Imperialism within the Margins

Queer Representation and the Politics of Culture in Southern Africa

William J. Spurlin

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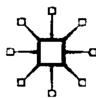

IMPERIALISM WITHIN THE MARGINS
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Dedicated to the memory of
Simon Nkoli

and to David,
again and again

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"Intersections of Postcolonial and Queer Theory" sponsored by the Division on English Literature Other Than British and American. The papers on this session, along with several others, eventually led to an edited collection, and I would like to thank John Hawley for organizing this seminal session at MLA and for inviting me to participate both in the session and as a contributor to the volume he later edited. Both the edited volume, and the session from which it developed, were important early interventions in the relatively new field of postcolonial queer studies. My essay "Broadening Postcolonial Studies/Decolonizing Queer Studies: Emerging 'Queer' Identities and Cultures in Southern Africa" appeared in *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, John C. Hawley, ed., Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001, 185–205. Copyright © 2001 by The State University of New York. I thank State University of New York Press for permission to use some of the copyrighted material from that essay in this book.

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London *WJS*

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Introduction

The dismantling of the structures of apartheid in South Africa since the 1994 elections over a decade ago, and the ANC's (African National Congress) gradual move toward democratization, national reconciliation, and full human rights for all South African citizens, has led, in one sense, to the long and ongoing process of the de-racialization of South African social and political institutions, to other claims of identity and solidarity, and to the exposure and critique of other axes of domination, including heteronormativity and homophobia. The transition from apartheid to democracy has also opened up new spaces of "queer" visibility, identity politics, cultural production, and social critique both in South Africa and in the neighboring region. Though there is now a seriousness about lesbian and gay issues in South Africa in ways that were previously not possible, including a constitutional clause that expressly protects sexual orientation, one must nonetheless concede that material conditions still mitigate against the fullest realization of ANC-initiated democratic imperatives and that the status of homosexuality in the region remains a highly complex and contradictory question.[1]

In October 1995, I was invited to South Africa to present a paper at the first-ever Lesbian and Gay Studies Colloquium held at the University of Cape Town. I was asked to speak on my work on gay African-American writer James Baldwin, and, if possible, to offer some tentative connections to the local context in South Africa. Since, at the time, I was writing a paper on the politics of race and sexuality in the cultural reception of Baldwin's early work in the 1950s and early 1960s, I decided that it might be interesting to see what connections there might be, if any, to the politics of sexuality and race in the aftermath

of apartheid in South Africa. The reception of Baldwin's first three novels, I argued, occurred at the nexus of hegemonic codes of belonging and exclusion prevalent in the Cold War national imaginary in the 1950s, psychoanalytic and psychiatric discourses on the etiology of homosexuality (centered on tropes of failed gender identification in early childhood, gender dysphoria and dysfunction, and close-binding, seductive mothers) in the immediate postwar period following the publication of the Kinsey Report in 1948, and U.S. Black Power representations of black homosexuality a decade later as an aberration coming from the dominant white culture in America.[2] In addition, the heightened anxiety in both the first decade of the Cold War over the security risks of homosexuals, Communists, and other "subversive" groups in the United States, and the redeployment of discourses of betrayal in the 1960s and early 1970s among U.S. black nationalists, where black homosexuality was seen as a threat to and a betrayal of black masculinity, black power, and African-American culture, pointed to a normativization of race, gender, sexuality, the family, and national identity as a means of serving broader political and national interests. What is also implied is an overall strategy of exclusion, that is, of un-belonging, directed toward those who did not conform to socially prescribed, that is, invented, normativities at the time.[3] These bifurcated strategies of normativization and exclusion formed a basis in the paper I presented at the colloquium not only for queer analysis and critique, but also for preliminary explorations of the ways in which notions of race, sexuality, and nation are intimately intertwined, especially within the context of discourses pertaining to "New" South African nationhood that were circulating at the very beginning of the postapartheid era and continue to circulate and undergo reformulation in the present day.

The Cape Town colloquium, which occurred at a deliberate historic moment only a year following the country's first democratic elections with the ANC victory that made Nelson Mandela president, was indeed a very exciting time—the promise of new beginnings and social change was definitely in the air! The presented papers, and the discussions that followed at the

conference proceedings, in the corridors, in cafés, bars, and restaurants around the city, in the newspapers, in the media, and in email correspondence for some time afterwards enabled radical retheorizations and renegotiations of sexuality and its various interimplications through a regime of racial domination that could be traced as far back as colonial rule. Papers by local activists, many of whom were part of the then newly formed National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE, founded in December 1994), which had successfully lobbied for the retention of sexual orientation in the Equality Clause of the new South African Constitution, and, among other things, campaigned for the decriminalization of homosexual acts, called attention to the role of sexual politics in this new phase of transition toward democratization in the aftermath of apartheid, a point upon which this book builds. Several papers pointed out how homosexuality has been long present in indigenous populations in southern Africa, despite claims coming from purist strands of African cultural nationalism that see homosexuality as a bourgeois western import tied to a legacy of colonialism and therefore as inherently alien to indigenous African cultures. This latter position, which racializes homosexuality as a white aberration, seemed remarkably similar, though certainly not reducible, to the stance on homosexuality taken by many black nationalists in the United States in the 1960s.

When I returned home, I finished my essay on Baldwin, which was eventually published in the volume *James Baldwin Now*, wherein I had elaborated what I had learned from the colloquium and what connections I saw between the homophobic reception given to Baldwin and his early work within black nationalism in the United States and readings of homosexuality, within some strands of cultural nationalism in southern Africa, as a remnant of empire. Certainly on one level, I could accept Robert J. Corber's remark that African-American culture can only be tenuously connected to the cultures of postcolonial Africa (177), yet such a claim can also be somewhat problematic if it forecloses the possibilities of comparative analysis across cultures and across national boundaries.[4] While my purpose here is not to write a book specifically on the politics of race and

sexuality in the cultural reception of Baldwin in relation to sexual struggles in South Africa since the 1994 elections, there is a close link to the kind of identity politics that Baldwin professed in ironic contrast to his black nationalist contemporaries who, because of his homosexuality, dismissed him as someone who was alienated from his African heritage. Rather than seeing race, gender, class, sexuality, national affiliation, and other determinants of subjectivity in parallel relation to one another, Baldwin questioned models of resistance and political solidarity based only on one's membership in a particular social group and was interested instead in looking at the ways in which differences are always already socially mediated by other differences and intersect and converge within the social field.[5] The resistance to fixed identities that Baldwin wrote about (especially in response to notions of a uniform black identity) poignantly connects to the wider frame of postapartheid politics in South Africa, which Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron speak to directly in their Introduction to *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Voices in South Africa:* "Asserting a lesbian or gay identity in South Africa is thus more than a necessary act of self-expression [as it often is in the West]. It is a *defiance* of the fixed identities—of race, ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality—that the apartheid system attempted to impose . . ." (5; emphasis and brackets added). It was this key connection that formed a primary impetus for the genesis of this book.

Convinced that the breakdown of apartheid and the attendant struggles for equality across the social spectrum had compelling implications for the study of sexual difference, in the summer of 1996, the U.S. National Endowment for the Humanities funded me to spend three months in South Africa along with eleven other American scholars with research interests in South Africa in a Summer Seminar for College Teachers, entitled "Literature and Culture in Contemporary South Africa: 1948–1994," held at the University of Natal in Pietermaritzburg as a way of beginning initial research for this book. The grant was supposed to provide an opportunity to gain access to libraries and archives in South Africa and, if necessary, in other parts of the region. But as I gradually found

out, since homosexuality, especially interracial homosexuality, was obsessively policed under the Immorality Act and Sexual Offences Act under apartheid (though with varied intensity at particular historical moments), much textual and archival material pertaining to homosexuality in South Africa prior to 1990 had been suppressed and was simply not yet publicly available. In addition, since the display booth for Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) was deliberately torched to prevent the display of their materials while I was in Harare at the International Book Fair in August 1996, locating materials and resources often proved difficult, time-consuming, and, at times, dangerous. In the spring of 1998, I returned to South Africa and was funded as a Visiting Fellow for six weeks through the Centre for Rhetoric Studies at the University of Cape Town. With the help of a dedicated research assistant who knew the archival collections at UCT well, I was able to collect resources not available elsewhere, especially from the Centre for African Studies Library at UCT, as well as at the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg, the Killie Campbell Africana Library in Durban, the NELM Library at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, and the newly formed Gay and Lesbian Archive at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, while simultaneously locating materials "underground" with the help of writers and activists from GALZ in Zimbabwe.

Acknowledging that queer inquiry needs more comparative, historical, rhetorical, and contexualized understandings of "queer," engaging localized questions of experience, identity, and history, in order to better understand specific processes of imperial domination, subordination, and resistance, so much at the heart of postcolonial inquiry, this book, through a specific focus on the sexual politics that have emerged out of postapartheid South Africa, investigates textual and cultural representations of same-sex desire outside of the Euro-American axes of queer culture and politics. Broadly speaking, the book aims to critically read the ways in which same-sex desires are discursively inscribed and culturally represented in academic scholarship on same-sex bonds between indigenous people in southern Africa, in nationalist discourses (especially pertaining to "New"

South African nationhood), and in the tension between global narratives on HIV/AIDS in Africa and local narratives and practices of prevention and treatment surrounding HIV/AIDS in southern Africa. But at the same time, this book argues that the cultural production of queerness in southern Africa is neither reducible to, nor to be subsumed under, western queer identity politics and cultural representations, but may very well resist them. Finally, the approach of the book examines South Africa's ongoing transition from apartheid to democracy as a queer space, through cutting across several boundaries—disciplinary, national, and historical—and through shifting continually between textual *theory* and the specific cultural *context* of the "New" South Africa, reifying neither as the more privileged site of knowledge production, but asking how their encounter, and the gaps that occur in their interchange, might produce new thinking about both sites, in addition to the theoretical production of new spaces of heterogeneity and (queer) difference—what David L. Eng has termed as "the emergence of a spectrum of new social formations and identities" (4) in the late twentieth/early twenty-first century.

The theoretical frame of the book will be discussed in more detail in chapter 1, but with these preliminary thoughts in mind, *Imperialism Within the Margins* raises and addresses the following general questions: What is the role of the politics of (homo)sexuality in the shifting debates on difference and democratic community in the "New" South Africa, where previously marginalized voices have been claiming (and continue to claim) subjectivity, cultural legitimacy, political viability, and equality under the law? What are the reverberations of postapartheid struggle in other parts of the region? How might a study of historical and cultural representations of sexual differences in southern Africa help further diversify representations of queer subjectivity as a social position, always already mediated by and affecting race, gender, social class, and geopolitical spatialization? How might academic historiographies on southern African indigenous sexualities be reread through the lens of recent and ongoing political shifts in contemporary South Africa, and, where appropriate, through the lens of queer

theory without setting up "queer" as a sovereign discourse, but using it to call attention to the possible trace of heteronormative assumptions in these studies? How might a study of queer cultural and political practices among indigenous Africans in the postapartheid context of South Africa help contribute further to a critique of nationalist claims in the region that read homosexuality as alien to African identity and culture, while, at the same time, articulating a critique of the colonizing impulses of queer identity politics in the West? How might recent efforts of (re)reading queer desires, subjectivities, and imaginaries transnationally help further question the nation-state as the object of study in postcolonial studies, and, as Povinelli and Chauncey note, more critically analyze how normative discourses interpellate individuals into gendered social orders, hegemonically imagined, that produce subjects of gender and the trajectory of their desire (444)? More broadly, and borrowing from Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, is it possible to rethink nationhood and national belonging, citizenship, ethnicity, and sexuality in nonhierarchical, nonheteronormative, and nonpatriarchal terms (13)? How are struggles for erotic autonomy in southern Africa connected to broader struggles toward decolonization? These questions, and the study overall, provide an urgent opportunity not only for comparative study of sexual identities and practices, but for an engaged and much-needed critique of the long-present *heterosexist* biases of postcolonial studies and the *western* biases of academic queer theory.

Examining South Africa's transition to democracy at the innovative conjunction of postcolonial and queer not only enables a necessary queering of postcolonial studies and an equally important decolonization of queer studies as I have just suggested, but also acknowledges and critiques, as I argue in chapter 1, other systems of domination and subordination that were implicated within the system of apartheid in addition to racism. Similarly, such an approach avoids a preoccupation with, or reification of, sexual difference alone, but is one way of bringing the politics of sexuality more to the forefront of critical discussion within South African struggles for democracy, while

simultaneously bringing attention to the ways in which academic queer theory may be complicit in reproducing the hegemony of western scholarship. More important, the book's approach, evident in its title, implies a reconceptualization of center-periphery relations and a queering of social, not just sexual, space to the extent that peripheries are not merely the binary opposites of centers of power (the West, the Euro-American axis, heteronormativity, global markets and economies, etc.) but can both contain new, or quite possibly similar, forms of hegemonic power within them, as well as sites of supplementarity that cannot be wholly contained under the more traditional center/peripheral, West/East split. The shifting significations of center-periphery relations are made evident in this book through its analysis of the AIDS pandemic in South Africa, its analysis of African cultural nationalism and its effects on dissident sexualities in the region, and its examination of received scholarship on indigenous nonheteronormative sexualities in southern Africa, where a heteronormative lens for interpreting them may require further interrogation. This approach also raises implications for the scholar working in postcolonial queer studies, questioning if it is possible to occupy an intellectual space between discursive colonization and authorization on the one hand (thereby reproducing the hegemony of western scholarship), and paralysis and silence on the other (by assuming that any engagement with postcolonial texts and cultures will appropriate the voice of the nonwestern, indigenous other) so that inquiry into the urgency of the social and political issues at stake is not foreclosed.

Chapters 2 and 3 analyze and critique historiographic and anthropological work on same-sex desires amongst indigenous Africans in the region, which, in accordance with Foucauldian approaches, accounts for the influence of history and culture in understanding same-sex erotic attachments between male migrant workers on the South African gold mines of the Witwatersrand and in the affective and erotic ties between Basotho women in Lesotho. Yet, I argue that these studies undertheorize the axis of desire and the potential of the same-sex bonds in question to disrupt heteronormativity as a fixed,

self-evident political regime rather than simply being subsumed under it. Chapter 2, for instance, acknowledges the highly important contribution of seminal studies by T. Dunbar Moodie and Patrick Harries for situating the so-called "mine marriages" between indigenous African men within a specific set of historical, social, economic, and ideological conditions, including racial domination, exploitative labor systems, apartheid capitalism, and the perpetuation of rural economic and kinship structures, as a way of democratizing the past. These studies have pointed usefully to the ways in which indigenous sexualities have been encoded through a culturally and historically different set of codes, systems, and meanings and cannot, therefore, be reduced to western understandings of sexual identities. But by allowing the axis of desire to be obscured by analysis of other social categories and axes of domination, both studies, I argue, still participate somewhat in the distortion of insurgent sexualities of the past and contribute to the erasure of their subversive potential by denying the miners in same-sex marriages sexual agency and erotic autonomy. By sanitizing sex between men through the problematic insistence that the miners in the marriages rarely engaged in anal intercourse, and, for the most part, practiced nonpenetrative exterior coitus as commonly practiced by young heterosexual couples prior to marriage in traditional African societies, and by reading the marriages as a close replication of intergender and social relations in rural homesteads (tied to bride wealth and the resistance to proletarianism), I argue that the goal of democratizing the past falls short since the studies fail to address the marriages as new spaces of indigenous (sexual) difference.

Another aspect of same-sex desire within indigenous African societies that has been given attention in academic scholarship is the affective and often erotic bonds between women in Lesotho. Judith Gay, whose well-known study of Basotho women first appeared in the *Journal of Homosexuality* in 1985, similar to Moodie and Harries, accounts for the specificities of culture and history (including, for instance, kinship structures and the effects of colonization and the male migrant labor system on rural women) in understanding the same-sex bonds

that Basotho women initiate and sustain over time. But Gay is adamant about the crucial difference of gender in understanding these relationships, and she argues that, unlike the male marriages between miners in Moodie's and Harries's studies, same-sex bonds between Basotho women are not differentiated from heterosexual marriage (that is, engaged in when the opposite sex is not available) but are compatible with and occur alongside it. Yet, while her study also seems well-grounded in Foucauldian paradigms given her attention to the specificities of history and culture, and while she argues that the relationships challenge the hetero/homo opposition in the West, Gay's conclusions, structurally similar to those of Moodie and Harries even though the content is slightly different, are also problematic in that she, too, shortchanges analysis on the axis of desire by pointing to the growing recognition of bisexuality in the psychosexual literature in anthropology, which is supported in the study of nonwestern sexualities like her own. Does bisexuality really challenge the sex and gender codes of the West? On the other hand, pushing analysis of the axis of desire further, as I attempt to do in chapter 3, points to the difficulties of using western terms for same-sex desires, especially "lesbian," to describe them in indigenous contexts, given western preoccupations with visible difference (through, for instance, crossing gender as a paradigm for gender, sexual, and political subversion), and given the failure of western feminist and queer scholarship to read the domestic sphere as nothing other than a space for fixed gender roles and sexual oppression. Is it possible not to lose sight of indigenous sexual differences by resisting their discursive appropriation by the West through accounting for the specificities of cultural and historical contextualization, while, *at the same time*, exposing the traces of heteronormative thinking by subjecting the axis of desire to further scrutiny in order to question facile assumptions of bisexuality and unsettle cultural nationalist myths of nativism that locate same-sex desire in the western other?[6]

While it is important to deconstruct the rubrics of nation and nationalism as well as rethink the relations between citizens and nation-states (Braziel and Mannur 7), another premise of this

book is that in our rush to theorize diaspora and transnational movements as the more radical sites of inquiry that help destabilize the homogenizing effects of the power of the nation-state, one cannot simply obliterate the specificity of local and national contexts because their careful examination can be effective in making legible sites of indigenous difference that have been erased or elided by colonialism, nationalism, or other forms of imperialism. Yet, at the same time, this need not imply that the mere social inscription of indigenous difference(s) is sufficient or that further elaboration and differentiation beyond the local realm are unnecessary. Further, within the specific context of South Africa, it is important to ask how the politics of sexuality are inscribed within emergent discourses of nationalism and national belonging. Acknowledging that nationalism is an invention, based on a social and political history of Europe grounded in post-Enlightenment thinking and then displaced into ideologies of national identity in particular postcolonial nation-states where it did not emerge historically, the development of postcolonial nationalisms, according to Partha Chatterjee, is not merely a political response to the historical realities and material effects of colonial power, but is also a double-edged struggle both to acknowledge and imitate western influence in the material domain of the nation while preserving the distinctiveness of the so-called "spiritual" or "inner" domain of national culture that must be protected from imperial intrusion (*Nation and Its Fragments* 6). While dissident sexualities are not specifically mentioned in Chatterjee's analysis, and while it is important not to reduce all postcolonial nationalisms to homogeneity, Chatterjee's point is significant as it illustrates the ways in which nationalism often slides from a strategy of opposition (to imperial power) to one of political oppression (of women's rights, of feminism, of homosexuality).

With this in mind, chapter 4 examines the implications of Chatterjee's theory for sexual politics in the "New" South Africa (and, where appropriate, the effects in the region), a politics that must remain framed within a history of colonial and racial domination, within a juridical frame of social transition after apartheid, and within a discursive frame of new and

emergent narratives of South African nationhood. Examining the homophobic rhetoric surrounding the defense of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela at her 1991 trial concerning her role in the abductions and beatings of several black youths in order to save them from the alleged homosexual advances of a white minister, and the tirades in nearby Zimbabwe against black homosexuality by President Robert Mugabe and his supporters who have similarly made rhetorical use of cultural nationalism to argue that homosexuality is a vestige of empire, the chapter acknowledges that lesbians and gay men in the "New" South Africa have had to frame their claims to equality within narratives of new nationhood, but asks to what extent nationalism can simultaneously disavow their status as subjects and as citizens and deny them erotic autonomy. In this regard, to what extent is nationalism, as Spivak asks, "a displaced or reversed legitimation of colonialism" (*Postcolonial Reason* 62), or, as Homi Bhabha notes, a strategy of social reference and an apparatus of power that *invents* national cohesion through citing selective and repetitive cultural shreds to invoke and sustain the signs of national culture ("DissemiNation" 293–294)? Is the inner domain of national culture of which Chatterjee speaks *necessarily* heterosexual? How can "queer," as a mode of critique and as a political praxis, disrupt narrative strategies of totalization that appeal to the trace of a "pure" originary culture (that supposedly existed prior to the colonial encounter) by exposing the gaps and internal inconsistencies of such narratives, while at the same time calling attention to the difference of sexual politics and sexual struggles in specific nonwestern locales?

Moving beyond local, national, and regional spheres, chapter 5, "Sexual/Cultural Hybridity in the 'New' South Africa: Emergent Sites of New Transnational Queer Politics," points to the ways in which culture, conceived as hybrid and as circulatorial, rather than as limited to a particular territorial space alone and as usually confined to the borders of the nation-state, can help challenge national cultural hegemonies. I argue that, on one level, new modes of self-representation and the (re)formation of individual and collective identities in the "New" South Africa have been influenced not only through a marked

period of internal social transition based on human rights and equality for all of South Africa's citizens, but also by the processes of transnational human rights and liberatory struggles and resistances recoded in local terms to meet the social and political demands of reconciliation after the lived experience of the atrocities of apartheid. Like "queer," understanding culture as hybrid, as a space "in between," creates more of a global/local tension rather than a privileging of one domain over the other and disrupts and exceeds the coherence of normative citizenship tied to the perpetuation of heteronormativity and to claims in some strands of cultural nationalism that view homosexuality as un-African.[7] The disruption of which I speak is evident in the dialogical tension between globalized representations of AIDS and HIV infection in Africa and localized AIDS activism in South Africa that has radically called into question cultural hegemonies pertaining to racialized ideologies of sexuality in representations of "African AIDS," thus creating new sites of hybridity and difference that have helped transform narratives of HIV/AIDS globally, especially pertaining to local safer-sex campaigns, prevention programs, and accessibility to antiretroviral medication. Moreover, the interventions made by South African queer and AIDS activists in response to the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS have broadened the sphere of international queer politics and have ruptured further the problematic conflation of sexual *identity* with sexual *practice* by exposing the different meanings and values attached to anal sex in symbolic regimes outside of the West. Similarly, I show that local queer and AIDS activism in South Africa has not only called attention to the strands of imperialism within the global management of AIDS, but also has exposed the limits of western imperialism, instantiating the ways in which it still operates within the so-called peripheries but can never fully contain or override them because of the supplement of (queer) difference that disrupts its hegemonic hold.

The book concludes by pointing out how the conjunction of postcolonial and queer, in analyzing the politics of sexual difference in South Africa's transition after apartheid, enables the exposure and critique of multiple, overlapping systems of power

(racial, nationalist, global, heteronormative, etc.) that are often the effects of imperial domination, while simultaneously broadening postcolonial studies beyond colonialism as a primary point of reference and offering greater theoretical insight into the ways in which same-sex desires are constructed in indigenous contexts. Since postcolonial queer theory obviously acknowledges and makes use of Foucault, as this book does, chapter 6 also debates the degree to which Foucauldian-based inquiry is adequate for interpreting sexualities within a framework and history of colonialism and racial domination. In other words, to what extent is Foucault's history of sexuality a history of *western* sexuality that, through his differentiation of *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis*, maintains problematic distinctions between past and present, between East and West, between peripheries and metropolitan centers? What this illustrates is that western theory cannot simply be "applied" to postcolonial locations, and that there must be a continual, ongoing shift, as there is in this study, between textual theory and cultural context, thus implying a hybridization of theory—in an epistemological, transdisciplinary sense through the conjunction of postcolonial and queer theory (and other related disciplines and forms of inquiry), and, more importantly, in a political sense, to the extent that the hegemony of western scholarship is disrupted and challenged, thereby shifting signification and discursive authority to what Homi Bhabha has referred to as emergent processes of cultural *re*location and *re*iteration ("Surviving Theory" 370). Such a shift also disturbs further the center/periphery split by loosening the imperial grip of the West on knowledge production.

Nonhierarchical, noncolonizing explorations of sexual difference, such as the ones theorized in this book, enable necessary reborderizations and new forms of inquiry, whereby postcolonial queer theory both engages and helps transform everyday practices (whether those are represented textually or enacted materially) while simultaneously transforming itself as it engages them. But such explorations also participate in, and potentially help arouse, renewed commitments to a politics of decolonization dedicated to resisting the homogenization of

desire, pointing to the importance of erotic autonomy as part of collective social action against all forms of domination, whether imperialist, nationalist, economic, or global. It is hoped that this book will incite further work on the place of sexual politics within the context of everyday lived struggles toward decolonization, as well as on the place of queer citizenship, and its impact on knowledge production, in the twenty-first century.

CHAPTER 1

Broadening Postcolonial Studies, Decolonizing Queer Studies: Disciplinary Transitions and Social Change in the "New" South Africa

Postcolonial studies, in its analysis of marginalization and subaltern domination, has tended to focus on national identities and borders and the ways in which race, gender, and class are configured within the hegemonic space of the nation, but, until very recently, has neglected seriously the ways in which heterosexism and homophobia shape imperial, nationalist, and global power. The elisions that this historical focus on the nation-state entails are not remarkably different from those elisions of sexuality that prevailed before the rise and influence of queer theory.[1] Keeping in mind Gayatri Spivak's claim that the idea or sheer possibility of the so-called native informant is always already inscribed in the academy as evidence in the production of disciplinary knowledge on the culture of others (*Postcolonial Reason* 66–67), the elision of which I speak may also be symptomatic of the historical tendency of postcolonial studies to assign a more or less static (hetero-)sexuality to the Other. As disciplinary European knowledge, which circumscribes postcolonial studies in the West, has not adequately engaged the politics of sexual difference, queer inquiry has begun to form a site of contestation, of rupture, to the extent that postcolonial studies often reinvents the sex and gender codes of the West that privilege not only heteronormative social relations, but also

a matrix of other normative ideologies pertaining to the body, family and kinship relations, race, national identity, health care, and other social positions, categories, and institutions.

A parallel problem is that queer studies, perhaps most highly developed in the United States, historically has shown little sustained interest in cross-cultural variations of the expression and representation of same-sex desire; homosexualities in nonwestern cultures have been, until very recently, imagined through the imperialist gaze of Euro-American queer identity politics, appropriated through the economies of the West or, at worst, ignored altogether. New and recent work has begun to expose and challenge the emergent hegemonies of western queer scholarship. This study, in fact, takes further the claim made in a groundbreaking special issue of the journal *Social Text* in 1997, entitled "Queer Transexions of Race, Nation, and Gender," wherein the editors, Phillip Brian Harper, et al., (re-) conceptualize queer critique "as a means of traversing and creatively transforming conceptual boundaries" by considering the ways in which sexuality, race, and gender intersect transnationally. This, they argue, helps to free queer theory from an exclusive analysis of the sexual and deploys it as a way of bringing "the projects of queer, postcolonial, and critical race theories together with each other and with a feminist analytic that itself has been a key factor in the critique of social identity" (1) and, in the process, enables a rethinking of *social* space. Yet, if academic queer studies truly aims to politicize and credibly intervene as an agent of social transformation, it must continue to engage in ongoing analysis as to how queer identities and queer cultural formations or collectivities have taken shape and operate beyond the borders of North America and Europe, as well as in the spaces between marked geographical boundaries. By remaining otherwise narrowly Eurocentric in perspective, the discipline not only reproduces fixed demarcations and imperialistic constructions of centers and peripheries, but also helps to underwrite nationalist strategies at work in many postcolonial contexts that read homosexuality as foreign to nonwestern cultures.

To the extent that postcolonial studies has not sufficiently interrogated same-sex desire in its analyses of the effects of

imperial power, and insofar as queer studies still needs to take into account historicized and contextualized understandings of "queer" and interrogate more fully its own metropolitan biases "that explain the absence of *visible* lesbian and gay movements . . . as a defect in political consciousness and maturity" (Alexander 69; emphasis added), the transition in South Africa from apartheid to democracy provides a salient site of analysis for broadening the scope of postcolonial studies, decolonizing queer studies, and therefore addressing a wider range of differences. If queer theoretical inquiry is truly committed to the widest possible proliferation of social differences and to the destabilization of social norms and analytical categories proffered by hegemonic discourses, then the cultural history pertaining to the transition toward the fullest possible understanding and practice of democracy after apartheid in the "New" South Africa provides new and fertile ground not for an imposed queer analysis coming from the West, but for a radical *re*vision of the critical optic through which queer scholars read sexuality and other sites of difference, a point to which I shall return shortly. In other words, I am interested in asking what the effects of political transition and the study of sexual difference in South Africa might imply for a broadened scope of inquiry at the nexus of postcolonial and queer studies. At the same time, the rush to theorize dissident sexualities in transnational terms and to account for the emergence of new social formations of same-sex desires, though important, may potentially risk obscuring or overriding the histories and cultural specificities of lived experience and material existence in local contexts and how these might impinge on western understandings of sexual difference. This is not a privileging of the local or national sphere over the transnational, but is to acknowledge a history of erasure of indigenous sexual differences by a variety of imperialist moves, both past (territorial colonialism) and present (some strands of cultural nationalism, discursive colonization in western queer, feminist, and postcolonial scholarship). At the same time, indigenous differences need not be confined to local or national spheres alone, but can be further theorized and elaborated in transnational contexts.

While the dismantling of the structures of apartheid has created the possibility for the de-racialization of South African political and social institutions in juridical terms, it has also enabled other claims of identity and solidarity and has exposed other nodes of social organization and domination. In this sense, cultural analysis of the transitional phase from apartheid to full democracy in the aftermath of apartheid in South Africa, borrowing from Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, refers not only to the constitutional end of apartheid, but also to the analysis and critique of those other systems, in addition to racism, that "were implicated in and supported the ideological machinery of apartheid" (2), including sexism, homophobia, language bias, social class, and nationalism among others, which, I would argue, marks the transitional phase as a *queer* space of analysis. Traditionally in postcolonial literature and cultural work, sexual difference, when it does appear, has signified, in a metaphorical sense, a political relationship between colonizer and colonized; that is, (homo)sexual difference functioned as a signifier to mark relations of power and subordination. As Rhonda Cobham explains, referring to indigenous African novelists' use of homosexuality in their works, the signifier "homosexual" can be read as an internalization of orientalist discourses through which the subaltern "Other" is constructed as feminine as a way of *representing* discursively the power relations between Europe and its colonies (47).[2] In contrast, my usage of the term "queer" denotes an oppositional mode of analysis and political praxis that operates against the normalizing ideologies of nationality, race, gender, class, as well as sexuality, all of which marked, to varying degrees, the apartheid era, and, as I shall discuss throughout this book, have not been totally eradicated within the frame of the so-called "New" South Africa despite juridical change.[3] As queer political and cultural practices, particularly in South Africa, have deliberately sought to resist (more overtly and publicly now than in the past) what Phillip Brian Harper refers to as " 'sexual orientation' as a primary identificatory principle uninflected by the pressures of other subjectivizing factors" (26), the term "lesbian and gay," insofar as it is restricted to a politics of sexual

identity and sexual politics alone, may not always be sufficient to describe them. Certainly my usage of the word "queer" to describe a political mode of analysis and action within the very specific context of South Africa is not an appropriative one; Mark Gevisser, for instance, in the collection he coedited with Edwin Cameron, entitled *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, has pointed out that gay men, lesbians, and other sexual dissidents in South Africa have self-identified as queers, dykes, lesbians, gays, "moffies" (a local term to describe homosexuals, originally used with derogatory intent, but, similar to the word "queer," today reclaimed as a term of empowerment), etc. (17). I enclose the word "queer" in scare quotes here and earlier as a reminder that the term, while influenced by and not entirely removed from western queer identity politics and cultural practices, is not reducible to them.[4] In postapartheid South Africa, the term has particular political cachet as a resistance to fixed identities and social normativities that are part of the legacy of state-sanctioned racism.

In this sense, the tension in the dialogical interfacing of postcolonial and queer analysis within the context of South Africa can be productive of new sites of heterogeneity and difference and enable further questioning of the boundaries that demarcate identities (racial, sexual, gendered, national) and disciplines (postcolonial studies, queer studies, African studies) as well as contribute, along with feminism and postcolonial studies, to the dismantling of the more traditional, yet still operative boundary between intellectual inquiry and social activism. Not only does postapartheid South Africa provide a fascinating shift away from the fixity of discrete boundaries, it also questions the validity of the nation-state as the self-evident object of analysis in postcolonial studies, bringing the political pressures of hybridity, diasporic migration, transnationalism, and globalization to bear on the idea of ("New") South African nationhood, which will be discussed more specifically in chapter 5.[5] Yet the attendant social changes that have emerged in the New South Africa remind us that apartheid and antiapartheid struggles are not reducible to race alone. Though one must acknowledge, but in no way diminish, the violence of state-enforced racism under apartheid,

it is similarly important, as Attridge and Jolly and others have argued, not to fetishize race and subordinate other struggles under racial ones; what has been overlooked within the overwhelming framework of antiapartheid struggle, they note, are narratives of women and homosexuals (12). Is the relation of colonizer/colonized, which is so central to postcolonial inquiry, reducible solely to a racial opposition? Furthermore, as Jolly points out elsewhere, the easy division of the white/black opposition is not always congruent with that of colonizer/colonized on the axis of race and disturbs D.E.S. Maxwell's categories of settler and nonsettler colonies in the postcolonial world (21), categories that reinforce the problematic congruency. South Africa, for instance, is a settler colony, whereby white settlers (Afrikaners) wrote, as Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin explain, of exile, the problem of finding and defining "home," and the physical and emotional confrontations with the so-called new land in their literature and were colonized by the British, culminating in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902.[6] Texts by black South African writers, on the other hand, are closer, but certainly not reducible, to nonsettler postcolonial literature and writing. Though the texts in question might touch on themes of dispossession, cultural fragmentation, colonial and neocolonial domination, and postcolonial corruption within the nation-state, similar to writing in other parts of Africa with a history of imperialism, the more compelling matters of race and personal and communal freedom under a repressive white regime tend to be more immediate (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 27).[7] While these specific historical differences need to be taken into account, it is important not to recreate race as spectacle in South African postapartheid politics since it was precisely this fetishization of racial difference that created and sustained the apparatus of apartheid in the first place. In other words, as Jolly argues, postcolonial critics must refuse "to hypostatize South Africa as the model in which the colonized black and the settler white eternally confront each other in the 'ultimate racism' " (22) so as not to miss other sites of difference. However, by positioning myself in the interstices between postcolonial and queer inquiry, I do not intend to

argue for a shift of sexuality from the margins toward the center of inquiry in South African or postcolonial scholarship. While a foregrounding of sexuality may be somewhat necessary, given a historical elision in postcolonial studies, not to mention the hostility sometimes aroused when any attention is given to non-heteronormative sexualities in postcolonial contexts, such an interstitial positioning allows for the possibility of critique of the Eurocentric biases of queer studies and broader articulation of the emancipatory possibilities of both disciplines; inasmuch as both postcolonial and queer studies speak to the importance of breaking down oppositions and boundaries, they also need to question further their own. Moreover, questioning "the relation between hegemonic (U.S.) cultural transmissions [of queer] as they intersect with indigenous or colonized formations of sexual identity" (Hawley 10; brackets added), while asking how these hegemonic transmissions are altered through the intersection, might better enable articulation of possible sites of coalition between the West and the developing world that resist broader, transnational hegemonies pertaining to heteronormativity, race, gender, class, nationalism, and global domination.

