Kofi Omoniyi Sylvanus Campbell

The Queer Caribbean Speaks: Interviews with Writers, Artists, and Activists. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. i + 209 pp. (Cloth US\$85.00)

The Queer Caribbean Speaks is an ambitious, complex exploration of multiple interpretations of same-sex sexuality and queer life across a range of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) people in the Anglophone Caribbean, as well as their descendants. Campbell's intent is to render visible, and even more legible, the knowledge production concerning what he refers to as "Caribbean queerness" (p. 8). For him, the complexity of Caribbean queerness is often problematically viewed through the lens of Western white definitions, at once stigmatized and short-sighted. He argues that queer people in the Caribbean navigate their queerness in ways that are underrecognized, freer, and open in spite of the entrenched social violence and sociopolitical limitations. His pursuit of a transformative dialogue about social justice and legitimacy of identities is relentless. Nevertheless, his probing approach creatively yet carefully argues against the idea that queerness as experienced within the Caribbean context is solely trapped by "danger" and instead moves to reframe the making of queer Caribbean life.

By interrogating notions of "full" citizenship for LGBTQ folks in/from the Caribbean, Campbell's method of working through question-and-answer-style interviews becomes an instrumental approach to reimagine the contextual worlds constituting sexual subjectivities and LGBTQ identity formation. The analytical potential of combining thirteen interviewees, both men and women, with each interview "standing on its own" (p. 11), can deepen our discussion of the way in which the Caribbean is a site of, as Jafari S. Allen put it in 2012, "black/queer/diaspora work" ("Black/Queer/Diaspora at the Current Conjuncture", *GLQ* 18, his emphasis). These interviews explore resistance, advocacy, freedom, violence, memory, and affect. As a collection of narratives, the book offers insights into Campbell's framing of the familiar as queer by grappling with participants' novels, activist leadership, artistic productions, and intellectual lives. By engaging these somewhat privileged ontologies, he meets his goal of challenging stigma and homophobia.

While grounded in different Caribbean contexts such as Jamaica, the Bahamas, and Guyana, the documented re-imaginings of past, present, and future in no way mark the Caribbean as seamless. In fact, the fragmenting of the Caribbean as negotiated landscapes ruptures the modes of recognition of its sexual and gendered subjects as antiviolence charters. Therefore, my summary attempts to avoid erasing the influential framing of these sensitive metanarratives as archives of oral histories. The multiplicity of metanarrative con-

structions is textually foundational for appreciating the book's intent to "read Caribbean queerness in light of its specific cultural histories and present realities" (p. 8). To this end, it walks us through intimate pathways of charting a queer life (as Campbell might argue) that include affirming family relations, involvement in activism, and political change, as well as sexual relationships and love, and coming into being as a sexual subject of Caribbean societies. The Q&A discussions show that interpretations of sociopolitical organizing, Caribbean novels, dance halls, and the community work on HIV/AIDS are windows into the intimate and broader relationship between Caribbean citizen formation and "queer" ontologies. Indeed, these individualized discussions point to critical ways of understanding pursuits of ethical recognitions for multidimensional forms of freedom.

Does the queer Caribbean speak? How do Campbell and his interviewees appropriate or relate to the notion of "queer"? The book must be read closely and questioned on how the term "queer" travels, situates, and maps the call-and-response process. Is "queer" an analytical tool for studying subjectivities, ontologies, and practices? Or is it solely about a politics of representation? As Campbell acknowledges, some of his interviewees reject or ignore the use of the term "queer" in their discussions. Since some interviewees no longer live in the Caribbean, should queer life be interpreted as access to intellectual, political, socioeconomic means or to an emergence of local through global understandings of the quotidian experiences in the Caribbean? These are critical questions that as scholars we must respond to within black queer studies. The face of humanity through the constructions of free agents with access to particular resources and language such as queer is not yet readily accessible to many people in the Caribbean.

The Queer Caribbean Speaks is ideal for students and scholars as well as fiction writers, artists, and activists even though it specifically targets a Western white and queer globalizing readership. It stands on its own as a collective endeavor. It is not unusual outside of the United States for this kind of narrative to appeal to both academic and nonacademic audiences, as I have noted in my own research in Salvador-Bahia, Brazil, where marginal citizens with sociopolitical access indeed prioritize contesting homophobia—Brazil also being a site where the term "queer" has not yet been fully accepted. Therefore, this is a timely and provocative contribution to Caribbean queer studies.

Nessette Falu

Institute for Research on the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean, CUNY Graduate Center, New York NY 10016, U.S.A.

nefalu@gmail.com