

## THE JAOMBILO OF TAMATAVE (MADAGASCAR), 1992–2004: REFLECTIONS ON YOUTH AND GLOBALIZATION

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Both anthropologists and historians have devoted a great deal of attention to the concept of adolescence, but they have done so in markedly different ways. Drawing in large measure on assumptions about adolescence taken from developmental psychology, anthropologists have implicitly assumed that adolescence is a universally identifiable stage of life. The single most famous study of adolescence in a “primitive” society by Margaret Mead self-consciously set out to demonstrate that the psychological content of this age period was a cultural construction.<sup>1</sup> However she never questioned its universal existence, a pattern that is replicated in research even today.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, historians of the life cycle have emphasized the historical contingency of adolescence as a life stage, pointing to the ways that economic circumstances and social institutions such as the family and education have played a decisive role in the emergence of this category and its variable presence depending upon such factors as gender and social class.<sup>3</sup>

It is an interesting historical fact that when G. Stanley Hall made the term “adolescence” a household word, he was referring to an age period spanning the years from 14–25.<sup>4</sup> Yet not only Mead but also virtually all psychological and anthropological scholarship on adolescence has focused on the years from 12–18. Within psychology, it was not until 1970, when Kenneth Kenniston proclaimed the emergence of youth as a “new” stage of life, that psychologists’ attention began to focus on the latter age range identified by Hall.<sup>5</sup> Yet within other disciplines the period of “youth,” used to refer to this older age range, had never been ignored. For example, the social historian Paula Fass documented the emergence of a distinctive American youth culture associated with college educated elites during the 1920’s, and sociologists of the Birmingham school have examined the role of youth subcultures arising to deal with class contradictions in post World War II Britain.<sup>6</sup> A distinctive feature of both of these lines of scholarship is their emphasis on the commercial basis of youth culture, particularly their focus on the emergence of youth culture in the context of rising affluence and the development of consumer society. Ironically, it was this historically constituted conceptualization of youth that was enshrined and dehistoricized in Erik Erikson’s famous formulation of youth as a time of moratorium.<sup>7</sup>

As the liberalization of markets and increased flow of consumer goods and information have reorganized both relations between different parts of the globe and within local communities, youth—and young people more generally—have emerged as a major social force.<sup>8</sup> Whether one is reading newspaper accounts of

child soldiers in West Africa, youth killing for a pair of Nike shoes, young women from the former Soviet Republics involved in the sex trade, or the emergence of a new commercially based youth culture in post-socialist Vietnam, the social and economic processes associated with globalization have heightened the visibility of youth in the public domain. In response, scholars have turned their attention to the study of youth and globalization.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, however, they have drawn on assumptions taken from the older writing on adolescence and youth that first emerged in the context of specific historical, social and economic conditions that gave rise to modern consumer society in the West. The result has been a troubling tendency to import prior ideas about adolescence and youth into the new historical context. Instead, we need to understand the ways in which new kinds of people—including new kinds of youth—emerge from the dislocation and reconfiguration caused by the confrontation between local, established categories of personhood and the new contexts produced by social and economic globalization.<sup>10</sup>

Three problems in the literature on youth and globalization are particularly relevant to my focus here. First is the assumption that the formation of categories of youth and youth culture is unidirectional—moving along the very channels that are usually privileged in accounts of globalization—from the affluent West to the rest of the world.<sup>11</sup> Second, little attention has been paid to the way in which preexisting ideas in societies experiencing globalization mediate the formation of youth and youth culture as local categories and practices. Third, much of this literature assumes that youth, and the extension of what is considered youthful behavior into ever-higher chronological age groups, results from affluence.<sup>12</sup> Fourth, academic writing on youth and globalization continues to smuggle in developmental models that assume that youth remains a stage on the way to adulthood, rather than representing, for some people, an end point of development in itself.

In this paper, I examine these assumptions through an analysis of the *jaombilo* of Tamatave, a port city on Madagascar's east coast. Appearing over the last ten years, but drawing in complex ways on older sets of symbols and practices, the emergence of the *jaombilo* is a particular response to local experiences of globalized consumerism. I show first how the emergence of the *jaombilo* illustrates that the formation of youth culture does not rely solely on the importation of Western commodities and models of behavior. Rather, its use of global images and ideas is selectively mediated by much older Malagasy ideas about labor, consumption and gender that they associate with youth. Next, I show how the expansion of the category of youth upwards to older ages is not universally associated with affluence, but may occur in conjunction with the increasing adoption, particularly by young males, of patterns of consumption and production associated with poverty. Finally, I argue that the case of the *jaombilo* challenges the developmental model of youth as a transitional phase leading to adulthood that emerged in the context of Western modernity. Instead, my analysis of the *jaombilo* suggests that for some people in the third world, "youth" is a stage they cannot escape. Much as savages were figured as "children" in 19th century evolutionary discourse, contemporary Malagasy young men have become perpetual youth, and perpetually poor.

### Normative Models of Gendered Youth and Adulthood: Labor, Marriage and Consumption

To understand the emergence of the jaombilo as a new category of youth it is crucial to understand how men and women's roles in Madagascar have traditionally been envisioned and how they are supposed to change over the life course as people move from childhood to adulthood. A wide range of different writings suggest that Malagasy tend to imagine personhood according to an Austronesian model in which identity and personhood are only finalized at death and one's placement in a tomb.<sup>13</sup> This general trajectory of life moves from the fluidity and possibility associated with birth to the stillness and finality of death and ancestorhood. Referred to most frequently by the term *tanora*, a word that can be used to refer to anything "that has not yet arrived at a state of completeness," the intermediate period when one is neither child nor adult is imagined as embodying the epitome of growth, beauty, and vitality.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, in many contexts youth are associated with ambivalent qualities of short-term pleasure seeking, movement, and instability. In the mining communities of Northwest Madagascar, for example, male migrant youth are criticized by community elders for spending their earnings from sapphire mining on short-term consumption, rather than investing it in longer term networks.<sup>15</sup> And in many contexts, movement, as opposed to stillness, is associated with lack of power: it is inevitably the less powerful person in an interaction, whether a child and a parent, or a subject and his sovereign, who moves towards the other.<sup>16</sup>

These varied and ambivalent qualities of youth are captured in ritual. On the one hand, people of a "living mother and father" symbolically embody the importance of youth as a life force that enables generational continuity; certain kinds of plants and animals are used ritually to signify vitality (including cattle—an association that is particularly relevant to the jaombilo, as I will show). At the same time, in many rituals this untamed vitality is appropriated violently only to be reintegrated in a new, socialized form via ancestral blessing. This symbolic transformation is most visible in cattle sacrifice, when people kill cattle in order to convert the life force associated with cattle into ancestral blessing, which once properly tamed allows descendents to flourish.<sup>17</sup>

Just as many ritual sequences imply that youthful vitality must be conquered in order to ensure socially sanctioned forms of reproduction, so too in daily life people assume that the youthful phase of present-oriented pleasure seeking will not—and should not—last. People have a keen sense of proper adult behavior and refer to an adult man or woman who is behaving like a child as "caught by a *retour d'age*" [caught by the inappropriate resurgence of behavior better suited to a prior age] just as they say that an old person who starts to lose control of bladder and bowel functions is "pretending to be a child," using a word that in Malagasy also has the sense of going home or returning to an original condition, as well as pretending (*mody zaza*).

In contrast to the association of youth with irresponsible pleasure seeking and immediate gratification, the most striking aspect of respectable, adult behavior—for both men and women—is how closely it is tied to the ideally long-term project of marriage. As one young man who was both unemployed and unmar-

ried remarked feelingly, "To me, boys who are not married are always considered trouble-makers by others and they aren't respected by either their families or the wider society." A woman I knew echoed his comments when she observed that now that she was married, and her sister wasn't, her mother respected her more than her sister. For both men and women then, marriage confers adulthood.

