzanian mainland and of Muslims' struggles worldwide, the leading article's headline (and the de-facto title of the blog post) "Big Funeral: The Mixed *Dini* is Coming" pronounces the fear of a hidden Christianization under the pretext of "interreligiosity." I here sketch the sentiments that I have commonly encountered in Zanzibar and that I saw epitomized in Salma Said's blog entry. For the broader framework of how Muslims and Christians speak about each other and to each other, see Thomas Ndaluka's elaborate analysis of Muslim-Christian discourse in which he delineates an "image of creolization and coexistence rather than conflict" (2012: 214) that he relates back to Tanzania's *ujamaa*-politics (2012: 27). Certainly, also in Zanzibar, peaceful coexistence is part and parcel of daily interactions, but I here wish to point to the differentiating tendencies that have not only become politicized, but were also amplified during my research at the time of the "Government of National Unity" (GNU, see chapter 2.2) and that were important to Omar in our discussion on kombe and Zanzibar "*ya kiislamu.*"

Omar implicitly claimed that this process of opening up Zanzibar's ties to Islam was well underway: due to Christian influence, Zanzibar's *tabia* could not be termed "real Islamic." Despite a considerable history of Muslim-Christian relations in Zanzibar, Omar's perception of Christians as threat to a "real Islamic" characteristics is not uncommon and intricately linked to Zanzibar's political situation. As a reaction to these developments in which Islam and Christianity are pitted increasingly violently against each other, the "interreligious dialogue," established within international networks, presents itself as solution. Researching kombe ("Islamic medicine"), my attention as a Christian was repeatedly drawn to the "interreligious dialogue." In the following section I engage with and situate the problems that Hakimu Saleh associates with the notion of an inter*religious* dialogue.

7.2. *Dini*: "Religion," *Dīn,* and the "Interreligious Dialogue"

When kombe is described as *dawa* "*ya kiislamu,*" this specification of *dawa* as "Islamic" evokes distinguishable and overlapping notions of Islam: the all-encompassing qualities of Islam as the one and only *dini* intra-act (are entangled and differentiated) with Islam as "religion." Building on a conversation that I had with Hakimu Saleh, this section scrutinizes *dini* and "religion."[36] It references the "interreligious dialogue" in Zanzibar that showcases these differentiatings and their political context and finally examines genealogies of *dīn* and "religion" in preparation to further explore the ways in which kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* epitomizes the intra-action of how Muslims and Christians drink kombe.

7.2.1. Hakimu Saleh on the "Interreligious Dialogue"

I was in the kitchen with his wife Bi Rehema when Hakimu Saleh arrived.[37] He greeted us from the door, and while he slipped out of his sandals, I ended the conversation with Bi Rehema and turned towards the main room where our session was about to take place. Hakimu Saleh's smile of a rascal assured me that he was looking forward to our meeting and had something interesting to tell me. We exchanged proper greetings and he handed me DVDs of theological debates between Muslims and Christians in which it is proven that the Qurʾan is superior to the Bible.[38] These DVDs are widely available in Zanzibar, and my positive anticipation of that day's session for a moment received a slight dent. Hakimu Saleh and I had found a way before to accept that I had not yet seen the light and that God surely has a plan lined up for me and that any discussion before I was called by God Himself was futile. The DVDs prepared me for another discussion in this direction, but my unease lifted when I thought about the conversation about the "interreligious dialogue" that I had overheard the week before. I was curious

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[36] Note that in the conversation with Hakimu Saleh, and thus in this section, *dini* was not explained in terms of *mila* as much of the literature about the Swahili Coast suggests. For the absence of *mila* in my research, see 2.1.3.

[37] 11 November 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[38] See John Chesworth's PhD thesis (2008: chapter 7) on tracts, small booklets, and other publications that are available for sale by numerous street vendors and Islamic bookshops in Zanzibar Town. The DVDs that Hakimu Saleh brought show enactments of the debates that these publications prepare for.

about Hakimu Saleh's viewpoint, and hoped that the DVDs might provide a good entry point to ask him further about it.

In the translations of the following conversation, I distinguish between *dini* and "religion." Although Hakimu Saleh consistently used "*dini*," I aim to stress and clarify his point about *dini*'s approximation to a western concept of "religion" and the limitations thereof. Concretely, I retain the Swahili "*dini*" in cases that I perceive to refer to an Islamic—and, by extension, to a Zanzibari—notion and translate "*dini*" into "religion" in cases that I perceive to refer to a western notion of "religion." The following paragraphs will show that this analytic separation is marked by entanglements, that *dini* and "religion" intra-act.

Hakimu Saleh sat down opposite me—as usual on his knees and with his back straight. As expected, we talked about the Muslim-Christian debates for a little while and then I could ask:

HANNA: I have heard that priests and sheikhs here in Zanzibar and—I don't know who exactly—sit together. It's called, mhhh—"interreligious" [English word used]–

HAKIMU SALEH: Ah, this, this mix, this one. Ah, now you are asking me a question! *Mseto.* It is called *dini mseto.*

HANNA: *Dini mseto.*

HAKIMU SALEH: Yes, *dini mseto.* "Mix," "mix" [in English], *mseto* is "mix." Christianity and Islam together. But there is something I want to tell you about this mixed government, this government *ya mseto*: it is not. There is no *dini mseto*. *Dini mseto*, for me does not exist, because *dini* is one. Do you hear? Also the books say so, it says so in the Qurᵓan. Do you hear? Perhaps wait, I will give to you the Aya for you to write it down, eh? Today we are going to talk about this issue. Ours we will–

HANNA: Yes, we can talk about this Tuesday later. [We were going through the days of the week for me to learn the properties of the weekdays in order to prepare kombe at the right time. "Tuesday" was the topic designated for this session.]

He searches for the correct Aya in the Swahili interpretation and continues:

HAKIMU SALEH: Do you hear? I tell you, here Almighty God says so in the Qurᵓan. Sura 3: "There is no *dini* except for this one *dini*."[39] Have you already heard this?

Yes, I had already heard this, I thought and opened my eyes widely while nodding slightly. But Hakimu Saleh clearly had an urge to teach me about this *dini mseto*—and I was curious about his stance.[40]

The "government *ya mseto*" that he mentioned refers to Tanzania's secularity as declared in the constitution.[41] To comply with the union's proclaimed secularity, the religious diversity of the ministers in office is important, at least to people in Zanzibar. Ideally, so the argumentation goes, a well-balanced diversity would facilitate political decision-making that would not be based on references to one or another "religion." The percentages of religious representation in parliament, thus, are subject to constant contention (Maoulidi 2014). Hakimu Saleh's lamentation that the Tanzanian government was not (religiously) mixed echoes a common perception about Christian dominance in the union's political decision making body.[42] The switch from content-related *dini mseto* to the structure-related government *ya mseto* and back highlights the entanglement between "religion" and politics.

The problem that Hakimu Saleh wanted me to understand here, however, is a different one. *Dini* is singular which he grounds in the recitation of verse 3:19. With this singularity there can be no mix of different religions—religio*ns* in the plural do not exist. And thus, there can be no (religiously) mixed government, no secularism. Proceeding from his proclamation of Islam as the only *dini*≠"religion," I wondered how Christianity featured in its singularity. On the one hand, I was interested in understanding how, given this singularity, he made sense of Christianity that is often juxtaposed to Islam on the premise that these two are the most common "religions" in Zanzibar. On the other hand, and this transpired

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[39] In Haleem's interpretation of the Qurᵓan, the first part of Aya 3:19 is: "True Religion, in God's eyes, is Islam: [devotion to Him alone]." See also the interpretation by Hilali and Khan on which Hakimu Saleh's bilingual *msahafu* is based: "Truly, the religion with Allah is Islam."

[40] Daniel Madsen from the Interfaith Centre (see below: 7.2.3) also mentioned *dini mseto* (3 January 2014). He translated it as "syncretism," which, indeed, concurs with what Hakimu Saleh strove to express.

[41] See above, see footnote 26.

[42] To be more precise, the lamentations target the Catholic dominance and on these grounds are also shared by many Pentecostals (Maoulidi 2014).

to be an underlying concern, my question about Christianity evoked a response geared to my positionality as a Christian, which Hakimu Saleh slowly led up to.

HAKIMU SALEH: Now, if you want to pursue this idea, we need to fetch the Bible so I can show you.[43] Because then, when you follow this up, you will see that *dini* is one, Islam…
… and Christians say it's two different ones!

he added disapprovingly while shaking his head.

Ignoring the implicit judgment, I acknowledged that this perception of different religions *is* necessary for an "*inter*religious dialogue." And that the *mseto* is crooked. I found myself again uneasily entangled in global power structures. What would an interreligious dialogue look like without the precondition of juxtaposing several "religions"? How did Hakimu Saleh and I solve it on a small scale and did we really?

Hakimu Saleh offered to fetch the Bible and thereby applied the authority given to a physically present *msahafu*[44] directly to a presumed authority of the physically present Bible over Christians. Through this application he situated Islam and Christianity within a shared framework—a shared framework that is also found when Islam and Christianity are both described as "religions." Despite this implicit comparison, the explicit content of his argumentation continued to reveal that, once I follow his explanations, I will understand that *dini* is singular and that this singular *dini* is Islam. Against this singularity of *dini*, Hakimu Saleh pitted the notion of coexisting differing "religions" that he attributed to Christians. From his viewpoint of *dini* as an all-encompassing worldview, he aimed at convincing me to discard the notion of "religion" with its ingrained possibility of plurality in order to be able to embrace *dini* that singularly is Islam. Thus, the added remark at the end in which he diasapprovingly noted that "Christians say it's two different ones," is a pivotal point where the two notions of *dini* and "religion" collapse into each other. Here, what I analytically distinguish as *dini* and "religion" are entangled in an instance of inseparability. *Dini* is one, so every other proclaimed *dini*, in the framework of "religion," is not.

As our conversation progressed, he made three moves from this pivotal point: firstly he resumed the topic of the "interreligious dialogue," which—as there is no other *dini* (sticking to the intra-active collapse of *dini* and "religion")—cannot

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[43] Note that the Bible is one of the authoritative books also in Islam.
[44] See "material citations" in chapter 3.2.

be about *dini* unless the "interreligious dialogue" is about Islam only.[45] Secondly, he concluded this small part by reiterating the first part of the Aya 3:19, both as recitation and through the read English interpretation given in his bilingual *msahafu*. He thereby did not only solidify the instantiation of the Qurʾan in the room, but also catered to my inability to understand by adding the authorized interpretation; he "materially cited" (see chapter 3.2). Lastly, he prompted me, a Christian who had agreed to learn from him and who had listened to his explanations about *dini*≠"religion," to embark on the search for the one *dini*. He thereby put into practice what he had explained before: conversations between Muslims and Christians about "religion" need to be about the primacy of the singular *dini* that is Islam.

With Hakimu Saleh, the notions of *dini* as all-encompassing worldview and "religion" which can be talked about in the plural (placing Islam and Christianity next to each other) intra-act. I have marked the simultaneity of *dini* and "religion" being distinguishable and inseparable by putting the separating slash under erasure (which simultaneously crosses out the connecting dash).[46] The differentiation between them that I have marked by using *dini* and "religion" matters through their intra-action, however, their intra-action also entangles them at times into inseparability. This epistemological flexibility is contained in Hakimu Saleh's use of the Swahili word "*dini*" which enables him to comment on the "interreligious dialogue" by emphasizing the singularity of *dini*. Before I engage further with the implications of how Hakimu Saleh used *dini*, I briefly provide some details about the "interreligious dialogue" in Zanzibar with which I do not only contextualize Hakimu Saleh's conversation with me, but also show how it is entangled within global power structures that find repercussions in the intra-action of *dini*≠ "religion."

7.2.2. Interreligious Dialogue in Zanzibar

The "Joint Committee of Religious Leaders for Peace in Zanzibar," established in 2005, combines Christian actors (Anglican Church, Lutheran Church, Catholic

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[45] Note that there have been similar conclusions in Christian theology. Karl Barth's neo-orthodox theology is associated with this stance, in particular his "theology of religion," although recently a different reading of Barth's works gains prominence (Chung 2005; Thompson 2006; Greggs 2011; Hennecke 2018).

[46] I have done this before in chapter 5.2 with the body≠mind complex which shows how the different parts of this thesis are interwoven.

Church) with Muslim actors (Mufti's office, Qadi's Court, WAQF & Trust Committee, Muslim Academy) and aims at building structures to facilitate and strengthen a peaceful togetherness based on mutual tolerance. It is interesting to note who is not involved: neither Hindus nor Pentecostals. Pastor Daniel[47] from one of the newer evangelical churches, for example, was dissatisfied with the lack of consideration given to small churches. He asserted that the "interreligious dialogue" with which the Joint Committee is commonly associated, was still in the process of being established, already acquired considerable media presence, and that sooner or later the small churches would have to be included. The Joint Committee has set up "local peace committees" spread out across Unguja and Pemba that are meant to distribute the Joint Committee's work and to give feedback. The Interfaith Centre is the structure that supports the Joint Committee.[48] It was initiated by the Lutheran Church and is aided by the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of the Lutheran Church in Tanzania and by Danmission, a Danish mission and development organization, related to the Lutheran Church. Through the "Inter-Religious Council of Peace Tanzania" (IRCPT),[49] the Joint Committee is also connected to the "African Council of Religious Leaders—Religions for Peace" (ACRL-RfP).[50] It thereby is linked to global structures in which the discourse about inter-religious engagement is framed through conferences[51] or representational meetings.[52] However, despite the international reach of the structures in which the Joint Committee is embedded, these structures highly rely on Christian networks, which prompts questions about a Christian bias in the establishment of importance of interreligious work.

Furthermore, the political mood in Tanzania encourages these kinds of initiatives, as the United States' "Religious Freedom Report 2012" shows.[53] However,

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[47] 3 February 2014, Mbweni, Zanzibar Town

[48] Daniel Madsen, 3 January 2014, Stone Town, Zanzibar Town. See more about it here: "Case study: Zanzibar Interfaith Centre," accessed 7 March 2018, http://www.actionsupportcentre.co.za/case-study-zanzibar-interfaith-centre/.

[49] See INter-Religious Council for Peace Tanzania, accessed 7 March 2018, http://ircpt.or.tz/.

[50] See their webpage: Religions for Peace, accessed 7 March 2018, https://rfp.org/connect/rfp-networks/africa/.

[51] See for example: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, accessed 8 August 2016, http://elctecd.org/cms/en/the-conference-of-religious-leaders-on-terrorism/.

[52] See for example the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, "Bundespräsident Gauck in Tansania," 9 February 2015, http://www.kas.de/wf/de/33.40417/.

[53] Available at: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/208416.pdf (accessed 7 March 2018).

again, the importance of paying attention to "religious freedom" and to an "interreligious dialogue" is a situated value—situated in western ideas of equality.[54] The historical ties of the established mission churches to the west fortify accusations of the "interreligious dialogue" being a Christian project (see Hakimu Saleh above).

According to Daniel Madsen, who had been working for the Interfaith Centre since 2010, the initial focus of the Joint Committee was on the national elections in 2010, which were feared to trigger violence with reference to religion. Mainly through influencing media coverage, the Joint Committee helped to appease public opinion. Since 2010, the focus has shifted to counter recent developments suggesting an increase in violent tensions along religious lines (see above: 7.1.3). Next to *uamsho*'s agenda and the uprisings in May 2012 that resulted in the burning of two churches, the murder of a Catholic bishop of Zanzibar in February 2013 points to increasingly antagonistic forces. At the time of research, the referendum on the new constitution was expected to be held in April 2015 and it was feared that political issues would be brokered through their transposition into religious issues. Daniel Madsen draws his motivation to work for the Interfaith Centre from his conviction that Christians should be able to live peacefully alongside Muslims. This view is shared by many people in Zanzibar, something which was particularly amplified in the reactions to religiously framed conflicts: anonymous peace-propagating inhabitants of Zanzibar, for example, copied and distributed a stamp from 1963 (celebrating independence and religious tolerance) on house walls across Stone Town. Activities like these invest in the maintenance of Zanzibar's heritage[55] of religious tolerance.

However, many people, as I was told in Chukwani,[56] are disillusioned about the effectiveness of these committees and their meetings. Daniel Madsen[57] from the Interfaith Centre is well aware of these opinions and also stressed the "fear of syncretism" that he encountered extensively. On the one hand, this shows the importance of including actors in positions that will not be challenged by the public to soften their religious standpoint. The Chief Qadi, for example, is very unlikely to be assumed to become a Christian. On the other hand, the fear of syncretism

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[54] Ali Muhsin Al Barwani (1997: chapter 2) extends this notion to "secularism" being a Christian affair.

[55] This is the result of a very particular historiography, in which the past's atmosphere of tolerance was stressed and set up against more violent tensions in more recent times. See also chapter 2.2.

[56] 12 October 2013, Chukwani, Zanzibar Town.

[57] 3 Januar 2014, Stone Town, Zanzibar Town.

(b) Stamp celebrating religious toler-
ance, image from colnect.com.

(a) Photocopy of stamp placarded
across Stone Town in 2013

Figure 24.: Religious tolerance on a stamp and beyond

shows an awareness of the possibility of change through engagement with the
other religion and of possibly blasphemous challenges to unquestioned Islamic
principles.[58] The different epistemologies that I have marked as *dini* and "religion"
are not only entangled with each other and historically rooted in Zanzibar, but also
have their genealogies in the Islamic concept of "*dīn*" (Arabic) and the western
concept of "religion" to which I turn now.

7.2.3. *Dīn*—Islam and the *Umma*

Hakimu Saleh repeatedly refers to Islam and attributes his understanding of *dini* to
Islamic teaching. The notion of the Arabic term *dīn* as it appears in the Qurʾan is
pivotal here. In Qurʾanic studies, three main conceptions of *dīn* in the Qurʾan have

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[58] It will be interesting to compare this to Erik Meinema's PhD thesis (forthcoming) on youth
and religious co-existence in coastal Kenya.

been distinguished in relation to the periodization of the revelations to Muhammad:[59] firstly, in the first and second Meccan period, *dīn* refers to "accountability before God" or to "judgement"/"retribution" (Brodeur 2004: 396). Secondly, in the third Meccan period, *dīn* is connoted with "commitment" to the "oneness of God" (*tawḥīd* in Arabic) (Haddad 1974: 118). Brodeur elaborates: "The word *dīn* is now no longer only about accountability for a future day of judgement: *dīn* is God's right path for human beings on earth at all times" (2004: 396). For the purpose of fleshing out Hakimu Saleh's uses of *dini* in Swahili for which he leans on the Qurˀan, the third conception relating to the Medinan period is of most interest here: Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad states that "in the Medinan period we seem to be moving from an emphasis on *tawḥīd* [oneness of God] to one on the unity of the *umma*, from *dīn* as a reference to personal commitment to one in the collective sense" and in a footnote she emphasizes that this marks a "shift identifying groups with the *dīn* they follow" (1974: 120). Similarly, Brodeur states the following about *dīn* in the Medinan period: "*Dīn* is now about collective commitment to live up to God's 'straight path.' *Dīn* then means 'religion' both in the sense of a prescribed set of behaviors [...] as well as a specific community of Muslims"[60] (2004: 396). With the move to the Medinan setting, where co-existence with Jews, Christians, and "pagans" shaped people's daily lives, the conception of *dīn* evolved to respond to the local situation. Vis-à-vis groups of "others," the emphasis on the community of Muhammad's followers becomes central. Of course, these different conceptions of *dīn* are entangled and the other senses of *dīn* have repercussions also in verse 3:19 which is attributed to this third conception of *dīn*. Influenced by these differentiations, interpretations of the Qurˀan in English term the third conception of *dīn* mostly "religion," which has its own repercussions in contemporary understandings of the term *dīn*. Brodeur, who in the *Encyclopedia of the Qurˀān* has written the entry on "Religion," ends his contribution with the following observations:

> these linguistic changes in contemporary Arabic [finding a plural form of *dīn*] reflect the unavoidable influence of the current global power dynamics that affect almost unilaterally the direction of change: the meanings traditionally

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[59] In the Second Edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Louis Gardet criticizes these disinctions and refers to their entanglements. While this is highly appreciated, I chose to revisit especially the third concept of *dīn* keeping in mind their productive entanglements.

[60] In the following sentence Brodeur comments on *dīn*'s degrees of purity through which Jews and Christians partake in *dīn*, albeit in corrupted ways.

> associated with the Arabic word *dīn* are gradually merging into those associated with the English words "religion" and "religions" [...]. The very name of this entry within an English language *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān* reinforces such power dynamics, affecting our efforts at reconstructing a qurʾānic understanding of the concept *dīn*. [...] In this respect, [...] this encyclopedia entry [...] demonstrate[s] how meanings are constantly created and re-created within both culturally received yet continually changing hermeneutical processes. (2004: 398)

Brodeur's self-reflexive comments draw attention to the situatedness of terms and inherent power relations. However, although the *Encyclopedia of the Qurʾān* discusses the conceptions of *dīn* under the entry of "Religion," other important English language reference works, such as Brill's vital *Encyclopedia of Islam* or the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* both list their explorations under *Dīn*.

     The translation in Hakimu Saleh's *msahafu* of *dīn* into "religion" does not only reflect the verse's periodization as Medinan and thus accentuates the community aspect glossed as "religion," it is also entangled with contemporary power relations in which the terms *dīn* and "religion" become interwoven. Hakimu Saleh chose verse 3:19, because its translation of *dīn* as "religion" enabled him to link the Islamic conceptions of *dīn* (primarily its singularity) to my initial question about the inter*religious* dialogue. Although the Qurʾanic conception of *dīn* is closely connected also to the "people of the book" (Arabic: *ahl al-kitāb*), that is Jews and Christians, who enjoy a status of toleration in the Qurʾan, Hakimu Saleh does not distinguish between Christians and other non-Muslims and maintains the singularity of *dini*. For him—and this reflects the broader discourse in Zanzibar—the Christians are the "other" to Muslims. However, at the same time, the session turned into an opportunity to teach me about the singularity of *dini*. His indebtedness is thereby related to a concept of "religion" which exists also in the plural (as "religions" engaging in an interreligious dialogue), a concept that he attributes to the Christians.

