

rehearsals and performances. From these conversations emerge paradoxes of the desire to progress within a Western-oriented society and the yearning for tradition, upheavals in gender relations, and a re-evaluation of Jewishness. Within these discourses, the concept of honour as addressed in the songs appears mostly tied to that of shameful and desirable love and their transformation in the Israeli context. Other interesting details emerge from the descriptions, such as the visits to Israel of major Christian performing artists from Ethiopia who coached the young Betä Israel artists of Porachat HaTikvah.

The transcriptions, transliterations and translations of most of the songs analysed in detail by Herman comprise the bulk of the book and enhance the value of this monograph as a source for the student interested in the Amharic repertoire that took shape in Israel. Emic concepts such as 'receiving' or 'accepting' the song as the basis for responsorial or antiphonal singing are addressed through the analysis of specific performances. Form, harmony and modality are other musical parameters thoroughly analysed.

The only shortcoming of this publication resides in its pertinence. Publishing in 2012 a text from 1994 merits at least a short-scale update. Except for a few general items about Ethiopia, the bibliography ends around 1995, when Herman's dissertation was filed. One wonders why the author has not made the extra effort to situate her work *vis-à-vis* the more recent scholarship overlapping with different issues raised by her, such as Hagar Salamon's *The Hyena People* (1999) or Malka Shabtay's work on the music of the Ethiopian youth clubs in Israel. In spite of this observation, Herman's contribution to the understanding of the role that song played in the negotiation of identities of Ethiopian Jews during the early days of immigration to Israel is valuable. This monograph contributes a new angle to the racialized debate about the fortunes of Ethiopian Jewry in an increasingly intolerant Israeli society.

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ANDREW BURTON and HÉLÈNE CHARTON-BIGOT (eds), *Generations Past: youth in East African history*. Athens OH: Ohio University Press (hb \$51.95–978 0 82141 923 6; pb \$23.95–978 0 82141 924 3). 2010, 312 pp.

Current understanding of youth in Africa has been shaped by scholars' attempts to make sense of what in the mid-1990s was described as the 'crisis of youth'. In this regard, two main analytical concerns have dominated the debate: the shifting nature of the category of youth and the contrasting and often contradictory way youth affirm their agency, acting as agents both of creative change and of violent disruption.

This collection on youth in East African history represents an interesting contribution to the debate on young people through its attempts to provide a further analytical perspective. The notion of 'generation' and the understanding of the continuities that youth practices share with the past constitute the foci of this book.

In their introduction to the volume, Burgess and Burton criticize the fact that youth has become a 'catchall existential category that encompassed all the subaltern despairs – and desires – of the post-colonial' (p. 5). Hence, they argue that the notion of 'generation', instead, could open up a more historically

grounded understanding of youth practices. 'Generation', Burgess and Burton point out, does not only correspond with 'historical cohorts'. It embodies notions of time and history and, more importantly, the different ways the nexus of power and age in pre-, colonial and post-colonial African societies has been shaped by historical processes.

From this perspective, some of the contributions do not necessarily discard the notion of youth, but they reconsider it as consisting of a historically and culturally situated way of defining intergenerational relations. As a result, this history of youth is a cultural history of the category 'rather than a description of what youth did' (p. 176), as Summers clearly states in her analysis of how different narrations of youth were used politically in late-colonial Buganda. This approach constitutes both the strength and the weakness of this collection. Voices of young people seldom appear even in the chapters dealing with more recent periods, but, at the same time, the rich historical analysis opens up an understanding of the power dynamics that have framed intergenerational relations.

With this emphasis, Burgess looks into the making of the revolutionary youth through labour camps in Zanzibar. Brennan traces the history of the TANU Youth League from its foundation in the 1950s up to its crisis in the 1970s. Looking at Maasailand, Waller examines how the colonial attempts at reforming or abolishing *murranhoo* constituted the terrain of the confrontations between elders, *murrans* themselves and colonial administrators. Burton points out that the emergence of youth unemployment in Tanzania was not only an outcome of the concurrence of different social factors, but also a matter for political dialogues between trade unions, nationalists and the colonial (and, later, post-colonial) governments.