But marriage alone does not adult men and women make. Rather, normative visions of marriage and adulthood, at least as these have crystallized in the context of modern urban Tamatave, are complexly linked to ideas about labor, consumption, and movement in and out of houses.<sup>18</sup> These processes are differently structured for men and women. As boys, men are expected to do relatively little to contribute to household chores although they are expected as they move towards adulthood to be able to find work outside the house. The ability to find work and earn money enables a man to achieve virilocal marriage, in which the woman moves into his house. In the rural context, the fact of having a house, and eventually, his own tomb, constitutes a man as an independent political unit, setting the context in which he might amass his own followers and hence political power. In the context of urban Tamatave, this broader set of political associations has atrophied. Nevertheless, controlling one's own house, and supporting one's dependents, remains a crucial marker of masculine adulthood for older people. The links between marriage, adult masculine behavior, and the ability to earn a living were made particularly clear in life history interviews I collected from forty men and women in their fifties and sixties. They emphasized again and again that "women are furniture, they are weak" (*vehivavy fanaka malemy*), an expression that urbanites used to indicate that men are supposed to earn money outside the home, and then turn it over to their wife to manage and control. Though younger men reported much more difficulty attaining this type of relationship, it nevertheless remained an ideal for them. As one young man put it, "Men are forced to work, girls take care of the house."

By contrast, young girls are expected to contribute substantial amounts of labor to their natal households—cooking, cleaning, washing, and caring for younger siblings. Female adulthood is marked not by a shift in the kind of labor, but rather its transfer to a man through marriage and the movement to a man's house. In this respect, the movement from youth to adulthood is more continuous for women than it is for men in terms of the types of labor that they perform.<sup>19</sup> Not coincidentally, the most desirable trait in a wife, cited primarily by older people, is someone who "does not leave the door white" (*tsy fotsy varavarana*). This expression means that she doesn't close the door (hence leaving it white, as opposed to showing the dark interior of the house when the outer palm door is open, signaling that someone is at home) to go wandering about, presumably causing trouble by finding lovers. Rather, she keeps close to home, a location that metonymically signals that her interests are congruous with the interests of her husband and family.<sup>20</sup>

These patterns of labor and movement are in turn related to an ideal pattern of consumption, in which, as I mentioned above, men are supposed to turn over their earnings to their wives. Such an arrangement is necessary, people claim, because men are incapable of managing money for household needs because they are weak willed and self-indulgent, so are likely to spend their money on

mistresses and drink, unless they do so. This disciplinary side of marriage, in addition to the desire to have children, is a major reason that many young men seek to get married: by their own admission, they will waste their money on “dreaming” (*mirevy*—from the French *revertir*—a term used to denote the pursuit of physical pleasure, whether alcohol, women, or cigarettes) unless their wives prevent them from doing so. One young man I spoke with had been married and had three children. But his wife had left him and returned home to her family. “I want to get married again”, he said, “because then I’ll have something to show for myself rather than just eating my money. Your wife is like your parent (*raiamandreny*).” Several older men, who had successful and enduring marriages, told me with pride how they had never once bought their own shirts, as evidence of how completely they trusted their spouses to manage their money to the benefit of the household. Reciprocally, women are supposed to use the money that their husbands give them not in pursuit of vainglorious fashion but rather in ways that contribute to the material and social improvement of the family—betterment of the house, buying food for cooking, caring for children, and generally investing wealth in long-term household reproduction.

While the portrait I have drawn here, which probably crystallized over the course of the latter colonial period and First Republic (1960–1972), is an ideal that many people still hold, there have always been exceptions. One exception to this ideal which is highly culturally elaborated and appears in many parts of Madagascar under different names is the *jaoloka*, as he is referred to in the northern and western parts of the island, and those who “follow their spouses” (*manarabady*), as they are referred to in the high plateau.<sup>21</sup> In many ways the *jaoloka* is a direct precursor of the *jaombilo*, as I will show. Though the names differ, in each case the term refers to men who live *uxorilocally* (e.g. in their wife’s household) instead of living *virilocally* according to the norm. The Norwegian missionary, Lars Vig, described how in the late 19th century, wealthy Merina noblewomen could choose their spouses and completely dominate them; sometimes poor young men were supported by wealthier women, a phenomenon that he noted took place among other social classes as well.<sup>22</sup> He also observed that the practice was looked down upon. Similarly, among the *Vezo* of the west coast, marriages in which a “man follows the woman” are considered shameful and bad because they place the man in a position of inferiority.<sup>23</sup> More generally, by occupying the subordinate position within a household, these young men come to be symbolically associated not only with women, but with slaves, an idiom of hierarchy and subordination that is very much alive throughout Madagascar.<sup>24</sup>

Though many different situations might lead a man to “follow his spouse,” I want to emphasize that frequently men were forced into these circumstances because they lacked access to productive resources. While official *Vezo* discourse constructs *jaoloka* as “lazy,” a good many were migrants to the area who couldn’t rely on the labor of kin to help them build houses; and in central Imerina men followed their spouses when the women had access to more land. The links between access to productive resources and the creation of *jaoloka* was particularly visible on Madagascar’s northwest coast during the 1970s. As commercial agriculture penetrated local, lineage-based models of agricultural production and more migrants came to work the land, *jaoloka* proliferated. It was only through

marriage that migrant men could access land. Keeping this general sketch in mind, I want to now turn to the more recent economic changes of the 1990s, and their role in the creation of new kinds of youth.

### **Economic Liberalization and the Emergence of Jeunes**

In 1992, after a wave of political protests, the government abandoned the state-socialist policy that had been adopted in 1975 and embraced a policy of free-market capitalism in its place. Whereas the country was comparatively closed to outside influences throughout the 1980s, by the mid-1990s, World Bank and IMF reforms had forced a devaluation of currency and the creation of free trade zones, making it easier for foreign investment. Between 1987 and 2000 the local currency decreased in value from 750 fmg to the dollar to 6300 fmg to the dollar. In 2004, the value of the Malagasy franc dropped again to 9500 fmg to the dollar. At the same time, there was an increase in the availability of foreign commodities in stores. As if this combination of decreased buying power paired with increased availability of foreign goods wasn't frustrating enough for the many urbanites who wanted to attain Western commodities but couldn't afford them, the simultaneous liberalization of the media meant that representations of foreign ways of life proliferated: Prior to liberalization, people had been dependent on radio for information. Now televisions, with their visceral, visually tempting images of foreign wealth, became increasingly widespread. As Madagascar became known as a place of exotic wildlife, tourism increased, further strengthening local people's desire for foreign lifestyles through contact with foreign tourists.

One consequence of these political and economic changes, according to local people, is that they have come increasingly to measure success and power in terms of control over money as well as foreign commodities and practices. Olivier, a young man who attended the university put it this way: "Everyone wants to succeed! That means if a telephone comes out, you need to get it, because you really need them—in other words you should follow all the new technological advances and your status will be higher than it was before. And if you don't follow progress it makes you ashamed."

Nowhere is this association of control over commodities with status and self worth more visible than among urban youth who regularly starve themselves in order to acquire the latest fashions, and who mercilessly mock those who are poor and unable to acquire the consumer goods possessed by others.<sup>25</sup> For men, control over these goods is associated with power and hence with masculinity. As one young man said, "If I go out without shoes, it is as if I'm not a man."<sup>26</sup>

The emphasis on controlling consumer goods as a route to status in these young people's statements is not matched by opportunities for earning money. According to statistics gathered in the mid-1990s, the official rate of unemployment for young people just entering the labor market was 62 percent.<sup>27</sup> However, because the statistics office calculates the rate of unemployment only in terms of the difference between those people who ask for work and the number of posts given, and because so much employment in Tamatave takes place in the context of the informal economy, these statistics grossly underestimate the number of unemployed. When one considers the fact that the majority of the popula-

tion is young—the median age in Tamatave is 21 and the average age 23—one gets a picture of a situation where a few middle-to late-middle aged men control many of the stable, salaried jobs and there is a great mass of unemployed young people.

