THIRD WORLD APPROACHES *to* INTERNATIONAL LAW *Review*

TWAILR: Dialogues ~ October 2021

Quilombolas and the Black Butterfly: An Interview with Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui

Sara Ali interviews Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui about his work and its relationship to black theorizing and theorizing while black in international law. This interview is a part of the #TheorizingWhileBlack Special Series.

Sara Ali: Thank you for doing this interview with me. Did you get a chance to read 'Wumi Asubiaro Dada's article, *#TheorizingWhileBlack: Whitesplaining and its Enduring Tragedies for Contemporary Black Thought*?

Siba Grovogui: No, I didn't read the article, perhaps because it is a familiar story. It is after all the story of my life: Theorizing While Black. Black people in the academy have had stories to tell, opinions to offer, and analyses for consideration. These stories, opinions, and analyses and the forms in which they are delivered can be very compelling. Occasionally, colleagues might invite you. Students may be drawn to you. You may even be given large fora to profess. In the end, however, professional ambitions orient many toward participation in the work of canonization that reduces anti and postcolonial authors to the status of native informants. They become those with interesting stories that provide insights to be processed into forms as materials with which to engage 'authoritative figures'. It is not after all professionally sanctioned or permitted to refer to professional conversations, class discussions, or even to passing comments, as sources of edification if the said comments are not already prefigured in authorized academic debates. As a result, academic productions today around race contain forms of cryptomnesia in which so-called mainstream authors peddle ideas and images that are projected as original but have in reality originated in

the minds of others and are freely offered in conversations and around panels. It is cryptomnesia because the sources are suppressed to give way to claims of originality.

Things are changing, however. I went to grad school in Madison, Wisconsin, in the 1980s. Then, the idea that there was a space out there for black people to have a take on anything was not really common. I remember my surprise when Patricia Williams wrote *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*. It was the first time that I had seen race and law appear in a title that fundamentally questioned both. I was moved by it. I still wonder today why that book has not made the canons. That book influenced my thinking about the decolonization in Namibia, albeit indirectly. The title alone lit a fire in me. It helped me make sense of why I was so bothered about the international diplomacy surrounding Namibia's independence as well as the rulings by the International Court of Justice. Before Williams' book, I did not have access to a language to critique the political and judicial processes around 'The Question of South West Africa', the formal reference then to the question. That book made me realize that law had been the pretext and context for the inordinate amount of violence heaped on black people for centuries, always under the guise of their wellbeing. The rulings of the ICJ and Western conditions for Namibia's independence confirmed this fact to me.

So I decided to write my own book, basically, because there was nobody who was talking about that. And the book, *Sovereigns, Quasi Sovereigns, and Africans,* is now 25 years old. The title itself meant that the world is organized in such a way that there were people who are sovereign: who could do anything, talk about themselves, imagine and think about themselves according to their own ideas. And then there is the nebulous case of quasi sovereigns, European companies that can act in Africa as sovereigns; and Africans who do not have sovereignty. When I was writing it, I gave the book idea to a lot of people, and one of them told me, 'Well, what you have here is a seven-volume book, you can't do this'. I was misunderstood then, as now perhaps. I was never opposed to the idea of law as language, and law as a set of prohibitions and guidance that dictate the norms surrounding how we can speak to one another in the international sphere (I speak about the 'international' loosely here). But it was the particular language of law and the particular laws we had that was my problem.

The language didn't have space in it for people who look like me, black people mostly because the location of black as subject in that language was highly troubling and problematic. That's actually why I wrote that book. And I was fortunate enough that that one of the people who read the earlier draft was David Kennedy at Harvard Law School in 1996. He wrote the blurb on the back of the book, and apparently showed

some of the manuscript to his students, James Gathii, Anthony Anghie, and others. The book, *Sovereigns, Quasi Sovereigns, and Africans*, was published in 1996. TWAIL was created in 1997, and in 1998 James Gathii wrote a review of the book in the *European Journal of International Law*. Anthony Anghie gave credit to the book in his own *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and International Law*, reflecting on the idea that that we have to think systematically about international law. Beyond just criticizing this dimension, that decision, this jurisprudence and so on, we have to look at the whole architecture of international law, because race is a huge, troubling thing within it. Yet, apart from a few TWAILers, a number of European and American scholars have recently taken up the idea of international law, empire, and race without reference to my own work. Again, I do not take it personally. But I am offended that academic and disciplinary canon on any matter depreciates real contributions by people of color, particularly black people.