7.2.4. "Religion"—Western Potentials for Plurality

The way that Hakimu Saleh connects *dini* to the inter*religious* dialogue and thus to a concept of "religion" presupposes a notion of a possible plurality of instantiations of what a "religion" is that facilitates coexistence. Simultaneously, the term "religion" (in the singular) demarcates that which is set apart from the "non-religious." It thereby acts as "collective singular" (Schlieter 2010a: 14 referring to

Koselleck 2005). This distinction between the "religious" and the "non-religious" can be made in myriad ways as the uncountable definitions of "religion" show.[61] For Hakimu Saleh, the distinction runs along the lines of the dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. In one of our very first meetings when he was still in the process of explaining the contents of his work to me, he stated that:

> HAKIMU SALEH: All of these things we do, this medicine, all of these things. Their problems are very big. They are twofold as I have told you. I have told you one: physical [in English], the second: *ya kiroho* ["spiritual"]. Now, this treatment is treatment for spiritual things.[62]

As also is apparent in this quote, the distinction between the physical and the spiritual was a reoccurring theme that did not only help him to distinguish his treatment from other treatment options, in particular from treatments of the government's hospital, it also accounted for the way that he received his payment as *sadaka*.[63] Although in this particular instance he used "physical" and *ya kiroho*, in other instances he also interchangeably used the English words "material" for "physical" and "spiritual" for "*ya kiroho*." He also often used metaphors of visuality: the physical was often referred to as the visually perceptible and the spiritual as the hidden.[64] The dichotomy, however, between two realms, one of which can only be approached with practices related to *dini*, was consistent throughout our exchanges. Despite *dini*'s all-encompassing quality, Hakimu Saleh makes a distinction between the physical (that which can also be accessed through other means) and the spiritual (that which can only be accessed within a framework of *dini*). He thus sets certain aspects apart from others, just as, he acknowledges, Christians

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[61] See most elaborately Hent de Vries' edited volume *Religion: Beyond a Concept* (2008). In his introduction, De Vries describes how rather than the search for a "classificatory regime," it is fruitful to engage with the "reverberations" that the term "religion" induces in particular contexts. Thus, in its first part, entitled "What is Religion?" the anthology includes chapters by Michael Lambek, Jan Assmann, and Daniel Boyarin (amongst others) who show engagement with (and contestations of) the term "religion" in different contexts.
See also James Bielo's *Anthropology of Religion: The Basics* (2015). In his first chapter Bielo traces the genealogy of nine different definitions of "religion" to showcase that any definition of religion is situated and takes up particular angles of the "wide-ranging contents and boundaries of religious life" (2015: 28). Talal Asad's work on the *Genealogies of Religion* (1993) has been instructive for these approaches (see also below).

[62] 8 April 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

[63] *Sadaka* translates to "offering." Being engaged in "spiritual" treatment he cannot demand payment and calculate for material benefits, but must rely on spiritual offerings that the patients donate to him. See also chapter 2.1.1.

[64] See chapter 6.1.

also do—a comparability that he establishes by responding to my question about the inter*religious* dialogue with his teachings on *dini.*

The term "religion" that I also heuristically employ here, is not neutral. It is embedded in Eurocentric genealogies to which Wilfred Cantwell Smith drew attention in 1962. His contribution was well-received by religious studies, in which an ongoing debate about a possible adoption of the term for non-European contexts thrives. Timothy Fitzgerald rejects the term "religion" for non-European contexts, contending that it carries a more or less tacit theological agenda (that most importantly separates "religion" from "culture" and thus confirms "religious studies") and that it sustains an imperialist ideology (1997, see also Dubuisson 2007 and Tyrell 1996: 442). In a similar vein, Abdulkader Tayob's intervention is targeted at considering conceptualizations of *dīn* in relation to "religion." Tayob engages with the discipline of "the study of religions" which he accuses of neglecting scholarship that, under the Arabic term *dīn*, contributes in its own way to conceptualizations of "religion." "Recognizing this intellectual labor suggests that we appreciate a discourse of religion amongst Muslim reformists who are usually only studied as objects for analysis" (Tayob 2018: 19). Within these important and absolutely necessary postcolonial interventions, the use of the term "religion" as an analytical category and as an object of investigation has been critically investigated, which did not so much lead to a rejection of the term "religion," as to an opening of a field of critical comparability.

The plural form, "religions," epitomizes comparability between *a* "religion" and *another* "religion." Tomoko Masuzawa has shown how the emergence of a pluralist discourse on "religion"—and "world religion(s)" in particular—is intricately linked to a discourse of othering and embedded in developments of secularization in that it sought to understand the "non-modern" determination by "archaic metaphysics of the magical and the supernatural" (2005: 16). Showing awareness of the problematic genealogy of the term "religion" (though based on different literature), Robert Ford Campany takes seriously non-European analogies of the term (his study focuses on medieval Chinese metaphors analogous to "religion") and points to the virtues of comparability under the term "religion" as opposed to "othering" similar non-European concepts by naming them "magic," "superstition," "witchcraft," or "heresy" (Ford Campany 2003). The question of equivalents in non-European contexts and their comparability to "religion," both as an analytical concept and as an object of investigation, hinges on conceptualizations of "religion."

The multiplicity of definitions and the term's appropriation in various contexts to delimit "tradition" or "culture"[65] (not least to justify an academic discipline of the "study of religion" and its departments) are not only the result of (comparative) studies of groups and practices, but also the precondition under which they are studied as "religious" groups pursuing "religious" practices. This "circular relation" (*zirkuläres Verhältnis*,[66] Schlieter 2010b: 250) of the term's tool-object dichotomy has been addressed by Adrian Hermann, who advocates a paradigmatic shift towards a focus on the adaptation of the discursive term "religion," taking its global spread seriously (2015: 102, 127–131, drawing on Matthes 2005), in a similar move to Talal Asad's campaign for "Islam as a discursive tradition" (2009). Embracing the multiplicity of the discourses on "religion," Hermann, in his second paradigmatic shift, calls for analyses of the historical processes through which instantiations within this multiplicity emerged.

Although I cannot provide many details on the historical processes through which the term "religion" came into contact with *dini*, Hakimu Saleh's reaction shows how the inter*religious* dialogue and its presuppositions on "religion" has particular implications in Zanzibar and its references to Islam. For Hakimu Saleh, the inherent plural of "religions" provoked dismay, causing him to differentiate vigorously between this concept of (what I translated as) "religion" that he—in light of Zanzibar's constitutionally declared non-management of religion—attributes to Christianity (with its inter*religious* dialogue), and an all-encompassing *dini* that is Islam.[67]

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[65] This became particularly important in the reactions to Clifford Geertz' influential essay "Religion as a Cultural System" (1993b) to which Talal Asad influentially responded with the essay "Religion as an Anthropological Category" (1993). In this essay Asad already points at the necessity of studying "religion" as it is historically produced (1993: 54). With particular attention to colonial encounters in southern Africa, David Chidester (1996; 2014) traces how the denial of indigenous practices as "religious" was entangled with dehumanizing justifications for colonial rule. Once under colonial control, the acknowledgement of indigenous "religious" practices gave way to "imperial comparative religion" that distinguished between "primitive" and "civilized" (1996: 28). Chidester urges a thorough engagement with the "imperial, colonial, and indigenous mediations in which knowledge about religion and religions has been generated" (2014: 313).

[66] This circular relation resembles Ian Hacking's constructivist concept of the "looping effect" with which he describes the alteration of a phenomenon due to its conceptualization as a certain phenomenon (see Hacking 1999: 34, 104-108).

[67] Unfortunately, I cannot do justice here to how Christians in Zanzibar (both those who engage in the "interreligious dialogue" and those who don't) relate to the term "religion" in this particular conceptual, post-colonial, and political constellation.

7.2.5. Translations

On the one hand, with the word choices of "religion" and *dini* that I use in translating Hakimu Saleh, I aim to do justice to his sentiments, treating those occurrences in which the to him unfavorable aspect of plurality is inherent as the western influenced "foreign" and those occurrences in which the to him favorable singularity is stressed as Swahili. Of course, these terms are not chosen arbitrarily. With the term "religion" I linguistically maintain the close link to the "interreligious dialogue" which shaped our engagement with this topic, and with the term *dini* I aim to show my acknowledgement of his normative view on what *dini* should comprise. I deliberately chose not to employ *dīn* as marker for this differentiation for two reasons. Firstly, equating the Swahili notion of *dini* with its Arabic counterpart *dīn* flattens the particularities of the Swahili notion, although, as the linguistic resemblance indicates, they are entangled.[68] Secondly, the Muslim-Christian relations in Zanzibar are marked by Christians being the Muslims' other, and not by Christians being *ahl al-kitāb* who enjoy a protected status, as the Islamic concept of *dīn* might suggest.[69]

On the other hand, alongside an attempt to do justice to Hakimu Saleh's sentiments, I also aim to mark the implicit differentiation of these overlapping and intra-acting conceptualizations as analytical categories. "*Ya kiislamu*" as specification of *dawa* evokes Islam both as an all-encompassing entity pertaining to the "spiritual" realm (Islam in the sense of *dini*) and as one possibility to specify *dawa* amongst others (Islam as "religion"). As *dawa* "*ya kiislamu*," kombe, thus, shares the simultaneity of incompatibility *and* entanglement that *dini* and "religion" bring forth in Zanzibar. With Hakimu Saleh's reaction to the interreligious dialogue, I have emphasized the differentiation between *dini* and "religion." With kombe as *dawa* "*ya kiislamu*" (see next chapter), however, the simultaneity of an all-encompassing singularity (Islam as *dini*) and a plurality of which Islam is a distinguishable part ("religion") gives rise to ambiguity.

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[68] The entanglement is not only historically grounded, but, as a Zanzibari, a Muslim (see chapter 1.2.5), Hakimu Saleh also supports his notion of *dini* with references to the Qurʾan.

[69] As delineated in the preceding subsection (7.2.3), I am aware that also the Islamically grounded concept of *dīn* and its implications for the relations between Muslims and Christians is not static and negotiated throughout the Islamicate world. However, these developments are recognized with differing degrees in Zanzibar and inform the concept of *dini*, but do not supersede Zanzibari conceptualizations.

So far, I have argued with an implicit notion of Islam as a coherent entity (that Hakimu Saleh differentiates from Christianity, a Christianity that Omar precludes as an attribute of Zanzibar). How kombe (as *dawa* "*ya kiislamu*") belongs to this entity must be given more attention than this specific conversation with Hakimu Saleh on the "interreligious dialogue" permits. Exploring further sentiments that *ya kiislamu* evokes, on the one hand, goes beyond Hakimu Saleh's explanations, but, on the other hand, it employs the very singularity of *dini* that Hakimu Saleh argued for. I thus now turn to perceived contradictions of kombe with Islam as a coherent entity; I turn to what I term the "anticipated criticism" of kombe as *dawa* "*ya kiislamu*."

7.3. Anticipating Criticism: References to a Global Islam

While doing my research I was repeatedly cautioned to be careful, because, as I was told, not everybody agrees with the practices of preparing and drinking kombe. "Yes, of course, there are these people who don't like kombe. You have to be careful who you talk to." I was advised several times. These "other sheikhs," (*masheikhi wengine*) my interlocutors told me, "do not approve" (*hawakubali*).[70] In response to my question of why "these other sheikhs" disapproved of kombe, different people provided different answers. Most of the answers came from people who distanced themselves from the opinions of "these other sheikhs," and who themselves had nothing against kombe (although not all of them give it a high priority in their own search for treatment). I first delineate three points of reasoning that I encountered for why "these other sheikhs" disapprove of kombe and then engage with Ayub, who stated that he himself disapproved.

7.3.1. The "Other Sheikhs'" Arguments

One of the arguments, which people (who approved of kombe) were expecting, was this specific use of the Qurʾan. Not reading the Qurʾan and learning from it, but swallowing it for healing purposes, caused explanatory unease amongst some of my

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70 For example, Hakimu Saleh, 8 and 15 April 2013, Vikokotoni.

interlocutors.[71] It was anticipated that this non-cognitive, affective, "mystical" encounter would be viewed skeptically by those who hold reformist tendencies, and who emphasize cognitive approaches to the Qurʾan, requiring reading skills and theological training. In response to this potential criticism, my interlocutors evoked that it is written in the Qurʾan that the Qurʾan is healing. Aya 17:82 states: "We send down the Qur'an as healing and mercy to those who believe; as for those who disbelieve, it only increases their loss."[72] While the second part is mostly omitted, the Qurʾan's own statement that it is healing is a strong argument for the use of the Qurʾan as medication to counter affliction. The argument that the "other sheikhs" are said to make is not a contestation of this verse, rather a contestation of its literal employment. "The Qurʾan heals, but not by being ingested" is the rationale attributed to these "other sheikhs." Still, with this verse, the use of the Qurʾan for healing purposes (and not solely for intellectual apprehension) is justified.

Following up on this justification, I was repeatedly told about a hadith by al-Bukhari[73] in which it is recounted how the first sura of the Qurʾan, the Fatihah, was recited over a patient who was subsequently healed. Again, the hadith itself is not expected to be challenged, but the implications it has for today's practices are. While the "other sheikhs" are said to recognize as medicinal water only the water that the Qurʾan is recited over orally (kombe *la kusomea*), kombe *la kuandika* needs to be justified: it is the same Qurʾan that is made to be contained in the water. This anticipated differentiation between kombe *la kusomea* (recited kombe) and kombe *la kuandika* (written kombe, see chapter 4.2.3) strengthens the differentiation between orality and literacy (see chapter 6.4). Interestingly, the practices of reciting the Qurʾan ("aurally") and drinking written kombe (ingesting

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[71] The selection of arguments here stems from a plethora of mostly informal conversations in various places and at various times towards the end of my research. Examplary conversations include those I had with two teachers who worked in a madrasa near the mosque of Nassor Bachu and engaged with this topic. I met them while visiting their madrasa: 18 March 2014, Kikwajuni, Zanzibar Town.

[72] This is also one of the most commonly used verses in the preparation of kombe (see chapter 4.3.1).

[73] A hadith is a story of how the Prophet Muhammad acted and what he said. With respect to authenticity there are differences between the ahadith. Those deemed most accurate are *sahih*, including those collected by al-Bukhari. Although my interlocutors did not specify which hadith they referred to, I assume it is the one with reference number 2276. Sheikh Soraga, the Mufti's secretary, also mentioned a hadith by al-Bukhari (14 August 2014, Mombasa, Zanzibar Town).

orally) mark their entanglements. Working with the differentiation, kombe *la kuandika*, by those who prepare and dispense it, is justified as a valuable option (in addition to kombe *la kusomea*) as it is less likely to be polluted by noise. Also, because the recitation might be heard by the patient and thereby would not bypass the brain, kombe *la kuandika* provides a valuable option. In anticipation of criticism, kombe's process of liquefaction necessitates vindication. That the Qurʾan states that it heals and that a hadith by Bukhari tells of the Prophet Muhammad's own use of the Qurʾan's healing powers are stressed in response to these anticipated criticisms and direct attention to the material conditions under which kombe *la kuandika* is prepared and drunk.

Secondly, an argument that was often put forward concerns the bodily containment of the Qurʾan. While a *msahafu*, a codex of the Qurʾan, is liable to a number of rules, including that it cannot be taken to the toilet, the ingested Qurʾan will necessarily be brought to the toilet eventually. At stake here is the material relation of the Qurʾan and a living body, *mwili*. Although this problem was often addressed, it was mostly dismissed with a short laugh. Deducing from other conversations, however, it has already been pointed out that *mwili* does not become a *mshafu* when it ingests the Qurʾan.[74] Already, as discussed in chapter 4.2.3, the process of liquefaction renders the Qurʾan to be *contained* in water and the water does not become a *msahafu*. Thus, although *mwili* mediates the Qurʾan towards an affliction (see chapter 6.5.3), it does not become a physical manifestation of the Qurʾan itself. Neither prior to ingestion nor after ingestion does kombe need to be treated like a *msahafu* and thus going to the toilet should not constitute a problem. However, this response was not given to me as a response to this problem, but it provides an explanation that my interlocutors curtailed with a short laugh. In a different response to the same anticipated problem, it was explained to me once[75] that kombe enters the body like good food; you would not take good food to the toilet, but it would unfold its effect in the body even if you go to the toilet eventually.

Thirdly, criticism was anticipated for kombe that did not only comprise Qurʾanic verses, but also supplements. Especially the inclusion of angelic names

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[74] See Iddi Said and Haroun Khalid, 12 August 2014, Ukutani, Zanzibar Town (introduced in chapter 4.2.3). However, see larger debates about how smartphones need to be treated when they show or voice the Qurʾan (chapter 4.3.1, see also Schmitt [2012: chapter 7.2.2]; Ibrahim [2017: chapter 7]).

[75] Mzee, 31 August 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

could be regarded as idolatry, *shirk* (see also chapter 3.1.3 and 4.3.1). Instead of relying on the Qurʾan as the sole healing power, the possibility of trusting these names in their own right is a point of potential denunciation. Preparing for this criticism, many practitioners told me that they did not include any supplements and especially not names of angels. While they could explain why other practitioners included these supplements (for protection, see chapter 4.1), the fear of being accused of *shirk* caused many to write the verses without protective supplements. The different ways of preparing kombe exist next to each other and while the practitioners mutually comment on each others' preferences they also accept each others' points of disagreements. Rather than openly devaluing others' choices of writing, usually the own choice is advocated. Those who do write angelic names did not raise this point as a possible criticism of kombe.

7.3.2. Finding the "Other Sheikhs"

So far, I have introduced points of criticism of kombe that were anticipated by those who do not agree with these potential denunciations and seek justifications for preparing and drinking kombe nevertheless.[76] The aforementioned criticisms were attributed to a discursively made "other." This "other" is said to be found amongst those people whose practices of Islam are influenced by what locally is often linked to *Wahhabism*[77] and what I have termed "reformist" (see chapter 2.1.4). Interestingly, those "other" people who are believed to reject *kombe* are mostly indifferent to it. Felicitas Becker's observations explain:

> The question of Qurʾanic or 'book' healing, *uganga wa kitabu*, into which many Tanzanian Muslims put much trust, focused many of the ambiguities Muslim reformists ran into. […] Despite their initial condemnation of every religious practice not explicitly sanctioned by the Qurʾan the stance of the *Ansuari* [reformists] on therapeutic uses of the Qurʾan was muted and unclear. On one hand, the use of the scripture as a means for protection was not in principle considered innovation. The notion of the Qurʾan as a panacea even had a certain resonance with Islamist ideas.
> On the other hand, the mixture of objects and substances with religious elements in *uganga wa kitabu* smacks of *shirk*, the sin of idolatry, and the focus on the materiality of the scriptures runs counter to the reformist emphasis

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[76] The argumentations alluded to here mirror those of the debates of the early stages of Islamic juridical thought (Zadeh 2009: 465).

[77] See above: 7.1.1; see also chapter 2.2.3.

> on intellectual engagement with them. By and large, the *Ansuari* dealt with
> the uncertainty by not pushing the point. (2007: 28)

Inquiring about where to find "these other sheikhs" I was directed to mosques that
were known to host "fierce" (*kali*) teachings. One of them is the mosque in which
Omar prays, another was the one of Nasssor Bachu (see chapter 2.2.3). In neither
of these two, however, did I find interview partners who would confirm that they
disapproved of kombe. Although I am uncertain to what extent my positionality
and my approach to these mosques influenced their responses, they seem to sub-
stantiate what Felicitas Becker has pointed out for the southern Tanzanian coast.
However, on the premises of another mosque, financed by Saudi Arabia, I was able
to interview Ayub.

Ayub and I sat outside of the mosque in Mazizini and I stated what my
research was about. I was curious about his opinion on kombe, as he spent his
time in the mosque that was known for propagating "strict" (*kali*) teachings. Ayub
had readily agreed for this interview to be recorded and after reassuring him that
I had switched on the recording, he took charge of the direction of our talk and
stated

AYUB: Briefly, to start, I would like to inform you about one thing. That is,
not everybody within Islam, when you listen to them, speaks with validity
of this thing. This one important issue, I want you to understand. Normal
people, not Muslims only, also of other religions [*dini nyingi*], normal people,
generally, don't understand what is inside of their religion [*dini yao*].[78]

During the course of our interview I learned that he was currently studying in
Medina and only spent his holidays home in Zanzibar. As he knew about my
research and deduced from the dominant approval of kombe in Zanzibar that I
had heard mainly sympathetic voices, he set the forthcoming conversation outside
of more mainstream opinion with these introductory words. He thus did not
only provide the ground for his critique of kombe, but also portrayed himself as
knowledgeable compared to "normal people." Being knowledgeable gave authority
to his opinion about kombe, authority that he had to establish first in the presence
of me, a foreign, non-Muslim, white, female researcher whom he gave a chance to
understand his concerns and take them seriously. He then stated that:

AYUB: A person can take medicine and does not heal [*kupoa*], because God has
not yet wished for her/him to heal. Have you seen? So, we Muslims, we

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[78] Ayub, 25 August 2014, Mazizini, Zanzibar Town.

believe/trust [*kuamini*] that God heals. Medicine and the like that people take as treatment, we believe that these are only reasons for helping a person to receive healing.

HANNA: So, to take kombe is not bad, but it alone doesn't help because God himself must heal.

AYUB: Kombe, in short, kombe is not acceptable. They say that it is better to abolish it. Do you understand me? To abolish it is better because these issues usually continue to lead a person to enter the realm of *shirk*.

HANNA: Ah OK, because they think that the water will help them and not God.

AYUB: Yes, it is possible s/he believes/trusts all the way in kombe. And that is a mistake.

Quite forcefully, Ayub rejects kombe. The danger that kombe elicits, the danger of paving the way to *shirk* outweighs its potentials as treatment. Medicines ("and the like," *na vinginevyo*), he states, are only "reasons for helping a person to receive healing." Thus, medicines do not heal in themselves, but help a person to receive healing from God. While this could be regarded as valuable—and Ayub does not comment further on other medicines—he takes issue with kombe. Apparently more than other medicines, kombe is dangerous to Muslims who might be led astray. I hypothesize that this outright rejection is connected to kombe's delineation as *dawa "ya kiislamu"*: The suggestive proximity to Islam increases the danger of venerating a material artifact, kombe, instead of God who alone provides healing with and without material substances.

