

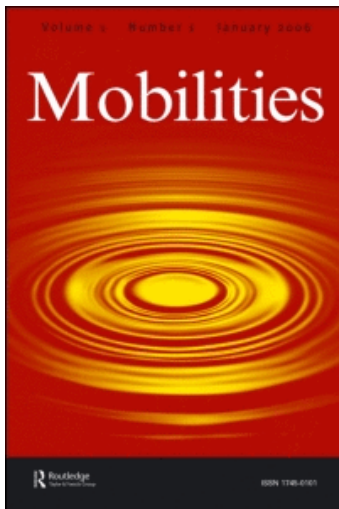
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### Love, Sexuality and Migration: Mapping the Issue(s)

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# Introduction

## Love, Sexuality and Migration: Mapping the Issue(s)

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**ABSTRACT** *In our globalised age of accelerating travel and communication, many migrations and other forms of mobility are informed by a variety of emotional, affective and sexual liaisons, attachments and expectations, which can be powerful and necessary motivations for mobility and for the risks taken in crossing boundaries. In some cases, the emotional and sexual motivations involve economic sacrifices; in others, especially for migrants from poor countries, they can also be a means to economic betterment. In yet others the economic imperative of acquiring work and income through migration implies a loss of emotional expressiveness and sexual identity. In this introductory paper to the special issue, we argue for both a 'sexual turn' and an 'emotional turn' in mobility studies, stressing also the intersectionality of these two dimensions. Some of the most productive research on sexuality in relation to mobility comes from 'queer theory', an intrinsically post-structuralist heuristic paradigm which challenges established heteronormative and homonormative categories in favour of an emphasis on the polymorphous and performative dimensions of sexuality. The final part of the article provides an overview of the papers that follow and the themes they explore. Taken together, the papers investigate different globalised intersections of love, sexuality and migration, and the way they inform, and are informed by, existing narratives and practices of migration and settlement.*

**KEY WORDS:** Love; sexuality; migration; mobility; queer migrations; heteronormativity

### Intersecting Love and Sexuality in Migration Studies

The papers in this special issue address the issues of love and sexuality in migration and mobility studies.<sup>1</sup> Along with the authors of the papers which follow, we see the narratives, practices and understandings of love and sexuality as two under-researched dimensions informing people's experiences of mobility, belonging, and

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individual and collective identities. Love, whether it is for a partner, lover or friend, or for a child, parents or other kin, is so often a key factor in the desire and the decision to move to a place where one's feelings, ambitions and expectations – emotional, sexual, political, economic, hedonistic etc. – can be lived more fully and freely. Sexuality is another increasingly relevant and recognised axis of self-identification for people, whether they decide to stay put or to migrate. Like love, and sometimes alongside it, sex can play a decisive role in the imagination and enactment of the choice to migrate. The fact that some of these relationships change and sour later on, or that one or both of the people had, or develop, exploitative plans, does not diminish the original feeling in the imagination, motivation and realisation of migration.

In this introductory paper we argue for, and document the background to, a 'sexual turn' in migration studies. We feel it needs to be recognised that, beyond their common function as mobile workers within the global capitalist economy, and beyond their victimhood fate as refugees fleeing war and persecution, migrants and other 'people on the move' are sexual beings expressing, wanting to express, or denied the means to express, their sexual identities. More than 30 years ago Tahar Ben Jelloun wrote compellingly of the 'ultimate loneliness' of North African male workers in France; this was their sexual misery imposed by a society which demanded their labour but turned its back on their personality, dignity and sexuality (Ben Jelloun, 1977). Although family reunification schemes have eased the sexual loneliness of many migrants, the expropriation of emotional warmth, sex and sexuality from migrants' lives remains widespread today, as the next two papers in this special issue show.

