

communities to build new homes as sojourners may not create detachment from the original home, as Okeke-Ihejirika contends. People can embrace multiple homes. Indeed, it seems more tenable that there is great variety in the meanings and experiences of home. For example, Canadian Africans may re-create home there even as they long for, travel to, communicate with, and maintain linkages with the old country and other places where they may have lived. The linkages they maintain continue to resonate because of people left behind, memories, spiritual connections, and material investments. Past studies of the diaspora show that these nostalgic thoughts of home continue, even though people have left or even fled under onerous circumstances. If Ihejirika-Okeke believes that African women in Canada are different, she should rigorously demonstrate this through careful sampling.

Many African women emigrate solo, or before their spouses. Some are subalterns, but others are not. It is also questionable whether women have fewer resources to handle “the challenges of settlement” (155). Instead, women are more flexible than men in adjusting to new situations, networking, taking menial jobs, and “giving their all” to “make it” as immigrants lacking social capital and status, and being “officially recognized as dependents of men” may or may not push women into the informal economy. More nuanced analysis is required than Ihejirika-Okede supplies.

Ideally, a conclusion would have tied together the issues and questions raised. Edited books from conference proceedings are prone to unevenness in quality and strength, but all told, this makes a useful contribution to an understanding of the globalization and transnationalization of Africans.

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Marc Epprecht. *Heterosexual Africa? The History of an Idea from the Age of Exploration to the Age of AIDS*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008. xiii + 231 pp. Bibliography. Index. \$19.95. Paper.

Sexuality is one of the most socially contentious issues facing Africa today. Carina Ray’s “Confronting Homophobia” (*New African*, Feb. 2010) states that currently thirty-seven African countries have draconian homophobic laws of colonial origin, which have recently been intensified in several countries to ban gay-rights organizations and to impose harsh penalties for those who engage in same-sex sex. A proposition in Uganda would make homosexuality a capital offense for repeat offenders and HIV-positive individuals. In the academic sphere, only in the last decade have postcolonial studies begun to pay serious attention to sexuality as a site of power and of simultaneous struggle.

My responses to Marc Epprecht's *Heterosexual Africa* occur within these larger cultural and academic contexts. Though his archival research for a previous book, *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Africa* (McGill-Queens UP, 2004), showed that homosexuality did not have a single meaning in colonial Rhodesia, *Heterosexual Africa?* overall appears more reactionary and didactic than helpful in terms of encouraging a better understanding of the complexities of African sexuality. Epprecht cites with seeming thoroughness much of the literature on Africa and sexuality, but he does so with very little critical analysis.

Heterosexual Africa lacks an engaged theorization of desire and is far too ensconced both in the social heteronormativity its author purports to challenge and in the epistemological heteronormativity that has for so long, as Epprecht himself rightly notes, plagued empirical and anthropological research on sexual difference in Africa. While it is true that the affective and erotic bonds sometimes formed between indigenous women in Lesotho (which often continue alongside heterosexual marriage) neither replace nor challenge overtly the high value placed on heterosexual marriage and reproduction in Sesotho culture, I cannot disagree more with Epprecht's uncritical conclusion: that because these relationships occur under such social conditions as economic strain, the high frequency of male absence in heterosexual marriage, and male sexual irresponsibility, these close emotive and sexual bonds strengthen heterosexual marriages since women are protected (or distracted) from having sex with other men. But doesn't this then keep the heteronormative lens at the forefront of inquiry; that is, is Epprecht saying that the female–female relationships are tolerated, or even encouraged, in Sesotho culture because they somehow ensure that women will not have sex with men other than their husbands? The obvious question that Epprecht's formulation leaves unanswered is: Why would they want to?

Reducing the desires of Basotho women to social circumstances and historical effects seems not only intellectually reductive, but also hypocritical; Epprecht seems to pride himself on taking in local knowledge as delivered by indigenous informants, but he doesn't appear to be listening critically to what they are saying. Moreover, Epprecht's dismissal of the credibility of queer theoretical inquiry on Africa, and his privileging of research that is anthropologically and empirically based and conducted in conjunction with local informants, is rather limiting, since (as prominent scholars such as Kwame Anthony Appiah have argued) it merely rehearses a nativist, originary myth of African culture that presumes an essentialized, centered, homogenous African subject of which the historian, like Epprecht, or the ethnographer, supposedly has direct and unfettered access. Epprecht's premise that only work that is produced in Africa and is informant-based bears the mark of African authenticity masks completely the all-too-evident political fact that such fantasies of authenticity are used by some governments in Africa to stigmatize and oppress those who are marked by differ-

ence (including lesbians, gay men, and other sexual dissidents) and thereby marginalized.