Ayub prepared his statements by marking himself as knowledgeable and did not only comment on his own preferences but spoke from a position of social responsibility. He thereby confirms people's expectations of how reformists claim theological authority. Whereas I doubt that Ayub actually engaged with many kombe practitioners—he was on holiday leave from his studies in Medina—he positioned himself as one of the "other sheikhs" (although I don't think he, being a student, regards himself as "sheikh" yet). However, Ayub is an exception. Most of the people that I spoke to in my search for these "other sheikhs" did not disapprove of kombe on such a totalizing scale, even if they did not choose kombe as treatment for themselves. Furthermore, the reasons provided by those who do not wish to drink it themselves predominantly revolve around the Prophet Muhammad's practices. The Prophet is not known to have drunk the written verses, thus

drinking kombe is not *sunna*.[79] Attending to one's personal piety[80] rather than to social responsibility, most people who chose not to drink kombe themselves left the decision open for others.

7.3.3. "Anticipated Criticism"

Despite the exception of Ayub, the argumentations of those who defend kombe circulate primarily as what I term "anticipated criticism" (already foreshadowed in 2.1.4, 4.2.3, and 6.4). Those who themselves approve of kombe establish the discourse against its contestations. On the one hand, the anticipation of criticism and the discursive justifications indicate that there are different opinions amongst Muslims (there are these "other sheikhs") and that the reformists' claims to theological authority are powerful. On the other hand, the anticipation and preparation contribute to the enactment of Islam as a shared framework amongst all Muslims. Rather than promoting plurality in understandings of Islam, the anticipation of criticism and the justifications contribute to manifesting Islam as a globally shared entity. That the "other sheikhs" care about kombe and that a response to these "other sheikhs" is necessary matters: it is deemed important and substantiates in discursively creating an "anticipated criticism" with its concomitant responses.[81]

Shahab Ahmed addresses this "claim of coherence" in the face of contradiction (2016: 108) in his recent book on how to conceptualize "Islam as theoretical object and analytical category that maps meaningfully onto Islam as a human and historical phenomenon" (2016: 542). For Ahmed, this is primarily an academic concern: he identifies the "need of an etic/historians' conceptualization of Islam that also functions satisfactorily as a 'pan-emic' conceptualization in spite of—indeed, *because of*—the disagreements of Muslim actors" (2016: 106, emphasis in original). Ahmed's problematization of various previous conceptualizations and his plea to take seriously both the contradictions of multiple "Islamic" practices and the claim to coherence of Islam are well-taken. I furthermore agree that "[t]he

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[79] Note the Salafi orientation towards imitating the Prophet's life in what is considered "sunna."

[80] Note that this individualistic concern about piety is entangled with modernity as is the turn towards a "pure" and "traditional" way of life propagated by Salafists. See also Henri Lauzière (2016: chapter 4) on the "ironies of modernity and the advent of modernist Salafism."

[81] Note that the name "kombe" is not as widely spread as the practices of its preparation and drinking and that the phenomenon of kombe always takes on local names (see introduction). The discourse on how kombe relates to enactments of a unified Islam appears to be intimately tied to its history; it appears to always have had an uneasy relation to more "orthodox" ideas about a unified and singular Islam with a global umma.

basic question to be asked when we confront any given phenomenon or object or statement is: what meaning is added by qualifying that phenomenon or object by the word Islamic?" (2016: 545). In fact, I would extend the question and ask which material realities such a designation as "Islamic" establishes. However, in the case of my research, the question is not whether I, as anthropologist, can and should term certain practices "Islamic," but how to engage with my interlocutors' designation of kombe as "Islamic" medicine (*dawa "ya kiislamu"*) and their anticipated criticisms on these grounds. Furthermore, Zanzibar as "Islamic" place with an "Islamic" *tabia* (or not, according to Omar) equally evokes these questions. Ahmed's "etic/historians' conceptualization of Islam" has already become (or has always been) an "emic" concern. By anticipating criticism and preparing responses, my interlocutors themselves enact the dynamics between a coherent Islam and multiplicity of "Islamic" practices in Zanzibar that do not neatly map onto a singular, text-based orthodoxy of modern Islam (see Ahmed 2016: 516).

The adjectival phrase describing kombe as *dawa "ya kiislamu"* relates to Zanzibar as a place (see above: 7.1), but also makes reference to Islam as *dini≠* "religion" (see above: 7.2). In the context of marking the differentiation to Christianity, Islam is enacted as coherent. However, as I highlight in this section with the use of the term "anticipated criticism," Islam's coherence co-occurs with multiple practices that are termed "Islamic" but may contradict each other. As *dawa "ya kiislamu"* and with reference to reformists' claims to theological authority, kombe is expected to be criticized. Rather than submitting to either coherence or contradiction, however, in the anticipation of criticism, both difference amongst Muslim practices and a coherent framework of Islam matter. For Omar (who prays at a *Wahhabi* mosque), this simultaneous difference and coherence that kombe as *dawa "ya kiislamu"* gives rise to, is problematic. He resorts to a statement about Zanzibar—the *tabia* of which is usually equally described as "*ya kiislamu*"—in which he gives prevalence to the dichotomy between Muslims and Christians and thus employs Islam solely as a coherent entity without reference to the complexity of contradictions. The anticipated criticism of kombe (as an "Islamic" phenomenon in "Islamic" Zanzibar) shows how to address the claim of a coherent Islam in the face of contradiction, as Ahmed pleads for academics to also do. Taking seriously the contradictions with which Islam as a coherent entity is delineated, I now conclude with some brief considerations about comparability which requires commensurability.

7.4. Establishing Comparability

As qualifier, the adjectival phrase, "*ya kiislamu*" ("Islamic") invites comparison. The co-existence of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar, historically situated and politically relevant, diffracts with a discourse that establishes Zanzibar as "Islamic" place (see 7.1). As place, Zanzibar not only provides a common denominator through which to *compare* Muslims' and Christians' practices within Zanzibar, but also, this "Islamic" Zanzibar *compares* to the "Christian-dominated" mainland within their common framework of the Tanzanian union. The Christians' presence in Zanzibar, constitutive for the former comparison, challenges the qualifier "Islamic" for the description of Zanzibar, according to Omar, and thus jeopardizes the political discourse on Zanzibar's *comparable* otherness to the Tanzanian mainland. Christian presence in Zanzibar brings forth developments that lead to "Islamic" Zanzibar's "big funeral."

Furthermore, the qualifier "*ya kiislamu*" and its invitation to comparison points at an overarching conceptual framework. As Hakimu Saleh has established in a conversation with me (see 7.2), the "inter*religious* dialogue" renders Islam and Christianity commensurable, which misses the point of Islam as *dini*. Nevertheless, in the conversation, Hakimu Saleh collapses what I analytically distinguish as "religion" and *dini*. He thus engages with "religion" in his own terms, ambivalently aligning it with a sense of "religion" that relates to the "interreligious dialogue" and thus makes room for plurality—and comparability—while vigorously retaining the singularity of *dini*.[82]

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[82] It must be noted that "intra-actions," the matterings from within, do not account for an "outside" in terms of *dini* (compare this to Samuli Schielke's article "The Power of God" [2019]). Barad's "intra-activity" with its notion that there is only "exteriority within" (2007: 377) is entangled with the separation of "religion" and *dini* in that "intra-activity" resonates more with "religion" (where *a* "beyond" is part of *a* religion) than with *dini* (which concretely addresses a pre-established "beyond"). "Exteriority within" does not map onto *dini* but only onto "religion" and thereby reifies "religion" as disentangled from *dini*. However, engagement with kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* and thus with Hakimu Saleh's response to my question about the interreligious dialogue have incited an ambiguously entangled notion of *dini*/"religion" as part of the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic in this thesis. How does this possible entanglement of *dini*-"religion" diffract with intra-activity's containment of a differentiation (i.e. *dini*/"religion")? Note that here another resonance flashes up: similar to the "interreligious dialogue," intra-activity takes a universality of potential plurality for granted. The possibility to relate plurals, however, was precisely the point that Hakimu Saleh passionately identified as an aspect of "religion" and its potential for plurality in contrast to *dini*'s singularity. Thus, apart from the question of where to position a "beyond" that is

Throughout this chapter, I have argued with reference to the relationality of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar. I have paid attention to the constitution of Zanzibar as place where Muslims and Christians engage with each other as each other's other (7.1) and to "religion" as concept through which Muslims and Christians become commensurable (7.2). Furthermore, I have attended to Islam as contradictorily coherent (7.3). The constitution of the place, the constitution of the concept, as well as the formation of a singular and coherent entity, I argue, are processes that build grounds for comparison from within entanglements, a *tertium comparationes* that constitutes through antagonism, contestations, and contradictions. While I have repeatedly shown throughout the preceding chapters how differentiations rely on their entanglements, this chapter's last section is dedicated to making explicit how the apparatus of "*ya kiislamu*" determines boundaries that make commensurable and thus ambiguously enable a relationally produced comparability of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar.

7.4.1. Comparison as Critique

Within anthropological discourse and tied to ethical concerns of how to do ethnographic research, comparative frameworks have been criticized for their assumptions about universalistic conditions. The negation of comparability, however, has equally been criticized for its particularistic inability to contribute to larger conceptualizations and the reflexive turn has shown the impossibility of such non-comparative studies as they always imply the comparison to the writer's own context. This reflexive (comparative) dimension has shaped much ethnographic work of the last thirty years while more explicitly comparative studies have become rare in anthropology[83] (although they remained popular in disciplines that embraced comparison as method to prevent moral imperialism of western scholarship [Nader 2010: 80], such as the comparative study of religion [but see Chidester 2014] and comparative literature).

In his recent book "The Value of Comparison," Peter van der Veer (2016) argues for a resurgence of comparison done anthropologically. Against universal-

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central to what *dini* and "religion" are, intra-action's presumption of universal potentiality of plurality resonates more with "religion" than with *dini*. What is at risk if we (do not) let an ambiguous entanglement of *dini*/"religion" diffract with intra-activity? How would such a diffractive investigation change what intra-activity is?

[83] But see Geschiere 2013: chapter 4 and 5.

izing tendencies in the social sciences today, he advocates for the implicit comparisons of an anthropological "awareness of the conceptual difficulties of entering 'other' lifeworlds" (2016: 11) to become explicit. He exemplifies the merits of comparison with various examples from his work, situated in China and India, tracing the historical contingencies of conceptual developments, such as "civilization" or "nationalism." Van der Veer does not seek to revive an old understanding of "comparison" in which differences and similarities are listed under a universal category, a universal *tertium comparationes.* Rather, he propels comparison as anthropological endeavor to "do justice to difference and diversity, and yet imagine a shared world," as Birgit Meyer formulates it in her review of Van der Veer's book (2017: 512). Promoting a middle ground between universalistic and particularistic approaches to ethnography, Meyer (in response to Van der Veer) suggests applying "comparison as critique" to recent universalistic tendencies in the academic world.

While for Van der Veer comparison serves an exclusively scholarly purpose, Meyer's review also draws attention to the comparisons that people engage themselves in, as Kai Kresse had argued (2017). In both Kresse's work and mine, Muslims compare themselves to Christians and these comparisons need to be taken seriously. (Furthermore, Christians living in Zanzibar also compare themselves to Muslims.) Kresse argues for using these locally established comparisons as starting points for scholarly comparisons. These comparisons are not disconnected from the circumstances in which they are put to use: the Muslim (and especially reformists') discourses on modernity, as exemplified by Christian colonialists, prompted Sheikh Al-Amin Mazrui in Mombasa (see chapter 2.1.4), for example, to critically engage with the Christians' practices and their value for Muslims, as Kresse points out. Similarly, the context of Zanzibar during the time of the "Government of National Unity," GNU, and its renewed potentiality for an independence discourse (see chapter 2.2) is linked to the comparisons of Muslims with Christians (and resistance to these comparisons) that I came across during my fieldwork, as this chapter attests. Even more than that, my encounters during fieldwork were influenced by my positionality (see chapter 3.3.1). Both Muslims and Christians often commented on my presence as Christian in "Islamic" Zanzibar (see for example Paul in part I and see Omar in this part) which often led to more explicit comparisons between Zanzibari Muslims and mainland Christians living in Zanzibar.

7.4.2. Ambiguous Comparability

Despite the value of comparison and despite the effort put into establishing comparability, the specificity of the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*" retains a sense of resisting commensurability. The negativity with which *dini mseto* was approached in Zanzibar, leading to a "big funeral" (7.1) and unacceptable alterations of *dini* that would make it into "religion" (7.2) diffract with the striving for coherence in the face of contradiction of Islamic practices (7.3) that challenge the establishment of comparability (7.4.1).

"*Ya kiislamu*" both facilitates comparison and resists it. On the one hand, it establishes the very ground on which Islam becomes comparable (to Christianity). On the other hand, *ya kiislam* also references the singularity of Islam, its incomparability to anything else. The adjectival phrase *ya kiislamu* retains comparability in a constant state of becoming.

Although it would be interesting to delve further into the contents of my interlocutors' comparisons (which similarities and differences matter to them?), I here ask what the establishment of comparability—not only by anthropologists but also by Zanzibari Muslims who speak about kombe—does. If comparison can be a form of academic critique, do my interlocutors also criticize when they establish and resist comparability? In light of the anticipated criticism and in light of global power structures, I suggest that the establishment of commensurability is a measure against the exoticization of kombe. In terms of *dawa*, kombe, *dawa ya kiislamu*, is commensurable with other *dawa* (see next chapter). In terms of "religion," however, the comparability of Muslims and Christians is not embraced, but rather met with aversion. Within the framework of "religion," the establishment of comparability through the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*" serves to mark difference.

Omar reacted to my research topic, kombe, *dawa ya kiislamu*, in that he picked up on the attribute "*ya kiislamu*" and turned to an evaluation of Zanzibar's "Islamic" *tabia*, which, according to him, was not "real Islamic" (*kiislamu kikweli*). This shift indicates how kombe—as "Islamic medicine"—is inseparable from the enactment of the political context in Zanzibar. The differentiation between Islam and Christianity matters in current Zanzibari affairs and for this differentiation Islam and Christianity are made commensurable. However, Omar indicates that Islam and Christianity are entangled in lived, shared realities. Omar disapproves of the concomitant blurrings: Zanzibar with the Christians is not "real Islamic."

The entanglement of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar through shared practices renders the differentiation between Muslims and Christians messy (and thus the political message of Zanzibar's distinction from the mainland). As *dawa* "*ya kiislamu*" (and thus with clear reference to Islam), kombe is part of this messiness as it is drunk by Muslims *and* Christians, as will be elaborated in the next chapter. The qualification of kombe with the adjectival phrase *ya kiislamu*, for Omar, is troublesome since it *does* something to the ascription of Zanzibar as "Islamic."

While the chapter began with an implicit understanding of a comparability of Muslims and Christians, thus portraying their historical relationalities in Zanzibar and the current sentiments towards these relationalities (see 7.1), the second section (7.2) troubled the conditions under which such a comparability is enacted. Giving due to Hakimu Saleh's teachings, the subsequent section (7.3) did not portray another aspect of Muslim-Christian comparability in the classical sense (working towards the similarities and differences), but, driven by the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*," it paid attention to anticipated criticism of kombe that builds on Islam being singular and coherent. The anticipation of this criticism shows that both difference in "Islamic" practices and coherence of "Islam" matter for the engagement with kombe in Zanzibar. The establishment of coherence (despite, or, as Ahmed [2016] would argue, *because of* contradictions) incidentally is yet another aspect of rendering Islam ambiguously comparable to another "religion." In juxtaposition to each other, these sections perform the simultaneity of comparability and incomparability that the adjectival phrase *ya kiislamu* evokes. Having elaborated on this adjectival phrase, in the next chapter, I turn to the noun it qualifies: *dawa*. While "*ya kiislamu*" marks difference and ambiguous comparability as structure for antagonisms, "*dawa*" allows for these differences to become differently re-entangled.

8. *Dawa*: Formational Healing in Zanzibar

Sara, a Christian who came to Zanzibar from the mainland (Morogoro), is enrolled in a program in which she already works as a secretary while studying secretarial services. Accompanied by her sister-in-law, who is also a Christian, she came to Bi Mwana's place to receive treatment to protect her from the jealousy of one of her co-workers. While she was waiting for her bottle to be filled with kombe, we exchanged numbers and met several times afterwards.[1] She lives in Kwahani, one of the neighborhoods that is popular amongst young people looking for work as it is well-connected and close to Stone Town. The walls of Sara's home are decorated with a picture of Baby Jesus and several greeting cards with good wishes for Christmas and God's blessing. While she told me much about her long working hours and her difficulties living as a Christian in Zanzibar, she always circumvented my careful questions about the kombe that she received when we first met. For quite some time I wondered whether Sara had drunk the kombe at all, but she once did mention that Bi Mwana has helped her a lot—an answer that I also received from many other patients whom I met at Bi Mwana's place.

Kombe is *dawa* ("medicine"). It is *dawa ya kiislamu*, but that does not restrict its application to Muslims alone. To specify something as *ya kiislamu* engages with Islam's classification as both *dini* and "religion," the distinction of which was examined for the Zanzibari specificities in the previous chapter. In light of *dini*≠"religion," relations of Muslims and Christians are marked by antagonistic comparability. This chapter endorses the entire phrase *dawa ya kiislamu* and explores how kombe as "medicine"/"treatment" allows for the differentiations of *ya kiislamu* to become differently re-entangled. A framework of *dawa* makes kombe accessible to both Muslims and Christians albeit not easily talk-about-able by everybody. Thus, while in the previous chapter I examined the adjectival phrase

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[1]   Several meetings from 14 January 2014 until 20 August 2014.

ya kiislamu, in this chapter I pay attention to that which this adjectival phrase qualifies: *dawa*. How does *dawa* relate to Islam? How does kombe as *dawa* allow for a different and less antagonistic take on the establishment of comparability of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar? What is happening when Sara receives and drinks kombe?

This chapter starts with an introduction to the term *dawa* (8.1.1) and attends to its relation to *dini*/"religion" both conceptually and with recourse to some ethnographic examples that diffract with each other, including Bi Mwaltima's statement that *dawa* does not have a "religion" (8.1.2) and Mama Sue who made *dawa ya asili* a matter of *dini* (8.1.3). The chapter continues with a number of voices that have justified how and why Christians take kombe although it is *dawa ya kiislamu* with reference to affliction (8.2.1), with reference to belief/trust (8.2.2), and with respect to Zanzibar (8.2.3). It then attend to Sara's silence and questions of power through Birgit Meyer's "sensational forms." Building on kombe's impact on social relations between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar (8.3.1), for which I evoke Meyer's "aesthetic formations" (although Omar in the beginning of this part critically evaluates this), and building on kombe's medical context (8.3.2), I introduce "formational healing" and the metaphor of *mshipa*. Finally, I explicitly formulate their resonances and diffractions with the other parts of this thesis.

8.1. Kombe as *Dawa ya Kiislamu*

Whether received in a dispensary that also offers other treatments or from Qurʾan school teachers of a madrasa, kombe is *dawa*. In this section I pay attention to how kombe is enacted as *dawa*. Firstly, it thus is embedded as "traditional medicine" in a dichotomous relation with biomedicine (8.1.1). Secondly, with its attribution as *ya kiislamu*, it relates to *dini*/"religion" (8.1.2 and 8.1.3). Kombe is drunk by Christians as well as Muslims and is targeted towards afflictions that any person in Zanzibar—Zanzibari or non-Zanzibari, Muslim or Christian—is prone to. Kombe is "read" by bodies irrespective of religious affiliations. However, this does not undo the differences between Muslims and Christians while drinking kombe. In order to examine how these differences are dealt with (at the end of this section and more explicitly in the subsequent section) I begin by turning to *dawa*.

8.1.1. *Dawa*

As discussed at the beginning of chapter 1, kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* is part of "traditional medicine" (as proposed by the WHO) and also often referred to as *dawa ya asili*. To different effects, the attributes of "Islamic" or "traditional"/ "original" are employed to describe kombe. Hakimu Saleh, for example, tends to emphasize kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* (which, he notes, is part of *dawa ya asili*) while in the setting of Bi Mwana, kombe is emphasized as part of their *dawa ya asili* (which can be further specified as *dawa ya kiislamu*). Regardless of which emphasis is chosen, kombe is always *dawa*.[2]

Amongst the various medical options in Zanzibar, biomedicine plays a dominant role against which most people measure and justify other options. According to Hakimu Saleh, that which is practiced in the governmental hospital and taken seriously by westeners[3] as "medicine" (and in the academic literature as "biomedicine"[4]) is that which is attuned to the visible and visibilizable body.[5] The visual accessibility, he specifies, is achieved through modern technological means, such as x-ray-scanners or CT-scans.[6] His explanations about biomedicine serve to show his acknowledgment of advances in biomedicine; his engagement with biomedicine in a session with me reaffirms the dominant status of biomedicine in Zanzibar. At the same time, his explanations carve out space for the value of non-

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[2]   The term *dawa* is almost interchangeably used with *tiba* (note the connection to the Arabic word *tibb*) which also denotes "medicine," "cure," or "treatment." However, I have opted for a consistent use of *dawa* in this thesis, as *dawa* more than *tiba* connotes the notion of a medicinal substance (see below).

[3]   He also refers to this kind of medicine as *dawa ya kizungu*. (For example, 28 March 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.) *Kizungu* is the adjective for "strange," "unfamiliar," and is mostly used for "western"; *wazungu* is the word for "white people."

[4]   Biomedicine strongly builds on a scientific understanding of bodies' biology through which bodies become commensurable for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes (see for example Lock and Nguyen 2018: 1).

[5]   8 and 17 April 2013, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town. Note the link of visuality and rational science (cognition) here that was explored in chapter 6.1., see also chapter 4.2.