Sara: I completely understand. Two of the things you talk about a lot are dehumanization and humanness. How would you connect that to the concept of theorizing while black?

Siba: Right now, I am writing two books. The book that I first started writing I had to put aside, in order to write another book that needed to come before I finished that one. The book I first started writing was about black people. When I'm being flippant, I say that to write a book about black people without being rudely uninterrupted, I needed to write this other book first so that when I get to black people, nobody will ask me silly questions.

What many people don't understand is that the African-descended diaspora has always taken itself very, very seriously even if other people didn't. And my job is to make people take us seriously to the extent that I can before I exit the academy. If you were to take an international law or international relations class, you would be exposed to peculiar genealogies of human rights. There would be mostly two streams. There's one that flows from the Magna Carta and informs Anglo-Saxon views on the matter via examinations of historical events: the long parliament, the advent of negative liberties, the US Bill of Rights, and so on. The other stream references natural rights and natural law and modern European empires and republicanisms: Dutch, French, and, rarely, Haiti.

The implication is that Europe and European descended diasporas have singularly been preoccupied with the two related questions of human and rights. This is absurd,

particularly with regard to the modern era when Africans and others coexisted with Europeans under modern empire and were therefore subject to European institutions, instruments, economies, politics, morality, and violence. If there was European exceptionalism, it was that European empires were the purveyors of the suffering of others. Beyond this truism, it is fantastic to imagine that others did not reflect on the question of the human, particularly the idea of protecting humans toward individual and collective ends. The absurdity of the European origin of human rights become apparent when you consider that Europeans and others concurrently perceived the need to protect humans, simultaneously reaching the same conclusion on the institutional and moral requirements.

This realization should not be difficult given the conjoined histories of struggles for freedom. For instance, the struggle of Dutch protestants for freedom and independence that resulted in the formation of the Dutch Republic (1588–1795) began as a reaction to the oppressive nature of the Union of Iberia under Philip II. It does not take a genius to realize that the formation of the Iberian Union was at the expense of the political autonomy of Portugal. Portuguese slaves and colonies would have fallen under the tutelage and repressive machineries of Philip II. It is surprising therefore that the struggle of Quilombolas of Palmares (1605-1694) has never been paired with the Dutch struggle. Yet, parallels abound. The brutality of King Philip was denounced in the same terms by the Dutch revolutionaries and Quilombolas. Both entities resolved to abjure King Philip's rule and sought self-government. The question that arises is why the Dutch abjuration features as a global historical event and not the Quilombo abjuration. Could it be because of race, space, or status? All of them. The Dutch were White Protestants in Europe while Quilombolas were Africans enslaved in Portuguese-owned plantations in the Americas.

But the answer is also not so straightforward. Although both initiated what conceptually are republican forms of government, the two movements also differed significantly. The Dutch ultimately retained some form of monarchical rule, made religion a central dimension of their identity, and engaged in imperial conquests of their own. Not so for the Quilombolas of Palmares who established a truly secular and inclusive order. Quilombolas did not just abjure imperialism, dynasticism, and religious exclusion. Their own articulation of the purpose and end of abjuration oriented them institutionally in different directions, toward radically different political, moral, and material lives and cultures than the Dutch and other European powers at the time. Quilombolas aspired to a postimperial form of republicanism and corresponding moral, symbolic, and constitutional imaginaries.

The trajectory of Quilombo dos Palmares beyond this point requires a separate treatise. Such a treatise would begin with simple observations. For instance, the sort of individual liberties flown from Magna Carta to the US Bill of Rights pertained to the human in profound ways. However, this imaginary of the individual does not exhaust what it meant then, as now, to be human. Similarly, Dutch and French constitutional provisions give rise to the inalienability of the rights of citizens; yet, citizenship hardly exhausts what humanity is or could be. The conceptions of the human in both liberal and republican contexts, however revolutionary, pertain to the human in very specific capacities. They left out the slave, stateless, homeless, propertyless, women, and, in their respective contexts, religious, ethnic, and racial minorities. To be sure, liberal and (European) republican stipulations of human rights have been tweaked over time to incorporate those left out. However, questions remain: for instance, how did Quilombos view humans and humanity? Are there connections between their views of the human and human rights and constitutional experiments in Haiti? Connections with anti-colonial aspirations? With civil rights discourses in the US and Brazil among others? What holds these resulting discourses together as a tradition?

