Transnational Sexual Politics:
Exporting Ex-Gay Therapies to the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America

This paper explores recent efforts mainly generated by "ex-gay" organizations and evangelical Christian congregations in the United States to introduce "reparative therapy" to nations in regions outside Europe and North America. I argue that such efforts bring to light larger political and religious tensions over the relationship between sexuality and modernity in locations with long histories of cultural imperialism.

Focusing specifically on recent controversies regarding proposed legislation to further criminalize homosexuality in Uganda, I examine the interplay of religious, political, and medical discourses in debates over whether sexual orientation is mutable, on the one hand, and therefore subject to intervention, or, on the other hand, an inalienable right deserving respect and legal protection. As conservative Christians from the United States offer support to local anti-gay organizations in Uganda and US based gay rights groups rally to denounce violence against Ugandan gay people, one can see how the rhetoric of medical care is yoked to spiritual salvation on the part of Ugandan anti-gay activists, clergy, and politicians who welcome the "ex-gay" ideas of Christian missionaries and yet insist that their proposed restrictions on homosexuality activity are expressions of authentic African traditions that value the family and procreation.

Biography
Jennifer Terry is an Associate Professor of Women’s Studies at University of California, Irvine working in areas of cultural studies; science and technology studies; formations of sexuality; critical approaches to modernity; American studies in transnational perspective. Her research is concentrated in Feminist Cultural Studies; Science and Technology studies; comparative and historical formations of gender, race, and sexuality; critical approaches to modernity; and American studies in transnational perspective. She is the author of An American Obsession: Science, Medicine, and Homosexuality in Modern Society (University of Chicago Press, 1999) and co-editor of Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture (Indiana University Press, 1995) and Processed Lives: Gender and Technology in Everyday Life (Routledge, 1997). She has written articles and chapters on reproductive politics, the history of sexual science in the United States, and contemporary scientific approaches to the sex lives of animals.