

Narrative Assemblage Part I

'We lived in a multi-ethnic, um, community. So, I'm from the Luo community, so I had friends from, um, the Kikuyu community, from the Luhya community, from the Kamba community. And I think, once in a while, we even had a few foreigners who lived amongst us.' (Eddah ¹, 31 yrs, *1988, female, Ngumo, N.) 'Well, there is this very large meadow, and we lived there in a complex called Amalienpark. [...] It was built in the late Art Nouveau period in 1895 as some kind of urban villa. [...] And that was, so to speak, the most important place in my childhood.' (Raphael, 31 yrs, *1988, male, Pankow, B.)² 'I was very young, so I didn't have much to worry about at that age. And, so most of the memories, then, uh, are good. [...] I think it was just the solitude. I was there, no one bugged me, yeah. Yeah, I think I liked home. It was safe.' (Stella, 41 yrs, *1978, female, Kileleshwa, N.) 'I grew up in a family where there was domestic violence. I rarely wanted to go home early. I'd finish school at 3 pm, and I'd chill in school till 5 pm, 6 pm, then head home, yeah, I'd say around 7. [...] I didn't have a fun childhood, because my family was really dysfunctional. Do you know what I mean?' (Amina, 21 yrs, *1998, female, Ruai, N.) 'My family is there; when I'm sad, when I'm angry. And I can cuddle with them and talk loudly or quietly. And well, you can laugh with them. And I think it's great that I'm not an only child, because otherwise my sister always says that if you're an only child, you're spoilt [...]' (Lisa, 9 yrs, *2010, female, Kreuzberg, B.) 'So, if you live in a compound, it's very boring if you're the only child. [...] It's just a place where you have, uh, like, one house in just a big chunk of land. [...] You just can't tell your parents, "Can I go out?" because it's a compound. It's not an estate. [...] Yeah. In an estate, it's more fun 'cause more kids live there, so it's more fun and noisy' (Sya, 12 yrs, *2007, female, Karen, N.) 'So, when I think of my childhood, I actually think of those endless school breaks in the summer, where I was sad when we had to go on vacation. Because I actually wanted to stay at home. And where we just lived on the street from Friday afternoon to Sunday evening. The houses were all open. At some point, our parents decided to replace the doorknob with a handle, so all the kids could come in anywhere.' (Anne, 49 yrs, *1970, female, Zehlendorf, B.) 'Everyone played in front

1 Pseudonyms were used for all speakers for purposes of confidentiality.

2 All Berlin speakers spoke to me in German. The passages used here were translated to English by the author. 'N.' stands for Nairobi and 'B.' stands for Berlin.

of the house and on the street. In Buruburu, we also played a lot in other children's homes. [...] The street was the most important place to me growing up.' (Gathi, 50 yrs, *1969, female, Buruburu, N.) 'There is not this one space in my biography that had this central role for me. [...] At most, you could say that this bubble or this sphere is somehow a unit. It forms a unit where I could somehow say that this was my radius. And for me, it was like a world in which I lived, like a miniature world.' (Fabian (38 yrs, *1982, male, Tiergarten, B.) 'Home is important to me, because I don't have to sleep out.' (Yao, 10 yrs, *2009, male, Lumumba, N.) 'Music was always important at home; everyone learned the piano somehow and went to music school.' (Paula, 58 yrs, *1961, female, Köpenick, B.) 'We go to school then come home. Then if you have no homework, we go and use a gadget, like we go watch TV or play games on the computer or on the phone, or on the tablet.' (Nuhu, 9 yrs, *2010, male, Maziwa, N.) 'I would actually quite like to live in the countryside or something, because it's just quieter there and there aren't so many cars. My parents got married in a kind of countryside. [And how can I imagine it there?] All grass, parties all the time.' (Neo, 10 yrs, *2010, male, Neukölln, B.)