The responses to these questions are the object my book project. In this regard, I have been recently engaging with the principle of 'no partial public sympathies' as predicate of human rights. This appears in the Africana diaspora as a central constitutional principle. It has been enunciated explicitly by the likes of Alexander Crummell (in all writings on civil rights); Frederick Douglass (in relation to the Chinese exclusion in his Composite Nation speech); and Nelson Mandela (in the conclusion to his Rivonia speech). This principle led Quilombolas to institute the first self-governing entity in the modern world that did not admit ethnic, racial, religious, and gender particularism or exclusion.

Sara: This idea of public sympathies versus private sympathies, and the way that the human has been conceptualized within African contexts – how do you think that's impacted the way that diaspora academic scholars have engaged with literature and theorizing in general? You mentioned earlier how the black diaspora lacked elements of entitlement. Do you think these things impact the way that we engage with academia and scholarship?

Siba: The idea of 'no partial public sympathies' appeared as a philosophical and moral constant in Africana thought for historical reasons. The most important is the

realization that all modern European formulations of universalism and humanism have contained clauses, addenda, and/or modifications on accounts of religion, race, culture, and geography. Reading from historical texts, it is apparent that this underlying paradox was not lost on Africans seeking freedom from enslavement, constitutional exclusions, and colonialism. The response was not always uniform. Some in the Africana Diaspora sought to emulate European constitutional projects of national exclusion and racial sympathies based on appropriation and reversal of the predicates of European nationalism and constitutional exclusion. Others, such as the Quilombolas, Haitian revolutionaries, anticolonialists, and civil rights constitutionalists from Brazil to the US, introduced more capacious understandings of humanity, humanism, and universalism based on their own understanding of the human conditions and their moral, material, and symbolic requirements. In the ensuing debates one finds rejections of theological predicates that one may have been chosen to the exclusion of another; of anthropological postulates in philosophy, law, and political theory that reason is the exclusive province of some; and that some humans require more because their own lives are better lived than those of others.

The result is the emergence in the Africana diaspora of the need for equal public sympathy, which leads to a principle of no constitutional exclusion, no policy preferences, no moral antipathy, and no religious intolerance. In other words, the public square, or the spaces that we all share, and the resources drawn from them cannot be subject to laws, policies, and moral standards that are partial to some and injurious to others without diminishing our collective humanity; reducing our humanist professions to pretenses; and undercutting the very possibility of plural existences within commons.

There is a calculated and instrumental misreading of the position of 'no partial public sympathies' today at the highest levels within the United Nations, particularly among the former colonial powers, in discussions around race and colonialism. In fact, there have been times when some in the US, France, Britain, Germany, and elsewhere have tried to paint it as antipathy toward their own favored subjects. This is what happened around the Durban Race Conference when calls for Palestinian rights was depicted as antisemitism. Of course, anti-Semites wanted to vilify Israel. But vast majorities only wanted to disabuse the West of the idea that it had the right to grant any particular state exemption to international norms to occupy another people's land and exercise extraterritorial rule over it – to settle, expropriate, and expel. The Durban contest in this sense was less about Israel, although the subject of the conversation, and more about international governance and the arbitrariness of the administration of the

international order by its hegemonic powers. Again, no partial public sympathies, no matter the private sympathies and/or antipathies.

Sara: It feels like one is always being marginalized. Even in the creation of an alternative space, when we have black/Indigenous studies or black centers it becomes immediately visible that black/Indigenous is outside the norm.

Siba: That's the irony. The overlooking of black and brown people should not be taken to be prejudicial only to the individuals who are marginalized. The cost of exclusion is to all of us human beings, to our collective capacity to comprehend ourselves as humans and, as such, to grasp the magnitude of the problems created by empire, enslavement, colonialism, patriarchy, racism, homophobia, and the conjoined carelessness toward nature and the environment. It also prevents us from appreciating the diversity and complexity of the resources available to us as humans for thinking through our collective problems, dilemmas, and the like.

Sara: It's an interesting thing to grapple with: Where's your space? If you try to create a space, you're automatically accepting marginalization as the norm but if you don't create a space, then you have no space in general society. This brings me to my next point. What do you see as the difference between the idea of black theorizing and that of theorizing while black? Is there a difference? How would you relate that to international law and academia?