But the idea of a more or less excluded, marginal position in postcolonial contexts (such as gay or lesbian positions) straightforwardly moving toward the center risks an undifferentiation of the margin as well as leaving unquestioned the political efficacy of such a move. To see the margin merely in opposition to a center is not only reductive and simplistic, it reinvents the modernist gestures of western philosophy and epistemology that maintain a self/other split without questioning the interpretive authority of the metropolitan center to enact the gesture in the first place, much less make it stick. According to Homi Bhabha, the story of modernity is "about the historical construction of a specific position of historical enunciation and address" (Bhabha, "Race, Time and the Revision of Modernity" 201; qtd. in Pratt 27). It is important, therefore, for postcolonial and queer studies, as self-designated postmodern interrogators of the legitimacy of modernity, to examine carefully their own complicity in (re-)appropriating

modernity as a form of imperialism that sets up other problematic center-periphery oppositions as they claim marginality for their particular objects of study, since, as Mary Louise Pratt reminds us, the idea of modernity was one of the chief tropes through which Europe constructed itself as *the* center and the rest of the world as its periphery (27). This book, through its very title, attempts to avoid the simplistic conceptions of centers in pure opposition to margins, not by denying the influence of western knowledge and culture on the rest of the world, but by recognizing that the flow of power and influence is never unidirectional, and that just because western scholarship and political practices often construct the non-West as peripheral, and therefore in a negative relation to power and knowledge in general, the center-periphery opposition is never quite that simple, never quite played so "straight." Margins can be conceived of as excluded subject positions that need to be brought closer to the center of the power structure, but as Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks points out, marginality can also be thought of as the irreducible remainder, the constitutive outside of power, that is, an intimate alterity that marks the *limit* of power, functioning "as the residue of representation, which is discerned when the other is presented [under a modernist paradigm] as immediately available in its truth and essence" (13; brackets added). To assume an undifferentiated notion of center-periphery relations, and to conceive of marginality monolithically as a homogenous powerless entity not only suppresses differences and the heterogeneity of the subjects in question, but denies them political and historical agency, a theme that also runs throughout this book. This does not imply that one can neglect to address the material realities of oppression and violence under such regimes as apartheid, but, as Seshadri-Crooks envisions, that postcolonial (and queer) studies continually rehearse the conditions for the production of their own discourses and rethink marginality not only as exclusion, but as the limit of western discursive productions (18). This book is one step in that direction and conceives of nonwestern geopolitical location not as a single undifferentiated or self-evident space but, as R. Radhakrishnan

puts it, as a multilayered reality "overdetermined by diverse cultural and political flows" (56). If we understand knowledge and culture as highly mediated rather than as self-contained essences, this implies not only a unidirectional flow of power or a relation of dependence on the part of the periphery, but also the production of new sites of supplementarity that cannot be wholly contained under the traditional center/margin split. In other words, to be marginal or peripheral is not to be completely isolated or disconnected from a center, but is to be intimately connected, as Pratt notes, in meaningful ways that are local, which does not mean that peripheral positions only see part of the picture, but view the world instead from a particular epistemological location that is *not* a center (30), from a position that is quite possibly "queer."

Such rethinking of center-periphery relations has been useful, for example, in understanding the politics of the AIDS pandemic, particularly in affected places that are outside of the West, which I discuss in relation to South Africa in chapter 5. Researchers, activists, and clinicians in South Africa have been instrumental in helping their cohorts in more economically and politically empowered parts of the world rethink western assumptions of HIV transmission, sexual identities and practices, and treatment and prevention programs, which often become globalized but elide the specificity of the ways in which these may operate, even shift, in particular local contexts. This also calls into question the received wisdom, or the paralysis that may be thought to result, if one assumes that it is not possible to understand any situation in which one has not had direct experience. Cindy Patton's work on global AIDS has shown that by not holding exactly the same forms of knowledge about other places as we do about our own, what has been learned about local knowledge can and has influenced global policy on AIDS and has enabled a broader understanding of the pandemic and the range of responses that are possible to it.[8] On the other hand, this does not exonerate us from the responsibility to pay careful, self-reflexive attention to the ways in which we apprehend and think about local knowledges and experiences, and possibly codify, reappropriate, and thereby

recolonize, through the use of the analytic categories of the West, knowledge about the developing world.

One of the aims of this book is to question the center-periphery split across multiple trajectories. Despite the transition from apartheid to democracy and the affirmation of fundamental human rights in South Africa's new Constitution, including a clause that specifically protects the sexual orientation of its citizens from discrimination, strains of African cultural nationalism in the region, and in South Africa itself, still claim homosexuality to be an import of empire and therefore un-African. This is evident, as I discuss in chapter 4, in the placards (announcing "Homosex is not in black culture") carried by supporters of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, former wife of President Nelson Mandela, during her 1991 trial when her defense lawyers argued that her involvement in the abductions and beatings of several black youths was necessary to save them from the alleged homosexual advances of a white minister. The same is evident in the homophobic public denunciations of homosexuals by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Sam Nujoma of Namibia, and other politicians who see homosexuality as connected to colonial rule and as defying indigenous African traditions. Despite a history of imperialism in these African nations, the discourse of anticolonial nationalism has slipped from a site of opposition to one of oppression with regard to sexual difference, despite, in the case of South Africa, radical juridical change. But emboldened by constitutional changes in the law, and making use of the rhetoric of human rights often articulated in the West but (re-)framed under local conditions, South African activists have contested state-authored fictions of African heterosexual inheritance by beginning to reclaim insurgent, indigenous nonheterosexual sexualities as a matter of historical record. It is important not only to democratize the present by making a break with an apartheid past in South Africa, but to democratize the past *through the present* perspective of democratization and social transformation, recognizing that indigenous nonheterosexual sexualities have been suppressed, erased from national memory, or erroneously interpreted and historicized, often by western anthropologists, through a

heteronormative lens, as I shall discuss more fully in chapters 2 and 3 in terms of how indigenous sexualities have been figured as a circumstantial response to migrant labor under apartheid capitalism, interpreted as bisexuality, or read as depoliticized because of their lack of apparent visibility. At the same time, while it is important to understand the difference of sexual politics in postapartheid South Africa, the nation-state as an object of analysis cannot be the endpoint of analysis or of emancipatory possibility. Given the immense political influence and power of the nation-state, disenfranchized groups, according to Parker, Russo, Sommer, and Yeager in their Introduction to *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, "have had to appeal to national values precisely to register their claims as political" (8). While juridical change in the "New" South Africa has enabled the social inscription of the claims of those previously marginalized under apartheid, material conditions nonetheless maintain center-periphery divisions along racial, sexual, class, and gender lines, thus making a case for the analytic engagement of other social formations beyond the national as potential sites of transformation.

Another trajectory is one that I have already discussed at length where centers and margins are invented through the disciplinary lenses of postcolonial and queer studies. By failing to address adequately sexuality as a site of difference in its analyses of imperial power, postcolonial studies has played a role in pushing lesbians, gay men, and other indigenous sexual dissidents in the postcolonial world further to the peripheries. Similarly, queer studies sets up new peripheries as long as it assumes the superiority of western knowledge about sexuality without questioning how the encounter with nonheterosexual indigenous sexualities, situated at the nexus of colonial history, race, apartheid capitalism, and migrant labor in southern Africa, challenges western certitudes that play a role in further rendering such sexualities illegible. Yet, at the same time, the cultural, political, and sexual practices of moffies, queers, lesbians, gay men, drag queens, and other sexual dissidents in southern Africa, in rejecting the strains of cultural nationalism I mentioned earlier, do not necessarily accept western queerness as a model or center of influence, but often resist and remain

indifferent to the analytic authority claimed by western queer scholarship, seeing themselves and the cultural world they inhabit as "authentically" queer. In this regard, appeals to authenticity, as Seshadri-Crooks notes, are more *performative* than ontological (11), and hence a form of strategic essentialism functioning quite deliberately as a site of resistance.

A final illustration of dismantling traditional center-periphery dichotomies, looking at imperialistic impulses within the margins without inscribing marginalization solely as a site of powerlessness, is evident not only in local responses to the spread of HIV/AIDS in southern Africa, but also in the responses of South African queer and AIDS activists to global narratives about AIDS, which have often made rhetorical use of racist ideologies of unbridled sexuality among indigenous Africans (and among blacks in general) through the usage of the term "African AIDS."[9] At the same time, tropes pertaining to Africa as a continent rife with disease can be linked to models of tropical medicine and bear the trace of colonial worldviews on health that aimed to protect the white European body from "foreign" infection. Yet activists and those who suffer with HIV infection and AIDS-related illnesses in South Africa, as I point out in chapter 5, have responded by exposing the racism and questionable ethics of pharmaceutical companies that have assumed that many Africans are too poor to adhere to the strict regimens for taking prescribed antiretroviral medications that are essential to fight the disease. Occupying the space of the limits of power, that is, occupying a position in relation to the economic and political power of the West, activists in South Africa have defied patent laws protecting pharmaceutical companies that have refused to make antiretrovirals affordable to those outside of the western axis. Activists, for example, despite resistance from the western pharmaceutical industry, have imported and made available generic combinations that comprise the three separately patented antiretroviral drugs (usually taken separately to manage HIV infection in more developed nations) into a single medication; furthermore, activists have made sure poor and undereducated patients who obtain the drugs, in whatever form, follow the required regime of

treatment. They have also brought to media attention pharmaceutical companies who have filed lawsuits on the basis of intellectual property rights and patent laws, thereby placing profit margins and monetary gain above regard for the treatment and management of the pandemic in poorer parts of the world. All of these interventions on the part of South African queer and AIDS activists have helped to transform the global management of AIDS as well as international drug policies and distribution practices.

Finally, in addition to resisting a reduction of postapartheid struggles toward democratization in the New South Africa to race alone, not forgetting that other sites of difference do bear varying relations to a framework and history of racial oppression, and as part of questioning a self-evident center/margin split in the analysis of sexual difference in South Africa that places peripheries in powerless and dependent relations to the center, positioning myself in the interstices between postcolonial and queer discourses in this study may require more explicit elaboration, though it is certainly implied in terms of what I have been thus far discussing. Through the many different stages of this project, whether as a Visiting Fellow at the University of Cape Town, where I began to more thoroughly research it, or in faculty seminars and colloquia at Cardiff University, where I shared my work in progress for this book with departmental colleagues and with others working in African or postcolonial studies, or within the context of the several conference papers and invited lectures where I spoke more formally about my work in progress, I have been invariably asked how I position myself as a white, queer, western scholar working on the politics of sexuality in southern Africa, especially since I am paying close attention to the cultural history and effects of the politics of sexual difference in indigenous populations. Stemming from a lack of critical attention to erotic autonomy, same-sex desire, and nonheteronormative sexualities as viable forms of resistance to imperialist domination, whether imperialist power comes from colonial, nationalist, western, or global domination, an early primary initiative for this study in its

early conception was to bring the politics of (homo)sexuality more to the foreground of postcolonial inquiry, stemming from the demands of gay and lesbian activists in South Africa to demand equality under the law in the early 1990s, an initiative that became increasingly visible in the early transition to democracy following the repeal of apartheid laws such as the Land Acts of 1913 and 1936 and the revocation of the State of Emergency.[10] As a queer scholar, and as a comparatist, I am not interested epistemologically in setting up queer studies as a kind of sovereign discourse under which postcolonial studies, or lesbian and gay politics in southern Africa, must be subsumed, nor am I attempting to assign a "static ethnicity to the Other"; but I am interested in asking how such an interrogation of these two disciplines together might enable broader and different understandings of same-sex desire and thereby question, put pressure on, and perhaps decolonize assumptions in queer scholarship about sexual identities, politics, and cultural practices outside the West, not diminishing, within the specific context of South Africa, the ways in which these are linked to a history of racial oppression under apartheid. My hope is not simply to bring sexuality more to the center of postcolonial or African studies, nor is it to substitute a metaphysics of presence for historical absence, but is to interrogate critically the legacy of apartheid from another angle that may help shed light on distinctive nodes of social organization and power during apartheid and thereafter in the process of articulating overlooked axes of heterogeneity and difference.

At the same time, I appreciate the claims of Spivak and others that readings of the so-called Third World are always already constructed by hegemonic voices, that is, the idea of an "authentic" native informant is at best a fiction constructed by self-styled academics in the West through the practices of such disciplines as philosophy, literature, history, and the study of culture (Spivak, *Postcolonial Reason* ix–x), thereby foreclosing the possibility of any access to nonwestern indigenous cultures. Recognizing this limitation, however, need not signify paralysis; the question remains (in a comparative approach) as to what the study of same-sex desires, in their discursive and social circumscription

in/by the public sphere in southern Africa, can teach the West about sexual identities, categories, and politics. Operating on the idea that my readings of the politics of sexual difference in southern Africa are put forth as tentative interventions that may stimulate debate and possibly help revise some of the assumptions of western queer scholarship, I would also argue that it would be simultaneously arrogant, not to mention a flagrant begging of the question, for scholars to refuse to engage with texts from cultures other than their own on the grounds that they are too different.[11] Such a position would, as Rosemary Jolly has argued "mask the academy's refusal to confront the demands of an indigenous vision and . . . withhold engagement with that vision from all potential scholars, students and teachers alike" (24), which would equally qualify as an imperialist move.

Rather than assuming that engaging with different texts, cultures, and communities will *only* produce an appropriation of the voice of the Other, we need to also begin to ask what kinds of questions are possible and what kinds of limitations scholarship that responds to those questions might face. Is there an intellectual space to occupy that is not reducible to colonization or appropriation on the one hand, or abdication of responsibility for a sustained engagement with difference on the other? Is it possible to proceed with research on cultures not like one's own, recognizing the partiality of one's own geopolitical location and position and, in the case of the western scholar, recognizing one's complicity (and that of the western academy) in a privileged capitalist world system? I am not implying that these things do not matter or that they can be simply brushed aside, but is it possible to imagine that the positioning of the scholar's "I" in his or her discourse need not, as Jolly discusses, result in a self-authorizing gesture or as a fetishization of self-consciousness, whereby, in the latter case, we become so self-reflexive and overcome with self-doubt that we effectively silence ourselves at the expense of the *political* urgency of the work to be done (25)? The move from apartheid toward democracy in South Africa has multifaceted implications for the understanding of difference, identity, citizenship, culture, and radical social transformation

not only in South Africa, but in a wider global context. Assuming this important political and cultural shift to be solely a South African phenomenon comes dangerously close to western isolationist impulses, particularly those in the United States immediately following World War I, that have largely assumed what happens beyond American or European borders to be of little consequence. As Jolly reminds us: "The task that postcolonial scholars face in the academic context . . . is analogous to the one faced by apartheid in South Africa: the *re*distribution of resources and power necessary to realize an *international* postapartheid future" (26; emphasis added). The political urgency of trying to understand racial and sexual oppression within colonialism, apartheid, nationalism, and globalization as systems of power must go hand in hand with self-reflexivity and acknowledgement of the ways in which the scholar's own position and discourse potentially contribute to those systems without foreclosing inquiry on the intellectual issues and political urgencies at stake.

Following this, postcolonial queer scholarship need not fall into the trap of authorizing or remaining silent but can both "articulate difference as it rehearses communal liberation" (Jolly 25). Similarly, western queer scholarship has been used by South African academics and political activists in their articulations of sexual difference and erotic autonomy, taking into account local contexts, needs, and differences. While this book similarly uses queer theoretical scholarship to critique sexual and other normativities put in place and often enforced by various systems of power (apartheid, African cultural nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism, etc.), its goal is not to appropriate or discursively colonize southern African sexual subjects under the auspices of western scholarship, but is to contribute to and offer possible rehearsals of erotic autonomy and therefore broader democratization, while simultaneously exposing the aporias, the gaps, in postcolonial and queer scholarship produced in the West so as to dislodge and rework knowledge and open up new sites of (queer) difference, a liberatory project in itself. This, then, is part of the task of redistributing resources of power referred to by Jolly through a noncolonizing, *mutual* exploration of difference (26), rather than obsessing about the

adequacy of the scholar's experience or without privileging local knowledge to the point that one fallaciously assumes the scholar to be incapable of understanding any context or situation he or she studies but has not directly experienced.

Albie Sachs, Justice on the South African Constitutional Court, author of several books on human rights, and himself a leader in South Africa's struggle against apartheid, has advocated, in "Preparing Ourselves for Freedom," originally given as a paper at an ANC seminar in 1989, the removal of the massive inequalities that are the legacy of colonialism and racist domination in southern Africa (247). Yet such steps will require parameters that are broader than merely a resistance to white oppression. With its more or less queer trajectory or interrogative lens, this book is one rehearsal of that broadening process, yet only one amongst many others. While the emancipatory implications of the innovative conjunction of postcolonial and queer are certainly highlighted and explored in the pages that follow, the book resists using the West as a model for emancipatory practice. Still, the emancipatory potential of western queer theory and of postcolonial studies as strategies for thinking about social transformation are valuable as tools for social activists, intellectuals, policy makers, and others in South Africa who may choose to use them as such—yet while these tools for inquiry may have developed in the western academy, one cannot deny their transformative and emancipatory potential elsewhere simply because they may contain the trace of western influence.

CHAPTER 2

Reclaiming Insurgent Sexualities: Migrant Labor and Same-Sex Marriages on the South African Gold Mines

In the search for the origins of exploitation and oppression, especially in trying to understand apartheid in South Africa through the perspective of postapartheid politics, contemporary historiography in South Africa, along with postcolonial studies on South Africa largely produced in the West, for the most part, have located same-sex desire within the normalizing structures of heteronormativity, reading it as a temporary aberration brought about by a regime of racial domination and the concomitant harshness of exploitative labor conditions. That is, while the critical attention of historians to colonialism, capitalism, and racism as intersecting and interrelated systems of power has helped to write the black working class into history, focusing on the lived experiences of black working people and their exploitation by the developing market economy (Harries xv), historical work on same-sex bonds among indigenous Africans in southern Africa seems to have been overwritten by the politics of racial and class oppression without sufficiently challenging heteronormativity as a self-evident given.[1] In other words, how are same-sex affective relationships differentially structured in indigenous contexts, such as those in South Africa, where the disciplining of African male bodies through racial domination, first by colonization and then by apartheid,

the development of capitalism, and the organization of migrant labor have produced a different historical trajectory for understanding same-sex desire among male migrant workers in southern Africa not reducible to their gay male counterparts in the West (as historical work in this area has shown)? But to what extent might these sexualities resist heteronormativity or possibly produce new sites of heterogeneity and indigenous difference?

In this chapter, I critically examine historical work on homosexuality among African migrant workers in southern Africa where same-sex relations were largely supposed to be practiced intermittently in the homosocial spaces of labor compounds where men were forced to cohabit for extended periods of time.[2] Specifically I examine and critique historical scholarship on the so-called mine marriages between men who lived and worked on the South African gold mines in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, paying further attention to sexuality as an axis of inquiry while not losing sight of the larger context of racial domination. South Africa's gold mine industry began to flourish in the late nineteenth century in the Witwatersrand, the area both in and around what is today known as Johannesburg. Even prior to apartheid, land acts forced much of the South African peasantry on to wage labor and restricted their movements within cities. Migrant workers, including miners, needed to spend long periods of time away from their rural homesteads and biological families (in the case of younger men) or their own households and families (in the case of more senior workers) and were largely confined to their compounds when not working. Many workers came from other parts of the region as well, especially from Mozambique, to work on sugar plantations, diamond fields, and the gold mines. African gold miners working in the migrant labor system prior to the 1970s oscillated between two modes of economic production—between familial peasant and subsistence production in the rural homestead on the one hand, and gold mining in or near the cities on the other (*Gold Mining's Labour Markets* 6). This meant that wage employment on the mines also helped support rural precapitalist forms of economic production since the miners

would spend their time back in their rural homelands between contracts with the mining industry, thus enabling them to maintain their rural identities outside of the wage labor system, and therefore outside of the cities and suburbs. Yet the migrant labor system and the confining of workers to living compounds during their contracts most likely served the apparatus of racial segregation prior to the institutionalization of apartheid in the first half of the twentieth century, and the very regime of apartheid itself after 1948.

The migration of miners between rural economies and the mines changed in the early 1970s. In 1973, according to the Labour Market Policy Paper entitled *Gold Mining's Labour Markets*, published by the South African Department of Labour, the international price of gold was unhinged from statutory control and subject to market conditions, resulting in an increase in the price of gold and an attendant escalation in profit margins, which effected a major shift in mining industry policies, including the stabilization of the labor force through investing some of the profits into a skilled, highly trained, and more committed labor force (7–8). As T. Dunbar Moodie notes, this contributed to the disintegration of the migrant labor system and brought about such changes as miners working on the mines full time throughout the year rather than moving between their rural homesteads and the mines for predefined periods, the eventual urbanization of miners and their rural families through a sole dependence on waged income, and a modification in family structures and sexual practices as the result of a significant migration of women from the rural homesteads to the townships around the gold mines (*Going for Gold* 158; hereafter cited as *GFG*).[3]

However, the stipulation in Moodie's study that the disintegration of the migrant system necessarily, or even logically, meant a complete or even partial erasure of same-sex bonds between men, as practiced in the mine marriages, and a return to heterosexuality (*GFG* 158) needs to be more rigorously addressed and analyzed. Reducing the history of migrant labor in southern Africa primarily, if not solely, to black resistance to white exploitation on the mines potentially misses other layered

meanings and interpretations of the lived experiences of black migrant workers and subsumes same-sex erotic bonds under the historical and material conditions of migrant labor and racial domination, while neglecting to address potential sites of sexual agency and resistance to heteronormativity as a regime that attempts to align desires under normative heterosexuality alone.

The studies of T. Dunbar Moodie (1994) and Patrick Harries (1994) on the so-called mine marriages between male migrant workers were among the first sustained major works to address same-sex relationships between African men in sub-Sahara Africa. Moodie's study of the marriages of the South African gold mines is largely based on material collected by one of his associates, Vivienne Ndatshe, who, in Pondoland in the 1980s, gathered life histories (which Moodie then analyzed) from men who had worked on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Harries, on the other hand, collected oral testimonies of retired miners in his larger study of the social history of Mozambican migrant workers, some of whom worked on the South African gold mines, while others worked on sugar plantations, diamond fields, and other locations.[4]

Both of these groundbreaking studies are important through their careful attention to historical context as well as through the analysis of their subjects of study in relation to specific social networks. Moodie indicates that the life world of the migrant miners was profoundly homosocial and age-graded (Moodie, "Masculinities" 12) to the extent that men were forced to cohabit for long periods of time without returning to their rural homesteads. His study is also attentive to the social organization of male sexuality on the mines, paying particular attention to the fact that these were often intergenerational relationships between more senior men and younger "boys," known as "the wives of the mines," and that the marriages were highly ritualistic in terms of prescribed gender roles that organized the domestic and sexual aspects of the relationship. Politically, however, Moodie argues that homosexual relationships on the mines were used as resources in the long-standing rural resistance

to proletarianization and the market economy (*GFG* 120). Harries goes one step further by pointing to a much needed critique of binary oppositions that impose a narrative imaginary based on post-Enlightenment ways of thinking; so much so that "sexual relations developed on the mines cannot be bracketed as either heterosexual or homosexual" (*Work, Culture, and Identity* xviii; hereafter cited as *WCI*). These studies are crucial, then, to challenging sites of discursive colonization by the West insofar as same-sex relations outside of the Euro-American axis have a history of being invented through the imperialist gaze of western queer scholarship without sufficient analysis of the hetero/homo split that still structures discourses on sexuality produced in the West. Moodie's and Harries's work also pays critical attention to the specificities of historical and cultural contexts that may have little or no basis in western social structures. How might indigenous same-sex desires produce new knowledge as to the ways in which prevailing social and cultural formations (family, kinship systems) in traditional societies are reinforced or subverted?

Both studies are important, then, for placing the mine marriages within historically specific networks of kinship systems, social power, and economic conditions. Harries notes that *bukhontxana*, or the mine marriages that emerged among indigenous Mozambican workers in the earlier part of the twentieth century, reinforced kin and gender roles and identities in the rural homesteads from which the men had migrated to work, thus providing a familiar or comprehensible structure to a different kind of life on the mines. In addition, *bukhontxana* served as a period of apprenticeship for young male workers to be taught principles of masculine identity within an influential network of male comrades and fictive kin, so that, as Harries argues, the mine marriages were viewed within the community of miners, and at home, as a channel for the younger male in the relationship to acquire fully masculine status and power (*WCI* 206). Moodie's analysis of mine marriages that took place later in the century concurs and points out that the younger partners (or "wives") were not only sexual partners but also provided domestic and personal services that their "husbands" were

reluctant to forego (*GFG* 121),[5] thus suggesting that the mine marriages were modeled on the gender norms of traditional, precapitalist, rural heterosexual marriages, the only difference being that the younger male in the marriage performed domestic services for remuneration, which would help him to earn *lobola* (bride wealth) and therefore enable him to become more rapidly a "real" man back home. Principles of seniority on the mines not only coincided with age and status in the rural home societies, they also, according to Moodie, governed definitions of masculinity and sexual relations in *both* locales (*GFG* 129).

The mine marriages were further imbricated within the nexus of kinship systems, social power, and economic conditions in relation to the larger dominant white society, which decreed that all black men, including mine supervisors, were "boys" in the racist, diminutive usage of the term. The mine marriages, however, could be seen as a resistance to apartheid capitalism, urbanization, and dominant social mores regarding race and, as Moodie indicates, black workers perceived themselves as graduating from being "boys" in their fellow workers' eyes to being "men" with their own "boys" as they gained seniority and experience on the mines (*GFG* 128).[6] There was a power structure on the mines that seemed to reinvent gender relations of male domination and female subordination in the rural homestead, one that simultaneously resisted the stripping away of masculine authority accorded to black men within a racist regime, which was formally institutionalized as apartheid in 1948.[7]

It is important to note that there were subtle nuances of difference, historically and geographically, amongst the marriages between men, but generally the marriages on the mines were strictly intergenerational, assumed to be temporary, and governed by specific rules.[8] Both Moodie and Harries point out that the hierarchical gender roles of male domination and female subordination were reproduced in the mine marriages, with the more senior man assuming a masculine role and the younger male in a feminized position in the relationship and within the wider social sphere of the mines. In addition,

Harries specifically notes that the mine marriages provided emotional and financial security to the younger male in a harsh, adult, masculine world (*WCI* 204). Initially, in the marriages characteristic of Tsonga-speaking migrants from Mozambique, the *nuna* (husband) would take his *nkhontxana* to the concession shop on the mine to buy him such necessities as soap and clothing in order to protect him from the inflated prices novice miners might be charged (Harries, *WCI* 204). But on a broader level within the domestic sphere, a *nkhontxana* would wash and iron the husband's clothing, clean his shoes, prepare tea, cook, run errands, make the bunk, and greet his husband "by clapping hands in the manner of women" (Harries, *WCI* 204). In addition, Harries indicates that gender roles were also "advertised" at parties and feasts. The *nunas* would drink heavily, swear, display bravado, and sing erotic songs celebrating their sexual dominance over women and boys. The younger *nkhontxana* would display markers of femininity by wearing imitation breasts made out of cloth or wood and wear strong perfumes and skirts. They also masked their masculinity by wearing headscarves, using creams that hid their facial stubble, and greasing their thighs to advertize their sexual role (*WCI* 205).

This is also corroborated by one of Moodie's informants, Philemon, a Tsonga-speaking Shangaan man, who had worked on the mines in the late 1940s until the early 1960s and was interviewed by one of Moodie's research associates. Philemon indicates that "wives" were expected to appear feminine:

> They would get pieces of [cloth] and they would sew [them] together so that [they looked] like real breasts. They would then attach . . . strings that made it look almost like a bra so that at the evening dancing "she" would dance with the "husband." I mean it would appear very real. Don't forget that guys used to play guitars there. . . . [Another] thing that an *nkhontxana* had to do was either cover his beard with [cloth] or cut it completely off. He was now so-and-so's wife. How would it [be] if a "couple" looked identical! There had to be differences and for an *nkhontxana* to stay clean shaven was one of them. Once the *nkhontxana* became a "grown-up" he could then keep his beard to indicate his maturity, which would be demonstrated by his acquiring a boy. (*GFG* 127)

These performances of femininity and masculinity obviously are demonstrative of Judith Butler's analysis of gender norms where gender is produced as "the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame" (*Gender Trouble* 43; hereafter cited as *GT*), thus creating the *illusion* of an organizing gender core. By shifting attention away from inner essences and normative assumptions of genders and gender cores rooted in psychology to an analysis of social norms, Butler has directed attention to the social regulations and disciplinary mechanisms that produce the political constitution of gendered subjects. But performances of gender do not come from the subject in a voluntaristic sense (as gender would then appear to be reducible to mere surface), but from the regulatory matrix of discourse that *precedes* it, and which insists that for gender to be intelligible "there must be a stable sex expressed through a stable gender (masculine expresses male, feminine expresses female) that is oppositionally and hierarchically defined through the compulsory practice of heterosexuality" (*GT* 194n). Yet in *Bodies that Matter*, Butler further explains how gender norms operate by requiring the citation or embodiment of certain ideals of femininity or masculinity, yet she concedes that while the matrix of cultural intelligibility is prior to the subject, it is not fully determining of gender either. She writes:

> The practice by which gendering occurs, the embodying of norms, is a compulsory practice, a forcible production, but not for that reason fully determining. To the extent that gender is an assignment, it is an assignment which is never quite carried out according to expectation, whose addressee never quite inhabits the ideal s/he is compelled to approximate. Moreover, this embodying is a repeated process. And one might construe repetition as precisely that which *undermines* the conceit of voluntarist mastery designated by the subject in language. (*Bodies that Matter* 231; hereafter cited as *BM*)

Returning to Moodie and Harries, then, it is evident that the younger "wives," as well as the more senior men who took on the role as "husband," displayed certain culturally and historically specific ideals of femininity and masculinity that were often performed in very ritualized ways, as well as in daily routines, to

the extent that the femininity and transvestism of the younger male, as Harries notes, was regarded as a way of buttressing the masculinity of the *nuna* (*WCI* 206). It would be erroneous to assume, however, that an understanding of gender performativity would be reducible to that of the younger male alone who "crosses" gender. Butler is quite clear that cross-gender identification, evident in the *nkhontxana's* performance of femininity, is one paradigm for understanding homosexuality, but not the only one (*BM* 235; *Psychic Life of Power* 146). But such performances of subordination on the part of the younger *nkhontxana* entail a parallel performance by the *nuna* of a hyperbolic masculinity that heightened his performance of domination over the younger male.

Indeed, instances of gender performativity were evident not only in the dancing and singing on the mines during leisure hours as already described, in the preparation and consumption of food and other public, domestic, and private activities, but also in language through the various signifiers used to position both male partners discursively in "this new symbolic order" (Harries, *WCI* 205). Just as critical to Butler's theory are the ways in which "norms" of masculinity and femininity are inscribed in the idealization of the heterosexual bond. Butler has argued for the importance of retaining a theoretical apparatus that would account for "how sexuality is regulated through the *policing* and the *shaming* of gender" (*BM* 238; emphasis added). In addition to the *nkhontxana's* performance of cultural ideals of femininity, Harries insightfully argues that the performance of *gender* through ritualistic inversion "allows us to unravel some of the unconscious social relations of dominance that are intertwined with *sexuality*" (*WCI* 205; emphasis added). Just as heteropatriarchy in general attempts to regulate and discipline sexuality through policing gender, certain ritualized expectations in the sex act in the mine marriages were very much tied to what it meant to be a "proper" *nuna* or *nkhontxana*. Both Harries and Moodie argue for the prevalence of exterior coitus whereby penetration and ejaculation occur between the thighs as commonly practiced by heterosexual adolescents in southern Mozambique and in other traditional societies in

the region well into most of the twentieth century.[9] *Hlabonga*, more commonly known as "thigh fucking," was practiced frequently by young, unmarried heterosexual couples in traditional African societies and was not regarded as premarital sex per se since the female would retain her virginity and her parents would not have to settle for a lower *lobola*. Quoting archival records from the mines as far back as the early part of the twentieth century, Moodie suggests that the sexual aspect of the mine marriages seldom involved anal penetration but took place externally through "the satisfaction of sexual passions by action between the thighs." The Taberer Report, submitted by Henry M. Taberer and J. Glenn Leary in 1907, also indicated that actual sodomy was "very rare" and "generally looked upon with disgust" (Taberer Report; qtd. in Moodie, *GFG* 121–122),[10] and it is feasible that the lubrication of the inner thighs and crotch by the younger males could possibly have some suggestion of thigh sex as a sexual practice, though it is doubtful that it was the exclusive sexual practice as I shall discuss later. Philemon, Moodie's Tsonga-speaking Shangaan informant, indicates that the " 'husband' [in the mine marriage] would penetrate his manhood between the boy's thighs," but "the boy would never make a mistake of 'breathing out' into the 'hubby.' It was taboo. Only the 'hubby' could 'breathe out' into the boy's legs" (*GFG* 121, 127). The intertwining of gender and sexuality, specifically the regulation of sexuality through specific gender regimes, is demonstrative of the *gendering* of sexual behavior in *heterosexualized* terms, whereby the younger male was expected to play the passive, receptive, and nonejaculatory role. Specific codes surrounding sexual relations in the mine marriages, and the citing of *hlabonga* as the dominant form of sexuality within them, also reveal the extent to which private erotic acts such as these were publicly mediated and socially reinforced within and outside of the culture of the mine compounds.

The comprehensiveness of the studies by Moodie and Harries demonstrate an indebtedness to Foucauldian analysis through the careful attention paid to the vicissitudes of history, and to the location of sexual relations between men in the mine

marriages within a network of social, economic, and ideological conditions. Yet there still seems to me to be a heteronormative remainder in their work that is not sufficiently addressed, and more critical attention could be paid specifically to the nuances of same-sex desire in their analyses. Marc Epprecht, in his book *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, chides me for my earlier critique of Moodie where I suggest that he may not have been attentive enough to the possibilities of same-sex *desire* among the African men studied, a desire that I imply, according to Epprecht, to be "an antecedent to contemporary *radical* queer identity" (66; emphasis added).[11] But I do not concede, implicitly or otherwise, that the partners in the mine marriages are an antecedent to contemporary understandings of queer identity in the West as this would decontextualize and dehistoricize the indigenous sexual practices in question. Further, as I argue in the next chapter with regard to same-sex bonds between Basotho women, in chapter 5 with regard to HIV/AIDS in South Africa, and in consideration of the findings in other postcolonial queer work,[12] many indigenous people who engage in same-sex eroticism do not necessarily take on a gay or lesbian sexual identity and view their same-sex erotic practices as compatible with heterosexuality. But my earlier critique of Moodie, however, is fairly much the same as it is here; it is directed at the causal link he makes between homosexuality, as practiced in the mine compounds, and the forced conditions of racial oppression.

