In the Shadow of the Sheraton: imagining localities in global spaces in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
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Citation for published version (APA):
Narudi nyumbani-o
Narudi nyumbani
Maisha ya mjini yamenishinda
Maisha ya Dar es Salaam sio mchezo
Nyumbani ni Nyumbani, kubaya au kuzuri

I am returning home
I am returning home
City life has beaten me
Dar es Salaam is not a joke
Home is home, bad or good

–Remmy Ongala, Narudi Nyumbani
Home Sweet Home

Writing about the longing for home experienced by many Africans living outside of their home countries, Philippe Wamba (1999) evocatively recalls how he would listen to the music of Remmy Ongala to heighten his memories of Tanzania and Kiswahili when feeling lost and lonely in Cambridge, Massachusetts. What is interesting and perhaps somewhat paradoxical at first glance about Wamba’s reference is that neither he nor Ongala are native sons of Tanzania, the country both eventually chose to call nyumbani, home. In theory, one might expect both Ongala and Wamba to be more inclined to call the Democratic Republic of Congo home, given that Ongala and Wamba’s father, Wamba dia Wamba, are among that country’s most well known citizens. Outspoken critics of Congo, whether musicians like Ongala, or opposition political leaders like Wamba, have been fleeing what is today the DRC for decades, thus influencing music, art and political philosophies throughout the globe. Many ended up in Europe or the United States, but those who were less inclined to leave the African continent often found themselves welcome in Tanzania. In many cases, their choices to remain in Africa even when ample opportunity presented itself to relocate to the West were politically motivated. Nyerere welcomed revolutionaries from throughout the continent, giving them time, space and resources to develop their anti-colonialist rhetoric and political connections, and sometimes even to train their troops. As such, those sons and daughters of Africa who discovered a home for themselves and their families in Dar es Salaam were part of a long tradition of pan-Africanist views extending back to the early days of Tanzanian independence when the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) was an international center of such thought. The American and European scholars I have spoken to who were then affiliated with UDSM fondly recall those golden days up on “the hill” when so many great minds were brought together to optimistically imagine the future of the continent. Surely a history of the institution and its contributions to Africanist thought is long overdue.

I have occasionally wondered if one of the reasons why it was difficult for me to find many Tanzanians who expressed a preference for living outside of their home country for any length of time was due to the country’s tradition of celebrating Africanist intellectualism, and to an African pride that was always alive beneath the surface in public and private discourses. Tanzania played a key role in helping many African nations achieve independence, and Tanzanians endured many personal and economic hardships particularly as a result of Nyerere’s decisions to back independence movements throughout Africa. It was also the only country to intervene in the affairs of Idi Amin, sending troops to topple his totalitarian regime with almost no international economic or political support. The country has served and continues to serve as a place of refuge for hundreds of thousands fleeing wars, persecution, and hunger throughout eastern, central and southern Africa, while the international tribunal in the northern city of Arusha currently struggles to get
to the bottom of the Rwandan genocides as part of a larger effort to reestablish and maintain peace in the region. There are many throughout the continent who owe much to both the Tanzanian nation and the people of Tanzania, who so often suffered, voluntarily and involuntarily, permitting their leaders to occupy a moral high ground internationally and to stand for principles that they were not always as willing to embrace at home. These international stances, taken by the state, continue to be a credit to the people of Tanzania, those who were born there and those who have come to make it their home over the years. In short, Tanzanians are proud of their country.

Majuu

It would be impossible for me to make any broad claims about the nature of Tanzanian nationalism, but much of the evidence I have gathered indicates that despite the critical views that were expressed toward the state by many, there are very few who would prefer to call another country their home. I write this chapter with this in mind, in part against discourses that suggest that most Africans would rather emigrate to the West than continue living in their own countries. I also want to shed light on some of the confusion that seems to exist among many Westerners as to why it is that so many modern-day immigrants choose to maintain strong ties to their homelands, sending remittances whenever possible, and in many cases eventually returning home to marry and to raise their families. Such choices, it seems, may serve as one of the most eloquent critiques of Western civilization available.

Any researcher from the West working in Africa can readily recount stories about the endless stream of petitions one is presented with by individuals trying to get a visa to visit and work abroad. Whether or not it is true, I like to imagine that American passports are among the most coveted documents on the continent. As an ambivalent owner of one, I was troubled by the number of requests I received from young people in Tanzania who were seemingly looking for any opportunity to get out. I wondered what would make them want to go to a country with such a troubled history in regards to race relations, immigration, and labor regulations, a history of which most were well aware. The answer was rather simple. To paraphrase Bill Clinton, it was the economy, stupid. Those who approached me did not see America as a land of freedom, equality and democracy, but rather as a land of economic opportunity. None of them spoke of moving permanently to the United States, but rather of relocating there temporarily in an attempt to gather enough capital to fund the development of a more meaningful life upon their return to Tanzania. In many ways, temporary emigration out of Tanzania was imagined in ways similar to rural-urban migration within the country, as a mode of looking for a life, kutafuta maisha.

Dreams and imaginings of emigration were not limited to the United States. Europe, Asia, particularly Pakistan and India, and South Africa figured prominently in such discourses as well. All such foreign lands of economic oppor-
Imagining Globalities in Local Spaces

tunity are collectively referred to as majuu, a noun formed by placing the lex­eme for “up on top” into the ji/ma noun class, again a class for unusually large and out of proportion things. Alternatively, people may use the word ulaya to refer to Europe and the West as a whole in more concrete terms, but when referring to a geographic imaginaire, a place of hopes, dreams and possibilities, people are more likely to use the term majuu. One might purchase a plane, boat or train ticket to travel to Italy, India or South Africa but, in many ways, the specificity of the destination is irrelevant when it comes to imagining what such a trip might provide in terms of economic opportunities. The way one enters into the individual economies of these destinations is entirely dependent on specificities of course, but such details should not get in the way of material longing before one even sets out on one’s journey.

It is these imaginings of majuu that I am most interested in exploring in this chapter, imaginings that are interwoven with local imaginaires of the global. I will return to some of the arguments made in Chapter Three in regards to globalization as perceived by many of those involved in this study in an effort to come full circle from the global to the local and back again. Previously I have discussed some of the ways that globalization touches down in people’s everyday lives. I now turn to a discussion of the way the global is discursive­ly imagined in the context of everyday discussions about majuu, or “the world up there.” Such discussions occurred regularly at Maskani and beyond. Once I noticed the popularity of this topic I began to introduce it myself into interviews and conversations among all the discussion groups we had established. Information gathered in those discussions contributed to the arguments made in several of the earlier chapters, especially regarding globalization and the proliferation and popularity of global imagery, media and music. Observations about the ways the global was manifested in everyday life, then, made up one of two categories of stories about majuu. The other category consisted of stories about local people’s experiences traveling the world. Though few of those I interviewed had actually traveled outside of Tanzania themselves, nearly all of them had close friends or family who had. As a result, many of the stories told to me about majuu were actually stories about other people’s travels —second- and third-hand stories that had woven themselves into daily discourses at maskani throughout the city. These stories were almost always intertwined with discussions about possibilities for earning money abroad. While people did imagine majuu as a place preferable to Tanzania in terms of economics, however, they also offered critiques that illustrated that emigration was most often imagined as a temporary endeavor, undertaken mainly to improve one’s life at home.

