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Sex And Salvation: Imagining The Future In Madagascar



Synopsis

Sex and Salvation chronicles the coming of age of a generation of women in Tamatave in the years that followed Madagascar's economic liberalization. Eager to forge a viable future amid poverty and rising consumerism, many young women have entered the sexual economy in hope of finding a European husband. Just as many Westerners believe that young people break with the past as they enter adulthood, Malagasy citizens fear that these women have severed the connection to their history and culture. Jennifer Cole's elegant analysis shows how this notion of generational change is both wrong and consequential. It obscures the ways young people draw on long-standing ideas of gender and sexuality, it ignores how urbanites relate to their rural counterparts, and it neglects the relationship between these husband-seeking women and their elders who join Pentecostal churches. And yet, as talk about the women circulates through the city's neighborhoods, bars, Internet cafes, and churches, it teaches others new ways of being. Cole's sophisticated depiction of how a generation's coming of age contributes to social change eschews a narrow focus on crisis. Instead, she reveals how fantasies of rupture and conceptions of the changing life course shape the everyday ways that people create the future.

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