

background – slowly creating a diaspora where both everyone and no one really belongs.

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MWENDA NTARANGWI, *East African Hip Hop: youth culture and globalization*. Urbana and Chicago IL: University of Illinois Press (pb \$20 – 978 0 25207 653 4). 2009, 160 pp.

With hundreds of articles, books, films, and compilation sound recordings being produced about African hip hop, it is often difficult for authors to provide new insight and stand apart from the fray. Mwenda Ntarangwi, however, provides an alternative approach by analysing hip hop music within three countries: Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Whereas other studies focus on one artist, city, town, or country, Ntarangwi encourages readers to see the connections, collaborations and mutual interests that exist regionally.

As a category East African hip hop includes several genres, such as rap, R & B, and ragga (note: ragga is spelled with one ‘g’ in the monograph, though it is often spelled with two to differentiate it from Indian raga). Ntarangwi analyses the relation of these genres to globalization, neo-colonialism, and the agency of youth. Agency is an important theme of the ethnography and Ntarangwi states that hip hop is a means for artists to retain autonomy while influencing ‘other people in political discourse and even economic activity in spite of the global forces of inequality and exploitation that they face’ (p. 3). The agency of youth engages with global flows of ideas, cultural products and people, as well as the changing relationship between the nation state and citizens.

This is a short book that moves swiftly through issues connecting youth and hip hop, such as identity, gender, economic change and health. Each chapter features information about many artists, though there is an express effort to concentrate attention on the music of only a few. For instance, in Chapter 3, ‘Move Over, Boys, the Girls Are Here’, Ntarangwi looks closely at the work of the Kenyan singer Wahu, the Tanzanian Zay B, and the Ugandan Chameleon. Opening with a narrative about attending a performance in Nairobi, the chapter unfolds to provide insight into these artists as they critique ‘perceptions and ideologies about gender’ (p. 49). Using lyrics and interviews, Ntarangwi argues that the music of these artists provides a means to ‘reorder’ gender values without altering the structures of gender relations altogether. The close examination of artists, particularly Wahu and Zay B, allows readers to visualize the responsiveness of popular culture to social and economic events taking place in East Africa.

Most chapters rely heavily on analysing and contextualizing song lyrics. The chapter ‘Economic Change and Political Deception’ looks closely at songs by the Tanzanian artist Professor Jay and the group Wagosi wa Kaya. The lyrics are provided in sections and then discussed in some detail, giving the reader a sense of the issues relevant to both the artist and fans of the music. In the chapter ‘Morality, Health, and the Politics of Sexuality’, the music of the same two artists is analysed again, this time in reference to sex, health and HIV/AIDS.

The brevity of the book provides both its strength and weakness. For audiences new to African issues, the short, to-the-point chapters provide an opportunity to learn about issues affecting people in East Africa while making

connections to popular genres of music (videos can be viewed on the Internet). The analysis of lyrics and the living conditions of artists yields a worthwhile introduction to the status of youth in contemporary societies. Particularly for undergraduate students or those just learning about Africa, the quick pace of the chapters provides an invigorating sense of the relevance of youth, music and social conditions in three countries. Ntarangwi's writing style is also devoid of heavy jargon or verbose passages, and will appeal to general interest readers.

For scholars interested in the history or in-depth analysis of music in East Africa, the monograph often moves too quickly to explore topics fully. The lives and careers of artists, as well as the reasons people are drawn to hip hop, are hardly addressed. There is almost no detail about the *sound* of East African hip hop and how the music pushes the themes of the lyrics. For scholars of East Africa, the inclusion of lyrics in English versions only makes it impossible to read more into them, or to check translations. Finally, even though the ethnography focuses on all of East Africa, it is strongest in examining Tanzania and Kenya and somewhat limited when it turns to Uganda.

Overall, this is an important regional study. As new economic and political partnerships emerge within regions such as East Africa, such studies are increasingly necessary to interpret the meaning and significance of cultural forms – of which popular music is certainly an important example.

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PAUL HENLEY, *The Adventure of the Real: Jean Rouch and the craft of ethnographic cinema*. Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press (pb \$37.50 – 978 0 22632 715 0). 2010, 512 pp.

Songhay elders in Niger and Mali sometimes say: 'The blind mongoose never strays far from its home.' Although he never tired of travelling to varied and distant places, Jean Rouch, like the blind mongoose, never strayed far from his homes: France and Niger. Even when he was in his eighties, Rouch tried to travel to Niger once a year. During one of those annual trips he died in a tragic car accident. His remains lie in a simple grave in the Catholic cemetery of Niamey, Niger's capital city.

When I travelled to Niamey in 2009 I went to the Catholic cemetery to find Jean Rouch's gravesite. The cemetery is a dry and sandy expanse just off the road to Kollo near Niamey's Terminus neighbourhood. Most of the gravesites are bare mounds marked with crosses. Jean Rouch's has a tombstone and is covered with white marble squares. It is unobtrusively situated at the southern end of the cemetery and says only: 'Jean Rouch May 31, 1917–February 18, 2004' – a modest space that marks the passing of a great scholar and film maker.

My visit to the gravesite was on the fifth anniversary of his death. In the years since his passing Jean Rouch's persona has reached mythic proportions in Niger. The French cultural centre in Niamey bears his name and its library is establishing a collection of books by and about him. A media centre is being developed. In addition *La Caravane Jean Rouch*, sponsored by the cultural centre, has taken Jean Rouch's films to the remote villages where they were shot, in some cases more than 60 years ago. Some of the villagers are the