Most stories told about majuu centered on America, Europe, South Africa or Asia. In this chapter, I focus on stories that were told about the heroin trade. Most of the heroin that makes it way to Tanzania originates in Afghanistan, travels through Pakistan and Indian into Tanzania before ideally being transported to Europe or the United States, sometimes by way of South Africa. One of the reasons I have decided to focus my attention on these stories in
this final chapter is because they so clearly demonstrate local understanding of global trade networks. This is true even if, as I illustrate below, people are not always necessarily aware of the political and economic consequences that influence those networks. Additionally, I have chosen to focus on the heroin trade and the associated imaginaires of the Indian Ocean world and beyond because most of the young men and women I worked with listed increasing heroin use as one of the three primary problems facing youth today in Tanzania. Many also saw the heroin trade as one of the best opportunities available for quickly earning large sums of money in Tanzania today.

**Heroin in Tanzania and Beyond**

To date, minimal research has been conducted on the subjects of either local heroin use in Tanzania or the international trade in heroin that connects Tanzania to larger regional and global geographies. Most research that has been conducted in Tanzania has relied on data collected from people in police custody for heroin use or trafficking, none of which has been ethnographic. Since 1989, with the creation of the National Drug Abuse Control Programme, the Tanzanian state has shown an increasing interest in curbing growing drug use within its borders, as well as limiting the degree to which the country is used as a transit point for heroin (Mbatia and Kilonzo 1996). In 1995, these efforts were redoubled with the implementation of the Tanzanian Drugs Act and eventually the formation of an inter-ministerial Anti-drug Commission with support from the United Nations Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and several international NGOs. The Anti-drug Commission was established for the expressed purpose of combating drug use and trafficking in Tanzania (Mbatia and Sangiwa 1996). These initiatives were put forth following and in response to public outcries from wealthy and influential families in Tanzania whose own children have been falling victim to heroin addiction since the late 1980s.

In several ways then, our research seemed timely both in regard to the views of those who were the primary focus of our study and in regards to the desires of the state. Although we made several attempts to work with the Anti-drug Commission and were asked to report our findings to them (which we happily did), we found that differing methodological and ethical views connected to data collection made long-term collaboration impossible at the time. I fear the data we were able to present were considered to be too qualitative for those looking for more statistically oriented information. During the time of my research there was a great deal of frustration among Tanzanian officials involved in the battle against drug use and trafficking. They were finding themselves continually confronted with mountains of anecdotal data and very few verifiable facts or numbers. Though this frustration was clearly connected to the need to present such hard findings to international funding organizations that require statistical evidence before they will agree to fund national projects, there also seemed to be an unwillingness
among those we spoke with to accept as fact information collected from young heroin users, people whom they clearly considered to be unreliable. Despite such resistance, I trust that our data will eventually lend to a greater understanding of statistics once they are collected.

Although nearly all of those I worked with were able to tell me something about the heroin trade, a group of young men in the Kijitonyama section of the city provided the most important insights. This group, the fifth and final group of people with whom I worked, was comprised of four men in their early twenties, all self-identified heroin users. Although they are known at the Sheraton Maskani, their connections to it were tenuous at best. I came to know them through Mbelwa who had gone to high school with several of them. Unlike myself, Mbelwa immediately demonstrated an interest in talking to these young men, hearing their stories and, if possible, providing insight into their lives. He persuaded me to enter into a working relationship with these young men after we were approached by one of them and his mother, who expressed fear and concern for her son’s life. Although we made it clear that we were not affiliated with any organization, nor would we be able to provide any assistance to those who agreed to work with us in regards to overcoming their addictions to heroin, a few young men, including the one who had first approached us, agreed to talk to us in hopes that our work would help others to understand them better.2

To my knowledge, no one at Maskani was using heroin during the time of the initial research for this project. It costs approximately 5 USD/day to support a heroin addiction and few Wamaskani would have been able to muster enough financial resources to become addicted to heroin, let alone support that addiction. Despite this, my intuition told me that heroin would eventually find its way to Maskani. When I returned to Dar es Salaam in 2002 I found that my intuition had unfortunately been right. Though most at Maskani were still not using heroin, several were, and there was much discussion about the fact that heroin was directly contributing to the end of Maskani as an oasis of peace. I was told that those who were using heroin were increasingly resorting to thievery to support their habits and that this, in turn, was bringing unwanted police attention to Maskani. At the time, one of the car washers was on the run from the police following his participation in an armed robbery incident, which his fellow car washers alleged was a direct result of his growing addiction. At least one other car washer was also using, while another young man who was trying to gain access to work washing cars at Maskani was turned away because it was rumored he was using heroin.

Abu, one of the main contributors to our group discussions at Uwanja wa Fisi was a recovering addict and, as a result, several of our discussions there did center on heroin use, abuse, and trafficking. This was in part because Mbelwa and I sometimes guided the discussions in that direction but it was also the case because heroin figured prominently into everyday life in Uwanja wa Fisi, and because it had personally touched the lives of all those involved in the discussion group. When we re-visited Uwanja wa Fisi in 2002 Abu was
still heroin free, though he and Spencer informed us that there was a lot more heroin around than there had been in 2000. They told us that dealers, by selling in smaller quantities, had found a way to effectively target poorer populations. While in the past it had been necessary to have a couple of thousand shillings to buy heroin, by 2002 one only needed 500 Tsh. (less than 1 USD).

Though I knew from early on that I wanted to learn more about heroin use in Tanzania, I struggled for some time before finding a suitable group with which I could work. We conducted preliminary interviews with several sex workers from the Kinondoni section of the city who were also heroin users in hopes of working with them, but decided not to continue because of the difficulties the work presented. I had grown to accept, if not expect, a certain degree of unreliability and tardiness among some of those with whom I worked, assuming this was concomitant with living a transient street life; but most of them, when they did show up, came ready to engage in serious discussions. What I found particularly difficult to accept among many of the heroin users with was that they would almost always show up for interviews too drugged to communicate. Even though I knew this had little to do with their personal views toward me, I still found it difficult to remember that they were not trying to take advantage of me, nor trying to disrespect me personally. These factors were sometimes an issue at Kijitonyama as well, but since they had first approached me and since they were mostly old friends with Mbelwa, they were usually more reliable than other heroin users with whom we had tried to work.

