



Sex in Transition: Remaking Gender & Race in South Africa

Amanda Lock Swarr

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Argues that South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation relied on an unexamined but interrelated system of sexed oppression that was at once both rigid and flexible.

Sex in Transition explores the lives of those who undermine the man/woman binary, exposing the gendered contradictions of apartheid and the transition to democracy in South Africa. In this context, gender liminality--a way to describe spaces between common conceptions of "man" and "woman"--is expressed by South Africans who identify as transgender, transsexual, transvestite, intersex, lesbian, gay, and/or eschew these categories altogether. This book is the first academic exploration of challenges to the man/woman binary on the African continent and brings together gender, queer, and postcolonial studies to question the stability of sex. It examines issues including why transsexuals' sex transitions were encouraged under apartheid and illegal during the political transition to democracy and how butch lesbians and drag queens in urban townships reshape race and gender. *Sex in Transition* challenges the dominance of theoretical frameworks based in the global North, drawing on fifteen years of research in South Africa to define the parameters of a new transnational transgender and sexuality studies.

"This is an excellent book and probably one of the best I've read on the topic. It is highly original and very well researched. For a long time this narrative has been needed in a South (and southern) African context and it's great to see it actually done--and done so well. The material here is insightful and ties together a number of concerns that previously have often only had brief mentions in discourses about sexuality in the region. It's high time that these debates, stories, and political struggles gained greater prominence. Swarr's work will hopefully go a long way towards achieving this." -- Andrew Tucker, author of *Queer Visibilities: Space, Identity and Interaction in Cape Town*

Amanda Lock Swarr is Associate Professor of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Washington, Seattle. She is the coeditor (with Richa Nagar) of *Critical Transnational Feminist Praxis*, also published by SUNY Press.

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