[6]   The importance of technology used in biomedicine and its entanglements with the way also other diagnostic and treatment options are framed has been described by Langwick (2011a) for the Newala area in southern Tanzania. I find these findings to be very comparable to the Zanzibari case. Within medical anthropology the relation of bodies to technology in biomedicine is one of the major topics (most explicitly noted in Lock and Nguyen 2018: chapter 1; see also Good et al. 2010: part IV and V). In the context of predicting the development of medicine in Zanzibar, Zube (22 August 2014, Jambiani) said that kombe will be used less and less and that other medicine relying on technology will develop further.

biomedical treatments in the realm that is not visible and that does not depend on modern technology to make affliction visible in the same way.[7]

The *dawa* ("medicine"/"treatment") that Hakimu Saleh offers is targeted at problems in the realm of the unseen, the "spiritual." Hakimu Saleh often explained how his treatment option, therefore, is complementary to biomedicine. It picks up where western science reaches its limits. While Hakimu Saleh established a dichotomy between biomedicine and the treatment that he offers,[8] at Bi Mwana's place, this distinction was not as pronounced. The treatment at Bi Mwana's place attends to biomedically diagnosable sicknesses but exceeds biomedicine's limits: it is also targeted at concerns that biomedicine does not cover, such as business, neighborhood, or spiritual issues. Also, most of the *dawa* dispensed at Bi Mwana's place is comparable to artificially produced biomedical pharmaceuticals, but it is natural and has fewer side effects.[9]

The term *dawa* needs to be understood in this broadness. Not merely a translation of "medicine," *dawa* is geared towards change of a "patient's" situation in a more encompassing and holistic way. Important is *dawa*'s "transformative power" (Wilkens 2011:181; see also Green 1996). This extends to practices that do not rely on material substances in the narrow sense, such as recitations over a patient's body (*kumsomea mtu*).[10] Throughout this thesis, I have often translated *dawa* as "treatment" to include these practices. Although *dawa* is not necessarily material, if targeted against human suffering, it needs to be applied to a living body, *mwili*, that then mediates this *dawa* to the affliction (see chapter 5.5). Overall, *dawa* is positively connoted: it is targeted towards betterment and against affliction (and the term "affliction" corresponds to this broadness, see chapter 5.1).

However, the line between healing and harming is thin and depends on the perspective. For example, *dawa* also refers to insecticides and chlorine as these substances equally effect change. Unlike *sumu*, "poison," these substances are *dawa* and although they harm in the process, they are still positively connoted:

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[7] Marking this relation, he does use metaphorical language in which technology features prominently, such as the "chip in the brain" (see in chapter 3.1.2 footnote 14).

[8] This dichotomy relates to the binary set up by the WHO between "biomedicine" and "traditional medicine" (see chapter 2.2.2).

[9] When I visited them in September 2018, Bi Mwana was very proud to show me two instruments that they had received in a biomedical training: one for measuring blood pressure and one for measuring *sukari* (diabetes).

[10] Note, however, how also oral recitations are material (see chapter 4.2.3).

the tomatoes grow better and the shirts become really white. In Zanzibar, it is understood that the simultaneity of healing and harming may extend to humans: seeking betterment for one person may result in harming another person (physically, through their business, or through spiritual means). All practitioners that I have met during my fieldwork agreed that this needs to be forestalled. In fact, these practices dealing with "transformative power" that would harm people were discursively set apart: they were deemed not *dawa*, but *uchawi*.[11] In practice, this distinction is not as easily identifiable as it is discursively. Nevertheless, setting harmful practices discursively apart retains the positive connotation of *dawa* (although practitioners are routinely suspected of crossing this line, as Hakimu Saleh worried about repeatedly).[12]

Given this broadness, the specification of *dawa* is important both for the practitioners and the patients. Through associating certain practices and substances, such as kombe, with a specification, such as *ya asili* or *ya kiislamu*, both practitioners and patients enact this concrete specification of *dawa*. That kombe is both, *dawa ya asili* and *dawa ya kiislamu* and that other practitioners' *dawa ya asili* and other practitioners' *dawa ya kiislamu* might not include kombe, attests to the flexibility with which these specifications are enacted. Rather than marking a correspondence with certain practices and substances, the chosen specifications frame the treatment by a certain person and at a certain place within a discursive field of *dawa*.

Different kinds of *dawa* become complexly entangled and differentiated from each other. While Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana both dispense kombe and while they agree that this is *dawa ya kiislamu* and that it is also *dawa ya asili*, their way of relating *dawa ya kiislamu* to *dawa ya asili* and to *dawa ya hospitali* (biomedicine) differ. Hakimu Saleh emphasizes the spiritual aspects of his treatment and marks it as targeted towards those afflictions that biomedicine cannot reach. The focus on the spiritual aspects renders his treatment complementary to biomedicine. In contrast, Bi Mwana emphasizes that her *dawa ya asili* (which kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* is part of) in many cases provides an alternative to biomedicine. It is more natural and has less side effects. In relation to and in distinction from

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[11] Nathalie Arnold Koenings examines how in Pemba, the term *uchawi* was (and is) connoted much more positively, embracing that which official discourse terms "witchcraft" in the "witchcraft act" (personal communication, June 2018).

[12] For example, 23 January 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

different kinds of *dawa*,[13] a certain specification—such as *ya kiislamu* or *ya asili*—is enacted, materialized, matters. More pointedly formulated: different kinds of *dawa* intra-act.

Relying on Murray Last (1981), David Westerlund observed a tendency of convergence of different kinds of "medicine," especially "traditional medicine" and "biomedicine" (Westerlund 1989: 169). Kwasi Konadu questions these processes and the underlying assumptions about comparable medicinal entities (2007: 21). He is interested in the conception and interpretation of medicine and how these explanations are employed in practice. Furthermore, he asks how individual healers and "culturally structured processes" relate to each other in the ways that medicine is continuously adapted. Focusing on shifts and changes, Konadu is skeptical about referring to medicine as a "system" of which constituents would be "interacting, complementary, interdependent, or functionally related [...] and reflective of a unified whole" (2007: 20). With the same skepticism, Stacy Langwick points to different actors' entangled processes of negotiations and re-negotiations within a broader field of medicine (2011a: 18, 238). To her, the challenge for ethnographers of what she terms "postcolonial healing" lies in "ways to describe healing in all its diversity without fixing difference in a priori assumptions about what is material or physical and what is immaterial or conceptual" (2011a: 236). Rather than describing a "system" of medicine that might "converge" with another "system," Langwick builds on Byron Good's and Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good's emphasis on "the body as a site of medical knowledge" (1993: 90). By paying attention to bodies, she is able to trace how "the modern [is implicated] in the traditional, the clinic in the home of the healer, science in the nonbiomedical, and vice versa" (2011a: 236).

The relation to biomedicine was an underlying concern during my research, including questions about "modern," "scientific" practices within "traditional," "nonbiomedical" settings. Bi Mwana's proud presentation of an instrument to measure blood sugar that she received because she was recognized as a "traditional" healer only serves as an example here.[14] How biomedicine is enacted as dominant and what happens to biomedicine through its relations to other medicines is an interesting topic and partially addressed in various publications

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[13] The continuous relation to or distinction from biomedicine enacts the biomedical dominance and points again at the priviledged position that biomedicine occupies in the discourse of the state and of the WHO.

[14] 25 September 2018, Amani, Zanzibar Town.

(see for example Meier zu Biesen, Dilger, and Nienstedt 2012). Through my regular visits to both Hakimu Saleh's place and Bi Mwana's place, however, the relation to biomedicine was not the only concern. Kombe's situatedness as both *dawa ya kiislamu* and *dawa ya asili* emphasized how a specification as *ya kiislamu* relates to *ya asili.* The following subsections examine this relation. Thus, I will first pay attention to the statement that "*dawa* does not have a religion" which occurred repeatedly during my fieldwork, and then, relying on the concerns addressed in the previous chapter, turn to an enactment of *dawa* as part of *dini.*

8.1.2. *Dawa* does not have a "Religion"

"Even Christians come here!" Bi Tufa (who works with Bi Mwana) once[15] proudly told me. "Yes, they also receive kombe and it helps them." Overhearing our conversation, Bi Mwaltima added, "Well, you see, they all just want to get healthy. *Dawa haina dini.* (Medicine does not have a 'religion.')" For the people at Bi Mwana's place (here given voice through Bi Tufa), the occasional visits from Christian patients, like Sara, served as evidence of the high quality of treatment that they provided, and of which they were proud: "Even Christians come here!" As part of their treatment repertoire, kombe is given to patients that the practitioners deem in need of Qurᵓanic power. I must have looked puzzled, so Bi Mwaltima joined the conversation and explained that which she expected me to be puzzled about. Patients' religious affiliations don't preclude treatment options: "They all just want to get healthy." The practitioners at Bi Mwana's place base their evaluation on the patients' afflictions, not on their religious affiliation, and thus Christians as well as Muslims receive kombe. That kombe is specified as "*ya kiislamu*" does not make it more or less effective for Muslim or Christian patients, because it is *dawa* and *dawa* does not have a "religion."[16]

Tufa's and Bi Mwaltima's statements resonate with what Allyson Purpura encountered in the late 1980s/early 1990s. She quotes Mzee Chuma, an Islamic practitioner in Zanzibar:

> 'The power of the Qur'an is not about religion,' he [Mzee Chuma] explained. 'If it was, we wouldn't be able to cure people with religions different from ours. Even though Christians were not given the Qur'an, we can still use

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[15]   19 November 2013, Amani, Zanzibar Town.
[16]   Note that in accordance with the previous chapter (in particular 7.2), I translate *dini* as "religion" here.

> the power of the Qur'an to cure them. It can cure anyone with a problem. Whether or not you are a religious person, you will still be cured.' (1997: 307)

Almost thirty years ago, Mzee Chuma, as quoted and translated by Purpura, signals that the casual treatment of Christians with the Qurˀan is not unusual. He expresses that Qurˀanic treatment for "anyone with a problem," including Christians, is self-evident. During the time of my research, Bi Tufa and Bi Mwaltima similarly express this self-evidence of treating also Christian patients with the Qurˀan. Similarly, Da Monica, who is a Christian and has a reputation for considerable beer consumption, noted that "finding a cure (*dawa*) is more important than religion (*dini*)."[17] She stressed that biomedical treatment has very many side effects which *dawa ya asili* and even *dawa ya kiislamu* do not have. Contrary to this, Pastor Daniel,[18] the pastor of an evangelical church, asserted that any treatment, especially spiritual treatment, can only be effective when it involves prayer with the Christian God. Interestingly, however, he also admitted that Islamic means of treatment might be effective for a little while. Indeed, the ways in which the search for healing extends beyond religious boundaries has been examined in various contexts, amongst them the Spanish kingdoms 1222–1610 (García Ballester 2001), contemporary Hyderabad (Flueckiger 2006; 2013), or contemporary Bulgaria (Lubanska 2015), three contexts to which I refer now.

In his last chapter, Luis García-Ballester addresses the situation of medical practitioners during the time of the Inquisition in Spain. Forced conversion to orthodox Christianity did not integrate Muslims and Jews into the Christian society, but maintained their history of conversion as part of their identity: they became "Moriscos" (former Muslims) and "Conversos" (former Jews). The "Conversos" practiced medicine in the same way as the "old Christians," referred to by García-Ballester as "academic medicine." The Moriscos, however, practiced medicine that was "steeped in magic and empiricism," which was "considered to be effective by Morisco and non-Morisco patients" (García Ballester 2001: 163). García-Ballester examines how the Inquisitors suspected "Converso" medical practitioners not for their medical practice, but for "Judaizing," whereas "Moriscos" were monitored for the medicine they practiced. The inquisitors judicially established a hierarchy of different kinds of medicine, while both "academic medicine" and the medicine practiced by Moriscos was requested across boundaries of conversion backgrounds.

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[17] 29 October 2013, Machui.
[18] 3 February 2014, Mbweni, Zanzibar Town.

Although it is more descriptive than analytic, García-Ballester's research is interesting in relation to Bi Mwaltima's statement, as it embeds contestations over crossing religious boundaries for treatment purposes within a larger historical trajectory.

Joyce Flueckiger introduces "crossroads" (Hindi/Urdu: *caurāstā*) as a concept with which she speaks about social spaces that come into being through people who cross through for a particular purpose, encounter each other, but do not dwell. At these "crossroads," people's paths intersect and are shared temporarily. She argues that the healing room that she writes about is such a space, such a *caurāstā*, where patients with different religious and social backgrounds come together and share a common cause: the search for healing (2006: 15). While differences of religious identities matter in other circumstances (to which their paths lead them again after passing through the *caurāstā*), at the "crossroads" and in the healing room in particular,

> these differences are overridden by what is shared, by the crisis of illness. But more is shared between patients than simply human affliction and attraction to a charismatic healer. Patients and disciples also share features of and actors in a cosmological structure that assumes the possibility of spiritual illness and healing; they share knowledge and acceptance of a minimal ritual grammar whose performance impacts the spiritual/physical world. (Flueckiger 2006: 169)

Introducing Flueckiger's work in another publication, Eliza Kent (Kent 2013: 24) points out that the fluidity of religious boundaries is enacted "in the name of something grander and more encompassing or by virtue of sharing something more fundamental." Medicine and the prospect of healing is such a "grander and more encompassing" issue. However, during my research, I did not perceive patients as *sharing* "affliction and attraction to a charismatic healer." Although patients spend time in the waiting area of Bi Mwana's house while other patients are also spending time there, they do so *individually* (or with a person who accompanies them) until they are called to one of the healers *individually* and receive their *individual* treatment. In contrast to how Amma's healing room and its waiting area are described, there is not such a strong sense of *sharing* time and space at Bi Mwana's place.[19]

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[19]   This could be further explained by examining the activities that take place at Amma's healing room and at Bi Mwana's place. Perhaps the instances in Amma's healing room where

Flueckiger notes the centrality of patients' personal relationships to a healer. Although in Zanzibar, these relationships are not *shared* as common trait, patients are drawn to Bi Mwana because they feel well-listened to and cared for. Patients trust Bi Mwana. Flueckiger writes that "[r]elationships can and do cross religious boundaries, and it is these relationships that enable spiritual healing across boundaries of diffference at this *caurāstā* in South India." (2006: 240) For Christian patients who were first attracted by Bi Mwana's *dawa ya asili*[20] and who came to trust her, Bi Mwana's treatment is part of what solidifies their relationship. Wilfred, a Christian who came to Bi Mwana to pick up *dawa* for his daughter, said: "That woman knows her *dawa*. I trust her. For me, it is very hard to understand, but that woman, she knows her *dawa*. So, I trust her."[21] Bi Mwana offers *dawa ya asili*, "traditional medicine." She does not portray herself as a practitioner of *dini*, which is why patients like Wilfred have no reservations about visiting Bi Mwana's place where they could potentially be seen and judged by others. Though kombe is *dawa ya kiislamu*, if dispensed by Bi Mwana, it is primarily *dawa* that she has personally chosen for a particular patient whose story she has listened to and whose betterment she cares for. A Christian patient who receives kombe is thus not so much crossing religious boundaries, as benefitting from her/his individual relationship to Bi Mwana. Despite Sara's silence about her ingestion of kombe, she once did say that Bi Mwana had helped her a lot: also for Sara, the relationship to Bi Mwana is key.

Furthermore, I draw attention here to Magdalena Lubanska's (2015) work. She investigates Muslims and Christians in Bulgaria who, when afflicted, seek treatment from each others' authorities (Muslim hodzhas and Christian priests). This happens particularly when the affliction is thought to be caused by a supernatural being of the other religion (who, Muslims and Christians in Bulgaria agree, co-exist since Muslim and Christian humans co-exist). The hodzhas and priests welcome patients from the other religion; however, Lubanska stresses, this does not entail religious syncretism. Rather, the patients "accept [the other's] power for pragmatic reasons, but they keep them at an arm's length in terms of personal interests or enquiries, a solution which safeguards each group from religious

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treatment consists of a communal ritual create more of a *shared* atmosphere that extends to those time spans when these rituals do not take place.

[20] Being attracted to Bi Mwana's *dawa ya asili* implies that the value of *dawa ya asili* is held in common. Flueckiger describes this precondition as a "shared cosmology" and a "shared ritual grammar" (Flueckiger 2006: xi, 169).

[21] Wilfred, 11 March 2014, Mji Mkongwe, Zanzibar Town.

syncretism" (2015: 300). Clearly situating her analysis against an oversimplified mixing and blurring, she speaks of "superficial syncretism" to access the convergence of practices within a framework of Muslim-Christian co-habitation. Similar to the conversation I had with Bi Tufa and Bi Mwaltima, Lubanska quotes her respondents: "When you're in need [...] its does not matter who does the helping, a priest or hodza."

While there are certainly many resonances of the situation in Bulgaria with the one in Zanzibar (especially also the increasing attention given to reformists' opinions), I find that the term "superficial syncretism" does not function in the Zanzibari context.[22] Firstly, the term "syncretism" resonates with *dini mseto* "mixed religion" (see previous chapter: 7.1) and contains the derogatory sense of mixing and altering "pure religions" which has informed much normative literature about religion in Africa, situated within a history of political and theological concerns about what is "right" and "true" (see Janson and Meyer 2016). Against the grain of syncretism, Marloes Janson thus argues for "assemblage" as an analytical term, which I take up below (see 8.3.1). Speaking about *dini mseto*, Daniel Madsen from the Interfaith Centre mentioned a "fear of syncretism"[23] which, along with Hakimu Saleh's explanations about *dini mseto*, raise questions about the use of this term despite the striking resonances between Lubanska's description of the situation in Bulgaria and my observations in Zanzibar.

Secondly, "superficial syncretism" does not correspond to the way that healing through religious treatment relates to narratives about conversion. Driven by a Pentecostal discourse, healing is a major theme in conversion narratives (see also Olsson 2016: 149).[24] In contrast to "syncretism," "conversion" stresses the distinction between different religions and their exclusivity. "Superficial syncretism"

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[22] Furthermore, I find it noteworthy that the discursive accessibility in Bulgaria does not seem to pose a problem. Sara envelops her ingestion of kombe in silence. Although I was present when she received her bottle of kombe, she did not talk about it later and Sara was not the only one acting in this way. For example, Wilfred whom I also met at Bi Mwana's place (11 March 2014, Amani and Mji Mkongwe, Zanzibar Town).

[23] 3 January 2014, Stone Town, Zanzibar Town. See also chapter 7.2.2.

[24] Although Olsson focuses on mainly Christian conversion to Pentecostalism (see his chapter 4), the public mass events in which public mass healing takes place is one of the outreach activities that are also targeted at a Muslim audience, primarily through, as Olsson delineates, marking spatial presence. I suggest that the dominance of "healing" in Pentecostal conversion narratives complicates how Pentecostals can partake (and talk about partaking) in other practices of healing (which could include the ingestion of kombe, for example). However, this explicit Pentecostal take on non-Pentecostal healing in Zanzibar would be an interesting topic to investigate that I have not explored sufficiently.

suggests that, even if "superficial," these practices are still "syncretic." Indeed, Lubanska's focus on how the treatment practices of Muslim hodzas and Christian priests are made to relate to each other and her argument that the convergence of practices is a "cultural strategy developed by both groups in order to preserve each group's unique identity" (2015: 300) give valence to her word choice (although she also describes how conversion is necessary for certain Christian prayers to be effective [2015: 294]). As an analytic term, however, "superficial syncretism" does not encompass the complexities in Zanzibar, which mark Islam and Christianity as distinct while Christians are welcome to (and do) employ Islamic medical treatment options.

Neither temporally nor spatially unique (see García-Ballester, Flueckiger, and Lubanska), the employment of medicine across religious boundaries remains scarcely theorized. Sara's silence about her drinking of kombe renders the act of theorizing questionable: if Sara does not talk about her ingestion of *dawa ya kiislamu*, how can I? Taking into account aspects that will be introduced throughout the next sections, I will come back to these theoretical cues towards the end of this chapter when I suggest "formational healing" as a term to capture the practice, the way it is made sense of, and how it is silenced. However, before delving into these conceptualizations, let me flesh out the relationality of *dawa* and *dini*/"religion." While Bi Mwaltima stated that *dawa* does not have a "religion," the following subsection will show how *dini* can envelop *dawa*.

8.1.3. *Dawa* as matter of *dini*

I first met Bi Mwana (see chapter 1.3.4) when I was accompanying Mama Sue with whom I lived at that time and who sought treatment for her new-born child, Shinuna. [25] That day, Bi Mwana touched the baby's stomach and diagnosed "gas" (flatulence). Besides some wooden sticks as ingredients for a decoction, Mama Sue also received kombe. She had brought an empty bottle which then was filled with kombe that had been written beforehand and kept in stock. Both the decoction and kombe were to be drunk by Mama Sue so that she would pass it on to Shinuna through breastfeeding. One small tea cup in the morning, one in the evening for seven days. Having arrived back home, the baby was breastfed and we started cooking. The water with the wooden sticks was put on the charcoal grill just after

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[25] 13 November 2013, Amani and Kiembe Samaki, Zanzibar Town.

the food was ready so that it would simmer while we ate. After the meal Mama Sue drank her medicine: both the decoction which was very bitter and therefore had to be gulped down quickly and the cup of kombe which fortunately did not taste bitter but was rather non-descript—like water. She went to bed early that day. Although the bottle of kombe was meant to last for seven days, it was already empty after three. Mama Sue noticed this with indifference and a day later decided to also stop drinking the decoction as it was "too bitter." Although Mama Sue continued to complain about her difficult situation with Shinuna who continued to have "gas" and therefore wouldn't sleep properly, she evaluated the treatment she received as successful and went back to Bi Mwana irregularly to receive more treatment.