I made it clear to the young men at Kijitonyama at the outset that I was not interested in further pathologizing their addictions and that I would prefer our discussions to focus on other elements of their lives. This does not mean that we never discussed heroin addiction, drug trafficking, and the cultures surrounding them, only that we agreed not to make it the sole focus of our conversations. The irony of this approach, which seemed at first confusing to them, was that during our second-to-last formal meeting when I did suggest that perhaps we focus more directly on their heroin use in an effort to generate a list of recommendations for the UN-sponsored Tanzania drug council, which had shown a great deal of interest in our work, they passively, but persistently resisted my efforts.

Disenchantment and Failed Expectations

The reliability of the young men from Kijitonyama may have also been connected to the fact that we visited them at their homes and that their living arrangements were fairly stable. Three of the four lived at home with their parents, while the fourth lived together with his wife and small child in the same neighborhood. Most of the other heroin users we had approached lived much more transient lifestyles, which was most likely more a result of their class background than their use of heroin. We had initially tried to find
a group of heroin users who had more in common with those from Maskani but found it impossible to locate a group we would be able to reliably follow.

This was never a problem with the young men from Kijitonyama because they were living in the same neighborhood where they had been born and raised. Their parents were all highly educated and the majority were civil servants. As such, they were members of what I termed the “respectable” middle class in Chapter Two. Like their parents, they all had completed some secondary schooling. Several of their parents had been educated abroad, which may have been one of the reasons this group of men was so markedly outward looking. Perhaps more than any of the other groups of people with which we had worked, those from Kijitonyama tended to express the belief that they were privileged in some ways, if not economically then at least in regards to social capital. They had been brought up to believe that they would inherit the wealth of the country. This belief was often handed down to them by parents who believed in the socialist state, if not entirely, then at least to the extent that they believed that those who did well in school could rely on being employed in state-controlled institutions or industries. Most of them had gotten their jobs in this way. By the time their children were entering secondary school, however, the state had begun to embrace policies of economic and political liberalization and it was no longer handing out jobs (see Chapter Two). If anything their own jobs were being threatened. The young men I spoke with in Kijitonyama told me that they felt they had been betrayed, both by the state and by their parents.

Ferguson, writing about Zambia and the connections between expectations of modernity and expectations of belonging to a new global society, suggests that those expectations, especially expectations of the latter, were largely inhabited by “educated black Zambians” who “took unprecedented positions of power and responsibility” in the wake of independence (1999:234-236). Despite the promises of the newly independent state, however, it would not be long before economic decline led the educated privileged classes to realize their expectations of becoming equals in global society. Ferguson suggests the term “abjection” to describe the complex feelings of rejection expressed by Copperbelt mineworkers who had expected more from modernity (1999:236). No longer could they dream of becoming first-class global citizens. The feelings of abjection Ferguson describes are quite similar to the feelings expressed by the young men from Kijitonyama, and, not surprisingly, by several of their parents as well. I would like to suggest that the rise in both heroin use and heroin trafficking is tied to these feelings of abjection. Those who entered into the trade suggested that it was one of the only avenues available to them for achieving their dreams, their expectations of modernity, while many of those who used suggested that they did so to escape the feelings of abjection associated with the failure of their own and their family’s expectations. Those from Kijitonyama were among the latter group. They experienced abjection not as a result of “being excluded” from wealth and success, either in Tanzania or globally, but as a result of “being
expelled, cast out and down from that status by the formation of a new (or newly impermeable) boundary” (Ferguson 1999:237-8; emphasis in original).

Ferguson's observations are made all the more poignant in contemporary Tanzania in the context of globalization. As he argues, “beyond simply illustrating the down side of global capitalism, what has happened in Zambia reveals something more fundamental about the mechanisms of membership, exclusion, and abjection upon which the contemporary system of spatialized global inequality depends” (1999:236). As promises of a new world order are being made and as more and more consumer goods become readily available in Tanzania, it becomes more difficult for people to participate in the new order or to gain access to all the consumer goods which demonstrate one's membership.

Most of those with whom I worked in Dar es Salaam had very different backgrounds than those from Kijitonyama. The majority came from poor rural areas and spoke of their emigration to the city as a significant step toward securing a future for themselves. Though many of them had also been educated, they had never been led to believe they would inherit jobs from the state. If anything their education translated into greater responsibility. They were expected to go out and make money to support themselves, as well as their families. From the beginning of their lives they knew they were being excluded from participating as first-class citizens, both nationally and globally. As a result, few expressed the same feelings of betrayal and abjection as those from Kijitonyama did. In many ways they were actively engaged in pursuing their expectations.

Because of the differences between those from Kijitonyama and those from Maskani and Uwanja wa Fisi, much of what we learned from the former group served to counter and check the data gathered at the other two sites. Often the information was complementary, two sides to the same coin, so to speak. Most often we found that those from Kijitonyama were more politicized, at least discursively. They were often able to articulate things more clearly than the others. For example, it was through conversations with them that we began to realize the relationship people drew between presidential regimes and Tanzanian political and economic history (see Chapter Two). We were able to transfer this knowledge to other groups and to ask questions that proved more effective in encouraging critical discussions of the state. It was also from them that we first realized the importance of imaginings of majuu. Their families had more direct connections to the world beyond Tanzania, and their own proximity to the drug trade made them more aware of its global structure. Discussions about majuu that took place at Maskani and Uwanja was Fisi were surprisingly similar to those that took place in Kijitonyama, though in most cases those who recounted majuu stories from the first two locations were further removed from them.

When asked why so many young people expressed the desire to travel abroad, nearly everyone responded with a similar version of the same story. Many young people believed that the only way they would ever be able to cre-
ate a future for themselves in Dar es Salaam was by raising capital in America, Europe, South Africa or Asia. Although such endeavors are often illegal to some degree, they are not always so. It was often believed that work in the West bring would enough money for a nice house, a car, and nice clothing. These things, considered standard in the West, are much sought after in Dar es Salaam and even a regular job in the West would bring opportunities for such economic advancement. Additionally, there seemed to be a belief that work in the West, even work situated in the informal economy, was more dependable and secure. People would speak of wanting to go to the West to work, to work hard, and to work long hours, if need be at several jobs, for the primary purpose of saving money and returning home where they would expect to create a more meaningful life and future for themselves. It has not always been so difficult for people to get ahead in Dar es Salaam.

