

Rethinking Aeromobilities in Black, African, and Afrodiasporic Cultural Texts

Our Special Section for *Transfers: Interdisciplinary Journal of Mobility Studies* seeks articles that are situated at the intersection of Black/ African/ Afrodiasporic aeromobilities and studies in literature and culture. Concentrating on “the study of various complex systems, assemblages and practices of mobility” (Sheller 2014, 45), mobilities research is often associated with the social sciences. Yet the field is also firmly rooted in the humanities (Aguiar et al. 2019, 4–5; Merriman and Pearce 2017, 493–494), and representations of mobilities are increasingly being studied in diverse cultural products. The “mobility humanities” pays attention to the meanings of mobility produced by humanistic production via representation, imagination, and speculation (Kim et al. 2019, 100). It recognizes cultural products as “vital constituents of the ways in which mobility [...] is experienced as an embodied, subjective act that is informed by, and through, the cultural context in which it occurs” (Aguiar et al. 2019, 17).

The system of aeromobility that covers “the assemblage of travelers, aircraft, and infrastructure, along with diverse components and their relations” (Zuskačova 2020, 8) has been a popular topic in mobility studies (e.g., Adey 2010; Cwerner et al. 2009; Salter 2009; Rink 2017). It has also received attention from literary and cultural studies scholars (e.g., MacArthur 2012; Schaberg 2013; Durante 2020; McCluskey and Seaber 2020; Eldelin and Nyblom 2021). Aeromobility should be viewed as a system of global hypermobility whose roots lie in colonial modernity (Pirie 2009; Browne 2015; Bhimull 2017). The long *durée* of coloniality that informs contemporary aeromobilities manifests itself in “racialized mobility politics” (Nicholson and Sheller 2016, 4; see also Kumavie 2021a; Bhimull 2017): the role of race in security and surveillance measures (Cwerner 2009, 10–11) and processes of deportation (Walters 2018) are the most explicit cases in point. At the same time, aeromobilities have had a pivotal role in enabling Africans’ journeys to (former) colonial metropolises (Ní Loingsigh 2009; Toivanen 2020, 2023) as well as in establishing diasporic connections and returns to (imagined) homelands (Bhimull 2017; Neigh 2018; Toivanen 2021).

Indeed, African mobility studies scholars, for instance, have called for approaches on mobility that move beyond Western biases to give room to African experiences (Nyamnjoh 2013; Matereke 2016; Mavhunga et al. 2016). With some exceptions in literary studies (see, e.g., Neigh 2018; Kumavie 2020, 2021a, 2021b; Toivanen 2020, 2021, 2023; García Corte 2022), representations of Black, African, and Afrodiasporic aeromobilities have not received the scholarly attention they deserve: more work is needed to get a fuller picture of the intersection of Africanness, Blackness, and aeromobility as portrayed across literary, cinematic, cultural, and artistic representations.

In line with Ato Quayson's (2003, xxii) argument that literature has the power to capture the complexities and contradictions of the real and that "reality itself acquires its texture only by way of the repetitions of its various representations in reality", we ask how literary and cultural representations shape global Black aeromobilities. Aesthetic practices not only play an active role in people's ways of relating to the real but can also serve as "prompts to *model* theoretical possibilities" for thinking about mobility (Merriman and Pearce 2017, 502; original emphasis). Another advantage of exploring (aero)mobilities in literary texts lies in their capacity to capture experiences of mobility that may not be accessed through other material (Mom 2014, 31; Pearce 2020, 81). Finally, cultural products are helpful in tracing "how particular movements, experiences and sensations may be grounded in very different ontologies, embodied practices, and cultural and historical contexts" (Merriman and Pearce 2017, 497).

We invite abstracts for articles that address representations of Black, African, or Afrodiasporic aeromobilities in literature, film, art, and other cultural products across diverse geographical, historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts. In addition to the thematic focus on the system of aeromobility from Black, African, and Afrodiasporic perspectives, we invite contributors to discuss the question of representation and how the study of representations of aviation can take us beyond strictly sociological viewpoints and allow for new insights not only into the aesthetics but also theoretical conceptualizations of global Black aeromobilities.

We welcome articles on African and Afrodiasporic cultural products (e.g., literature, film, art) that revolve around – without being limited to – the following topics:

- Portrayals of airports and flight passages
- Politics of Black aeromobilities
- Aesthetics/poetics of Black aeromobilities; 'aeromobilities of form'
- Black/African/Afrodiasporic aeromobile subjectivities and embodied experiences of air travel
- Aeromobile hypermobilities and immobilities
- Colonial modernity, long durée of coloniality, and aeromobility
- African modernities and aeromobility
- Aeromobility and diasporic connectivity
- Airports as border spaces of migration

Send your abstract of **350 words** and a bio of **150 words** by **30 September 2024** to both editors: Anna-Leena Toivanen anna-leena.toivanen@uef.fi and Delali Kumavie fkumavie@syr.edu

Selected full articles of 8000 words will be due by 28 February 2025.

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