Siba: There are nuances differentiating these concepts but they ultimately converge and overlap on some levels. In political theory and legal theory, with which I am more familiar, people talk today about such things as Black Theory, Southern Theory, and Theory from the South and so on. I am not always sure why one would need to adjectivize thought and theory. Africans, like everyone else, have never ceased to think about the human condition and the terms of governance. I take this predicate as a starting point in rejecting the European conceit that others did not think about their own conditions and those of larger collectives. This is to say that one should simply lay to rest the idea emanating in seventeenth century Europe that black people were not self-conscious and that they had no thoughts of their own. Even today, serious scholars still assume that Africans enter disciplinary discourses with no languages of their own. By this, I do not mean something akin to English or French. I mean symbolic, structured, and conventional ways of communicating thought.

This conceit was so powerful a force in the modern world that, from the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, professional intellectuals in the Africana diaspora began to establish black thought. In Africa too, tropes such as African personality emerged as anchors to some unique ways of thought and speech among Africans. Black theorizing appeared thus as way of theorizing about ourselves as blacks. African personality meant that African individuals and collectives embodied manifest human conditions and historical traits that propelled them toward unique moral and ethical drives in thought and actions. To be generous, these two movements were steps toward establishing as self-evident that Africans and thought were conjoined in unique traditions owing to histories and circumstances that were also profoundly human. To me, the aphorism of 'theorizing while black' does not make sense. It would not make sense even if one referred to theorizing manifestly about blackness as a condition. Yet, it is a sad reality. Race and region, particularly black and Africa, have been marginalized or dismissed outright in academic practices and discourses when disciplinary conventions, archiving, and canonization are at stake. But the ideas themselves would not be black. That would be absurd because thinking is universal, and thought is ultimately connected to the human condition. To be black is to be human just as thinking is. There are therefore precepts in 'black thought' that are amenable to abstractions toward some universal understanding of the human condition.

The marginalization or dismissing of the scholarship of Africans and intellectuals of the African diasporas begins with the false predicate that their reflections are not universal or do not have universal or generalizable applicability. This is of course non-sense. The particular necessarily relates to the general. When I write on the subject of international law, for instance, I refer to cases in non-conventional manners precisely because the conventions themselves are wanting. But to say that I write about Africa because Africa appears in my analytical scheme would be like dismissing the contributions of Hugo Grotius, James Lorimer and other so-called precursors of international law because they all started their reflections from problems arising in national and imperial contexts. Grotius' treatise on the freedom of the seas was an advocacy on behalf of the right of Dutch merchants, particularly of the Dutch East India Company, to trade in the Strait of Malacca, against protestations by the Portuguese and Spanish. Today, we take the enunciated principle as constitutive of a universal principle although it was claimed in the context of Dutch imperial expansion. Who is to say then that interrogating race as constitutive dimension of international law is not international theorizing because the idea was first advanced by Africans and on behalf of a drive toward self-determination?

Today's canon-makers would not be so conceited if they knew their own intellectual roots and the genealogies behind their own ideas. One of their precursors had warned them about their present attitudes toward so-called theories from the south, which are simply anti-colonialist universalizing. I refer here to Francis Bacon, who laid the foundation for modern empiricism and was the key inspiration for what became later the British Academy and the French Académie. Bacon was against the four idols that lead scholars astray. The first idol was the tribe, then there is the cave, the idols of theater, and the idols of the marketplace. He said all of that distorts what we do. The paradox for Europeans and for Francis Bacon himself is that they never left the cave. In fact, they brought us to the cave because they are colonizers of the world. The irony is that we ended up with one tribe and one cave and we forgot the forest. The forest was scarier for them because they had no way of dealing with the forest. I'm speaking metaphorically here, because I'm talking about caves, but either they colonize the forest, which they have tried to by destroying it, or they go back to the cave. But they destroyed the forest, and they said, 'well, we did it because only this cave was viable'. So that is Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is actually the cave where we all ended up and what we need is to leave that cave to go back to the forest. Then we can see all the caves around it, and we can see that all the caves contribute to the life of this forest.