Consequently, young people find themselves caught in a bind: They desperately want commodities and need commodities in order to be viewed as respectable, desirable people with whom others would want to associate. They also desperately need financial resources in order to be able to create households and families and achieve what has been to date normative adult status. But they find it increasingly difficult to earn the money they need in order to marry and form households of their own. Viewed from the perspective of urban Madagascar, then, it quickly becomes clear that for many people the extension of “youth” upwards in terms of age is linked not to the prolongation of schooling and rising affluence, as it is in the West, but rather the absence of work.

Not only have the new economic conditions prolonged the period of youth, but among some young people the nature of what it means to be young has also changed. This shift is marked by the increasing use by urbanites of the term “jeunes” in place of the older term “tanora.” In contrast to tanora, with its emphasis on productive labor and growth rooted in and, ultimately, contributing to the flourishing of families and ancestors, the concept of jeunes combines older ideas about the playful, pleasure-oriented nature of youth with a new emphasis on sophisticated individual consumption as a means to self-realization.<sup>28</sup> Although a minority of these youth have families who can afford to pay both for their schooling and to provide them with the consumer goods youth desire, the great majority find themselves forced to enter into the informal economy, which is the fastest growing economic sector in urban Madagascar.<sup>29</sup>

### **Gendered forms of participation in the informal economy: transactional sex and biznesy**

The kind of labor that jeunes perform is divided by gender. Drawing on very old ideas about how women can use their sexuality to forge liaisons with powerful men, many young women turn to various types of transactional sex as a way to earn money.<sup>30</sup> The kinds of transactional sex that young women engage in runs the gamut from short-term transactions with no long term expectation of reciprocity, which is what Tamatavians consider prostitution, to more long term kinds of relationships, some of which end in formal marriage. These kinds of transactions are in turn crosscut by the kinds of men with whom young women form relationships. These men range from the most coveted catch—the wealthy European—to wealthy Malagasy, who often work at the port or in export-import businesses, and finally the “simple Malagasy.” While many young women who are not able to find work and who do not have a husband or family to support them seek success via the sexual economy, the equivalent métier for young men is breaking into the containers at the port and selling stolen goods, a practice referred to as “biznesy,” “affaires” or very occasionally, “traffique.” As Maman n’i Noelphine, the fifty year old mother of 8 children, commented: “If your daughter is out past dark you know she’s with a man; if your son is out past dark and shows up with 50,000 fmg, you never trust where he got it.” Making perfectly clear the

link between the desire for commodities and the social status associated with them, and certain kinds of morally dubious action, a younger man observed, "If you are the child of someone who doesn't have money and you get a school grant of only 25,000 fmg a month (roughly four dollars), and you don't have a TV, well, you shouldn't be ashamed. But there are those youth who want to have many things and they don't have enough so they start doing all sorts of bad things. Like stealing, or working as prostitutes." What neither Maman n'i Noelphine, nor this young man, stated was that some young men also become jaombilo. To illuminate more fully how the jaombilo emerges out of the intersection of biznesy and prostitution, I want to look more closely at local ideas about gender, labor and consumption.

### Gendered Forms of Labor and Consumption

Young men in Tamatave have very specific notions of the value of work, what actually counts as work, and how money earned in certain kinds of work is supposed to be spent. As several of the remarks I cited earlier imply, young men constantly noted the fact that men had to work, often citing the proverb "men were cursed to work" (*lehilahy voaozana miasa*). They often commented that men should work "no matter what," that they should "go from house to house to find work," implying a persistence even in the face of degradation. Young men who didn't work, I was told, lost all *hasina*, a word that is used to indicate generative power and efficacy.

It has been argued that Merina peasants of Madagascar's central high-plateau make a sharp distinction between unpaid work on the one hand (*miasa*), which is carried out with kin, and paid work for others (*mikarama*). Wage labor is viewed as morally ambiguous and is negatively evaluated when it conflicts with kinship obligations.<sup>31</sup> In the context of urban Tamatave however, where few people farm, it is assumed that everyone works for wages and there is no moral ambiguity associated with the practice. The relevant distinction is not between work for oneself and work for others (though many young men complain about the indignities involved in working for others and dream of having enough money to start their own business), or work that earns cash or work that doesn't, but rather between morally valued work that is stable, predictable and carried out on a daily basis, and ways of earning money that are more unpredictable such as theft, which are morally denigrated. People refer to proper work as *asa*, which also has the connotation of doing ceremonial work for the ancestors.<sup>32</sup>

For most young men I spoke with, *asa* is seen as a kind of discipline to which one forces oneself to submit because the benefit is that one knows when one's wages will come and how much one will be paid. Knowing how much one will be paid, one can plan, save and budget in order to buy something substantial. Moreover, if a young man really works and earns money by the sweat of his brow and the strength of his muscles he will be less likely to part with it for more ephemeral pleasures. Tatou, a young man who had worked for his uncle, but quit because he was persistently cheated of his wages, and now worked doing "small kinds of business" commented, "If you don't earn money by the sweat of your brow then you just waste it, but if you suffered in order to earn it then you won't let it just be wasted without meaning." In other words, young men

make a close association between certain kinds of labor and proper, adult, forms of consumption, which by local definition means consumption aimed at more long term kinds of relationships. Although more disciplined, regulated forms of labor do not guarantee that a man will use his earnings toward long-term kinds of investments and processes of social reproduction—recall the belief mentioned earlier that men are supposed to hand their earnings over to their wives to make sure that it is used for household ends—they do make it more likely. In this sense, regular work combines with marriage to produce proper men: It is not already formed men who work (or marry), but rather men who submit themselves to the discipline of work and marriage that can become proper male subjects.

Young women's relationship to labor is figured differently. In particular, where young men are faced with a split between regular, predictable, morally valued work and biznesy, which is morally devalued, the most basic form of women's labor—providing sex and bearing children, buying food, cooking, washing dishes, washing and ironing clothes—remains the same across domains. In emphasizing this aspect of women's labor, I do not mean to imply that women do not engage in other kinds of labor, or have access to other forms of social capital, like schooling; some obviously do, and more educated women often work as teachers, secretaries, etc. However, it remains the case that for the vast majority of poor young women, their bodies, and the way they can insert their bodies into particular kinds of social networks, are their most valued productive resource. Even in the cases of women who gain access to money and can engage in trading, which many women do, the money is often given to them either by family members or the men whom they are linked to, and to whom their sexual/caring services in a sense belong. What shifts for women, as I mentioned earlier, is who controls that labor and the fruits of sexuality—a natal family, or a husband, on the one hand, or, in the case of prostitution, a woman herself. Although the linguistic marking of the difference was less pronounced than for men, I repeatedly found that when people referred to housewives, they said their mother “cared for the house” or “did stuff around the house.”<sup>33</sup> By contrast when young women worked for wages as maids they “worked in the house” (*miasa antrano*).

These conceptions of work play an important role in mediating the effects of young women and men's engagement in either prostitution or biznesy. While prostitution is dangerous work, it is nevertheless considered work. Young women are quite clear that their sexuality is a productive resource, and they will often make comments to each other to the effect that if one doesn't “use” their vagina it will grow rusty or rotten, and that women ought to use the opportunities that reside in their bodies. And both young men and women I spoke to also insisted that a woman out selling her charm and good looks is a laborer. I even heard prostitutes occasionally refer to the Neptune hotel, where more “high class” young women go to try and pick up Europeans, as “our factory.” One young woman, who had been taught by older prostitutes how to work in nightclubs was explicitly told by them to “treat it as her job.” In turn, having worked hard and received their money little by little, most women try to save it to invest in long-term projects. While many young women find that their money is quickly drained off into short-term projects (keeping up with fashions or simply eating), I was struck by how many had more long term goals of saving up to start a grocery store, helping their families or building a house—all considered respectable, adult pursuits.

