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# Street-Corner Justice in the Name of Jah: Imperatives for Peace among Dar es Salaam Street Youth

Eileen Moyer

*Young men throughout the world seem fascinated with Bob Marley. Especially fascinated with him are poor, disenfranchised youths, like those living and working in the streets of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, who are the subjects this article. What is it about Bob Marley and Rastafari-inspired discourses of peace and love that make them so appealing? Why are street youths throughout the world growing dreads and praising Jah? By taking a close look at internal peacekeeping strategies employed on a specific street corner located in the middle of the central business district of Dar es Salaam, this article demonstrates that such questions are best answered from a local perspective. While Marley's global appeal may be attributed to shared experiences of inequality, the ways this popularity emerges locally sheds light on the particularities of those experiences.*

Every man got a right to decide his own destiny,  
And in this judgment there is no partiality.  
So arm in arms, with arms, we'll fight this little struggle,  
Cause that's the only way we can overcome our little trouble.

No more internal power struggle;  
We come together to overcome the little trouble.  
Soon we'll find out who is the real revolutionary,  
'Cause I don't want my people to be contrary.

To divide and rule could only tear us apart,  
In every man chest, mm—there beats a heart.  
So soon we'll find out who is the real revolutionaries.  
And I don't want my people to be tricked by mercenaries.  
—Bob Marley, *Zimbabwe*

## Introduction

Those who study youth subcultures and popular culture in general tend to gravitate toward politicized subjects of study, focusing on revolutionary ideas and projects that counter the status quo. My own interest in studying Rastafari subcultures in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, was to ferret out local discussions on inequality, African unity, and social justice to inform and reinforce my own scholarly views on these subjects. During my research, however, I found that such discussions rarely took place among so-called “real” Rastas, but were instead more likely to occur among those who were struggling to make a life for themselves on the streets.

This article examines the increasing popularity of Rastafari-inspired discourses among young men living and working in the streets of Dar es Salaam, demonstrating how they contribute to social order and understandings of power structures—local, national, and international—that have contributed to the development of a largely marginalized and disenfranchised generation. For my arguments, I rely mainly on examples gained from conducting research among a group of approximately 100 informal economy entrepreneurs working on and around one particular street corner in Dar es Salaam between 1999 and 2002. Similar corners, throughout the city and country, serve as centers of economic and social activity for young people. These places are referred to as either a *maskani* or a *kijiweni*, depending on whether those occupying them consider them primarily as places of leisure (*maskani*) or work (*kijiweni*). The corner where this research was conducted was situated across the street from the Sheraton Hotel in the city center. Most who lived and worked there called it their *maskani*. Following their convention, I refer to it in my writing as Maskani, capitalized and without italics, reserving *maskani* for generalized references to such corners, and employ the neologism Wamaskani (the people of Maskani) to refer to the wide range of people associated with the corner.

I offer a longer description of Maskani below, particularly in regard to how the space was claimed and shaped by Rastafari-influenced ideals, but I want to offer a general introduction to the corner here. Maskani is located at the edge of the downtown business district, where several streets come together to form an atypical intersection. Most Maskani workers have set up their business along a dead-end street situated perpendicular to the Sheraton. From there, they can take advantage of the heavy foot traffic of locals and foreign tourists. They are also located close enough to numerous formal businesses to guarantee a steady supply of customers who usually come to the corner to eat or to have their cars washed; some come with the added objective of passing time with young Wamaskani, who are often imagined by elites to embody a certain street toughness to be admired from a distance. Wamaskani and others like them are particularly lauded for their linguistic virtuosity. Outsiders come to Maskani to hear stories; they are rarely disappointed.

As businesses and organizations, and their personnel, around Maskani change all the time, my attempts to reconstruct its history remain fragmentary. Interviews with individuals who have been associated with the corner for years, however, leave no doubt that the place has experienced steady growth since the construction of the Sheraton.<sup>1</sup> As the most luxurious hotel in town in the late 1990s, and the accommodation of choice for politicians, development personnel, travelers, and businesspeople, it is a symbol and node of globalization (Moyer 2003a, 2004). In close proximity to it are branches of Citibank, American Express, DHL, KLM, USAID, UNICEF, numerous consulates, embassies, and nongovernmental organization headquarters. Even before the Sheraton was built, the central location of this area made it desirable. It has steadily gained in attraction since then, for global companies and organizations and, consequently, for local informal workers. The latter began to transform this street corner and its surroundings into a business location in 1996, when construction of the Sheraton started. The food vendors came first, providing meals for the workers on the construction site. Car washers who had worked at nearby Tanganyika Motors since the early 1990s noted an increase in business as a result of the dust caused by the construction. They started to guard and wash the vehicles of the construction foremen. Also in the mid-1990s, itinerant street vendors added this corner to their routes. Others built makeshift shops along the roadside. As these workers occupied public space, they tested and expanded the limits of city zoning laws. Maskani also became a taxi stand for about ten drivers. Some artists and vendors selling objects ranging from Makonde woodcarvings to Bob Marley paintings started to work the area. Others sold newspapers, shined and repaired shoes, and offered to change money at black-market rates.

Wamaskani came from all over, though most were recent migrants to Dar es Salaam. The average worker at Maskani was a male in his late teens or early twenties, had been in the city from one to seven years, had nearly or already finished primary school, and had come in search of better economic and social opportunities than he believed were available in the rural areas. A slight majority of Wamaskani car washers came from Arusha, while many of the other vendors were from southeastern Tanzania. Christians and Muslims could be found at Maskani, but there was no discernable religious dominance. With the exception of a few vocal Rastafari, religion was almost never a topic of discussion. Though women could be found at the corner during the day, excluding the occasional girlfriend or prostitute, few women spent nights there. In many ways, the information presented in this article pertains specifically to men and to a particular form of masculinity. Female Rastas were hard to find in the city, perhaps because Rastafari's liberating philosophy tended to be far less liberating for women (Lake 1998). There were no female Rastas at Maskani—which was not surprising, given that one of the restrictions put on female followers of the faith is that they should remain out of the public eye whenever possible.

Most of the ethnographic evidence presented in this article was gained through observation and informal discussions with Wamaskani. Knowledge about language and dress inspired by Rastafari, or any other belief-system, is largely embodied and intuitive and, thus, rarely articulated. It was usually only when I, as an outsider, noted the exceptional popularity of Rasta-related speech, fashion, music, and art at the corner that people spoke about the subject in abstract terms. Though the arguments presented are largely ethnographically informed, I offer few direct quotes.

The increasing popularity of Rastafari-inspired rhetoric and fashion among Wamaskani, as well as among many other young people in the city, can be attributed to several reasons. Factors, which I discuss below, include the diversification of media forms previously controlled by the state—which has been a positive result of the neoliberal economic and political reforms that began in Tanzania in the mid-1980s. These changes have brought about an increased awareness and popularity of reggae, specifically the music of Bob Marley. In this article, I provide examples of how Wamaskani use Marley’s image and lyrics to comment upon and control social situations and social space in the context of an overarching discourse of peace. Following a brief discussion of recent media transformations in Tanzania and an example of the way Marley’s lyrics are employed to comment on more localized injustices, I turn to a more expansive discussion of Maskani and practices undertaken there to produce a “place of peace,” conducive to both business and a better quality of life. Wamaskani transformed their social space abstractly through discourse, and more concretely through the public display of artworks produced at the corner. They also set themselves apart through dress, jewelry, and hairstyles (Moyer 2003a, 2003b). Wamaskani are not the only people in Dar es Salaam to align with Rastafari, as the section on “real” Rastas and their “fashion dread” counterparts demonstrates. This is made even clearer through a discussion of the ways that Rastafari philosophies work together with and reinforce Maskani views on social justice and morality. Though this article is primarily concerned with one particular street corner in Tanzania at one particular moment in history, it demonstrates the ways that economically marginalized young people struggle to make meaning in their lives regardless of, or perhaps because of, circumstances.