Sara: The idea of the cave was something that I was thinking about in terms of international law. We all exist within this cave and have never seen the forest. For most of us, the forest isn't a material reality because it doesn't impact our day to day since the cave is where everything is. When all you know is the cave, how would you theorize about the forest? Or theorize about the cave while being in the cave but trying to see it from outside? Because even when we do theorize, we theorize from within a Eurocentric framework and with Eurocentric ideas. When we look at what success and failure look like, what is despotism versus democracy, freedom versus oppression and subjugation, when we look at these terms, we look at them through a very Eurocentric lens, where what is normal for one is not normal for the other. How do you escape this? With respect to international law, how do we come up with different ways of theorizing in light of the myth of the 'international' in international law, when it is really Eurocentric law pushed out internationally. How can black theorizing or theorizing while black help to transform that when none of us know any differently? The world was configured in this way before many of us were born.

Siba: Do you know the legend of the Black Butterfly? Because what you ask requires either a ministerial explanation or a metaphor. The Black Butterfly is always overlooked, because it doesn't have bright colors. It is also the quietest and hangs out

in the least visible spaces in the forest. It baffles the mind of the uncurious that the Black Butterfly is the one to understand the seasons. The sage, however, knows that the Black Butterfly has the time to itself to look around and to see what is happening and that it cannot last. It can perceive tension, perversity, and cruelty around itself. It can also detect kindness and therefore hope. As it is reflective, Black Butterfly detects patterns and is therefore able to anticipate. It is also mindful of pitfalls.

So, when you think about black people, you can either think of being a Black Butterfly, or you can think about being at the bottom of the well. From either the obscurity of the forest or the bottom of the well, you can see what others can't. This is not a function of skin color but of circumstance, to be able to perceive human follies and generosity in full display. The Black Butterfly has experienced dimensions of modernity as ugly, vulgar, and perverse. For these reasons, it can relate to the miseries of others. The Butterfly also knows proportions and prudence for it has seen where the colorful butterflies ended up, some burned by the fires to which they were drawn or captured by those who flattered them. This is to give contexts for admonitions by the likes of Blyden, Dubois, Douglas, Davis, Stewart, James, Sobukwe, Cabral, MLK Jr, Nasser, Nkrumah, Lumumba, Touré, Neto, and other African leaders that the Africana diaspora should embrace its historical positions and press for more equality, justice, and toleration globally. Aimé Césaire said it best when he said that the Africana diaspora has the obligation and duty to the world to humanize humanity – away from fetishization of state, capital, crude exploitation of nature, and more importantly, violence, of the means of violence, of weapons, nuclear weapons, all of them. Again, the Black Butterfly minds the forest and not simply the cave. It embraces all and not merely the tribe.

In this spirit, I do not theorize as a Black person when referring to conditions arising from blackness in the modern world – for instance, under enslavement, empire, imperialism, colonialism and the like. The latter are constitutive of modern thoughts, conventions, and practices as incorporated in disciplines such as international law and international relations. When I write about the place and subjective and objective conditions of Africans and Black people under international law and relations, I am writing about the essence of being modern, human, and black. I am confronting at that moment systems of thought whose universal and emancipatory pretenses countenanced racism, enslavement, and privation of peoples on account of race. If 'theorizing while black' is to be given a positive form in this context, my constant 'deconstructing' and 'reconstructing' of law-as-language, the language of law, and international norms and practices is a way of affirming my own humanity. It is also

confronting the pretenses, empirics, morality, and ethics of life on this planet. In the end, it is to look for better commonsense and commonplaces as grounds for thinking and relating as humans.

Sara: I really like that. I think this also relates to the idea of community-based research, which is a very black form of research, you know, community based and more ethnographic than that top down, a sort of watchful observational approach. But at the same time, there are areas where black folk have been on the other side of oppression, as with queer experiences, especially in black countries or African countries. I've always been confused when people oppress who have been on the receiving end of oppression. It seems like there is some sort of disconnect because how can you do unto others what has been done unto you?

Siba: Phenomenologically speaking, law appears in two forms or expressions. The first is law-as-language. This is that law is a language of its own. It appears as an articulation and formalization of belief that human life depends on assembling and communicating to subjects crucial principles, norms, and values as foundations of social, moral, and spiritual life. In this manner law appears everywhere as a symbolic regime corresponding to culture and material existence. In another expression, there is the language of the law. This relates to the normative content of particularized regimes of law, with particular reference to distribution, assignation, and application and execution of legal principles and values in the forms of injunctions, directives, and prohibitions. Historically speaking, it may be said that law-as-language is manifest in modern constitutionalism, contractualism, and other like-forms. Yet, liberals, fascists, Nazis, communists, and communitarians have produced different justifications and discourses of law as well as particular legal dispositions under which individuals, citizens, and subjects fare in drastically different manners. In this latter sense, the language of law produces legality as forms of ideological, political, and cultural hegemonies. The fortunes and misfortunes of subjects in any case depend upon the protections, privileges, and immunities accorded to them under the law.