Having said that, then, by interpreting the mine marriages as a close replication of intergender relations in rural homesteads, and, in the case of Moodie, as a temporary aberration brought about by inhumane labor systems and apartheid capitalism, the studies in question overinscribe the same-sex relations among African men with economic and biological determinism rather than addressing the ways in which these relationships may possibly have *disrupted* heteronormativity (rather than heterosexuality per se) instead of simply replicating it. While Harries acknowledges the importance of social history, influenced by Gramsci, E.P. Thompson, and others, to rescue the experiences of working class people from "the enormous condescension of

posterity" (Thompson; qtd. in Harries, *WCI* xv) so as to help bring about a democratization of the past, both studies nonetheless participate in the erasure of any memory of insurgent sexualities that resist, and possibly exacerbate, dominant social relations to the extent that the heterosexual norm is already, in some sense, destabilized by virtue of the same-sex relationships themselves. Further, this historical erasure is not dissimilar from bourgeois nationalist elitism, or, for that matter, from the narratives of territorial imperialism that preceded it, to the extent that, in both cases, as Spivak, in citing Foucault, reminds us, a whole set of subjugated knowledges has been disqualified as inadequate or as insufficiently elaborated (Spivak, *Postcolonial Reason* 267).[13]

To what extent does reading the mine marriages solely as the products of inhumane labor systems participate in the erasure of counterhegemonic memories of insurgent sexualities? Not only do Moodie's and Harries's heteronormative perspectives help serve nationalistic fictions in the region that attempt to reinvent Africa as completely heterosexual "in ideological and material terms imagined and practiced through patriarchy and masculinity" (Alexander 86), but as Zackie Achmat more specifically argues, these studies also attempt "to neutralise the subversive and destabilising effects of sex in the compounds . . . and, through this, to 'normalise' sexual activity, fix 'cultural' identity, and center monogamous, heterosexual relations" (108). Certainly, one must account for, as the studies by Moodie and Harries do, the influence of kinship formations, colonial conquest, racial domination, the development of capitalism (and the concomitant urbanization and prosperity of whites in South Africa), and the effects of all of these factors in the region on the mine marriages. But it is not necessary, nor entirely possible, to read the mine marriages, or the desires of African men for other men, as determined by these factors alone and therefore operating as momentary aberrations that are otherwise simply reflecting heteronormative gender relations in precapitalist rural economies. Nor is it possible to read ethnic or racial identities as fixed through narrow appeals to "tradition" coming from both the informants in the studies as

well as from the researchers. Can one assume, for instance, that after leaving the mines, the younger *nkhontxana* in the marriage, after earning sufficient *lobola*, would simply assume his "natural" heterosexual destiny and return home to marry a woman in any and all cases? The interpretation of remuneration in these studies (as a way of earning *lobola* for the younger partner) was regarded, in addition to the minor detail of the partners in the mine marriages being of the same sex, as the more crucial difference to traditional heterosexual marriages in the rural homestead. But, as Achmat points out, the emphasis on remuneration for the younger partner fails to acknowledge that these marriages, and less formalized forms of sex between men, could not have occurred without the use of the male body as a site of pleasure *in the first instance* (104). Harries does stipulate, but does not develop, the point that to interpret *bukhontxana* solely as the product of enforced celibacy, since sex with women (such as with town women or with prostitutes) was discouraged by mine managers, or as another aspect of the brutalized existence of blacks in South Africa, ignores "the strong ties of affection that bound the partners" (*WCI* 202). The point made by Harries is an important one simply because there are unexplored gaps evident in the research that require further exploration. For example, from the transcript of Mpande wa Sibuyi's interview with Philemon for Moodie's study, Philemon is asked if the men in the mine marriages behaved as if they were married. Philemon replies, "*In most cases* the relationship would end when they would go home for ever, or, as I have explained, when the boy was old enough to start his own family [after having earned *lobola*]" (Sibuyi 58). Perhaps this was the trajectory in many cases, but can this be generalized as the trajectory for all the miners' desires? What about the exceptions, the omissions, the nuances of Philemon's qualifier "in most cases"? To me, this implies that there may have been exceptions to the "fact" that the relationships (or the felt desire for other men) simply terminated when the men completed their tours of duty on the mines and went home to their wives or to marry into a heterosexual relationship.

But rather than develop this point and analyze the marriages through the lens of same-sex desire, Harries focuses instead on the ways in which the marriages were tied to the exercise and acquisition of male power. Whether analyzing the mine marriages as a rite of passage and tying them to the eventual reproduction of male heterosexuality (Harries), or linking them predominately to the forced conditions of racial oppression, capitalist exploitation, and rural resistance to proletarianism (Moodie), both studies, as I have pointed out elsewhere, violently rob those being studied of the agency of their own desire and problematically inscribe the "boy," who assumed the more feminine role in the marriage, as a transferred sexual object that fulfills otherwise uncontrollable male heterosexual desire (Spurlin, "Broadening Postcolonial Studies" 190).

In response to these studies, queer activists in the New South Africa have reexamined research on the mine marriages and have tried to reclaim historically the erotic/lived experiences of male migrant workers that have been subject to erasure or reduction to causation through the effects of other vectors of domination. This work, though more informal than the studies by Moodie and Harries and lacking the methodological sophistication of received historical and sociological inquiry produced within the confines of the academy, is useful as a means to expose and tear the fabric of heteronormativity in the academic studies cited without losing sight of the important cultural and historical specificities, which Moodie and Harries have brought to bear on the analysis of indigenous sexualities. At the same time, these new studies are valuable as a means of inciting further research that pays specific attention to desire as an important axis of analysis in studying same-sex relationships of the past in southern Africa, particularly as practiced among indigenous male migrant workers.

Hugh McLean and Linda Ngcobo, for example, have questioned seriously the embedded heteronormative assumptions in the two extensively discussed academic studies that reduce same-sex relations among male migrant African workers to circumstantial homosexuality through interviewing African men in townships from various age groups who have had sex with

other men and prefer them to heterosexual relations. McLean and Ngcobo question a completely separate analysis of gay sexual practices among contemporary African men in nonurban areas and sexual practices between men in the gold mine marriages. While their assumption exposes an obvious omission of historical context and the specificities of locale (the contemporary South African townships as opposed to the compounds on the gold mines at least forty years before), excerpts from their interviews and a discussion of their findings, published in the essay "*Abangibhamayo bathi ngimnandi*," or "Those Who Fuck Me Say I'm Tasty," acknowledge intercrural (thigh) sex as a cultural precedent in sexual relations commonly practiced between young, unmarried heterosexual partners in traditional African societies, but call into serious question the prevalence of *hlabonga* in the mine marriages and see Moodie's study in particular as an attempt to sanitize sex between men. The responses of the men interviewed indicated that for many African men who have sex with other men, the signifier "sex" functions rhetorically as a synecdoche for anal penetration. McLean and Ngcobo criticize Moodie for representing gay male sexuality "too much like a mechanical and necessary substitute for heterosexual life . . . [making] no real concession to the fact that some men . . . may have enjoyed sex with men or might [have] even prefer[red] it to having sex with women" (166). Why not recognize, then, that when the life histories of the miners were gathered, stronger social taboos and the illegality of sodomy under apartheid could possibly have prevented Moodie's and Harries's respondents from admitting to having had anal sex, much less having had enjoyed it? Moodie's appeal to archival records, such as the Taberer Report, is questionable evidence for the prevalence of *hlabonga* as the primary, if not, the only, form of sex performed in the marriages. It appears that since the report was incited by charges of immorality on the gold mines by Christian missionaries, the report may have cited thigh sex as a way of appeasing the missionaries' concerns about sodomy and other "unnatural" vices on the mines.[14]

Marc Epprecht addresses some of the gaps in the earlier studies (and the Taberer Report on which Moodie's study relies)

by questioning the practice of *hlabonga* as the primary form of eroticism within the mine marriages and by examining not the final report submitted by Taberer and Leary, but the actual testimonies given to them by the miners themselves. Testimonials and transcripts of the actual interviews, according to Epprecht, reveal a slant toward confirming the sexual otherness of African men and of homosexuality. Epprecht writes, "The façade of objective sociological enquiry is immediately belied by the way that the commissioners made known their repugnance for the 'obnoxious and loathsome custom' that they were charged to investigate" (*Hungochani* 68). This supports my claim regarding the questionable prevalence of thigh sex in the mine marriages because Taberer and Leary's approach to collecting data minimized practices of actual sodomy by assuming, as Epprecht notes, that African men lacked the imagination, in their primitive state, to practice nonprocreative sex and must, therefore, have learned it from elsewhere (68). Under such logic, surely the "obnoxious and loathsome custom" referred to by Taberer and Leary above must not refer to *hlabonga* since that particular sexual practice was already customary among young heterosexual couples in traditional African societies. But do the studies by Moodie and Harries, who are not racist and explicitly judgmental like Taberer and Leary, give the full picture given their elisions or failure to question the findings of the Taberer Report more radically, especially on the practice of *hlabonga* as the dominant sexual practice within the mine marriages? Epprecht notes that while most of the testimony given to Taberer and Leary cited thigh sex as the main sexual practice, several respondents claimed that anal penetration was practiced as well. The testimony given by Phillip Nyampule to Taberer and Leary reveals that he participated in both thigh sex and anal penetration on the mines, "on both receiving and giving ends," and that such sexual relationships were not strictly between men and so-called boys (Epprecht, *Hungochani* 73–74). While Moodie and Harries also seem to place too much faith on *hlabonga*, and on references to the erotic acts within the mine marriages as determined by the rigidity of prescribed, age-graded gender roles as a way of differentiating them from

western understandings of gay identity, I agree with Epprecht's claim that having enough references to sexual mutuality and reciprocity is a matter of historical record, and that one must question the absolute rigidity of the older man/youth model that translated into active and passive sexual roles respectively, devoid of anal penetration (*Hungochani* 75). But while this fact is elided in the report submitted by Taberer and Leary, it remains insufficiently elaborated in Moodie or Harries.

Ongoing research among scholars writing explicitly from a deliberate and very broad antihomophobic perspective further questions the imbrications of heteronormativity in the studies by Moodie and Harries. Supported largely by Achmat's critique of Moodie and Harries, and speaking of Epprecht's point questioning the rigidity of age and the aspects of sexual mutuality and reciprocity in some of the mine marriages, Ronald Louw has researched same-sex marriages between African men in the 1950s in Mkhumbane, an informal settlement shantytown in the port city of Durban, just beneath the white suburb of Berea. Through interviewing Khumalo, who was in his early thirties at the time, Louw documents unresearched gaps in the history of same-sex desire in South Africa, arguing that, unlike the mine marriages described by Moodie and Harries, the marriages at Mkhumbane were *not* restricted to intergenerational couplings, the bonds were not always formed for financial reasons as was often the case for the younger male in the mine marriages, and while the marriages did not always last and often involved simultaneous commitments to spouses or partners of the opposite sex, the desires of the men for other men were, in most cases, not transient (15). Rather, it seems that Louw is arguing that the marriages were constituted primarily by desire and pleasure. Following Achmat, Louw asks whether the *city*, rather than the labor compound culture, could also have represented "a new space of desire" (16) or, in Achmat's words, "a network of new pleasures and desires" (106) that possibly disrupted heteronormative social relations while simultaneously producing new identities and a proletarian consciousness that did not simply duplicate imagined myths of African authenticity. Louw's study further challenges prevailing historical assumptions on same-sex

relations among African men and broader nationalist and cultural assertions that homosexuality was practiced simply as a response to harsh labor conditions. Resistances to precolonial traditionalism and postcolonial cultural nationalism with regard to indigenous sexualities create ruptures in the ideological perpetuation of heteronormativity and homogeneous productions of African identity fixed by economic and sexual determinism. To what extent do the marriages between men, in representing "a new space of desire," enact a site of subversion? Do they help to denaturalize heterosexual hegemony as normative?

Butler rightfully reminds us that there is no guarantee that exposing the naturalized status of heterosexuality (here through a focus on same-sex marriages among men in South Africa) will automatically lead to its subversion insofar as any denaturalization can parody but simultaneously reidealize the heterosexual norm (as the marriages, as presented by Moodie and Harries, perhaps on one level seem to do) without necessarily calling it into question (*BM* 231). Earlier I indicated that gender performance is operative in the case of both the *nuna* and the younger *nkhontxana*, though, of course, the crossing of gender occurs in the case of the younger male. While, on the other hand, the marriages might seem to parody or reidealize heterosexuality, attention to the history of desire, to the ruptures and resistances of some of the partners in the marriages to the imperatives of *lobola*, to social reproduction in the rural homestead, and to the ways in which same-sex desire in the specific space of the mine compounds produced new sites of erotic autonomy and sexual pleasures in the specific historical and cultural context of South Africa point to the ways in which the marriages may have subverted an *assumed* or *imagined* regime of compulsory heterosexuality. But a discursive shift in terms of thinking about the mine marriages beyond received ideas about them being a momentary aberration in the face of labor exploitation (a lens which would certainly not be sufficient in reading the male marriages described by Louw in Mkhumbane)—through a reterritorialization of the terms (*bukhontxana*, *nuna*, *nkhontxana*, etc.) and the *context* of their uses—can enact new discursive forms of resistance to received narratives about homosexuality and its history in Africa.

Epprecht's book takes into account the homophobic and racist impulses with which colonialists read same-sex desire among indigenous African men and widens the possibilities for sexual agency by looking at the differences between prescribed ideologies of kinship, both under colonialism and its aftermath, and actual erotic practices. Epprecht accounts for sexual agency in the mine marriages, especially for the *nkhontxana*, the younger partner, to the extent that sexual and emotional intimacy without the gender tensions and performative pressures of heterosexual intercourse may have been more preferable and cost beneficial than having sex with untraditionally assertive, possibly syphilitic prostitutes. In addition, he acknowledges that the homestead communities may have read the marriages as a form of recreational play, male comradeship, or release from the stress from dehumanizing compound conditions (*Hungochani* 77). But, on another level, this last part sounds very much to me like Moodie's study. Epprecht goes on to describe how the relationships "could lead to the development of quite strong feelings of attachment" (77), but he does not develop this fully. He also notes that "for *most* men, the ultimate *desirability* of sexual intercourse with women was never in question" (75; emphasis added). But what about others not named under the "most men" rubric? How do we know such was true for "most" men? Or is "desirability" really the issue; would it be possible to substitute "desirability" with "necessity" given the rural homesteads from which the miners came and the economic necessity of marriage and reproduction to the success of the rural, precapitalist economy? More important, just because the miners in the marriages eventually returned to the rural homestead to marry, or to be reunited with their wives in the case of the older partners, does not necessarily imply that their primary erotic desires or affectional attachments were necessarily or entirely heterosexual.

Reading the mine marriages, then, with a wider antihomophobic lens, rather than allowing it to be overridden by other axes of domination (but not discarding them), not only enables a radical questioning of the labor compound regime as duplicating or sustaining gender and social relations in the countryside,

but, also, as Achmat argues, provides a way of rereading the mine marriages themselves as possibly productive of new spaces of desire and pleasure (not only as a means of securing wealth and status in the economies of precapitalist societies) that exacerbated preexisting class, gender, and age differences in indigenous social formations (106). Were the mine marriages merely a form of resistance to proletarianization and the developing wage economy, or a sexual practice associated primarily, though not exclusively, with temporary migrancy, or could they be interpreted, in some cases, as rupturing prescribed social roles, thus creating new historical possibilities and an important basis for reclaiming insurgent sexualities of the past in opposition to nationalist claims that see homosexuality practiced by indigenous Africans as a product of empire? The studies by Moodie, Harries, and Epprecht reveal a rich discursive system available across several local southern African languages to describe the roles of the partners in the marriages, supporting the idea that insurgent sexualities existed *prior to* the colonial encounter.[15] But what also needs to be challenged further as a way of reclaiming sexual histories is a challenge to assumptions that the mine marriages were merely the effects of migrant labor and apartheid capitalism. As Barbara Bush argues, since the histories of those who were oppressed under apartheid were rendered invisible or distorted to fit in with the myths of those who held power, South African history "is thus a minefield of conflicting historical visions of the past" (132). While historiography in South Africa has attempted to rewrite the subaltern subject through the effects of colonialism, apartheid, and capitalism, studies such as Moodie's and Harries's lack a sufficient analysis of sexual difference and supplementarity and, as a result, reproduce indigenous subjects as irretrievably homogeneous.

In this regard, I am thinking of Butler's example of the use of the term "queer," which, as she argues, has been redeployed and, through this redeployment, enacts a prohibition and a degradation against itself, spawning a different order of values and political affirmations specifically eradicated by prior usage of the term (*BM* 231). I am not suggesting, of course, that we impose the word "queer" to describe the partners in the

same-sex marriages I have been describing, or even as a way of describing the marriages themselves. Rather, one might queer instead the received understandings of the marriages and the attendant terminology, which otherwise reproduce not only heteronormative understandings of gender and sexuality, but also narrow and fixed ideas about rural African identity as well.[16] The subversion lies, then, in the possibilities "of an enabling social and political *resignification*" (Butler, *BM* 231; emphasis added), that is, through new significations of gender not reducible to the gender binaries and sexual practices tied to the idealization of the heterosexual bond, and through accounting for the ways in which gender and sexuality are always already interimplicated, though shifting, to the extent that sexual practices are differentially structured according to the relations of gender in which they occur as new work on same-sex desire among indigenous African men is beginning to demonstrate.

The dominant body of academic research on the mine marriages indicates how the causal and reductive relation between gender and sexuality posited by the regulatory matrix of gender and sexual relations exposes it as a political relation and one that has the power to redirect our understandings of dissident sexualities back into heteronormative terms, insofar as the *nuna* is fixed as the "husband," the younger male as the "wife," and attendant sexual practices fixed without, it seems, the possibilities of gender and sexual flexibility and resistance. Yet, as Epprecht's historical work suggests concerning mutuality and sexual reciprocity within the mine marriages, the regulatory matrix continues to lose its imposing power through the persistence of *other* configurations between gender and sexuality than the causal ones demanded by heteronormativity.

This discussion has attempted to call critical attention to the ways in which historiographic inquiry surrounding same-sex desire on the South African gold mines has situated same-sex sexualities among indigenous Africans at the nexus of South African history, apartheid capitalism, and migrant labor and has interpreted the mine marriages as primarily a resistance to proletarianization, though Epprecht's book does push the

boundaries a bit further by pointing to the heterogeneity and differences within particular marriages as documented by historical record. This work has not been a matter of merely recovering imagined lives and experiences that have been omitted or overlooked, but has examined carefully the ways in which sexualities are socially encoded and nuanced through a culturally and historically specific network of signs, symbols, and meanings. In approaching the historical work considered here through an antihomophobic lens, while not ignoring the importance of cultural context and history, I am not rejecting these seminal studies, nor am I questioning what the informants of Moodie and those of Harries may have said in describing their erotic lives. Having read the printed transcripts as cited in the published research and as archived at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, I am convinced that the method of data collection was impeccable. But I am asking new questions on the interpretation of the data in these studies. How can *present* knowledge inform our readings and interpretation of historical data (such as the testimonials collected by Moodie and Harries), not to cast doubt on the actual testimony given, but to further interrogate the *interpretation* of the data, not merely for the sake of giving voice to queer perspectives, but through responding to the material demands in postapartheid South Africa to be attentive to all forms of struggle across the social spectrum, both past and present, that must, in my view, include the space of the erotic. Further, as this present, pressing condition in South Africa continues to be taken up by historiographers so that their scholarship works to democratize the past, the boundaries of the sexual sphere, the homoerotic, enacted and articulated same-sex desires, need to be widened even further, perhaps in the direction that Epprecht has taken. Situating the signifier of homosexuality as a marginal or causal phenomenon in relation to a critique of such ideologies as colonialism, racism, and capitalism is illustrative of the ways in which academic historiography, in attempting to democratize the past, still needs to interrogate its complicity within the history of imperialism and its privileging of heteronormativity. Queer work, while being mindful of not using queer practices

and queer discourse in the West as a litmus test to appropriate dissident and resistant sexualities elsewhere, can provide a useful lens for the interpretation of historical data and documents through careful and considered speculation on the gaps in thinking as well as draw attention to what is contingent, variable, shifting, and sometimes absent or not immediately apparent, thereby respecting readings of the past as sites of ongoing contestation while inviting further debate on what it means to democratize the past.

CHAPTER 3

Affective Bonds between Women in Lesotho: Retheorizing Gender, Sexuality, and Lesbian Existence

In the previous chapter, I acknowledged how the dominant body of historical research on same-sex relations among indigenous miners, within the system of South African migrant labor, is able to mark the ways in which the relationships are constructed differently from articulated and enacted desires between men in the West. I argued that the marriages between African men who worked on the South African gold mines need to be historically bracketed and not simply "recovered from history" through an analysis of such interrelated systems of domination as racism, capitalism under apartheid, and migrant labor. Yet, while the two major studies on the mine marriages (Moodie and Harries) accomplish this, the axis of desire remains overridden by other systems of domination, and the marriages themselves seem too facilely reinscribed into heteronormative social relations without sufficiently analyzing them as a new space of desire that potentially subverts heterosexual hegemony. On the other hand, while queer studies may provide a useful analytic tool to address this significant gap, it cannot go so far as to produce "postcolonial queer" as a new category, since this would set up a problematic self/other split between the developed and developing world, that is, in this case, between the West and Africa. Chandra Talpade Mohanty

explicitly warned western feminists not to do this two decades ago when representing nonwestern women; such an imperialist strategy would once again risk "a certain mode of appropriation and codification of scholarship and knowledge," this time about lesbians, gay men, transsexuals, and other sexual dissidents outside of the Euro-American axis, "through the use of particular analytic categories employed in specific writings on the subject that take as their referent . . . [queer] . . . interests as they have been articulated in the United States and Western Europe" (Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" 255).

Insofar as queer work, unlike its lesbian and gay studies counterpart, seeks to resist the analysis of sexual identities alone, addressing instead the ways in which sexualities are always already imbricated within other normalizing systems of power pertaining to race, class, gender, geopolitical spatialization, imperialism, citizenship, nationhood, and the effects of globalization and transnational exchange, to name a few, it must maintain difference at the forefront of its deliberations and debates. Further, if culture, understood as a range or repertoire of codes, symbols, and signifying practices that shift in meaning as they operate under specific social, historical, and ideological conditions, a similar shift must also be implied in our understandings of same-sex desire when it is articulated, enacted, or not immediately apparent within these differential networks in non-Euro-American spaces. But in its commitment to the endless proliferation of social differences, queer work must also remain continuously self-reflexive about the more or less privileged discursive position from which it speaks, and its intellectual strategies need to incite simultaneous revision of the lenses through which it reads and interprets desire.

Queer work must also ensure, as I specifically argue in this chapter, that the axis of sexuality, in an analysis of same-sex desire in postcolonial contexts, not obscure the axis of gender so that the *specificity* of lesbian difference(s), which questions any apparent or imaginary parallels between men and women who desire the same sex, is not rendered invisible. As Biddy Martin reminds us, queer theorists tend to see gender differences as constraining, as if they can be overridden by the greater

mobility of queer desires. Yet, such representations of gender, she argues, get "coded implicitly, when not explicitly, as female while sexuality takes on the universality of man" ("Extraordinary Homosexuals" 102). In "Sexualities without Genders and Other Queer Utopias," Martin elaborates by pointing to a critical and political problem pertaining to the evacuation of inner essences and normative assumptions of gender cores in favor of an analysis of social norms and their role in the formation of gendered identities (12–13), a shift in thinking certainly pioneered by Judith Butler, who does acknowledge, I must reiterate, that cross-gender identification is one, but not the only, paradigm for understanding homosexuality.[1] So while interpreting homosexuality only in terms of cross-gender identification is a misreading of Butler, it can have the consequence of conceiving of gender, by implication, in negative terms, that is, as fixity, as something from which to escape. Martin's point is valuable, if, as a result of Butler's thinking, we have mistakenly come to see queerness as *visible* difference, representing greater fluidity, variability, mobility, and differentiation that the "feminine" and the gender-conforming lesbian supposedly cannot (13). The problem facing lesbian and feminist inquiry, insofar as contemporary queer work seems to privilege sexuality over, and often at the expense of, gender is how to render lesbian desire not necessarily as visible, but as culturally legible.

In postcolonial contexts, if queer studies, as it is discursively produced in the West, privileges sexuality as the more avant-garde, as the more volatile site of resistance to normativization over and above gender, it remains even more obviously complicit in reinventing the logic of masculinist privilege that has very much plagued not only colonialist rule, but anticolonialist and postcolonial struggles as well. Queer inquiry can most productively intersect with postcolonial work and with emerging insurgent sexualities in postcolonial locations if it engages in comparative exchange so that queer studies, as it has developed primarily in the West, does not become yet another master discourse of the postcolonial, if it maintains gender and sexuality as intimately entangled axes of analysis, and if it rigorously analyzes sexuality as always already mediated by other axes of

social positioning (race, geopolitical location, class, etc.) in addition to gender.

Judith Gay's study of mummy-baby relationships among women in Lesotho, originally published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* in 1985, provides a salient site for further investigation and elaboration of these issues and for what it tells us of indigenous sexualities in postcolonial contexts. This study is often cited as significant for understanding same-sex desire among women in southern Africa despite some nationalist reactions against it. Queer analysis informed by postcolonial theory may be useful for elaboration of some of the problematic precepts of the study, as I shall shortly discuss, and for challenging its reinscription of the sexual categories in the West.[2] Gay's anthropological investigation of same-sex relations among women in rural Lesotho is important because it argues that the relationships must be understood under the socioeconomic conditions of male migrant labor, a system under which large numbers of men migrate to nearby South Africa to work for long periods of time, thereby increasing, as Colin Murray notes, female economic dependence and the subjection of marital relationships to instability since the migrant system encourages not only prolonged separation but nonsupport by husbands as well as conjugal breakdown and desertion (171). So while affectionate and erotic ties between women in Lesotho certainly need to be understood in terms of the effects of kinship structures (which are rooted in subordination to male authority, child bearing, and child care), colonization, and the effects of the organization of labor on women, Gay is quite adamant that the affective relations between women in Lesotho not be understood in the same way that Moodie problematically characterized sexual relations among men in the South African gold mine compounds, which I discussed in the last chapter, that is, as motivated primarily by sexual release when the opposite sex is not available (112).[3] Gay argues that unlike the mine marriages, the mummy-baby relationships in Lesotho are not differentiated from heterosexual marriage but are compatible with it and reflect fictive *kinship* rather than fictive *marriage* (112).

This is an important distinction as it gives crucial attention to gender difference in understanding same-sex relations in southern Africa, but Gay's assumption that sexual relations between men, as on the South African gold mines, were structured by "the enforced all-male living conditions of South African mine compounds" (112) is, as I have already discussed, highly reductive and deterministic, and it violently robs the miners of sexual agency.

For the most part, "mummy-baby" relationships are always initiated and agreed upon voluntarily; they usually begin in adolescence, but are not limited to pre-adulthood, when one girl takes a liking to another and asks her to be her "mummy" or her "baby" depending on their relative ages. The relationships usually develop through organized encounters and by material and emotional exchanges, such as gift giving and advice on having sex with men.[4] Gay does point out, however, that the relationships are not limited to adolescence; in some cases, they fade in importance as attention turns to heterosexual courtship, marriage, childbirth, and the responsibilities of family life; yet, in other cases, the relationships may be maintained by letters, visits, and gift exchanges, and, especially if the pair remains in the same village, the relationship frequently continues into adulthood. But most importantly, and somewhat similar to and yet different from the mine marriages described earlier, the relationships are a socially *recognized* means within Sesotho culture by which young women can extend the range of their social relations (102–103). Not only do affectionate ties between women usually include an intense level of genital eroticism where women are able to exercise a great deal of initiative and autonomy, unlike the formal rules of marriage, where they are constrained both by the male-dominated family system and the modern male-dominated economic system,[5] the romantic and sensual bonds that women initiate and sustain can continue *alongside* and are *compatible with* conventional heterosexual marriage (111) and can become the basis for a lifelong support structure. Building somewhat on Gay's research from a materialist feminist perspective, and providing a glimpse, perhaps, of the lived experience of affective relations between Basotho

women, Limakatso Kendall has published a collection of narratives, *Basali!*, by and about women in Lesotho, several of whom write about caring for the women they love. For example 'Mpho 'M'atsepo Nthunya, in her piece, "Three Moments in a Marriage" recalls:

> When I was living in the mountains near Marakabei I got a special friend. She was living in another village, and I passed her house when I was going to church every month. One day she saw me and said, "What is your name?"
>
> I told her it was 'M'atsepo Nthunya. So she said, "I always see you passing here. Today I want to talk to you. I want you to be my *motsoalle*." This is a name we have in Sesotho for a very special friend. She says, "I love you." It's like when a man chooses you for a wife, except when a man chooses, it's because he wants to share his blankets with you. The woman chooses you the same way, but she wants love only. When a woman loves another woman, you see, she can love with her whole heart.
>
> I saw how she was looking at me, and I said, "*Ke hantle.*" It's fine with me. So she kissed me, and from that day she was my *motsoalle*. She told her husband about it, and he came to my house and told my husband, and these two husbands became friends too. (4–5)

Attention to the axis of gender in analyses of same-sex desire in postcolonial contexts, given that affectionate and erotic exchanges between women in Lesotho are normative, though not specifically named as "lesbian," enable further sites of theoretical elaboration. While Gay points out that the compatibility of intimate female relations with heterosexuality challenges western insistences on the polarization of hetero- and homosexuality, her anthropological perspective is somewhat limiting politically. One of her conclusions is that "mummy-baby" relationships point to the growing recognition of bisexuality in the psychosexual literature, which is specifically supported in studies of nonwestern societies (111–112). Rhetorically speaking, Gay does not seem very self-reflexive about the ways in which her conclusion is constituted by and constitutes the production of the discourse of anthropological investigation situated in the western academy. She rather uncritically takes for granted the gender and sexual codes of the West, which would include bisexuality and thereby maintain, rather than rupture, the hetero/homo opposition, and she substitutes these codes, which have

not been sufficiently deconstructed, for "indigenous knowledge" about Basotho women. Such a rhetorical move once again brings to mind Gayatri Spivak's critique of the sex/gender systems of the West as a political economy that play a role in the ways in which western scholarship tends "to assign a static ethnicity to the Other in order to locate critique or confirmation of the most sophisticated thought or act of the West" (110). The politics of this reductive move become clear when one assumes, takes for granted, and perpetuates the hegemony of western scholarship and the superiority of its analytic categories—a site of discursive colonization to which I referred in my discussion of Mohanty's essay on western feminist scholarship at the beginning of this chapter. Quoting from Johannes Fabian, Spivak furthers Mohanty's argument by pointing out that often for the anthropologist "[d]ispersal in space [can] reflect . . . directly . . . sequence in Time" (Fabian 12; qtd. in Spivak 109), meaning that cultural spaces outside of the West are often automatically relegated to a status that is less developed or primitive in relation to the West as the standard model for the measure of economic, educational, technological, and social development. The problem with Gay's reduction of same-sex relations among Basotho women to bisexuality, simply because their relations with other women frequently occur alongside heterosexual marriage, assumes unproblematically the usefulness and superiority of the western category of bisexuality, which may not be adequate to explain them. At the same time, closely related to the problem of imposing western frames of reference and categories of analysis, it is important not to simply translate into English 'M'atsepo Nthunya's use of the Sesotho word *motsoalle* ("a name we have in Sesotho for a very special friend") as *lesbian*. The reductive imposition of such terms as "bisexuality" and "lesbian" to understand the emotive and erotic ties between Basotho women enacts further sites of discursive colonization, radically suppressing difference and denying the heterogeneity and the erotic agency of the women in question, particularly if one ignores the ways in which the women themselves describe their relationships using the resources of their own language.[6]

Future postcolonial queer work needs to challenge further Gay's assumptions by theorizing, for instance, as Chris Dunton and Mai Palmberg suggest, whether women in Lesotho, and other parts of southern Africa where affectionate ties between women may be common, draw rigid boundaries between their friendships with women that have an erotic component and those that do not, and between their erotic relations with women and with their husbands (21). Because rural women in southern Africa may engage in same-sex relations without necessarily self-identifying, indeed often resisting being named, as lesbian, it is important for postcolonial queer analysis not to lose sight of how these affective exchanges between women help *re*articulate and *re*define gender, lesbian, and African identity rather than simply reinventing or instantiating the sexual and gender codes of the West. Only by asking first how the erotic ties between Basotho women call into question western identity categories, as well as what it means to be African from an African cultural nationalist position, and by acknowledging that Basotho women may prefer not to use the signifier "lesbian" as a way of describing their felt connections to other women, can postcolonial queer work begin to ask the extent to which these relationships subvert, consciously or otherwise, normative regimes of compulsory heterosexuality.[7]

Coming back to Gay's point about bisexuality, and my own earlier point about not losing sight of the axis of gender, it seems important to fortify further the relation between gender and sexuality as linked axes of analysis in postcolonial contexts because there is often a heightened regulation of sexuality through "the policing and the shaming of gender" (Butler, *BM* 238). In postcolonial spaces, the conflation of "proper gender" with sexual desire often occurs in nationalist ideologies that promulgate "good citizenship" as men's and women's proper (gender) roles as procreating, and therefore, so the argument goes, heterosexual citizens, in the name of nation building. Yet while postcolonial studies has challenged what the limiting and oppressive implications of such ideologies might mean for women to the extent that they could limit women's prospects for education and for work outside of the domestic sphere and

thereby uphold, as Cherryl Walker points out, a dominant ideology of gender (and sexuality) inherited from colonialism and Christianity rather than from indigenous sex-gender systems (25), postcolonial studies has not adequately asked how a causal link between gender and (hetero)sexual ideologies in postcolonial contexts acts as a site of recolonization if it undermines erotic autonomy for both women and men. Affective ties between Basotho women seem to get around this and *both* participate in *and* resist heteropatriarchal imperatives legislated in the name of national development. How do erotic ties between women in Lesotho, and between rural and urban women in other parts of southern Africa, create new sites of political agency and resistance to fixed identities, that is, to fixed notions of African and gender identity promulgated by nationalism, and to fixed notions of "queer" identity rooted in western queer identity politics? What seems to be at stake in both approaches, that is, both the colonial impulses in the nation-state and the imperial impulses of what is proffered as oppositional queer politics, is a preoccupation with what is visible. While affective ties, often including genital eroticism, may be common among Basotho women and are socially recognized as such, the relationships have not been, perhaps until recently, subject to oversurveillance most likely because of the discretion with which they are established and pursued and because of the higher degree of visibility of the women as wives and mothers in traditional heterosexual familial structures. Similarly, on the axis of gender, the women appear, on the social surface at least, to be performing their socially expected gender roles in the first instance, thereby not appearing to threaten heterosexual hegemony. Yet the subversiveness of these same-sex bonds remains a significant question and is one to which I shall return.

