

BOOK REVIEW

B Camminga and John Marnell, eds. *Queer & Trans African Mobilities: Migration, Asylum, & Diaspora*. London: Bloomsbury, 2022. 264 pp. Index. \$26.95. Paper. ISBN: 9780755638994.

In B Camminga and John Marnell's *Queer & Trans African Mobilities: Migration, Asylum & Diaspora*, the editors curate a collection of Africa-centered scholarship addressing two critical needs: attention to African migrants within queer migration studies and attention to migration in queer African studies. In each of twelve chapters, the authors trouble our understanding of queer African migration by complicating trajectories of movement, revealing stoppages and incoherencies within asylum and refugee systems, and naming competing desires that press African queer migrants in directions both expected and unexpected.

The work is divided thematically into four parts: I) Complicating Migration Narratives; II) Barriers to Protection; III) The Digital & the Transnational; and IV) Bordering in Action. In Part I, the authors ask us to rethink mobility, its affective dimensions, and its archives. Yara Ahmed looks to imagining possible futures elsewhere as a form of affective mobility among queer Egyptian migrants seeking a way out of the “stuckedness” produced by the homophobic surveillance of the Egyptian security state (30).

Part II looks to legal and procedural incoherencies that haunt queer African migration, and the ethical conundrums that researchers face when asked to take on the role of “expert” between these incoherent systems. Agathe Menetrier considers her positionality as a mediator between international humanitarian actors and gay asylum seekers, focusing on the ethical imperatives arising from her performance of expertise. The incoherence between international asylum systems and national persecutory regimes—a theme repeated in several chapters in the collection—is also well-evidenced in Charlotte Walker-Said's study of Cameroonian LGB asylum claimants, who are neglected by international interests that recognize only state-sanctioned or state-sponsored persecution, yet cannot recognize state mobilization of private interests, including the family and church, as a legitimate threat to LGB Cameroonians.

In Part III, the authors locate queer agency within the digital world-making of queer African migrants, in their participation in networks of care, information sharing, and self-advocacy online. Godfried Asante examines how queer African migrants use social media to forge queer imagined communities to connect with the idea of “home” when return is an impossibility. In a well-juxtaposed contrast, Gonca Şahin looks to queer African migrants who cannot easily access support from LGBTQ affirming communities from home, and instead engage offline and online social networks—including through dating apps like Grindr—based on

their queer identities, rather than ethnic or national identities. Thinking through the internet as public archive, B Camminga returns us to the role of the researcher in migration studies, to consider how one ethically engages with online digital materials that contain the deadnames of trans people. They seek methods that invest trans people with control over how their deadnames are handled in scholarship.

Part IV examines the impacts of bordering processes on the identities, well-being, and social participation of LGBT refugee youth in Kenya, lesbian migrant women in South Africa, and African queer migrants applying for sexual orientation and/or gender identity (SOGI) asylum in France. Among other important contributions, Emmanuel Munyarukumbuzi, Margaret Jjuuko, and James Maingi Gathatwa document and call for additional research on the experiences and wellbeing of unaccompanied LGBT refugee youth in Nairobi caught waiting under the presumed benevolent protection of international law within a nation-state that criminalizes their existence.

As with any critical project, more can be said than is included. In the spirit of the work, rather than posing the following as indicative of lack, I suggest these directions for future research: 1) digital world-making and self-signifying among queer African migrant influencers in the diaspora and how these practices are being read (or not) on the continent; and 2) attention to the work of Africa-based and African-led NGOs working between the incoherencies of international rights regimes and homophobic nation-states.

Finally, one additional strength of the project that bears mentioning before finishing is its commitment to inclusivity in its scholarly practices as much as its scholarly subjects. Recognizing their own privilege as white scholars representing powerful institutions and the relative precarity and barriers faced by non-white Global South scholars, in this work the editors outline and model a critical praxis for scholarly review that aims to reduce barriers to publication for contributing scholars from the African continent, including addressing barriers that are the result of language bias and economic precarity.

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[doi:10.1017/asr.2023.125](https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2023.125)