For these women, who worked hard to produce themselves as beautiful, fashionable subjects, and who played on a kind of fetishized notion of the erotic African as they worked to make themselves desirable to Europeans, their sexuality was a source of productive labor. Forging relationships with men—and particularly foreign men—helped produce a flow of money and gifts, which could then be diverted and reconfigured towards other ends.<sup>34</sup>

If women's sex work is seen as productive labor, biznesy is not. On the one hand, the way in which money appears and disappears suddenly in biznesy, coming in unpredictable bunches rather than a steady stream, makes it akin to other kinds of youthful, masculine labor like hunting or fishing, in which one depends on the unpredictable bounty of nature, so that a man who relies on biznesy, no matter what his actual age, is symbolically marked as young.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, biznesy is seen as a kind of parasitical trafficking in which one profits by hurting others either by stealing or cheating in some way. Since young men believe that the money they obtain from biznesy is not produced by proper labor, they also believe that it is not supposed to be saved or turned over to a wife and family in order to support the regeneration of new families. In fact, it can not be used to support families or other kinds of long-term projects because it is considered "hot money" (*vola mafana*) that has to be quickly spent, often in forms of conspicuous consumption;<sup>36</sup> the absence of a wife, whose discipline has the power to domesticate savage spending, makes this outcome all the more likely. It is worth noting that the phenomenon of hot money is so gendered that I was completely unaware of its existence while I was working mainly with women; only when I turned my attention to men did it start to emerge as a crucial aspect of the social landscape.

The idea that some money has to be spent quickly on short-term pleasures reflects a pattern of consumption, and dealing with abundance, which dates at least to the creation of cloves as a cash crop during the colonial period, if not much earlier. Many young men explained that the term hot money originated to the north of Tamatave where cloves and vanilla are farmed and where, or so young men in Tamatave claimed, people who earned cash from the clove harvest felt they just "had to spend the money" as soon as it was earned; it was also a term used to refer to money earned from mining sapphires. But the term acquired a much more general application referring to any money that "came in easily" and "left easily" as well—people often cited the proverb that what comes in by the screen leaves by the sieve as a way to express the notion of easy come, easy go.<sup>37</sup> Still others suggested that money earned through biznesy could only come to naught—if you bought a car intending to use it as a taxi, one man explained, it would surely crash. The notion of hot money thus seems akin to our notion of ill-gotten goods, and one young man suggested that the sadness of the people you'd stolen from followed you, a bit like an unhappy spirit. Some people also blamed hot money on the ill intentions of the people with whom one worked. As Bomo, a man in his early thirties explained, "Maybe there is someone who works for me, or maybe we are splitting money in two, or maybe there is a certain percentage that is meant for me, and when we do the accounts, we should have equal amounts, but the other man is jealous and he thinks that I have more. Then he adds Malagasy medicine (*ody gasy/magic*) to my money in order to harm me, and he gives the money back to me. When I get that

money, I use it for my pleasures, going to nightclubs, and the money gets eaten up with no meaning.” Like many men, Bomo interpreted his irresponsibility as uncontrollable, owing either to the intrinsic nature of men (who didn’t have wives to discipline them) or the malevolent power of magic.

If money gained from biznesy cannot be spent on long-term investments, however, this is not to say that the money is not used to foster certain kinds of relationships. And here is where “dreaming” comes in—a word that, as I noted earlier, is used for any kind of fantasy, whether of the pleasures of consumption, sex, or just having one’s desires indulgently fulfilled. Often these young men spend their money on dreaming, sometimes by paying for prostitutes but more frequently by buying rounds of drinks for their friends. In fact, the great majority of young men with whom I talked said that they spent their money on “making their friends dream” because that way they get honor from their friends. As Florian said, “When you make your friends dream you get honor from your friends. ‘So-and-so really has money!’ they say. But in the morning when I am penniless no one tries to help me.” The young man who was able to buy rounds of drinks and conspicuously spend his money gained honor from his friends, and in fact I was often told that families found it useful to have at least one such young man available because they “knew many people” and could get things done. However, this honor appeared to be of a rather different kind than that earned by the married, employed householder.

### **A New Kind of Youth: The Jaombilo**

It is out of the intersection of prostitution and biznesy—the different modes of labor and consumption that they embody, the different possibilities that they enable—that the jaombilo has emerged. Although working in the sexual economy puts young women at risk for HIV/AIDS, pregnancy, and possible violence, it is nevertheless also true that when they are able to forge liaisons with wealthy men, some young women do become economically successful in comparison to younger men. And when they have money, they are in a position to support jaombilo. Consequently, jaombilo appear to have proliferated over the course of the 1990s, along with female prostitution.

Making the perceived novelty and generational basis of the phenomenon clear, one older woman remarked that, “Jaombilo have just appeared recently; older people have no idea about that!” By contrast among young people and in popular culture, references to this new category of young men are ubiquitous. As one popular song put it, emphasizing both the perceived novelty of the phenomenon and the negative light in which it was primarily viewed, “These days there are very strange customs (*fomba hafahafa*), for it has become the fashion for every young man to marry a prostitute.” Another song described the practice without actually referring to the term in the lyrics, “She [the prostitute] will go out to work at night, and charge high prices, in order to make a living for her young Malagasy man.”

As my work progressed and examples accumulated, however, I found that while most people viewed jaombilo with derision and perceived the category as new, the reality was considerably more complex. Consider the words of Claudin as he describes what a jaombilo is:

A jaombilo is when the European supports the Malagasy girl. And the Malagasy girl then supports the Malagasy man. That is to say, there is a parallel finance system going on (financement parallel). The way I see it, the Malagasy man is doing “love for self interest” [*l’amour par interet*—a line from a now celebrated song] to the Malagasy girl. Because he too has another girlfriend who he really likes somewhere else. For example, there is an old Australian man who is married to my cousin. And I see that my cousin only loves him for his money, for my cousin she has a Malagasy boyfriend hidden away, but the old European he doesn’t know. Often I joke around with the old man, “You know my sister she is just using you for money” and he just laughs and says, “That is true.” People who do jaombilo, they are people who are very handsome (bogosity) and they really follow the fashions. They are people you just support but they don’t work—they don’t want low wages. For example, the song by Mamy Gotso [a popular singer] says, “Has money—full; doesn’t have money? Still full.” You see, they are full whether they work or not. They are like the leaders of the gang in the town, because they can make young people who are beneath them dream (mirevy). To me “to make dream” (mam-pirevy) means they can finance many pleasures. Like, they can pay for their friends to go to discos, or to drink rum or to watch concerts.

According to Claudin and others’ accounts, jaombilo are young men who are pure consumers, who don’t work, and yet are attractive and kept for sexual and domestic pleasure by women who earn their money either through prostitution or sometimes more long-term relationships with European men. Since as I discussed earlier, local ideals of masculinity hold that it is men who are supposed to support women financially, not women who are supposed to support men, the jaombilo appears to embody a kind of paradox: He combines a new kind of hypermasculinity based on good looks and sexual desirability, as opposed to the older emphasis on labor and the ability to support a family, with a distinct form of emasculation (because a man who doesn’t work and is supported by a woman is no man at all). The jaombilo also seems to embody a kind of transgressive pleasure obtained from consuming without actually working, or at least, as I will explore further, not working in the normative sense of the term.