## Transforming the Airwaves

Before the introduction of political-liberalization policies in the mid-1990s, Tanzania’s media were small and largely state-controlled; however, with the onset of multiparty democracy, the media rapidly grew. There were dozens of newspapers by the year 2000, alongside several television stations, most of which broadcast some form of music, and more than twenty radio stations (AM and FM). Before 1995, the only radio station available on mainland Tanzania, Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD), was state-sponsored

and tightly controlled, promoted by then President Nyerere primarily as a tool for development and culture building. Reggae, seen as a foreign influence, was rarely played, though cassettes were widely smuggled into the country, and those living in Zanzibar or near the borders with Kenya or Zambia listened to reggae broadcast from those countries. Many older reggae fans reported listening to reggae in the early 1980s, even though the music market was tightly controlled.<sup>2</sup> During this period, private clubs and hotels hosted dances where reggae could be heard; sites included the Dar es Salaam YWCA, located just down the street from Maskani.<sup>3</sup> Shortly after it became possible, several FM stations began playing popular music. Radio One led the way in the mid-1990s; but by 2000, Clouds and East Africa FM had become the most successful. East Africa FM strongly supported reggae, both foreign and locally produced. In 2000, the station counted three Rastas among their selectors: Jamaican-born and repatriated<sup>4</sup> Ras (or Baba)-T, Seychelles-born Emp'ress Gypsy, and locally born Gotta Irre. Together, these three have dramatically increased people's knowledge of reggae, as well as the philosophies that inspire it.

Though they are media "stars," it should be noted that Dar es Salaam is still a face-to-face city in many ways, and one-on-one contact between selectors such as these and street youths like those at Maskani was not uncommon. Kiswahili often served as a barrier for the non-Tanzanians in regard to meaningful conversation, although they remained easily accessible public figures. Baba T, in particular, made routine stops at Maskani to greet the young men he knew there and to dispense advice, which mostly went underappreciated. He was not alone either, as other popular and public figures associated with reggae and Rastafari beliefs regularly passed by Maskani. They rarely bothered to talk to most of the young men who worked at Maskani, preferring to exchange greetings with Ras Masha, a Rastafari who operated a music stand at the corner, and the few other Wamaskani who currently or previously considered themselves Rastafari. To the outside observer, it seemed that these public Rastafari had little time for most street youths and, in fact, those I interviewed tended to see such young men as victims at best, and as criminals at worst.

## The Real Revolutionary

The recent growth in popularity of Rastafari rhetoric, Bob Marley, and dreadlocks among poor youths in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere in Tanzania is due, in part, to the mass production of sounds and images associated with Rastafari culture—a trend that has become increasingly common over the last several years. From one perspective, Bob Marley could be understood as a global symbol, a floating signifier, waiting to be taken up by oppressed people throughout the world. The worldwide popularity of his image and music is undeniable, especially among young men living at the margins of global capitalism. Though it could be argued that there are many parallels

between the types of injustices experienced by those like Wamaskani and poor urban youths elsewhere around the world, and even that there might be a sense of global common cause motivating young people's embracing of reggae and Rastafari, the specific reasons for Marley's popularity among disenfranchised youths in Dar es Salaam are intensely local. In Dar es Salaam, Marley is recognized as a global figure, and this is no doubt part of his allure. Even so, those who have come to embrace him as a representative of their individual and communal oppression freely reinterpret both Rastafari tenets and his lyrics to help them make sense of and order their own needs. Hannerz has suggested that such "cultural borrowings" do not indicate the "cultural power of the center over the periphery, of the way that autonomy and diversity are lost in the world" (1997:168). First, it should be noted that despite critics who might be inclined to identify the heavily mediated Marley with the "center," most fans I interviewed claimed to identify with him particularly because of his entrenchment in the periphery as a citizen of a small Caribbean nation, as a street tough and petty criminal, as the child of a less-than-nuclear family, and, most importantly, as someone who grew up in poverty. Second, despite this observation, there is no doubt that Marley and the popularity of reggae and Rastafari philosophies in Dar es Salaam do represent some form of "cultural borrowing." Following Jewsiewicki's (1997) well-argued thesis regarding popular painting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (still Zaire in his arguments), I believe that Wamaskani, and others like them in Dar es Salaam, take Marley, reggae, and Rastafari, and "cannibalize" them to meet their own needs. At Maskani, this means many things related to the claiming and transforming of space, which I will discuss below.

In regard to Marley specifically, there seems to be a strong tendency to employ his lyrics to critique the failures of the state, particularly of the state in the hands of the generation, including many of their own parents, who inherited its power following independence. Many Wamaskani readily quote Marley's lyrics as a means of commenting on local social and economic injustices, which they attributed to poor governance and hypocrisy. The charge of hypocrisy was made all the more valid because it was known that many leaders of the postindependence generation championed themselves as fighting for social justice. They knew about the sufferings of the poor and, to make matters worse, some of them even listened to Bob Marley. Along the way though, most of them had lost the thread, had given up fighting for the rights of the poor, and had embraced neoliberalism, at least to an extent that they settled into their middle-class lifestyles and began placing the blame for the state's failures on the shoulders of poor youths trying to make a life for themselves.

As one country after another achieved independence throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many had great hopes for the African continent; as time passed, however, and the general air of optimism started to fade, there arose a cautionary voice, which declared that the "real revolutionaries" had yet to act, and that the real revolution was yet to occur. That voice belonged to

Bob Marley. In his 1980 song “Zimbabwe,” composed and recorded out of solidarity with the freedom fighters of that country, he cautioned against internal divisions and power struggles in African countries. By 1980, the world had already witnessed the consequences of such struggles in many newly independent African states and, at least to Marley, it was becoming apparent that many so-called revolutionaries and independence leaders had gone astray after independence. Marley insightfully suggested that fighting for the independence of African nations did not necessarily make people revolutionaries. His song was, in essence, an appeal to Africans, and especially African leaders, to become “real revolutionaries” and visionaries. He was the only foreign musician invited to perform at the national ceremony marking Zimbabwe’s independence, in April of 1980. He gave a performance that guaranteed his message would be directly delivered to the many African and Commonwealth leaders, including Prince Charles, who had gathered to mark the last time the British flag would fly over the African continent. Marley’s sustained interest and commitment to African power structures has probably helped guarantee his continued popularity throughout the continent. It is certainly true in Tanzania, where people still talk about Marley’s Zimbabwe performance. His thinly veiled criticism of African leaders at a time when unity was being almost uniformly and uncritically celebrated was seen in Dar es Salaam as truly revolutionary among many young men who were critical of their own leaders.