We also advocate for an 'emotional turn' in migration and mobility studies which explicitly places emotions, especially love and affection, at the heart of migration decision making and behaviour. This, perhaps, is less new: King (2002, pp. 99–100) wrote of 'love migrations' as an essential component of the 'new map of migration' and there is a growing appreciation of the role of emotion in human spatial behaviour across the social sciences (see for example Davidson et al., 2005 on 'emotional geographies'). And yet studies that focus on the actual relevance of discourses and practices of 'love' in the development of migration are still quite rare and tend to focus on dynamics which are affiliated with, rather than central to, migration processes: typical examples are the negotiation of love and romance on the internet as a potential precursor to mobility (Constable, 2003; Johnson, 2007), or love and mobility within the heteronormative institutions of the transnational marriage and the family (Chamberlain, 2006; Robinson, 1996; for alternative conceptualisations see Lyons & Ford, 2008; Shah, 2006). However, in recent years, the queer approach to migration has highlighted the need to separate more clearly heterosexuality from heteronormativity and to investigate the articulation of 'queer heterosexualities' alongside more normative practices. A developing body of literature has recently begun to address non-normative experiences of heterosexuality in the Asian migration context (Huang & Yeoh, 2008; Walsh et al., 2008). Another interesting stream of research investigates the transformation of values and sexualities in relation to migration dynamics, examining the impact of migration on the detraditionalisation of established gender and sexual norms (Ahmadi, 2003; González-López, 2005; Hirsh, 2003).

Third, we appreciate the intersectionality of love, sex and emotion in framing mobility behaviour; they are distinct, yet overlapping domains. Our aim in this special issue is to shift the interplay between sexuality, affectivity and migration to the centre of the analysis, rather than situating it at the margin or in the background. But this is not to overlook the economic and structural forces driving migration. Indeed, how productive and possible is it to separate a migrant's desire to improve the economic well-being of her/his family from the feelings of love, loyalty and respect this elicits, or from existing gendered understandings of responsibility, morality and care? When analysing people's migratory trajectories, how can it be heuristically useful to continue to separate the desire to experience new environments, to improve one's economic status, to resist socio-economic and gender oppression, to express one's sexual and emotional being, when all these dimensions coexist and interact in people's understanding of who/where they are and who/where they want to be?

Although the interlocking of the cognitive and affective dimensions are key in investigating any social dynamic (Campbell & Rew, 1999, pp. 18–20), the study of migration and mobility has been for too long restricted by the emotional constraints embedded within its two main research approaches: one from economics and sociology which focuses on costs and benefits, the working lives of migrants and their socio-structural position; and a second from anthropology and cultural studies which addresses questions of socio-cultural positionality and identity.<sup>2</sup> These two mainstream research paradigms implicitly sideline the role of emotions, feelings and affect in the motivation and experience of migration. It is as if migrants are not allowed to love, express their sexualities, have emotions, be intimate. A consequence of this is that emotional relations are regarded as something apart from the economic or the geographic, as something essentially private, removed from the researcher's gaze traditionally fixed on spatial mobility patterns, push–pull factors, the 'laws' of migration, the mobility transition, assimilation/integration and the cross-cultural encounter (Anderson & Smith, 2001, p. 8). Against the reductive outcome of these polarised approaches, we need to recognise that migrations are rarely exclusively motivated by economic or political considerations, and that the full relevance of the decision to migrate and to continue living and working abroad can only be understood by bringing into the analytical equation the affective, sexual and emotional dimensions.

In the past few years a growing body of literature has emerged at the nexus of migration, sexuality and queer studies (Fortier, 2001; Luibhéid, 2004, 2008; Luibhéid & Cantú, 2005; Manalansan IV, 2006). The queer studies approach acknowledges, but also undermines, the full spectrum of sexualities and sexual identities; it not only challenges the heteronormativity of most migration scholarship and policies, but also moves beyond the duality between heterosexual and homosexual normativities in order to show how queer practices and interpretations transcend the restrictions of such a binary system. As Anne-Marie Fortier says (2001, p. 408), 'the queer diasporic journey is one of envisioning ourselves beyond the framework of normative heterosexuality'; and also, one might add, of normative homosexuality. From this 'unruly body of scholarship' (Luibhéid, 2008), which by definition subverts conventional categorisations and theorisations of gender and sexuality, we see, in a sense, a natural alliance between mobile persons and fluid and multiple sexual identities: both are on the move and challenge the fixedness of sedentary national and sexual citizenship and of established sexual identities as straight/gay or even as gay/lesbian/bisexual/

transgender (Manalansan IV, 2006). The ‘queer migrant diaspora’ (Patton & Sánchez-Eppler, 2000) reproduces to some extent the ‘third space’ of Homi Bhabha (1994); queer migrants and identities occupy a ‘space in-between’, an ‘interstitial passage’ between fixed identifications ‘that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy’ (1994, p. 10). Moreover, both queerness and mobility can be considered as liminal states and practices, since both, in their own fashion, constitute peripheral and borderline spaces and identities.

