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Jennifer Cole. *Sex and Salvation: Imagining the Future in Madagascar.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010. xvi + 229 pp. $80.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-226-11330-2; $27.50 (paper), ISBN 978-0-226-11331-9.

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In Pursuit of Prosperity: Prostitution and Pentecostalism in a Malagasy Port Town

In her fascinating new book, *Sex and Salvation*, Jennifer Cole uses the framing of "an imagined future" rather than the language of crisis and rupture to describe the "generational changes" taking place in Madagascar today. Her study is situated in Tamatave, a port town where young people experience uncertainties about their futures as a result of increasing poverty, economic instability, and a rapid influx of Western practices. Cole outlines two distinct yet related paths young women select as a means to achieve stability in the midst of Madagascar's move to a more liberalized consumerist economy. One path involves entrance into a precarious sexual economy; the other entails participation in the new emergent Pentecostal churches. Her decision to write "not only on what young people do in the present, but [also] on how they imagine–and seek to attain–a desired future" gives intellectual agency to her subjects by addressing their actions in so far as they relate to their imaginative visions–visions that precede and inform their sexual and religious choices (p. 5). While outside observers, as well Tamatavians themselves, might view young women's pursuit of wealthy European men and engagement with Pentecostal practices as contrasting choices, Cole's research draws interesting connections between the two by demonstrating how both offer potential solutions to the economic problems youth face.

Cole borrows Charles Taylor's term "disembedding" to address what she sees as multidirectional historical changes taking place as a result of young peoples' move from rural environments to the urban setting of Tamatave. She describes disembedding as a process whereby people divorce themselves from old attachments in order to creatively forge new ones, a severance that is never permanent or unidirectional. Rather, Cole argues that Malagasy youth have varied and multiple relationships with the past that inform the futures they aspire to. In this way, Cole documents changing cultural practices, but also highlights continuities, recognizing that there are historical precedents for both the sexual and religious activities of today's youth. For example, she points out that "women have long used their sexual and reproductive capacities to create desirable economic and kin relationships in this part of the world," and shows that mutually beneficial marriage alliances between locals and foreigners dates back to at least the eighteenth century (pp. 11, 26).

The greatest strength of *Sex and Salvation* is its emphasis on continuity and historical precedence. It challenges both emic and etic notions that sexual tourism and prostitution, in their current manifestations, are wholly modern phenomena. Cole writes: "I am arguing that recent economic reforms, and the influx of Western practices and images they enable, do not impose particular ways of being on young urban Malagasy, nor do Malagasy youth deliberately co-opt what they see of the West to create a new world. Rather, I see a series of small, incremental, and highly uneven changes that become transformative over time" (p. 12). In this way, Cole chronicles change without using the European categories of precolonial, colonial, and modern, but rather frames the incremental changes that occur as a result of ongoing creative processes of exchange.

In chapters 1 and 2, Cole theorizes social and historical change and describes the social and economic contexts of the town of Tamatave, her site of research. She also delves into the material and spiritual motivations behind young peoples' decision making, explaining why people choose alternate futures, rather than simply attributing their choices to outside social and economic factors. In chapters 3 and 4, she discusses poverty, economic instability, and globalization, and describes how young people navigate these turbulent changes where some are losers and some winners. Another important strength of

the book is the inclusion of informants' narratives, which form the core of chapters 5 and 6. Informants' narratives give the reader a full and textured picture of the struggles young people face in addition to the options they choose from to imagine and implement a viable future. Cole addresses success and failure simultaneously through the personal narratives of the informants allowing the reader to relate to their struggles.

One wishes that the section on Pentecostalism were a bit more developed. Chapter 7, "Other Futures: Women, Suffering, and Pentecostalism," seems curtailed, especially when compared to the more extensive discussion in "Finding Vazaha? Navigating the Sexual Economy." Pentecostalism is a multifaceted phenomenon that articulates with young Malagasy women's aspirations in complex ways. The reader would have benefited from a more complete picture of the scope of religious options that Malagasy women have, and a better understanding of why and how Pentecostalism both digresses from and maintains continuities with older more established religions. Clearly both prostitution and Pentecostalism offer ways to achieve prosperity under tumultuous economic circumstances. And Cole indicates that the topics of sex and religion frequently came up together during her fieldwork, especially in relation to older generations lamenting the youths' loose morals and unappreciative stance toward traditional culture.

Cole's insightful and timely book makes an important contribution to two significant realities in today's African urban landscape: sexual tourism and Pentecostalism. It will be of interest to students and scholars in anthropology, religious studies, gender studies, and generational studies. Cole demonstrates throughout the book, and most succinctly in the concluding chapter 8, not only how generations choose new paths, but also how they let go, sometimes partially, of older ones. Previous studies on acculturation "show that people move across cultural boundaries, but they do not reveal much about how people let go of discrete skills, orientations, and dispositions and adopt new ones" (p. 184). Cole's description of how and why young women choose the Pentecostal path goes beyond and complicates the theory that people choose the faith solely because of its prosperity theology, or relationships with foreigners solely because of economic incentives. She discusses the emotional appeal of both, highlights the therapeutics of the faith, and underscores social competition as important factors in women's pursuit of a better future.

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