

Migrant Precariat and the Global South Novel

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Abstract

This article examines migration in two contemporary African novels: Juan Tomás Ávila Laurel's *The Gurugu Pledge* (2017) and Marie NDiaye's *Three Strong Women* (2009). Focusing on an increasingly urgent set of questions around citizenship and borders, Ávila Laurel's and NDiaye's narratives resort to fragmentation and focus on Sub-Saharan migrants at a specific geopolitical location on the migrant route: the Spanish-Moroccan border at Melilla, an EU entrance gate that also marks its frontier with the Global South. I argue that the deeply disconcerting fragments through which migrant narratives are told require not only new figurations, as devised through these postcolonial novels and the their shared stories of oppression and solidarity, but also new critical insight into whose lives, and which objects, are transformed by involuntary mobilities and war-fueled global economy. I show that the two novels set on Europe's African border are not only politically engaged with precarity but also boundary-crossing, in multiple ways, for they interrogate the humanitarian and securitarian mechanisms of actual territorial borders, and in doing so problematize translation and disciplinary boundaries.

Keywords: borders; citizenship; Global South; precarity, migration