However, queer theory, especially in its initial formulations, has tended to emphasise the fluid and elusive ‘outbound’ aspects of the nexus between sexuality and movement (eg. Gopinath, 2005; Patton & Sánchez-Eppler, 2000) over ‘inbound’ articulations of resettlement and return (Fortier, 2001) and over more fluid understandings of migration as both estrangement from, and reproduction of, homes (Ahmed, 1999). Against the fixation of ‘sexuality as movement’ and ‘queer’ as ‘movement out of place’, Fortier examines the relation between queer mobilities, identities and belongings by focusing on the reproduction of ‘homes’ through migration. In an analogous way, Rachel Pain (2001, p. 130) critiques the linear migration trope of leaving a problematic home behind for the exile of a queer subculture; she emphasises how home is a site of attachment which engages us in complex multidimensional relations, encompassing multiple returns to the past and renegotiations in the future. Moreover, whilst in most cases the double helix of migrating persons and mobile sexualities can be emancipating – in Fortier’s words ‘moving out and coming out’ (2001, p. 408) – in other instances the reverse dynamic can result, one of a double marginality as immigrants and queers (Kuntsman, 2009).

Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the phenomenological turn in queer studies, which frames the relation between mobility and sexuality in terms of processes which shape the material worlds that constitute our experiences of subjectivity, including the possibility to navigate queer rather than normative spaces (Ahmed, 2006). By understanding objects and emotions as sustained and challenged through materiality, this approach offers the possibility to re-map the relations between mobility, sexuality and emotions in terms which automatically emphasise the social-collective dimension and which problematise the boundedness and relevance of the individual subject and its emotions. The queer phenomenological perspective is a potentially productive way to look at the interplay between migration, love and sexuality as it highlights the embeddedness of emotions and subjects within materiality, discourse and society, thus transcending the focus on the individualised subject as the fundamental heuristic unit of research. However, it has so far focused, in line with emotional geographies (Pain & Smith, 2008), on the analyses of global affective economies of fear, within which love was constituted as the libidinal underpinning of hatred (Ahmed, 2004), rather than exploring love as a specific agent of mobilisation or foreclosure of mobility. This special issue aims to take this approach further, by analysing the interplay between mobility, sexuality and wider affective economies of love. In doing that, it will highlight the way these encompass people’s ambivalently ‘queer’ orientations and migrations in relation to the social normativities available within the increasingly globalised material world they inhabit.

A final introductory perspective on the papers which follow opens up issues of place, scale and situatedness. Following Doreen Massey (1994, p. 154), we conceptualise place as constituted by networks of social relations which are perceived by its

residents to be both local and distant. Moreover, places are inherently open, 'porous' and constituted as 'products of other places' (1994, p. 59). In order to embed the interplay between love, sexuality and migration within the complexity of contemporary social settings, we conceptualise place 'as a complex, tangled mosaic of superimposed and interpenetrating nodes, levels, scales, and morphologies' (Brenner, 2004, p. 66). This multilayered and relational understanding of place frames the papers composing this special issue, which focus on the way in which queer and normative narratives and practices of 'love' and 'sexuality' are implicated in the definition of what constitutes 'the local' in relation to 'the distant' and thereby frame the experiences of belonging, social mobility and migration. The papers acknowledge and transcend the post-structuralist focus on language and cognition informing existing studies on sexuality. They 'return to materiality' (Plummer, 2008) in three main ways: by focusing on practices as well as ideologies of love and sexuality; by embedding these practices and ideologies in the material worlds informing them; and by analysing these as they emerge at global/local intersections of class, gender, race and ethnicity, rooted in local structures of belonging grounded in the history of each place (Wilson & Dissanayake, 1996). We use the notion of intersectionality to refer to the way in which different social and cultural categories – like race, ethnicity, class, gender, age and sexuality – overlap and interact within social relations and processes to legitimise specific social hierarchies and inequalities (Crenshaw, 2003, p. 192).

