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Chéry, Tshepo Masango, *Kingdom Come: The Politics of Faith and Freedom in Segregationist South Africa and Beyond*. Duke University Press, 2023, 264 pages. ISBN-10:147801993.

Reviewed by: Thobile Ndimande, Yale University.

Tshepo Masango Chéry's scholarship presents Christian religiosity in the question of liberation registers and centralizes Africa in the modern African diasporic scholarly debates. Chéry does so in a manner that amplifies the call made by Frances Smith Foster (2005), which attests that "Afro-Protestantism; an organic synthesis of African, European, and new-world theologies, traditions, and exigencies was as much political as personal" (p.715). Born in the fire and smoke of South Africa's 1980s and fueled by the apartheid regime, Masango Chéry "knew terror by the age of five" because her home in Soweto "was engulfed in flames" (p.1). As such, the tone of this contribution is set as one that is not only profoundly intellectual but deeply personal, exposing the etchings of history as those that are made with scars from past wounds. Attentively and affectionately, Masango Chéry presents Maake Jonathan S. Masango as "my father" alongside his better-known colleague and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Desmond Tutu, as key figures who were bound by their moral convictions as religious leaders to commit to social justice (pp.1-3). These men stem from a genealogy of African Christians that wove into their faith the politics of freedom and survival.

Overview: The book is divided into seven chapters, the first titled "My Blood Is a Million Stories: The Making of Colored Identity." Here, Masango Chéry foregrounds the Ethiopian movement by presenting the historical, political, and social formation of the colored race in South Africa against European and Black African identities. Followed is "Faith of Our Fathers," which presents Ethiopianism as a nineteenth-century movement that at once brought about the heightened anxiety of white missionaries for it bolstered "Black spiritual solidarity" across ethnicity and race. In the chapter titled "In the Name of the Father," Masango Chéry negates the evasion of the letter exchange between the Manye sisters as not existing "in the archival record," but instead holding onto their "persist[ance] in cultural memory" (p.55).

In a chapter titled "Ministries of Migration," movement and migrations present the cuts and crevices that are formed and broken in search for freedom and faith through the friendship of George McGuire and Robert Josias Morgan.

The politics of racial upliftment is incumbent on the values of respectability drawn from Christian religiosity—an aspect often shunned in the reflective conversations and debates of freedom and resistance of global Blackness. Masango Chéry resurrects this principal element in the chapter titled "Garvey's God." The final chapter, "Seeds of Freedom: Growing Orthodoxy and Freedom in East Africa," not only engages the expansion of the denomination but also the tensions it came across in the region of East Africa. Analysis: The Ethiopian movement is foregrounded by the presentation of the historical, political, and social formation of the coloured race in South Africa against European and Black African identities. Coloured history is presented as "a history of transoceanic travel and migration, a history of the sea, the land, and the interplay between them" (p.14). By establishing the Coloured race as that which labels people other than "indigenous" [read Black], Africans, and Europeans, Masango Chéry highlights the way the conception of race and ethnicity was arbitrarily made by colonial governments, thus creating loops for flexibility and negotiation. With a rich historical understanding, Masango Chéry displays that these loops materialized in the political and social arenas of a largely racializing society. The politics of racial upliftment are incumbent to the values of respectability drawn from Christian religiosity. An aspect often shunned in the reflective conversations and debates of freedom and resistance of global Blackness.

Masango Chéry resurrects the epistolary correspondence between Charlotte, née Manye Maxeke, and Katie, née Manye Makanya, by confronting the death sentence evidence has waged over it. The archive continues to be a contested arena for many African women's voices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from South Africa. The Christian mission educated such as Regina Gelena Twala has been brought to life in *Written Out* by historian Joel Cabrita in similar efforts of rereading the past like those of Masango Chéry. As a historian, Masango Chéry utilizes fiction and what is presented by the archive together and becomes the "fabula" in the Saidiya Hartman (2008) sense. Masango Chéry draws on the method of critical fabulation because it takes "the basic elements of a story, the building blocks of the narrative," and produces "a counter-history at the intersection of the fictive and the historical" (pp.11-12).

The archive is redefined by Masango Chéry to be a stringing and weaving together of "slivers of the archive...alongside biographical fragments and the [very ephemeral and evasive] memory of this fabled letter" (p. 57). Verbatim "As her letter stated, she aimed to produce a body of believers who would make anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-sexism, and pan-Africanism integral to their Christian faith" (p.82). Masango Chéry gives back the Manye sisters their authorial voice which was penned in the most bold and profound epistolary musings exchanged between young, Black, and African women in the early twentieth century. Continuing the question of gender, Masango Chéry presents

that the rites and practices of African tradition and spirituality were never in tension with the western understandings of Africa as barbaric and in need of saving. Masango Chéry presents that through the cultural and traditional practice of female circumcision, the African female body becomes an ambivalent site for the tensions between western Christian missionaries and African Christians. It cannot go unnoticed that Christian values are deeply rooted in and supportive of patriarchal notions despite the holistic developmental underpinnings of Christianity.

Using the archive and oral narrative related by her father, Masango Chéry tracks the South African leader of Ethiopianism, Maake Mangena Mokone, and his influence, who was said to have been inspired by Ethiopia "both in scripture and politics" (p.31). The Ethiopian movement was not without its complications, especially when South Africa crystallized its racialized governance, often brewing hostility among differently demarcated racial groups. As such, Christian unity was challenged. It seems then that the social and political divisions imposed by the racial stratification of the segregationist and colonial South African government did not eradicate all forms of solidarity along religious, ethnic, and racial lines.

Postscript: Tshepo Masango Chéry has filled a dearth in scholarship with this formidable intellectual contribution. *Kingdom Come* is a unique intervention that revisits a critical historical period in the history of global Blackness. It, for a moment, unveils the shadow of apartheid that hovers over South Africa in a capacious manner. Masango Chéry's generosity extends beyond the region by refusing to dismiss Christianity as not radical enough to engage with, especially when it comes to questions of freedom and resistance. We are called to look again with a perspective that allows for complexity and the sharpening of contradictions.

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