This tension between a particular kind of youthful strength and ephemeral power based on sex appeal combined with good looks, and a sense of being lost from proper socially sanctioned pursuits, is also encoded semantically in the word *jaombilo*. Although no youth I spoke to could actually identify the origin of the word, the term *jao* is often used to refer to a young bull, which throughout Madagascar, as I alluded to earlier, is perceived as the embodiment of untamed, wild vitality.<sup>38</sup> In turn, these attributes are often metaphorically associated with young men who are also envisioned as a vital and untamed life force, so that a common name for young men in the north of Madagascar is *Jao*. One dictionary defines “*jao*” as a bull, strong and capable, and the place where young unmarried men eat together.<sup>39</sup> “*Bilo*,” by contrast, refers to the phenomenon of turning from side to side, as if worried or dazed—it is the term used throughout the south of Madagascar to refer to a form of spirit possession. But it is also worth noting that people can use the term “*bilo manga*”—or a blue *bilo*—for a child throwing a temper tantrum, as I discovered when my young daughter threw several during a prior fieldtrip. The term *jaombilo* thus potentially combines a sense of strength and vitality with behavior unfettered by normal social restraints. While young men and women alike usually uttered the word *jaombilo* derogatorily, and

while older people looked disapprovingly on the practice, the term also implies a kind of bemused sympathy, much in the same way there is a sense of adult tolerance and amusement when they comment that a child who is throwing a temper tantrum is “doing a bilo manga.”

It is of course difficult to measure with any certainty the number of women who engage in transactional sex or the number of men who engage in biznesy, or become jaombilo. Nevertheless, there are some clues. While the normative expectation that women should receive gifts or money in exchange for sex means that most young women engage in transactional sex, only a certain subset engage in prostitution. The self-declared president of the prostitution association, a self-help organization run mainly by older women who are trying to get out of prostitution, told me that based on the distribution of free condoms, of 175,000 people, approximately half of whom are women, 12,000 women work as prostitutes.<sup>40</sup> Though I am dubious about the accuracy of these numbers because they are likely to reflect those women who go out onto the street thus under-representing the phenomenon, it does give some sense of the numbers. As for young men, when you consider that unemployment is highest among youth, and that there are 32,000 young men between the ages of 20 and 39 in Tamatave, you have some sense of the number of young men likely to be involved in biznesy. Though the jaombilo is harder to measure—all the more so because the stigma attached to it means that men often do not admit to such a status—about a third of the working class young men that I knew—and even the occasional college student—had been one for some period of time; everyone knew other young men who had made their living as jaombilo at one time or another.

### **Gendered Inversions and New Subjects: Becoming Jaombilo**

So far I have argued that the jaombilo emerged because of the precise ways in which the liberalization of the economy articulates with local ideas and practices around gender, labor and consumption. While young men have been unable to find work, forcing them to live off biznesy, which in turn makes it less likely they will invest in long-term projects, some young women have managed to find a means of gaining economic power by laboring in the sexual economy. As a result, at least some women are in the position to support young men as jaombilo, while the jaombilo, in turn, cultivate their youthful good looks and sex appeal in an effort to make a living through their relationships with women. However, while this broad argument gives some sense of how the structural possibility of being jaombilo emerges out of the reconfiguration of gender and economy, it is not sufficient to capture the subjective struggles of the jaombilo. In addition to an examination of the structural conditions which give rise to this role, we also need to look closely at the phenomenology of the experience: the ways in which particular men become jaombilo, and the kinds of negotiations that are involved.

Young men I spoke with—most of whom had been jaombilo at one time or another—recounted two ways in which people become jaombilo. In the first, the man and the woman are together but because the man is unable to find work, he is also unable to fulfill the expectation that he will support the woman financially and so the woman turns to prostitution. In some cases, this is a mutual

decision in which the woman uses prostitution as a way of sustaining the couple for a short period of time. In these circumstances, people said, there is “true love” between the man and the woman, and in some cases I heard about, when a couple had amassed enough money the woman gave up prostitution and the couple reverted to a more traditional arrangement where they went into commerce and worked together. In other cases, men found that they became *jaombilo* inadvertently when their wives worked as prostitutes behind their backs and brought the money they earned into the house. Bomo told me how this had happened to him twice while he was working as a trucker, and how he left the woman precisely because he still earned a living and didn’t want to be a *jaombilo*. But when I asked him what he would have done if he didn’t have work he said that he would “Work on his thoughts and convince himself to put up with it.”

More frequent, however, were stories of young men who either solicited women who were working as prostitutes or were picked up by prostitutes in bars. Unemployed and with no easy way to earn money, they respond to the girls’ request to live with them. But by entering into the woman’s house and becoming financially dependent on her, they also risk placing themselves in a subordinate, feminized position *vis-à-vis* the woman. Florian explained how he became a *jaombilo*:

I was with a girl who came to Tamatave to work as a maid in someone’s house and she earned 30,000 (about five dollars) a month. On Sundays she would go out with her friends to the beach and her friends were all working as prostitutes. She went with them and got a man, and that night she earned 30,000—what she’d usually earn in one month. And so she decided to work as a prostitute. I saw her first on the Avenue of Independence and I called to her. I was 22 at the time. At that moment I didn’t have a penny in my pocket and I said to her, I don’t have any money right now but I like you. Would you go with me? She wasn’t difficult and said, “Let’s go home together.” And we got to her house and she fed me and there was already rice and sauce and I didn’t hesitate but ate. And we slept together. And when the morning came I woke up to leave and she said, “Don’t leave now.” Well, I didn’t have anywhere to go so I stayed. But I went home the day after that. But she said to me, “Why don’t you live with me?” To keep me she told me to go get my clothes and to bring them to her to wash them, and I just stayed. And I became her *jaombilo* for I didn’t work at that time. I would sit there and she would bring money home and I would do things around the house.

Florian detailed some of the work he would do including watching the house or taking his girl various places and waiting for her while she conducted her business. He then continued, “But sometimes when she was mad we would fight and she would say that I had no meaning because I didn’t work, and she would break the dishes in the house screaming that—and I didn’t dare to speak because I knew she would insult me by saying that she had bought them.” Florian concluded by saying that to be *jaombilo* you had to have a “sporting heart” (fo sportive), a sentiment that was also expressed as the need to endure by many men I knew that had found themselves in the role.

What young men emphasized again and again was that while you were supported and could enjoy the pleasures of not working, you potentially bargain away your manhood in the process: you bring your girlfriend to nightclubs, you fetch her when she called you, you wash her underwear that has been soiled

with the sexual fluids of other men, you massage her tired feet after dancing at nightclubs, and you wear clothes that she had bought and that she could publicly strip you of at any time. From the point of view of most men, these jobs are profoundly humiliating, and so to put up with such indignities, you indeed need a “sporting heart.” Young men again and again insisted that, “Jaombilo don’t deserve to go by the name of men.” But it wasn’t just other young men who, noting with glee that it was their money, which they had paid to a woman in order to sleep with her, which had paid for the clothes a jaombilo was wearing, that made the role of jaombilo so problematic. In addition, because of the stigma attached to being a jaombilo, boys’ parents strongly objected to their sons becoming one. In one case, Pascal, a boy of 18, recounted how he’d been a jaombilo at sixteen and followed a younger woman to a town in the north until his family forced him back to Tamatave; he described how his mother and father cried as they persuaded him to return home and he took pity on them and went.

But young prostitutes I spoke with who kept jaombilo viewed the situation differently. For these young women, keeping a jaombilo is a mark of their economic power and hence dominance. While the relations forged with jaombilo often cause them problems, as I discuss in more detail below, they also take enormous pleasure and pride in their ability to seduce and maintain young men. Most of the young women I knew who kept jaombilo emphasized that they did so out of love and sexual desire: it was the youth and beauty of the jaombilo that attracted the prostitute to him, and made her want to exercise her seductive charms. The charms a woman exercised included the woman’s sexual abilities and visible signs of her economic power. Veronique, a girl who had had a long-term relationship with a European, but had broken it off once she realized the man would not divorce his wife, explained how she acquired her first jaombilo. “He was very beautiful and had a beautiful body! Each time I would see him I would be in wonder. He knew I liked him, and he started to flirt with me. And I said to him, ‘If you go with me, I won’t ask you for money and I’ll treat you as my spouse for I don’t want someone else to get you.’ And he agreed. And that day we were already together: I took him home and made love to him. He was amazed and he stayed.”