### **The (Geo)Politics of Love**

Love, and in particular the idea of romantic love, was chosen as a strategic concept and discursive apparatus for our examination of the intersectional interplay between emotional, sexual and social dynamics for three main reasons. First, because of its intrinsic and foundational relation with modernity and, by reflex, mobility. According to Illouz (1998, p. 79), 'all that is romantic melts into air'; this refers to the way romantic love, in its affirmation of the right to choose a mate outside the rules of endogamy, was a powerful vector for the dynamics of individualisation within modernity and, even more so, post-modernity. Second, because of its embeddedness within a deeply transforming social dynamic such as individualisation, the notion of romantic love has been invested with sacred and liminal qualities (Illouz, 1998, p. 10) and plays an increasing role in people's understanding of themselves and of their place in the world. Finally, in late modern times the globalisation of ideologies of romantic love coincided with the diffusion of practices and ideologies of consumption and lifestyles which both transcended and demarcated aspirational middle classes from less privileged strata of local populations. In other words, 'the post-modern romantic utopia contains the classless dream of leisure and authenticity at the same time that it affirms new class divisions and class identities' (Illouz, 1998, p. 100). Thus, because of its embeddedness within the rise and dissemination of capitalist modernity, 'romantic love' captures its deep contradictions. The entitlement to engage in 'romantic love' has always been, at least in modern times, a key site of struggle between different and opposed discursive practices, social movements and political projects, animated by both progressive and conservative ideologies and values.

Definitions and understandings of what constitutes love, sexuality, their mutual relations and the degree of centrality they should occupy in people's understanding of

themselves as individuals and as parts of collective social formations play a key role in the operationalisation of hierarchies of civility within and across nations. These hierarchies are intersected by and in turn encompass migratory phenomena. The currently hegemonic notions of romantic love amongst 'equal' individuals are consistent with a highly individualised and neoliberal model of society, celebrating the expression of individual autonomy, gender equality and emotional fulfilment as key and fixed criteria of Northcentric 'civility'. These are applied differentially to people perceived as 'others' than to those perceived as 'sames'. They play a key role in the construction of Europe (and the West) as spaces of emotional and civic superiority and in enforcing 'commonsense-based' yet crippling restrictive migration policies. Because of their deep resonance within ideologies and practices of modernisation and of the celebration of courtly love's respect towards women as a founding institution of European political and cultural civilisation, ideologies of romantic love have played (and still play) a key role in the construction of Europe in terms of moral and civic superiority (Passerini, 1999, pp. 1–4). The articles in this issue will show that ideologies of romantic love enjoy a pivotal function in the repositioning and legitimisation of global/local socio-economic and cultural hierarchies encompassing and informing migration from and to Europe and other 'developed' societies.

These 'structural' dimensions of ideologies of romantic love legitimise its choice as a strategic trope when studying migration. However, when analysing the specific role of love and sexuality in the imagination and enactment of migratory phenomena, the risk is that of underestimating the way these two dimensions and the relation between them vary across and within contemporary global/local socio-cultural settings. For instance the specific understanding of what constitutes love, the way it should be felt, the power dynamics underpinning it, the way it should be expressed and by whom, the behaviours associated with it, the boundaries between self and other that one is supposed to maintain, the acceptable economic transactions that can be associated with love, and the role it should play in determining key life choices, are all culturally, socially and economically sited and interdependent (Zelizer, 2005), both 'at home' and 'away'. The same is true about what constitutes sex and sexuality, the associated gender roles, the degree of intimacy they are associated with in relation to acceptable forms of social behaviour, the economic transactions that can accompany sex and sexuality, the importance these dimensions play in determining life choices, their centrality in people's understanding of themselves and each other, their links to moralised notions of freedom, coercion and respectability. Most importantly, socio-culturally sited experiences of love and sexuality do not emerge in isolation, but affect (and are affected by) globalised hierarchies and materialities of civility and entitlement emerging at the intersection of race, faith, gender and class, which get both challenged and reproduced through migration.

### **Late Modern Tensions of Mobility and Sedentarism**

This special issue contributes to the study of contemporary mobilities by analysing various strategic ways in which these are informed and challenged by the interplay of sexuality, love and migration. The articles address some or all of these dimensions in interesting and innovative ways, encompassing the four meanings that the term mobility can refer to: something that moves or is capable of moving; a mob, i.e. something

seen as unruly and disorderly because it is mobile; the sociological concept of upwards and downwards social mobility; and mobility in the sense of migration or other forms of semi-permanent geographical movement (Urry, 2007, pp. 7–8). By engaging with and underlining the inherent ambivalence of sexual and emotional dynamics, this special issue will also relativise the (potentially class-blind) celebration of the possibility to enjoy socio-cultural experientiality and pluralism in contemporary late modern times (Bhabha, 1994; Brah, 1996; Chambers, 1994) and the concomitant emphasis on the role of movement over sedentarism in the emergence of contemporary identity formations (Rapport & Dawson, 1998, p. 33).