The higher visibility of Basotho women in traditional social and familial roles might be seen as providing a layer of protection against heteropatriarchal surveillance, discipline, and regulation for women who also engage in varying degrees of emotional and sexual intimacy with other women, but the preoccupation with *visible* difference in queer studies in the West, often tantamount to cross-gender identification, can potentially place

these relationships under another kind of erasure to the extent that the women involved in them do not appear to be crossing gender and do not seem to be radically subverting traditional heterosexual marriage. Are Basotho women with erotic ties to other women merely "passing" as straight and therefore rendering their lesbo-erotic desires illegible? This would be a huge analytic leap, since the relationships are socially registered within Sesotho culture as special friendships *and* as desire (but not as "sex"). While queer work in the West has placed a high emphasis on antinormative display, that is, in a lesbian context, as Biddy Martin argues, by defiantly cross-identifying and thereby resisting conventional norms of femininity ("Sexualities without Genders" 32);[8] this tends to reduce women who relate to other women sexually as gender conformists if they do not "cross." As long as cross-gender identification serves as the primary paradigm for representing homosexuality, as well as the primary means for building and sustaining transnational political solidarities, one risks not only the suppression of the gaps, the nuances, the differences that refuse to be subsumed under such a paradigm, but also new ways of thinking about same-sex desire and sexual identities in postcolonial contexts where, for a variety of reasons, they may not be as immediately apparent. Speaking of the problem of the invisibility of the lesbian femme in queer studies under a paradigm of crossing, Martin points out that the goal of our analyses is double-pronged in that queer work must identify and examine what is tangibly different and visible, while, *at the same time*, apprehending what might not stand out (21). Her critique is useful not only for what it implies for a preoccupation in the West with queer visibility, but for enabling critical (re)readings of same-sex desire in general, and the variant ways in which affectionate ties between women outside of the West are intimately experienced yet socially mediated without necessarily having the mark, the signifier, of "crossing" as the more privileged site of visible difference.

The very fact that Basotho women do not cross-gender identify enables further dismantling of the hetero/homo binary without necessarily, I might add, reducing the sexual practices of Basotho women who maintain affective relations with other

women to bisexuality. Furthermore, as Martin reminds us, the fact that some women who desire other women do not cross-gender identify implies the possibility of further denaturalizing heterosexuality, since they would most successfully displace the conventional opposition between imitation of straight roles and lesbian specificity by being neither the same as, nor entirely different from, either ("Sexualities without Genders" 22). The same-sex bonds between women in Lesotho deconstruct any absolute opposition between same-sex desire and heterosexuality insofar as performances of more conventional femininity, even pertaining to heterosexual marriage and motherhood, are not necessarily signifiers of (heterosexual) *desire*. As Martin suggests, one also needs to examine carefully the positions from which women who desire other women appear to pass rather than cross-gender identify (23). This would include, of course, the positions of Basotho women, who do not identify with masculinity and who appear to "pass" given that they do not cross gender and that their emotional and erotic ties with women do not replace heterosexual marriage socially. But simply because some Basotho women remain married, have children, and play it "straight" while maintaining same-sex affective bonds with other women, it would be naive to assume that the relationships have no subversive edge since the various signifiers for playing it straight and for conforming to (or performing) socially sanctioned ideals of femininity are not necessarily reducible to pure heterosexual desire.

Queer inquiry needs to examine its own complicity in perpetuating the subjugation of certain knowledges and in erasing insurgent sexualities that are masked "within the body of functionalist and systematizing [queer] theory" (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 82; brackets mine) that privileges, in its formal systematization of sexuality, cross-gender identification as *the* signifier of same-sex desire.[9] In speaking on my research for this book several years ago at the conference "Queer Globalization/Local Homosexualities" organized by the CUNY Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies, I attended, just before presenting my paper, a very interesting session about the controversial 1996 Deepa Mehta film *Fire*. The film, which was

highly protested and eventually banned from cinematic screenings in parts of India, depicts the marital struggles and desires of the characters Radha, whose husband takes a vow of celibacy because she is unable to have children (thus making sexual desire and pleasure sinful in her husband's view), and her sister-in-law, Sita, who is confined to a newly arranged, but loveless, marriage to a husband who keeps a mistress. During the course of the film, Sita and Radha become very close friends and eventually have a sexual relationship. As part of the analysis of the film at the conference session, a clip was shown in which there is a family "outing," so to speak (that is, a picnic!), including Radha, Sita, their mother-in-law, the male servant, and the two husbands. At one point, as the family is seated on blankets on the grass, eating the meal, Sita begins to massage Radha's feet and the two women stare passionately into one another's eyes nearly oblivious to their husbands and the other family members present. The papers on the panel analyzed several of the problems with the film, especially for representing the desire of the women for each other as the result of their own unfulfilled marriages, and for its fairy tale and rather incredulous ending whereby the two women flee their husbands and run off together without any regard for their filial obligations or for the fact that there would be few social and economic structures available in many parts of India to support their relationship outside of heteronormativity.

During the discussion period, a prominent lesbian scholar further faulted the film for its lack of representation of lesbians who cross-dressed, and she specifically critiqued it for representing both principal characters as lesbian femmes, dressed in saris. I was rather surprised by this question since in the clip of the film that was shown to the audience, the desire of the women for each other came across as quite seductive, not to mention subversive, since the fixed eyes, parted lips, touched skin, and obvious passionate arousal on the part of the two women were all taking place within the context of a (heterosexual, at least on the surface) family picnic. Yet within a conservative nationalist ideology that sees homosexuality as "un-Indian," or within a Marxist, slightly more liberal position as "a Western perversion

imported through the capitalist free market" (Vanita, "Straight Path to Postcolonial Salvation" 274), and given the violence that erupted following the film's cinematic release in parts of India, and a variety of other cultural questions, to what extent must one bracket or defer western assumptions of cross-gender identification as a visible signifier of same-sex desire? How do we apprehend what might not stand out? There is, in fact, a disruption of gender norms, and therefore of heteronormativity, in the film, given that female same-sex desire in *Fire* is located *within* the domestic sphere. As a matter of fact, an embroidered cloth that reads "Home Sweet Home" hangs prominently on the wall (and within several frames of the film as the characters move from room to room) in Radha's home, which is the space where the relationship between her and her sister-in-law, Sita, grows and becomes highly sexualized. Gayatri Gopinath, in citing Geeta Patel, points to the slide in *Fire* from female homosociality (which usually characterizes the domestic sphere) into female desire, pleasure, and eroticism within the sanitized confines of the home, thereby destabilizing any causal, natural link between heterosexuality and the domestic (271).[10] The disruption of the gendered, and therefore highly political, associations between the domestic sphere and overdetermined conventional femininity tied to heterosexual hegemony is where gender nonconformity occurs, that is, within the locality of the heterosexual nuclear and extended family rather than through visible cross-gendered identifications, but this is still a challenge to fixed gender and sexual norms and prescribed familial and social relations that often limit and police women's erotic autonomy.[11] The link of the film to the reading of affective and erotic ties between women in Lesotho is significant, I believe, for a postcolonial queer studies. It is not that the erotic ties between women in *Fire*, or between Basotho women, are to be understood as "authentic" forms of same-sex desire in indigenous contexts, but that these relationships resist dominant configurations of both gender and desire in their own specific cultural contexts and in western (feminist and queer) scholarship that views the domestic sphere predominantly as a site of fixed gender roles and sexual oppression, and reads, often mistakenly,

cross-gender identification in women as the primary signifier for erotic attachment between women. As Gopinath reminds us, it is important to consider "alternative modes of reading and 'seeing' nonnormative erotic and gender configurations as they erupt within sites of extreme heteronormativity" (273) such as in the home.[12] Rather than seeing the representation of gender conformity between two women who desire one another as a lack, one needs to ask how the subversion of heteronormativity may be operating in less noticeable ways, yet still open up possibilities for sexual agency and erotic autonomy for women, while paying close attention to how the lack of apparent visibility pertaining to gender (nonconformity) does not necessarily erase (same-sex) desire and can simultaneously, up to a certain point, protect women's affective and erotic bonds from heteropatriarchal surveillance, discipline, and violence.

Attention to the axis of gender cannot imply, then, as I have argued elsewhere, completely wiping out the axis of sexuality since this would ignore the erotic subjectivities of women who engage in sexual relationships with other women without cross-gender identifying and overlook the radical potential of such relationships to transgress the opposition between "true" (heterosexual) femininity and lesbian specificity.[13] Adrienne Rich's controversial, yet, in this context, I believe, significant, notion of a lesbian continuum is useful as a mode of critique of the obsession of western queer studies with cross-gender identification and visible difference, and as a way of addressing the problem that Biddy Martin has since identified as an ever-widening, resultant gap between "lesbian" and "feminist" spaces that Rich's work has tried to bring to closer political proximity. More than mere "sexual preference" or the mirror image of heterosexual female or gay male relations, Rich refers to the lesbian continuum as a *range* of woman-identified experiences through specific women's lives and throughout history and "not simply the fact that a woman has had or consciously desired genital sexual experience with another woman" ("Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" 217). Rich is arguing not so much for who can or cannot be *named* as lesbian, nor is she concerned with who can claim or use the

label "lesbian"; she is concerned rather with recognizing the historical presence of lesbian existence across diverse historical periods and cultural contexts and with the continuing creation of the meaning of that existence (217), which may include, but is not limited to, a broad range of the emotional, psychological, and intimate ways women may relate to one another, as well as the ways in which women move in and out of the continuum regardless of whether or not they consciously identify as lesbian.

Rich's continuum has caused controversy within both feminist and lesbian studies in ironic contrast to her attempt to bridge the gap between both disciplines by challenging feminism to analyze heterosexuality as a political regime that disempowers all women, and by exposing the erasure of lesbian existence in much of feminist scholarship and in the wider social world. Though western feminist studies has had a history of leaving its heterosexist assumptions unexamined, and while many lesbians have objected to Rich's continuum because it fails, in their view, to differentiate between close emotional and supportive bonds between women and the specific ways in which women relate to one another sexually, the continuum, despite its controversial status in the West, may be a useful analytic lens with which to read affective bonds between women in postcolonial contexts by calling attention to the difficulties of simply identifying the women who engage in such relationships as lesbian. Rich herself has pointed to the need for further unearthing, describing, and developing the notion of lesbian existence beyond the contextual limits of white, middle class, western women's studies, and for examining women's lived experiences in racial, ethnic, and political structures outside of the West (223). In other words, by deferring the label "lesbian," one is avoiding the enactment of yet another site of colonization when studying affective relations between women outside of the West, while not diminishing the possibility of broadened understandings of lesbian *existence*.

Teresa de Lauretis has usefully interpreted Rich's continuum as a conceptual space where lesbian existence can be imagined and theorized, that is, lesbian existence as a metaphor and socio-symbolic conception, rather than as a literal idea to be

tested and proven in the social world (*Practice of Love* 191). Certainly it is important to allow for the substitution of "lesbian" with "woman" in "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," but de Lauretis warns about the frequency and the breadth of the reading of "woman" in the essay *instead of* "lesbian," and reminds us that it was "lesbian" and not "woman" "that expressed Rich's vision, that signified women's resistance to marriage and to the institution of heterosexuality, [and] asserted their subjective and social agency in relation to one another . . . " (191–192). Conceding that one must not lose sight of the specificity of lesbian existence, thereby rendering it once again not only absent, but inconceivable, at the same time, in order to fulfill the long-term goal of articulating further "the conditions and the many other modes of lesbian existence" (de Lauretis 192), one needs to look beyond the narrow identity category of "lesbian" as we understand it in the West and closely read women's lives for the possibility of an ever-widening lesbian existence. Though there does not appear to be a sustained or collective resistance to heterosexual marriage among Basotho women who, alongside marriage, maintain erotic ties with other women in the context of Sesotho culture, as Chris Dunton and Mai Palmberg note, there may not be a need to give separate names to different affective bonds that would include love relationships, friendships, and affective relationships (21). Perhaps the hetero/homo opposition for Basotho women who marry and maintain affective and erotic bonds with other women is more fluid as either label would be problematic, as would that of bisexuality, which surely holds the opposition in place since bisexuality is understood through it. Are the women heterosexual simply because they are married and bear children, or would they be lesbian since they have sexual relations with other women? Rich's continuum does help, in this particular context, to diffuse the opposition and expose the complexities of assigning an essential sexuality, especially in acknowledging the ways in which women may move in and out of the continuum whether or not they self-identify as lesbian. While the Sesotho term *motsoalle*, as I pointed out earlier, cannot easily be translated as *lesbian*, it might be possible to place

motsoalle relationships on the lesbian continuum to discuss, debate, and imagine them theoretically as *possible* sites of lesbian existence, given the close emotional and intimate bonds between the women, but with the stipulation that the relationships not be reduced to western understandings of "lesbian." In this regard, I cannot agree with Marc Epprecht's generalization that mummy-baby relationships, much like the marriages between male miners discussed in chapter 2, were modeled on heterosexual norms of courtship and marriage (*Hungochani* 204). Firstly, the comparison of the mine marriages to the mummy-baby relationships is a slippery one as Gay herself emphatically stipulates that the affective and erotic ties between Basotho women are based on fictive *kinship* rather than on fictive *marriage* (112), which, to my mind, implies a different kind of placement of the relationships on the social register. But, more important, the relationships between Basotho women are conceptual and erotic spaces where women can, as Teresa de Lauretis points out, see women concurrently both "as subjects and as objects of female desire" ("Sexual Indifference" 155) and help challenge conventional constructions of femininity that seek to seal the heterosexual contract through binding all sexualities and bodies strictly and exclusively to (straight) male desire. Admittedly, same-sex relationships between Basotho women are not so radical as to undermine or replace conventional heterosexual marriage, but they nonetheless help signify and expose compulsory heterosexuality as a social invention and as a political regime and challenge its pretense to impose and reflect a natural order of "true" genders defined exclusively by heterosexual desire even within the highly heteronormativized domestic sphere.

The affective bonds between Basotho women similarly point to the inadequacy of the simple assertion of male control/female subordination, which has historically been a trope of western feminism concerning women in the developing world. Such a view, according to Cherryl Walker, does not account for the complexity of male/female emotional and sexual relationships within the heterosexual nuclear family (31), and the trope of male control/female subordination is equally

challenged by the Gay study, which acknowledges the high degree of initiative and autonomy women enjoy in same-sex relationships, both socially and sexually. In the latter context, women are not confined to sexually passive roles that may be tied largely to procreation, as may be the case in their marriages. Yet in speaking specifically of gender and the migrant labor system in southern Africa, Walker also questions an uncritical fusing together of women's agency and women's resistance to (gender) oppression. Without trivializing the historical significance of women's rejection of their gender-assigned roles in southern Africa, which were reinforced historically through colonialism in an effort to maintain Britain's commercial interests in the region, Walker argues that women also acted as agents of gender socialization, upholding prevailing norms and women's subordinated position. In the case of indigenous women, for example, Walker points out that it was their endorsement of their domestic roles that underlay black women's militant resistance to the power of colonialism and later to the South African state (30–31). But with specific reference to Lesotho, despite the close intimate bonds women may enjoy with other women outside of their marriages, their responsibilities as wives and mothers, influenced by Christianity, colonialism, and education based on western ideologies of motherhood and domesticity, as well as continued economic dependence on women for homestead agricultural production, which helped sustain the male migrant labor system, still seem, on one level, to endorse and perpetuate their positions within heteronormative domination by giving them social status and prestige within their communities as wives and mothers.[14] One must also take into consideration the limited alternatives available to women economically and politically, and, as Walker notes, the dangers of rebellion and the rewards of conformity (30). Without too readily romanticizing the affective bonds between Basotho women as radical sites of resistance to the status quo, on the one hand, or as a form of not yet fully realized or fully developed lesbian consciousness using western understandings of "lesbian" as a litmus test (instantiating a site of discursive colonization) on the other, a

fundamental question to ask is whether sexual intimacy between women would be accepted in Sesotho culture if it were made more public and overt, and if it threatened to displace or collapse traditional heterosexual marriage and the primary role of women in the bearing of and caring for children in the domestic sphere.

Acknowledging political and economic limitations, and resisting the impulse to interpret and validate the political efficacy of Basotho women's sexual agency through immediate and visible social transformation should not, however, foreclose the possibilities of their friendships and erotic ties with other women to operate as political challenges to heteropatriarchal domination and its attendant prescribed gender roles, nor should these conditions preclude revision of gender, sexual, and African identity, both within the confines of the nation-state as well as in the West. Even though women's friendships and sexual intimacies with other women are recognized in Sesotho culture as a way for women to extend their social relations, the relationships are also highly veiled, or at least engaged in discreetly. Other than Judith Gay's study, and the various references to it in the recent emergence of new queer work being done in/on southern Africa,[15] there are few references to Gay's study in historiographic studies on Lesotho, and in research on women in Lesotho.[16] From what I have been able to ascertain after the Gay study from a wide variety of sources in southern Africa, the United States, and Europe, with the exception of new queer work, only Marc Epprecht's history of gender and politics in colonial Lesotho alludes briefly to the same-sex relationships between women in Lesotho when he mentions that boys in Lesotho have historically been vulnerable to coercive homosexual advances from older peers and were expected to remain quiet about them and to repress any ambiguous (homo)sexual feelings. But the repression of sexual ambiguity appears not to be expected of girls according to Epprecht, who acknowledges that girls maintained same-sex relationships, including genital eroticism, without the risk of social disgrace; yet his source for this is the report of a Roman Catholic priest in the 1920s who had heard the relationships reported by Basotho women in the confessional (*"This Matter of Women"* 25–26).

Though he does not say specifically, the felt need of some women to confess to intimate ties with other women as sinful is most likely a result of the influence of colonialism and the teachings of Christianity at the time rather than any guilt coming from Sesotho cultural prohibitions.

It seems, then, that while close relations between women are acknowledged within Sesotho culture, great pains to keep them private are also prevalent, particularly with regard to "outsiders," including clergy, foreigners, and academic researchers. Gay reports that she had only begun to hear about these relationships after a year of living and researching in the village where she was collecting data on the lives of Basotho women. Her research assistant, a Mosotho woman, chided her for not paying enough attention to the ways in which girls and women sometimes addressed one another or seemed startled when they were found together when approached by Gay and her assistant to do interviews for the research being undertaken. Talking about female friendships with three older women, Gay describes the arrival of a twenty-four year old daughter-in-law, who gasped and clapped her hands in amazement after hearing the topic of the discussion. A ninety-year-old respondent, with whom Gay had been speaking at the time, turned and asked the younger woman why she was clapping and then straightforwardly asked her, "Haven't you ever fallen in love with another girl?" (102).

Gay's initial lack of recognition of the affective and erotic ties between Basotho women points to a western bias for social visibility in reading same-sex desires. But the fact that efforts are made to keep the relationships concealed, particularly from outsiders, does, I think, give them a subversive edge because of the *potential* threat they pose to heteronormativity and because of their socially marginal position in relation to heterosexual marriage. Historically, they have been a salient site of resistance to gender ideologies imposed by Christianity in the name of morality as well as a resistance to the legacy of colonialism in the name of social cohesion. Marc Epprecht points out that the British colonialists clearly feared Basotho women's nontraditional, nonconforming behavior as a threat to the social fabric of territory ("*This Matter of Women*" 212), and this nonconformity, must, on

one level, include the affective and intimate same-sex relations between them. Since after independence Lesotho remains a patrilineal society where women are subject to male control largely through the practice of *boholi* (bride wealth) as I pointed out earlier,[17] the independent nation-state is similarly constituted in gender power and in the perpetuation of normative gender ideologies, inherited from colonialism. But keeping in mind Mohanty's warning not to homogenize the "oppression" of women outside of the West, nor to appropriate women in the so-called Third World as victimized subjects, it is important not to simply assume that the very nature of patriarchal power in Lesotho is unambiguously or self-evidently demeaning and oppressive to women. Epprecht has also noted that while Basotho women are expected to defer to men, a gender ideology reinforced under colonial power, boys and young men are required to defer and show respect toward their female elders and there are cultural customs that protect women from abuse and neglect ("*This Matter of Women*" 19), including societal recognition that female sexuality is healthy and desirable, with an obligation implied on the part of the husband to provide sexual satisfaction to his wife (21)—a cultural notion of female sexuality as something other than coerced to cater to male sexual pleasure—a view that could also account for the social acceptance of intimate and erotic ties between women. Moreover, the relations between Basotho women do, to some extent, subvert patriarchy by creating an alternative vision and space free from male intervention and domination, the dictates of procreation, and "proper" citizenship legislated in the name of national development, even if these relationships do not replace or override heterosexual marriage.

Rather than interpreting the emotive and erotic relationships between women as nonresistant or as not sufficiently subversive since they do not radically impinge upon the hegemony of heterosexual marriage, which is relied upon as a social and economic structure in Lesotho unlike in the West, it is also important to think of them as a feminist practice that enacts a potential site of decolonization while simultaneously challenging the heteropatriarchal imperatives of the nation-state. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra

Mohanty, in speaking of the limitations of western, liberal conceptions of democracy, have written of the importance of conceptualizing a feminist democracy as part of the ongoing process of decolonization, which I will say more about in chapter 6, thereby broadening received ideas about feminist and democratic practice. They specifically argue that feminist democracy suggests a different order of relations among people and a deeper understanding of various hierarchies of rule (pertaining not only to gender, but to race, class, sexuality, and nation) and their effects on disenfranchized people within the context of transformative collective practices that lead toward self-determination and autonomy. Such a transformation of selves and communities, according to Alexander and Mohanty, are crucial in crafting a different order of social relationships (xxvii–xxviii). The relationships created and sustained between Basotho women in the interstitial spaces between hegemonic gender and sexual ideologies that intend to keep them in traditional roles confined predominately to heterosexual marriage, and the newly created spaces of desire and pleasure they share with other women, produce new sites of sexual agency for women, while providing a new conceptual framework for reimagining heteronormative social relations and systems of rule that have been put in place under specific historical, economic, and ideological conditions. Further, the intimate ties Basotho women form with other women to provide and receive help, emotional support, comfort, and sexual intimacy and pleasure bring to light different ways of thinking about gender and sexual agency and perhaps new ways of imagining other dimensions of lesbian existence not reducible to the signifier "lesbian" as it is understood in the West, thus rupturing conventional distinctions between peripheral positions (such as the intimate bonds shared between women in Lesotho) and the more centered positions (of heterosexual hegemony, of western knowledge) that are disturbed and cannot fully contain indigenous (sexual) difference(s).

CHAPTER 4

Nationalism, Homophobia, and the Politics of "New" South African Nationhood

Amidst the political shift from apartheid to democracy for over a decade in South Africa, the country has been engaged in political and discursive struggle in attempting to redefine the signifier "South Africa" that acknowledges the atrocities of apartheid violence while simultaneously attempting to rebuild an historically divided society through developing and implementing more democratic structures of governance. Part of this national struggle is not to erase the apartheid era from South African national consciousness and memory, but to rebuild the nation, not only under the traditional tropes of economic development and modernization usually imposed on Africa and other parts of the world by the West, but through juridical practices that take into account the fullest possible range of human rights for all South African citizens, perhaps best symbolized in the early years of the postapartheid period by the establishment and work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.[1] Given that sexual politics are constitutive of all social relations, and keeping in mind Foucault's formulation that sexuality is not a transhistorical or transcultural category, while conceding, as Homi K. Bhabha reminds us, that there is no privileged narrative of nationalism or nation ("Narrating the Nation" 4), how are the politics of sexuality inscribed within emergent discourses of nationalism in the "New" South Africa? What is the role of the politics of sexual difference in South Africa's

transition from apartheid to democracy? More importantly, how does sexual dissidence discursively figure in South African rehearsals and revisions of a new sense of imagined community and national identity, and what are the reverberating effects of the marked visibility of lesbian and gay identity politics, particularly in indigenous communities and cultures, in South Africa and in the rest of the region?

Unlike western identity politics, where a unity or self-sameness is often projected on to identities and cultures without engaging fully the disputes and differences within a particular social group about its identity and its relationship to the wider social world, "queer" identities and cultural practices in the "New" South Africa are not merely forms of self-assertion and self-expression, but are explicitly shaped by the resistance to fixed identities and fixed notions of culture previously imposed by the system of apartheid. It is important, then, to differentiate queer politics and resistance in South Africa from western practices, given its specific history of apartheid and colonialism—both of which helped shape the various ways in which sexual imaginaries are inscribed in South African national consciousness. How is same-sex desire discursively constituted in/through historically and culturally specific codes, symbols, and meanings along with the concomitant justifications of the social apparatuses of detection, stigmatization, and persecution of lesbians, gay men, and other sexual dissidents? While I accept George Mosse's influential idea that the proliferation of modern nationalisms in Europe helped shape the construction of middle-class norms of the body and of sexual behavior,[2] I would like to extend this, though with some degree of caution, by arguing that such norms of the body and of sexuality also helped play a critical role, in varying degrees, in the formation of the colonized subject in discourses of imperialism. But one must take caution in reading the disciplining of bodies and the deployment of "respectable" sexuality in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe as straightforwardly transplanted into the colonies where they did not emerge historically.

Even the notion of nationalism, as analyzed by Mosse, is largely a product, that is, an invention, coming out of the

political and social history of western Europe. One tends to assume that nationalism develops out of, or is intimately connected with, some trace of "authentic" or autonomous national culture or language. Partha Chatterjee, in *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* and in his other work, has challenged the idea of nationalism as centered around liberal-nationalist thinking related to wealth, industriousness, liberty, and progress and has critiqued the postulation of these ideals as universal when in fact they are a product of post-Enlightenment thinking and are specific to industrialized western societies that apply them to modern politics in other parts of the world (2–3). Following this argument, then, in the context of nations outside of the Euro-American axis, nationalism is not an authentic product coming out of the history of particular nations in the so-called postcolonial world, since the western thought that inscribes it assumes that history is a distinct and univocal mode of thought in which the life of the nation can be represented and experienced. Rather, nationalism is a western European invention that has been absorbed into the ideologies of national identity in particular postcolonial nation-states (Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought* 9). What this implies for postcolonial contexts, according to Chatterjee, is that nationalism is often double-edged as it is a search for a regeneration of national culture adapted to reach the standards set by the alien (western) culture for progress and development on the one hand, while rejecting colonial (and later western) influence as a means of preserving the distinctiveness of one's spiritual culture as well as simultaneously rejecting those ancestral ways that seem to serve as obstacles to development (2). Another level of the double-edge of nationalism is evident in the ambivalence toward the so-called ancestral ways that belong to that "inner" domain of national culture often used to differentiate it from the West, which can also be read as potential impediments to development and progress both within nationalist frameworks and by the West. Rather than reading the development of postcolonial nationalism as primarily, if not exclusively, a site of contestation with, or a political response to, colonial power, nationalism, in much of the formerly colonized world, is a struggle both to

acknowledge and imitate western skills in the material domain while simultaneously preserving the distinctiveness of the "inner" domain, or spiritual aspects of national culture; that is, as Chatterjee argues in his later work *The Nation and its Fragments*, anticolonial nationalism is part of an ideological framework to fashion a national culture that is nevertheless not western—the struggle to make the nation sovereign begins *within* colonial society, that is, at the time the state (as opposed to the nation) is in the hands of colonial power (6). This important point is often missed in dominant narratives of postcolonial nationalism that view it only as a visible struggle against colonial power and fail to acknowledge the trace(s) of western post-Enlightenment thinking when emerging nations and nation-states adhere to principles of self-definition and development as a means to overcome "backwardness" through which the rest of the world, particularly the West, may view them.

While Chatterjee does not specifically engage the roles of gender and (dissident) sexualities in the formation of postcolonial nationalisms, he creates a space from which to theorize them in pointing out that the root of postcolonial misery lies not in the "inability to think out new forms of the modern community but in our surrender to the old forms of the modern state" (*Nation and Its Fragments* 11). But part of this surrender, of course, lies in the historical and discursive placement of homosexuality under tropes of waywardness, as contamination and threat, initially to colonial power, and later to the so-called spiritual domain of national culture. Is heterosexuality necessarily part of the inner, spiritual domain of culture, or is it a politically enforced regime making rhetorical use of tropes of nativism and undifferentiated enduring traditions and cultures to argue for homosexuality's culturally alienating "othered" status? Chatterjee's analysis raises important issues concerning the relationship between imperialism and postcoloniality, as well as more specific implications for examining the representation of same-sex desire in emergent national imaginaries in South Africa and the surrounding region. Anne McClintock warns against the use of the prefix "post" in the term "postcolonial" to the extent that it reduces the multiplicity of nations and people

referred to under the sign of "postcolonial" to a singular and ahistorical abstraction, while simultaneously rehearsing Enlightenment tropes of sequential, linear progress, and forward movement in time. This, she argues, has been the grand narrative of western historicism whereby colonialism is assumed to be the determining marker of history (*Imperial Leather* 10–11; hereafter cited as *IL*), which is, in itself, another site of discursive colonization on the part of the West. Concerning McClintock's latter point, and bearing in mind Chatterjee's point that nationalism must not be reduced to the period following colonialism, one needs to exercise caution in postulating a straightforward, linear relation between colonialism and nationalism. For the same reason, as I shall argue later, it is important to be equally careful about reading same-sex desire monolithically and as undifferentiated whether under colonial power or under postcolonial nationalism. Even to the extent that nationalism can be interpreted as an oppositional stance against, or a response to, colonial power, one must avoid setting up a simplistic relationship of cause and effect, or one of linearity, between them, just as one needs to avoid placing an overdetermined meaning on homosexuality under tropes of threat and containment without necessary historical contextualization. Gayatri Spivak acknowledges that "nationalism in many ways is a displaced or reversed legitimation of colonialism" (62), especially through rhetorical strategies appealing to nativism, tangentially related to Chatterjee's spiritual domain of culture that anticolonial and postcolonial nationalism are determined to protect from western intrusion.

Just as proliferations of nationalism are not limited to the aftermath of colonialism but begin under imperial power, the specific history of South Africa further refutes the dubious claim of historical progression in the shift from territorial imperialism to the search for so-called national identity. Certainly British imperialism played a role in laying the foundation for racial segregation, and later for apartheid, in South Africa through the development and implementation of "native" policies, as in other British colonies on the continent. The Act of Union of 1910, eight years following the Anglo-Boer War,

which consolidated British conquest in South Africa, unified the British colonies (Cape Colony and Natal) to form the South African Union with the Boer republics (Transvaal and the Orange Free State) under a single legislature. Rather than unifying Afrikaner republicans and the English-speaking minority who favored continued bonds with Britain, tensions were further intensified. Yet, as Barbara Bush argues, both British and Afrikaners were in agreement on the racially exclusive occupation of land, separate political representation and education, and the need to preserve tribal cultures through separate development (Bush 134).[3] Under the segregationist Native Land Act of 1913, less than 10 percent of land in the Union was set aside for the majority indigenous African population as "native reserves," which eventually became known as the homelands. The Native Land Act, which was further elaborated and consolidated in the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, justified by economic and "hygienic" reasons grounded in scientific racism (Bush 141), served as the cornerstone for apartheid, not officially legislated until 1948, by effectively dividing South Africa into white and black areas and was not repealed until 1991. Until the outbreak of World War II, South Africa operated as an autonomous state under "internal colonialism"; it was also, according to Bush, an embryonic sub-imperialist power acting as proxy for western imperialist economic interests in the region (133).

My point is that while the groundwork for apartheid in South Africa can be traced to British imperialism, the subsequent development of Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s, the strengthening of the Native Land Act by further curtailment of the movements of blacks, especially in the cities, through the Urban Areas Act of 1937, and the eventual control of the South African government by the National Party in 1948 on an apartheid platform, the Bantu Education Act of 1953 (which required that black children be taught in segregated schools), and the Sharpeville Massacre of 69 identity-pass protestors in 1960 certainly do not reveal a progressive view of events concerning racial relations. Rather, the so-called modernisms of the colonial state do not, in the case of South Africa, imply

progress toward democratic practices and economic growth for everyone, but, according to Bush, imply instead a retrogressive segregationist legislation and an elaboration of scientific racism (155). The eventual formation of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 and its simultaneous exit from the British Commonwealth were contextualized and followed by further atrocities and the violent repression of human rights to maintain white supremacy, including the Soweto uprising in 1976, where schoolchildren in Soweto were massacred for demanding education in English instead of Afrikaans, and the period of Emergency (1985–1990), during which the government increased its powers of detention without charge and placed limits on press and media coverage of its violent actions. Questioning the "post" in "postcolonial" within the specific history of South Africa, a history that I have been able to sketch primarily through example here rather than through more sustained discussion and analysis, not only deconstructs post-Enlightenment notions of linear progress after the event of colonialism, but also, I believe, radically calls into question whether *post*apartheid South Africa, in the shape of the so-called "New" South Africa, through a turn toward more democratic practices in juridical terms, will live up to its socially transformative possibilities.

While Chatterjee's analysis recognizes nationalisms as invented, imagined communities,[4] his analysis falls short on the ways in which nationalism is specifically and symbolically *gendered*. As McClintock argues, nationalism is always already implicated in gender power since men and women are seldom given the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state. But, more than that, McClintock points out that women are usually constructed as symbolic bearers of the nation, situated, as I shall argue, within the spiritual domain of national culture as described by Chatterjee, but denied any direct access to national or sexual agency (*IL* 353–354). Returning again to the specific historical context of South Africa, Afrikaner nationalism, alongside British imperialism's influence on South African apartheid, requires further discussion. As a result of the defeat of the Boers in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902,

which, as I mentioned earlier, consolidated British imperial power in the region, the Boers developed a counterculture in order not to risk invisibility. The Boers, or Afrikaners of mixed Dutch, German, or Huguenot descent, had quite literally to "invent" themselves since they had no single unifying language and were dispersed throughout South Africa. The *volk* culture that developed in the early twentieth century, according to McClintock, fashioned the Boer vernaculars into an identifiable Afrikaans language through the conscious creation of a single print-language, evident and formalized through the production of magazines, newspapers, novels, and poetry (*IL* 369). It is also important to understand that Afrikaner nationalists continued to see themselves as victims of British colonization, as Jolly explains, and that this sense of imagined continuation of victimization, after the Anglo-Boer War, was used to rationalize the maintenance of apartheid (Jolly 22) as part of the practice of Afrikaner postcolonial liberation, consummated by the establishment of the Republic of South Africa and independence from Britain in 1961 when South Africa left the Commonwealth.[5]

Yet the enduring emblem of Afrikaner nationalism is the Great Trek of 1838, specifically figured in the spectacle of the white whip-wielding patriarch on horseback, white mother and children inside the ox-wagon, and black servants toiling alongside. More important, the women's ancestral white starched bonnets, according to McClintock, signified, on the axes of race, gender, and sexuality, the social invisibility of white female labor and the decorous surrender of white female sexuality to the patriarch (*IL* 370–371). This spectacle of Afrikaner nationalism not only glorified the Afrikaner's pioneering spirit and, as Bush notes, played a significant role in constructing racial difference through a creed of racial purity and white destiny (140), but similarly constructed gender difference as well, whereby white men embodied the political and economic agency of the *volk* (Chatterjee's material domain) and women were figured as the unpaid keepers of tradition and the *volk's* social and *spiritual* mission (McClintock, *IL* 377).[6] Not only does this gendered division of labor under the spectacle of Afrikaner

nationalism recall Chatterjee's differentiation between the material and spiritual domains, the centrality of the white family also reinscribes heteronormativity as another master trope of Afrikaner nationalism, through the idealization of the male/female bonds and the explicit distinctiveness of gender roles in these images.