Describing a second relationship she’d had with a jaombilo, Veronique commented that the young man had walked into her house and “was astonished to see how many things she owned in her house.” These women represented themselves as earning money with their clients, but loving their jaombilo. Because they loved their jaombilo they wasted their money on them, a gesture taken as the ultimate sign of love and commitment. As Veronique’s friend, Lala, remarked feelingly, “I’ll waste a lot of money on my jaombilo because that is who I really love. The other men I go with, it is just for money. But prostitutes, you know, they are human beings too and they know about love. They place all their love in their jaombilo.” Mamtiana, a young woman who was married to a European but maintained a jaombilo relationship with a young Malagasy man explained, “If it were my own choice I’d go with a Malagasy, but since they have no money I’m married to a vazaha. But I really love my Malagasy boyfriend—he’s younger than me, and he’s my jaombilo. I’m very jealous of that boy—I buy his clothes, I pay for everything. He’s tall, dark, and well-muscled; my European spouse is fat, but at least he’s gentle and easy-going.” Since they love and spend

money on their jaombilo, these women are known to be intensely jealous of their jaombilo's actions.

Both Veronique and Mamitiana represented the relationship of a woman to her jaombilo as one of pure love and desire, as opposed to the transactional relationship that they had with the men who gave them money. Yet the reality of the jaombilo relationship is still more complex, for while the women who have jaombilo talk mostly of love (and were never so indiscrete as to say that they asked the jaombilo to wash their dirty underwear), young men who are jaombilo often said cynically that they were just doing it for the money. And because of the hierarchical relationship created by the fact that the jaombilo lived with the woman, as well as her financial power, she could ask him to do the kinds of household labor that featured so prominently in young men's accounts.

But the combination of the woman's love for the jaombilo and her reliance on the jaombilo to fulfill certain tasks means that the woman also becomes dependent on the jaombilo, enabling the jaombilo, because of his physical strength and attractiveness, to recuperate a dominant, and hence masculine, position. In some cases, the jaombilo does this by using violent force against the woman in order to control her, a tactic that is particularly frequent among those jaombilo who work as women's "body guards" (guard de corps), collecting outstanding debts and physically protecting her. More frequently, the jaombilo recuperates a dominant subject position by taking the money he gains from the woman and spending it on short-term pleasures with his friends, or on other girlfriends that he keeps hidden away. Neighbors who know about the jaombilo and his circumstances encourage him to do so, goading him on by saying that if his girlfriend can go and sleep with whom she wants to, he too should be able to do his pleasure. But jaombilo who have other girlfriends risk the wrath of the women who support them. Veronique explained the most common end of a jaombilo relationship, which occurs when the woman realizes that her jaombilo is using her money to support another girl. As she recounted her reaction upon learning that her jaombilo had been cheating on her, "He saw that I loved him, and he wanted to take advantage of me. If they see you are weak, they do what pleases them. At that time, I almost ripped off all his clothes that I had bought for him, but I thought about the fact that I too have a brother, and I took pity on him." Such are the complexities either of being, or supporting, a jaombilo.

### **Continuities and Discontinuities in the Historical Construction of Marginal (Young) Men**

How then are we to interpret the jaombilo as a particular kind of youth? In many ways the jaombilo appears to be continuous with older ideas about Malagasy young men, including their propensity to dress well and spend their money on short-term pleasures; even the name itself, as I discussed earlier, suggests an effort to draw together much older cultural conceptions about the nature of youthful masculinity to express a partially new way of being. This impression of a basic continuity with older cultural forms is strengthened when we compare the jaombilo with that other kind of non-normative male, the jaoloka whom I mentioned earlier.

The similarity between the jaombilo and the jaoloka rests in part on the way in which patterns of movement between houses create relations of hierarchy and subordination, and with them maleness and femaleness, so that the man who finds himself in a subordinate position is, in all cases, said to be “like a woman.” As I mentioned earlier with regards to conceptions of young people, in many contexts in Madagascar status is associated with stasis; people who have power are assumed to be able, almost magically, to call people towards them, while movement signals a junior or inferior position. It is youth who move towards elders, not elders towards youth. This pattern is replicated in virilocal marriage where it is partly the movement of the woman away from her natal home that places the man in a position of power. Once the marriage takes place however, the tables turn; as I mentioned earlier, the woman is supposed to remain in the house while the man goes in search of a living. Viewed in this light, it should not be surprising that the expression “women are furniture, they are weak,” which my urban informants used to assert that women are supposed to be financially supported by men, specifically likens women to moveable objects (*fanaka*) and is often used to refer to virilocality.<sup>41</sup> It should also be increasingly clear why so many of the prostitutes’ and jaombilo’s stories focused on the back and forth of movement in and out of the house as they negotiated their relationships. Recall how movement figured prominently in both Florien’s story of how he became a jaombilo, and Veronique’s story of how she acquired one: Florien recounted how the woman asked him to bring his clothes over as a way of retaining him and making it more difficult to leave, while Veronique talked about how she invited her jaombilo to come live with her. In both cases, the women clearly attempted to consolidate their power over the young men by making them into a kind of household dependent. Although young men were always uncomfortable when I made the comparison, they agreed that jaombilo did bear similarities to local conceptions of what makes a slave.

But the ideal pattern of virilocal marriage is premised not only on movement, but the way in which movement articulates with patterns of labor and consumption. In the ideal case of virilocal marriage, local ideology holds that it is men who labor and women who consume, although as I’ve suggested this vision obscures the enormous amount of household labor that women do in fact perform.<sup>42</sup> This fact highlights an important way in which the jaoloka *does* conform to at least some aspects of the ideal model. The jaoloka described by Waast in the context of commercialization of agriculture in Northwestern Madagascar, or the “man who followed his spouse” described for the high plateau, was looked down upon because he followed his wife, in part because his labor contributed to the growth of his wife’s lineage. In this respect his position, like that of the jaombilo, hovered dangerously close to local conceptions of what makes a slave.<sup>43</sup> But even if the jaoloka’s labor contributed to the growth of his wife’s lineage he did labor—if he was a subordinate man because his labor was siphoned off to contribute to the growth of another ancestry, his labor, which as we have seen is tightly linked to older conceptions of proper male adulthood, still marked him as a man. By contrast the jaombilo consumes the labor of others and spends it endlessly on fashion, women, drink and other short-term pleasures. This con-

trast between the jaoloka and the jaombilo suggests that to understand where the jaombilo's novelty lies, we need to look more closely at the relationship between labor and consumption he embodies.

The significant amount of household work that many jaombilo do raises the question of whether being a jaombilo is, like prostitution, a kind of labor, one in which young men can amass cultural or material capital through which to start new kinds of relationships. Though a couple of young men claimed that being a jaombilo was a kind of work (because "women became the boss"), most argued that being a jaombilo is not a kind of labor. Rather the woman works and you, irrespective of whether you wash her laundry or not, just sit around. And because the jaombilo does not earn his money "by the sweat of his brow" so too he doesn't try to save his money to try and start long-term business ventures. In all the different stories of jaombilo that I encountered, only once did I hear about a man who used his money from a woman to start a grocery store. Rather, the jaombilo spends his money on short-term efforts to recuperate his masculinity, either by spending the woman's money on another "hidden" girlfriend, where he is in a position of power, or in some very rare cases, by violently trying to seize control of the money that the woman has earned.