Within contemporary analyses of modernisation and post-modernity, mobility is often posited as pivotal in the understanding of contemporary social phenomena (Urry, 2000, p. 2); migration and uprootedness have become a trope to convey the disembedding of people's contemporary sense of self from fixed notions of identity and belonging and their re-articulation in new uprooted (Clifford, 1992), nomadic (Braidotti, 1994) and cosmopolitan (Beck, 2006) forms. The critiques of the comforting Western scenario of individual agency and experimentality evoked by these mobility-centric analyses emerged early in the debate (Ahmed, 1999). If 'the era of postmodernity is distinctively characterised by an increasing tendency to the "mediation" and "global interconnectedness" of social experience' (Morley & Robins, 1995, pp. 218–219), it is also true that 'we are not all nomadic, fragmented subjectivities living in the same postmodern universe' (Morley, 1999, p. 160). New (and old) technologies of communication and transportation are available only to the relatively rich, but the narrative and visual scripts accounting for late modern Western subjectivities are always translated according to local subjectivities and experiences. Moreover, the celebration of the 'newness' of the post-modern condition of cultural displacement and hybridity can be seen as implicitly Eurocentric, as it refers to Europe's greater awareness of its receding central positionality in the world, rather than to a new reality (Morley & Robins, 1995, p. 210). In other words, romanticising mobility is as dangerous as celebrating sedentarism (Frello, 2008). Maybe sedentarism and nomadism, following Cresswell (2006, p. 55), are better understood as 'metanarratives that inform more specific, more local, more contextual attitudes to mobility [...] always within a field of unequal power relations'. These inequalities participate in the material and discursive construction of (the entitlement to) mobility, as mobility, individualisation and identity displaced and subsumed the category of class as a key dimension of social exclusion and hierarchisation (Skeggs, 2004, p. 60). At the same time, it is important to acknowledge how the unequal global distribution of mobility, immobility and mooring is part of the neoliberal restructuring of the economic regulation and governance of place and of the materialities, practices and discursive apparatuses informing it (Hannam et al., 2006, p. 15).

## **The Papers**

Our aim in assembling this special issue is to explore some of the complexities outlined above. Each paper is grounded in extensive and often highly imaginative fieldwork, researching a particular intersection between a variety of sexual and emotional encounters and experiences on the one hand, and a particular migrant group, type of mobility, and one or more places on the other. Some of the relationships

analysed are mainly emotional and altruistic; others are more instrumental to accessing money and power. They involve love for (and/or sexual relations with) a boy or girlfriend, a tourist, a (future) husband or wife, a same-sex partner, a child, a pimp or a trafficker, as well as the denial of such feelings and relations. The research sites include the UK, Spain, Italy, Costa Rica, Cuba, Lebanon and Dubai. The papers are sequenced and themed in the following manner, often paired together to explore contrasting or complementary aspects of the same or a closely related issue.

Like their material lives, migrants' sexual and emotional entitlement is regimented by global hierarchical intersections of race, faith, gender and class which deeply influence the migratory project and its socio-cultural underpinnings. This is a structural theme echoing across several of the papers, but it is brought out in a particularly acute way by two papers which, complementing the early psycho-sexual documentary of Tahar Ben Jelloun (1977), deal with the sexual dispossession of Pakistani male migrants in Italy and Britain (Ali Nobil Ahmad) and Sri Lankan female maids in Lebanon (Nayla Moukarbel).

Ali Ahmad critiques the economic focus of studies of male labour migration from Pakistan, by exploring the importance of sexuality, masculine desire and subjectivity in the home-country society, during the bodily experience of travel, and while involved in the labour process in the destination. Drawing on classical and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Georges Bataille's 'base materialism' and contemporary queer theory, the paper shows how the desire to migrate is informed by a libidinal investment in a material and social advancement which is tied to 'the West' and which allows prospective migrants to resist their family's pressure to conform to established lifestyles and expectations. It also shows how these investments clash against the social and libidinal exclusion these men face, as migrants in the West, where they undergo a process of labour commodification depriving them of their entitlement to sexual and emotional fulfilment.