Indigenous African nationalism in South Africa developed out of a similar historical context as its Afrikaner counterpart, that is, through the vectors of imperialism and rapid modernization. Indigenous African nationalism was also, as McClintock notes, a conscious reinvention of the nation, and the enactment of a new and different political collectivity, but its racial and gender components were quite different (*IL* 379). The South African Union, in particular, with the influence of the British, began to lay the foundation for the racist state, which would continue through the entire apartheid period, attempting to immobilize African resistance to a conception of a Union, and later a nation-state, that conceived of itself as white, denying blacks not only political representation and voice, but free and unencumbered movement within the state.[7] Given a history of black women's militancy in African nationalism, beginning in response to pass laws and the Urban Areas Act of 1937, which further restricted black women's movements after the Native Land Act of 1913, similar to its Afrikaner counterpart, women's political agency has been imbricated within the presiding ideology of motherhood. Yet indigenous African women, according to McClintock, have reworked this ideology in order to justify public militancy and social defiance to appeal to a racially inclusive image of motherhood (*IL* 381).[8] The issue of race would become more crucial in the challenge to white feminists to recognize and analyze rigorously the privileged position from which they spoke and through which they appropriated the struggles of women of color in South Africa. While the site of gender remained a point of contestation with black men as black women hoped to gain full participation in national liberation, the contestation of gender within the space of "new" South African nationhood continues into the present postapartheid context.

In recognizing that nationalism is both racialized and gendered and is not merely an after-effect of colonialism, and in considering Chatterjee's point that the nation begins to emerge even when the state is still under the control of colonial power, it is erroneous to assume that imperialism is simply an act of power that is deployed from the West and has consequences elsewhere. Instead, imperialism, and the invention of race in the urban metropole, according to McClintock, not only helped produce the self-definition of the European white middle class, but also produced the policing of the "other," of those "dangerous" classes of Jews, the working class, prostitutes, homosexuals, militant dissidents, and others (*IL* 5). Within the specificity of the politics of sexuality, to which I now turn, this recalls Mosse's idea of how the development of modern nationalisms and industrialization in Europe was not unrelated to the European invention of middle-class norms of the body and of sexual behavior, which had its effects in colonial administration. At the same time, imperialism, as a vector of power, is not limited to the West in terms of its deployment, to the extent that postcolonial nationalisms, calling to mind the claim made by Spivak mentioned earlier, can often contain the trace of western colonial and imperial power.

Yet while one must not restrict imperial power to the specific regulation of sexuality through the policing of rigidly prescribed gender roles within the space of the colonies, it is equally imperative to acknowledge the multiple elaborations of homosexuality within the context of British imperialism. Speaking of the late colonial period, from the end of the nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, Christopher Lane, in arguing for a more complex and precarious relation between British nationalism, masculine identification, and homosexual desire, has made a case for the multiple elaboration of homosexual desire under colonialism by retaining a necessary undecidability about this elaboration's meaning that cannot be determined or fixed. In other words, according to Lane, while one cannot deny that British juridical codes endeavored to unify the description of homosexuality as contrary, wayward, and immature, evoking suspicion and betrayal as a means of

determining British national and colonial policy, one must not lose sight of the slippages in the meaning of same-sex desire, the ways in which it ruptures unifying principles of colonialism, thereby questioning the mythology that homosexuality carried only one meaning—that of perversity and deviance (5–6). Lane's approach places emphasis on "the symbolic roles and fears that British culture attributed to homosexuality—specifically, homosexuality's ability to demonstrate what is precarious and *lacking* in heterosexual meaning and national formations" (4). While my emphasis is not on a general history of homosexuality under British colonialism, Lane's analysis is useful in questioning the supposed greater coherence of heterosexuality in colonial and national formations as the more "natural" or "normative" expression of sexual desire, and in exposing the containment of the multiple meanings of same-sex desire as a rhetorical intervention related specifically to colonial relations of rule. It is in this space that one may begin to theorize some degree of "carry over" into the varied, contextualized, and historically specific formations of national identity in postcolonial nation-states.

If McClintock is correct in assuming that the history of imperialism in South Africa cannot be understood fully without a theory of gender power, and that gender is not incidental to the politics of race or class (*IL* 6–7), and if one accepts Judith Butler's claim that sexuality is regulated through the *policing* and the *shaming* of gender (*BM* 238; emphasis added), then an analysis of gender *and* sexuality is crucial to understanding the figuration of lesbians and gay men in African cultural nationalist discourses that accuse them of "supporting lifestyles that are no more than invidious imports of empire" (McClintock, *IL* 384) and therefore a contamination of African purity.[9] Within the context of national liberation struggle and political resistance that is so much part of South African history, the dismantling of the structures of the apartheid state has enabled a public platform for the greater visibility of lesbian and gay rights within the region, though not always with positive effects, and, historically and presently, not always congruent with earlier and emergent notions of

South African nationhood. To what extent are appeals to national or African cultural identity in South Africa politically useful for those marked by sexual difference, or for those political projects that aim to make sexual difference legible within the national sphere? For example, as a result of the negotiation between African National Congress (ANC) leaders and lesbian and gay activists in the early 1990s, South Africa's present Constitution contains a clause that expressly prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Yet, as Rachel Holmes reminds us in her essay "Queer Comrades: Winnie Mandela and the Moffies," the same year (1991) that the ANC Constitutional Committee included a clause in the draft Bill of Rights that made discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation illegal, the 1991 trial of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, ex-wife of former President Nelson Mandela, precipitated anxieties about the status of lesbian and gay rights and homosexuality not only within the ANC, but also within the broader public sphere of national politics (163). Several years later, in December 1997, Mrs. Madikizela-Mandela appeared before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to speak about her role in the kidnappings and beatings of four black youths in 1988, one of whom, fourteen-year-old Stompei Moeketsi Seipei, was found dead. Though she was convicted in 1991 of four charges of kidnapping and for being an accessory after the fact and on appeal served with a suspended sentence, a fine, and ordered to pay compensation to the families of the surviving youths, Mrs. Madikizela-Mandela testified to the TRC that she played no part in the abduction and beatings, referring to the accusations and evidence against her as "lunacy" and "ridiculous lies" (Daley, *New York Times* A1). Yet according to her own testimony at her 1991 trial, she admitted that the kidnappings and beatings, in which she claimed she did not participate, were necessary to save the youths from the homosexual advances of a white Methodist church minister, Paul Verryn, and that the boys were taken with her knowledge from the Orlando West Manse, where the Reverend Verryn presided, to her Diepkloof Extension home.

At the trial, Mrs. Madikizela-Mandela's defense generated a homophobic public discourse within the context of preelection attempts to move toward a new political climate in South Africa. Her defense team, with the help of the popular media, not only rhetorically conflated homosexuality with child sexual abuse at nearly the same time that the ANC had formalized its commitment to equal rights for lesbians and gay men in the draft Bill of Rights, but also conflated (white) homosexual practice with the exploitation and vulnerability of disadvantaged people (Holmes 168–169), the latter strategy of which played on many aspects of African cultural nationalism, given the history of imperialism and apartheid in South Africa. Through implying, Holmes continues, that homosexuality is antithetical to the "fraternity" of the nation by casting it on the constitutive outside of the formative discourses of new South African nationhood, the defense team demarcated homosexuality by marking it racially as a form of deviance tainted with whiteness (178). For many black gay men and lesbians in South Africa, then, Mrs. Madikizela-Mandela's testimony to the TRC evoked memories of the homophobic discourses incited by her trial and the line of defense taken by her solicitors—discourses that fed off of social phobias about homosexuality already in place, perhaps best summed up by many of her supporters who stood outside the Supreme Court building in Johannesburg and defended her actions by carrying placards declaring "Homosex is not in black culture." Winnie Madikizela-Mandela herself, one who was once gendered as the "Mother of the Nation" by the discourses of "New" South African nationhood and, as Holmes claims, simultaneously venerated and disempowered through such discourses (176), and others in southern Africa have continued to play on homophobically inscribed nationalist assertions that read and position homosexuality as inherently alien to indigenous black cultures, and as representing a threat to what Chatterjee has termed the spiritual domain of the nation that the state must protect from western intrusion.

My point is that while queer activists in South Africa have had to appeal to ideas about nationhood and emergent national identity in the aftermath of apartheid in order to register their

claims as political, the rubric of nationalism has not necessarily served them well. A more public queer resistance after apartheid in South Africa has not occurred without homophobic responses and heightened appeals to nationalism and a distinctive heterosexual African identity, especially in the years following the deliberate inclusion of an antidiscrimination clause in the Bill of Rights and its retention in the final version of the Equality Clause in the South African Constitution. Worked out between the ANC and the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality, the clause enabled the eventual decriminalization of homosexuality in 1998. While such a clause was seen as giving lesbians and gay men equal citizenship under the law in South Africa, Jacqui Alexander, speaking of erotic autonomy and feminist practice in the Bahamas, reminds us that the nation-state has always been conceived in heterosexuality and, as a result, postcolonial nations often make rhetorical use of classificatory systems reminiscent of colonial relations of rule to argue against homosexuality and to maintain what they perceive to be the moral boundaries of the closet and the basis for "true" citizenship. In such arguments, Alexander continues, strains of "evidence" are conveniently and idiosyncratically borrowed from quasi-scientific discourses ("laws of nature"), medicine (outdated psychiatric discourses on perversion), and "common sense," all of which function to interpret important dimensions of self (84–85). In southern Africa, colonial history is appealed to and cited by those strands of African cultural nationalism that see homosexuality as a western intrusion that threatens the collapse of the nation's spiritual domain. Consider, for example, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's much publicized denunciation of gay men and lesbians at the official opening of the International Book Fair held in Harare in August 1995, ironically themed "Human Rights and Justice," from which a small exhibit booth by Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) was excluded by government order at the last moment:

> I find it extremely outrageous and repugnant to my human conscience that such immoral and repulsive organizations, like those of homosexuals,

> who offend both against the law of nature and the morals of religious beliefs espoused by our society, should have any advocates in our midst and even elsewhere in the world.
>
> If we accept homosexuality as a right, as is being argued by the association of sodomists [*sic*] and sexual perverts, what moral fibre shall our society ever have to deny organised drug addicts, or even those given to bestiality, the rights they might claim and allege they possess under the rubrics of individual freedom and human rights, including the freedom of the Press to write, publish, and publicise their literature on them? (Qtd. in Dunton and Palmberg 9–10)[10]

Indeed, nationalist discourses, such as those articulated by Mugabe, and frequently supported in other parts of the region (including in the "New" South Africa), condemn, as I have been discussing, homosexuality as "un-African" or as a bourgeois western phenomenon, and such arguments are particularly underscored with reference to emerging lesbian and gay movements in black communities in the region.[11] Two weeks after Mugabe's attack, *The Chronicle*, a Harare newspaper, played on nationalist and masculinist assumptions that white colonial discourse was emasculating for Africa and that homosexuality among blacks is a form of ideological penetration by whites that further feminizes the nation-state, conceived of as masculine. Once again, there is the implication that any attempt at feminization risks the nation's autonomy and power, reminiscent of imperial rule:

> Painful experience reminds us Zimbabweans, and all other Africans on the continent, of moves orchestrated by colonialists to wipe out anything that had to do with African culture as constituted mainly by our customs and traditions. . . . Many years after decolonisation, attempts to wipe out what is left of our cultural values are still being made—and made with a vengeance in some cases, witness the *shrill* outcries over the refusal by the Government to allow the Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe to *peddle* its ideas by exhibiting at the recent Zimbabwe International Book Fair in Harare—a refusal that all Africans who cherish their cultural identity—or what remains of it—should support unflinchingly. (*The Chronicle*, Harare, 9 August 1995; qtd. in Dunton and Palmberg 12; emphasis added)

Of course, some scholars and activists in southern Africa have argued that same-sex relations might have very well existed

among Africans *prior to* European colonial rule and may very well be considered to be part of a specifically African past. In his book *Hungochani: The History of a Dissident Sexuality in Southern Africa*, part of which discusses the colonial management of same-sex sexual relations through court and police structures in colonial Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Marc Epprecht has documented the occurrence of so-called "unnatural crimes" between African men in such areas as Harare (formerly Salisbury), Bulawayo, and Mutare (formerly Umtali) as recorded in early colonial court records from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century. The records show that same-sex relations occurred between Shona men as well as between the Shangaans, who had invaded and ruled parts of southeastern Zimbabwe in the second half of the nineteenth century before retreating back to Mozambique.[12] Epprecht acknowledges that the role of the state in policing homosexual relations between African men under colonial rule was at best ambivalent and that magistrates tended to adjudicate cases on an ad hoc basis. In addition, the rulings often depended on the prejudices of individual magistrates. This study corroborates Lane's thesis (discussed earlier) that same-sex desire, in the juridical context of colonial rule, did not contain a singular, monolithic meaning; that is, while Epprecht notes a growing shift toward tolerance for same-sex consensual relations between African men, his examination of court records indicates more of an intolerance and a more rigorous policing and persecution of *interracial* homosexual relations (*Hungochani* 130). This supports my view that the meaning of same-sex desire under British imperialism in southern Africa must be seen as contextualized, and within a system of racial domination, rather than straightforwardly as a threat that must be contained in all cases, especially since rulings and persecutions did vary according to whether homosexual relations occurred between indigenous African men or interracially.

Yet while Epprecht's research certainly gives credence to an argument against those strands of African cultural nationalism that read same-sex sexuality as a colonial import, along with his argument that terms such as *ingotshana* (meaning "a small boy

who is used by the Zambesi boys on the mine as a wife," possibly imported from the Shangaans in Mozambique to the area now known as southeastern Zimbabwe, but also quite possibly derived from other regional languages as well) were first documented in court transcripts as early as 1907 (*Hungochani* 73),[13] the issue that remains is the extent to which questions of etiology are significant to the presence of lesbians and gay men in southern Africa. The more viable site of critique might be to expose how nationalist discourses in the region that target same-sex desire as un-African, through problematic appeals to a natural precolonial heterosexuality, make use of and reinvent the same medicalized tropes of abject gender, and, in so doing, rearticulate a homophobic discursive grid and system of inscription with which to read same-sex desire not remarkably different from the white colonialist legacy such discourses otherwise purport to resist. Indeed, same-sex desire is often read in African nationalism as an infection to be contained; the approximation of homosexuality with decadence and disease, a trope used in the trial of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, in Mugabe's attack, and in the public responses of the supporters of both political figures, functions rhetorically both as figure and as argument. At the same time, nationalist appeals to "authentic" African beliefs and ways of being positioned in the world, that is, appeals to what Chatterjee has referred to as a nation's inner domain that needs to be protected from outside intrusion, see Africa, as Kwame Anthony Appiah notes, as culturally homogeneous and fail to account for the diversity of its people and its cultures. Such appeals, Appiah continues, not only assume that there are characteristically African ways of thinking, but that there are characteristically African beliefs; that is, not only is there a belief in a particular African form of thinking, but a belief in special African *contents* of thought (24). Moreover, nationalist ideologies, fueled by nostalgic appeals to a precolonial authenticity are not only flawed because they assume that cultural practices can return to some pure and "unsullied" condition (Ashcroft, et al. 41–42), they also further normalize domination, fail to acknowledge the difference(s) of African identities and cultures, fail to account for cultural

hybridity and the ways in which African identities and cultures are shaped by historical, economic, and political influences, and maintain a problematic self/other split between Africa and the West, all of which, in addition to the censure of homosexuality, are highly characteristic of the imperialist inheritance that is still operative in the "New" South Africa and in much of the postcolonial and developing world.

Along these lines, texts by African writers in southern Africa, while not necessarily addressing same-sex desire but instead addressing other axes of difference, are beneficial to postcolonial queer inquiry insofar as they help debunk nostalgic myths about recuperating a monolithic precolonial authenticity to be conflated with a new sense of nationhood and national identity. Instead these writers call attention to such claims of authenticity as cultural inventions, exposing them as fantasies created by and serving patriarchal interests in the postcolonial nation-state. Bessie Head, for instance, in *The Collector of Treasures and Other Botswana Village Tales*, points not only to the incongruities between precapitalist and postcapitalist societies, but to the specific ways in which traditional societies have oppressed women. She writes: "The ancestors made so many errors and one of the most bitter-making things was that they relegated to men a superior position in the tribe, while women were regarded, in a congenital sense, as being an inferior form of human life. To this day, women still suffered from all the calamities that befall an inferior form of human life" (92). Also important is Ezekiel Mphahlele's autobiography of his exile from South Africa, *Down Second Avenue*, that illustrates not only the complexity of African identity through his reflectively written interludes, but rereads subjectivity as radically decentered and as requiring a continual repositioning of oneself in the world and in one's history, which, may, in turn, help to generate new thinking in Africa, and in the West, about new matrices of political agency and resistance for lesbians and gay men in southern Africa and in other postcolonial spaces.

Similarly, some forms of African cultural nationalism have inflicted psychic violence on black lesbians and gay men through homophobic strategies of excessive codification and

regulation. Queer studies in the West, as I have already argued, has not paid enough attention to the ways in which lesbians and gay men are multiply positioned and therefore often oppressed in ways that may not be immediately apparent outside of the Euro-American axis. This is an important site of inquiry and coalition for queer and postcolonial scholars to work toward the liberatory imperatives of both disciplines by helping expose heterosexist and other oppressive ways in which self, citizenship, community, and national imaginaries are politically configured and understood. Black gay men and lesbians in southern Africa often assume that their only choices are to take their African heritage as primary, suppressing their gay sexuality as frivolous, or to openly identify as gay or lesbian while suffering a sense of wounded African identity.[14] Hein Kleinbooi, for instance, writes of the intense alienation he experienced as a black gay student activist at the University of Cape Town, where his gay white colleagues reductively equated the heterosexist and homophobic oppression they experienced under apartheid with the long-term and sustained violence and poverty experienced by black Africans as a result of state-enforced racial oppression, and where his black liberationist comrades told him he was "hijacking the struggle" for racial equality when he spoke to them of the importance of gay rights (264). Both of these positions, as long as one does not interrogate the other (but without reducing one to the other), foreclose discussion on how a variety of oppressions may intertwine and create a dualistic logic that insists on fixed notions of identity thereby further impeding both the decolonization of the mind and the dismantling of the psychic structures of apartheid.

The nation-state's fantasy of itself as masculine and then feminized by the imperial imprint of homosexuality similarly points to and extends the ambivalence at the site of the nation-state's authority. Drawing on Chatterjee's theory of nationalism, Homi Bhabha has argued how nationalism operates rhetorically as a strategy of social reference and as an apparatus of power by exposing how the nation-state's invention of national cohesion is made up of selective and repetitive cultural shreds and patches

to invoke and sustain the signs of a national culture ("DissemiNation" 293–294). Such nationalist and pedagogical readings are a defensive move by a hegemonic structure, in this case the nation-state, deployed in an attempt to contain threats to itself by extending its principles of justification to groups excluded from the exercise and deployment of power. But the site of writing the nation, according to Bhabha, is inscribed not only in the masterful image of "the people" and their traditions (Chatterjee's spiritual domain of culture), but in the tension between the *image* of the people and the *movement* of its sign in the Derridean sense, that is, in the ambivalent movement between the discourses of nationalist pedagogy and the very performance of narrative marked in the repetition and pulsation of the national sign, which allows the gaps, the interstitial spaces, the collapse of certainty, the evocation and erasure of totalizing boundaries, to come into play, thus opening up the possibility of new narratives of "the people" and their difference (299–300), including, I would surmise, contentious spaces from which to position oneself as "queer" in southern Africa in the midst of those strains of African cultural nationalism that read same-sex desire as un-African.

But more interesting to me in "counter-narratives of the nation that continually . . . disturb those ideological manoeuvres through which 'imagined communities' are given essentialist identities" (Bhabha, "Dissemi-nation" 300), there seems something quite queer in Bhabha's theory of the double-writing of the nation that should inform further work at the innovative conjunction of postcolonial and queer inquiry to the extent that Bhabha's liminal figure of dissemi-nation ensures that no political ideology, whether normative or oppositional, I should add, can claim transcendent authority for itself (299). Queer theory, in its oscillation between normative ideologies and specific, historicized material practices, keeps difference at the foreground of its inquiry, resists totalization, disturbs (hetero)normativity through disrupting, rather than reversing, binary oppositions, addresses the jarrings of meanings, and, most similar to Bhabha's figure of dissemi-nation, erases "the harmonious totalities of culture . . . [and] articulates the

difference between representations of social life without surmounting the space of incommensurable meanings and judgements that are produced within the process of transcultural negotiation" ("DissemiNation" 312).

Rather than reducing nationalism to a narrow ideology of national signs, images, and systems of totalization that are self-evidently oppressive to those placed in the margins of (re)formulated discourses on nationhood, Bhabha's notion of dissemi-nation enables readings of nationalism as a contradictory discourse that can be closely read, interpreted, and unpacked to locate its gaps, erasures, and internal inconsistencies. Queer analysis, while not supplanting nationalist ideologies with its own oppositional politics, provides one space for potential (re)reading and resistance. Following Bhabha, queer difference intervenes not so much to disturb the rationale for homophobic discrimination where it occurs in certain strands of African cultural nationalism, but to change the position of enunciation—that is, focusing not merely on what is said, but from where it is said, marking "the establishment of new forms of meaning, and strategies of identification, through processes of negotiation where no discursive authority can be established without revealing the difference of itself" (312–313). This seems to be at work with queer struggles in the "New" South Africa as "queer" can never become a new category in and of itself, but is always already implicated in other symbolic systems and specific historical matrices, tied to colonialism, apartheid, the globalization of queerness, and current struggles toward a fuller implementation of democratic practices within South Africa, having both discursive and material effects in other parts of the region. Given the heightened visibility of queerness, the meaning of "queer" will not only shift and resist totalization as it opens up hybrid sites of meaning and disturbs the center/margin split within national imaginaries in southern Africa (in that "queer" does not merely function as an appendage to specific historicized meanings of national identity), but continually calls any formation of national identity, or of queerness, into question through its attention to multiple enunciations of social difference(s).

As long as postcolonial nationalisms cite the past and the precedence of historical tradition (however skewed interpretations of the past and "tradition" may be) as a means of resisting western influence and the historical legacy of colonialism, what Chatterjee has identified as the strategy of preserving the spiritual sovereignty of what national culture is imagined to be, struggles for difference, including queer difference, tend to become marginalized or excluded in the formation of a new hegemonic national culture. While juridical change in the "New" South Africa, in particular, has attempted to be self-reflexive about this by refusing the exclusion of any axis of social difference, the recognition of sexual differences in the region has incited nationalist discourses that proffer homosexuality to be at odds with what it means to be African, as well as calls for delaying the "luxury" of attending to the needs of lesbians and gay men while focusing attention on the more pressing needs of national development and the further eradication of the remnants of apartheid socially, economically, and politically.

Since Foucault, we have come to understand sexuality as inseparable from regimes of power; yet in postcolonial analyses of culture, and in postcolonial societies in general, the politics of sexuality, if and when recognized as a viable site of decolonization, seems deferred from serious analysis until the supposedly more urgent tasks of nation building and development have taken place and brought about tangible social and economic change. Can attempts at nation building, democratization, and national reconciliation that continue even after the dissolution of the TRC in South Africa in 2001 be fully understood or realized without a full analysis of sexual differences, just as any analysis of sexuality and sexual politics, as I have thus far been arguing in this book, needs to be theorized within the historical context of specific material conditions? A more engaged analysis of sexual politics, despite new scholarship on South Africa, remains to be done. Derek Attridge and Rosemary Jolly, in their critical introduction to their volume *Writing South Africa* in 1998, assert that "clearly postcolonial writing desires to contest the power of the colonizer, and assert

the authority of the oppressed subject" (8). Not only does this set up a reductive, dichotomous relationship that sees anticolonialist and postcolonial practices only as a visible struggle against imperial power and fails to recognize the reinscription of the imperial within the peripheral, a point to which this book has returned again and again (and will develop further in the next chapter), Attridge and Jolly also fail to recognize, it seems, that the new authority of the so-called oppressed subject is fraught with *new* struggles, the formation of *new* hegemonies, and new, or quite possibly similar, sites of marginalization and exclusion depending on how the subject is socially positioned in the new national and global order.

Chatterjee reminds us that the limitations of nationalist ideologies, in aggressively advocating for liberal and egalitarian change, can also be explained by rhetorical appeals to the protection of the inner domain of sovereignty that differentiates the postcolonial nation-state from the West, and in so doing, enables resistance to other forms of colonization that occur through the processes of modernization in the material sphere. As a result of setting up a new hegemonic, patriarchal order, nationalist discourse, according to Chatterjee, not only demarcates its cultural essence as distinct from the West, but also from that of the mass of the people. The production of dichotomies that are set up through the confrontation between colonialist and nationalist discourses (that is, the dichotomies between spiritual and material domains of culture, home/world, feminine/masculine, etc.), while enabling a new sense of nation and national identity separate from colonialism, remains trapped within its network of false essentialisms (*The Nation and Its Fragments* 134). The maintenance of heterosexual family structures and gender dichotomies rooted in nationalist notions of "tradition" and "home" has not only helped diminish or forestall social change centered around gender dichotomies, it has also been an impediment along similar, though not reducible, lines to erotic autonomy. These shortcomings, these essentialisms, these gaps in liberatory visions for a better democratic future in South Africa are still apparent in new productions of South African nationhood since apartheid and continue to

influence, and be influenced by, those aspects of African cultural nationalism in South Africa, and in other parts of the region, such as Zimbabwe, that wish to keep sexual dissidents at the peripheries of African nationhood.

Yet the assignation of sexual difference and erotic autonomy to the peripheries similarly occurs discursively within scholarly textual productions centered on questions of antiapartheid and postapartheid struggles. Witness, for example, Attridge and Jolly's all-too-brief gloss of Michiel Heyns's essay "A Man's World: South African Gay Writing and the State of Emergency" at the end of their introduction to *Writing South Africa*, the only piece in the collection that specifically addresses gay writing and the politics of same-sex desire in South Africa. After citing Heyns's analysis of the fiction of the late Afrikaans writer, Koos Prinsloo, during South Africa's State of Emergency (1985–1990), the country's most brutal period of repression of human rights, where Heyns asserts that "to read Prinsloo is not so much to understand the Emergency as to experience it, and to see the gay writer not as a marginalized observer but as a participant in a troubled society" (12; Heyns 121), Attridge and Jolly go on to say that like Prinsloo's narrative, their collection does not aim to tell the story of South Africa so as to have the final word on the decline of apartheid as this would (re)produce South Africa as spectacle (12). But they miss any engaged analysis of the specifics of the sexual sphere and what it means to participate in the troubled society alluded to by Heyns as a gay writer vis-à-vis what Attridge and Jolly describe earlier in their introduction as "the intricate relations among aesthetics, ethics, and politics" that the other essays in the volume purport to explore "in the light of a new freedom" (1–2).

Speaking of postcolonial feminist struggles and addressing the issue of the insistence on silence around gender conflict where it already exists, Anne McClintock argues that such silence covers, and thereby ratifies, women's disempowerment, and is therefore complicit in maintaining the nation-state as a repository of male hopes, male aspirations, and male privilege (*IL* 385). Likewise, following the implications of McClintock's argument, for nationalist ideologies, or postcolonial theorists of "new"

South African nationhood, to posit queer struggles as less urgent (or, in the case of Attridge and Jolly, to tokenize them without any serious analysis) and not recognize the transformative power of the erotic, trivializes the demands of lesbians, gay men, and other sexual dissidents, defers necessary retheorizations of sexuality, identity, citizenship, and nation, and enables heteronormativity, as a normalizing regime, to perpetuate its ideological longevity long after the colonial encounter.

CHAPTER 5

Sexual/Cultural Hybridity in the "New" South Africa: Emergent Sites of New Transnational Queer Politics

This book has argued has that the study of (homo)sexuality in South Africa needs to be bracketed contextually under a set of historical, cultural, and ideological conditions, but any study that falls under the rubric of the social effects of apartheid and its aftermath in South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy remains incomplete if it confines itself only within South African national borders. While the primary focus of this study is the examination of the politics of sexual difference as they have "come out" of postapartheid politics in South Africa, the effects of sexual struggles in South Africa have been examined in other parts of the region, as examples, where appropriate, to show how multiple lines of social invention, domination, and resistance have been activated within national borders as well as across them.[1] While certainly the varied histories and social struggles to discern new South African nationhood and sense of belonging are multiple and contradictory, they are useful in understanding the ways in which sexual difference is inscribed into (or sometimes erased out of) the national imaginary. At the same time, the homophobic implications of some strands of African cultural nationalism raise important issues for engaging the viability of the nation-state as an embodied sovereign and conceptual space for erotic autonomy and/as decolonization, and for examining same-sex desire as a further site of indigenous difference and

resistance not only within geographically marked cultural spaces outside of the West, but also within a larger global context.

Though it is politically important to expose and critique nationalist representations of homosexuality that may be oppressive and impede further decolonization of the mind, it is equally important to challenge assumptions coming not only from cultural nationalism in postcolonial nation-states, but also from western queer politics that appropriate queer movements in the developing world as mere mimicry of queer identities and political practices in the West. While the previous chapter critically examined what Jacqui Alexander has aptly referred to as "the imbrication of the imperial and the national" (that is, imperialist traces within the nationalist imaginaries of postcolonial nation-states), this chapter, while accounting for the privileging of certain economic zones over others (which has been heightened in the post-Soviet economic restructuring of the globe), will look at the effects of globalization and examine the implications of the other side of Alexander's equation by calling attention to "the colonial within the postmodern" (69). That is, I will examine in this chapter the ways in which the discourses of western queer studies and the cultural assumptions of western queer activism may be implicated in neoimperial systems of power, but may, at times, be reworked at specific moments and within particular contexts as strategies of local agency and resistance to global domination.

Addressing the effects of globalization does not imply a privileging of global and transnational frames of reference over local or contextual ones (or vice versa) but is to challenge the modernist binary opposition that determines globalism as self-evidently progressive, abstract, historically dynamic, and replacing or overriding the local, which is understood to be as rooted in concrete experience and in specific, undifferentiated, and enduring traditions, cultures, and locations. As Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake argue, an emphasis on a global/local dialectic disturbs prior analytic categories (such as the nation-state as a self-evident object of analysis) and challenges one-way models of power (to the extent that the global necessarily or self-evidently supersedes the local) (6). An important question to ask is how the local might be lived or experienced globally,

beyond the confines of the nation-state or national imaginary, and what emancipatory effects are possible if lived experience is set in a transnational context. How might more attention to the processes and effects of globalization, as Wilson and Dissanayake ask, strengthen local ties, allegiances, and identity politics within different nation-state formations? How might diasporic displacement, (im)migration, and translocal hybridity put pressure on national cultural hegemony? On the other hand, is it possible for the local to resist and transform the "localness" of western universality as the standard and center of knowledge (5–6)? How do local struggles address not only particular regional and national concerns, but "allegories of larger, more systemic alteration" on the larger global horizon as well (Wilson and Dissanayake 7)? In what ways is it possible for nation-states outside of the Euro-American axis of power and influence to participate in, and interact with, a global system without being completely absorbed or overridden by it? What are the implications for contentious practices of queerness and how are queer politics reshaped and reconceptualized within the wider global sphere?

The processes of transnational and diasporic movement have helped further influence cultural politics in southern Africa, especially given the lifting of sanctions and the end of South Africa's economic isolation following the collapse of apartheid. The beginning of the shift toward democratization in South Africa, along with its fuller participation in world markets similarly helped broaden social spaces for lesbians and gay men to claim political viability and solidarity in ways that were previously not possible under the apartheid regime and the concomitant repression of human rights. The ongoing deracialization of South African society and ANC initiatives to bring about democratically based social change and freedom from discrimination based on race and ethnicity, as well as religion, gender, sexual orientation, linguistic affiliation, and social class, are peculiar to South African history to the extent that, as Albie Sachs notes, South African culture is not separate from its history of political struggle and liberation (241). Indeed, as Sachs acknowledges, what has been historically lacking for the most of

Africa since colonial domination "is the right of the people themselves to determine how they wish to live" (245). While colonialism in South Africa certainly helped to lay the foundation for apartheid, as I argued in chapter 4, it would be naive, or quite plainly wrong in the case of South Africa, to assume that decolonization straightforwardly and self-evidently occurred with independence from colonial control, when, in fact, the apartheid regime, in many respects, solidified the colonial legacy. Indeed, the new meanings of national identity and citizenship in postcolonial nations, imagined and sustained through discourses of nationalism, often slide from operating as a site of opposition (to imperial control) to one of oppression with regard to racial, ethnic, and linguistic differences, with regard to the status of women (insofar as gender equality is inhibited through appeals to "culture" and "tradition" that keep women in traditional roles), and, as I have argued in the previous chapter, with regard to lesbians and gay men (whose "lifestyles" are often regarded as western aberrations and therefore as remnants of empire). The specific gender and sexual implications of such rhetorical moves are obvious in Sachs's critique of cultural nationalist chauvinism and appeals to the purity of cultural traditions as they supposedly existed prior to the colonial encounter:

> Sometimes cultural practices that were appropriate to certain forms of social organization become a barrier to change when the society itself has become transformed—we can think of forms of family organization, for example, that correspond to the social and economic modes of pre-conquest societies that are out of keeping with the demands of contemporary life. (245)

But the attempts at redressing the inequalities brought about by colonial and racist domination in South Africa cannot be the products of national containment alone. Conceding that practices of resistance are tied to a specific history and to material, cultural, and ideological conditions in South Africa, these practices are not confined or bound to that geographical space alone but also include a reimagining of social space. How have new modes of self-representation and the formation of individual

and collective identities in the "New" South Africa been influenced not only by internal revisions of (South) African nationhood and citizenship, but also by the processes of cultural hybridization enabled by transnational liberatory struggles and practices of resistance that may exceed a reified identification with reclaimed national identity in South Africa?