These young men felt that their parents’ generation had failed at being “real revolutionaries,” and, worse, that through their corruption and greed, they had colluded in the perpetuation of neocolonialism. Marley’s lyrics concerning real revolutionaries gave voice to people looking for an explanation of why Zion, in the form of modern-day Africa, and specifically the Tanzanian nation-state, has failed to live up to its promise. This opinion was common at Maskani, but even commoner in Dar es Salaam among middle-class youths whose parents had actually benefited from international education and a steady flow of development aid, and who had been guaranteed lifetime employment opportunities in government jobs. The nation had invested in them and, as is commonly believed among young and disillusioned people in postsocialist Tanzania, they let the nation down.

## Mapping Zion

At Maskani, a general form of verbal demarcation was used to map out social space as either safe or unsafe. This process, which I call “mapping Zion,” allowed people to obtain and exchange information about the city through social and discursive practices that were inflected and influenced by Rastafari belief and culture. For example, most Wamaskani used the phrase “peace and love” to describe a place that they considered safe. They would say, “we have peace and love here; but over there, there is none: there it is Babylon.”<sup>5</sup> Difference, especially in reference to notions of security,

was almost always expressed in dichotomous terms. Places, and occasionally people, were either good or bad, Zion or Babylon. Although the line between good and bad was rarely clearly defined and moral boundaries were continually being challenged and renegotiated, most spoke as if it were otherwise.

One of the most common reasons Wamaskani used Rasta-inspired rhetoric was to link social-justice arguments to their individual desires to use public space for business. Demands for access to public space were almost always marked with invocations of the nation.<sup>6</sup> It was common to hear people throughout the city proclaim their right to conduct business in the streets based on their Tanzanian citizenship; this was no less true at Maskani. From this perspective, all Tanzanians have an equal right to use public space for their own personal economic advantage. This argument, especially heralded among people like the Wamaskani, who had come to Dar es Salaam in search of economic opportunities, contradicts former socialist visions of public city life, in which city streets were to be used for the assembling and enjoyment of the masses, rather than the economic advancement of individuals. Places like Maskani are a contradiction to modern urban ideals, yet those who conduct business in such locales find little irony in invoking socialist visions of the city to demand space for individual capitalist endeavors.

For those who make their living in the streets, public space is most readily defined by the degree to which it is accessible for economic development. Every inch of public space, whether in the streets, on the sidewalks, or in public parks, can serve as a potential market. In these spaces, the most important factor for guaranteeing steady and uninterrupted business and trade is a *peaceful* environment, which simultaneously serves to make potential customers feel safe, keep police at bay, and produce a relaxing atmosphere. The ways this environment is maintained differ, depending on particularities of the sites.

To the degree that it served as a place of work and leisure, Maskani was like other street corners. To those who worked, lived, and hung out there, however, it was preferred specifically because it was thought to embody a spirit of “peace and love,” the reason given whenever and by whomever I would ask: “Why this corner?” Most of the young men working at Maskani had extensive networks throughout the city and, had they chosen to do so, they could probably have worked somewhere else, yet they chose Maskani. The spirit of peace that set Maskani apart was partially maintained through social pressure. Additionally, many of the young men working in the area tried to demarcate the space as a zone of peace. Almost all would do this through speech, peppering their greetings and vocabulary with various Rasta-fied expressions exchanged among each other, but in particular with potential customers. This allowed them to overcome possible language barriers with customers who did not speak Swahili—everyone knows “peace and love”—and it gave them a way to reassure people who might otherwise be wary of engaging in business with street hustlers.

Others would try to accomplish this by wearing Rasta-inspired clothing (Moyer 2003b). Though these efforts may have worked to reassure tourists and expatriates who might equate Rasta symbolism with peace, many upper- and middle-class Tanzanians looked down on Rastas. The decision to demarcate Maskani as a peaceful zone may have been good for business, but it also had the capacity to attract unwanted attention from the police. Since the police were mostly concerned that people should not smoke marijuana in public, however, much of this attention could be deflected by not smoking at Maskani. There were several other *maskani* in the city, mostly located near the beaches, where Wamaskani would go when they wanted to smoke. They did this to avoid being caught smoking near their place of business and to avoid being stopped with cannabis in their pockets by police—which would require a higher “fee” to avoid incarceration. They rarely carried marijuana with them, and would, instead, buy it in a small *kete*, or package, containing just enough for a joint, and smoke it immediately. I came to realize how important these places of leisure were for maintaining a peaceful working and living environment at the Sheraton Maskani. Because of its location, right in the middle of the central business district and on the main tourist path, the police paid special attention to Maskani, and held the people who worked there to a higher standard than those who rarely come into contact with wealthy Tanzanians, expatriates, Tanzanian officials, and foreign tourists.

## Unwritten Rules of Maskani

It was rare for anyone to even consider smoking marijuana at Maskani during the daytime; but if they did, they could expect to be quickly censured. On one occasion, when a young man began selling marijuana at Maskani, he was almost immediately reprimanded by other young men from the corner. This instance made it clear that there were many unwritten rules for keeping order at Maskani, and that everyone wishing to work there was subject to them. The man in question had set up a makeshift stand on the edge of Maskani, opposite the Sheraton Hotel. He wore his dreadlocked hair tucked up under a red, green, and yellow Rastafari-style hat and was, at least publicly, busy selling small beaded trinkets, known colloquially (to the anthropologist’s delight) as “culture,” but there were rumors that he was selling marijuana to tourists. As we walked by his stand one day, I was surprised to hear my generally soft-spoken research assistant, Derrick Mbelwa, raise his voice to reprimand him. “What are you trying to do?” he asked him. “Don’t you know that you can’t do that sort of thing around here, across the street from the Sheraton? There are white people here, and if you cause trouble, the police will start coming around and asking questions. There will be trouble. We just want peace here.” Several other young men echoed Mbelwa, and, within a few days, this particular “culture” broker had closed shop and moved away.

This example is unusual in that it so clearly demonstrates the presence of social control at Maskani, yet Wamaskani routinely worked to achieve and maintain a certain degree of peace and civil accord through less obvious means. This was notable whenever an argument or fight broke out. Before the fight could get out of hand, someone would almost always stop it. In most cases, it was someone a little bit older, or someone outside of the immediate circle of those fighting. If one person routinely got out of line, the others would gang up on him, or they refused to help him when he was hungry, sick, or jailed. It was almost impossible to be financially successful at Maskani if one constantly caused fights and disagreements. Arguments were an almost daily occurrence at Maskani: mostly they were about money, but they rarely escalated to the point where they would attract outside attention.

Among those who worked at Maskani, many slept there. They therefore had the most to gain by maintaining a peaceful environment, as many of them would have had nowhere to go if the police began cracking down on their activities. Maskani served as a center of economic and social life for them, making their lives extremely precarious. Even though they earned enough to survive at Maskani, they were acutely aware of how quickly their circumstances could change. Any disruptions to their business were interpreted as extremely problematic.

Despite constant insecurity, some had been successfully living as car washers for several years, while others had returned home, saved up enough capital to start businesses of their own, or been jailed. Income at Maskani was fairly stable. Usually, one could make enough honestly to eat three meals a day, and often there were opportunities to make much larger sums of money, some legal, and some not.<sup>7</sup> Because of this potential for success, people constantly tried to gain work at Maskani; most, however, lacked the social capital to do so. No one just showed up at Maskani and started working there. It was important to know someone already working at the corner, and preference was given to people who were related, either through kin or social networks connected to one's home region. Social connections did not always guarantee success. People were given access to work gradually and tested: if they proved too argumentative, or were unwilling to follow the unwritten rules, they were told to leave.