While Ahmad's paper deals with a masculine dimension, Nayla Moukarbel documents the experiences of Sri Lankan live-in female maids in Lebanon, and focuses on the way the professional identities required of them by Lebanese employers, reflecting global/local intersections of gender, race and ethnicity, 'do not allow them to love'. This partially self-reflexive study analyses in depth the racialised and gendered assumptions and strategies enacted by Lebanese employers to control their migrant employees, including de-sexualisation, maternalism and familist exploitation. It also shows the ambivalent nature of the professional and human relations between migrants and their employers. These are embedded in the 'caring' nature of their job; in the very familistic and maternalistic practices and narratives used to control them, including the possibility of genuine attachment on both sides; and in migrants' strategies of resistance to the mechanisms of control and repression enacted by (mainly female) employers.

For many migrants, the migratory project has a pronounced liminal salience, as working and living in the West often becomes a way to achieve an enhanced status in one's own eyes and within the community of origin. Although liminality is a key dimension of migration and, as such, is more or less present in all of the articles in this issue, two papers address it as a key heuristic category and explore the structural ambivalence between the challenging and the reproduction of established moral, emotional, sexual and social conventions through the migration process.

Nicola Mai analyses the relation between the intra-psychological and geographical mobility of young men from Albania and Romania selling sex in the EU. Mai addresses migration as a form of subjective displacement as well as a strategy of liminal self-advancement in relation to a transforming socio-cultural scenario, affecting models of authority, material culture, gender and sexual canons, both at home and abroad. Against hegemonic interpretations of young people's involvement in sex work as inherently exploitative, Mai argues for the possibility of both emancipatory (minor) and dis-emancipatory (errant) forms of psychological, social and geographic mobilities for these proletarian yet cosmopolitan young migrant men, whether they sell sex or not. What distinguishes emancipatory from non-emancipatory forms of mobility, according to Mai's analysis, is a successful psychological separation from parents, which translates in the ability to own one's desire of subjective deterritorialisation from normative sexual, gender and social expectations and to then negotiate a socially and psychologically sustainable and post-liminal reterritorialisation.

Compared with Albanian and Romanian young men's ambivalent sexual and social positionings, the migratory, psychological and bodily journeys of the Venezuelan *transformistas* studied by Katrin Vogel are marked by a higher degree of structuration. Vogel analyses the way migration to Europe is a key liminal passage for a group of Venezuelan self-identified gay men, who become *transformistas* and sell sex to escape sexual discrimination, survive economically, help their (sometimes abusive) families, and express their sexuality more freely. Through migration and sex work, *transformistas* achieve the economic means to negotiate a successful liminal passage to a socially enhanced status at home and abroad. In the process, they both challenge and reproduce family figures, roles and duties emerging at the intersection of class, sexuality and gender. As such, their migratory trajectories are marked by an inextricable entanglement of feelings of love, loyalty and exploitation towards parents and home and other important parental figures abroad.

The 'uncanny' (Freud, 1919/1934) tension between the reproduction and the challenging of familiar 'emotional matrices' during the migration process is another key theme underpinning this special issue, addressed in detail in the papers by Frohlick and De Sousa e Santos. These two papers deal with two variations of the theme of the encounter between 'Northern' tourists, Caribbean 'locals' and potential migrants (cf. Brennan, 2004). First, Susan Frohlick examines the subjective experiences of a group of women who 'become migrants', following tourist visits to Costa Rica, in order to pursue their emotional and romantic trajectories with local (black) men. Using a transnational framework to examine the remaking of emotion in global encounters, Frohlick de-constructs Western female migrants' self-reflexive and medicalised notions of 'obsessive love'. Her article explores the way emotion, travel and migration are linked, and how cultural and transcultural notions of love profoundly affect migration experiences, by both being challenged and reproduced in new forms and settings which are marked by global/local intersections of race, sexuality, class and gender.

In a parallel fashion, Dina de Sousa e Santos analyses the way Cuban black *jinetas* re-negotiate a better social positioning for themselves against Cuban racial and gender politics, by desiring to love an idealised European man and aspiring thereby to migrate to Europe. By exchanging romance with European men, and fighting for their social self-advancement and economic survival, Cuban *jinetas* attempt

to renegotiate in their own terms the social exclusion engendered by existing social, gender and racial hierarchies in Cuba. At the same time, by assuming the traditionally male role of breadwinners as well as the socially established female role of carers for their mothers and daughters, they adapt and contribute to changes in norms and values which were brought about by the Cuban revolution's undermining of the male's economic role.