Yet to say that the jaombilo only consumes is too simple, just as we cannot say, given the shifting dynamics between jaombilo and their women in which at different times both parties teeter unevenly between positions of superiority/inferiority, that they are emasculated in any permanent way. Rather, my informants' comments, which all emphasize the combination of degrading, household labor endured by the jaombilo paired with his youthful good looks, fashion sense, and sex appeal, suggest that the jaombilo engages in a new kind of labor. The values of consumerism—including the privileging of youth and beauty—enable a kind of labor that is uniquely based on self-production that draws on youth, good looks, fashion, and ways of living and embodying sex appeal that are drawn from global media. For women, the kind of labor they perform is broadly continuous with older ways of building status and authority, for it is hardly novel in Tamatave that young women should use the beauty of their bodies to obtain money from men. At the same time, young women are able to rearrange familial hierarchies in new ways when they can obtain money from European men, as I have argued in more depth elsewhere.<sup>44</sup>

But if the practice of young women surviving off the "beauty of their bodies" is hardly new, it is new that young men should also be induced to do so. Earlier I stated that paradoxically the jaombilo combined hypermasculinity—because he was sexually desirable and able to obtain women—with emasculation. Yet older patterns of gender relations I described suggest that it was women's physical appearance that was judged more important, not men's. What seems to have happened in the case of the jaombilo is that what were important characteristics for women have become part of what makes an appealing man—at least among a certain subset of the urban population. A set of relationships has been constructed in which the very same characteristics which young women use to appeal to European or older Malagasy men are now used by young Malagasy men to appeal to these same women. In a world where many young women find themselves forced to enter into relations with much older men, where there is money

but no love or sexual desire, their jaombilo comes to symbolize all that is lacking in their other relationships. Jaombilo engage in an intense self-production—much like the prostitutes—as they turn their very bodies into a potential source of value. Jaombilo represent the force of objectified desire, youth and beauty, and of a new role that has long been available to women but is now available to men, although they enter into these relations at their peril.

But the possibilities for young men and women to achieve the status of either a successful prostitute or a jaombilo are time limited. Just as it is primarily young women in their early twenties to late thirties who are most likely to become successful prostitutes or forge long-term relationships with Europeans, so too it is only men in their late teens through late twenties who are likely to be adopted as jaombilo. One prostitute summarized the situation succinctly: No one would want an old jaombilo (*efa soira*—literally “already evening,” a common metaphor for old age). In both cases, young men and women use their sexuality to produce monetary value, but their ability to do so is limited to a short period of time. But where women invest the value they obtain through sex work in other long-term relationships, men tend to consume theirs in short-term dreaming. As a result, some women are able to steer the demands of the consumer economy to suit their own interests, at least some of the time. By contrast because the jaombilo cannot convert his sexuality into more long-term wealth and value, and because his youth and beauty will eventually be used up, he runs the risk of remaining perpetually young, in the sense of perpetually inhabiting a poor, subordinate position. In this regard, the jaombilo also bears some similarity to the man who does *biznessy*: both rely on ill-gotten gains, and as a result, both are unable to convert their profits into more long-term, adult, kinds of self-making. But because the jaombilo explicitly brings these traits into tension with particular kinds of gender relations and their location with a domestic economy he more clearly embodies the contradictions of the move towards a consumer and service-oriented economy. He potently evokes both its pleasures and its potentially immoral and emasculating dangers. It may be that in today’s world, the ephemeral power the jaombilo represents, which is based on a kind of beauty that is short-lived and quickly consumed, is an increasingly common one.

## Conclusion

I began by citing prior writing on youth which tended to assume that youth and affluence are closely intertwined and that, even as youth extends upwards into ever-older age categories, youth nevertheless marks a transitional phase on the way to adulthood. I want to end by considering to what extent this assumption holds in the context of Madagascar, and what that might tell us more generally about the relationship between youth and globalization.

In his postscript to this special issue, Stearns suggests that globalization frequently spreads the model of modern childhood that emerged first in the West, while adding some new elements. Based on the analysis I have provided here, which has sought to illuminate how social and economic changes brought about by globalization intersect with local age categories to create new kinds of per-

sonhood and new social forms, it seems clear that important alternate patterns have taken shape: The (re)formation of youth as it has taken place in Madagascar over the last ten years diverges from the classic model associated with modernity, in which youth is a protected phase en route to adulthood.

The specificity of the current moment is illuminated when we compare the way in which a renegotiation of the nature of youth took place in many parts of Africa during the colonial period. Then, the introduction of wage labor and the cash economy simultaneously pulled young men out of their rural communities in order to engage in wage labor, and gave them cash with which to negotiate their relationships to their elders. Though the axes of tension during the colonial period were different than they are today, focused on the senior male/junior male axis rather than the male/female relations that I have described, in both cases, social change occurred as some relationships were disarticulated and rearticulated in different ways, and new ways of making relationships (cattle versus cash versus consumerism) came to mediate people's interactions with one another. However, during the colonial period economic changes gave youth new sources of power that they could use to bypass older systems of bridewealth that old men had used to keep them in a position of juniority.<sup>45</sup> The routes to adulthood shifted, but the overall trajectory remained the same.

By contrast in contemporary urban Madagascar, as in many other countries in Africa, the rise of consumerism has been accompanied by the collapse of male labor that was the hallmark of the colonial period. Like the American college youth who were involved in consumer fads in the 1920s, or the post-war London youth who used mass-produced commodities and elements of personal style to contest the class structure, the jaombilo with his excessive spending on short-term pleasures, his use of youth and beauty, and his self-production, also embodies the epitome of consumerism. In all of these cases, youth come to embody the concerns of an era, because of the specific social and economic dynamics through which specific kinds of youth are produced.

It may also be possible that urban Malagasy youth are also in the process of forging new conceptions of superiority and inferiority, adulthood and youth, insofar as they are key players in promoting a conception of authority premised not only on one's ability to command oneself and others, but also one's control over valued consumer goods. In this respect, they may play a role similar to what Paula Fass has argued for American youth in the 1920s in promoting the values of consumerism.<sup>46</sup> However, at least for now, the predicament of the jaombilo is that while he may grow older in chronological years, because of the complex set of associations that I have described here, he is most likely to remain poor and symbolically, at least, forever young. That some young men should find themselves in a permanent position of juniority has long been the case in Madagascar—such was the permanent predicament of slaves. That those same young men could become the symbolic equivalent of slaves and simultaneously embody the normal course of development brings into question the modernist trajectory that places youth between adolescence and adulthood.

This is not another case of African exceptionalism. Rather, it suggests we need to rethink the normative developmental model in its entirety; to do so we need to delve more deeply into the historical circumstances which seduce us into believing that what we took as inevitable is in fact historically contingent.

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## ENDNOTES

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5. Kenneth Kenniston, “Youth: A ‘New’ Stage of Life,” in Thomas J. Cottle, ed., *The Prospect of Youth* (Boston, 1972), 631–654.
6. See Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920s* (New York, 1977); Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-War Britain* (London, 1976)
7. For a discussion of the affinities between contemporary conceptualizations of youth agency and consumerism, as well as an exploration of alternative models of youth in Botswana, see Deborah Durham, “Apathy and Agency” in Jennifer Cole and Deborah Durham, eds., *Youth, Mediating the Global Imagination* (Santa FE, NM, forthcoming).
8. Jean and John L. Comaroff, “Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony,” *American Ethnologist* 26(2) (1999), 279–303.
9. Alice Schlegel, “The Global Spread of Adolescent Culture” in Lisa Crockett and Rainer K. Silbereisen, eds., *Negotiating Adolescence in Times of Social Change* (Cambridge, 2000), 71–88; Paula S. Fass, “Children and Globalization,” *Journal of Social History* 36(4) (Summer, 2003), 963–977; Jeffrey Jensen Arnett. “The Psychology of Globalization,” *American Psychologist*, 57 (10) (October, 2002), 774–783.
10. As Kenniston observed, the emergence of this new phase of life might “permit new forms of human cooperation and social organization” (“Youth a ‘New’ Stage of Life,” 653), e.g. that the formation of a new life phase might actually create new kinds of people who could potentially transform the society of which they were a part. Although Kenniston was narrowly concerned with wealthy elite youth in the United States and

remained overly committed to a developmental-psychological framework, his observation is worth recuperating in the context of the burgeoning contemporary interest in youth and globalization.

11. Scholars of globalization explicitly attempt to theorize the current social-economic moment in ways that move beyond either older center-periphery or modernization models. Nevertheless, this more complex view is rarely reflected in the literature on youth and globalization. See for example Anna Tsing, "The Global Situation," *Cultural Anthropology* 15(3) (2000), 327–60.