In one case, Haji, a young man living in the Tandale section of the city, a social acquaintance of several Wamaskani, began hanging out at the corner in hopes of picking up work washing cars. From the start, it was clear that he was seen as an outsider and not particularly welcomed, despite the fact that almost everyone at Maskani knew him in some capacity. At first, the reasons given for rejecting him were mainly economic: there simply was not enough work or money to go around to permit a new person to start working at the corner, regardless of his social connections. Numerous other reasons for excluding him became clear rather quickly. It was generally known that he was a petty drug dealer, and that, over the last few years, he had been in and out of jail for this and for stealing. But the real problem was



Figure 1: Ras Masha

that most believed he was a heroin addict—which they assumed would lead to his untrustworthiness. When I spoke with him about these accusations, he did not deny them, but told me that he was trying to make a change in his life. His new girlfriend had just become pregnant with his child, and he believed it was time to make an honest living. The other car washers did not match my sympathies for Haji's predicament. He was a member of the small group of people with which I worked in Tandale. I had visited him there often, had met his current girlfriend, and understood the difficulties of starting fresh in that environment. This was not enough to win him acceptance at Maskani, however, and it was only a couple of days before he was accused of stealing from a car one of the other young men had asked him to wash. A big argument ensued between him and two car washers, who seemed to think that he was putting them all at risk. By stealing from a customer's car, he was inviting trouble into their shared workspace and risking unwanted police attention. Shortly after the argument, he quit working at Maskani and returned to Tandale.

To a certain degree, social hierarchies at Maskani were based on the length of time individuals worked there, though age, physical size, and social connections to those with seniority played a part. The person with the greatest policing power was usually the one with the greatest investment in keeping the peace, and in most cases it was Ras Masha, the owner-operator of the one permanent establishment at Maskani. He owned two music stands in the city. At Maskani, he had built a permanent structure, which could not be easily moved if there was trouble with the police or local (formal) businessowners (figure 1). Next to his stand, he had built a sheltered seating area, where several Wamaskani slept at night. The safest place to

secure valuables was in his stand, and many young men kept their clothes and other personal belongings there. Ras Masha was also a banker: for many of the men, he held money in an informal saving scheme; in return for the service, he used their money as investment capital.

As Masha could not be at both of his stands at once, he employed someone to help him. When I first met Mbelwa, he was running Masha's stand at Maskani. When Mbelwa moved on, Masha hired Mustapha in his place. One might have expected the store operator's main role to have been selling music, "culture," and drinks, but he was more often engaged in keeping the peace among the car washers who worked in the vicinity of the stand. Regardless of who was in charge of the music stand, he could be certain that his duties would include policing those who worked and slept in the area. When the fight between Haji and the two car washers broke out, it was Mustapha who stepped in to calm the situation. It was also in this capacity that Mbelwa was acting when he reprimanded the young man for attempting to sell cannabis on the corner. Rashidi, a night guard hired by Masha, also played an important role in maintaining peace at Maskani at night: he was in charge when it came to deciding who would be permitted to sleep at Maskani, and made sure that no one stole anything from those who stored their merchandise with him in the evening in exchange for a small fee.

When someone connected with the music stand became involved in policing the corner, he was normally shown respect, though sometimes begrudgingly. In short, hierarchies of power were acknowledged, but rarely were they accepted without question. Those who held positions of power, regardless of how marginal, were expected to perform their roles with a certain degree of fairness. When they failed to act justly, they were almost immediately taken to task with reminders of the equality of all humans, the equality of access to public space, and the connections between morality and social justice. And, Rastafari-inspired expressions were almost always used to add weight to the arguments.

## **The Art of Peace: The Work of Ras Swedi and Haruna**

Maskani did not exist on formal maps of the city and could not be considered a formal place, yet its boundaries, though amorphous, were familiar to all who worked and lived there. These were marked in various ways, most poignantly through the public display of Rastafari-inspired objects and artworks. Ras Masha commonly hung hats, shirts, and other types of handknit clothing in the Rasta colors of green, yellow, red, and black in front of his store. As they blew gently in the air, they caught the eye of potential customers, alerting them that this was a place where peace ruled. To the same end, he hung Rasta beadwork and commissioned a painting of a Rasta baby on the side of his store. Even more remarkable were the artworks displayed

on the street corner, images drawn and painted by Maskani's resident artists, Ras Swedi and Haruna.<sup>8</sup>

Ras Swedi (figure 2) was truly inspired by Bob Marley, by both his music and his countenance. Among those familiar with Swedi's work, he was best known for his meticulous pencil drawings of Marley. He also painted larger Marley canvases together with Haruna, who applied paint after Swedi had sketched Marley's image (figure 3). Though Haruna was a good draftsman, the Marley canvases were usually thought of as Swedi's because of the subject-matter. Simply put, if you wanted a picture of Bob Marley in Dar es Salaam, you would do business with Ras Swedi, the recognized master of the genre. Generally speaking, people who saw his work were amazed by his talent. His superbly detailed pencil drawings, possessing an uncanny degree of verisimilitude reminiscent of photography would take about a day to complete and were most often done on commission or as gifts for friends. Only occasionally would Swedi put his Marley drawings up for sale. When he did, they were quickly snatched up. The large Marley canvases were primarily produced for the tourist market, since they were too expensive for most of the Tanzanians who might have wanted them, though this did not prevent them from stopping by to enjoy them in the Maskani-based open-air gallery.

The place where Swedi and Haruna painted was sandwiched between several food vendors' stalls, a couple of small *dukas* selling sodas and cigarettes, and various other informal economy emporiums. Swedi's choice to set up his studio on this corner was hardly accidental: he chose it because it gave him access to the several markets for which he painted, including the gallery at the nationally sponsored Nyumba ya Sanaa, situated directly across the road from Maskani; UNICEF, which occasionally employed him to design posters for public education campaigns and was located just around the corner from Maskani. Many international-development organizations employed local artists in an attempt to effect more culturally appropriate campaigns, but when they did, they often worked with the artists who were most easily contacted. For this reason, setting up his workshop around the corner from UNICEF, as well as in the shadow of numerous other development organizations, guaranteed Swedi greater access to the markets they provided.

A third group of customers was made up of tourists and expatriates who passed by his workshop as they went about their business in the city. There was a steady stream of foreigners passing by Maskani, but few purchased Haruna's or Swedi's works. Although they rarely sold for more than US\$50, they were usually too expensive for low-budget tourists looking for souvenirs, and Swedi and Haruna's works were neither original nor "naïve" enough to be of any great interest to expatriates in search of an investment. A fourth group of customers interested in Swedi's work consisted of young Tanzanians, mostly male and middle class, who even with very little money might commission a drawing of Marley from Swedi to hang on the wall of