This account of how Mama Sue took kombe cannot be generalized. Others might portion the bottle more carefully to last seven days and they might say "Bismillahi" before swallowing kombe, but the account of how Mama Sue took kombe is not exceptional and gives a sense of how nonchalantly kombe can be drunk. This way of ingesting the Qurʾan is usually not framed as "religious" and is not incorporated in a practice bundle that would render it as part of practicing a religion. Mama Sue directly linked drinking kombe with the decoction: they were received together, they were prescribed in similar doses and for a similar time span and the early finishing of the bottle of kombe prompted her to also finish the treatment with the decoction a day later. The bitter taste of the decoction cannot be discounted in making it unpalatable for Mama Sue. (Plus, she also needed to use the pot in which the decoction was prepared for the daily preparation of meals.) With some hesitation, Mama Sue evaluated treatment with the decoction to be only effective with the accompanying ingestion of kombe. Mama Sue received the decoction as *dawa ya asili* and kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* (which is part of Bi Mwana's *dawa ya asili*) and although they each have an independent rationale for how they work, Mama Sue treats them as being in a dependency relation: they are both *dawa*, but the efficacy of *dawa ya asili*, following experientially established knowledge, is made dependent on the *dawa ya kiislamu*, referring to spirituality, knowledge of *dini*.

Here, the *dawa ya kiislamu* is coupled with the sense of *dini* that is encompassing, relevant to all aspects of life, including the realm of the "traditional," and entangles the drinking of the two liquids into one practice bundle. Mama Sue does not mark drinking kombe as "religious." She is not particularly pious. She went to Bi Mwana because she wanted to receive *dawa ya asili* rather than "religious"

treatment (of which there are also numerous options in Zanzibar). However, the kombe she received encircled the *dawa ya asili* and highlighted its situatedness in God's realm. With kombe, the *dawa ya asili* became a matter of *dini*.

In the previous subsection, I described how Bi Mwaltima stated that "*dawa haina dini*" (*dawa* does not have a "religion"). This appears to contradict the way in which Mama Sue merged the decoction into the realm of *dini*. In connection to the ambiguous distinguishability of *dini* and "religion" as delineated in chapter 7.2.4, however, this juxtaposition makes sense. In Bi Mwaltima's statement, *dawa haina dini*, *dini* converges with a sense of "religion" (thus my translation of her statement as *dawa* not having a "religion"). While many Muslims also take *kombe* without making an explicit connection to their religious affiliation, Bi Mwaltima's intervention that "*dawa* does not have a religion" was made in connection to Christians, the Muslim's other (see chapter 7.1). Thus, Bi Tufa's proud statement that "even Christians come here" and that "they also receive kombe" and that "it helps them" employs the Christians' occasional visits to Bi Mwana's place to situate their treatment (including the ingestion of the Qurʾan) as a treatment that affects bodies in need of healing regardless of their religious affiliation. *Dawa* becomes the overarching attribute of *kombe* to the extent that it un-makes "religion" as an attribute. However, Mama Sue treats kombe and the decoction as part of an all-encompassing framework of *dini*. *Dawa* necessarily belongs to the realm in which God acts, as everything belongs to that realm. When Mama Sue linked her decoction to kombe, she accustomed it to this realm of *dini*, making use of kombe's explicit tie to this realm. Bringing this understanding of *dawa* as part of *dini* together with the statement that *dawa* does not have a "religion" points at the ambiguous relation of *dini* and "religion" which I have expressed as *dini*≠"religion" in the previous chapter (7.2.1): while *dini* and "religion" are distinguishable, they are simultaneously inseparable from each other. Bi Mwaltima treats the attribute *ya kiislamu* as an attribute of "religion" and Mama Sue treats it as an attribute of *dini*. In the description of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* both of these two notions are contained and entangled.

Due to this simultaneity of *dini* and "religion" in kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu*, Sara chooses not to talk about her ingestion of kombe. The intra-active relation of *dini* and "religion" leaves room for Bi Tufa and Bi Mwaltima on the one hand, and Mama Sue on the other to enact differentiated practices of *dawa ya kiislamu*. For Sara as a Pentecostal Christian, however, this differentiation is not possible. While she can receive kombe as *dawa* and as part of *dawa ya asili* because *dawa*

does not have a "religion," kombe's ties to Islam in the sense of *dini* render her uncomfortable (or even unable) to talk about it.[26] That kombe is *dawa* causes her to drink it; that it is something *ya kiislamu* mutes her because she is a Christian and *ya kiislamu* evokes both a sense of "religion"—and in this case, that would be the "other" religion—and an Islamic sense of *dini* in Zanzibar—that equally does not make sense for her to endorse. Whereas Sara does not speak about her own ingestion with me, many other people do speak about Christians' ingestion of the Qurʾan, emphasizing that it is primarily *dawa* and also emphasizing its contrasting relation to biomedicine. In the next section I present numerous voices to comment on Christians' partaking in the employment of the written and liquefied Qurʾan as *dawa*, a transformative substance targeted at an affliction that their bodies mediate.

8.2. Voices and Silence on Christians' Drinking Kombe

During a week-long trip to Machui, a village around a Catholic nunnery, I happened to spend some time in the waiting area of the nuns' dispensary.[27] Amongst the waiting patients (all of them were female), a conversation was taking place about the disadvantages of the governmental hospital in town where the waiting lines were much longer and where less time and care was taken for each patient in comparison to the nuns' dispensary. I entered this conversation, asking for their opinions about other medicines. They hesitated in responding, and I sensed that they felt uneasy about discussing non-biomedical options with a white person (who are not known to be very appreciative of alternative medicines). I explained my interest and my research topic and then they all responded at once. Communally forming an answer, the general consent was that, Muslims and Christians could, of course, take each others' medicines (and in this context of the Catholic nuns' dispensary, biomedicine was seen as the Christians' medicine). One woman added that the afflicted person just needed to believe in it a little. Another woman intervened that it also depended on the affliction; some afflictions can be better taken care of with certain kinds of medicines than others. In some cases, yet another

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[26] Rose Marie Beck approaches these issues in terms of "(un-)talk-about-ability" (ongoing personal communication).
[27] 28 October 2013, Machui.

woman agreed, Christians go to receive *dawa ya kiislamu* and in other cases Muslims go to church. None of the women who were present, though, knew (or was ready to admit to know) of any Muslim who had ever gone to church to receive prayers. The conversation in the waiting area of the Catholic nuns' dispensary was interrupted when somebody was called into the doctor's office and our conversation then turned to a new topic: food. Although they did not elaborate much on individual points, the women in the waiting area touched on many issues that were addressed in other contexts of my research. Thus, the topics raised by their conversation serve as introduction to this section where I bring together voices that make sense of how Christians can take kombe as *dawa* with references to afflictions (8.2.1), references to belief (8.2.2), and references to respect and pragmatism in being situated in Zanzibar (8.2.3). I then relate this choir to Sara's silence through "sensational forms" (8.2.4).

8.2.1. Reference to Affliction

Dr Muhyiddin Ahmad Khamis[28] who is the principle of the Zanzibar Muslim Academy (*Chuo cha Kiislamu*), for example, foregrounded affliction and stated that especially for people, both Muslims and Christians, who are overwhelmed by their lives (*kuzidiwa na maisha*), the Qurʾan is healing. As every type of illness has its cure, he stated, kombe is particularly good for those who have been troubled by jinn. I was told that especially Christians who were afflicted by a Muslim jinni needed *dawa ya kiislamu* to treat this affliction.[29] Also Hakimu Saleh engaged actively with the question of Christians' possession by a Muslim spirit. Having a Muslim spirit bother you (for example, by rising to your head and moving your body around wildly, only to be soothed by Qurʾan recitations) is an affliction that many Christians can suffer from and that is often treated with *dawa ya kiislamu*. Hakimu Saleh explained: "Because, you see, the spirits don't choose people according to their religion—and if you have a Muslim spirit, even if you are a Christian, it is best to treat this condition with *dawa ya kiislamu*."[30] "Having a spirit" (*kuwa na sheitani/kuwa na jini*) is usually framed as a "spiritual" problem

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[28] 26 March 2014, Mazizini, Zanzibar Town.
[29] Note here how the embodiment of the "other" is portrayed as problematic (see chapter 5.3.3) and how this takes for granted an Islamic cosmology of jinn, since jinn are ontologically different from Christian evil spirits. It would be interesting to explore further how these ontological difference is enacted or made commensurable in Zanzibari practice.
[30] 14 August 2014, Vikokotoni, Zanzibar Town.

that biomedicine fails to treat and that therefore needs "alternative" or often more specifically "Islamic" treatment.[31] Pastor Daniel, however, did not agree. Although many people are burdened with possession of demons, he doubts that "Christian spirits" afflict Muslims and made reference to one case in Pemba where a Muslim was thought to be possessed by a Roman Catholic spirit which proved not to be true.[32] That Christians can be afflicted with Muslim spirits, however, was unanimously agreed upon and in recurring narrations led to the conclusion that Christians in these cases needed to turn to *dawa ya kiislamu.*

For practitioners it is not a question of whether they should attend to Christians with *dawa ya kiislamu* or not. In a herbal pharmacy in Chake Chake, Pemba, I met Rasul who works there.[33] He asserted that kombe helps with personal problems (*matatizo ya binafsi*) such as poor understanding or little intellect, much along the same lines that Dr Muhyiddin Ahmad Khamis had explained. As Islam invites everybody and does not differentiate between people, he pointed out, practitioners cannot deny Christians kombe. God grants to those who believe. Especially with problems concerning devils (*shetani*) or if your stomach is upset, kombe can help as far as God agrees. Who are we to know God's plans for working through spirits to shape our spiritual well-being and who are we to judge those who believes?

8.2.2. Reference to Belief/Trust

Rasul stated that God grants to those who believe (in him). Similar to how Mama Sue made all *dawa* a matter of *dini* (see above: 8.1.3), Rasul places all humans in God's realm (*dini*). This includes those who are formally Christians—we cannot know who believes. He used the word *kuamini*: to believe, to trust.[34] The women

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[31] That spirit possession is not unanimously regarded as affliction to be healed has already been addressed in chapter 5.3. In possession ceremonies, for example, the relation to one's spirit is nurtured in order to receive healing (see also chapter 7.1.4). "Healing spirit possession" can thus be read both as a verbal phrase (chapter 5.3.1) and as an adjectival phrase (chapter 5.3.2).

[32] Pastor Daniel, 3 February 2014, Mbweni, Zanzibar Town.

[33] 10 August 2014, Chake Chake, Pemba.

[34] I translated this instance as "to believe" in the preceding sentence as the statement appears to refer to a qualitive relationship between God and the person who "believes" as a personal and interior affair. Reading this notion into this sentence is problematic since the term "belief" evolved in the Christian context and carries Christian (and post-Christian) peculiarities, (see Ruel 1982: 9, 22-23). Note the relation of this debate with postcolonial interventions about the term "religion" (see chapter 7.2.4).

in the nuns' dispensary waiting area also mentioned belief/trust, but they framed it as the belief/trust in the efficacy of kombe: "The afflicted person just needs to believe in it a little, *kuamini kidogo*." Believing that kombe would work (often blurred with believing in the Islamic God) was frequently mentioned as a prerequisite for kombe to work. Talib Ali[35] who explained that kombe works through the heart's prior knowledge about it, as well as Zube[36] who prepares kombe for himself whenever he is not feeling well, or Iddi and Haroun[37] from the Ba Kathir madrasa in Ukutani strongly advocated this position. Belief in something (the written Qurʾan, see chapter 4) that bypasses one's brain (chapter 5) to be read bodily (chapter 6) depends on the heart's knowledge about (chapter 3) what this something entails and the patient's trust in it regardless of religious affiliation (chapter 7).

Those justifications for why and how Christians can drink kombe that are made in connection to "belief" question and set in place the separation between Christians' and Muslims' frames of reference. Christians, on the one hand, can trust that the Qurʾan heals them and this belief/trust affects their bodies' abilities to "read" the verses. Belief in the efficacy of the Qurʾan does not challenge one's affiliation to Christianity since kombe is *dawa* and *dawa* does not have a religion. Muslims, on the other hand, can portray kombe as a matter of *dini* and thus enact *dawa*'s situatedness in the overarching realm of *dini*. These two frames of reference hinge on the ambiguous relation of *dini* and "religion" that has different consequences for how Muslims and Christians can frame kombe (although all are required to "believe" in it a little as one of the women in the nuns' dispensary waiting area stated).

Chombo Juma,[38] a madrasa teacher and kombe practitioner in Mto Pepo, and also Sheikh Mziwanda Ngwali Ahmed,[39] one of the imams of the governmental mosque in Mwembe Shauri, stressed the importance of belief, too, but they were much more skeptical about the possibility of Christians' "belief" in the Qurʾan.[40]

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[35] 17 July 2014, Mombasa, Zanzibar Town. See also chapter 5.4.1.

[36] 22 August 2014, Jambiani. See also chapter 1.1.1, footnote 12.

[37] 12 August 2014, Ukutani, Zanzibar Town. See also chapter 4.2.3.

[38] 21 January 2014. Mto Pepo, Zanzibar Town, see introduction.

[39] 20 March 2014, Mwembe Shauri, Zanzibar Town.

[40] Note, that I circumscribe their statements as being critical of Christians' possible belief *in* the Qurʾan as opposed to their belief *that* the Qurʾan heals. They both refer to "belief" in a less personal and more communal way, a distinction that in English academic writing was targeted with the two terms "belief" and "faith" (see Malcolm Ruel on Rodney Needham

They both suggested that kombe written for Christians needs to make use of Biblical verses rather than Qurᵓanic verses. Sheikh Ahmed explicitly stressed that this modification does not change the quality of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu*, as the Bible also belongs to Islam. He also stressed, though, that the practitioners need to be Muslims, as kombe has its roots in Islam. For both, Chombo Juma and Sheikh Ahmed, the question of how to treat Christians is rather hypothetical. They both portray themselves as experts of Islamic ("religious") matters and thus, the Christian patients that I have met would not visit them but instead seek *dawa ya asili* without the emphasis on *ya kiislamu* elsewhere. Nevertheless, their hypothetical readiness to employ Biblical verses in kombe preparation is noteworthy as it again blurs the distinction of *dini* and "religion." While they would dispense kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* to everyone (*ya kiislamu* in the sense of *dini*), they make a difference for Christians (in the sense of "religion"), adding to what the term *dini*≠"religion" entails in the context of this thesis.

The relation between "religious" affiliation and a more encompassing notion of *dini* influences the variety with which Christians' drinking kombe is related to "believing" and "trusting" (*kuamini*). Sara does not dogmatically "believe" *in* the Qurᵓan, but she trusts *that* Bi Mwana provides her with help. While Sara did not talk about it, many of my interlocutors made sense of how people like Sara can drink kombe in terms of *kuamini*. While the related notion of *dini*≠"religion" is peculiar in Zanzibar, I argue that also the Christians' partaking in drinking kombe needs to be situated in Zanzibar.

8.2.3. Respect and the Place Zanzibar

Sefuati,[41] a Muslim healer from the mainland (Dar es Salaam) whose treatment consists of praying over people in Machui, agrees that the practitioners need to be Muslims and that they should welcome also Christian patients. We were sitting in front of his house, in the shade of banana trees. He interrupted his afternoon's checkers game to participate in this interview with me. His checkers competitor listened to our interview and occasionally Sefuati turned to him and sought his

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and Wilfred Cantwell Smith 1982: 23-26) in relation to the post-Christian bias of "belief" (see footnote 34). For political (liberal-democratic) implications of this particularly formed notion of "belief" and its connection to cultivating sensibilities, see Talal Asad (2012) who draws extensively on Charles Taylor's "A Secular Age" (2007) and Charles Hirschkind's "The Ethical Soundscape" (2006).

[41] 5 November 2013, Machui.

affirmation. In his elaborations of why Christians are to be welcomed, Sefuati placed religious practices of respect (*heshima*) at the center of his evaluation. "It's just like when you and I met. We greeted each other, you introduced yourself and politely explained what you were doing and then we started talking." Respect is essential to how we behave. Although Muslims, he continued, are privileged in that they have received knowledge that can be used for healing, this advantage does not downgrade Christian practices. As God knows every language and has insight into one's *nafsi* (soul/self),[42] he will be able to judge and provide healing also to Christians who cannot prepare kombe, but accept the Muslims' God-given knowledge and profit from it. In order for God to heal people, it does not matter which religion one belongs to, but that one is respectful and *straight*[43] in one's religion, in the submission and worship to God. To Sefuati, it was important to stress that this is very different from mixing or from syncretism. Our conversation continued, touching on the increasing tensions between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar town. Sefuati's checkers comptetitor joined the conversation. The disparity between Muslims and Christians in town was difficult to grasp from the perspective of Machui.

Sefuati mentioned that sincerity of one's religious practices (being "straight") was crucial for receiving healing through kombe. As a Muslim, he does not regard Christians' drinking of kombe as indication of their embrace of Islam (in fact, he strongly emphasized that this is neither mixing nor syncretism). As a Muslim, he respected God's judgment and focused on being a good Muslim. As a Muslim, he attended to Christian patients as a matter of respect (*heshima*).

Because of the Catholic nunnery, Machui is an unusual place in Zanzibar in that it hosts a much larger proportion of Christian inhabitants than other places. Unlike some of the other practitioners whom I have referred to in this chapter, Sefuati encounters Christians on a regular basis. Voiced from his experience in Machui, Sefuati's emphasis on respect that he portrays as inherent to both Muslim and Christian conduct gains particular relevance. All the more important are the implications that Sefuati's elaborations have in relation to statements of people from town.

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[42] See chapter 5.4.1.
[43] Sefuati used the English term "straight" here, signifying the importance of sincerity.

Hakimu Saleh explicitly stated that in Dar es Salaam,[44] Muslims also go to Christians to receive treatment, but not in Zanzibar, because Zanzibar is Islamic. A Catholic priest whom I interviewed in town[45] confirmed that Muslims in Zanzibar do not come to church to receive *dawa* (although he did not mention anything about the situation in Dar es Salaam or other mainland places).[46] Reading Hakimu Saleh's statement through Sefuati's elaborations, one could arrive at the interpretation that out of respect, Christians seek Islamic Medicine in Zanzibar. However, my understanding of Sara's situation, supported by encounters with other Christians,[47] points at pragmatic reasons rather than concerns of respect.

Sara lives in Zanzibar and seeks help in Zanzibar. Since Zanzibar is Islamic, Bi Mwana's *dawa ya asili* may include "Islamic" components as part of Zanzibari "traditional medicine." For Sara, the choice of Zanzibari "traditional medicine" only secondarily relates to her religious affiliation. Primarily, it is a pragmatic solution to her problem: jealousy at work. Since biomedicine does not offer treatment for this kind of affliction, Sara turns to *dawa ya asili* in (Islamic) Zanzibar, where she lives and works. While this primarily pragmatic solution provides an explanation for why Sara as a Christian drinks kombe, the dissonance between kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* and her being Christian in Zanzibar—taking Islam and Christianity as "religions"—renders her unable to talk about it. Pondering Sara's silence on drinking, its "un-talk-about-ability," I now turn to "sensational forms" as a way towards developing an analytical language for partially silenced healing practices.

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[44] Dar es Salaam is not only the biggest city in Tanzania, but its port also provides the main connection to Zanzibar via ferry. Going to the mainland from Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam often is the first destination.

[45] 1 February 2014, Mji Mkongwe, Zanzibar Town.

[46] Note that Pastor Daniel (3 February 2014, Mbweni, Zanzibar Town) explained that Christian spirits do not possess which is why there is no need for Muslims to seek Christian practitioners (see above: 8.2.1). While Pastor Daniel referenced affliction, the Catholic priest embedded his explanations in the role and history of the Catholic Church in Zanzibar and emphasized a long-lasting parallelism where Muslims and Christians lived side by side, each group minding its own business.

[47] For example, Stella (18 February 2014, Amani, Zanzibar Town) whom I also met at Bi Mwana's place with her boss wanted to return to Bi Mwana for her own issues later. However, I cannot elaborate on Stella's case because we did not manage to see each other again.

8.2.4. "Sensational Forms" and Religious Power Structures

In search of an approach to "religious sensations as socially constituted *as well as* personal experiences that encompass thinking and feeling" (Meyer 2016a: 18, emphasis in original), Birgit Meyer developed the concept of "sensational forms" (Meyer 2006b; 2009; 2011; 2016a). Taking seriously the entanglements of the individual's experiences (whether or not they are termed "religious" experiences) with the social embeddedness that authorizes these experiences, and not reducing one to the other, "sensational forms" provide an approach to how Sara drinks kombe. She experiences betterment, and in Zanzibar kombe is known to heal even Christians, as the plethora of voices in this section has shown. Thus, Sara's healing experience is socially authorized in Zanzibar.

However, her avoidance of speaking about this experience indicates the conundrum she faces between her (socially authorized) healing experience and power structures that mark Christianity and Islam as distinct "religions" and consequently render her "religious" affiliation incompatible with such an experience. (I mainly rely on Sara's silence for my argument here since I had most contact with her. Other Pentecostal Christians that I fleetingly met, however, appeared to apply a similar strategy of avoidance).[48] To follow Meyer and adapt her definition, "sensational forms [of healing] are relatively fixed, authorized modes of invoking and organizing access to the transcendental [or to healing *ya kiislamu*], thereby creating and sustaining links between believers [or amongst practitioners and patients] in the context of particular religious[49] power structures" (Meyer 2009: 13). For Sara, this "context of particular *religious* power structures" (emphasis mine) is problematic.

Sara cannot join the here assembled choir of how Christians can drink kombe as *dawa*. Although Da Monica, a Catholic in Machui, said that "finding a cure

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[48] For example, Wilfred who sought treatment for his daughter at Bi Mwana's place would only talk about the herbal medication when we met again later and, like Sara, was silent on the kombe that I witnessed him receiving (11 March 2014, Amani and Mji Mkongwe, Zanzibar Town).

[49] Birgit Meyer employs the term "religion" as a "practice of mediation between humans and a professed invisible 'beyond.'" Instead of taking the existence of a transcendental force (i.e. God) for granted or unmasking it as illusion, she focuses on the methods through which the sublime, a sacred surplus, some kind of excess is fabricated (2016a: 18). In the context of this text where I flesh out how the term "religion" matters in research on kombe, I take the term "religious" here in the sense that was made explicit in chapter 7.2.4, which relies on Hakimu Saleh's explanations.