In addition to those from Kijitonyama, many others who were born in Dar es Salaam explained to me that things had been easier for their parents’ generation, many of whom had left their rural villages to move to Dar es Salaam as members of the post-colonial elite. They were educated in the West and were granted civil service jobs in the socialist government following their return. While they were not immediately presented with opportunities to gain great wealth, they had comfortable housing, enough to eat, and could send their children to school. And, they were respected. As socialism gradually came to an end and Mwinyi’s *ruksa* years (1985–1995) began, only the most committed socialists passed up the opportunity to take advantage of the relaxation of economic regulations (see Chapter Two). During this period, tax money that should have been going to the government and to national development often ended up in the pockets of government officials and civil servants, including some of the parents of the young men from Kijitonyama. Much of this corruption was brought to an end following the election of Mkapa in 1995, and many young people from middle class backgrounds told me they believed they had not afforded the same economic opportunities, both legal and illegal, as their parents’ generation had.

**From the Global to the Local: The heroin trade in brief**

This understanding of Tanzanian post-colonial political and economic history is especially important when trying to make sense of the growing heroin trade within Tanzania today, a trade that really only began to expand in the mid-1990s as it became difficult for young people to find start-up capital in the city. Those I spoke with suggested that Tanzanian involvement in the international heroin trade started about fifteen years prior to that time, in the early 1980s. At first Tanzania was just a transit point between Asia and the West. Before turning to a discussion on the particularities of the local drug trade in Tanzania, however, I think it is important to point out some important connections to the global trade.

Heroin is an opium product, which is itself a product of the poppy, a flower
that grows best in temperate subtropical climates like those found in southwestern and southeastern Asia. These two areas are known respectively as the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent, the former being located in the border regions where Myanmar, Thailand and Lao come together, and the latter centered in Afghanistan and the bordering nations of Pakistan and Iran. The Golden Crescent, which is actually the second largest center of opium production in the world, is the source for most heroin that finds its way into Tanzania (Mbwambo 1996:85). According to those I spoke with on the street and those officially involved in combating the drug trade in Tanzania, heroin first became available in Tanzania in the early 1980s, a factor which most people connected to the loosening of border controls that came about when Tanzania began its shift away from socialism.

Very few people, however, were able to draw a connection between political and economic crises in the Golden Crescent area and the proliferation of heroin routes throughout eastern Africa. Prior to the early 1980s, nearly all opium that was trafficked out of the Golden Crescent into Europe and North America was transported across Iran and Turkey, through overland routes where it was processed into heroin, then through the Balkans into Western Europe. In 1980, however, Iran established tighter laws. When the revolutionary Islamic regime took power, it made heroin production a crime punishable by death. Iranian drug lords shifted their center of production to the Afghan Helmand Valley and the transport routes through Iran rapidly diminished (Chandran n.d.). Around the same time, northern Pakistan became a staging ground for Afghan and Pakistani Mujahideen who were organizing to confront the Soviet troops that invaded Afghanistan in 1979. With intelligence and financial support from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, those opposed to the Soviet regime managed to procure massive amounts of arms, which they then funneled into Afghanistan to help support and sustain resistance fighters battling it out with the Soviets. In response to the fighting, millions of Afghan refugees fled to northern Pakistan where they set up communities that are still in existence today. Amidst the pervasive atmosphere of illegality that characterized the border region in the early 1980s, when neither the Afghan nor the Pakistani state had control over the areas, those connected to the anti-Soviet alliance in Afghanistan and Pakistan began a large-scale expansion of the existing drug trade between the two countries. Poppy plantations and production facilities long established in Afghanistan were moved to northern Pakistan. Money earned from opium and heroin exports was used to buy arms and fund the resistance. Without the option of trafficking to the West, however, the profits to be made in the heroin trade are minimal. With the Soviets blocking trade routes to the north, it was only a matter of time before efforts were made to find routes to move the heroin from Pakistan, through India and Africa, to Europe and beyond (Chandran n.d.).

Though Deutsch (2002) suggests that some Zanzibari traders and couriers travel all the way to Peshawar in the northern part of Pakistan to make their
purchases, the evidence I gathered suggested that most Dar es Salaam traders go only as far as Mumbai or Karachi where large quantities of heroin can be purchased by individual entrepreneurs looking to enter into the drug trade. Reportedly, there are small Kiswahili speaking communities in both cities where couriers from Tanzania and Kenya can go when trying to find their way in the world of heroin trafficking. This suggests that there are both Tanzanians and Kenyans living in these cities who work as middlemen between heroin suppliers and small scale traders. Direct links between Tanzanian entrepreneurs and large-scale suppliers seem to be tenuous.5

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the amount of heroin being transported from Afghanistan, through Pakistan, and into Europe and North America steadily increased so that by the end of the 1990s nearly three-fourths of the world’s heroin was distributed along this route (UNODCCP 2002). When the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 1996 heroin production and trade was outlawed as it had been in Iran sixteen years earlier. Initially, the Taliban regime did little to quell the trade between Afghanistan and Pakistan, but by the year 2000 they had reportedly brought trade to a near standstill. In 2000, 82,000 hectares of opium was cultivated in Afghanistan. By 2001 the amount had been reduced to 8,000 hectares, and most of that was in the areas controlled by the Northern Alliance. Despite the reduction in opium production, however, the heroin trade continued to thrive in Tanzania, as was made evident by my field observations made during the same period. According to reports on the streets at the time, if anything it was easier than ever to get heroin. The United Nations’ Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) suggests that this was because significant stocks of opiates had been accumulated during previous years of bumper harvest (2002:2). It was not until spring 2001 that reductions in heroin stocks became observable in Europe (ibid.).6

While it is true that political events that have occurred in Tanzania from the early 1980s and into the present have contributed to making the country a more suitable place for heroin transit, it must also be recognized that events occurring in Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States and the Soviet Union during the same time period have most likely had an even greater influence. Restrictions on production in Iran in the early 1980s led drug barons from Iran to shift their center of production to Afghanistan, while the outbreak of the Afghan war around the same time led to a blocking of northern trade routes, forcing traffickers to look southward toward Pakistan and India. The United States and Pakistan looked the other way while Afghan resistance soldiers used drug money to pay for arms and fund their war against the Soviet-backed forces. Tanzania just happened to be in the right place at the right time.