Figure 2: Swedi working

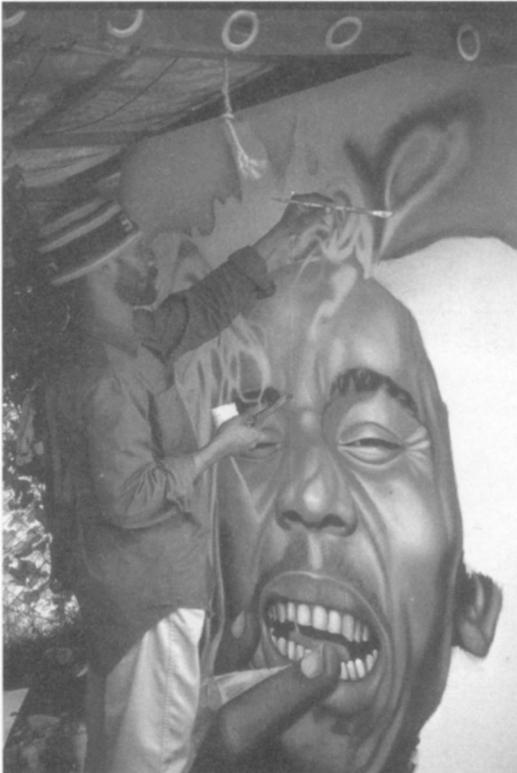


Figure 3: Haruna working



Figure 4: Newly completed masterpiece

their room. From this category, Swedi had a few patrons, a couple of whom promised to try to market his work abroad.<sup>9</sup>

Swedi's choice to set up his workshop at Maskani was an economic one, but it expressed his desire to work in a place relatively free from hassle. In this respect, he and Haruna were not unlike other young men working at Maskani. To a large extent, the presence of his workshop at the corner helped demarcate it physically as a place of peace. This was especially the case when his larger than life-size canvases of Marley were on display. Their drawings and paintings provided visual evidence of the corner's peacefulness, marking the area as a swath of Zion in the midst of Babylon. In many ways, their work—their labor and its products—was the proud possession of the other young men nearby. When Swedi and Haruna were working, their presence transformed the space of Maskani. Small groups of people often gathered around to watch, and when a painting or drawing was nearing completion, word would spread quickly so everyone could stop in to have a look. If there was a willing anthropologist in the area, they even asked to have their picture taken with a newly completed masterpiece (figure 4).

When people watched Swedi work, they were amazed by his talent, but more often than not they would marvel at the beauty and the spirit of the man who was his most popular subject. Swedi's visible reverence for Bob Marley served as an inspiration for many young men who were searching for a role model that could provide an example for living righteously in a morally ambiguous world. When I asked Swedi why he drew the same pictures of Marley over and over again, he told me that it was a way of training, that he believed that if he could draw Marley's face perfectly, he would become



Figure 5: Image of Peter Tosh

a better artist. Watching him meditatively produce these drawings, day in and day out, for almost a year made me wonder what it was about the image of Marley that was so intoxicating, for him and for those who gathered to watch him work—and, I must confess, for me as well.

I could figure out why the rhetoric and imagery associated with peace and Rastafari philosophies were so appealing, but I had difficulty answering the question: “Why Bob Marley?” Why not Peter Tosh, for instance? When discussions on music were held, someone would offer the rarely challenged observation that Tosh was the better musician (figure 5). When I would ask, “why Marley,” most had no trouble answering.<sup>10</sup> They almost uniformly agreed that it was simply a matter of aesthetics. “Bob is a beautiful man you see, and Peter Tosh is not.” The ambiguity he embodies as a result, in part, of his mixed parentage makes him exceptionally appealing. The lightness of his skin influences this aesthetic judgment. More significant are his long, beautiful dreads—dreads, I was often told, which would be difficult to grow for someone of purely African descent. There is a centuries-long tradition along coastal Tanzania of marriage between Africans and lighter-skinned Arabs and occasionally Indians, and it is a commonly held belief among coastal Tanzanians that people with mixed ancestry are physically more attractive. Marley fits perfectly into this aesthetic.

There was more to people’s love and admiration for Bob Marley than just his looks: people spoke of him as a prophet or a saint of the Rastafari faith, and his lyrics seemed to serve as a hymnal for them. A hagiography is the story of a saint’s life. It was remarkable to note the extent to which Wamaskani were familiar with the life-story of Marley. Roberts and Roberts have argued that “hagiography causes and/or permits adherents to become

swept up in a saint's biographical narrative in such a way that their own lives seem extensions of the saint's" (2003:38). At Maskani, it was rare to hear reggae during the daytime working hours, despite the fact that it was the stated preferred music choice of most who worked there. Shortly after sunset, however, those who slept at Maskani would slowly return from their trips to "the beach," where they were likely to have smoked some marijuana to mark the end of the working day. As the heat subsided and the final customers came to pick up their cars, people gathered to tell stories and smoke cigarettes. As the city quieted, so did Maskani, creating the proper setting and time for Marley's music. In such settings, poetic discussions would often ensue. People would talk about the lyrics they heard and, though they were in English, most were familiar with rough translations, which they had either learned from listening to friends who were fluent in English or by reading translations in the music sections of popular newspapers. These discussions would often lead to wider comments about the particularities of Marley's life, which they saw as noticeably paralleling their own: his roots in poverty, his citizenship of a poor, third-world country, his skin color, his alienation from his father, his youthful death, and, most importantly, his rock-solid belief in social justice.

It is for these reasons that Bob Marley has become so popular among poor, disenfranchised youths in Dar es Salaam. His physical beauty is an added bonus, which has, no doubt, helped to transform his countenance from something that indexes social justice to an icon of it. Yet his popularity goes beyond the concrete jungles of the world; in North America and Europe, he is perhaps even more popular among middle-class whites. This is why I argue that Marley has become a global floating signifier: he stands for different things for different people. Writing about the popularity of hip-hop graffiti art among middle-class white youths in Western Cape, South Africa, Sandra Klopper has suggested that they are "searching the margins for . . . a sense of 'realness' and 'authenticity'" lacking in their own lives (Klopper 2000:185).<sup>11</sup> The same could be said of middle-class Euro-American whites and their attraction to Bob Marley and reggae more generally; in fact, it might also be said of middle-class Tanzanians, whose reasons for liking Bob Marley were rarely tied to the same reasons as those of the Wamaskani.

## **"Fashion" Dreads and "Real" Rastas**

During this period, there were also many young culture brokers working the tourist circuits of the city who wore their hair in dreadlocks. They were well known for their Disneyfied Kiswahili—Habari Sista, Hakuna Matata—and for the way they would relentlessly pursue potential customers, and there were more than a few rumors about their supposed obsession with finding a European woman to support them in exchange for special services. Many of the predominantly nondreadlocked young men at Maskani had told me from the beginning of my research that these young men were not "real"

Rastas: they were “fashion dreads” with *roho mbaya*—meaning that their spirits were more focused on their own success than in treating people with respect.

“Fashion dreads,” locks grown for reasons of style rather than for spirit, are as common in Dar es Salaam as anywhere else in the world. In Dar es Salaam, however, this style choice can result in harassment by local police. Young men with dreads, many of whom are directly involved in the tourist industry, are often targeted by police and pigeonholed as troublemakers, drug addicts, and thieves by the general public. Usually a small bribe is enough to escape the grip of the police; but, when local officials decide to clean up the streets, many young “fashion dreads” are thrown into jail, where their locks are unceremoniously shorn off.<sup>12</sup> One gets the sense that police rarely target dreadlocked individuals randomly, as conversations with other Rastas not involved in tourist hustles suggest they are rarely subjected to police harassment.

Aside from “fashion dreads,” there are also “real” Rastafari and real Rastafari communities—those who follow a Rastafari belief-system and adhere to its tenets, though, as I found, they rarely employed the popular rhetoric of peace and love that seemed to echo in the streets. Instead, there seemed to be a lot of fighting and disagreement, both within and among the communities, and there was an almost universal distrust of outsiders.<sup>13</sup> Many of these Rastafari communities were linked to foreigners who had repatriated to Tanzania in search of Zion. Most had failed to make a connection with young men hustling to make a living in the street. Those who had come from outside of Tanzania rarely bothered to learn Kiswahili and had trouble communicating with all but educated Tanzanians. They usually failed to recognize their positions of relative power and wealth. They seemed to romanticize Africa, calling it “Zion,” while still maintaining their own attachments to “Babylon,” the West, to secure their own economic means. Among those living and working in the streets, they were often condemned when they tried to preach about the proper way to behave and were often depicted as hypocritical.

