

the arts of resistance. The arts of resistance are synonymous with the refusal to be evacuated from being Kenyan, Christian and queer at the same time.

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Adriaan van Klinken's *Kenyan, Christian, Queer* makes a timely and compelling contribution to scholarship and activism within and across queer, religious and African studies. Situated at these theoretical intersections, the work sets out a case for how those on the sexual margins in Kenya are recrafting religious and political narratives in ways that upend the oppressive world views of Christian orthodoxies and their violent and exclusionary effects on queer life. Challenging the singular and homogenizing view of homophobia in Africa, Van Klinken approaches queerness in Kenya as a place of activism and resistance where queer and Christian identities, cultures and theologies are productively constituted. Using four case studies, the book draws on the embodied experiences of Kenyan LGBTI people as active *subjects* in Christian worldmaking. This is a significant scholarly intervention in the face of Christianity-inspired homophobia and transphobia that seek to render LGBTI persons as repudiated *objects*.

Theology – as a site of sexual politics – is dealt with in the book as a critical antidote to religious practices and identifications that are premised on the denial of sexual and gendered others. Given the pernicious role of organized religion in the propagation of politicized homophobia in Africa, Van Klinken details how narratives of Christianity are (re)deployed by queers to advance more inclusive expressions of religious identity and belonging.

Considering the myriad ways in which LGBT individuals and communities navigate violence, discrimination and stigmatization – in which Christianity is deeply implicated – the book provokes critical questions. Is an adherence to religious belief a prerequisite for mobilizing Christian discourses in liberatory ways? And how might queer theology enable a productive contestation around the terms of queer Christian identification itself? Such questions concern the normative practices through which both church and faith are defined, in queer and non-queer forms, while recognizing the disciplining impulse of religion, even when it is LGBTI affirming. The challenge is thus to interrogate the assumption that, when in the hands of queers, religiosity will necessarily transform the intersecting inequalities that underpin the denial of rights and justice for LGBTI persons. This is particularly the case for gender power relations within the queer community where the mutually reinforcing dynamics of patriarchal heteronormativity and neoliberalism are given succour through queer and Christian imaginaries. Van Klinken powerfully applies the notion of the prophetic voice to queer figures. At the same time, the discussion on the gender politics of the queer prophet is a reminder that singular (frequently male) prophets remain contradictory figures: neither all good nor all bad, as the doctrines might have it. These contradictions expose the conflicting experiences that make up LGBTI communities at the intersections of patriarchy, heteronormativity, racism and political economies of exclusion.

By situating himself directly in the hot mess of queer life 'in the field', Van Klinken exposes the interconnections of power and vulnerability in the ethnographic encounter. This is a fresh and commendable approach. In writing himself into and through the text, the author seeks to counter the extractive and dominating gaze of the ethnographer. This serves as a productive prompt for queer scholars to further reflection on whether the over- (or under-)presence

of the embodied researcher/writer can ever be remedied. Perhaps a certain degree of discomfort with how one's own body *does not* fit – regardless of the intimacies it might encounter in the field – is necessary in order to acknowledge the significant limitations of one's perspective. Here, the invitation is perhaps to persist in writing these discomforts beyond the pain and romance of the field.

In claiming Christian queerness from a critical vantage point – and noting its social, political and epistemological force – it is necessary to wage both secular and, as the book reasserts, post-secular struggle. Consequently, the linking of 'Kenyan', 'Christian' and 'Queer' must remain unsettled if we are to keep the prospect of a radical politics in sight. This seems relevant in a time and place where one is at once *with* and *without* African, *with* and *without* queer, and *with* and *without* Christian – each an unstable and contingent signifier that is simultaneously embraced and refused. For it is also in refusing the terms on which belonging is offered that the desire and demand for more equitable and just social relationships can be further articulated.

Importantly and productively, the book showcases faith as a site of transgressive and creative 'artivism' and its emancipatory possibilities at the level of politics, culture and religion. In the same moment, and in the spirit of the queer critical enquiry the book invites, we should heed the caution against seeking and finding all the answers in the dictates of (queer) religion and its prophets: in the words of the ninth-century Zen Buddhist Master Lin Chi, 'If you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him.'

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This book presents a controversial theme in anthropological explorations of queer experience, especially by linking religion and LGBT issues. This is most welcome as this is a fresh area of academic inquiry into sexuality in Kenya. By using case-by-case examples – namely, works by the author Binyavanga Wainaina, the gay gospel artist George Barasa, an anthology of short films documenting the lives of Kenyan individuals identifying as lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual and intersex, and ethnography conducted in the LGBT-affirming Cosmopolitan Affirming Church in Nairobi – Adriaan van Klinken brings out narratives that present the challenges people face in expressing their sexualities in a patriarchal society. Specifically, the book thus records the experiences of those who refuse to be victims, a people with hope and urgency, who navigate between resistance and conventional growth, creating more space for community and affirmation. It allows its subjects to tell their own stories. In sum, Van Klinken shows how religiosity in Kenya shapes the lived experiences of LGBT people and how sexual orientation forges wider dimensions of faith and spirituality.

Van Klinken draws from rich primary and secondary sources to explore contestations around sexual diversity in the context of Christianity, examining how spiritual paths are transformed in reconciling and expressing faith and sexual orientations. Van Klinken has thus become the first scholar to bring LGBT discussion to the doorstep of the Christian church in Kenya, relating sexuality to theology by focusing on a combination of art, religion and activism. The subject has always been criminalized, taboo, hidden and often feared. This bold exposition complicates normative African religious understanding with a dose of queer theology. I may say that this work is very courageous and confrontational towards the conventional theological practice in Kenya. As such, the study reveals wider social anxieties and tensions. The author weaves together gospel themes of