When those producing heroin in Pakistan began searching for southern routes to transport their profitable cargo to the West, they did not have to look very far. Trade routes, both legal and illegal, had existed throughout the Indian Ocean world for centuries, and ships moving between India and east-
ern Africa were plentiful. The coastlines are long and difficult to monitor and there is no end to the number of sailors throughout the region who are willing to take a chance on striking it rich by shipping illegal cargo. Heroin is usually transported in small packages, which makes it easy to hide amongst legitimate cargo. Tanzania’s location on the Indian Ocean and its centuries-long shipping culture has made it a center of both legal and illegal trade in the region. Heroin might just be considered as one of the latest and most profitable commodities to be traded in the already well established trade networks. Those I spoke with in Tanzania reported that the earliest traders in heroin to make it big in Dar es Salaam were sailors working on the big ships that move between Asia, Africa and Europe who would agree to transport the drug illegally in exchange for part of the profits. I have also gathered several reports from small fishermen working off the coasts of Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, and Tanga, that suggest that large quantities of heroin are still being moved by sea, loaded into fishing boats off-shore and brought surreptitiously to land at night. These same fishing boats are moving everything from cloves to children’s clothing from Zanzibar to mainland Tanzania and Kenya in an effort to avoid paying taxes. For many of their operators the nature of cargo itself is irrelevant as long as it brings a profit.

Making It Big

Once word got out that big money was to be made through the illegal trade in heroin, many well-connected Dar es Salaam families began to get involved. When these businessmen and diplomats entered the scene, however, they began making greater use of air travel to move the goods. The same smuggling networks that allowed people to move all sorts of other undeclared goods through customs at the airport in Dar es Salaam were utilized to allow for the easy importation of heroin, a practice that still continues today. There is no shortage of stories in Dar es Salaam about wealthy and politically powerful families using their positions and influence in Tanzania to gain entrance into and further develop drug-trading networks. Throughout the 1980s many reportedly took full advantage of their diplomatic status to facilitate the transportation of large quantities of heroin into Europe, trusting that their political positions would prevent customs officials from inspecting their baggage when entering and leaving foreign countries. For a long time they managed to get away with this, but according to unofficial reports, sometime in the early 1990s KLM airline officials decided to begin inspecting the baggage of diplomatic passengers following a tip-off. It did not take them long to discover large quantities of heroin in the luggage of a well-placed Tanzanian official. He was never convicted for the crime in Tanzania because he managed to bribe those who would have been responsible for prosecuting him. Diplomatic privileges in regards to luggage inspection, however, are no longer easily granted to travelling Tanzanian diplomats headed for European destinations. Getting heroin shipments through customs at the Dar es Salaam
airport and into Tanzania, on the other hand, has never been much of a problem, since many of those officials who are not directly involved in the trade themselves gladly accept payment to look the other way.

For many years, the international drug trade was controlled by people who already had quite a bit of money and power in Tanzania. They did not attempt to sell heroin in Tanzania mainly because it was assumed it would not be profitable. Many people suggested that in the early years of the drug trade heroin was considered a “white man’s drug” not to be marketed to already poor Tanzanians who had enough problems without heroin. In the early 1990s, as it became more difficult for the big traffickers to move the drugs themselves they began financing couriers to do it for them. These couriers, young men and women mostly from lower-middle class or poor backgrounds, would be paid to fly to India or Pakistan to purchase up to a kilo of heroin, which they would then ingest in small sealed packages before returning to Dar es Salaam with their precious cargo hidden in their bellies. Upon their return and the delivery of the heroin to their financiers, they would usually be paid a relatively large sum of money (about 100 USD on average) and given a small amount of heroin to sell locally for their own profit. At this time, the local Dar es Salaam market was still small and there was very little heroin available on the streets of the city, yet there were reports of addiction as early as 1988 (Mbwambo 1996:86). By the mid-1990s, however, just a few years later, young lower-middle class people began financing their own trips to India, primarily Mumbai, where they would work as local drug dealers in an effort to save up enough capital to make their own purchases and to buy a ticket to Europe where they could sell the heroin themselves. Such a trip could reportedly earn them up to 100,000 USD with the right business connections in Italy or England, an amount that would easily set them up for life in Dar es Salaam.

Although I question such stories of extravagant wealth, especially given the degree to which they were marked by exaggeration, there should be no question of the fact that since the mid-1990s many young men and women have been undertaking journeys to India or Pakistan with the expressed purpose of making it rich by transporting small quantities of heroin to the West. When recounting stories about those who are known to have made this journey successfully, people tend to point to the physical manifestations of their successes as witnessed in Tanzania: the nice houses, the nice cars, the new businesses, the support they gave to football clubs, or the investments they made in local and national transportation. The naming and outfitting of football teams and the naming and painting of buses have given the newly rich ideal opportunities to capitalize on and shape popular forms of cultural expression in Dar es Salaam, while also building their reputations. Sometimes successful businessmen christen their buses with phrases like “hard work pays,” in ironic reference to the relative ease with which they obtained their start-up capital. Others simply use their names, as in the example of LindaTrans, a bus company started by a young woman named
Linda who reportedly swallowed 1.2 kilograms of heroin as a courier, which she then transported for sale to Australia. For this heroic feat her financier rewarded her with 30,000 USD that in turn allowed her to begin her own business. Although most stories connecting conspicuous wealth to heroin trafficking are about poor young men making it rich, it is generally believed that women make better couriers because they can physically ingest greater quantities of heroin, are suspected less by international authorities, and are more easily subject to physical violence and other forms of control by those financing them. It is also generally believed, however, that women are less inclined to waste the money they make from their trafficking endeavors on conspicuous consuming. Rather, they invest their profits in legitimate businesses in Tanzania and usually limit themselves to making only one or two trips.

According to most, it was these start-up couriers, that is young lower-middle class people financing their own trips to India and Pakistan, who first began large-scale selling of heroin in Tanzania in the mid-1990s when they realized there was a local market for it. This realization came about gradually, and, from what I understand, rather by chance when couriers without money or resources to travel to Europe or North America returned to Tanzania from India or Pakistan with several hundred grams of heroin and no way to move it. Slowly they began to infiltrate and expand the small market available in Tanzania. By the mid- to late-1990s the market was fully developed and local demand was growing. This trend can also be traced through police statistics that indicate a slow increase in arrests of people in connection with illicit drugs (heroin, methaqualone and cocaine) from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s (from five to 26 arrests) then a doubling of arrests in 1992 (to 54) and an increase of more than 200% the following year (to 183) (Mbatia 1996:115). It was at this time that the Tanzanian government began to rethink its drug policy and decided to establish the new Drug Act in 1995.

Since the mid-1990s, the local trade in heroin in Tanzania has developed parallel to the international trade, which is still largely controlled by elite Dar es Salaam families. The two parallel trades are certainly connected, but it is important to emphasize how changing political and economic conditions that have occurred in Tanzania over the last ten years have helped to create an environment where the local trade has flourished. With shrinking opportunities for young people from poor and lower-middle class backgrounds to make it rich in the city, hundreds if not thousands of young men and women have decided to take their chances on making it big. The risks they take are enormous, but so are the rewards. Many young people, especially those without family connections and higher education that might provide less dangerous ways of making it to majuu, often feel that the only chance they have of escaping the uncertainty that marks their lives of struggle in the informal economy and of making a meaningful life for themselves in Tanzania is to head to India or Pakistan.
Imagining Globalities in Local Spaces

Capturing Incomprehensibility Through Language

“Ukitaka kujua uhondo ya ngoma, ingia ucheze”
-if you want to know the sweetness (essence) of ngoma,
you must join the dancing.