Yet they did offer a focal point around which Tanzanian-born Rastafari could meet. At Saturday gatherings organized by various Rastafari communities, the faith is reimagined and recreated to reflect local interpretations underlying its tenets. It is here that Tanzanians can learn the importance of His Imperial Majesty Haile Selassie I, about Ital eating requirements, and biblical justifications for smoking cannabis. Informal discussions in Kiswahili among Tanzanians before and after the sermons are common. It is during these times that the sermons, often delivered in English by foreign-born or extremist leaders, are interpreted in accordance with more temperate local views. Peace, acceptance, and social justice become the central ideals of local Rastafari practices, while many of the racist and sexist elements of Atlantic-based Rastafari beliefs are discarded.<sup>14</sup>

When the young men at Maskani spoke of a “real” Rastafari faith, they were not speaking of that which was most closely tied to Atlantic-



Figure 6: Ras Simba

based Rastafari beliefs, but rather of a philosophical and spiritual commitment to adhere to a particular set of social norms, to approach life with justice in one's heart and a generosity of spirit toward those who are down and out. Although some of the young men from Maskani did sport dreads and adorn themselves daily in red, green, yellow, and black, this did not mean they were followers of the Rastafari faith in any strict sense. Still, for many, it did indicate a strong belief in social justice and the rights of the poor man (figure 6).<sup>15</sup>

### Inner Peace: Achieving Clarity through a Gift from God

*Maskani bila dawa ni kama kilabu bila pombe.* (A *maskani* without “medicine” is like a bar without beer.) This joke was made in response to my questioning the popular belief that people visit *maskani* only to smoke cannabis.

The smoking of *Cannabis sativa*, or ganja, is one of the central practices of the Rastafari faith. Followers consider it divinely inspired, as Dar es Salaam Rastafari would often illustrate with quotations from the Bibles many carried with them:

“And the Earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.” (Genesis 1:12)

“Thou shall eat the herb of the field.” (Genesis 3:18)

“Thou shall eat every herb of the land.” (Exodus 10:12)<sup>16</sup>

“He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that he may bring forth food out of the earth.” (Psalms 104:14)

The Kiswahili word for cannabis is *bangi*, but Rastafari, as well as most young people who smoke it, refer to it simply as *dawa*, “medicine.” The renaming of illegal substances to conceal their identity from the police is a common enough practice, which was the reason most often given to me for using the word *dawa*. Yet when Wamaskani talk about their reasons for smoking, it becomes clear that cannabis is consumed primarily for medicinal reasons related to the reduction of psychological stress associated with living on the streets. For them, it was indeed medicine. The young men with whom I worked smoked *kupunguza mawazo* “to reduce confusion through a process of cooling off,” and *kupata mawazo* “to get ideas.”<sup>17</sup> Several young men explained to me how living on the streets brings about confusion: every day, one is confronted with difficult decisions, which challenge norms and morals. People say *nimechanganikiwa*, a beautifully passive construction announcing “I was caused to be mixed up,”—a state that can arise from struggling to survive day after day in the heat of the sun. *Mawazo* are ideas related to abstract thought, and it is believed that when one is overwhelmed with them, it is difficult to make intelligent decisions. In this sense, ideas themselves are neither bad nor good: it is how one acts on them that is important. To avoid acting on impulse, or out of anger, people smoke *dawa* to clear their heads, give them time to think through a problem or a situation, examine all the possibilities, and foresee obstacles when possible. It is after the act of clearing the head, or reducing confusion, that one gets new, clearer ideas.

*Mawazo* is a noun related to the verb *kuwaza* “to imagine, ponder, and reflect.” Smoking *dawa* provides a method for opening the mind to new ways of solving complex social problems through imagination and reflection. Most of the time, people smoked in small groups among close friends and acquaintances and used the occasion to discuss the difficulties that were confronting them, as well as to dream about the future (in fact, *mawazo* can also mean “dreams”). Many regular smokers referred to these gatherings as “meditation,” borrowing from the English, or claimed that smoking helped them, “*kupata* meditation,” to enter into a meditative state. In these contexts, meditation doubles as a synonym for *mawazo* (or *kuwaza*,

depending on how it is used), while making a connection to Rastafari belief systems that refer to smoking cannabis as meditation.<sup>18</sup>

One could argue that smoking *dawa* helps bring about peace at Mas-kani, and on the streets more generally, and that by providing an opportunity for thinking before acting, the consumption of cannabis decreases violent outbursts and impulsive robberies.<sup>19</sup> In addition to fostering this outward peace, however, *dawa* contributes to the development of a sort of inner peace among those who smoke, by reducing their confusion and easing their anxiety about living an extremely precarious existence. Much of the writing I have done about those living and working in the street focuses on their exterior worlds, as it is extremely difficult to examine the interiority of their worlds without resorting to an exploration of subjectivities bordering on the psychological—a skill that falls outside my domain. When I speak of suffering and struggling, I most often invoke economic or physical tropes; but much of the suffering experienced by those who struggle in the streets is psychological. Routinely subject to the humiliations of physical and verbal abuse, begging, rape, and hunger, they bear psychological scars that are difficult to fathom, let alone discuss or write about. For many young men, *dawa* provides relief from these daily humiliations, and a space, albeit an inner one, to contemplate the meaning of life and to find the strength to continue. In addition to smoking for the purpose of clearing their minds, most report smoking before going to sleep at night in order to ease their minds and their hunger, and to help induce a state of (un)consciousness that allows them to sleep with little to protect them from the elements, the mosquitoes, and the rapists. In this regard, it is easy to see why so many of them are quick to imagine *dawa* as a medicine sent from above.

### Chant down Babylon: *Roho Mbaya* as the Root of All Evil

Wamaskani often chose to smoke when they were angry, to cool off, and to discuss the causes of their anger. It was in these contexts that I first began to hear people using the term *roho mbaya* “bad spirit,” a phrase often equated with Babylon. The concept has the capacity to envelop everything wrong with society, and is considered the opposite of peace and love: *roho mbaya ni ugonjwa* “a bad spirit is a sickness” (figure 7).