As well as the specific issues outlined above, the papers from Mai, Vogel, Frohlick and De Sousa e Santos also implicitly 'take on' the victimising ethos informing the anti-trafficking paradigm. This apparatus of social intervention casts migrant sex workers as exploited victims (Rafferty, 2008, p. 14) and denies them agency or dynamism in shaping their own lives against social injustice, discriminating migration legislation and gender/sexual discrimination both at home and away (Agustín, 2007). By focusing on women, men and transgender people's ambivalent and complex experiences and transcultural understandings of femininity/masculinity/queerness, sex work and migration, these papers challenge both the implicit vulnerability ascribed to the women and the implicit agency ascribed to the men involved. Moreover, the papers highlight the way the sex industry responds to orientations which are ambivalently queer in relation to hegemonic notions of femininity, masculinity and mobility. In doing so, they also underline the 'short circuit' between the moralising victim-centred politics of social intervention of a growing number of state and non-governmental actors, and the restrictive migration policies that are consistent with these, which actually reproduce the conditions for exploitable employment in the sex as well as in other industries.

Finally, the article by Katie Walsh addresses and problematises the common association of love with spatial proximity in relation to the emotional and affective displacements and resettlements of British transnational expatriates in Dubai. Walsh examines the discourses surrounding three types of intimate relationship – couple, family and friend – as sites in which love might be located and experienced and focuses on the ways in which British migrants negotiate different sorts of love relationships with Britons in the UK and in Dubai. The article explores how such relations in different places are inter-connected; and the way in which they are central to spatial imaginations of mobility/dwelling, home/away, proximity/distance, and absence/presence taking place both at home and in transnational settings.

## Conclusion

The articles in this special issue focus on two under-researched dimensions in the study of migration – emotions and sexuality – addressing their specific role in the unfolding of migratory phenomena in various geographic and developmental contexts. The papers help to better contextualise migrants' life trajectories within the intrinsically ambivalent interplay between mobility, modernity and capitalism. On the one hand, preceding values, roles, practices and lifestyles were fluidified and mobilised by modern capitalism, which Berman (1988), taking a line from Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, describes as a time in which 'all that is solid melts into air'. In a parallel way, Illouz, as we have seen, underlines how love can be seen as a catalyst of modernising change and individualisation, as 'all that is romantic melts into the air' (Illouz, 1998, p. 79). However, notions of romantic love, along with sexuality and

indeed with capitalism, can be recruited within conservative and ‘solidifying’ agendas. They potentially both transcend and reinscribe existing (or new) social demarcations and hierarchies, as they inform the establishment of new (and old) hetero and homo normativities and ‘naturalise’ their material and discursive environments. This ambivalent pivotal function of naturalisation exposes the importance of the interplay between sexuality and love in dynamics of power, which resides in setting the terms of the ‘naturalisation’ and ‘invisibilisation’ of the relatively powerful as ‘local’ and in the fixation and othering of the relatively powerless ‘as distant’ (Skeggs, 2004, p. 4).

These processes are exacerbated by the socio-cultural and economic dynamics characterising late modernity. If late modern subjects are allowed to enjoy a plurality of lifestyles and contradictory identities, these possibilities are very unequally distributed at a local, national and globalised level. Finally, even where the possibility of social and psychological mobility is available, this needs to be measured against the heightened burden of self-reflexivity – often correlated or intertwined with spatial mobility of various types and scales – introduced by new forms of individualisation (Elliott & Lemert, 2005); while late modern subjects also risk becoming potentially more dependent on others for their sense of continuity and identity. By analysing the interplay between mobility and migration through the prisms of love and sexuality, we aim at examining migrants’ lives within the structurally ambivalent multiple tensions between mobility and settlement, entitlement and inequality, and individualism and conformism which (differentially) encompass contemporary social and individual circumstances.

## Notes

1. The papers were first presented and discussed at a workshop organised by the editors of this special issue at the University of Sussex, 14–15 March 2008. The workshop followed a series of earlier meetings and presentations organised under the aegis of the EU Network of Excellence on ‘International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe’ (MISCOE), specifically its research cluster C8 on ‘Gender, Age and Generations’. Three people contributed in a very real way to the success of this venture: Laura Agustín, who animated our initial discussions; Nalu Binaisa, who organised the Sussex workshop; and Jenny Money, who helped to edit the final versions of the papers.
2. It is significant that none of the standard texts on migration have much to say about the sexual and emotional aspects of mobility, except to briefly note the link between migration and sex work. See *inter alia* Boyle et al. (1998), Brettell & Hollifield (2008), Castles & Miller (2009), Cohen (1995).

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