Ngoma, a word much discussed by students of Bantu languages, bears a heavy semantic load in Tanzania. It refers to the drum and drumming, to performance and the place of performance, and it can be a dance, any ritual involving drums, or a healing ceremony. However, I have also heard it used to mean a gun, AIDS and/or heroin, all of which are considered to be tough, transformative elements of contemporary society in Dar es Salaam. The above proverb was quoted to me when I asked the young men at Kijitonyama to talk to me about the first time they used heroin, about what attracted them to it, and what it felt like. The phrase was invoked as a way of explaining why they chose to try heroin and not as encouragement for me to try it. While I was constantly being offered cannabis and locally brewed alcohol, I was never offered heroin. In fact, nearly all users of the drug that I met went out of their way to warn me and anyone within hearing range not to try it. It seemed that everyone I met who was using wished that they had never started, that they had never known the “sweetness of ngoma.”

I begin this section with a discussion of ngoma because I want to stress the importance of language in relation to heroin use in Tanzania. The symbolic richness of the concept of ngoma makes it a natural choice for metaphorical extension. In the previous chapter, I tried to make a case illustrating the ways that language changes in relation to other social and economic changes. I suggested a connection between growing disparities in wealth in Tanzania and the expansion of the ji/ma noun class, a class that can, when needed, serve to accommodate disproportionately large things. Not surprisingly many of the new terms created to describe heroin trafficking and abuse can also be placed in the ji/ma noun class.

Pakistan, or any other place where large quantities heroin are produced and purchased, is referred to as shamba (mashamba, pl.), a noun normally translated as farm or field. Shamba, when used to refer to Pakistan, means “the big farm,” or the place people travel to in order to get valuable produce to sell in the city. Those who trade in heroin are known as zungu (mzungu, pl.), while those who use heroin are teja (mateja, pl.) or junki (majunki, pl.). The last example comes from the English word junkie, but the first two are transformations of the Kiswahili nouns for white foreigner, mzungu, and customer, mteja, both of which are usually situated in the m/wa noun class for living things. According to this system of ordering then, those who traffic and use heroin are no longer considered human, at least not linguistically. When nouns for living things are moved into other noun classes they are normally still treated as though they are in the original class for grammatical purposes, but these newly created nouns are more likely to be treated as represent-
ing things rather than humans. Thus traders in heroin are known as "zungu la unga"—unga, usually meaning a whitish milled flour, is also a slang word for heroin. In this phrase, however, it is the "la" connecting the two nouns that is important to consider, for it indicates that zungu is indeed located in the ji/ma noun class. If zungu still had the capacity to act as a noun indicating a living thing, "la" would instead be "wa." Other words like pusha (from pusher) are borrowed from English as well but, like junki, are placed in the ji/ma noun class rather than the N class for borrowed nouns.

There are probably as many words for heroin as there are groups of people using it, unga and ngoma being just two of them. The same is true for those who sell the drug. Pusha or pushaman predominate, but my personal favorite is sedali, which is rumored to be the name of a drug lord in Peshawar, Pakistan who is known to have a preference for dealing with African traders. Not all words connected to the drug trade are in the ji/ma noun class. Heroin in transit is innocuously referred to as mzigo, or package, thus people will say about someone who is in Pakistan procuring heroin for exporting: amenda shamba kuchukua mzigo, he's gone to the farm to get a package. That new language has been created to accommodate the need to speak about the growing drug trade both within and through Tanzania by using the ji/ma noun class, in my mind, indicates a certain degree of incomprehensibility that surrounds heroin trade and use in Dar es Salaam.

Heroin confounds people's efforts to make sense of the world. Poor people get rich overnight, young men with only a few years of schooling are driving BMWs, otherwise intelligent young people are willing to swallow a deadly drug packaged by people they barely know in hopes of achieving great wealth, while others, most often coming from relatively wealthy families—having had the privilege of secondary and even higher education—become addicts who are seemingly willing to undertake the most humiliating of tasks with no regard for their family's reputation in order to earn enough for the next fix. Normal language does not suffice to explain such behavior. New words are needed. Preferably "big" words that have the power to connote that things have gotten out of hand, out of proportion, and no longer make sense in relation to the way things should be.

Middle Class Addicts and Lower Class Pushers

Although there are few reliable statistics available regarding heroin use in Dar es Salaam, those I spoke with on the streets, as well as those professionals and academics involved in drug studies, agreed that most heroin users come from middle and upper-middle class family backgrounds. This was certainly the case of those I worked with in Kijitonyama. It is generally assumed that this is so because those who come from less privileged backgrounds, like the young people I worked with at Maskani and in Uwanja wa Fisi, are unable to fund a heroin addiction. Although it is true that most of them could not legally afford to support heroin addiction, more and more young people from lower-
class backgrounds have begun to turn to stealing to pay for their habits.

On average, heroin users report spending between 2000 and 5000 shillings a day on their addiction (roughly three to seven USD), but most agree that they will spend whatever they can get their hands on. Men make up the majority of users, but only marginally. A 1992 study conducted by Kilonzo reported that 57% of hard drug users were males, mostly between the ages of 20-35 years. All of the women I spoke with who were regular users of heroin were also actively engaged in some level of transactional sex. When I inquired how they began using, all reported they were first introduced to heroin by a boyfriend, and most also reported coming from relatively well-off families. It seems that once they became addicted, their boyfriends, no longer wishing to support their habits, would leave them to fend for themselves. With few other options, most then turned to sex work to earn enough to buy their daily dosage of heroin.

Most people I interviewed reported a preference for smoking heroin, either in cigarettes with tobacco or cannabis mixed in, or for “chasing the dragon” (inhaling fumes produced by the heating of heroin on the foil used to package it). There seems, however, to be an increasing preference for injecting, which has obvious implications for the potential spread of HIV. The few people I was able to interview about this subject demonstrated remarkable knowledge about the relationship between needle sharing and HIV infection and all reported taking necessary precautions to protect themselves from this mode of transmission.