(*dawa*) is more important than religion (*dini*)"[50] (see above: 8.1.2), Sara finds herself in a more complicated situation. Not only does she live in town where the incommensurability of Islam and Christianity is more pronounced than in Machui, but she is also part of the TAG (Tanzanian Assemblies of God), one of the oldest and largest Pentecostal churches in Tanzania.[51] With recourse to the Pentecostal discourse of healing through the Holy Spirit alone, Sara's search for healing outside of the church is not just unaccounted for in Pentecostal rhetoric, but even dangerous in that it threatens her personal salvation in Christ. Within Pentecostal discourse, *dini* (Pentecostal *dini*≠"religion") is the most superior *dawa* ("transformative power" geared towards healing) which is incongruous with statements such as *dawa haina dini* ("medicine does not have a religion"). Sara's affiliation to the TAG constrains her ability to talk about her ingestion of the Qurˀan, an artifact of another "religion." However, she does mention that Bi Mwana has helped her a lot. Talking about the link between practitioner and patient (even if they belong to different "religions") is not sanctioned to the same extent by her *religious* power structures (although she only mentioned this once after I specifically asked her about it). In avoiding discussion of the ingestion of kombe with me by commenting on Bi Mwana, with whom she is in a patient-practitioner relationship, Sara faintly emphasizes kombe as *dawa* while thwarting a statement such as *dawa haina dini.*

Not Omar (see next section), but Bi Tufa and Bi Mwaltima, Da Monica, the women in the waiting area of the Catholic dispensary, Dr Muhyiddin Ahmad Khamis, Hakimu Saleh, Pastor Daniel, Rasul, Talib Ali, Zube, Iddi and Haroun, Chombo Juma, Sheikh Mziwanda Ngwali Ahmed, and Sefuati. I engage them all in diffractively making sense of Christians who drink kombe. Concerns for the type of affliction and for questions of belief/trust in Zanzibar permeate the responses. Through these themes, the phenomenon of Christians' ingestion of the Qurˀan makes sense and becomes a socially authorized way for Zanzibaris to account for Christians' access to healing *ya kiislamu.* This diffraction of voices accounts for a desire to align the separative discursive formations of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar with an affective practice that withholds these nominal differentiations

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[50] 29 October 2013, Machui.

[51] I am not sure about the connection of the TAG church that Sara attended and the "Christian City Center" that Olsson describes which, according to its website is also a TAG-church: TAG City Christian Centre kariakoo zanzibar, accessed 29 November 2018, http://assembliesofgodzicc.blogspot.com/.

from healing. However, Sara's silence superposes this accountability. Neither the type of affliction that she sought treatment for nor her situatedness in Zanzibar, let alone concerns for belief, are entry points for her to speak about her ingestion to me. Sara's silence overshadows the choir of voices. Only a faint hint at the importance of her relation to Bi Mwana (and thus a faint hint at matters of trust) breaks the silence and thus amplifies the concern for relationalities of trust between patients and practitioners in Zanzibar in the context of Christians' recourse to *dawa ya asili* that happen to include *dawa ya kiislamu*.

Although Sara's bodily experience with the Qurʾan is a relatively fixed and socially authorized mode of healing, the influence that her own religion exerts over the discourse on healing discourage her from talking about this experience. Since kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* bears the simultaneous entanglement and distinction of *dini*/"religion," Sara's drinking of this "Islamic" *dawa* is possible, but she prefers not to talk about it. For Sara, drinking the Qurʾan is a bodily and affective experience; her *mwili* ("body") is able to "read" that which has bypassed the brain but she envelops this experience in silence. Possibly, Sara perceives her ingestion of kombe to be inconsistent with Pentecostal rhetoric and does not wish to disclose this inconsistency; possibly Sara talks to other people about it, but not to me; possibly Sara expects me, a "sister in Christ," to lecture her about the dangers of Islamic medicine just as she lectured me about my insufficient church attendance. I am not able to and do not want to draw irrefutable conclusions about Sara's silence with me about her ingestion of kombe. However, with "sensational forms" I can pay attention to the context of power structures within which these bodily experiences occur. Furthermore, and this I will stress in the following section, the notion of "sensational forms" allows for the conception of kombe in its context as "form."

8.3. Formational Healing and *Mshipa* as Metaphor

Kombe consists of trans*form*ed verses (chapter 4) that unfold their healing power through *mwili* (chapter 5). *Mwili* "reads" and mediates the verses towards the affliction (chapter 6). As it is *dawa* (see above: 8.1.1), kombe's per*form*ance in and through *mwili* has trans*form*ative power; kombe heals.

In light of a dominant dichotomization between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar (see chapter 2.2 and 7.1), the choir of voices that justifies why and how Christians can drink kombe (see above: 8.2) points at the need to find an

explanation for a practice that is more inclusive than the discursively nurtured imagination of an almost exclusively Muslim Zanzibari community suggests. The choir of voices accounts for the inclusion of Christians in Zanzibar's society and indicates a concern for aligning kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* with Christians in Zanzibar, who conform with Zanzibari society to the extent that they partake in drinking *dawa ya kiislamu*. Thereby, both Christians who drink kombe and people who comment on and make sense of Christians' drinking of kombe indicate a social formation in Zanzibar through *dawa* that is less antagonistic than discursive developments through *dini*/"religion."

Picking up on drinking kombe as a "sensational *form*" of healing (see previous section: 8.2.2) and taking seriously the materiality of kombe as an affectively legible form, I turn to the sociality of drinking *dawa ya kiislamu* in Zanzibar in terms of "formational healing." The term "formational healing" is designed to resonate with the diffraction of three aspects that in this section I first address separately before then attending to their entanglements. In anticipation of writing about these entanglements through "form" and with much emphasis on kombe's materializations (8.3.3), I first depart from the choir of voices that makes sense of kombe as sensational form (see preceding section) and pay attention to concomitant Zanzibari social "formations" (8.3.1) in which both Muslims and Christians, established as ambiguously and antagonistically comparable to each other (see chapter 7), are involved. This section then picks up on this chapter's beginning section on *dawa* and links social formations to the entangeled materiality of kombe by pinpointing drinking kombe as a practice of healing (8.3.2). The components of this section do not only cut across this chapter, but in doing so, also engage all three parts of this thesis.

8.3.1. Social "Formation"

The use of the term "formation" draws on Birgit Meyer's conceptualizations of "Aesthetic Formations" that she develops from and through Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities" (2003):

> In order to get a better grip on the making of communities as a process, it is helpful to invoke the term formation, because it is more encompassing and dynamic. Formation refers both to a *social entity* (as in social formation)—thus designating a community—and to *processes of forming* (see also

> Mahmood 2005, 17ff.).[52] These processes of forming mold particular sub-
> jects through shared imaginations that materialize [...] through embodied
> aesthetic forms. The term aesthetic formation, then, highlights the conver-
> gence of processes of forming subjects and the making of communities—as
> social formations. [M]y concern here is not so much to replace the term com-
> munity, but to launch a dynamic—indeed per*form*ative—understanding of
> community as an aesthetic formation. (Meyer 2009: 7, emphases in original)

Such a dynamic understanding of community in Zanzibar accentuates how prac-
tices of drinking kombe and talking about Christians' drinking of kombe can im-
pact on imaginations of belonging. Practices, such as drinking kombe, may impact
on how people perceive of themselves partaking in a community. Practices, such as
talking about Christians who drink kombe, point to an embodied aesthetic form
that materializes a dissonance between what a Zanzibari community comprises
and how Zanzibar's "religious" composition is discursively maintained.

   As stated earlier (8.1.2), the ingestion of kombe is not a *shared* practice in
the sense that it is not *shared* amongst patients who *share* afflictions and expe-
riences of a healing room (unlike the case that Flueckiger presents of *caurāstā* in
Hyderabad [2006]). Christians' ingestion of the Qurʾan is also not a practice of *re-*
ligious "assemblage" in the way that Marloes Janson (2016) suggests attending to
religious fluid and flexible diversity, (let alone "superficial syncretism" [Lubanska
2015]). Although drinking kombe occasions vigorous debates about *dini*≠"religion"
in Zanzibar, drinking kombe is not only a practice of "religion": drinking kom-
be is primarily a practice of *dawa*. It is a practice of *dawa*, more specifically of
dawa ya asili of which *dawa ya kiislamu* is part that allows for a discursively
nurtured framework of *dini*≠"religion" to become less important—to "diffractively
level out"—occasionally.

   While I seek to argue that Christians' partaking in a healing practice of
ingesting *dawa ya kiislamu* impact on the dominantly held antagonistic relations
between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar, I am similarly careful not to evoke
"formational healing" in an encompassing sense. I neither conclude that drinking
kombe and talking about drinking kombe is formational for the entire Zanzibari
community nor that these practices form a particular healing community whose
subjects *share* the application of kombe as part of an assemblage that dynami-

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[52]   Meyer refers here to Saba Mahmood's book *Politics and Piety: The Islamic Revival and the*
   Feminist Subject.

cally per*form*s community. Extending Meyer's much appreciated emphasis on a
"dynamic understanding of community," I turn to Karen Barad's "cuts."

Barad speaks of "agential cuts." Not as pre-existing entities, but from within
their entanglements (including their entanglements with global power dynamics),
Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar become separable entities. The "cut" between
Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar is a "cut" between "self" and "other" that is
enacted in a multiplicity of ways (see chapter 2). Kombe's description as *dawa* "*ya
kiislamu*" prompts not only justifications for an anticipated criticism from "fierce
sheikhs" (see chapter 7.3), but also explanations that make sense of Christians (the
significant "other") who drink kombe (a practice attributed to one's "own") in a
framework of established comparability of Muslims and Christians. Similar to how
the justifications against an anticipated criticism attest to the potential problems
of regarding kombe as an "Islamic" practice, the choir of explanations that makes
sense of Christians' drinking *dawa ya kiislamu* attests to potential dissonances
between what Christians do with "Islamic medicine" and what they are expected
to do. The discursive work invested in validating Christians' enactment of drinking
kombe substantiates the very "cut" it aims to bridge. Barad speaks of "[i]ntra-
actions [that] cut 'things' together and apart. Cuts are not enacted from the
outside, nor are they ever enacted once and for all" (2007: 179).[53]

Not everybody is involved in accounting for Christians who drink kombe
in Zanzibar. Thus, a "cut" between those who do and those who do not (and
possibly cannot) talk about it is established.[54] This "cut" along the lines of who
talks and who does not talk is related to but different from the one between
Muslims and Christians. Omar (see introduction to this part) does not provide
room to make sense of Christians who drink kombe. For him, the conversation
about kombe is a cue to lament the Christian influence on Zanzibar's "Islamic"
tabia. Omar, of course, does not speak for all people in Zanzibar. His notion
of what is considered "Islamic" is inspired by Saudi-influenced teachings that he

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[53] Karen Barad speaks of "agential cuts" that are not pregiven but intra-actively enacted dif-
ferentiations between "objects" and "subjects," determining causal structures, boundaries,
properties and meaning. Cuts cut things together and apart (Barad 2003: 815; 2007: 175–179,
339). "Cutting together" alludes to the *formational* intra-actions. See also Barad's article
"Diffracting Diffraction: Cutting Together-Apart" (2014).

[54] Following Barad further, the question of agency would have to be addressed here. Indeed,
Barad speaks of "agential cuts" within phenomena that produce "measured object" and
"measuring agent" and thus the "condition for objectivity" (2007: 175, 337, 340). While this
is an important aspect (especially in its connection to ethics [see 2007: 179]), I cannot do
justice to it here.

encounters in the mosque in which he prays: the "Wahhabi" mosque as people in its neighborhood term it. Unlike the majority of people in Zanzibar who discursively foster the inseparability of Zanzibar and Islam, he observes and quietly comments on the formational quality of inclusive practices, such as drinking *kombe*. He thereby situates a practice that is otherwise framed as local—even as "Zanzibari"[55] since kombe is *dawa* "*ya kiislamu*" and Zanzibar is "Islamic"—within a more globally envisioned threat to a purified Islam (see Loimeier 2003; Turner 2009). Like the Pentecostals to whom I relate Sara's silence, Omar is also not part of those who account for Christians who drink *dawa ya kiislamu.*

In contrast, Da Monica does take part. She is a Christian in Machui and, like Sara, qualifies as part of the "other" who might drink kombe and whose drinking would require explanation.[56] Unlike Sara and other Pentecostal Christians,[57] however, she does not feel uneasy talking about it. In fact, she affirmed a common narrative that makes sense of Christians' drinking *dawa ya kiislamu*, saying that *dawa* is more important than *dini.*

Da Monica's participation in this narrative together with various other people's attempts that account for Christians who drink kombe in juxtaposition with Omar's and Sara's silence mark how kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu* does not only invite comparison and antagonism within a framework of *dini*≠"religion," but shows how a different "cut" emerges between those who do and those who do not talk about Christian participation within a framework of *dawa*. Unlike *dini*≠"religion" with a dichotomy of Muslims and Christians, *dawa*—with *dawa ya asili* of which *dawa ya kiislamu* is part—separates more extreme positions from those who seek a pragmatic middle ground. This pragmatic middle ground must not be seen as an alternative way of encountering "religious" diversity. Muslims and Christians do not "religiously" mix. They do not form a "religious" assemblage. *Dawa* allows for practices where both Muslims and Christians partake, but that does not mean that they become differently "religious." Muslims and Christians are still separable; in fact, the choir of voices accounted not for Muslims, but for Christians who drink kombe. Their separability, I wish to make clear, does not immediately map onto practices that both Muslims and Christians partake in. Only the extreme positions

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[55] Although kombe is often framed as "Zanzibari," it is much more widely spread (see introduction).

[56] 29 October 2013, Machui. See above: 8.1.2.

[57] I can here only exemplarily refer to Wilfred (11 March 2014), but I am convinced that there are more examples.

(that Omar and Sara stand for here) merge the Christian participation of drinking the *dawa* kombe with disparaging evaluations of *dini*/"religion" in Zanzibar.

Thus, the separability of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar—and its relation to Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*"—is a phenomenon that is iteratively (re)produced and (re)configured (see Barad 2007: 240). A diffractive reading of Christians' involvement through drinking kombe as *dawa* "cuts together" social formations in Zanzibar that are grounded in embodied healing practices. This does not mean, that they are not also "cut apart." Kombe directs attention to healing that is "formational" in this sense of iterative (re)configurations: I propose to understand Meyer's "dynamics" of "formations" through Barad's "agential cuts" that continuously and iteratively produce shifting differentiatings.

Integrating Barad's iterative (re)configurations of "cuts" into Meyer's dynamic understanding of community, I have pointed to the possibilities of describing social formations through the sensational form and discursive-material phenomenon of kombe. Although such a focus on kombe's social aspect is valuable in itself as it shows how the practice of kombe and its discursive delineation are intricately linked to particular constellations of Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*" while paying attention to the fluidity and multiplicity of such constellations, the ubiquitous characterization of kombe as *dawa* impels me to take seriously these enactments of social formations in Zanzibar through kombe as a form of healing.

8.3.2. Healing

Since it has "transformative power" (Wilkens 2011: 181, see above: 8.1.1), kombe is *dawa*. The written and washed off Qurʾanic verses are ingested to be mediated by *mwili* towards an affliction, to counter this affliction, to induce betterment. Drinking kombe is a practice of healing. Before I come back to social *form*ations, let me elaborate briefly on the implications of using the term "healing" that then is qualified as "formational."

Taking seriously kombe's delineation as *dawa*, I employ the term "healing" here. Andrew Strathern and Pamela Steward address the term "healing" through its relation to "curing." What they make explicit is often taken for granted in medical anthropological writing—and also I have worked with this intuitive sense throughout the thesis. Similar to how disease relates to illness (in chapter 5.1, see footnote 2 on Kleinmann), Strathern and Steward inform, curing relates to healing (2010: 219). Although they note the entanglements of these terms, they

expound the distinction for analytical clarity: while "curing," they state, "refers to an act of treating successfully a specific condition" (that is, a biomedically explicable condition), the term "healing, by contrast, refers to the whole person or the whole body seen as an integrated system with both physical and spiritual components" (Strathern and Stewart 2010: 7). The term "healing," thus, is frequently used in contexts that do not adhere to a neat separation between "medicine" and "religion."[58] In fact, in much of this literature, the "religious" context plays a significant role for the etiology of an affliction and the possibilities of treating it.[59] With respect to the entanglements of "medicine" and *dini*/"religion" in delineating kombe, I also employ the term "healing" and thereby connect my work on kombe to a large body of literature on treatment practices that evoke "religious" references.

Healers may heal or a wound may heal; "healing" can be used as an active or passive verb in English which keeps the question of agency conveniently open. Making use of this openness, George Chryssides describes an instance of "spiritual healing" where "healing came through, not from the healer" (2000: 60) and thereby hints at powers (or energies) that are connoted with a "spiritual" or "religious" realm. When I employ the term "healing," I also connect to the English interpretation of the Qurʾanic verse 17:82 that begins with "We sent down the Qur'an as *healing* and mercy" (emphasis mine) and my interlocutors agree that healing comes from God. Regarding the question of whether the kombe that I could write for somebody would be effective (see chapter 1.2, footnote 45), which was sometimes answered positively (since the Qurʾan is the Qurʾan) and sometimes negatively (since as a non-Muslim I do not have the necessary *baraka*), I have occasionally used the term "healer" which allows me to maintain the inconclusiveness of the

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[58] This neat separation is part of the particular constellation in which biomedicine could develop as "an anomalous system of theory and practice when compared to all others [medical systems] across time and geography" (Whitaker 2006: 29, in her introduction to an article by Don Bates). However, the argument needs to be considered carefully since the work invested in grouping "all others [medical systems]" relies on a notion of "religion" that is not all-encompassing (in contrast to what *dini*, for example, would prompt [see chapter 7.2]). Biomedicine's anomaly, thus, is tied to the anomality of setting "religion" apart from other worldly matters. See however Eric Cassell (2013: chapter 4) who encourages biomedical practitioners to attune their practices more to "healing" and less to "curing" and thus to approach "healing" not only in terms of "religion."

[59] Note that the English terms "healing" and "holy" have a common etymology.

kombe-writer's agency in the healing process.[60] Usually, however, I have written of "practitioners" who "treat" because these terms enable me to focus on the practices of the process and suspend evaluations of success (which both "healing" and "curing" denote).

In Swahili, the passive sense of "to heal" (or "to recover," "to get well") is usually denoted as *kupona*. *Kupona* can be turned active: *kupoza*, which I would translate as "to treat." *Kupona* and *kupoza* are derivatives of *kupoa* which denotes "cooling" and can easily be related to unani medicine (see chapter 1.2.1). The active sense of "to heal," in the context of my research, was mostly conveyed to me through *kutiba*, whereby *kutiba* expresses the process of treatment rather than implying an evaluation of success. *Kutiba*—as well as *tiba* ("medicine"),[61] *matibabu* ("medical treatment"), and *tabibu* ("medical practitioner")—has an Arabic root: *ṭibb*. These words mark an understanding of "medicine" that is intimately tied to developments inspired by Islam. In contrast, *kuganga* has a Bantu root. *Kuganga*, besides designating "to heal," also means "to bind." As verbform of *uganga* ("traditional medicine") and *mganga* ("traditional healer"), in the context of my research, it was mostly used to designate a derogative sense of those treatment practices that work mainly through spirit possession and are attributed to "Africanness."[62] By translating *kupona*, *kutiba*, and *kuganga* as "to heal," I do not highlight the connection to unani medicine, nor to an Arabic and Islamic trajectory within which contemporary medicine in Zanzibar developed, nor to unappreciative sense of African bonds, but I situate drinking kombe as a topic that I engage with in the context of medical anthropology and the anthropology of religion. By qualifying "healing" as "formational," however, I do not only include the social dimension of medical treatments,[63] but partially pick up on *kuganga* and connect "healing" to an affliction that binds and has a form: *mshipa*.

At Bi Mwana's place, children are very often diagnosed with *mshipa*. By briefly massaging and thus examining the children's stomachs, the people at Bi Mwana's place can feel *mshipa*. *Mshipa*, they explained to me, is something of

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[60] This inconclusiveness is intimitely tied to the anticipated criticism of kombe (see chapter 7.3). It poses the question of whether the manufacture of Qurʾanic water distracts from the power to heal that is to be attributed exclusively to God.

[61] "*Tiba*" is used almost interchangeably with "*dawa*." See footnote 2.

[62] For the establishment of a dichotomy between "African" and "Islamic" influences in Zanzibar, see predominantly chapter 2.

[63] This has been done extensively, most notably by John Janzen and his concepualization of the "therapy management group" (1978).

a long and thin shape which binds together that which is inside the stomach (*tumbo*).[64] Sometimes, these binds are not good, but Bi Mwana's *dawa ya asili*, in particular selections of the small wooden sticks for which her place is known, can help. Dictionaries translate *mshipa* as blood vessel, sinew, tendon, muscle, hernia, hydrocele, nerve. However, a biomedical surgeon with whom I shared my observation of the ubiquitous diagnosis of *mshipa* said that in non-biomedical contexts, *mshipa* often stands for an "extended notion of pain."[65] Not only at Bi Mwana's place, this pain has a shape and is tactually perceivable: it is long and thin.

Countering *mshipa*, the "trans*form*ative power" of *dawa* needs to be taken quite literally. "Healing" involves the dissolution of this long and thin tactually perceivable "extended notion of pain," *mshipa*, that binds the insides of *mwili* in the wrong way. *Kuganga*, translated both as "to heal" and "to bind," with its negative connotations (my interlocutors preferred using the Arabic-inflected word *kutiba*) further points at the problematic but relevant notion of "binding" in the context of affliction, medicine, and healing in Zanzibar. While other binds, such as children's labial chords, are literally cut to enable their proper development, *mshipa* was never talked about in the sense of "cutting." It rather marked a de*form*ation that needed to be treated to then disappear. With reference to *mshipa*, I have chosen to qualify "healing" as "formational" to evoke the simultaneity of social aspects (deriving "formational" from "aesthetic formations" while relating this to "agential cuts") and material aspects that trans*form* afflictions through *mwili* where these afflictions take *form*.