*Roho mbaya* is normally translated as “jealously” or “envy,” but these translations fall short (figure 8). Both jealousy and envy are considered normal human emotions; it is only those with *roho mbaya* who act on such feelings. The degree to which an individual is considered a good person is determined by the degree to which he or she is able to refrain from acting on the feelings of jealousy and envy, which are bound to be everywhere in a society where scarce resources are unevenly distributed. People with *roho mbaya* are described as if something were inherently wrong with them, as if they have not been properly socialized. Many people I interviewed championed the belief that an individual’s character is formed in childhood

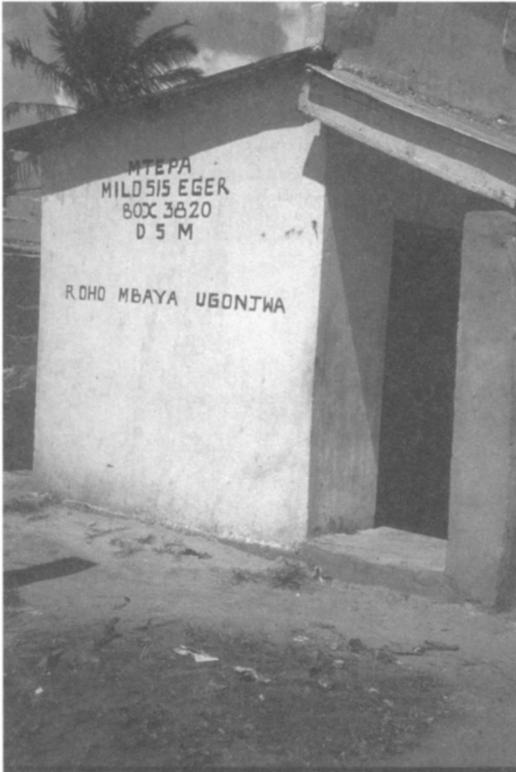


Figure 7:  
Roho mbaya ugonjwa



Figure 8: Jelous people

and that, once determined, it is almost impossible to alter. Therefore, someone afflicted with *roho mbaya* is doomed to a life of inflicting social and economic injustices against those who are least able to defend themselves. There are strong power and class connotations at work here. People generally consider it impossible for a wealthy person or a person in a position of power to be jealous or envious of the less powerful and feel that ill-will directed toward the have-nots by those with money and power is a result of their *roho mbaya*. Although poor people may be inclined toward *roho mbaya*, their lack of power makes it difficult to act on it. It may be possible to argue that discourses surrounding *roho mbaya* at Maskani are similar to witchcraft discourses more generally.<sup>20</sup> Rather than talking about witchcraft, however, or making witchcraft accusations, something most Wamaskani rarely did, they fortified their accusations of *roho mbaya* with Rastafari rhetoric, referring to someone as Babylon.

Philosophical views related to *roho* “the human spirit,” are central to any understanding of the way that Atlantic-based Rastafari beliefs are interpreted, transformed, and coopted by young people in Dar es Salaam. One of the main reasons Marley and his music have become so popular in Tanzania today is that messages in his lyrics already reflect local ways of knowing. The reason he is particularly popular among poor urban youths is that his music captures the spirit of struggle that so many of them know firsthand from their daily efforts to get by. His lyrics, when taken out of context, could be construed as boringly banal; when interpreted in the context of one’s life experience, however, they can seem profound. The struggle that Marley describes is a difficult one. It is made worthwhile because of the moments of love, joyousness, and pleasure that are also part of it. Unlike many musicians who describe and condemn Babylon power structures, Marley offers possibilities, not just for the future, but also for the possibility that a certain peacefulness can be had today if one chooses to live with love in one’s heart. Marley’s music is revolutionary in political and economic terms, but also because it insists on recognizing the power of peace and love central to Rastafari notions of “spirit.” Through experimentation with Rastafari philosophies, young people making their way in the streets of Dar es Salaam not only survive, but also thrive with a degree of passion, compassion, and style that might otherwise be denied them.

## Conclusion

Many Wamaskani who promoted social ideals of peaceful coexistence, cloaked in Rastafari philosophy, did so to promote a better quality of life in the context of their daily negotiations with others who worked at the corner, as well as between themselves and those officially responsible for policing the corner. In limiting the number and degree of public altercations, they could limit the attention they drew to themselves and improve the likelihood that they could go about their lives with a limited amount of

hassle and harassment. Paradoxically, the choice to demarcate the corner as a “zone of peace” with Bob Marley and other Rastafari imagery and music, and the choice to wear Rasta hairstyles, clothing, and jewelry, virtually guaranteed that they would be seen as troublemakers by much of Dar es Salaam society. Though Rastas rarely smoked marijuana where they could readily be observed, the public generally assumed that they regularly consumed it. Many Tanzanians believe that smoking marijuana causes insanity and irresponsible social behavior—a belief that the Tanzanian scientific community echoed.<sup>21</sup> Though a few young men at Maskani strictly adhered to the tenets of Rastafari belief (vegetarianism, not cutting hair, etc.), most observed the rules of the faith nominally, giving precedence to philosophies that reinforced their own ideals regarding social justice and fashions that resonated with their own aesthetics.

Writing about inner-city African-American expressive cultural forms in the United States, historian Robin Kelley stresses the importance of examining cultural forms that are normally referred to as popular—such as language, music, and style—in a way that allows for the possibility that they serve a purpose that is more than simply functional:

[W]hen social scientists explore “expressive” cultural forms or what has been called “popular culture”[,]. . . most reduce it to expressions of pathology, compensatory behavior, or creative “coping mechanisms” to deal with racism and poverty. While some aspects of black expressive cultures certainly help inner city residents deal with and even resist ghetto conditions, most of the literature ignores what these cultural forms mean for the practitioners. Few scholars acknowledge that what might also be at stake here are aesthetics, style, and pleasure. Nor do they recognize black urban culture’s hybridity and internal differences. (1997:17)

In this article, I have attempted to follow Kelley’s lead, and to illustrate how an uncontested global phenomenon like Bob Marley can be localized through a process that infuses his life and what he stood for with meanings that are often completely removed from who he was.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, I find it important to focus on how choosing to become a Rasta in Dar es Salaam, whether “real” or “fashion,” is part of a set of choices relating to “aesthetics, style, and pleasure,” as well as economics and politics. Reducing such choices in a way that would portray those who honor Marley’s philosophies through an embodiment of Rastafari culture as blind consumers of Western-marketed music, or people so subsumed by the daily struggle to survive that their lives have become devoid of inventiveness and pleasure, is too simplistic an analysis. Such a view would be a disservice not only to those dedicated to the task of trying to understand and perhaps “help” those who have been economically marginalized by society, but also to those who have found in Marley someone capable of representing the complexities, both banal and profound, of living and working in the streets.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research for this article was made possible by Fulbright-Hays, the University of Amsterdam, and the University of Iowa. Deepest thanks to Allen Roberts, who encouraged me to pursue the reasons behind Bob Marley's popularity in Dar es Salaam, and to Derrick Mbelwa, who expertly guided me through the world of Rastafari and reggae. This article is dedicated to the memory of Philippe Wamba and Justin Kalikawe, sons of Tanzania who were much too young when taken by Jah, but not before inspiring us with their individual spirits of *amani na upendo* "One Love."