A second group of chapters engage more closely with an understanding of the historical continuities that shape youth practices. Reid examines how violence and warfare are embedded historically in the political practices of the region. Looking at modern cattle raids on the Kenya–Uganda border, Eaton argues that these were later manifestations of forms of conflicts that had already existed between elders and youth over marriage and bridewealth. A similar approach is used to describe sexuality, HIV and gender dynamics. Nyairo and Kamaara analyse the persistence of masculine dominance and female subordination as the main reasons for the spreading of HIV in Kenya. Doyle discusses the broader transformation of premarital sex and marriage in late-colonial society and gives insights into the nature of the most recent confrontation between elders and young people over promiscuity and HIV in Great Lakes Africa.

With a similar analytical concern, another group of chapters look at how continuities (and discontinuities) are not only embodied but also negotiated and reproduced. In this regard, these chapters look at different periods of East African history. Focusing on the eve of colonialism in Tanzania, Giblin emphasizes how the first conversions to Christianity and, broadly, contacts with colonial cultural and social institutions were not necessarily an experience of rupture but a work of persuasion between elders and youth that calibrated 'obligation, respect and subordination' (p. 81). Looking at colonial Kenya, Charton-Bigot records how the first generation of educated men challenged colonial representations of the colonized as children. Finally, Willis presents the debate over the ban on alcohol advertising in Kenya in 2005 as 'the latest round in a long cultural argument over age and authority' (p. 281).

This book is undoubtedly very interesting. Its attempts at linking an analytical definition of generation and an informed historical analysis of the category of

youth make it an important reference work. As such it issues an unambiguous call for more historical depth in future works on youth in East Africa and beyond.

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FRASER MCNEILL, *AIDS, Politics, and Music in South Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press for the International African Institute (hb \$90–978 1 10700 991 2). 2011, 306 pp.

Picture an anthropologist: a young, Scottish (a.k.a. ‘white’), dreadlocked Rastafarian reggae guitarist graduate student. Male. Late at night, a decade or so after apartheid was vanquished, he is in a crowded hut, in the African night, his video camera confounded by the glow of the fire, surrounded by naked teenaged Venda girls, witnessing something remarkable. The girls, as part of their initiation ritual – which the anthropologist has been accorded the privilege of observing by virtue of his close connection with the Venda king and the woman who runs the initiation school – have been enjoined to hurl the most abusive insults they can think of at each other. It’s part of the training.

The girls, at first, are a little shy about speaking rudely in the presence of older women, many of whom are elder relatives of the initiates. These same elders, custodians of the wisdom of womanhood, have for the past days, and long into this night, been instilling in the girls the knowledge they will need as they embark on this new phase of their lives now they have qualified to be wives and mothers.

The shyness does not last long. Soon the girls start swinging insults with gay abandon, improvising songs of witches and murder and a girl fucked by a bull – plus another whom they say wants to fuck the anthropologist and relocate to Scotland. The elders, nicely pickled in the local brew they’ve been quaffing all evening, laugh and encourage the bawdiness. The anthropologist takes his notes.

Encouraged by the elders’ licence, one of the initiates, a daughter of the woman running the whole show, suddenly improvises a song castigating someone known to all, though unnamed in the song, as a promiscuous ‘gossip’ who has infected herself with AIDS and will soon die. At that, her mother lays into her with a stick and whacks her about the head and thighs. The other girls are slow to appreciate what is happening, so continue with the theme. Worse. Having heard the word ‘AIDS’ they reflexively launch into another song on the subject, this time extolling a version of the AIDS-awareness ‘messaging’ they have been exposed to since before birth: ‘We must not eat (have sex) like that / There is no cure . . . we must condomize! Use condoms!’

Now, the spontaneous injecting of talk about AIDS and condoms into an event centred on the transmission of rules of female sexual behaviour and principles of sexual health is exactly the sort of thing that the emissaries of the international AIDS industry have been advocating for decades, despite the fact that the girls in that initiation hut were talking of AIDS and condoms by way of insulting each other – not exactly what the AIDS-awareness people usually have in mind when they advocate ‘cultural relevance’. When the girls started singing of condoms in the initiation hut that night while Fraser McNeill was observing, however, pandemonium broke loose. Hurling abuse, the older women beat the initiates with sticks and the ritual came to a hasty and indecorous end.

In his superb book *AIDS, Politics, and Music* McNeill demonstrates, time and again, how ham-fisted the efforts of the AIDS-awareness industry to harness