8.3.3. "Form"

With "*form*ational healing" I combine the ubiquitously emphasized context of "healing" not only with attention to social formations that kombe influences, but also with the materiality of kombe (the *form* kombe takes) and the materiality of writing about kombe (how the thesis is *form*ulated). Employing the metaphor of

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[64] It is interesting to note that the stomach and tactually perceivable binds were not very important in the descriptions of *mwili* in chapter 5.4. I can only speculate that this might be a shortcoming due to the male bias of the interview partners in chapter 5.4 or that it could be related to their discursive portrayal of Islamic informedness, in particular since I elaborated on my question about *mwili* through providing parts of a semantic field including *nafsi* or *roho*. Further research is needed to attend to this shortcoming.

[65] Yusuf, 26 September 2018, Kisauni, Zanzibar Town.

mshipa, the "extended notion of pain" in its tactually perceivable long and thin form, helps to account for the entanglements of what kombe is, what kombe does, what is done to kombe, and what is made of kombe in this dissertation. *Mshipa* is only one of many afflictions that people seek to treat with "traditional medicine," and at Bi Mwana's place it is mostly treated with her small wooden sticks that are only occasionally supplemented with kombe. *Mshipa* does not seem to be the ideal affliction to pursue a discussion about kombe and indeed, I only include it now, towards the end of this thesis. As a metaphor, however, *mshipa* does not only relate healing that is formational to Omar's statement that Christians in Zanzibar influence the "Islamic *tabia*," but also enables a critical investigation of the here formulated connectivities between "text," "body," and "knowledge."

Mshipa is not to be "cut," but is to disappear. Binding together parts of the stomach in the wrong way, *mshipa* is an affliction that epitomizes the necessity of "*form*ational healing" in a literal sense. However, translated as "blood vessels," "sinews," "tendons," or "muslces," *mishipa* (plural of *mshipa*) are also necessary for *miwili* to function as living bodies. Like most medical conditions, the evaluation of *mshipa* as affliction needs to be considered in relation to its bodily material context: while some long, thin binds are necessary and enable life with *mwili*, others constitute a cause for intervention. Distinguishing disturbing from necessary binds, the evaluation of *mshipa* as affliction is closely related to how *dawa* can heal and harm (see above: 8.1). Like *dawa*, *mshipa* could be regarded ambivalently, but in their everyday use in social contexts, such as Bi Mwana's place, the evaluations of both *dawa* and *mshipa* are stabilized: *dawa* is that which acts through *mwili* and helps while *mshipa* is a long and thin bind inside the stomach which causes trouble. In connection to *mshipa*, the phrase "formational healing," thus, does not only approach social dynamics that arise in medically connoted contexts, but also connects to concrete forms that bodily afflictions take and that are treated with *dawa*.

When Sara drinks kombe, she drinks Bi Mwana's *dawa*. Bi Mwana dispenses *dawa ya asili* and she is the practitioner that Sara has chosen to trust. Still, the kombe that Sara receives from Bi Mwana as *dawa ya asili* is also *dawa ya kiislamu*. It is the Qurʾan in an affectively legible form and Sara's *mwili* is able to "read" it; it is "Islamic" *dawa* that stands in opposition to her affiliation to Pentecostal Christianity, but it is *dawa* that can treat her affliction and that, mediated through her *mwili*, has transformative power over her problem of jealousy at work. The treatment of Sara's affliction with kombe is formational. It does not

only influence the social ties at her work, but it establishes a relationship between her and Bi Mwana. Choosing Bi Mwana (because she dispenses *dawa ya asili*) and accepting kombe (although it is *dawa ya kiislamu*), Sara takes part in enacting Zanzibar's Islamic *asili* ("origins," "roots," "tradition") and thus performs being a part of a Zanzibari "aesthetic formation." Needless to say, Bi Mwana, by dispensing kombe to Sara, is equally engaged in enrolling Sara in this "aesthetic formation." In the context of Christians who drink kombe, employing *dawa ya kiislamu* and *dawa ya asili* while making one part of the other is intimately tied to the ambiguities of the relation of *dawa* to *dini*/"religion" that come together in kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu*. While various approaches to differentiations within these entanglements emanate through and elicit a necessity to make sense of Christians who drink kombe, these approaches can not be voiced by everybody. In particular, the ambiguities of *dini*/"religion" mark kombe as a "sensational form" that evokes "formational healing," but that also demarcate extreme positions, such as reformist (*Wahhabi*) Islam or Pentecostal Christianity, which do not take part in this formation.

Sara does not suffer from *mshipa*, not in the sense of an "extended notion of pain" that manifests as a long and thin bind inside the stomach. However, Sara creates social ties with Bi Mwana and to Zanzibar's Islamic *asili* that from the perspective of Pentecostalism are negatively evaluated: Sara's ingestion of kombe creates bonds that within the Pentecostal discourse constitute a problem. From the Pentecostal perspective, Sara's connections to Zanzibari *dawa ya asili* are like *mshipa*: an affliction. Sara's muteness is an expression thereof. In an echo of the Pentecostal discourse, Omar also negatively evaluates Christians' recourse to and thus influence on practices of Zanzibari *asili*. With reference to his sentiments, the binds, which these practices create between Muslims and Christians as a "formation" in Zanzibar, negatively influence Zanzibar's "Islamic *tabia*," just as *mshipa* negatively influence the forms bodies take.

Mishipa are long and thin and constitute connections that are not negative as such. *Mishipa* are necessary for *miwili* to function (through blood vessels, sinews, or muscles), but if making wrong connections, *mishipa* are painful and comprise afflictions that can be treated by dissolving these long and thin ties with *dawa ya asili*. Relations between Muslims and Christians constitute connections that do not have to be seen negatively as such. They are necessary for societies to function, but, paraphrasing Omar, if making wrong connections (or too many), the relations between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar comprise a problem for

Zanzibar's Islamic *tabia*. By creating a specific tie, *mshipa* changes the relative positions of everything that is inside the stomach and thereby deforms the stomach. By connecting to practices of Zanzibar's *asili*, Christians who drink kombe change the relative positions of other people in Zanzibar to each other (Christians who drink kombe become a topic to be made sense of by a variety of people in Zanzibar) and thereby take part in the formation of Zanzibar's social constellations. *Mshipa* resonates with Omar's sentiments towards Christians who drink kombe in Zanzibar.

Taking *mshipa* as a metaphor, "deploying imagery that, in relation to what the metaphor stands for, expresses more than the name of a phenomenon does" (my words in chapter 5.6.1), I offer an approach to the topic of Muslim-Christian relations in Zanzibar in the context of Christians who drink *dawa ya kiislamu* that has a form—long and thin—and thus alludes to the tactility of Zanzibar's social formations. However, I write about these connections in plain words and I have not included an alternative mode of accessing this metaphor (as I did in chapter 5). *Mshipa* is not an ideal metaphor not only because I find it difficult to provide an alternative access, but also for two more reasons. Firstly, as already mentioned above, *mshipa* is usually not treated with kombe. The question about what *mshipa* does in this thesis needs to be posed. Secondly, this metaphor of *mshipa* requires explanation, since it is yet another non-English term in this thesis and for this reason it can be considered to fail its most important function as metaphor: to create excess meaning, sentiments towards that which constitutes the metaphor (*mshipa*) that create a relation between the reader and the topic (Muslim-Christian relations in the context of Christians who drink kombe in Zanzibar). I hope to have introduced *mshipa* explicitly enough as a tactually perceptible long and thin form that occurs as affliction in the stomach[66] and thus carries negative connotations as "extended notion of pain" (but that also can be translated as "blood vessels" or "sinews" without the negative connotations). Through such an introduction, a metaphorical use of *mshipa* may provide more depth to the topic, but as a metaphor it does not create excess meanings for readers who individually relate to the metaphor.

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[66] It would be interesting to further pay attention to how *mshipa* occurs as affliction in "stomachs." This would be interesting not only in relation to the centrality of touching stomachs for "traditional" medicine's practices of diagnosis (see footnote 32 in chapter 5), but also in relation to the role the stomach plays in literature about Africa (see for example "Politics of the Belly" by Bayart [1993]). However, I cannot do justice to this topic here.

Nevertheless, the metaphor of *mshipa* does invaluable work throughout this section and enables an interlocking of the various chapters of this thesis. Linking "*form*ational healing" to a concrete "form," the metaphorical use of *mshipa* takes recourse to materiality and attends to sentiments and valuations. This is of particular relevance in the description of Zanzibar's social formations, where Muslims and Christians engage with each other as each other's other (my words in chapter 7.4, see also the entanglements with politics addressed in chapter 2.2.4), but are challenged in this dichotomous structure through the actions of Christians who drink *dawa ya kiislamu* (see above: 8.2). The bond between Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar, enacted through Christians who drink *dawa ya kiislamu* and also through Muslims who make sense of Christians drinking kombe, is subject to judgment by people like Omar who expresses concern for Zanzibar's "Islamic character." Christians' ability to drink kombe, hinges on the ambiguities of *dini*≠"religion" that the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*" evokes (see chapter 7) and the metaphorical use of *mshipa* attends to a possible assessment of Christians' ingestion of the Qurʾan. Furthermore, *mshipa* is predominantly regarded as an affliction: its metaphorical use connects these sentiments of how Christians' ingestion of a substance "*ya kiislamu*" impacts on social formations in Zanzibar to the medical context both kombe and the formation of these social bonds are embedded in. As a medical condition, *mshipa* calls not for a framework of "religion" to approach these sentiments, but for a framework of *dawa* that, as this chapter has shown, provides an alternative to the antagonistic comparability established through *dini*≠"religion." With the metaphor of *mshipa* and its diffraction with the ethnographic vignette of Omar at the beginning of this part, the entanglements of the two chapters of this part are readdressed not only in relation to a material form, but also with respect to concomitant sentiments and valuations. The antagonistic establishment of comparability between Muslims and Christians does not end there; with kombe as *dawa* other formations matter.

Writing about social aspects that kombe evokes in this way—including the use of metaphors—allows for the concerns of this part (part III) to diffract in multiple ways with the concerns of part II: what kombe is, what kombe does, and what is done to kombe are all entangled with each other. *Mshipa* has a form; written Qurʾanic verses have a form. While both *mshipa* and written Qurʾanic verses in these manifesting forms constitute phenomena in their own right, in the medical context of kombe, changing these forms is important. In the ("traditional") medical context, *mshipa* is an affliction, an "extended notion of pain" that needs to

be dissolved. With kombe, the written Qurᵓanic verses need to be liquefied (not liquidated!) and thus trans*form*ed (see chapter 4.3). Juxtaposing *mshipa* with kombe in this way does not only establish comparability (see chapter 7.4), it also intimately connects chapter 4 to this section. Furthermore, as already mentioned several times throughout this subsection, *mshipa* occurs in *mwili*. In particular, it occurs as affliction in *mwili* which affectively mediates between inside and outside, between material and immaterial. The metaphor of *mshipa* is designed to similarly mediate. It occurs as metaphor in this thesis, mediating between "traditional" medical contexts in Zanzibar and academic writing, between writing and "reading" (see chapter 6). Furthermore, by addressing its metaphoricity in this thesis, *mshipa* enmeshes content and structure and thus alludes to chapter 3 in part I. Thus, what kombe is, what kombe does, and what is done to kombe is furthermore entangled with what is made of kombe in the *form*ulation of this thesis about the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic.

Conclusion

"But we all know what kombe is." On the day I waited with Faki, the banana seller, for the fish seller who turned out to be Chombo Juma, I did not realize how far-reaching Faki's sentence would be in the emerging constitution of kombe-as-a-topic for my dissertation.[1] Faki's sentence comprises a "we all." It is a "we all" that marks the people of Mto Pepo (a disadvantaged suburb of Zanzibar Town) as belonging together and as belonging to Islamic Zanzibar (see chapter 2).[2] Faki's sentence also comprises the verb "to know." That "we all know" frames belonging in terms of knowledge. In this thesis, however, the context of knowledge has even further reaching implications. Of course, every doctoral thesis is about knowledge and in particular constitutes a new contribution to already existing knowledge. In this thesis, explicit engagement with knowledge (and how what is translated as knowledge from Swahili to English is entangled with the western academic knowledge that this thesis speaks to) through the topic of kombe has been central (see chapter 3) and cuts through engagement with other aspects. Another component of the sentence is "kombe," the topic around which the entire thesis revolves. Faki phrases knowledge about kombe as an ontological concern: to "know what kombe *is*." Challenging the possibility of an ontological approach to a topic to be investigated ethnographically, I have taken the trouble to find a way that does justice to what it is that I am able to describe and I have ultimately resorted to a formulation of the *phenomenon* of kombe *as a topic* that attends closely to kombe's materiality (see chapter 1). Finally, Faki begins his sentence with the word "but," which points to the situatedness of this sentence as part of a conversation with me. Although I have referred to all the words in Faki's statement, there is yet another aspect: this sentence appears in the introduction and now as the beginning of the conclusion of the written text of this thesis. It provides a frame for this ethnography, but even more so, it diffractively takes part

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[1] 21 January 2014, Mto Pepo, Zanzibar Town.
[2] The violent propagation of Zanzibar's independence amongst people from Daraja Bovu (of which Mto Pepo is part) could also be analyzed in light of a struggle to belong.

in constituting the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic. Drawing attention to what Faki's statement comprises and how it appears as part of this thesis' written text encompasses much of what this dissertation is about.

Comprising the conclusion, these last few pages briefly crosscut through the thesis and then pick up on one issue that challenges the here-advocated entanglements of diffractive writing. Juxtaposing the formation and potential deformation of this thesis as part of this thesis, this conclusion shows the dynamics within what I term "diffractive ethnography." Though opening up, providing anchors for how to think further, and asking how a sip of kombe was and is involved, this conclusion marks the end of this thesis about the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic.

Mattering, Context, Knowledge

Diffraction patterns are not linear. A written thesis, however, needs an overall linear structure: a beginning, an end, and myriad sentences that, grouped in parts, chapters, sections, subsections, and paragraphs, continuously connect sentence endings with other sentence beginnings. Despite cross-references, the text invites the reader to follow its linear structure, introduces, concludes, and makes transitions between topics. Instead of reifying the already provided linear structure, I revisit major themes of this thesis: in the following three paragraphs I refer to the three chapters of part I and follow some of these cross-references to briefly recapture how this thesis has approached (and influenced) the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic.

Firstly, in chapter 1, kombe was introduced through how it materialized and became important (how it "mattered") in my research. This entailed first a description of kombe in terms of its materiality and then an introduction of Hakimu Saleh and Bi Mwana with whom I learned about kombe and with whom kombe became a topic for my doctoral thesis. This entry point with specific attention to materiality shaped much of what part II comprises. Following the preparation and ingestion of kombe (as I had learned about it from Hakimu Saleh and at Bi Mwana's place), part II scrutinized kombe's textuality (chapter 4) and attended to the body, *mwili* (chapter 5). Kombe *la kuandika*'s ("written" kombe's) explicit textuality is rendered literally implicit, but does not disappear: the process of preparing kombe entails that ink shaped to constitute a Qurʾanic verse (with protective supplements) is liquefied, not liquidated. *Miwili* ("bodies") ingest this textual artifact and provide access to afflictions. With *mwili*'s intra-active rela-

tion of "body" and "mind," of "material" and "immaterial," and of "inside" and "outside," the bodily ingestion of kombe allows for a mediation of the Qurʾanic verses towards an affliction (locatable inside or outside of *mwili*, in material or immaterial form). This material ingestion of materially liquefied Qurʾanic verses through *miwili* that intra-actively differentiate between "body" and "mind" is anticipated to be contentious amongst Muslims (see chapter 7.3), but also enables Christians to drink kombe as medicine, *dawa* (see chapter 8). Palpable also in part III, the entry point of chapter 1—kombe's "mattering"—provides access to the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic.

Secondly, the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic was approached through its situatedness in Zanzibar, an issue to which chapter 2 has paid considerable attention. Research in Zanzibar in the period of 2013 to 2015 about a topic that is delineated as *ya kiislamu* ("Islamic") cannot be divorced from a rhetoric that resorts to particular narrations of history: in this discourse, Zanzibar is placed in the "Islamic" Indian Ocean world and thereby distinguished from the Tanzanian mainland, which does not host a Muslim majority but to which it is politically tied. Not only the coevalness of my research and the intensified dichotomizing discourse during the time of the "government of national unity" (GNU), but especially its superpositioning with the description of kombe as *dawa ya kiislamu*, renders kombe's situatedness a far-reaching entrypoint to access the phenomenon of kombe. Part III, thereby, is intimately tied to chapter 2. It picks up on the establishment of this dichotomy between the "Islamic" Indian Ocean world and the "Christian-dominated" Tanzanian mainland and engages with how kombe-as-a-topic elicits nuances and ambiguities of the adjectival phrase "*ya kiislamu*" and how these nuances and ambiguities diffract with kombe's categorization as *dawa* ("medicine"). That is, entangled with the dichotomizing discourse about Zanzibar's belonging (chapter 2), the relationality of Muslims and Christians in Zanzibar is addressed, challenging the implications of an adjectival use of Islam through which an all-encompassing understanding of *dini* intra-acts with the possibilities for plurality inherent in today's use of the term "religion" (chapter 7). With Christians' recourse to kombe as *dawa* and my questions about the relation of Christians to *dawa ya kiislamu*, these nuances and ambiguities become important in that they foster ways of making sense discursively of a practice that for a Pentecostal Christian remained "untalkaboutable" (chapter 8.2). While the resonances with part III are dominant, traces of chapter 2 also shape part II. Next to the importance of Arabic-scripted writtenness in Zanzibar (see chapter 4.1), kombe-ingesting *miwili*

("bodies") are profoundly grounded in Zanzibar with its spiritual landscape (see chapter 5.3) and my interlocutors' explanations of *mwili* (see chapter 5.4) reference my research's and our bodies' situatedness in Zanzibar.

Thirdly, this thesis presents itself to be read through concerns of knowledge as outlined in chapter 3. Taking Swahili conceptions of knowledge into consideration and examining how they are entangled with writing and dispensing kombe, chapter 3 also addresses how my research, including my role as a researcher, as a seeker of knowledge who is embedded in western conceptions of knowledge (at a university in the discipline of anthropology), diffracts with these Swahili conceptions. This thesis cannot be about kombe as a phenomenon independent of my research; what I write about is enmeshed with how I encountered kombe and how it was explained to me. I thus write about the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic. The prospect of writing a PhD thesis, my positionality, and conceptions of knowledge—what and how people explained to me—are crucial for how I came to understand kombe and how I can write about it. While chapter 1 resonates particularly with part II and chapter 2 with part III, chapter 3's attention to concerns of knowledge runs through the entire thesis as a mode of writing. Most chapters conclude on a note that explicitly relates the chapter's subject to its situatedness in this academic thesis, such as chapter 4's subsection on ethno*graphy* and chapter 5's section on the politics of body-writing. Similarly, the final section of chapter 7 makes explicit what the establishment of comparability does in its relation to academia. More than an explicit reflexivity, the inclusion of artwork (in chapter 4.5.2) and of drawings that depict explanations of *mwili* (chapter 5.4) points to the limits of *representing* knowledge in textual form and encourages affective approaches to that which is *present*. These pictures point at the constructive endeavor of "translations" that gain momentum with "affective reading" (chapter 6.3) and the metaphor *mshipa* (chapter 8.3). "Affective reading" draws on the English genealogy of the term "reading" (chapter 6.2) and is not a translation of *kusoma* (chapter 6.4), but it does translate my understanding of how kombe works for an English-reading audience. Similarly but conversely, the use of *mshipa* as metaphor employs the form of *mshipa* and its evaluation to pinpoint chapter 8's topic of Zanzibar's social formations with kombe as *dawa*. *Mshipa* is an affliction that is treated with *dawa ya asili* (though usually not with kombe) and it is not used as a metaphor in these Swahili contexts, but employing it as a metaphor in this thesis conveys how social formations in Zanzibar that include Christians

can be ambiguously evaluated (chapter 8.2) while relating it to kombe's Swahili context of "traditional" healing (chapter 8.1) for the reader of this text.

These three entry points, introduced and differentiated through the three chapters of part I, are entangled with each other as part II and III attest to and as the very last subsection on "form" (8.3.3) emphasizes through the metaphor of *mshipa*. More than standing for social formations in the context of healing that are mostly evaluated negatively, *mshipa* has a concrete form and connects standing for social formations in Zanzibar to concerns of materiality and mediation and to engagement with ways of writing an ethnography of a phenomenon. Addressing these three entry points simultaneously, the metaphor of *mshipa*, similar to a cross-reference, enacts the entanglements of these entry points although it is part of the linear structure of written text.

For those who are able to see differently, *mshipa* is on the cover of this book. Not looking at but through the pattern of the cover, the shape of the letters forming the word *mshipa* shift to the foreground in three-dimensional vision. Foreshadowing engagement with material and visual accessibility of text, the cover features the word *mshipa* which now at the end of the thesis unfolds as metaphor. Binding and having a form, *mshipa* is part of *mwili* but needs to be treated and dissolved. Binding and having a form (though not perceptible when looking at the cover as a two-dimensional image), the written word *mshipa* entangles outside with inside and form with content—a metaphor for what I otherwise term "diffractive ethnography."

Ethnographic Diffractions—Diffractive Ethnography

This thesis is an ethnography. It estranges and makes familiar. It puts "cultural" (*ethno-*) practices into writing (*-graphy*).[3] This thesis offers a description of kombe. Or many descriptions with different emphases. It offers descriptions with emphases that relate to each other, that partially map onto each other: it offers descriptions that diffract and form the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic.

As a "diffractive ethnography," this thesis does not stop at describing kombe but scrutinizes emerging resonances with the production of ethnographic text

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[3]   I am aware that the connotations of "ethno" are also shaped by the self-designation of the (German) academic discipline of "Ethnologie" which, in contrast to "Soziologie," fore-grounded research about foreign cultures as the "other" to a "self" (see also chapter 4.5.3). In the sentence above, however, I stress the Greek etymology of the word stem "ethno."

about kombe. Producing material about kombe's materiality, writing about kombe's writtenness (and its liquefaction), and tailoring it to be "read," I was incited by the topic of kombe to engage with the non-representationality of my own alignment of words in this thesis. More than "information" about kombe, in this thesis I "enact" knowledge about kombe-as-a-topic (see chapter 3.3). Concretely, as onto-epistemological endeavor that attends to the entanglements of meaning and mattering of written words, the manifestation of this thesis is part of the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic which I stress with the term "diffractive ethnography."