## NOTES

1. In 2001, the Sheraton was bought by a South African company and renamed the Royal Palm.
2. See Wamba for a discussion on the availability and popularity of "pan-African" music in Dar es Salaam in the 1980s (1999, especially chapter eight); also see Graebner (1997).
3. I had several insightful discussions on the history of reggae in Zanzibar and on the mainland with the producer of Bongoland Recordings, a label devoted to producing bootleg copies of hard-to-find reggae classics. "Teacher," as he is fondly known at Maskani, now lives in Dar es Salaam, but grew up in Zanzibar and worked as a music selector for reggae gatherings that were commonly held there in the 1970s and 1980s. Clearly, it was people like him, making copies of reggae music, who fueled underground interest in foreign music throughout the socialist period. Other notable sources of foreign music that were reported by those I spoke with in the music world were university professors and Tanzanian diplomats working abroad.
4. Repatriation refers to the return of all Rastafari to Zion, Africa. Repatriation is one of the primary tenets of the Rastafari faith.
5. *Sisi tupo na peace and love; lakini uko hamna: uko Babylon.*
6. Elsewhere I have discussed the relationship between the "rhetoric of peace" employed at Maskani and a similar rhetoric employed in state and popular discourses that present Tanzania as a "nation of peace" in otherwise war-torn Africa (Moyer 2003a, especially chapter 5). It is important to recognize that in neither instance is the rhetoric of peace always benign: it is often used to justify violent behavior toward those who are perceived to transgress the imperative of peace that is held as the norm.
7. On a good day, a car washer could earn 2000 to 3000 Tsh. just washing cars, and three square meals could be bought for under 1000. At *maskani* where people earned less, it was not uncommon for people to pool their resources to buy the necessary ingredients to prepare a meal. In this case, 1000 Tsh could feed four or five people quite well. Most car washers considered 500 Tsh. to be the minimum they could make and still survive. With this, they could eat one large afternoon meal and still have enough left over to smoke a little marijuana to stave off hunger in the evening. Though most of them did have savings with Masha, the store owner, I never saw them dig into this money to meet daily expenses. Instead, they would either borrow money from someone else working at the corner who had done good business for the day, convince one of the food vendors to give them a meal on credit, or try to beg money from passersby.
8. For a more extensive discussion of Ras Swedi's art, see Moyer (forthcoming).

9. I suppose, despite my gender and nationality, I would have fit into this latter category in Swedi's mind; yet when I found him a potential foreign market, he did not show any great interest in it. There is no doubt in my mind that this ambivalence was tied to a certain resistance on his part to market pictures of Marley to audiences that he considered unworthy, specifically white people, non-Rastafari, and foreigners.
10. Though I do not discuss it in this article, Marley was not the only popular global image ubiquitously present in Dar es Salaam. Significantly, most of the others—including numerous American rap artists, Mike Tyson, Osama bin Laden, and Sadaam Hussein—could be said to represent the polar opposite of peace. While this was true for the city as a whole, however, it was not the case at Maskani, where Marley and peace seemed to reign supreme. See Moyer (2003a, especially chapter 5) for a wider discussion on violent imagery, particularly as it relates to images of Marley.
11. Klopfer bases her arguments on those made by Timothy Simpson (1996) and Bourdieu's (1984) notion of the "refusal of complicity."
12. The shaving of dreads is a practice much more common among police in Zanzibar, where the number of tourists and "fashion dreads" is much higher. See Weiss for a discussion on the relationship between hairstyles and police harassment in Arusha (2002:116).
13. Special thanks to Ras Simba, who valiantly attempted to convince the brethren of his church to accept my presence in their midst. I know this caused a great deal of social discomfort for him and respect his decision to maintain the moral high ground.
14. See Lake (1998), *Rastafari Women: Subordination in the Midst of Liberation Theology*, for a discussion of the subordinate and even slavelike roles to which many women are subject in the name of a Rastafari belief-system in Jamaica. In Tanzania, very few women consider themselves Rastafari, though an increasing number of young women are dreading their hair. Emp'ress Gypsy, a radio selector for East Africa FM, publicly proclaims herself a Rasta woman, but this identity is often challenged by her male counterparts for her refusal to submit to conservative doctrines that would transform and limit her involvement in public life. Generally, those with whom I worked seemed to express a great deal of acceptance toward white Rastafari, while limiting simplistic generalizations connecting notions of Babylon to "white" power structures. Oppression was recognized as resulting from differences in power, which may or may not be related to race, and depictions of Babylon were often connected to power structures much closer to home than those connected to the Atlantic slave trade.
15. Most Tanzanian Rastas think of Rastafari as a set of cultural norms, rather than a religion, and neither Muslims nor Christians reported finding the tenets of Rastafari at odds with their own religious beliefs. Although I had initially expected religion to play an important role in my research, it was rarely a subject of discussion among the groups with which I worked. All of the groups consisted of members who were Christian or Muslim, but most had working knowledge of both faiths. The women with whom I worked were more likely to discuss how their faith figured into their lives than the men were, but there were no discernable social tensions based on religion.
16. In this particular biblical passage, it is actually locusts, which "come up upon the land of Egypt, and eat every herb of the land," but this did not stop Rastas from quoting it to justify their use of cannabis.
17. Fabian suggests that if we are to accept the notion that we, as Africanist anthropologists, are participants in the struggle to carve a place for Africa and Africans in the present, then we must make present "our knowledge of what people think that thinking is and accomplishes"

- (1998:105–106). It is to this end that I enter into a discussion on *mawazo* and its relation to the consumption of cannabis.
18. There are striking linguistic similarities between Wamaskani discourses on the relationship between thought and action and Fabian's (1991[1974]) discussion of genres of Jamaa discourse. Both speak of being inspired by *mawazo* "dreams" or "ideas" and of the importance of exchanging these ideas through a mode of counseling, or advice giving (*mashaurii*). Few Wamaskani viewed the smoking of marijuana as a religious experience, or of divinely receiving *mawazo*. There were, however, undeniable tendencies to ritualize cannabis use by associating it with Rastafari beliefs (see next note).
  19. The idea that cannabis produces a calming influence is hardly new. Fabian provides the following observations, made by German explorer Hermann von Wissman in 1881 when traveling through central Tanzania: "I am convinced that hemp has a domesticating effect on the negro, that the narcotic weed mitigates their restless savagery. . . . It makes the negro more approachable and more useful for culture and civilization" (Fabian 2000:171). If nothing else, Wissman's observations provide evidence of ritual use of cannabis in Tanzania as early as 1881. Some of the young Wamaskani would talk about older men (*wazee*) in their respective home regions smoking cannabis when working in the fields or at the end of a long day of labor. None spoke of the ritual use of cannabis in rural areas, though they did tend to ritualize their own use of it and to place high value on Rastafari beliefs that regard cannabis as holy. In an interview with the author (2000), Dr. Gad Paul Kilonzo, a psychiatrist at Muhimbili Hospital, suggested that cannabis is sometimes used by rural laborers to relieve the boredom that agricultural work sometimes entails. Mbatia recognizes ritualistic use of cannabis in some rural areas of Tanzania, but stresses its consumption was regulated "traditionally," though it is unclear what he means by this (1996:25).
  20. Several early readers of this text pointed this out, and I believe it is worth further comparison, even though the data I have gathered does not support it.
  21. Dr. Sylvia Kahaya, personal communication with the author (2000). Dr. Kahaya, a psychiatrist at Muhimbili Hospital in Dar es Salaam, reports unusually high numbers of patients being admitted to the psychiatric ward with "cannabis-induced psychosis" and over one-third of all patients being admitted with high THC (the active ingredient in cannabis) in their bloodstream. She also reports that parents commonly commit children they suspect of cannabis use to the psychiatric ward for treatment. She suggests that it was possible that some forms of Tanzanian cannabis had exceptionally high levels of THC, making it more potent than cannabis in other parts of the world. Clinical tests to verify this are currently under way.
  22. A similar argument is made by Savishinsky (1994) regarding the ways Senegalese Baye Faal have incorporated and transformed Atlantic Rastafari cultural practices that already resonated with their own beliefs and practices as followers of the teachings of SheikIbra Faal (1858–1930), who quite independently of Rastafari influences dreaded his hair and smoked cannabis for religious purposes. See Roberts and Roberts (2003) for further discussion of the popularity of Bob Marley among Mourides in Senegal today.

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