

over the war's decade, he recreates a thread of ethnography common in the late 1990s and early 2000s that was generated with the ostensible goal of "bearing witness" to atrocities. However, what it accomplished in fact was creating an excess of those atrocities, rendering the intricacies of people's demise in such graphic detail that it mimicked pornography. The scholarship that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the war highlighted these atrocities in order to grapple with a form of warfare that the world had never seen before; in contrast in this book, it is simply excessive. The text also becomes quite repetitive, and at 400 pages it was clear that it lacked a firm editorial hand. The first 200 pages were a recap of the war, which was revisited as Sommers wove in his own research from that point forward.

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Imagine Lagos: Mapping History, Place, and Politics in a Nineteenth-Century African City. By Ademide Adelusi-Adeluyi. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2024. Pp. 239. \$80.00 cloth, \$34.95 paper, \$34.99 E-book.

Has there ever been an ordinary day in Lagos? Ademide Adelusi-Adeluyi reflects on this question in the first pages of her brilliant book, *Imagine Lagos*. There probably hasn't been. Lagos has been a place of friction and frisson for some three hundred years, and Adelusi-Adeluyi's meticulous research recovers the complex lives of the people who lived there in the nineteenth century. In their relations with the land, the sea, and with each other, Lagosians—locals and newcomers alike—collectively imagined the island metropolis that would become the core of Africa's largest city.

The central argument of this book is methodological: the physical characteristics of space, and how people move through it, can be sources about the past, even when that space has been broken up, transformed, or reconfigured. This is essential in Lagos, where large parts of the city are invisible in historical maps that tended only to see Europeans and the buildings they built. The *architectural* record is thin here too. Lagos Island is one of the most densely built places on earth, and constant growth (plus a general indifference to historic preservation) means that most of the nineteenth century architecture is gone. What remains are traces: place names, topography, and bits of infrastructure (tram tracks, wells) that survived the churn of the twentieth century. The names of streets are especially revealing, like Inabẹrẹ Street ("the fire started here"), or Tokunbọ Street ("born overseas," in the Brazilian Quarter).

The centerpiece of the book are its maps—both historical maps that Adelusi-Adeluyi found in archives and contemporary maps that she made herself. She uses them creatively, superimposing them on each other and collating them to other sources, sometimes with surprising effects. Serious technical work went into this book, but the finer points of cartography are made clear to the non-specialist reader. The maps themselves are impressive, although they are difficult to read in the printed version of the book. Fortunately, a companion website includes high resolution versions that one can get lost in. The book is driven by method rather than narrative, but there are fascinating stories of battles, shipwrecks, and palace intrigue told along the way. Many of them are derived from court records and newspapers, which Adelusi-Adeluyi uses as deftly as she uses the maps.

The most impressive aspect of her research is the legwork. With two collaborators over several years, Adelusi-Adeluyi walked the streets of Lagos Island, searching for clues to the city's past in its present. But she is no flâneur, idly strolling while meditating on the past. Adelusi-Adeluyi is after something more, and at any rate the busy streets of Lagos Island don't lend themselves to reverie like the arcades of Paris. What she is able to recover is a remarkably detailed social history. Walking leads her to think tactically about terrain (Lagos was bombarded by the British in 1851), and to craft intricate biographies of Lagosians well-known and not, often with an emphasis on where they lived. Walking fills in the gaps that maps can't. How narrow or wide is a street? How long does it take to walk from point A to point B? How do different parts of the island relate to the water that surrounds it?

Adelusi-Adeluyi has a background in architecture, and she worked as a research assistant on the architect Rem Koolhaas' memorable study of Lagos in the early 2000s. Her approach could not be more different than his; while Koolhaas took to the skies in a helicopter to understand the logic of the city, Adelusi-Adeluyi takes a distinctly grounded approach to how Lagos came to be. Forgoing the kind of god's-eye theorizing that the city seems to inspire, she describes Lagos as people actually lived there—at street level, often on foot. What results is a creative, empirically rigorous book that is also down-to-earth, both literally and figuratively.

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***Accidental Queer: And Other Essays Around Critical Masculinity Studies in Southern Africa and Canada.* By Marc Epprecht. Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa Research and Publishing, distributed by African Books Collective, 2024. Pp. 232; \$42.00 paper, \$40.00 E-book.**

Marc Epprecht's *Accidental Queer* is a difficult book to review, primarily because it is hard to explain the profound intellectual and emotional importance of this book in so few words. Unlike his prior work, Epprecht's new book takes a self-critical yet self-compassionate collection of experiences from his own life to make an argument not about what masculinity *should* be, but rather about how scholars, individuals, and activists *can* unlearn harmful, colonial masculinities. Asking questions such as "how can we winnow generative knowledge from dehumanizing tendencies in the culture including pervasive oppressive forms of masculinity?" and "Can we decolonize from harmful practices and ways of being as men—or as settlers on other people's lands—while employing a toolkit at least partly grounded in masculinist structures and colonial history?" he models new pathways in decolonial thinking in this book (p. 3). Epprecht does not set out to answer these questions. Instead, he offers readers an example of how he has personally moved through these kinds