Looking at the specific history of colonization and independence in South Africa, and certainly the case could be argued for other postcolonial nations as well, it is evident, as Masao Miyoshi points out, that decolonization has effected neither emancipation nor equality, nor did it provide wealth or peace in formerly colonized countries, but instead brought about continued misery and suffering in an altered form at the hands of different agencies and regimes. In this instance, Miyoshi claims, the processes of colonization and decolonization are intermeshed (80). This is not a justification of, or a capitulation to, imperial domination under colonialism, but rhetorical appeals to nativism and to an idealized, precolonial past as a means of resisting imperialism and its effects after colonization, particularly with regard to queer struggles in southern Africa, have resulted in distortions of the past and have failed to acknowledge that territorial space, once colonized, as Miyoshi reminds us, can never reclaim autonomy and seclusion apart from the rest of the world, despite the wishes and inclinations of indigenous populations (81). Further, as Arif Dirlik argues in his essay "Bringing History Back In," national cultural hegemony has historically resulted in the denial of full political and participatory citizenship for those citizens who have resisted assimilation into new conceptualizations of national culture (94), and this would include, of course, those marked by sexual difference. Seeing culture as a site of hybridity and as circulatorial, rather than as limited only to a particular territorial space, can help destabilize national identities defined through essentialized categories of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality and thereby challenge national cultural hegemony and expose new sites of difference. Hybridity, conceived of as "in-betweenness," has particular relevance to queerness both as an intellectual strategy and as a political praxis since queerness disrupts and

exceeds the coherence of normative citizenship tied to the reproduction of heteronormative social relations.[2]

Hybridity can function as a theoretical *and* political strategy within postcolonial contexts to challenge nationalist discourses that view any western influence on local indigenous cultures as contaminating a self-contained, "pure" originary state that supposedly existed prior to colonial domination, thereby deconstructing the West/East binary initially put in place by an imperial legacy and then reinforced in slightly different terms through national cultural hegemony.[3] But Dirlik warns that hybridity, understood only at the level of epistemology, abstracted from its anchorings in actual sociohistorical practices, runs the risk of blurring significant distinctions between various differences, masks social inequalities to the extent that one reduces to a state of hybridity all those who may be considered to be "marginal," and fails to ask what new identities the dialogic encounters with other cultures may produce ("Bringing History Back In" 105–106). While Dirlik is correct in stating that not all marginalities can be reduced to sameness, is it possible for hybridity, read as a condition of history, to operate credibly on the level of epistemology alone apart from sociohistorical contextualization, a premise that seems to structure the shortcomings of cultural hybridity Dirlik highlights? My point is that just as the self is bound, indeed formed by social, ideological, and historical constraints, no cultural or national identity, as part of its movement through history, can exist untouched by the circulation of cultures, presently occurring at increasingly higher speeds across the globe (through increased migration and greater human mobility across vast distances, through the rapid transnational exchange of commodities, as well as through the rapid movement of culture by electronic means and the mass media). Along these lines, then, agency, especially in a collective or cultural sense, rather than in an individual one, can only be produced in the interactions and contradictions between cultures rather than imposed from anticolonial nationalism on the one hand, or from transplanted social movements (e.g., feminism, queer politics) from the West. According to Dirlik, largely influenced by Bakhtin, the more radical site of cultural hybridity

exposes relations of inequality and hegemony embedded in everyday life (112).[4] Relating this to a specifically African context by questioning the hegemony of a single, self-contained western or African culture, Kwame Anthony Appiah points to the problematic construction of an either/or binary between a unitary Africa and a monolithic West. His argument that there is no uncontaminated autochthonous African culture awaiting inscription by African artists and cultural workers, just as there can be no autonomous, "pure" European or American cultures without their African roots (155), implies multiple nodes of exchange and influence between Africa and the West, and more complex sites of cultural transformation within both that require deeper deconstruction and analysis.

Thinking of culture in terms of hybridization can help disrupt dichotomous thinking and operate as a site of transnational interaction and as an impetus for radical social change provided that conjunctural encounters between cultures are theorized in relation to specific historical and material conditions, and provided that social inequalities made more visible by the encounter, along with the underlying hegemonies, are articulated and exposed. South Africa's transition from apartheid to a juridical recognition of the broadest range of human rights possible is informed by the dialogical tension between the local and the global—that is, the political transition is mediated by the resistance to the specific historical precedent of apartheid, and its colonial antecedent, and by the influence of globalized human rights discourses and politics. This specific history of struggle against state-enforced racism and the current cultural and political context of democratization and the shedding of a racist past, as I shall argue later, are critical to understanding queerness as a site of resistance to new (as well as to historically inherited) forms of national cultural hegemony that perpetuate heteronormativity, and to understanding queer politics and identities in South Africa as a hybrid space. Surely the democracy that is slowly emerging in South Africa, largely through material practices struggling to become more closely aligned with what is juridically proscribed, is neither reducible to the history of internal struggles in South Africa nor to human rights

discourses and politics elsewhere (How many other countries have a constitutional clause specifically making discrimination by sexual orientation unlawful?), but is influenced significantly and in part by both. The process of hybridity in this sense, according to Homi Bhabha, has enabled not only "a turning of boundaries and limits into the *in-between* spaces through which the meanings of cultural and political authority are negotiated" ("Narrating the Nation" 4), but similarly accounts for heterogeneity and difference, and for potential social transformation, rather than being mired only in abstract theorizing for which Dirlik accuses him.[5] When Bhabha speaks of hybridity as "incorporating new 'people' in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned [*sic*] sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation" (4), he could very well be speaking about what has emerged, and continues to emerge, in the political and social space of the "New" South Africa to the extent that he is asking us to examine the relations, the spaces, between nation and culture, between past and present. Since queer theoretical inquiry and political praxis are concerned largely with the proliferation of social differences, and with resistance to all normativities (not only sexual ones), and since cultural hybridity functions as a site of destabilization of normative categories, and therefore as a site of queerness, they can be productively linked as modes of cultural analysis and critique.

Human rights have long been recognized as being based in western liberal thinking largely because of the position of the individual in human rights discourses within the framework of the autonomous Cartesian subject whose humanity and dignity must be protected and defended against the intervention of the state. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the trace of western liberal thinking in dominant human rights discourses and policies, which have largely served the economic and geopolitical interests of hegemonic capitalist states, can be seen in the Universal Declaration of 1948 that was drafted without the participation of the majority of the people of the world (220). Yet Santos recognizes, at the same time, that a

counter-hegemonic human rights discourse and practice has been developing, and nonwestern conceptualizations of human rights that did not develop out of post-Enlightenment thinking in the West have been articulated in response to those victimized by authoritarian, capitalistic states. He argues that emancipatory politics in the present must involve transforming human rights from a *globalized localism* based in the West, toward *transnational* networks, dialogues, and coalitions coming out of specific, localized conditions in nonwestern parts of the world and tied to the ongoing discussion and shifting meaning of human rights (219–220). In this sense, in giving credibility to a dialogical tension between global and local spheres, it is important to ensure social change through creating a discursive space for human rights discourses and practices operant in localized contexts across the larger global sphere in order to ask broader, self-reflexive questions about what human rights might mean in a time of rapid global change, rather than human rights discourses, as they have developed historically in the West, being imposed on the rest of the world.

South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which I discussed earlier in this study, is often regarded as the most fundamental South African forum for human rights apart from its Constitution, which has inscribed these rights within juridical law. The TRC created a public, even global, forum for victims to give testimony against the apartheid state and its perpetrators and offered the possibility of amnesty to many who admitted to their complicit roles in crimes and acts of violence pertaining to the maintenance of the apparatus of apartheid. The TRC, through its staged public testimonials, highlighted what Attridge and Jolly have described as "the need to narrativize the past in such a way that the future becomes—unlike the past—bearable" (3). Obviously the concept and practice of truth commissions can be traced to the postwar period with the Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals and to the transition periods accompanying the waves of democratization in the 1970s in Chile and Argentina and in the 1980s and early 1990s in the former eastern Europe. Including the South

African TRC, there has been, according to Lyn Graybill, a history of twenty-one truth commissions worldwide since 2000 (8n). Yet, unlike South Africa's TRC, which took as its precedent other nations who decided to use truth commissions as a way of dealing with human rights abuses committed in former regimes, other truth commissions either dispensed harsh retribution to those involved directly in human rights abuses or dealt punitively with those most closely linked with state apparatuses of assassination and torture, but, for the most part, in either case, ignored the victims of the atrocities (Graybill 1). Kader Asmal, who was influential in the early conceptualization of the TRC in South Africa, described its purpose and acknowledged historical precedent: "There is no prototype that can be automatically used in South Africa. We will be guided, to a greater or lesser extent, by experiences elsewhere, notably in those countries that managed to handle this highly sensitive—even dangerous—process with success" (Boraine and Levy, *The Healing of a Nation?* 27; qtd. in Graybill 1).

The very practice of the TRC in South Africa, both in the staging of testimony around the country in 1996 and 1997, as well as the five-volume final report submitted to President Mandela in 1998, instantiated the global/local tension, insofar as the formation and function of the TRC was influenced transnationally by truth commissions elsewhere, yet came out of the specific historical and material conditions of the nation's recent past and was contextually recoded to meet the social and political demands of national reconciliation after the lived experience of apartheid by both victims and perpetrators. Just as the formation and operation of a truth commission in South Africa borrowed from historical precedent and acknowledged outside influence, in the form of international human rights discourses and the actual practices of truth commissions in the past, the TRC in South Africa is reducible neither to those human rights discourses nor to truth commissions elsewhere, just as the TRC and postapartheid struggles cannot be uncritically transposed to other contexts any more than these struggles, and the instantiation of

the "New" South Africa, can be proffered as illustrative or exemplary of postcolonial liberation worldwide. As Attridge and Jolly remind us: "To insist that South Africa during apartheid should be the emblem of racial struggles internationally, or to use the inauguration of the 'New South Africa' as a symbol of the triumph of multiculturalism over racism and other forms of discrimination, is both simplistic and fallacious" (4). Quite true, as neither South Africa's TRC nor any sense of "new" South African nationhood that may have ensued can be supplanted elsewhere, especially when other countries overcoming human rights abuses may not wish to confront the past but may simply prefer to move forward instead. Yet, in keeping the possibilities of reductionism in mind, one must also bear in mind that the important, still developing transitions occurring in South Africa today do have effects beyond South Africa's own internal borders—by moving transnationally, narratives of South African struggles raise important implications for racial relations, for the democratization of expression, articulation, and access, and for redefining citizenship in other emergent democratic spheres. In this light, *transnational interaction*, as the name implies, is not a one-way process whereby the West simply influences the rest of the world; while it can certainly challenge nationalist sovereignty, new meanings pertaining to political and cultural authority are (re)negotiated in the hybrid spaces in *between* national borders and in the dialogical tension between the global and the local. It is important for South African struggles for democracy, including the effects of the TRC as an attempt to deal with a racist past, to enter global forums of exchange so that transnational capital, in the form of human agency and social struggle emerging from Africa and other neglected parts of a so-called global system, can take shape and participate in the processes of social and global change.

Part of the challenge to national cultural hegemony, insofar as it attempts to fix national spheres with self-contained, historically decontextualized meanings pertaining to national identity, as well as the challenge to the imperialist tendencies of

western queer studies and queer activism in the West, must include the circulation of sexuality transnationally, both as a materiality and as a discourse, which can further unsettle reductive readings of homosexuality as alien to particular nations and to particular racial, ethnic, or national identities, and as having an originary, privileged status in the West. Acknowledging the potential of queer discourse as a site of cultural hybridity does not mean that global influences are reducible, as Katherine Gibson and Julie Graham note, to the familiar trope of nonreciprocal penetration "not only of commodities but also of meaning" (Gibson-Graham 239); nor does it mean that the flow of power (coming from western queer influence or coming from national cultural hegemony in particular nation-states that view homosexuality as a western decadence) is unidirectional. Contentious practices of resistance in South Africa have been historically connected to struggles for fundamental human rights and to the resistance to fixed identities previously imposed by state-enforced racism, and queer practices in South Africa also stem from these historically and culturally specific struggles and to the building of broader coalitions for human equality and human rights for all citizens in the "New" South Africa. As Michiel Heyns has clarified, historically there is a link between queer identity and political dissent in South Africa. This has meant, as Heyns explains, that (queer) dissociation from heteropatriarchy is a disavowal and resistance to the political situation that heteropatriarchy in South Africa has wrought (115). Queer resistance in South Africa is also very much rooted in a specific history of disavowal of imposed forms of national sovereignty and belonging that served a heteropatriarchal social order under apartheid, traces of which remain in the postapartheid era despite juridical change. Queer resistance in South Africa, then, is not a simple mimicry of western models of queer politics, as some forms of cultural nationalism may imply, but western queer discourses and political activism, which circulate through global linkages (such as the internet and information technology), are co-opted and used strategically for local political purposes as in the case of AIDS activism in South Africa, which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

Globalization, then, need not necessarily or self-evidently signify the mere marginalization, displacement, or erasure of local cultures. Rather, transnational movements across and within national boundaries can work to question and unsettle nationalist myths appealing to nativism, cultural purity, and neoethnicism, processes that often relegate certain segments of a nation's population to the peripheries of full participation in its political life, especially if such groups of people fall outside of the constructs of national identity being promulgated by the state, and this often includes those marked by sexual difference. Backward gazing fetishes of cultural purity assume that national identity is homogeneous and enduring, and that previously colonized nations can somehow reclaim the autonomy and seclusion that supposedly existed prior to the colonial encounter, but in so doing "disguise how global, hybrid, compromised, and unprotected everyday identity already is" (Wilson and Dissanayake 5). The ways in which localized cultures are produced by the confrontation *between* cultures is a condition of cultural activity and its ceaseless transformation, and this conjunctural, hybrid space is always already deeply imbricated in the social fabric of what Michel de Certeau has called the "practice of everyday life" (qtd. in Dirlik, "The Global in the Local" 39).

Yet while the effects of globalization, especially the facilitation of transnational exchange and interaction between cultures, can be viewed as a potential *opening*, working across and within national borders toward more broad-based conceptualizations of culture, and as a challenge to differences unacknowledged or oppressed by national cultural hegemony, the effects of globalization can similarly work as a *threat*, with limited opportunities for agency and extensive democratic transformation in the so-called Third World under the banner of "global culture" (Paik 227–228). In other words, globalization, particularly in its economic manifestations, can be a site of uneven development and access and does not affect all parts of the world in the same way. Admittedly, my preferential use of the term "transnational" does not always necessarily function in the way I have been using it as a dialogical site of cultural exchange and hybridity,

and I certainly do not intend simply to endow the term with benign benevolence. Within the context of transnational capitalism in a global economic system, transnationalism can also work as a site of domination and normalization that efficiently erases difference and serves the interests of multinational and transnational corporations.[6] African nations in particular remain in (neo)colonized relations of dependence on international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. As Manthia Diawara has argued, the World Bank has refinanced debts owed in Africa to industrialized countries in order to impose a "structural adjustment" on African states; yet this seemingly benevolent act masks how such a readjustment ensures that the debt owed by African nations is an even larger sum than before (105–106). Even in an age of global proximity, Africa continues to be read by the West as a continent containing infectious diseases (by the World Health Organization, for instance, in its reliance on colonial models of global health), as a continent rife with economic corruption (by foreign-owned multinational corporations and by transnational corporations who are reluctant to give representation on their boards of directors to indigenous Africans who work for them), and as a continent of poorly developed countries in need of international financial aid without accounting for the recolonization of Africa by exploitative multinational and transnational systems that, as Diawara notes, have an eye for cheap labor, cheap natural resources, and devalued cultures (121), all of which retard further the process of Africa's financial independence and fiscal viability.

In spite of globalized efforts for a single world economic system, not only is an opposition between Africa and the West kept in place by the continual peripherization of Africa under such a regime, which heightens the vulnerability of its local economies, but a hierarchy reminiscent of colonialism is perpetuated to the extent that a greater prestige is still attached to western culture, western economics, and western technology. Evidence of this hierarchical arrangement, according to Subramani, is the conflation of modernization with mimicry, reflective of the imitation of the consumptive patterns of

metropolitan centers, which is an orientation away from that which is locally produced (Subramani 155–156). At the same time, as I pointed out earlier with regard to Appiah's implied critique of African cultural nationalism, the history of hierarchical, dichotomous relations between Africa and Europe has, of course, been similarly perpetuated by the West and is relied upon in the economic financialization of the globe. Largely citing and critiquing Jürgen Habermas's *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Emmanuel Eze has pointed out that Africa has served paradigmatically as the "mythical" world against which one can establish the achievements of the modern western, "rational" worldview; a view that, in spite of the growth of European capitalist societies, whose political and economic growth depended, from the seventeenth century onward, on imperial domination, transatlantic slavery, colonization, and ideologies of white racial supremacy, still reads Europe as scientific, socially differentiated, and familiar, and Africa as animistic, socially totalistic, and alien (Eze 49–50; 58).[7] As long as Africa is discursively and economically inscribed by the West as "a continent apart," Africa will remain outside the reach of global investors and traders, and the idea of a free market in a new, globalized order remains highly problematic and exclusionary.

The unevenness of access and development in an increasingly globalized world is especially significant for nonheteronormative sexualities in Africa with respect to HIV infection and AIDS. South Africa, in particular, has the highest HIV-positive population worldwide, presently estimated at about 5.3 million of its total population of 45 million, with the largest concentration of sufferers located in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and the government has only recently begun to provide antiretroviral drugs to those too poor to afford them.[8] Yet, in representing the AIDS epidemic in South Africa, it is important not to read a simplistic opposition between *global* understandings of AIDS (as narrated by the World Health Organization and western medicine, for example, in terms of mapping HIV infection and tracking its movement, as well as statistics on the global distribution of drugs and education/prevention programs) and

local needs, economic conditions, and resistances. Rather, it is important to focus on the dialogical tension between global and specifically localized spheres, acknowledging the imperialist impulses of the West in globalized discourses on the representation of AIDS worldwide, and the specificities not only of local needs and conditions in South Africa, but also of resistances to western hegemonies, which, in turn, create new sites of hybridity and difference that can transform dominant narratives of AIDS globally.

Certainly the hierarchies between Africa and the West are reinscripted not only in western narratives of the AIDS pandemic, but historically as well in early medical discourses that attempted to locate the disease in geographic regions and track the transmission patterns of HIV infection. Cindy Patton, for example, has argued that the term "African AIDS" circulated more quickly in the West and globally than the term "Pattern Two" used by the World Health Organization to describe HIV transmission in Africa where it was assumed that, unlike in Europe and North America, heterosexual intercourse was the primary (though certainly not exclusive) mode of transmission (xii). The usage of the term "African AIDS" has mobilized racist ideologies of unchecked, unbridled sexuality in Africa and among blacks in general. Analyzing the rhetorical strategies of medical thought-styles in global AIDS representations and policies that have relied on tropical medicine models, which can be traced to the legacy of colonialism insofar as they are aimed at protecting the white European body from "foreign" infections, and on models of epidemiology that shift the emphasis of study from the location of disease to its temporal, statistical distribution ("Pattern Two" in Africa), Patton argues that both of these medical thought-styles, far from being scientifically objective or politically neutral, are deeply layered with social ideologies and have the power "to structure the terms through which bodies become visible as the locations of disease, of an epidemic" (26). Because Pattern One refers to sexual intercourse between men, which was thought to be the primary mode of transmission in Europe and North America early in the epidemic, Patton points out that the category Pattern One also has helped further

construct racist readings of Africa as sexually deviant (in the *form* of sexual relations rather than the sex-gender object) and has helped deepen convictions among North Americans in particular that because AIDS in Africa was different in terms of its transmission routes and whom it infected, "ordinary people" (read: straight, native-born, white, middle class) could not possibly contract HIV during "ordinary" heterosexual intercourse (xiii–xiv).

A cursory glance at recent media coverage of HIV/AIDS in South Africa confirms racist readings of AIDS in Africa and seems to maintain a "safe" rhetorical distance between reader and subject matter. Earlier rationales for not making antiretroviral drugs more widely available and at affordable prices for the five to six million HIV/AIDS sufferers in South Africa, some coming from western-based pharmaceutical companies themselves, include statements, as described in a London newspaper, that many poor Africans, who lack watches and literacy skills, would not be able to adhere to the strict regimen of taking prescribed medication at particular times, which might, so the argument goes, risk the possibility of a new drug-resistant strain of HIV ("Aids Orphans' Survival" 5). In addition to globally circulated myths that poor Africans somehow cannot be trusted with sophisticated drugs to fight AIDS-related illnesses, President Thabo Mbeki's earlier failure to provide effective leadership on AIDS in South Africa, and his earlier controversial questioning of antiretroviral drugs as too expensive, unsafe, and toxic have, as Patton argues, unwittingly buttressed racist ideologies that see African countries as already lost to the pandemic because they are too poor to be saved (131).[9] An article on AIDS in southern Africa in a 2002 issue of *The Economist* begins with a voyeuristic narrative of sexual practices in Botswana, describing some indigenous men's preference for "dry sex" whereby women, in order to provide more pleasure for their male partners, insert toothpaste or herbs into their vaginas in order to prevent lubrication, which can lead to tears in vaginal tissues and bleeding during penetration, and thereby more easily allow the human immunodeficiency virus to penetrate the tissue ("Fighting Back" 27). While the practice,

provided the male partner is HIV-infected, could place the woman at risk for infection, beginning an article about AIDS in southern Africa with "dry sex" textually (re)produces a colonialist (and voyeuristic) erotics that imagines nonwestern exotic otherness as a site of sexual deviance or excess, far removed from the sexual epistemologies and practices of the West. Similar to critiques of Said's orientalism, where sexualities outside of the West "become a psychic screen on which to project fantasies of illicit sexuality and unbridled excess" (Boone 89),[10] in addition to the presence of racist ideologies, such globalized discourses on AIDS in Africa remain similarly ensconced in heteronormative frames of reference. Appeals to the breakdown of the heterosexual nuclear family, and to the associated risks of contracting HIV infection through "buggery" or prostitution among supposedly otherwise heterosexual male migrant laborers confined to same-sex hostels for long periods of time, away from their families and villages,[11] in effect, erases other modes of possible transmission and raises important issues regarding prevention (other than abstinence to keep the heterosexual nuclear family intact), treatment programs, and accessibility to drugs among indigenous men and women who have sex with partners of the same sex, particularly in townships, hostels (for migrant laborers), and poorer areas of the region. Here, not only are racist ideologies present in globalized representations of AIDS in Africa, but heterosexist and homophobic ones as well, and such discourses help lend implicit, if not explicit, support of nationalist ideologies in the region that view homosexuality as un-African, in much the same way that Mbeki's earlier failure to help lobby internationally for wider accessibility to antiretroviral drugs for those who suffer with AIDS-related illnesses and HIV infection in South Africa can be seen as endorsing racist readings of AIDS in Africa coming from the western stereotypes that continue to see Africa as a world apart, that is, as too impoverished and illiterate to be saved from the devastation and suffering surrounding HIV infection and AIDS. It is important, therefore, to look at how more than a single system of domination operates within these globalized narratives and discourses on AIDS.

Similarly, the idea of homosexuality being a foreign, western intrusion in postcolonial national imaginaries has its roots in a history of western imperialism, insofar as colonial management had an effect on local sexualities by enforcing draconian laws against homosexual practices as part of its "civilizing" mission. Such juridical codes and practices tied to the policing of sexuality in the colonies often continued, or were expanded upon, following independence, especially during apartheid in South Africa, and the imperial imprint remains in globalized discourses on AIDS in Africa. In the early days of monitoring the growth of the epidemic globally (that is, in the mid- to late 1980s), it was often assumed that since HIV infection appeared to be restricted largely, with few exceptions, to gay men and intravenous drug users in North America and Europe, and, as result, the governments of many postcolonial nations in Africa and Asia reported low or no incidences of HIV transmission and infection through men having sex with men, arguing that if HIV infection occurred through homosexual transmission, homosexuality was brought to their nations by western homosexual tourists or migrants.[12] Yet the particular reluctance of African nations to admit to a presence of homosexuality within their borders, and even higher rates of HIV infection than were originally assumed or predicted, Patton argues, is an effect of colonialism, tied to deep-seated historical anxieties by African nations about discursive appropriations of African sexuality by the West in decadent terms (75), an effect that still remains in discourses surrounding the global surveillance and tracking of HIV infection. This serious erasure of cases, situated at the nexus of a colonialist legacy, apartheid politics, imperialist readings of African sexuality by the West in decadent terms, and discursive shreds of nationalism in the region that blame homosexuality on the West, minimized the possibility of ascertaining accurate rates of HIV infection among indigenous African men who have sex with men, and was largely responsible for the late development of safer sex campaigns and access to drugs, treatment, and care within this specific group.

The denial is especially pertinent within South Africa, as evidenced in the remarks of Alan Whiteside, of the South African

Ministry of Mines, who reported in 1988 that black miners who formed same-sex bonds while on the gold mines and away from their rural homes did not need safe-sex education since little or no anal penetration was practiced or acknowledged (Patton 79).[13] While Whiteside's claim might be used to point to the *differences* between local forms of indigenous homosexualities and those of the West and of white South Africans, as Patton contends (80), a time lag was nonetheless created in the dissemination of prevention messages in the late 1980s based on a cultural disavowal of same-sex bonds among indigenous African men, particularly if these were conflated with western understandings of homosexuality. Early safer-sex campaigns in South Africa were racially split and, according to Patton, exposed the racial and sexual presuppositions of apartheid and colonialism to the extent that the "white" campaign was aimed at homosexual sex, and "black" campaigns focused on heterosexual sex and the preservation of the heterosexual nuclear family (80). Yet this racial splitting of sexuality produced a significant gap and subsequent delay in education and prevention programs among particular groups of men who escaped both the sexual categories of the West (since homosexuality under some strands of African cultural nationalism was thought of as un-African and, if practiced, was supposedly not practiced in the same way as it was in the West) and the pattern structure of the statistical distribution and transmission routes of AIDS by the World Health Organization's Global Programme on AIDS, since the disease in Pattern Two was largely, if not exclusively, assumed to be acquired through heterosexual transmission.

At the same time, however, the increased participation of local queer and AIDS activists has helped create a transnational, hybrid space of queerness to question radically the nexus of sexual, racial, and national inventions in general, and the global management of AIDS in particular. According to Patton, the GPA's adoption of the more descriptive phrase "men who have sex with men," or MSM, though unwieldy and not completely divorced from western understandings of homosexuality, enabled the GPA HIV educators to work more sensitively with local homosexualities, while, in turn, individuals in South Africa

shed light on their own complex sexualities that deconstructed Euro-American understandings of homosexuality as a more or less distinct identity and community. And, as local queers in South Africa began to achieve global mobility and exposure by participating in local and global AIDS politics, they broadened the sphere of international queer politics while insisting on their own cultural differences (Patton 81–82).

The supposedly neutral, descriptive rubric of "men who have sex with men" was intended to recognize that anal sex cannot always be read as the predominant practice of sexual pleasure between men as it is often conceived to be in the West (though it must be stated that this would also be an overgeneralization in understanding gay male sexual practices in western Europe and North America as well). Patton credits Moodie's study with creating a historical precedent in challenging the prevalence of anal sex among male migrant workers on the South African gold mines in a much earlier period in the twentieth century, though I still maintain, as I do in chapter 2, that Moodie's study, while highlighting other forms of same-sex eroticism between men, seems also to sanitize sex between men and leaves some heteronormative assumptions unchallenged.[14] But the crucial distinction that Patton is making lies in the difficulties encountered by GPA AIDS educators to sever the link between *identity* and *practice* (i.e., the idea that one *is* what one *does*), which are often conflated in the West, while trying to be sensitive to the fact that anal sex has different meanings and values in other symbolic regimes that need to be accounted for in helping individuals who may engage in the practice of anal sex recognize that "safer sex" applies to them as well, even if they refuse to take on a "gay" identity as it is understood in the West, that is, even if they resist becoming, or being seen as, homosexual subjects. In faulting some GPA AIDS education workers for vilifying anal intercourse "as both the sine qua non and principal danger of sex," and for forgetting to remind men that most of their other sexual practices were already safe (84), Patton seems to place uncritical faith in Moodie's findings in assuming that most of the miners in his study (and therefore most migrant workers in more recent times) practiced

hlabonga, or nonpenetrative sex, with their male partners, in a manner similar to unmarried heterosexual couples who wished to remain chaste prior to marriage in traditional indigenous societies. Patton does not specifically mention nonpenetrative forms of sex, but Moodie's study explicitly states that this form of sexual pleasure practiced between men on the South African gold mines was substituted for anal penetration. If practiced, thigh sex would be considered as "safe" from HIV transmission provided that the receptive partner has no broken skin in the area in which the other partner ejaculates. Though she seems to accept Moodie's findings more readily than I do, Patton comes to a similar conclusion, in that the rubric "men who have sex with men" sanitizes sex between them and, more importantly, provides a thinly veiled screen, or closet, if you will, not only of secrecy, but also of a "safe" identity that is more legibly heterosexual and, therefore, supposedly not at risk for HIV transmission or infection (86–87). So the problem with western interpretations of homosexuality amongst indigenous men is not so much the conflation of anal sex with homosexuality, which was a problem early in the pandemic for western GPA education consultants. The larger problem within this particular historical moment and indigenous context (which would also be relevant to the mine marriages among male miners in the studies by Moodie and by Harries and to the same-sex affective and erotic ties between Basotho women) seems to me to be the conflation of sexual *practice* with sexual *identity*, a conflation that places Foucault's proposition of a shift in homosexuality in the nineteenth century from a temporary aberration (based on specific acts) to an emergent identic category *even more* firmly in the West. Similarly, the reduction of safe-sex practices to condom use in globalized HIV prevention discourses simply replicates the idea of western, urbanized male sexual subjects who have sex with other men under other symbolic regimes (Patton 84) and fails to acknowledge the more fluid shifts, the more contested borders, between hetero- and homosexuality within indigenous contexts.

But this does not diminish the importance of transnational spheres of exchange, the (queer) hybrid spaces between

national borders, spaces that are produced in the dialogical tension between globalized and local homosexualities in global AIDS narratives and policies to the extent that these hybrid spaces help destabilize related fixed social epistemes pertaining to race, nationality, gender, and social class in addition to sexuality. Resisting the attachment of local homosexualities to western prototypes of gay identity and community has helped transform the ways in which the GPA, and those involved in the global management of AIDS, read same-sex desires and sexual practices in local contexts outside of the Euro-American axis. Similarly, globalized versions of queer desires and social activism have been differentially appropriated by queer activists in southern Africa and reworked strategically for political gain in local contexts. Similar to the influence of other truth commissions in relation to South Africa's TRC, which is discussed earlier in this chapter, Patton notes that local activists in South Africa do know of western forms of queer activism, such as Act Up and Queer Nation, are intrigued by these new fractious politics, and are excited to use them to find their own ways to explore the contingency of the nation even as the governments of some developing nations have officially rejected feminism and gay liberation as unwelcome intrusions into their national imaginaries (24–25). By producing themselves as "queer," through an acknowledgment of cultural differences between local and western forms of homosexuality and queer activism, activists in South Africa have been able to call to the attention of health ministers and government officials forms of homosexuality practiced by indigenous citizens and to challenge the stigma associated with devastating illnesses related to AIDS.

Most important, South African queer activism has focused international attention on the plight of AIDS in South Africa by challenging placid assumptions in the West that the availability of antiretroviral drugs no longer necessarily signifies eventual death for those who are HIV-positive when this is precisely what it signifies for the nearly six hundred South Africans dying from AIDS-related illnesses each day because they cannot afford the cost of treatment. Activist Zackie Achmat, cofounder of the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) in South Africa in 1998,

founding member of NCGLE mentioned in the Introduction, and whose work I cite in chapter 2 in response to T. Dunbar Moodie's historical research on same-sex bonds between male migrant workers, has worked to ensure access to affordable treatment for all people with HIV/AIDS in the nation. TAC fought quite successfully against international pharmaceutical companies that were profiting at the expense of those who were suffering from HIV/AIDS and against bureaucratic delays and official neglect from the South African government. Calling attention to the production and distribution of power, destabilizing institutional, social, and governmental façades, and making use of the international media where possible, reminiscent of the strategies of Act Up in the United States in the 1980s and 1990s but also constructed by a specific South African history of disobedience, struggle, and resistance to the apartheid regime, TAC willfully ignored international and trade agreements pertaining to the production, import, and use of less costly generic versions of patented antiretroviral drugs for the treatment of HIV infection. The TAC has also exposed the bureaucratic inefficiency of the South African government to manage the AIDS crisis effectively.

This blatant and unapologetic challenge to international drug policies and distribution practices, and the attendant media attention, according to a special exposé of Achmat in *Time*, helped force 39 major pharmaceutical companies to withdraw their legal challenges against South African laws that allow the production and importation of generic versions of the more expensive brand-name, patented drugs to be used to fight HIV/AIDS in South Africa ("Dying to Get AIDS Drugs to All" 72). The French nongovernmental human rights organization in South Africa, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), which has been working in the impoverished township of Khayelitsha near Cape Town, provides antiretroviral medication to HIV/AIDS sufferers. While breaching patent law by importing generic drugs from Brazil, the results of the MSF defied globalized discourses on AIDS in Africa that purport that poor Africans are too uneducated to take the pills responsibly and follow the strict regimen required, given that over 90 percent of patients in the

Khayelitsha program in 2003 followed the regime and that after six months of treatment, the average patient in the pilot project gained 8.8 kilograms and the level of HIV in the blood dropped below the rate of detection ("AIDS Orphans' Survival Offers Africa Hope" 5). Moreover, Achmat himself (who is also HIV-positive and for some time refused to take antiretrovirals until they were available for free to everyone through the national health system) points to both the connection to and influences of the contentious practices of queer activism in the West and to the connection of local queer politics in South Africa to a history of opposition to oppressive regimes. One can almost hear intertextual references, such as "We're here, we're queer, get used to it!" and "Silence equals death" in Achmat's own words, with a critical difference specific to local conditions in South Africa: "It's not about being proud to *come out* and admit that the disease is with us (revealing the preoccupation with the visibility of queerness and HIV-infection in the West). It's about being *realistic* (countering denials of homosexuality among indigenous Africans in nationalist discourses—while acknowledging local differences—and countering related denials of the high numbers of HIV-sufferers in South Africa as well as earlier denials among health and government officials relating to the efficacy of antiretroviral drugs in the treatment of HIV infection and AIDS-related illnesses). That's when *fighting* it can begin" ("Dying to Get AIDS Drugs to All" 72; emphasis and parentheses mine).

The transnational sets of social relations produced by discourses and economic practices of globalization have helped create new, or quite possibly the same, sites of peripherization as the territorial European colonialism that began in the late seventeenth century and lasted until the end of World War II, though the historical specificities are not similar. But current attempts to impose a new, post-Soviet, financial unification on the world by and through "the market" (among other things), as Spivak claims, make it more than impossible for new or developing states, which she refers to as "the newly decolonizing or the old decolonized nations," to escape the orthodox restraints of a

so-called neoliberal world economic system, because such a system, in the name of "sustainable development," effectively disavows all barriers between itself and more fragile national economies so that the very possibility of meaningful social redistribution is damaged (357). Certainly, intensified imperialism and the difficulty of social and economic transformation in the developing world are at work in the lack of easy access to antiretroviral drugs for still so many HIV/AIDS sufferers in South Africa insofar as the effects of the (in)action of pharmaceutical companies, and the patent laws that protect them, have been deeply imbricated in perpetuating racist ideologies about Africa, both of which bear the colonial trace connected to the disposability of African bodies. As Masao Miyoshi reminds us, "ours . . . is not an age of *post*colonialism but of intensified colonialism, even though it is under an unfamiliar guise" ("Borderless World?" 97).