This is why legality, rights discourses, and such claims must be placed in the context of their underlying incipient forms of morality and values. Legality alone does not suffice as foundation of social order, however. The efficacity of legality is connected to legitimacy, which is to say that legal subjects, persons and actors, appreciate legality historically according to ever-changing personal, individual, and material circumstances as well as the appearances of new knowledges, truths, and desires. Viewed from this angle, legality may clash with legitimacy.

In Africa, as elsewhere, legal regimes have proven no longer relevant to the times, particularly regarding homosexuality, and other expressions of gender and sexuality. Societies and individuals confront legal and moral deficiencies within their own regional and cultural contexts with varying degrees of approval, disproval, affirmation, and protest. Once again, the tension between legality and legitimacy is an issue for those who govern and would bring about change. The resolution of the tension is complicated by the fact that intent, motivation, desire, ability and capacity do not always align and are not always self-evident or transparent. States and governing coalitions are not always transparent in their resistances to changes in the law. There also instances when leaders wish to enact change but do not have adequate answers or symbolic tools to bring opposition along with them. It should not be taken for granted also that those who bemoan the inequities, prejudices, and discriminations of the law are themselves able to provide better laws. By 'better' I mean the conjoining of legality with legitimacy.

It is easy to identify and denounce leaders and constituencies that patently discriminate on the basis of status, gender, and sexuality. For instance, it is easy to make the connection between Uganda's homophobic laws and the role of American Evangelicals in providing language (theology), resources (finances), and political muscles (the flock) behind the related measures. On the other hand, I am not always convinced that those who aspire to change have displayed adequate intelligence and sensibility toward the manner in which homosexuality and queerness have lived in African societies. Sadly, even some African reformers are at times unable to distinguish the methods of so-called human rights activists from those of Evangelicals in their willingness to dispense with domestic sensibilities, values, and norms in the interest of legality. Much remains to be done today to protect official and communal temptations to do violence to sexual minorities under the pretenses of moralities, religions, and traditions.

In this latter regard, it offends me that harms are done onto others in the name of 'African tradition' without specifying either 'African' or 'tradition'. I wish to convey here a personal note. When I was 13 years old, I was changing in my house in my room and my aunt, my mother's younger sister, walks in. Now, you know, that's very catastrophic. I'm a 13-year-old boy, my voice is beginning to change, and there is a woman walking in on me while I'm naked. I went to my mom who told me that 'I wouldn't be so upset if I were you. Because she's not like that and there is nothing that you have that she desires'. Then she added, 'You'll understand as you grow up'. She

was correct. My aunt had a conjoined male-female name and those like her were the only ones allowed to be with pre-pubescent and pubescent boys during male rituals. They also had their own circles of friends and entertained themselves, admittedly within the strictures of the extant moral 'codes'. My aunt lived with us and had the greatest influence on us, her nephews.

I also look back with great fondness at how I lived with my buddies as a young boy. Again, I will provide only a vignette. We identified mattresses not as single, double, queen, and king but as one, two, three, and four spaces to signify sleeping arrangement. When friends came to visit and torrential rain prevented them from going home, one was obligated to sleep in the same bed. In the morning we all went to the river or creek to bathe. Yes, we even developed techniques for the collective use of towels. You may call it quartering. Throughout, we had ideas about sexual preferences, but sleeping together was not about sex. Nor was kissing male friends on the cheek.

I used these two vignettes to caution about what people call visibility and acceptance in conjunction with rights talk. The drive toward legalization has not always moved reform in the right direction. I also wish to signal the need for attention to the conceptions of private and public spaces with respect to social, individual, public, and private activities and lives. In my own context, it has come with the indexing of behavior and activities such that young men and women may no longer sleep together, kiss, hold hands, and hug in public without interrogating how these simple acts translate into sexuality. It also comes with conflation of eroticism, sensuality, and sexuality, which can be enjoyed separately as well as conjointly. All of this is to say that seeking legality without attention to legitimacy and conformity with sensibilities, values, and dispositions does not bode well for democracy, self-governance, and autonomy.

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