There are also several factual errors in *Heterosexual Africa* that need addressing. In chapter 3 Epprecht attempts a critique of psychoanalytic readings of Shaka, the nineteenth-century Zulu leader, who has been mythologized as hypermasculine, heroic, cruel, barbaric, misogynistic, and most recently (though dubiously), as queer. Yet any actual discussion of Shaka is occluded by a completely misguided summary of Freud's ideas on homosexuality. Epprecht asserts that while Freud may have seen homosexuality as a natural phenomenon, he "nevertheless still clearly regarded homosexuality as *something* that could and should be avoided. . ." (69; emphasis added); yet Freud's views on homosexuality, as with his views on other aspects of sexuality, shifted significantly over time and were not reducible to an either/or view around pathology. It is also important to pay attention to Freud's stress on contingency, rather than relying on the dogma that is often attributed to him. Freud states quite clearly in his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* that heterosexuality is not clinically proven to be psychologically healthier than homosexuality. Further, Epprecht gets the diagnostic history of homosexuality in the U.S. wrong; contrary to his claims, Freud did not prepare the ground for new forms of scientific stigma in the 1950s. Rather, psychoanalysts such as Socarides, Bieber, and others willfully ignored Freud's theory on the etiology of homosexuality as based on both constitutive as well as early environmental factors; instead these psychoanalysts quite deliberately decided to focus only on early familial relations, especially between the child and the mother or primary caretaker, as a way of preventing a homosexual outcome. While Epprecht's stated purpose is to propose a link between psychology and colonialism and to critique attempts to apply Freudian psychoanalysis to Africa (which would have been an interesting point to develop), his analysis is compromised by a reduction of Freudian theory to simplistic glosses and cliché.

In the chapter on the history of HIV/AIDS in Africa, Epprecht links racist assumptions about African sexuality, inherited from colonialism, with tropes of African sexual decadence in early biomedical research, citing Cindy Patton's *Inventing AIDS* (Routledge, 1990). Yet this work is already quite well known, and it would have been better to cite her more recent monograph, *Globalizing AIDS* (University of Minnesota Press, 2002). Epprecht also should have developed his discussion of the epidemiological differences between HIV/AIDS in Africa and in the West by stating more clearly that women are the largest HIV-infected group in Africa and perhaps theorizing how gender and sexual oppression, while not always reducible to each other, might, in this instance, be intertwined. The chapter attempting to analyze African voices in literature and film sadly ends up being little more than a string of passing citations to authors such as Wole Soyinka and Ayi Kwei Armah, or mere textual descriptions of Bessie Head's *A Question of Power* (Hienemann, 1987) and Mark Behr's *The Smell of Apples* (Picador, 1997). Epprecht wrongly

credits Glen Elder with introducing the term *heteropatriarchy* into critical discourse in his 2003 book *Hostels, Sexuality, and the Apartheid Legacy* (Ohio UP), when in fact the term was actually used well before that in M. Jacqui Alexander's work on women's erotic autonomy in the Bahamas (see her essay in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* [Routledge, 1997]). Alexander herself cites the use of the term in Lynda Hart's 1994 book *Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression* (Princeton UP), so it has had a much longer history than Epprecht suggests.

Another vexing problem with *Heterosexual Africa* is that in his introduction and conclusion Epprecht dismisses queer theory as arising from the gay rights movement in the West and as reflecting Western concerns, neither of which is quite true, and he accuses queer scholarship of submerging African perspectives in a "homonormative" paradigm, which is downright absurd! Yet the central chapters of the book never really come back to this point—it just seems mentioned casually at the beginning and end of the book and is neither engaged nor proven in the book as a whole. While Epprecht goes on at length about how early empirical work on African sexualities considered the subject only in heteronormative, procreative terms, he doesn't seem to understand that this is the very space where queer theoretical inquiry began by problematizing the very assumption of a normative sexuality. Why dismiss queer thinking, when in fact social and HIV activists in South Africa, including such high profile ones as Zackie Achmat and the late Simon Nkoli, have made use of it and have even embraced it? They have done so not to reproduce or mimic Western culture, but to address pressing social and cultural issues in Africa and thereby transform queer theoretical work and produce new sites of knowledge alongside credible social change in distinctively African terms.

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