12. "Elana Ashanti Jefferson and Barbara Hey, "45 is the new 30, fortysomethings are the new babes," *The Miami Herald*, Tuesday July 15, 2003.

13. See for example J. Fox, "The House as a type of social organization on the island of Roti" in C. MacDonald, ed., *De la Hutte au Palais: sociétés "à maison" en Asie Sud-Est et insulaire* (Paris, 1987); Maurice Bloch, *Placing the Dead: Tombs, Ancestral Villages, and Kinship Organization in Madagascar* (London, 1971); Karen Middleton, "Tombs, Umbilical Cords, and the Syllable Fo" in Sandra Evers and Marc Spindler, eds., *Cultures of Madagascar: Ebb and Flow of Influences* (Leiden, 1995), 223–235

14. Rev. J. Richardson, ed., *A New Malagasy-English Dictionary* (Antananarivo, Madagascar, 1885). In addition to the term *tanora*, which is used on the high plateau, there are numerous different local words to refer to this period of life. In the Betsimisaraka region where I worked the words *gonalahy* and *gonavavy* were used as well as *tanora*.

15. Andrew Walsh, "'Hot Money' and daring consumption in a northern Malagasy sapphire-mining town," *American Ethnologist* 30(2) (2003), 290–305.

16. For a discussion of the politics of movement and power among various ethnic groups in Madagascar see Jennifer Cole, *Forget Colonialism? Sacrifice and the Art of Memory in Madagascar* (Berkeley, 2001) and Michael Lambek, *The Weight of the Past: Living with History in Mahajanga, Madagascar* (New York, 2003).

17. Bloch has made this particular argument with regards to Malagasy ritual. See for example Maurice Bloch, *From Blessing to Violence: History and Ideology in the Circumcision Ritual of the Merina of Madagascar* (Cambridge, UK, 1986).

18. The symbolism of marriages and houses has been extensively discussed in the anthropological literature on Madagascar. See for example Gillian Feeley-Harnik, *A Green Estate: Restoring Independence in Madagascar* (Washington, D.C., 1991); Maurice Bloch, "The resurrection of the house among the Zafimaniry of Madagascar", in Janet Carsten and Stephen Hugh-Jones, eds., *About the house: Lévi-Strauss and beyond* (Cambridge, UK, 1995); Philip Thomas, "Place Person and Ancestry Among the Tenambondro of Southeast Madagascar." Unpublished Ph.d Thesis, Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics (1996).

19. Bloch makes a similar observation for the Zafimaniry, swidden agriculturalists who inhabit Madagascar's eastern escarpment forest. See Maurice Bloch, "'Eating' Young Men Among the Zafimaniry" in Karen Middleton, ed., *Ancestors, power and history in Madagascar* (Leiden, 1999), 175–190.

20. It is noteworthy that it was mainly older people who wanted spouses who stayed at home; by contrast younger men and women valued women who "moved," although

this quality was viewed with ambivalence because it was often perceived as indicating a woman who sought success via the sexual economy. I found that while young women emphasized the necessity of moving outside the house in order to find success, many young men remained opposed to it because of the lack of control that it symbolized.

21. See for example Rita Astuti, *People of the Sea: Identity and Descent Among the Vevo of Madagascar* (Cambridge, UK, 1995); Sophie Blanchy, “Femmes et Résidence Familiale: Quelques notes sur les règles, les faits contemporains et l’idéologie en Imerina,” in Sarah Fee, ed., *Taloha*, 13. (Antananarivo, Madagascar, 2000), 39–62; Jean Francois Baré, *Pouvoir des vivants, langages des morts: idéologiques Sakalava* (Paris, 1977); Roland Waast, “Les Concubins de Soalala” in R. Waast, E. Fauroux, B. Schlemmer, F. Le Bourdieu, J.P. Raison, G. Dandoy, eds., *Changements sociaux dans l’Ouest Malgache* (Paris, 1980), 153–188.

22. Lars Vig, *Sur la Femme Malgache* (Paris, 2003).

23. Astuti, *People of the Sea*

24. For example see the essays gathered in Rakoto Ignace, ed., *L’Esclavage à Madagascar: Aspects Historiques et Résurgence Contemporains* (Antananarivo, Madagascar, 1997). For a case study of the use of slavery in a contemporary Malagasy village, see Sandra Evers, “People without History: The Tombless in the Extreme Southern Highlands of Madagascar” in Zoe Crossland, Genese Sodikoff and Will Griffin, eds., *Lova/Inheritance: Past and Present in Madagascar*, (Michigan Discussions in Anthropology 14, 2003), p. 37–52. For a discussion about the ways in which French colonial rule transformed local notions of authority in Imerina, and their uneasy relationship to a history of slaveholding, see David Graeber, “Love Magic and Political Morality in Central Madagascar, 1875–1990” *Gender and History* 8(3) (November, 1996), 416–439.

25. Jennifer Cole, “Fresh Contact in Tamatave, Madagascar: Sex, Money and Intergenerational Transformation,” *American Ethnologist*, 31(4)(2004), 573–588.

26. A focus on consumption, and the pleasure associated with consumer goods, is nothing new to Madagascar. However, as I have argued elsewhere, the particular emphasis on consumption has shifted. See Jennifer Cole, “Fashioning Distinction in Urban Madagascar” in Jennifer Cole and Deborah Durham, eds., *Youth, Mediating the Global Imagination* (Santa Fe, NM, forthcoming).

27. INSTAT, “L’Emploi, Le Chomage et Les Conditions d’Activité des Ménages dans les Sept Grandes Villes de Madagascar” (Antananarivo, 2001).

28. Cole, “Fresh Contact in Tamatave, Madagascar”

29. INSTAT, “L’Emploi, le chômage et les conditions d’activité des ménages dans les sept grandes villes de Madagascar.”

30. Cole, “Fresh Contact in Tamatave, Madagascar”

31. Maurice Bloch, “The Symbolism of Money in Imerina” in J. Parry and M. Bloch, eds., *Money and the Morality of Exchange*, (Cambridge, UK, 1989), 165–190.

32. Cole, *Forget Colonialism?*

33. In Malagasy the expressions were “mikarakara trano” or “manao raharaha antrano.”

34. See Cole, "Fresh Contact in Tamatave, Madagascar" for a longer discussion of what women do with the money they earn.
35. See Bloch, "Eating Young Men" and Walsh, "Hot Money" for a discussion of the relationship between men and short-term consumption practices in two different areas of Madagascar.
36. Walsh, "Hot Money."
37. In Malagasy, the expression is "*vola azo avy amin'ny makarakara dia mivoaka amin'ny kilaodaoka.*"
38. Maurice Bloch, "Almost Eating the Ancestors," *MAN* 20 (1986), 631–46
39. Richardson, *A New Malagasy-English Dictionary*, Gillian Feeley-Harnik, personal communication, March 15, 2002.
40. I cite these numbers because the prostitutes' association, which was formally called "Women who join together to protect themselves," was one of the few groups that actually tried to count the number of women involved in sex work. The woman who had founded the group was herself a former prostitute. A savvy business woman, she was interested in finding external financial support from an NGO for her group, which was largely dedicated to educating women in sex work about the use of condoms, and helping former prostitutes to learn new skills, like sewing. However because so much prostitution in Tamatave takes place informally, and doesn't necessarily involve streetwalking, I suspect that the numbers of women involved in occasional prostitution are much higher.
41. Maurice Bloch, personal communication, December 2003.
42. This vision also obscures the fact that in many cases women engage in trade activities that do contribute economically to the household.
43. Cole, *Forget Colonialism?*
44. Cole, "Fresh Contact in Tamatave, Madagascar."
45. For discussion of these processes in relationship to masculinity, see Stephen Meisner and Lisa A. Lindsay, eds., *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2003)
46. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful*.