However, concern for all these diffractions does not erase global power dynamics that also pertain to writing an ethnography. My agenda of writing an ethnography met other people's diverse agendas. Hakimu Saleh did not only speak back to western knowledge (which is something I have partially integrated), but also hoped that I would convert to Islam. Bi Mwana and Bi Mwaltima did not only seek recognition of their work, but also saw my research as an advertising platform for even more patients.[4] These agendas (and many more) are part of how research and this ethnography came into being; they are part of the diffraction. They are part of the emergence of the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic; however, they do not become part of this "diffractive ethnography." While I aim to make the resonances of kombe's textual materiality and the textual materiality of an ethnography productive, I do not tailor this ethnography to resonate equally well with my interlocutors' hopes. While my proposal for a "diffractive ethnography" could be perceived as "ethical fantasy of intersubjective harmony" (Pels 2014a: 212, see also chapter 3.3.1), I hope to evoke a reading that goes beyond the collection of information about kombe (for which the "diffractive ethnography" would be a tool, separable from the object of interest) towards a reading that takes into account the difficulties of creating an object of research at all (for which "diffractive ethnography" becomes part of the investigation and emphasizes the impossibility of intersubjective harmony).

Proposing a "diffractive ethnography," I do not use the medium of an ethnography to "represent" concerns of people whom I have worked with and I do

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[4] When I returned to Zanzibar for a short visit in September 2018, they proudly told me how well their place had developed since I was last there. They thanked me for having taken them seriously, which, they claimed, encouraged others to also take them seriously. Although I was very happy to see their enthusiasm about their place's development (they gained recognition and documentation as "traditional" medical place, they were invited to take part in medical trainings, and they received instruments to measure insulin and blood pressure), I felt uneasy about how I was integrated into the story of bringing forth this development.

not present a situation in order to call for social and political intervention. Nevertheless, the debate about today's role of ethnographies—paying attention to global inequalities, the anthropocene, or decolonization movements—is implicitly part of my engagement with my writing. I agree with Peter Pels when he writes that "[o]ur proper object of study today [...] seems to be the process by which knowledge and classifications of human difference were generated by global parties in interaction (before, that is, 'us' and 'them' crystallized as identities)" (2014a: 228). Proposing a "diffractive ethnography," I broaden the "object of study" to include that which is produced as "outcome" of anthropological knowledge production and question its neutrality. I contribute to the debate on what ethnographies can do in terms of what they are: material textual artifacts, the contents of which explicitly relate to fieldwork encounters and speak to academic knowledge production. How the form of a material textual artifact relates to its contents is often not addressed explicitly. Engaging with kombe, I took up kombe's challenge to the distinction between form and content, between matter and meaning, between ontology and epistemology. My own writing, thus, attends to kombe as an onto-epistemological endeavor, which questions the often perceived neutrality of textual form that then can be filled with charged content. Attending to the entanglements of form and content (or matter and meaning), research on and writing about kombe—and thereby rendering the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic determinate—is also an issue of forming/formulating/formatting politics of onto-epistemological contributions.

Having written the previous paragraph, I must note that much of this concern for political engagement with ethnographic writing was addressed through anthropological debates and not from within my fieldwork. Furthermore, in order to address and formulate this "diffractive ethnography," I have relied on translations of "diffraction" and "entanglement" into conceptual social science terminology and I have extensively employed the new word formation "intra-action." While I have shown how this ethnography is not about kombe, but about the phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic and while I have argued to take the resonance of ethnographic form and its contents seriously (as "diffractive ethnography"), I have not investigated "diffraction," "entanglement," or "intra-activity" as equally emergent from diffractions. As part of the conceptual language (the "diffractive apparatus" in Barad's words, that makes kombe-as-a-topic intelligible), intra-activity

is also part of the emerging phenomenon of kombe-as-a-topic in this thesis.[5] However, this conceptual terminology was largely stabilized within this ethnography. Stabilizing certain aspects and prompting others to diffract, also this "diffractive ethnography" is not divorced from onto-epistemological power dynamics.[6]

A Sip of Kombe

At times, people whom I tell about my research ask me whether I have tasted kombe. Indeed, in the very early phase of my fieldwork, Hakimu Saleh gave me a small bottle of kombe, saying that only the Bismillah was its content. I did not feel afflicted at that time, but perhaps Hakimu Saleh saw this differently or perhaps he just wanted to be nice to me. Having taken the bottle home, I thought about the effects that drinking kombe could have on me in the evening. Would I have an affective experience through which I could understand the patients' experiences? Was this an attempt to turn me into a Muslim (as I knew my mother feared) and to what extent would the internalization of the Qurʾan (bypassing the brain) abrogate decisions that I made consciously? How would drinking the Qurʾan influence who I was? I hesitated. Certain that Hakimu Saleh would inquire about my ingestion and not knowing how I could possibly explain my hesitation to him, I decided to take a sip. I opened the bottle, sniffed at the liquid, and wondered how fresh the water was. It did not smell bad and I drank a bit. Still, while I turned my attention to my stomach where the sip of kombe was now resting and attentively traced my sensations, I caught myself being preoccupied with the quality of the water. It did not smell bad and it did not taste bad. It probably was perfectly fine and usually I was not overly concerned about which water I drank in Zanzibar. But this time, I perceived myself being concerned. How clean was the bottle into which

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[5] Barad posits that "apparatuses are material-discursive practices [and] not bounded objects or structures; they are open-ended practices. […] Apparatuses are themselves phenomena" (2007: 170) where "phenomena are the ontological inseparability of objects and apparatuses" (2007: 128).

[6] Applying a diffractive methodology as "apparatus" to investigations that employ intra-activity as conceptual tool continuously reworks boundaries until, taken ad absurdum, differences—the emergence of which intra-activity is designed to address—cancel out. Similar to long-exposure photography of waves, repeatedly diffracted diffraction patterns create a foggy lack of distinction. Intra-activity dissolves itself and, building on the resonances with kombe's liquefaction, this evokes questions of which possibilities the process of intra-activity's dissolution might comprise.

the kombe had been poured? The worries about the water quality certainly made me experience my ingestion of kombe in a particular way and although I was aware of these worries' dominance, I could not prevent the fact that they were overriding other sensations. I cannot describe in detail what it feels like for other people to drink kombe, since I was only told that it induced a sense of happiness/calmness (*unaona raha*). I assume that my experience was different from how other people drink kombe, but perhaps not. To my surprise, Hakimu Saleh—unlike people who listen to my academic presentations about kombe—never asked about my ingestion and thus never prompted me to put my "affective reading" (my ingestion of kombe, see chapter 6) into words.

Throughout the last years, questions of what needs to be phrased, how to phrase, and what this phrasing does in relation to kombe's writtenness have accompanied me as the author of this thesis. Acknowledging the limitations of my research, I have developed a "diffractive ethnography" that attends to kombe's textuality and liquefaction, its affective "readability" targeted at afflictions, kombe's designation as "Islamic medicine" in Zanzibar Town, and emergent dynamics of writing ethnographically about it. I have formulated and formatted text, provided pictures and drawings, and employed metaphors. I have engaged with what kombe-as-a-topic does and becomes. While the people whom I engaged with during my fieldwork—the practices, the words—are crucial in shaping this topic, I cannot say how and to what extent the sip of kombe that I took is part of how this thesis has evolved.

Glossary

-a kiislamu	Islamic (adjectival phrase)
-a kikristu	Christian (adjectival phrase)
akili	mind, intellect; Arabic: ᶜaql
asili	original, "traditional" (in the sense that the WHO mentions "traditional medicine")
buduh	magic square (see "wafq") with the numbers 1 to 9 and with the numbers 2, 4, 6, 8 in the four corners
chuo	Qurᵓan school
daktari	doctor
dawa	medicine
dhikr	meditative Sufi practice including repetitive utterances of names and attributes of God
dini	religion
dīn	Arabic: religion; see "dini"
elimu	educationally acquired information; Arabic: ᶜilm
hospitali	hospital
imani	belief/trust
kabila	"tribe," "ethnic group"; plural: makabila
kanga	imprinted rectangular piece of cloth with a saying, usually wrapped around the hips, bound as a headscarf, or presented as a gift
kibuki	spirit possession ceremony for the "Buki''-spirits that come from Madagascar and are said to be Christians
kichwa	head
kiwiliwili	bodily substance
kombe	written Qurᵓanic verses that are washed off to be drunk as medicine
kuandika	to write

Glossary

kufahamu	to understand; verb form of "ufahamu"
kuganga	to bind, to heal; see in contrast to "kutibu"; verb form of "uganga"
kujua	to know (how); verb form of "ujuzi"
kusoma	to read, to study, to recite; see "kusomea"
kusomea	to recite for/over somebody; see "kosoma"
kutibu	to medically treat; Arabic; ṭibb; verb form of "tiba"
kuweza	to be able to; verb form of "uwezo"
maarifa	information; Arabic: maᶜrifa
maiti	corpse
matibabu	medical treatment; Arabic: ṭibb; see also "tiba"
maulidi	celebration of the Prophet's birth; Arabic: mawlid
mganga	healer
moyo	heart
msahafu	material codex of the Qurʾan; Arabic: muṣḥaf
mseto	mix; "dini mseto" is often used for the interreligious dialogue and expresses fears of syncretism
mshipa	long and thin form that binds inside the stomach and is considered an affliction, however, also translated as "blood vessel," "sinew," "tendon," "muscle," "hernia," "hydrocele," "nerve"
mwili	(living) body; plural: miwili
nafsi	self, soul; Arabic: nafs
Ng'ambo	"the other side," a not clearly demarcated urban area east of Zanzibar's urban center. It carries a history of designating the "African" counterpart to Stone Town where "Asians" lived, according to colonial attributions of identity.
roho	spirit, soul; Arabic: rūḥ
sadaka	voluntary offering that is seen positively in Islam
Shafiᶜi	one of the four Sunni schools of jurisprudence, dominant along the Swahili Coast
sharifu	descendent of the Prophet; plural: masharifu; Arabic: female sharīfa, male sharīf, plural ashrāf or shurafāʾ
shirk	idolatry in Islam

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siri	secret
sunna	valued body of practices based on the exemplary life of the Prophet Muhammad
tabia	attitude, habit, character, culture, nature, behavior
tariqa	Sufi brotherhood
tawḥīd	oneness of God
taṣawwuf	Islamic mysticism
tiba	medicine; Arabic: ṭibb; see also "matibabu"
tumbo	stomach
ufahamu	understanding
uganga	medical treatment, mostly used for "traditional medicine," often used in context of spirit possession; see in contrast "matibabu"
ujuzi	know-how
umma	community of all Muslims
uwezo	ability
wafq	magic squares; for a particular one see "buduh"
wizara ya afya	Ministry of Health

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Samenvatting en het Nederlands

De geschreven Koran gedronken: Kombe genezingen in Zanzibar-stad

Als Koranverzen – soms met de toevoeging van bepaalde namen, tekeningen of nummers – met inkt van saffraan geschreven worden op een onbeschreven bord of stuk papier en vervolgens met water worden afgewassen, dan wordt erop vertrouwd dat dit water de Koranverzen bevat, alsmede hun genezende kracht. Deze vloeistof wordt in het Swahili kombe genoemd, hetgeen wordt beschreven als *dawa ya kiislamu* (islamitisch medicijn).

In dit proefschrift baseer ik me op etnografisch veldwerk en schrijf ik over Hakimu Saleh, Bi Mwana, Faki, Sara, Mama Sue, en vele anderen die in de tekst worden geïntroduceerd. In deze tekst contextualiseer en vertaal ik hun handelingen en woorden in het geschreven Engels. Hun verwijzingen naar, en handelingen rondom, het gebruik van kombe staan in relatie tot mijn eigen ervaringen en ze komen tot uitdrukking in mijn schrijven.

Niet alleen heeft dit proefschrift kombe als onderwerp, het vormt kombe ook als een onderwerp. Het is een geschreven materieel product over een geschreven tekst die vloeibaar wordt gemaakt en deze relatie in beschouwing neemt: dit is wat ik "diffractieve etnografie" noem. Dus in plaats van te stellen dat dit proefschrift een "representatie" bevat van wat er in Zanzibar gebeurt, richt ik, etnografisch gezien, mijn aandacht ook op de manier waarop de vorm van mijn tekst (die berust op visuele leesbaarheid) "diffracteert" met zijn inhoud (waar het gaat om affectieve benaderingen van een niet langer gevisualiseerde tekst in de praktijk).

Deze "diffractieve etnografie" van kombe in Zanzibar stelt vraagtekens bij het onderscheid tussen vorm en inhoud, tussen materie en betekenis, en tussen ontologie en epistemologie. Het geeft aan dat de manier waarop een academische tekst geschreven wordt niet alleen een methodologische aangelegenheid is, maar ook datgene bepaalt waar de tekst over gaat. Het fenomeen kombe-als-een-onderwerp is dus niet vooraf gegeven, maar komt in de loop van het proefschrift tot uitdrukking.

Na een voornamelijk conceptuele introductie waarin het raamwerk van een "diffractieve etnografie" wordt geïntroduceerd, dient ook de rest van deel I als inleiding. Hoofdstuk 1 introduceert kombe in zijn materialiteit door het volgen van inkt, bord of papier, flessen, water, en de geschreven tekst van de Koran in zijn specifieke materiele kenmerken; het verbindt deze materiele beschouwingen aan de twee specifieke locaties waarin ik over kombe heb geleerd, namelijk die van Hakimu Saleh (die zichzelf presenteert als "islamitisch genezer") en die van Bi Mwana (die zichzelf presenteert als "traditionele genezer"). Vervolgens introduceert deel I de historische en politieke context van kombe in Zanzibar in hoofdstuk 2. Als plaatsen die behoren tot de Indische Oceaan en het Tanzaniaanse vasteland, zijn de verwevenheid en differentiatie van deze regio's in Zanzibar politiek relevant. Bovendien hebben deze verwevenheid en differentiatie invloed op hoe kombe als "islamitisch medicijn" wordt begrepen. Tot slot introduceert hoofdstuk 3, het laatste hoofdstuk van deel I), de kwestie hoe onderzoek over kombe draait om kennispraktijken en hoe deze praktijken verband houden met dit proefschrift. Wie of wat heeft op welke manier betrekking op deze kennispraktijken en hoe beïnvloedt deze betrokkenheid hoe kombe wordt geportretteerd? Samengevat biedt deel I van het proefschrift, dat de titel "het materialiseren van kombe" draagt, een uitgebreide introductie van kombe in zijn materialiteit (inclusief de context waarin ik als onderzoeker heb geleerd, de ruimtelijke en temporele context en de context waarin kombe als onderzoeksobject wordt gevormd) en vormt het tegelijk een materiele manifestatie van kombe-als-onderwerp.

Als volgende stap onderzoekt deel II de bemiddeling van kombe en neemt het de diffractie van die bemiddeling in beschouwing. In de Koran wordt beschreven dat kombe een helende werking heeft (17:82). De Koran – de fysieke codex (*msahafu*), de recitatie -– maakt het mogelijk menselijke aandoeningen te veranderen door het lichaam. Kombe wordt niet beschouwd als *msahafu* omdat het niet langer leesbaar is, maar draagt desondanks helende kracht. Hoofdstuk 4 stelt de vraag hoe Koranteksten via kombe materieel worden getransformeerd, hun definiërende vorm verliezen, maar helende eigenschappen behouden. Door de semantische, iconische en performatieve aspecten van tekstualiteit te volgen, onderzoek ik het vloeibaar maken van Koranteksten om de impliciete tekstualiteit van kombe te beschrijven. Het schrijven en vloeibaar maken van kombe zijn processen waarin de materiële tekstuele eigenschappen van dit medicijn bepaalde processen van bemiddeling faciliteren en verhinderen. Zoals hoofdstuk 5 beschrijft, absorbeert het levende lichaam (*mwili*) de opgeloste Koran om de helende kracht ervan te ac-

tiveren. Volgens gangbare ideeën over lichamen en genezing in Zanzibar is *mwili* het medium waardoor de materiele substantie van kombe zich kan richten op aandoeningen en voor genezing kan zorgen. *Mwili* absorbeert en verleent toegang tot vloeibaar gemaakte Koranteksten. Mijn gesprekpartners beschreven dit via metaforen, die ik naar schetsen vertaal om deze overmaat van betekenis tot uitdrukking te brengen. Na de hoofdstukken 4 en 5, die zich respectievelijk op tekst en lichaam richten, ontwikkelt hoofdstuk 6 de notie van een "lezend lichaam", een lichaam dat een vormloos geschrift "leest". De opzettelijke afwezigheid van kombe's visuele toegankelijkheid en de relatie tussen zichtbaarheid enerzijds en cognitie en kennis anderzijds leiden ertoe dat het hoofdstuk vervolgens dieper ingaat op de term "lezen" en de notie van "affectief lezen" ontwikkelt. Omdat dit geen directe vertaling is van de manier waarop mensen in Zanzibar beschrijven wat er gebeurt als mensen Koranverzen drinken, vraagt deze woordkeuze erom expliciet aandacht te besteden aan de diffractieve processen van formulering die kenmerkend zijn voor al het etnografische schrijven. De drie hoofdstukken in dit onderdeel beschrijven verschillende processen van bemiddeling die verweven zijn met elkaar en in hun verwevenheid een aanwezigheid van de tekstuele Koranverzen tot stand brengen binnen *mwili*. Een lichamelijke "geletterdheid" leidt tot een onmiddellijke en affectieve beleving van de genezende krachten van de Koran.

Nadat aandacht is besteed aan de bemiddelingsprocessen (deel II) die door de materialiteit van kombe (hoofdstuk 1) worden voortgebracht, gaat deel III over op een meer sociale en discursieve analyse van kombe in Zanzibar. Het neemt in ogenschouw dat kombe wordt omschreven als "islamitisch medicijn" (*dawa ya kiislamu*) en wordt gedronken door zowel moslims als christenen voor geneeskrachtige doeleinden. Kwesties met betrekking tot de specifieke politiek-religieuze aanduiding van Zanzibar als een "islamitische" plaats, die daarmee een uitzondering vormt op het Tanzaniaanse vasteland (hoofdstuk 2), spelen een belangrijke rol in de manier waarop kombe als *dawa ya kiislamu* wordt geëvalueerd en gepraktiseerd door moslims en christenen in Zanzibar. In hoofdstuk 7 ligt de focus op "ya kiislamu" ("islamitisch"). Het laat zien hoe het bijvoegelijk naamwoord "islamitisch" vragen oproept over de verhouding tussen de concepten "religie" en "*dini*" (dat vaak wordt vertaald als "geloof" of "religie") en kijkt naar hun vervlechtingen en differentiatieprocessen. Het hoofdstuk kijkt naar de manier waarop deze vervlechtingen en differentiatieprocessen, impliciet in de frase "ya kiislamu", een antagonistische basis vormen voor de vergelijkbaarheid van moslims en christenen. Hoofdstuk 8 vervolgt de analyse van kombe als *dawa ya kiislamu* en kijkt

naar dawa (medicine) als een terrein waarin de differentiaties en verwevenheid van "religie" en "*dini*" zich materialiseren en het mogelijk maken voor zowel moslims als christenen om kombe te drinken—als dawa. Het antagonisme dat in hoofdstuk 7 wordt beschreven staat in contrast met een veel meer omvattende relationaliteit tussen christenen en moslims door dawa. Hoofdstuk 8 eindigt met een metaforische blik op deze gelijktijdigheid van gedeelde praktijken onder moslims en christenen in Zanzibar en het tot stand komen van een antagonistische vergelijkbaarheid. De gebruikte metafoor omschrijft de relationaliteit tussen moslims en christenen als een ambivalente aandoening en grijpt daarom niet alleen terug op deel III, maar verbindt dit deel ook met de zorgen over een aangetast lichaam (*mwili*) en het in de praktijk brengen van tekstualiteit in deel II.

De conclusie brengt tot slot de verschillende hoofdstukken samen door in te gaan op drie thema's die het gehele proefschrift doorkruisen. Eén daarvan is het centrale belang van de materialiteit van kombe, hetgeen wordt geïntroduceerd in hoofdstuk 1 en in het bijzonder resoneert met deel II (maar ook sporen nalaat in deel III). Ten tweede biedt de Zanzibari context, waarin dit etnografische onderzoek plaatsvond, een benadering aan dit proefschrift die expliciet wordt geïntroduceerd in hoofdstuk 2 en in het bijzonder relevant is voor deel III (hoewel ook deel II er niet los van kan worden gezien). Tot slot is ook het onderwerp kennis, dat gedetailleerd wordt behandeld in hoofdstuk 3, een onderliggend thema voor het gehele proefschrift.

Als een "diffractieve etnografie" gaat dit proefschrift niet (alleen) over kombe, maar is het ook gevormd door kombe (zijn materialiteit, etnografische context en aanwezigheid in deze academische bijdrage). Dit proefschrift manifesteert het fenomeen kombe-als-een-onderwerp.

Curriculum Vitae

Hanna Nieber received her Master degree in African Studies, University of Leipzig, in 2012. Her Master thesis, based on seven months of ethnographic research in Zanzibar, provided an overview over medicine in Zanzibar and included a conversation analysis of a negotiation between a healer and a jinni. In 2012, she joined the Zentrum Moderner Orient and the Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies in Berlin with her PhD Project which was part of Birgit Meyer's project "Habitats and Habitus: Politics and Aesthetics of Religious World Making." She took up teaching tasks at the Institute of African Studies in Leipzig (summer terms 2017 and 2018) and at the Institute for the Study of Religion in Bayreuth (summer term 2018). Since 2018 she teaches and is a research assistant at the Institute for the Study of Religion at the University of Bayreuth, developing her new project.

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