Heroin users in Dar es Salaam who come from “respectable” families are the most visible and bear the brunt of public scrutiny and debate on the subject of heroin usage. They are visible not because they are on the streets where respectable people can observe them, but because they are in the same houses as respectable people. It is primarily as a result of them becoming addicted that the state has been motivated to initiate efforts to reduce heroin use in Tanzania. Their habits and the behavior that results from it are difficult for people to understand. According to the status quo, drug users are supposed to come from the dregs of society, not from the respectable classes. In describing the lifestyle of users, the young men from Kijitonyama chose to focus their discussion on how heroin had taken away their self-respect. These young men, all of whom had been educated and all of whom had previously been engaged in respectable, albeit low-paying, jobs, were now willing to undertake the most menial tasks to earn enough money to get by from day to day. They cleaned sewers, carried heavy loads, and picked up trash in full view of their families and their neighbors, many of whom had lower class backgrounds. They stopped caring about their personal appearance, forgot to bathe for days on end, wore dirty and torn clothing, and let their hair go wild. In lucid moments they were painfully aware of how they were embarrassing themselves, but even more so of how they were bringing shame on their families. As difficult as it was for people to comprehend how young men from poor families in Uswahilini could manage to build...
a big house and buy a nice car seemingly overnight, it was even more difficult for them to comprehend how young men from good families living in Uzunguni could be hired for a pittance to clean their sewers.

Just as there were local economic motivations that encouraged young lower-class men to enter into and facilitate the expansion of a local drug trade in Tanzania, there were also economic factors that encouraged young men from well off families who watched their futures dissolve before their eyes to turn to heroin to ease their pain. The economic desperation and feelings of hopelessness encountered by so many lower class men have clearly encouraged some of them to become small-time entrepreneurs in the heroin trade and others from formerly well-off families to partake in the sweet pleasures of denial, escape and euphoria associated with consumption of the drug.

The Entwinement of Heroin and Violence

There are additional factors to be considered related to the ways that heroin use and trafficking has been socially constructed in Tanzania. Evidence of this can be detected in the stories told by those who have become addicted. To return to the earlier proverb about ngoma, in deciding to use heroin they were also entering into a performance, or ngoma. The performance in question is one marked by violence and a certain degree of machismo. The subculture of heroin use is disturbingly violent on three different levels. The first, and most obvious one, is the bodily level, that is the violence that heroin use inflicts on the user, both mentally and physically.

The second level is more closely connected to the drug trade itself. As most of those I worked with were at least marginally involved in the trade, if only as customers, they were greatly effected by the violence of this world. Second only to the stories of great wealth that were offered by those describing the world of heroin, were the stories of great violence. Most chilling were the reports of beatings, gang rape and public humiliations which misguided couriers who had failed to live to deliver contracted goods were routinely subjected to by angry financiers and their henchmen. Almost as haunting were the stories of friends and acquaintances who had lost their lives on the gallows in Egypt or in front of the firing squad in Iran following convictions for smuggling, not to mention the hundreds of Tanzanians wasting away in jails throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and North America who had set out with a dream of making it big back home. Many of those I spoke with seemed to swell with pride when recounting such tales, which I believe they thought were somehow reflective of their own manhood, their own toughness.

With much less pride, they talked about the public image of the addict as a thug at best, and a thief at worst. This is the third level at which heroin use is marked by violence. Most of those who agreed to speak with me about their use of heroin told me they wished they had never started and that they wished that they could stop. Even though they were aware of the physical dangers of using the drug, they were more interested in stopping and escap-
ing the social stigma of the user. This motivation was compounded by the fact that heroin users have increasingly become scapegoats in their communities, embodying everything wrong with the modern world, with young people these days, and with injustice in the system.

Although many people who are addicted to heroin do resort to stealing to support their habits, not all users are thieves. Most try to support themselves by other means; thus their willingness to engage in humiliating labor. Despite this, the general belief among most of the Tanzanians I interviewed (including those at Maskani) was that nearly all heroin users were thieves. As in most places where poverty reigns supreme, being labeled a thief in Tanzania is tantamount to being called a witch. Stealing from people who have nothing is considered to be the most anti-social of anti-social behaviors. Such accusations, whether true or not, are also often equivalent to a death sentence. In Kijitonyama, in the year prior to my research there, three different young men from the neighborhood were killed by a group of vigilante Maasai night guards who worked for homeowners in the area. Those who were killed also happened to be addicted to heroin. All had previously been accused of stealing, all had been picked up by the police, and all had been let go when their parents used their influence to get the pending cases dropped. It is generally argued that when a mob attacks a thief and proceeds to beat, burn and kill him, it is because they have been caught red-handed, but this was not the case with the young men in Kijitonyama. All that these young men had done wrong was to walk through their own neighborhood late at night. Because they were known heroin users they were immediately subject to suspicion. The battle cry of “thief” was called out, a crowd of club wielding Maasai warriors appeared, and the young men were killed.

**Blame Versus the Struggle for Respectability**

What is most troubling about these incidents and countless similar ones that have occurred throughout Dar es Salaam over the last several years is that most people applaud them. Dealers and users are most often mistakenly put into the same category in the minds of many and both are considered despicable. Killing them is not considered murder; it is justice, justice that the state has repeatedly failed to mete out. Failure to rid society of them, people think, would inevitably lead to the downfall of Tanzanian, even African culture.

Top-down discourses surrounding heroin addiction in Tanzania are almost uniformly marked by the underlying notion that the growing problem is a direct result of Western influences, that young urban people in their efforts to embrace the modern world have left behind traditional norms and values that would have otherwise discouraged them from using drugs. Parents, political leaders, and medical professionals all point to foreign media influences, specifically American gangsta rap images, to explain the desire to embrace conspicuous forms of consumption, a desire that is thought to
encourage young people to engage in drug trade and use. If it were not for such images, young people would be satisfied with less. Urban Africa is corrupt, or so the argument goes, and what is needed is a return to "tradition." Young people have forgotten their heritage. Rather then rehashing the well-worn and, in my opinion, convincing views so well argued by Terrence Ranger (1983) and those who have followed in his footsteps on the "invention of tradition," I instead present critiques of these traditionalist discourses as offered by some of the youth who have apparently lost their way.

Most of those with whom I worked found arguments that blamed youth for the breakdown in contemporary Dar es Salaam society both hypocritical and insulting, most of all because they were being put forth by the very people who had most benefited from early post-colonial efforts to embrace modernity. What so many young people in Dar es Salaam today realize is that calling something "traditional" in Tanzania imbues it with a certain power, making it difficult to argue against it without looking disrespectful. As such, traditionalizing discourses have the ability to serve as tools that are particularly useful for silencing and controlling both youth and women who attempt to challenge the status quo. Some young people additionally suggested that such discourses allowed people, particularly members of their parents’ generation, to overlook the roles they themselves played in creating economic and political circumstances that helped to produce an environment where drug trafficking and use flourishes. Of course, heroin use is not part of so-called traditional African values, but neither is it part of Western traditional values, and blaming the current rise in heroin use on increasing Western influences hardly promises to reduce the problem.

