

solicited financial donations in the school's newsletters. Paradoxically, such skills proved quite useful for students who would go on to teach at grossly underfunded Bantu Education schools.

While *The Art of Life* excels at exploring how apartheid shaped Ndaleni, one does wonder if more could have been written about the effects of South Africa's racialized practices on relationships between students and their white teachers, as well as how the black students viewed this institution made possible by Bantu Education. Magaziner convincingly presents Ndaleni as an artistic "island" offering escape from apartheid, but one does wonder how racist thinking crept into this expressive oasis. Or if it did not, then one wonders how the school managed to exclude it.

Overall, *The Art of Life* is an impressive work that is sure to become a basic text in the field of African cultural history. Ndaleni will no longer be forgotten.

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MEMOIRS AND BIOGRAPHY

Pat Caplan. *Mikidadi: Individual Biography and National History in Tanzania*.

Canon Pyon, U.K.: Sean Kingston Publishing. vi + 191. Bibliography. Index. Maps. Pictures. Cloth. No price reported. ISBN 978-1-907774-48-5.

Pat Caplan has a long and distinguished record as an anthropologist writing about, among other topics, the people of Mafia Island in Tanzania. She presents her newest book, a biography of one of her chief interlocutors from the island, as a work of both "public anthropology" and history. She places the life of Mikidadi Juma Kichange in the context of his times, relating episodes of his life and changes in his circumstance to the broader history of postindependence Tanzania. The book is a moving account of a life of struggle, frustration, and achievement as well as a touching portrait of a person who helped many people, including herself.

Caplan first met Mikidadi when he was still a schoolboy and she had first come to Mafia to conduct research for her dissertation in 1965. He proved a willing participant, and after she returned to Britain he was a diligent correspondent, keeping her abreast of both happenings on Mafia and his own attempts to further his education. He eventually completed secondary school, trained with the forestry department, and worked for the national government and then the Dar es Salaam City Council during the 1970s and 1980s. As government salaries stagnated during the era of economic dislocation and then structural adjustment, he looked elsewhere and eventually found private sector employment as a forest farm manager

in Dar es Salaam. He resigned from that position in 1987 to look after ailing relatives, and for the rest of his life he maintained one foot in the city and one in Mafia, running a small shop and managing his family's modest agricultural holdings.

Like many urban Tanzanians, Mikidadi maintained strong connections with his home community throughout his life. He hosted his sisters' children and those of many other relatives and neighbors in the city so that they could attend school. He supported his father's Koranic school. He also became active in Islamic organizations, taking over the school after his father's death and participating in the increasing engagement of Tanzanian Muslims with international Islamic currents and organizations. After the legalization of opposition parties in 1992 he also became a political activist, helping to found a self-help NGO dedicated to the improvement of Mafia and running for local office in a CCM primary. He died suddenly in 2002 at age forty-nine, leaving behind a widow and two daughters.

Caplan tells the story of Mikidadi's life through his own words, selected from his letters and her notes of their many conversations during her visits to Tanzania. Caplan states that in writing this book she "eschewed jargon and refrained from loading it with anthropological theory" (9) in an effort to ensure its accessibility. She seems determined to avoid the use of what Johannes Fabian has described as the author's "as" (*Remembering the Present*, University of California Press, 1996)—that is, the narration of Mikidadi's story as an example of a larger theory. Instead she presents the story of a person who lived his life the best he could and tried to make life better for his family and his community. She weaves in the changes taking place in Tanzania, highlighting the effects of Ujamaa, economic dislocation, structural adjustment and economic liberalization, and multi-partyism, and she also inserts her own observations about Mikidadi's life and the changes that took place in Tanzania over the decades of her fieldwork. But Caplan mostly limits herself to reporting what she saw or heard or what Mikidadi wrote to her. The book never becomes a work of auto-ethnography, and it is not intended to be a broad history of Mafia or Tanzania. It touches on Mikidadi's engagement with Islam and his work with the NGO, but even these sections are focused on a couple of incidents and not on the totality of its work or meaning. The focus remains on Mikidadi, his family, and their community as they struggle to survive in a changing country. Caplan allows Mikidadi to tell his own story; she presents him as he wanted her to see him, and after his death, as his family and mourners wanted him celebrated. The result is an insightful and at times emotional book that is a fitting tribute to an interesting person.

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