On the other hand, the exposure and critique of globalization as a form of economic domination with colonial tendencies should not lead, as I have been arguing, to the reification of the local as the "proper" object of inquiry and analysis, nor can it lead to paralysis or despair. I agree with John Hawley's premise that resistance to this new form of sovereignty known as globalization cannot be a simple grounding of political analysis or struggle solely within localized spheres (8) as this once again reproduces a problematic global/local opposition and ignores how other sites of power and marginalization emerge within local and national contexts. Yet I cannot agree with Hawley's conclusion that as a result of the shift from sovereign-based nation-states as objects of study to deterritorialized "scapes" opened up by the permeability and contingency of national borders,[15] "globalization, in effect, becomes queer" (8). Transnational interaction and the production of cultural hybridity, in some instances, have helped challenge national cultural hegemonies pertaining to social inventions surrounding national identity, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, and other sites of homogenization while simultaneously calling into question the locality of western universality as standard, dominant knowledge, both of which mask how hybrid, how

fractured and contested, everyday life already is. Yet the effects of globalization, as I have argued at length, do not only function as sites of destabilization and dislocation, but can also function as sites of domination and normativization. Therefore, a queer space cannot be located within globality anymore than it can be situated within any specific localized spatialization. Rather, I would locate it, as an oppositional mode of analysis and political praxis, in the dialogical, reciprocal space "in between," where new forms of heterogeneity and social difference not accounted for in advance are produced, where boundaries and borders are both (re)figured and blurred, and where the flow of power is not unidirectional in the conjunctural encounter between global processes and the local practices of everyday life.

This process already is taking place in South Africa as sexual struggles and AIDS activism gain momentum to the extent that South African AIDS activists have not only exposed the ways in which imperialism operates within the margins through the global management of AIDS, but, through the hybrid space of (queer) difference(s), they have also transformed narratives of HIV/AIDS, not only nationally and regionally, but in the global sphere. The relatively new field of globalization studies implies a range of different levels of analysis; for sexuality, as one node of inquiry, this implies critical attention not only to the mobility of sexuality across the globe (Sánchez-Eppler and Patton 3), but also to questions pertaining to how the study of sexualities contributes to, unsettles, and complicates global processes and attempts at global unification, financial or otherwise. The queer space radically disturbs the global/local opposition in calling attention to what Elizabeth Povinelli and George Chauncey refer to as "the tension between increasingly powerful *global* discourses and institutions of homosexuality and heterosexuality, and between *local* sexual ideologies and subjectivities organized in different, often resistant terms" (446; emphasis added). Both global and local spheres, conceived of as self-contained totalities and as social inventions, have functioned as sites for keeping queerness on the outside of cultural legitimacy and systems of power; yet theorizing their conjunctural encounter and articulating sites of hybridity,

contradiction, and difference that are part of that encounter open up new possibilities for sexual and political agency for those who desire the same sex, whether or not such persons self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or queer. The decolonization of desire has not occurred in the aftermath of colonization in postcolonial nations, nor can it occur if the hegemonic underpinnings of sexual identity and sexual politics in western culture remain undeconstructed as they intersect with nonwestern cultures. Indeed, as Anne McClintock reminds us, "feminism is imperialist when it puts the interests and needs of privileged women in imperialist countries above the local needs of disempowered women and men, borrowing from patriarchal privilege" (*IL* 384); the connections of western queer discourse and politics to imperialism can, and often do, occur along similar lines. One must distinguish between the *acknowledgment* of western queer influences (as opposed to their simple imposition and reproduction elsewhere) and their *strategic redeployment* for localized needs and purposes within a history of colonial domination. In South Africa, in particular, this also means looking at queer struggles in relation to broader postapartheid struggles for democracy and racial equality. Recognizing the conjunctural encounter of global and local spheres, but locating queer in the hybrid space between them, rather than solely within one or the other, enables not only a reimagining of public and social space, but what Diana Fuss has termed an "imaginative enactment of sexual *re*definitions, *re*borderizations, and *re*articulations" (7; emphasis added). It is within these interstitial spaces that new sites of queer difference can take shape and produce renegotiations of sexual and gender identity, race, national affiliation and citizenship, and global influence. Refiguring sexual and national borders may not signify the end of queer struggles in South Africa or elsewhere, but may bring those South Africans who articulate and/or enact same-sex desires one step closer to determining how they wish to live, one step closer to truly incorporating "new people in relation to the body politic" (Bhabha, "Narrating the Nation" 4), which is part of the promise of South African narratives of national reconciliation and new nationhood. The crafting of

further interstitial spaces between the global and the local is crucial to an emancipatory project, whereby, following Jacqui Alexander, people can love themselves, love the same sex, and transform the nation, and perhaps the world, simultaneously. This, Alexander says, can create new landmarks for the transformative power of the erotic, "a meetingplace where our deepest yearnings for different kinds of freedom can take shape and find rest" (100). This process already is taking place in South Africa as sexual struggles and AIDS activism gain momentum to the extent that South African AIDS activists have not only exposed the ways in which imperialism operates within the margins through the global management of AIDS, but, through the hybrid space of (queer) difference(s), they have also transformed narratives of HIV/AIDS, not only nationally and regionally, but in the global sphere.

CHAPTER 6

Transforming Theory/Transforming Borders: Postcolonial Queer Inquiry and/as a Politics of Decolonization

In refusing to (re)produce South Africa as the spectacle of apartheid while being attentive to the historical reality of racial domination and its material effects in an analysis of struggles pertaining to the politics of sexual difference, this book has attempted to engage the useful, but sometimes slippery, cultural and epistemological significations that come about in the engagement of postcolonial/queer as a theoretical mode of inquiry when studying South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy. Because the transition is still ongoing, this has necessitated a contextual analysis of the politics of sexuality within the wider struggle for democratization and the effects of that struggle within the frame of the nation-state, in other parts of the region, and in the larger global sphere. At the same time, this study has not confined itself to the present postapartheid situation alone, but has also examined and critiqued the ways in which earlier historiographic and anthropological studies of nonheteronormative indigenous sexualities in the region have superbly accounted for their historical and cultural difference; yet these studies still fall somewhat short of a more comprehensive analysis of sexual agency and erotic autonomy to the extent that indigenous same-sex bonds are framed and interpreted through a trace of heteronormative assumptions. Not unlike the problematic "post" in postcolonial, which can erroneously place imperial domination in the past, an analysis of the representation

of sexual difference in postapartheid South Africa must take into consideration, as I have argued throughout this book, the historical antecedents of apartheid and colonialism and the ongoing consequences of these legacies of racial domination and ask new questions of the representation of indigenous same-sex bonds in received historiographic and anthropological work, pointing to the ways in which such bonds have resisted, and possibly exacerbated, prescribed heteronormative regimes rather than simply having been subsumed under them. Future analysis must also pay closer attention to the gaps, to the exceptions to heteronormativity, that are suggested but not developed in these studies. Discussing these issues, however, is not an attempt toward a linear genealogy of sexual differences in southern Africa, but instead pushes the boundaries of what it means, within the transitional discursive and material struggle toward full democracy in South Africa, to democratize more fully the past in the "New" South Africa. My "queer" (re)readings of the historical studies in question attempt to open up further the heterogeneity of indigenous sexualities that refuse any easy categorization, and they may be useful in addressing the ongoing cultural representation of sexual difference in present-day southern Africa.

But in addition to "correcting," revising, or modifying the silences and elisions that have occurred in dominant narratives of academic work on indigenous same-sex bonds in southern Africa, whether in historiography or in anthropology, both of which can be placed within the broader rubric of postcolonial studies, and more than tending to the gaps or absences in dominant queer theoretical productions, insofar as these discourses are often overinscribed by western, metropolitan understandings of "queer," the conjunction of postcolonial and queer enables a space, as it has in this study, for postcolonial work to move further away from anticolonial narratives that inscribe Europe as an object of critique and move toward what Ella Shohat has aptly described as "a discursive analysis and historiography addressing decentered multiplicities of power relations (e.g., between colonized women and men or between colonized peasantry and the bourgeoisie)" (133). The reinscription of

Europe as an object of critique and resistance against a colonial past, as it appears in various discourses of postcolonial cultural nationalism, loses sight of other forms of subjugation and the ways in which erotic autonomy may operate as a site of decolonization. I would slightly extend Shohat, then, by pointing out that the power relations of which she speaks are *multilayered*, in addition to simply being multiple, and operate, as argued within the parameters of this study, at the overlap of sexual, racial, nationalist, and global stratifications, complemented by multiple, overlapping strands of resistance to hegemonic constructions of intergender relations, normative family affiliations, nationalist imaginaries, and local and global health policies, to name a few. Clearly this is a move beyond a narrow occupation with the colonizer/colonized opposition, though, at the same time, the fact of colonial history is by no means placed under erasure since an emphasis on multilayered sites of power and resistance broadens and complexifies imperial relations, both past and ongoing.

Simultaneously, a discursive analysis and historiography that focuses on multilayered and overlapping systems of power within the context of sexual struggles in southern Africa can only broaden and deconstruct the (western) assumptions and parameters of queer theoretical inquiry. While queer work subjects a range of related social normativities, institutions, and categories to analysis and critique in addition to those pertaining to sexuality, an examination of indigenous same-sex bonds within specific networks of kinship systems, labor and economic conditions, and past and present forms of imperial domination remains to be more fully and meaningfully enfolded into academic queer theory's discursive productions on sexuality and into a broader commitment by queer political practices to social justice worldwide. The transdisciplinary engagement of postcolonial and queer theory, then, is one strategy for rethinking center-periphery relations and for initiating what André Brink has referred to as strategies of interrogation not only for the narratives we produce in cultural inquiry, but also for the narratives we habitually call the world (23). But the hegemony of western scholarship must be continuously interrogated and

deconstructed within more globally diversified understandings of "queer." Any resultant representations of "queer" would always already require critical attention to their contingency and instability through being subjected to the ongoing process of transcultural negotiation.

In addition to widening the parameters of both fields of inquiry, what is also implied is a slippage in the authority of both postcolonial theory and queer theory as modes of analysis and as systems of representation, insofar as their dialogical conjunction highlights other kinds of absences and blindspots in the discourses it produces. Somewhat related to my discussion of my own positioning in relation to this study in chapter 1, the theoretical dislocation of which I now speak is not simply the result of the use (and critique) of western queer theory to analyze the politics of sexual difference in the "New" South Africa and the surrounding region. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin remind us that simply advocating the complete dismissal of western theory as irredeemably Eurocentric in its assumptions and political effects masks the very conditions of hybridity that exist in postcolonial texts, which also must exist in the use and production of theory in postcolonial and indigenous contexts. It is only through the condition of hybridity, they argue, that multiple sites of indigenous difference can be named and elaborated and thereby transform the study and criticism of contemporary postcolonial realities (180). The slippages of which I speak, then, come out of the necessary hybridization of theory, both in the conjunction of postcolonial and queer and in the continual shift throughout this study between textual theory and cultural context (as opposed to the mere "application" of postcolonial and/or queer theory to/in southern Africa). Homi Bhabha refers to this kind of theoretical work as the *translocational* transfer of signification and power from an authoritative system of cultural hegemony (i.e., western theory) to the emergent processes of cultural relocation and reiteration, which also changes the terms of interpretation and institutionalization ("Surviving Theory" 370). Unlike the uncritical, reductive "application" of western theory to postcolonial locations and contexts, Bhabha is speaking about a strategic form of

cultural translation that does not simply "recover the norms of universality, autonomy, and sovereignty," which would erase difference(s), but a habit of mind that recognizes there is "a positive, agential value in the whole process of surviving domination" (370), which shifts the locus of enunciation and calls into question the hegemony of western scholarship. Postcolonial queer inquiry simply does not divest itself of theory altogether but, on one level, works to *re*theorize desire in response to shifting contexts and material conditions that are often the effects of various forms (or layers) of imperial domination, both past and ongoing, and offers greater theoretical sophistication and insights into the ways in which sexualities are constructed. At the same time, the translocational transfer of signification and power of which Bhabha speaks, within that transitional "queer" space in South Africa between apartheid and democracy, implies a simultaneous shift in center/peripheral relations, not once and for all, or simply in a straightforward movement where the peripheries simply move to the center, but continuously calling the very virgule demarcating racial, sexual, gender, class, national, and global borders into question as various systems and layers of power and resistance are exposed and analyzed.

In speaking of the historical and social construction of sexuality, throughout this study I have stressed the importance of looking at nonheteronormative sexualities in southern Africa under specific cultural, historical, and material conditions.[1] Yet, while interpreting sexuality as a discursive and cultural production within specific sets of social relations is the legacy of Foucauldian thinking (Halperin 7), I also remain somewhat ambivalent, if not skeptical, about the efficacy of Foucauldian paradigms for understanding sexuality within a social and historical context of colonialism and racial domination, and for understanding the contemporary effects of this history on dissident sexualities in postapartheid South Africa. Foucault's theorization of homosexuality as an emergent identity category in the nineteenth century, as opposed to its earlier status as a temporary aberration (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 43),[2] entails an instantiation of colonial forgetting, that is, a disavowal of the

centrality of colonialism to the extent that colonized bodies are assumed to be safely contained, frozen, in history within an *ars erotica*, but without progress or movement in time. Hema Chari has pointed out that Foucault's analysis of the discursive construction of the homosexual "other" medicalized in the nineteenth century is analogous to imperial constructions of sexually deviant and decadent racial others in colonial discourse, which justified the need for colonial intervention and rule; yet, she argues, Foucault does not account for the influence of colonization as a regime of power and knowledge in the history of sexuality (282). At the same time, Foucault's distinction between *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis* reinvents problematic binaries between past and present, between West and East, and certainly between centers and peripheries, thereby keeping imperial taxonomies in place and creating a fantasized cartography of the world and of space-time reminiscent of orientalist modes of perception, which, in turn, sets up problematic relations of equivalence between geographic/cultural space and sexual practices by gridding, as Joseph Boone points out, "the geographical and sexual oppositions—West/East, heterosexual/homosexual—onto and across each other's axes" (104). More specifically, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault writes:

> On the one hand, the societies—and they are numerous: China, Japan, India, Rome, the Arabo-Moslem societies—which endowed themselves with an *ars erotica*. In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul. Moreover, this knowledge must be deflected back into the sexual practice itself, in order to shape it as though from within and amplify its effects. In this way, there is formed a knowledge that must remain secret, not because of an element of infamy that might attach to its object, but because of the need to hold it in the greatest reserve. . . .(57)

Within the western tradition, Foucault's *ars erotica* seems located entirely in the past, to the extent that confession, as the

precursor to the production of scientific discourses on sex, gradually became detached from the sacrament of penance in the sixteenth century and gravitated toward pedagogy, relationships between adults and children, family relations, and medicine as ways of discerning the "truth" of sex (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 68). Still more problematic to Foucault's cartography is that *ars erotica* similarly seems to overwrite completely the non-West, distinguished from the *scientia sexualis*, which Foucault attributes to western rationalism, and strangely exempt or displaced from power, insofar as "truth" in *ars erotica* seems to be derived from pleasure itself rather than in relation to what is forbidden. Same-sex marriages between men on the South African gold mines, though a modern phenomenon, but still undetached from imperialist/orientalist readings indicative of sexual permissiveness and unbridled sexuality among indigenous Africans, far from being tied simply to licentious polymorphous pleasure on the one hand, or narrowly circumscribed to the social contingencies of apartheid capitalism as a regime of power on the other, were inscribed, to varying degrees, with gender normativities and prohibitions. While the studies by Moodie and Harries discussed in chapter 2 make use of Foucauldian paradigms, their analysis of the social and historical conditions surrounding same-sex marriages on the South African gold mines rely largely on a heteronormative social order and heteronormative assumptions, leaving little room for sexual agency and erotic autonomy. And it would seem that neither an *ars erotica* nor a *scientia sexualis* would be adequate or sufficient to describe them.

While Foucault has remarked in "Two Lectures" in *Power/Knowledge* how some knowledges have been disqualified or insufficiently elaborated (82), his history of sexuality, especially his broad generalization of indigenous sexualities under the rubric of *ars erotica*, seems to fall prey to his own insightful claim.[3] Along similar lines, and going back to classical India, Michael J. Sweet and others have faulted Foucault for modeling *ars erotica* on orientalist (and heterosexist) readings of Vatsyayana's *Kama Sutra* without paying attention to class distinctions, given that the *Kama Sutra's* advocacy of sexual libertinism and permissiveness speaks

to a small minority of privileged, urban, upper-caste wealthy males,[4] and for ignoring other texts, such as the Buddhist Vinaya and the *Manusmriti*, that prescribe precise penalties for transgressing socially normative practices around sexuality. Speaking of a questionable *ars erotica* separate from juridical spheres of power, Sweet succinctly summarizes, "India was not a Rousseauian paradise of sexual freedom by any stretch of the imagination" (79). Further, given that interracial homosexual relations in colonial Rhodesia were persecuted with greater zeal than those between indigenous African men or between white colonial masters, as I discussed in chapter 4, one challenge of future postcolonial queer work is to question further the extent to which same-sex sexualities are racialized when set within a history of racial domination in specific locations, and to continue to put pressure on any easy or straightforward distinction between *ars erotica* and *scientia sexualis* in the study of indigenous sexualities. Along these lines, further work must also expose, as Ruth Vanita notes, attempts by colonialists and nationalists to suppress and rewrite multivocal traditions of the past pertaining to sexuality into a univocal, uniform tradition (*Queering India* 3), and, I would add, this must also include exposing the containment of multiple meanings of same-sex desire in Foucauldian thinking, which may not be equipped to address the varied and historically specific formations of sexual identities in the postcolonial world. In addressing the blindspots, the gaps in Foucault's thinking, postcolonial queer work might better analyze multilayered forms of power and resistance in postcolonial contexts and then more productively ask what new forms of sexual subjectivity and erotic autonomy are possible and the practices of citizenship these might imply.

In the first chapter, I mentioned, following Seshadri-Crooks, that marginality be thought of not only as an exclusion (from hegemonic regimes of power and cultural production), but also as a limit to the interrogatory optic and enunciative positions from which dominant epistemological knowledge constructs and interprets the world. Postcolonial queer theory, within the frame of this study, takes the idea of limit as one of its starting points, and as a point of departure, as a means of democratizing

the heterosexist and imperialist readings of indigenous sexualities of the past and present in southern Africa by addressing the neocolonizing impulses of nationalism and globalization, and by subjecting postcolonial and queer modes of inquiry to their own complicity in reinventing problematic center-periphery relations between the West and the so-called Third World. With inquiry and critique working strategically from a variety of positions and from multilayered and transdisciplinary levels, postcolonial queer work is simultaneously a construction and a deconstruction, a site of "visioning" and a site of radical *re*vision, implying a subject position for its practitioners being one of contingent *location* (within discourse, within a discipline, within imagined or material geopolitical spaces, within theory) and of simultaneous *dislocation*, working in and moving out of the shifting borderlines of theoretical, cultural, and disciplinary inquiry. As Bhabha reminds us, it is important not only to value the topical, spatial status of theory in the structure of an argument, but also to grasp its fragility, its metaphorical structures, its slippages ("Surviving Theory" 371), which is something very different from adhering rigidly to narrow, singular schools of theoretical thought or speaking from a singular position of "authorizing" knowledge, since one's own position in discourse can never be univocal but is always already overdetermined by multiple cultural flows and political commitments. Indeed, similar to the refusal to hypostatize South Africa as the spectacle of apartheid by focusing instead on noncolonizing explorations of sexual difference while taking into consideration an apartheid past, postcolonial queer theory, as it interfaces in non-hierarchical ways with local histories, material practices, and lived experiences, and accounts for the attendant slippages, gaps, and aporias that must necessarily accompany and decenter it, can potentially offer new forms of inquiry and a renewed commitment to the politics of decolonization. It is for this reason that postcolonial queer work cannot obliterate the importance of local contexts, or obscure the idea of the nation as an imagined community (with material consequences in the immediate social world) in the rush to analyze such more radically determined spaces as the diasporic or transnational. Similarly, this

neither implies a fetishization of the local, nor a hesitancy to elaborate the local further within wider transnational and global contexts.

How, then, might postcolonial queer work contribute to, or have implications for, the lived everyday struggles toward decolonization not only in southern Africa but elsewhere? Developing Bhabha's critique of theory, and situating it within the praxis of a borderless feminism, Chandra Talpade Mohanty offers an important precedent through her feminist vision of social transformation beyond the strict lines of demarcation and division where imperialism often resides (both on the outside of national borders as well as within them). Similar to Bhabha, Mohanty acknowledges the limitations of working within distinct theoretical schools. Developing her earlier views from her seminal essay "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," Mohanty, in her book *Feminism Without Borders*, recognizes that the hegemony of postmodern theory's skepticism over identity has narrowed feminist politics through reducing identity either to a self-serving, exclusionary category, or by simply assuming that identity is always already unstable or merely "strategic" (6).[5] With regard to sexual identities, the problem to which Mohanty points becomes more nuanced since Foucault's premise, mentioned earlier, that in the nineteenth century homosexuality shifted from an aberration to an identity in the West, is called into question, and the analytical leap that sexual identity and sexual practice can be easily conflated is more radically challenged.[6]

The Eurocentric privileged feminisms of which Mohanty has spoken and critiqued, especially in "Under Western Eyes," have curtailed feminist thinking as an internationalist commitment, and certainly would limit postcolonial queer work as well. The feminist reflective practice of solidarity she envisions is one that rejects an enforced community of common oppression and the containment that borders present (both disciplinary and geographical), and foregrounds instead communities of people who have chosen to work and fight together against what I have referred to earlier as multilayered power relations—within Mohanty's framework these would include sexism, misogyny,

and heterosexism as overlapping systems of power that are so central to the social fabric of the world in which we live (*Feminism Without Borders* 7–8). Similar to the approach I have taken in this book with regard to postcolonial queer theoretical analysis, though certainly in need of further exploration and elaboration in other contexts and in future work, Mohanty offers a comparative feminist scholarship that exposes overlapping forms of subjugation in women's lives, and theorizes complex, *relational* understandings of experience, location, and history (*Feminism Without Borders* 238). While the difference of indigenous histories of sexual struggle in southern Africa certainly needs to be analyzed and understood under specific sets of material and ideological conditions, and while analyses of current struggles for sexual agency and erotic autonomy in South Africa in particular need to be attentive to the specificities of a history of racial domination under colonialism and apartheid, further postcolonial queer work, following Mohanty's vision for feminist solidarity, in exposing the effects of territorial colonization and continued economic, discursive, and psychic colonization on the lives and struggles of sexual dissidents, must also examine the ways in which experiences of sexual oppression, both in the present and in the past, have struggled to resist the homogenization of desire which earlier historiographies, as well as the Eurocentric biases of some strands of academic queer studies, including Foucault, have been complicit in reproducing. How might narratives pertaining to counter-hegemonic memories (and appropriations) of nonheteronormative sexualities of the past in southern Africa be renegotiated so as not to form a communal or fetishized cultural heritage to be (re)produced in a new key, but as Shohat suggests, "as fragmented sets of narrated memories and experiences on the basis of which to *mobilize* contemporary communities" (136; emphasis added)? How is academic queer scholarship taken up discursively as a strategy in non-western parts of the world, and how does it transform everyday practices (both for queers and in the larger public sphere) while simultaneously transforming *itself* as it engages them? How can non-hierarchical queer solidarities and alliances be formulated and asserted

across borders that neither hypostatize particular locations nor homogenize particular identities and desires?

The implications, then, of a post-Foucauldian, postcolonial queer analysis that examines encounters between imperial, hegemonic cultural transmissions (cultural nationalism, globalization, western scholarship) with indigenous sexualities, acknowledges the legacy of Foucault's thinking on sexuality and simultaneously points to its shortcomings. It also implies a rethinking of center-periphery relations as the effects of multiple, overlapping systems of power, to the extent that peripheries are not merely the binary opposites of centers of power, or figured in negative relation to western power and knowledge, but can both contain new, or quite possibly similar, forms of hegemonic power within them, as well as new sites of supplementarity and difference that cannot be wholly contained under the standard center-periphery split, nor fully understood within national borders, within the confines of western scholarship, or within a single discipline or unitary theoretical perspective. Given that citizenship, as figured within the borders of the nation-state, as Alexander and Mohanty remark, is largely premised within the normative parameters of masculinity and heterosexuality (xiv), thereby denying full citizenship and a sense of belonging to those marked by queer difference, and taking a cue from Mohanty's borderless feminism that calls for collective (re)visions of identity, political mobilization, and social change based on comparative and transnational understandings of subjugation and oppression in women's experiences and histories, the crossing of borders (geographically, intellectually, imaginatively) will enable continued theorizations of desire outside of spaces where the imperial resides, and call greater attention and urgency to erotic autonomy and sexual agency as viable praxes of decolonization. This work cannot be done without an ongoing dialogical engagement between postcolonial and queer scholarship; nor can it be done without the intervention of revised, resituated queer political practices in postcolonial locations, not to mention alliances with a borderless feminism, as advocated by Mohanty, that help analyze the links of gender oppression to the enforcement of heteronormative

social relations, all of which are central to demystifying the hegemony of scholarship produced in the West and to dismantling the hierarchies of knowledge production. At the same time, postcolonial queer inquiry, in its movement across national, gender, sexual, and disciplinary borders, must continuously and self-reflexively ask what remains *undertheorized* in its own productions of knowledge, as well as remain critically attentive to what remains unseen by, or not immediately apparent to, western eyes.

Throughout the past decade and a half, South Africa has taught the world a great deal about democracy, equality, and radical social change. Its transition to democracy and its colonial and apartheid past meaningfully illustrate that citizenship, far from being a privilege of those safely ensconced in centered heteronormative, masculinist, white, and other hegemonic spaces, is an ongoing struggle for social justice. While full democracy as envisioned by the ANC has yet to be fully realized, the transitional phase after apartheid has provided significant opportunities for decolonization as indigenous South Africans continue to think themselves out of the effects of domination by race, gender oppression, homophobia, HIV/AIDS discrimination, colonization, apartheid, cultural nationalism, and the neoimperialist gestures of economic globalization. The liminal space between apartheid and democracy in the immediate period after apartheid, indeed a queer space, has involved significant shifts in thinking regarding nationhood, African identity, and the multiple links to the wider African diapsora (through racism, exile, segregation, slavery, and genocide) along with the efficacy of sexual politics within a democracy and worldwide. This does not imply that moving across borders obliterates them altogether; as I have argued throughout this study, the processes of decolonization must involve ongoing engagement with the lived, everyday experience of marginality and its transgression so that better sense can be made of the effects of new sites of imperial and hegemonic domination so as to avoid any simplistic opposition between national and transnational spheres. Citizenship, then, as a struggle for social justice, within *and* across national borders, enables

the ongoing renegotiation and destabilization of hierarchies of rule, a kind of citizenship that is not reducible to national affiliation alone but is able to imagine new, participatory, transnational forms of collective democratic practice premised on ideas of self-determination and a genuine commitment to erotic autonomy as a viable practice of decolonization. It is hoped that future work, taking South Africa's transition as a point of departure, will explore and elaborate further on the implications for postcolonial queer theory in other contexts, and within the sphere of public deliberation, by asking what new forms of sexual subjectivities are possible and what it means to live with those subjectivities in a participatory, democratic social world that is in many respects, like the "New" South Africa, still in the process of emerging.

Notes

Introduction

1. My use of "queer" here and throughout this book denotes an oppositional mode of analysis and political praxis operating against the normalizing ideologies of race, class, gender, nationality, language usage, ethnicity, etc., in addition to sexuality, as these normative ideologies also marked the apartheid era in addition to racial domination and have not been totally eradicated despite juridical change in South Africa. Certainly, my usage of "queer" to describe a mode of analysis and critique, as well as a political praxis, within the specific context of South Africa, is not an appropriative one as lesbians, gay men, and other sexual dissidents in South Africa have used "queer" as a site of identification, along with other terms, both specific to the West and to local contexts. This will be addressed in more detail in chapter 1. Similarly, my use of "New" South Africa in scare quotes differentiates it from the apartheid era, but simultaneously calls into question that very newness and the extent to which there has been a complete break with the past.
2. The three novels in question are *Go Tell It On the Mountain* (1953), *Giovanni's Room* (1956), and *Another Country* (1962), though I also made some reference in the paper to *The Fire Next Time* (1963) as a treatise on racial relations in America at the time though not without its sexual undertones.
3. For the redeployment of the rigid gender and sexual norms of the immediate postwar period for slightly different purposes in the 1960s contextualized by the politics of race, see Eldridge Cleaver's critique of Baldwin's *Another Country* in his (in)famous essay "Notes on a Native Son" published in *Soul on Ice.* Concerning the normativization of gender within U.S. black nationalism, see Joyce Hope Scott's essay "From Foreground to Margin: Female Configurations and Masculine Self-Representation in Black Nationalist Fiction," where she argues that black women tended to be portrayed in black nationalist fiction with ambivalence or within a Euro-American, male-dominated framework where she is subordinated to men and often repudiated as the "terrible mother" who "emasculates and tyrannizes the black male, depriving him of his opportunity to flourish and grow into a healthy American man" (303–304).
4. However, it is also worth pointing out that while it is difficult to connect African-American culture to the cultures of Africa, using only

race as the point of comparison, it might be possible to consider seriously the possibilities of comparative inquiry when race is examined through constructions of gender, sexuality, and nation, focusing on specific historicized events and without making foundationalist claims.

5. For a more specific discussion of Baldwin's theory of identity and difference and of the politics of race and sexuality that surrounded his reception within black nationalism, see Spurlin, "Culture, Rhetoric, and Queer Identity: James Baldwin and the Identity Politics of Race and Sexuality" and "Queer Identity and Racial Alienation: The Politics of Race and Sexuality in James Baldwin and in the 'New' South Africa."
6. In focusing on specific indigenous same-sex desires in southern Africa, I do not mean to exclude those same-sex desires that crossed racial demarcations, and interracial same-sex liaisons are specifically discussed in chapter 4 in the context of colonial rule which set the foundation for apartheid. But with regard to the mine marriages between indigenous African men in chapter 2 and the affective and erotic bonds between Basotho women in chapter 3, I have chosen to focus on these particular sets of indigenous same-sex relations in this book because they are already encoded in received scholarship on South African cultural history, which, I argue, instantiates and perpetuates a heteronormative slant that needs to be further challenged. Part of the democratic work on the "New" South Africa is to question assumptions of heteronormativity not only in the present, but in the past and in received scholarship. For an analysis of black-white same-sex relations in South African fiction, see Alan Sinfield's *On Sexuality and Power*, especially pages 163–167.
7. But this is not a capitulation to global hegemony or to the elision or erasure of local identities and cultures; I also acknowledge in chapter 5 that transnational influences, particularly economic ones, similarly operate as a threat and as a site of uneven development and access given the specific history of Africa. This is especially evident, in light of the current AIDS crisis in South Africa, in the continued perpetuation of relations of neocolonial economic dependence kept in place by international financial institutions that read Africa as a continent rife with infectious diseases, and by the World Health Organization's historic reliance on colonial models of health in its global health policies.

Chapter 1 Broadening Postcolonial Studies, Decolonizing Queer Studies: Disciplinary Transitions and Social Change in the "New" South Africa

1. This is beginning to change as a result of the insistent pressures of queer work begun in postcolonial studies as well as work within new diasporic studies. See, for example, such collections as *Queer Diasporas* (eds. Cindy Patton and Benigno Sánchez-Eppler); *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical*

Intersections (ed. John C. Hawley); *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society* (ed. Ruth Vanita); *Gays and Lesbians in Asia and the Pacific* (eds. Gerard Sullivan and Laurence Wai-Teng Leong); and *Queer Globalizations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism* (eds. Arnaldo Cruz-Malavé and Martin F. Manalansan IV) many of which are referenced further in this book.

2. Cobham is using such indigenous African writers as Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* and Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* and *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born* to make this point. See her essay "Misgendering the Nation: African Nationalist Fictions and Nuruddin Farah's *Maps*" for further discussion, especially pp. 46–48.
3. Hence, my usage of scare quotes here and elsewhere to differentiate and simultaneously interrogate the notion of a "new" South Africa. Also, the connection of sexual repression going hand in hand with racist legislation under apartheid is evident in the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and in the Immorality Act of 1957, which later became the Sexual Offences Act, and criminalized a range of nonheteronormative forms of sexuality and any form of interracial sex as part of an overall social trend of obsessive sexual policing during the 1950s and the 1960s in South Africa. Specifically homophobic legislation was apparent in the Immorality Amendment Act (Act 57 of 1969) two years after the decriminalization of homosexuality in Britain and in the same year as the Stonewall Rebellion in the United States. The Amendment raised the age of consent for homosexual sex from sixteen to nineteen, forbade homosexual sex at parties, outlawed the use of dildos by lesbians, and gave powers to the police to raid gay parties and clubs (which they already had been doing). In addition, Schedule One of the Criminal Procedure Act of 1977 allowed for the arrest of any person "reasonably" suspected of having committed sodomy. For further discussion, see Glen Retief, "Keeping Sodom Out of the Laager: State Repression of Homosexuality in Apartheid South Africa," and a related research report by Retief entitled " 'Policing the Perverts': An Exploratory Investigation of the Nature and Social Impact of Police Action Towards Gay and Bisexual Men in South Africa" submitted to the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cape Town and to the Centre for Scientific Development of the Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria (1993). Well into the 1990s, despite the repeal of the Immorality Act in 1985, homosexual sodomy was harshly prosecuted and was still considered a Schedule One offense, potentially punishable by lengthy prison terms. It was not until 1998 that the South African High Court decriminalized homosexuality in order to bring it in line with the new Constitution, which declared discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation to be unlawful. For further discussion of the legal case surrounding decriminalization, see Albertyn, "The Decriminalization of Gay Sexual Offences" in the *South African Journal of Human Rights.*

4. On the other hand, concerning the use of such terms as "queer," "gay," or "homosexual" in India, Ruth Vanita objects to the purist idea that only terms "indigenous" to a particular place should be used and to the use of more generic terms such as "men who have sex with men" or "homoerotically inclined." Vanita convincingly argues that in India, the political viability of terms such as "gay" is likely to be greater than the more generic "men who have sex with men" as far fewer men would identity themselves in the latter category than in the former. Further, she notes that antigay groups in India have no compunction about using familiar present-day terms to campaign against lesbians and gay men in India. Even as some historians may object to "ahistorical" use of terms such as "gay" in describing same-sex relationships in nonwestern past societies, they seem relatively untroubled about the use of such terms as "family," "marriage," "master," etc. when discussing societies where approximations of these terms in other languages may not be equivalent to their use in English or to our present-day understandings of them. See Vanita's Introduction to *Queering India*, especially pages 4–5. While it is important to recognize the specificities of terms to describe same-sex bonds in nonwestern languages and cultural traditions, as well as in speaking of same-sex bonds of the past, it is equally important to draw out their nonheteronormative, dissident, and sometimes resistant implications so they cannot be reappropriated, misinterpreted, or even normalized by heteronormative frames of reference. The implications of this rather delicate balancing act are explored in chapter 2, with regard to same-sex erotic ties between men on the South African gold mines, and in chapter 3, regarding same-sex affective and erotic ties between Basotho women.
5. However, the earlier chapters of this book also imply a movement beyond the nation-state as an object of analysis as the book itself addresses the effects of sexual politics in the "New" South Africa in other parts of the region where appropriate. This is implied through historical analysis of the organization of male sexuality within the migrant labor system in the region, specifically where many indigenous men, who worked on the South African gold mines of the Witwatersrand, engaged in same-sex relationships, known as "mine marriages," and migrated from other parts of the region to work for long periods of time, with a specific presence of miners from Mozambique dating back to the early twentieth century. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2. Diasporic movement across other parts of southern Africa is also implied through addressing the effects of migrant labor on Basotho women who form same-sex affective bonds with other women (chapter 3), and through the movement and impact of certain strands of African cultural nationalism that circulate discursively throughout the

southern Africa region insisting that homosexuality amongst Africans is a western aberration (chapter 4).