Heroin use in Tanzania can indeed be tied to global influences but it can also be tied to local conditions. In any case, global influences are certainly not going to bring an end to heroin use among young people in Dar es Salaam. Those who enter into the drug trade and those who decide to start using heroin do so because they are disillusioned with the society in which they live. As members of the lower classes they see little hope of moving up, and as members of the middle classes they are confronted with the humiliation of sliding backwards. The drug trade is perceived as one of the only ways left in which young people can really “make it big,” a way in which they can create a meaningful life for themselves. There is no doubt that drug money is being used to buy respectable lives in Tanzania, to buy nice houses, nice cars, good food, and nice clothes — maisha. Even though the money comes from outside, it is being used to fashion lives that, if nothing else, are created in the image of “traditional” middle class Tanzanian lives.

The young people who shared their stories and their dreams with me did imagine majuu, but only in so far as it was a place where they could pursue their commitment to home, nyumbani. Whether travelling to South Africa, Pakistan, India, Europe, the United States, or simply from the rural areas to Dar es Salaam (which I would suspect could easily be imagined as majuu for many villagers), young people are choosing to do so in an effort to hold onto
what they imagine is their tradition, is Tanzanian, is African. Since the mid-1980s and the introduction of economic and political reform the rules for fashioning a meaningful life in Tanzania have changed dramatically – twice. If the rules have changed, then it only makes sense that the players have changed the way they play the game, even if it has forced them to re-invent traditions and the meaning of home. Youth have not lost their way. Indeed, they are struggling to find it.

notes

1 When referring to the portion of my research relating to drug use, I use “our” and “we” instead of “mine” and “I” to refer to my and Mbelwa’s partnership on this project. Following my departure from Tanzania in 2000, Mbelwa began working as a consultant for an international NGO engaged in assisting the Tanzanian government to tackle drug usage among youth. Much of what I know about drug trafficking and usage in Tanzania I owe to both him and the young men from Kijitonyama who were exceptionally forthcoming about this legally sensitive subject. Mbelwa and I hope to eventually co-author an article on this topic that is reflective of both of our views, but this chapter is primarily shaped by my thinking.

2 We treated this group of young men like the other groups with which we worked, meeting with them once a week for a two hour interview and paying them 3000 Tsh. a piece for their time. Though I am a strong proponent of paying people for their time, especially if it is to be a lengthy interview and if you are taking them away from their work, there were occasions when I thought that payment to this group was questionable. Our weekly visits quickly turned into an opportunity for a heroin binge. Each week when I arrived in Kijitonyama they would convince a local dealer to give them some heroin in advance, my presence being enough to guarantee their credit with him. During the last interview, which Mbelwa conducted in my absence, they demanded payment up front so that they could smoke heroin before the interview. Without me there, the dealer would not supply them goods on credit. I am pretty sure these young men would have talked to me without the financial incentive but I am also pretty sure they would have been less reliable. At the time of this writing I am still ambivalent about the decision to pay them, and the decision to do so with so little reflection about how different their life circumstances were from those of the others with whom we worked.

3 Traffic still continues across Iran today and, according to a report by the UN Economic and Social Council, is still one of the primary routes used to transport heroin from Afghanistan to Western Europe. As important, however, is the southern route through Pakistan (UNESCO 2001:17). Tanzania is one of numerous possible transit countries used between Pakistan and Europe.

4 For extensive discussion on links between heroin trade, the civil war in Afghanistan, and CIA involvement, see Chandran (n.d.), Emdad-UI Haq (2003), McCoy (2003 [1991]), and Scott (2003).
The informal and fragmented nature of international heroin markets make it difficult to stop the flow of heroin. Zaitch (2001) suggests a similar description of cocaine trade originating in Colombia, questioning portrayals of all-powerful drug cartels and mafias.

To a certain extent, however, the point seems moot. The power vacuum created in Kabul following the US invasion of Afghanistan enabled farmers to replant their poppy fields. "By the time the Afghan Interim Administration took control of the government and issued a strong ban on poppy cultivation, processing, trafficking and consumption (17 January 2002), most of the poppy fields had already started to sprout" (UNODCCP 2002:2). Afghani opium production in 2002 exceeded production levels in 2000 by 100 tons. Totals in 2000 were 3300 tons, 185 tons in 2001, and 3400 tons in 2002.

Many stories associated with the drug trade took the form of rumor. By using this word I do not mean to imply that they were untrue, only that it was rarely possible to prove them in any way. White in attempting to elucidate what rumor may mean in specific African contexts suggests that the "the more widespread and widely told a rumor was, the more it had to conform to the laws of plausibility" (2000:56; with reference to Tamotsu Shibutani's, Improvised News: A sociological study of rumor). What makes a rumor powerful, she argues, is that people believe it (2000:57). The rumors I report in this chapter were, in fact, widely believed by those with whom I worked. Whenever possible I would ask several people about a particular rumor in order to ascertain how widespread it was. It is only those rumors that seemed to carry particular truth-value that I present here. Issues of secrecy were closely intertwined with these rumor stories as well. Pels suggests a direct relationship between publicity and secrecy, stating "there is no secret socially speaking - that is not always a public secret, that is, attuned to a certain audience of public 'in the know'" (2002:5; see also Taussig 1993). Since many of those who shared their secret drug stories with me were definitely "in the know," I feel confident arguing there is likely much truth in their rumors.

About midway through my research I realized that small children living in the neighborhoods surrounding Uwanja wa Fisi would shout "zungu, zungu, zungu la unga" when I walked through their neighborhood. Normally, one only hears choruses of "mzungu, mzungu, mzungu," but with the growing popularity of this phrase and its linguistic relation to the word mzungu, children began unknowingly incorporating into their daily lexicon. I have no reason to believe that they would have been calling me a drug courier, especially as they usually interspersed the two forms of address.

See note 11, Chapter Eight.

Tesha (2000) suggests that street girls living near the waterfront are also using heroin, and also relying on sex work to support their habits. Unlike the women I interviewed, however, most of her subjects originally came from poor rural areas. Heroin is readily available at the waterfront and it is difficult to determine whether the girls who live there began using before they moved
there or moved there after they started using. According to Tesha, those she interviewed reported using heroin to numb both their minds and bodies to the humilities of street life. Those with whom I spoke suggested a spiraling relationship between sex work and heroin use, where each contributed to an increase in the other.

In the late 1980s, Augustine Mrema sponsored an initiative to encourage the development of a nationwide neighborhood watch program (sungusungu) as a constructive effort in the fight against crime. It is my understanding that the night guards who work in Kijitonyama were operating under this mandate when they executed the heroin users/thieves in question.