



Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops: Global Fantasy in Urban Tanzania (Tracking Globalization)

By Brad Weiss

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For young men in urban Tanzania, barbershops are sites of the struggle to earn a living amid economic crisis. With names like Brooklyn Barber House and Boyz II Men, these workplaces are also nodes in an explosion of popular culture that appropriates images drawn from the global circulation of hip hop music, fashion, and celebrity. Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops grapples with the implications of globalization and neoliberalism for urban youth in Africa today, exploring urban Tanzanians' complex, new ways of understanding their place in the world.

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Editorial Review

Review

"... an important ethnography for interpreting the intersection of youth, masculinity, and popular culture.... Street Dreams provides a useful means to understand globalization and neoliberalism, particularly as it affects young men in Africa's informal economies." ?Alex Perullo, Bryant University, AFRICAN STUDIES REVIEW, Vol. 52.3 Dec. 2009

"Brad Weiss's ethnography makes a valuable contribution to the body of scholarship that documents and discusses the parts that neoliberal economic policies... play in creating gaps between the aspirations of youth and economic realities in Africa." ?Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute

"Dr. Weiss has chosen a very difficult group to study?young men?but also a group about which we urgently need to know much more, since they are increasingly seen, in Africa and elsewhere, as a problem-group that is potentially dangerous.... A seminal analysis of the global-local conundrum." ?Peter Geschiere, University of Amsterdam

Contemporary pop culture in Arusha, Tanzania's third-largest city, is the often-fuzzy focus of this urban ethnography. Weiss (College of William and Mary; *The Making and Unmaking of the Haya Lived World*, CH, Nov'96, 34-1630), an experienced and knowledgeable student of the country in the grasp of economic liberalization and globalization, tries his hand at deciphering the meaning of local culture. His selected topics are the now ubiquitous barbershops, hairstyles, gangsta rap, modes of local transport, and clothing, fashion, and media, both indigenous and imported. In a stretch, he also attempts to relate these concerns to gender relations among the young. With little in the way of evidence, the author offers explanations for these vivid cultural expressions with an emphasis on 'feelings' linked to the overall 'sensations' of inclusion and exclusion in everyday life. The discourse is often insightful but, perhaps inevitably, almost as inchoate as the subject matter itself. Summing Up: Recommended. Faculty. -- ChoiceW. Arens, Stony Brook University, Choice, March 2010

About the Author

Brad Weiss is Professor of Anthropology at the College of William and Mary. He is author of *The Making and Unmaking of the Haya Lived World: Consumption and Commoditization in Everyday Practice* and *Sacred Trees, Bitter Harvests: Globalizing Coffee in Colonial Northwest Tanganyika* and editor of *Producing African Futures: Ritual and Reproduction in a Neoliberal Age*.

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