6. See chapter 4 for a discussion of the Anglo-Boer War and for the ways in which British and Afrikaner conflicts help set the foundation for apartheid.
7. In coming up with the categories of settler colonies and invaded societies, Maxwell concentrates on the relation of language to the specificity of place. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin explain, in both there is a disjunction between place and language. In settler colonies, European colonists dispossessed and overwhelmed indigenous populations, set up a transplanted civilization, and secured political independence while retaining a nonindigenous language which was always alien to the "new" land and its ancient and established meanings. In invaded societies, the disjunction between language and place is figured differently; postcolonial writers were colonized in their own territory and not forced to adapt to a different landscape but had their own sophisticated responses to their familiar landscape and cultural world marginalized through the use of English, which not only displaced the mother tongue or provided an alternative medium of communication, but ruptured the traditional ways in which one could think and talk about the world one inhabited (25). For further elaboration of this difference, see D.E.S. Maxwell's "Landscape and Theme."
8. See Cindy Patton's book *Globalizing AIDS* for further elaboration and chapter 5 in this book for further discussion of the politics of global policies on AIDS and their effects on/in South Africa.
9. Cindy Patton explains that the term "African AIDS" circulated more quickly in the West than did the World Health Organization's term "Pattern Two," used in the late 1980s to describe transmission routes of HIV in Africa, which were largely believed to be through heterosexual intercourse (xii).
10. These Native Land Acts are discussed in more detail in chapter 4. While there were certainly lesbian and gay political groups prior to the postapartheid period, such as GASA (Gay Association of South Africa), which were largely white, middle class, and characterized by single-issue politics, from 1988, with the founding of GLOW (Gays and Lesbians of the Witwatersrand), lesbian and gay political organizations became more aligned ideologically with the Freedom Charter of the ANC (Gevisser 63), that is, with a mission to assert gay rights as part of a larger struggle for social transformation in South Africa as I mentioned in the Introduction. It is this broader-based movement of resistance (to fixed identities put in place initially under colonialism and more so under apartheid), which includes indigenous gay and lesbian South Africans participating as equals in struggles for human rights at the end of the apartheid era and after, and the implications that it raises for the study of difference, that has also led to the genesis

of this study. On the other hand, however, in incorporating lesbian and gay issues under the larger rubric of social change and new nationhood, it is important that these issues not be sidestepped. Taking a cue from postcolonial feminist histories, whereby in some anti-imperialist struggles and nationalist discourses, such as in political campaigns for elected office, as Geraldine Heng discusses in the context of Singapore, women's issues and tropes of female emancipation have offered nationalist movements a social forum for collective mobilization and an imagined national future (31), but often have fallen short on promises made once the election has been won. Similarly, in the context of lesbian and gay rights in South Africa, Vasu Reddy and other activists are skeptical of easy inclusion insofar as political parties are more often interested in merely securing constituencies for political support (Reddy 176), but often without maintaining the necessary sustained support for particular social issues once in power. In South Africa, while queer issues have been aligned with ANC-initiated instruments for social change, these issues have also remained separate, especially concerning the HIV/AIDS crisis.

11. Audre Lorde has similarly argued from a black lesbian-feminist position in her essay "Women Redefining Difference" that many white female academics refuse to teach works by women of color on the same grounds, that is, that by teaching these writers they would be appropriating their voices and thereby perpetuating and enforcing racism and possibly discursive (re)colonization. Yet these same women, Lorde continues, will teach and/or write about works by Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Molière, or Dostoyevsky, all of which come out of vastly different *historical* experiences. "Surely," Lorde writes sardonically, "there must be some other explanation" (376).

Chapter 2 Reclaiming Insurgent Sexualities: Migrant Labor and Same-Sex Marriages on the South African Gold Mines

1. Patrick Harries also argues that more radical historians viewed culture as a source of raw data that would result in a "democratisation of the past" (Thompson; qtd. in Harries *Work, Culture, and Identiy* xvi). This shift in historical thinking is important, but needs to be taken further so as to more sufficiently elaborate the nuances of same-sex desire among African migrants in southern Africa and how it may have put more pressure on heteronormativity than is generally supposed while raising possibilities for sexual agency among indigenous African men, as I shall discuss.

2. Certainly there are many other aspects of migrant labor to consider in economic and political terms, especially as it developed as a cornerstone to apartheid, including Bantu education, insofar as it maintained a substandard education for school youth and reduced chances of social advancement, the tightening of influx controls to regiment migrant laborers, the politics of unionization, etc., which I do not have space to consider here unless they relate specifically to my focus on same-sex marriages between African men on the South African gold mines. For a detailed study of these other factors in South Africa specifically, see Mahmood Mamdani's comprehensive study *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, especially chapter 7.
3. Moodie indicates that some women who migrated were able to achieve "male-dependent independence," paying lip-service to male dominance but also undercutting it. Other women struggled to do "double duty" as country wives and "town women," the latter referring to small-scale entrepreneurial activities (selling beer, meats, vegetables, dressmaking, and sometimes selling sex on the side) (*GFG* 151–52). Moodie also acknowledges that the breakdown in the migrant system in the gold mining industry after 1973, higher wages, a longer period at work, and the collapse of traditional arranged marriages and the diminishing need to earn money for the payment of dowries often put a strain on marriages rooted in indigenous traditions (*GFG* 148).
4. As Moodie points out in an earlier essay on which *Going for Gold* is based, workers from southern Mozambique have a longer history of migration that pre-dates gold mining ("Migrancy and Male Sexuality" 566n). In this chapter, I will only address Harries's study as it pertains to the same-sex marriages between male miners, especially among Shangaan workers, though his book *Work, Culture, and Identity* addresses other aspects of migrant labor as well.
5. Such duties might include fetching water, cooking food, doing domestic chores, running messages for the more senior male, and being available sexually in return for being fed, paid, and given gifts (*GFG* 126).
6. Moodie also points to the varying degrees of management acceptance and opposition to the mine marriages in different historical periods (see *GFG* 125). Most accounts by informants seem to indicate that the fact of mine marriages was public knowledge, but the sexual specificities were always kept more or less discreet and the couples involved needed to constantly (re-)negotiate the public portrayal of their relationship within social and working life on the mines. In speaking of migrant miners from Mozambique, Harries indicates that mine managers often turned a blind eye to the marriages, moving religious Christian workers, whose religions disapproved of the practice, to separate dormitories. He also argues that mine managers had to tolerate, in some cases encourage, the marriages in order to maintain the labor force at their disposal. Also, by spending large amounts of money on their "wives," the most

experienced and skilled workers would renew their contracts so as not to eventually return home with little or no money (Harries, *WCI* 207).

7. Moodie acknowledges that "town women" were available to men working on the mines, but that many workers feared being robbed by them and/or getting venereal disease if there was a sexual liaison, which would be tied to the loss of one's rural identity. The same-sex marriages, by contrast, were, according to Moodie, contractual, reliable, sexually exclusive, and a symbol of status and authority within the context of the mine compound (*GFG* 157–58). Yet here Moodie also seems to be relying somewhat on outdated medical tropes of male homosexuality that reduce it, in part, to a phobic response to the opposite sex.
8. While it was often assumed, as does Moodie, that the marriages only lasted during the men's tenure on the mines and that the marriage would provide the younger male with the means to pay bride wealth (*lobola*) as the more senior man paid him for his domestic and sexual services, the termination of one man's desire for another man as coinciding with the end of one's tenure on the mines is problematic and may not have necessarily always been the case, especially when one examines the relationships through the axis of desire, as subsequent work by lesbian and gay activists in South Africa attempts to do, which I shall discuss later in this chapter along with my own critique along these lines.
9. The term for inter-crural sex varies by ethnic and linguistic group and is known as *gangisa* in southern Mozambique, *hlabonga* among the Zulu in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and *ukumetsha* among Xhosa speakers.
10. H.M. Taberer, who worked for the Transvaal Native Affairs Department in 1907, the year of his Report, investigated charges of "unnatural vice" being claimed by Christian missionaries at the time who condemned sodomy (Moodie, *GFG* 122).
11. See Spurlin, "Broadening Postcolonial Studies/Decolonizing Queer Studies: Emerging 'Queer' Identities and Cultures in Southern Africa" as the text to which Epprecht refers.
12. See, for instance, Ruth Vanita, *Queering India: Same-Sex Love and Eroticism in Indian Culture and Society*, p. 3.
13. Also see Foucault, "Two Lectures," *Power/Knowledge* 81–82. It must be noted, of course, that Foucault is specifically referring to the disqualified knowledges of the psychiatric patient, the delinquent, the ill person, etc., in this essay, which are marginal to the highly formalized knowledge of medicine and psychiatry. But the idea of subjugated knowledges aptly works in a postcolonial framework as well, though I am surprised that Spivak, who is citing Foucault, does not connect it to the disqualified knowledges of sexuality in postcolonial contexts since Foucault is specifically referring to a history of the knowledge of sexuality.
14. See note 10 above.

15. In addition to Moodie and Harries, McLean and Ngcobo provide a detailed glossary of terminology in local languages in South Africa alone that centers on erotic and affective relationships between indigenous men. These include, in addition to some of the terms already mentioned, "imbube" and "mix masala" to describe those who switch between performing the penetrative and receptive roles (184); though it is not clear whether the switching occurs with the same partner in a particular sexual encounter, or if the shifting of active and passive sexual roles occurs with different partners.
16. The use of the word "queer" as I am using it is not necessarily a western appropriation; I use it here and elsewhere in this study to denote an oppositional praxis in the New South Africa which operates against normalizing ideologies pertaining to nationality, race, gender, and class, as well as sexuality, as discussed earlier in chapter 1.

Chapter 3 Affective Bonds between Women in Lesotho: Retheorizing Gender, Sexuality, and Lesbian Existence

1. See chapter 2 of *Gender Trouble* and also Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* 235 and *The Psychic Life of Power* 146.
2. See for instance Mark Gevisser's essay "A Different Fight for Freedom," in the collection *Defiant Desire: Gay and Lesbian Lives in South Africa*, which seems to simply accept the Gay study, both its precepts and conclusions, as self-evident without question or critical analysis (72). This is surprising for an anthology, of which Gevisser is coeditor, put together by South Africans in an attempt to expose *difference* in the lives of lesbians and gay men in South Africa, especially in the shift from apartheid to democracy.
3. Similar to Moodie and Harries, and quoting a publication by Basotho theological students entitled *Another Blanket* (Lesotho: Agency for Industrial Mission, 1976), Gay points out that male migrants who sold their favors were considered as "women of the compound," and, in contrasting the male/male relations on the gold mines to relations between women in Lesotho, she remarks that there is no evidence that male sexual relations continued when Basotho male migrants returned to their wives in Lesotho (112). But the scare quotes used by Gay in referring to the younger males in the mine marriages as the "women of the compound" hint at, but do not sufficiently analyze, the men's performance of feminine gender. More important, Gay fails to acknowledge the possible bias, or the rhetorical context, of her source; certainly a publication by Basotho theological students could possibly see the mine marriages as a temporary aberration or as circumstantial homosexuality at best, denying the men any erotic autonomy or sexual agency outside of dominant heteronormative social relations.

4. Gay also notes that the affective relationships she describes sometimes occur in contemporary school cultures in more urban areas, but have their origin in indigenous institutions and practices (100). An important aspect of the relationships is a strict Sesotho cultural prohibition against women who have had children discussing sexual matters with women (and girls) who have not. As this prohibits a daughter from obtaining sexual advice or information from her biological mother (99), mummy-baby relationships create and enable this discursive space.
5. It is important to point out that similar to other patrilineal societies, yet differing only in a higher literacy rate among women that exceeds men in Lesotho and women in the rest of Africa, Basotho women are still subject to male control, principally through the continuing practice of *bohali* (*lobola* or bridewealth), usually paid in cattle or cash to the parents of the bride as a seal of marriage. Through this arrangement, the family of the husband offers payment (usually, according to Gwen Malahlela's report *Women of Lesotho*, consisting of twenty head of cattle, ten sheep, and a fully saddled horse, or cash is substituted for livestock as many families no longer have cattle or sheep) in return for the woman's labor and reproductive capacity (5).
6. Mpho 'M'atsepo Nthunya has published a book *Singing Away the Hunger: Stories of a Life in Lesotho*, edited by Limakatso Kendall who translated her work into English as it was dictated to her in Sesotho language by Nthunya. The term *motsoalle* is translated in a glossary at the end of both *Basali!* and *Singing Away the Hunger* literally (and perhaps deliberately) as "a very close friend" when both partners in the friendship are women. This is similar to a separate discursive space available in local African languages to describe same-sex bonds in indigenous cultures, despite some cultural nationalist claims that homosexuality is a western import, while indicating to queer studies that we cannot always so readily translate these terms into western usages and understandings of same-sex desire. Even when terms such as "queer" are used in nonwestern contexts, as "queer" is used in South Africa, they usually become bracketed by a shifting set of cultural conditions as I explained in chapter 1.
7. In querying Basotho women about female-female sexuality, Kendall found that sex without phallic penetration, even if it specifically involved genital stimulation, was not considered to be "sex" per se. See Kendall, "Women in Lesotho and the (Western) Construction of Homophobia."
8. Martin explains that this has the effect of setting up gender as something to be escaped and sexuality as strangely exempt from the enmeshments and constraints of gender. This assumes that lesbians (or women in general) become interesting only by making a cross-gender identification, or an identification with sexuality (implicitly associated with gay men) over and against gender, and, by extension, gender and women ("Sexualities without Genders" 16). The essay to which I refer originally

appeared in *Diacritics* 24.2–3 (1994): 104–121, and is reprinted in *Coming Out of Feminism?* (eds. Merck et al.). References to the essay cited parenthetically in my text refer to its latter edition.

9. For a further discussion of Foucault's point on subjugated knowledges, see my earlier discussion in relation to Spivak in the previous chapter, especially note 13.
10. See also Geeta Patel, "Homely Housewives Run Amok: Lesbians in Marital Fixes" in *Public Culture* (2004).
11. There is a brief, but not very significant, moment of cross-dressing in *Fire* where Sita dons a man's suit and she and Radha dance to Hindi film songs. More important is the connection to Hindu mythology; Gopinath points to the deliberate irony of the two names of the women—Radha, the devoted consort of Hindu god, Krishna, who is famous for his womanizing, and Sita, who proves chastity to her husband by immersing herself in fire, thereby embodying the womanly virtue of self-sacrifice (278n). Interestingly, both Radha and Sita in the film refuse, within the national and mythological imaginaries in India that position women as devoted to men and as denying their own desires, to occupy positions of sexual subservience to their husbands.
12. Yet, of course, the "home" or the domestic space is recreated or invented in the mine marriages discussed in chapter 2. That is, the homosocial space for the miners helps set *the conditions for* domestic spaces created and sustained by the marriages, whereas the bonds between Basotho women evolve out of the traditionally inhabited, more feminine sphere of the domestic.
13. For further discussion of this point, as well as my argument for maintaining gender and sexuality as enmeshed categories of analysis while not failing to examine them in relation to other axes of social positioning, including race and class, see my essay "Sissies and Sisters: Gender, Sexuality and the Possibilities of Coalition" in *Coming Out of Feminism?*.
14. This is corroborated by specific studies on women in Lesotho, though few mention same-sex bonds between women. Gwen Malahlela's report *Contradictions and Ironies: Women of Lesotho*, part of the Change International Reports on Women in Society, for instance, notes that marital status appears to play a role in determining a woman's economic options and legal status in Lesotho. By remaining single, women are exposed to the practices of a labor market, which, for the most part, privileges men and leaves women with few other economic options (6, 9).
15. See Dunton and Palmberg, Gevisser, Kendall, and Spurlin "Broadening Postcolonial Studies."
16. See especially Letuka et al. Another study "The Gender Dimension of Urban Migration in Lesotho," by Kimane and Ntimo-Makara, published as part of a larger work by the Institute of Southern African

Studies at the National University of Lesotho (1998), mentions Gay's earlier work, including her 1980 Ph.D. thesis at Cambridge University "Basotho Women's Options: A Study of Marital Careers in Lesotho," but makes no mention of Gay's study of mummy-baby relationships. Even though the Kimane and Ntimo-Makara study is primarily concerned with female migration from rural to urban areas in Lesotho, it only speaks of the effects of migration on heterosexual marriage and the separation of spouses as well as parent(s) and children. I find this heteronormative slant rather puzzling since it assumes that the affective attachments of migrant women in Lesotho are exclusively heterosexual. It is in this instance that queer work can be helpful by correcting such faulty assumptions without imposing western notions of queer and western categories on to the study of indigenous sexualities.

17. See note 5 above for further clarification of this point.

Chapter 4 Nationalism, Homophobia, and the Politics of "New" South African Nationhood

1. Of course, there was much controversy surrounding the purpose and accomplishments of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) at the time that it was in operation. Following the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act (1995), and based on the assumption that societies cannot grow unless they come to terms with the atrocities of their past, the goals of the TRC were to try to develop a comprehensive view of the gross violations of human rights during apartheid, to provide a forum for victims to tell their individual stories and the atrocities they faced in an attempt to restore personal and civil dignity, and to consider granting amnesty to perpetrators who gave full accounts of their actions and could show that they carried out abuses for political reasons. The Commission set up three Committees to help achieve these goals; they included the Committee on Human Rights Violations, the Committee on Amnesty, and the Committee on Reparation and Rehabilitation. Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Commission first gathered in 1995, beginning with the Committee on Human Rights Violations hearing accounts by victims in 1996 as a means of ascertaining the extent to which gross violations had occurred; the other Committees held regional hearings in 1996 and 1997. In the end, as documented by Lyn Graybill, 22,000 victims' statements covering some 37,000 violations were taken and 7000 perpetrators applied for amnesty (8). In 1998, a final five-volume report by the Commission was submitted to President Nelson Mandela. The TRC was dissolved by President Thabo Mbeki on December 31, 2001. Whether or not attempts to uncover the "truth"of

the atrocities of the violence of apartheid led to "reconciliation" remains a site of debate and contestation in South Africa.

2. See George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe.*
3. Even prior to the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902, which was rooted in British greed to exploit South Africa's rich mineral resources and cheap "native" labor, the movements of indigenous Africans were tightly monitored by British Randlords who, as Bush notes, introduced the first Pass Laws of 1894 to control migrant labor as economic development in the region increased (134).
4. Though Benedict Anderson points out that nations are "imagined communities to the extent that they are systems of social and cultural representation" (6), McClintock sharpens this view by qualifying that nations are not simply projections of the imagination, but have a basis in the material world as historical practices through which social difference is *both* invented *and* performed, thereby constituting people's identities in ways that are *always already* gendered (*IL* 353).
5. Jolly also points out that the Afrikaner nationalists believed that the international isolation that resulted from anti-apartheid sanctions imposed by other nations was the price to pay for freedom from colonial domination by Britain (22).
6. Bush's analysis of the fascist trends in the Afrikaner 1938 centennial celebrations of the Great Trek and the formation of the Nazi-modelled *Ossewa Brandung* (the ox-wagon picket) (140), and McClintock's discussion of the formation of a secret society of white Afrikaner men in 1918, known as the *Broederbond* (the Brotherhood), whose purpose was to safeguard white male business interests and to exert power over Afrikaner Nationalist policy (*IL* 369), are demonstrative of the links of the racial, gender, and sexual hierarchies that were being developed under Afrikaner nationalism to those already in place under National Socialism in Germany.
7. The South African National Congress (SANC) was formed in 1912 specifically to resist the proposed Native Land Act of 1913 and eventually became the African National Congress (ANC).
8. This is another instance in which the domestic space and women's traditional gender roles within it become politically charged as discussed in the previous chapter with regard to the affective ties between Basotho women, and the affective/erotic relationship between the two principal female characters in Deepa Mehta's film *Fire*, even though neither of these may appear to be overtly political.
9. Related to this point, see also Mark Gevisser's essay "A Different Fight for Freedom" in *Defiant Desire*, especially pp. 72–73.
10. It is important to note that since the 1995 Harare Book Fair and the torching of the its booth at the Book Fair a year later, GALZ has grown and developed links with other human rights organizations in

southern Africa and in other parts of the continent while also suffering setbacks through internal politics. Epprecht, quoting Keith Goddard, speaks of the exaggeration of "the actual state of [gay and lesbian] oppression" in Zimbabwe and of the damage done to GALZ having played the victim (*Hungochani* 216). While I agree that GALZ remains multiracial and attempts to represent a modernized Africa rather than simply aping western gay politics, and while I do not dispute that GALZ has had to renegotiate its position alongside the Mugabe government in Zimbabwe (Epprecht, *Hungochani* 216–217), my focus on "queer" representation in this book is not one that can simply relegate the Book Fair incident to the past, but attempts instead to examine how homophobia becomes encoded in nationalist discourses in the region. Yet the conservative tone of Epprecht's remarks regarding homophobic discourses in Zimbabwe is troubling to the extent that his remarks fail to consider adequately the effects of Mugabe's denunciations against lesbians and gay men in Zimbabwe and elsewhere in Africa, and they also fail to consider how the material and lived realities of discursive violence and homophobic repression against indigenous lesbians and gay men can be so easily trivialized within the larger national imaginary.

11. The same antigay rhetoric, as an appeal to throw off the last vestiges of colonialism, is also evident in Namibian President Sam Nujoma's speeches, which have since been toned down. In an April 2001 speech in Windhoek, *The Namibian* reported that Nujoma saw homosexuality as "a national threat" along with globalization and alcoholism: " 'They colonised us and now they claim human rights when we condemn and reject them. In Namibia there will be no lesbian and homosexual left. Those who want to do that must pack and go back to Europe,' he said, sending a saucer covering his glass of water flying into the air as he gestured excitedly" ("Homosexuality, Alcoholism Top Government Enemies—Nujoma").
12. The Shangaans were the main focus of Harries's study on same-sex relations among male migrant workers from Mozambique. See chapter 2. The Shona (including the Ndau, Rozwi, Korekore, Karanga, Manyika, and Zezeru groups) form the largest indigenous population in Zimbabwe. The Ndebele is the other main indigenous ethnic/linguistic group, which had split with the Zulu Kingdom in South Africa in the 1840s and moved north of the Limpopo River to rule over the plateau south of the Zambezi River (the current Zimbabwe) and over the Shona and other dynasties in the period just prior to the invasion and settlement of most of the plateau by Europeans, beginning with Cecil John Rhodes's British South Africa Company (BSAC) in 1888 and 1889.
13. In an earlier colloquium paper on the origins of dissident sexualities in Zimbabwe given at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Durban,

Epprecht identifies ambiguous terms for (homo)sexual relations more common to the Shona people, such as *shamwari* ("friend," but also a sexual partner or male "wife" of another male), *kurinda* or *kuswira* (meaning "to fuck" without specifying the other gender or if it includes anal intercourse), and *kutamba chete*, or just (sexually) playing, all of which call into question notions coming from homophobic forms of African cultural nationalism that same-sex practices were unknown among indigenous Africans prior to colonization ("*Ngochani*" 5).

14. Similarly, in an African-American context, writers James Baldwin and Audre Lorde often found themselves in similar situations with their own sexualities as gay and lesbian respectively, and the representation of same-sex desire in their work at odds with black nationalist heteronormative standards for the production of black writing in the United States. For consideration of James Baldwin's fractured relation with the New Black Aesthetic critics, see my essays "Culture, Rhetoric, and Queer Identity: James Baldwin and the Identity Politics of Race and Sexuality" and "Queer Identity and Racial Alienation: The Politics of Race and Sexuality in James Baldwin and in the 'New' South Africa." See Lorde's reflections in *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* and her essay "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" in her collection of essays *Sister Outsider*.

Chapter 5 Sexual/Cultural Hybridity in the "New" South Africa: Emergent Sites of New Transnational Queer Politics

1. These movements across borders would include, for example, those instantiations of African cultural nationalism that read homosexuality among indigenous people as un-African (especially in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia), as well as discourses and material practices of resistance to heteronormativity in the region.
2. This point is worth making since, as Dirlik notes, hybridity is most often used as a site of critique around the categories of nation, race, and ethnicity rather than to gender or class ("Bringing History Back In" 108); but he, too, fails to make any connection whatsoever to sexuality or to the disruptive potential of hybridity as queer.
3. This preservation of national culture from western influence is also at the heart of what Chatterjee has referred to as the spiritual domain, that inner core of national culture that must be protected from the West as I discussed in the previous chapter. See also Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, especially pp. 2–3 and *The Nation and Its Fragments*, especially pp. 5–6, the latter of which shows how his argument surrounding anticolonial nationalism is

contextualized in his discussion and critique of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. But it must be said that even the spiritual domain of national culture, as opposed to its material domain, cannot remain "pure" from the influence of other cultures and can potentially reinvent dichotomous, binary thinking.

4. Dirlik's theory of cultural hybridity relies on Bakhtin's theory of language as dialogical, that is, as a living mix of varied and opposing voices which are internally stratified within any given language at any given moment in its historical existence, thereby implying links and interrelationships between utterances and languages and between language and social context (Bakhtin 263). Bakhtin notes that "no living word relates to its object in a *singular* way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exists an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that is often difficult to penetrate. It is precisely in the process of living interaction with this specific environment that the word may be individualized and given stylistic shape" (276).

   Based on Bakhtin's view of language as dialogical, Dirlik's theory of cultural hybridity proposes that culture is similarly subject to transformations through its daily encounters with different cultures, and, like Bakhtin, challenges the hegemony of a singular, unitary voice. Bakhtin defines hybridization in language as "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor" (358). For further elaboration of Bakhtin's theory, and his distinction between unintentional, unconscious hybridity and intentional hybridity of which Dirlik also makes use, see Bakhtin's essay "Discourse in the Novel" in *The Dialogic Imagination*, especially pp. 262–277 and pp. 358–360.

5. Dirlik is concerned that theories such as Bhabha's result in hybridity as disruptive of binary modes of thinking on the level of epistemology, being abstracted from its social and historical anchorings rather than functioning as an articulation of actual human conditions. I disagree as my discussion of Bhabha in the text shows, but Dirlik's concern that hybridity could blur "in the name of difference significant distinctions between different differences" (106) is a point in need of consideration and is one to which I shall address toward the end of this chapter. See Dirlik, "Bringing History Back In," pp. 105–106.

6. The deregulation of financial markets since the end of the Cold War and the shift from multinational to transnational corporations, which are no longer tied to their nations of origin but are mobile and operate over wide distances, have arguably benefited the economies of the West. I am relying here on Masao Miyoshi's distinction between multinational

(MNC) and transnational corporations (TNC). He acknowledges the difficulty of a sharp distinction between the terms as they are often used interchangeably and are contextually dependent, and since it is often difficult to ascertain the precise denationalization of a given corporation. But one way of thinking about them is that an MNC is usually headquartered in a nation and operates in several other countries, but the highest echelon of personnel consists largely of nationals of the country of origin, and corporate loyalty is highly tied to the "home" nation. A TNC, on the other hand, denationalizes its operations so that it is no longer tied to its nation of origin but is ready to settle anywhere and exploit any state, including its own. The affiliation is not tied to any sort of national allegiance or loyalty, as it is in the case of the MNC, but to its own interests. For a further discussion, see Miyoshi's essay "A Borderless World? From Colonialism to Transnationalism and the Decline of the Nation-State," especially pp. 86–87 and p. 101 n22.

7. See Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume One: Reason and the Rationalization of Society.*
8. Largely as a result of increased negative publicity, in November 2003 the South Africa government approved a plan to provide free AIDS medication to all who needed it within five years. The distribution of antiretroviral drugs began at hospitals in seven of the nine provinces on April 1, 2004, including Gauteng, South Africa's richest province, which includes Johannesburg and Pretoria, but it is estimated that the drugs are reaching only a small percentage of the people who need them. It is still unclear, therefore, if the demand for treatment will be able to match resources, and if a diagnosis of AIDS will signify a manageable disease, as is often the case now in the West, as opposed to the eventual death sentence it has signified in South Africa for so long.
9. The more or less same sentiment with regard to making antiretroviral drugs available to poor South Africans was echoed from within Mbeki's government as well. According to the April 2003 issue of *The Economist*, the Ministry of Health made the argument that poor and uneducated South Africans may not follow the correct treatment regimens thereby making the drugs ineffective ("South Africa and AIDS: Get On With It" 52).
10. See Edward Said's *Orientalism* for a discussion of orientalism as an occidental mode of perception through which the Orient is experienced and shapes "the language, perception, and form of the encounter between East and West" (58–59). For an insightful critique of Said's notion of orientalism, see Homi K. Bhabha's essay "The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism." Bhabha links the racial stereotype not only to mastery and power, but psychoanalytically to fetishism (and thereby to

pleasure and anxiety), which is also part of the discourse of colonial power, requiring the articulation of modes of differentiation—sexual and racial—as well as different modes of discourse—psychoanalytic and historical (79–80). The stereotype, according to Bhabha, "as an arrested, fetishistic mode of representation" (81), constitutes a play between the recognition of difference and its disavowal. I also wish to add that Said uses the term "Orient" specifically to refer to the Near and Middle East. But I am more interested in the use of the term to describe an occidental *strategy of power*, specifically related to globalized representations of AIDS, recognizing that the Orient cannot possibly refer to an all-encompassing, totalized entity subjected to discursive and political domination by the West, and recognizing, as Bhabha notes, with a touch of Foucault in the essay just cited, that power is not unidirectional (77).

11. See chapter 2 for a critique of the heteronormative traces in seminal work on this topic, especially studies by T. Dunbar Moodie and Patrick Harries on migrant laborers in an earlier period, where it was generally assumed by these researchers that same-sex relations between men on the gold mines of the Witwatersrand were more circumstantial than preferential.
12. Patton notes that the World Health Organization's mapping of AIDS by its Global Programme on AIDS (GPA) reproduced imperialist models of tropical medicine and surveillance, which proved devastating for Pattern Three, where AIDS supposedly arrived "late" in the initially "blank" spaces of Asia as a result of taking too literally claims by some Asian governments and health officials that homosexuality was contrary to "Asian values." Similar, but not reducible to those in Africa, racist ideologies were implicitly cited as researchers initially saw low incidences of HIV in Asian nations as indicative of sexual conservatism, sexual passivity, and even "asexuality" on the part of Asians. As with Africa, but with a slightly different twist, not only were gay men with HIV in Asia rendered invisible, the critically late arrival of HIV prevention programs and the allocation of resources (based on maps of where AIDS was geographically located and its modes of transmission in the three patterns) proved devastating for those with HIV in parts of Asia. See Patton 96–100.
13. Whiteside's conclusions, largely based on data that suggested low incidences of anal penetration in same-sex bonds between male miners, are buttressed by T. Dunbar Moodie's study of sexual practices of indigenous miners, which Whiteside cites. But it seems fallacious to cite an earlier study as a precedent, which was based on collecting the life histories of men who recounted their experiences on the gold mines in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s and not question or investigate further claims that thigh sex, rather than anal penetration, was the primary practice of sexual activity between men given the risk of possible HIV infection.

14. Also, I find it curious that Patton only cites an earlier 1988 article by Moodie et al., "Migrancy and Male Sexuality on the South African Gold Mines" first published in the *Journal of South African Studies*, and not the later, fuller work on which it is based, *Going for Gold: Men, Mines, and Migration*, published in 1994.
15. For a full discussion of this shift, see Arjun Appadurai's book *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, especially his chapter "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology."

Chapter 6 Transforming Theory/ Transforming Borders: Postcolonial Queer Inquiry and/as a Politics of Decolonization

1. Obviously, I am basing this on Foucault's premise in *The History of Sexuality, Volume I*, that sexuality is neither "a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check," nor "an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover" (105). By situating sexuality historically and socially and separating it from nature and from the body alone, Foucault argues that sexuality, as a cultural production, is "the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviors, and social relations by a certain deployment deriving from a complex political technology" (127).
2. Using Carl Westphal's 1870 paper on "contrary sexual sensations," Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality*, marks this medicalization as the site of the constitution of homosexuality as a social category, signifying a major shift in thinking, whereby "the nineteenth-century homosexual became a personage, a past, a case history, and a childhood, in addition to being a type of life, a life form. . . . The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species" (43). See also Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, especially p. 196, for a critique of Foucault's lack of critical attention to the ways in which western textual modes of production elide postcolonial forms of cultural production and enunciative agency.
3. As I remarked in a slightly different context in chapter 2, Foucault is speaking about the disqualified knowledges of the psychiatric patient, the delinquent, etc., whose discourses and knowledges are in subjugated relation to the more powerful knowledges and discourses of medicine and juridical law. But since Foucault is also writing about sexuality in these two lectures, and since *Power/Knowledge*, in which they appear, was published around the same time as his *History of Sexuality, Volume I*, it would seem that there is a politics of orientalism at work in generalizing the notion of *ars erotica* to "numerous" societies outside of the West.

4. Here Sweet is referring specifically to Alain Daniélou's introduction to his translation of *The Kama Sutra* in *The Complete Kama Sutra* (Rochester, VT: Park Street Press, 1994). Sweet acknowledges that Foucault doesn't mention the *Kama Sutra* by name, but argues that it is the model for Foucault's notion of the idea of a pragmatic sexual lore or treatise for the connoisseur in his description of *ars erotica* (79).
5. Certainly in the latter case, there is much less risk to think of identity as decentered and unstable if one is speaking about identities more or less safely ensconced within dominant social groups (especially in the West). Obviously, for those collective identities that have experienced long histories of erasure and oppression, the claiming of a group or individual identity can enact powerful forms of struggle and resistance. This does not imply that no further theoretical elaboration is possible or necessary, but is to expose a blindspot of theory that takes the instability of identities a priori without an analysis of difference, history, and political context.
6. This latter point is discussed at length in chapter 5 in the context of AIDS education and prevention programmes set up in South Africa by GPA AIDS workers who were operating under western assumptions of sexual identity with regard to anal sex, but did not account for the practice of anal sex among those men who may not necessarily take on a public gay identity as it is understood in the West. The problematic conflation of sexual identity with sexual practice also raises implications for understanding indigenous African sexualities, where same-sex and heterosexual desires are not always mutually exclusive, such as in the marriages between male migrant miners and affective bonds between Basotho women in southern Africa.

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