BLACKNESS AND THE PITFALLS OF ANTHROPOCENE ETHICS

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Abstract

Though to deny the geological impact of human force on nature is now essentially quasi-criminal, many theorists (mostly in the humanities) remain, nonetheless, unimpressed with what this "new era" has afforded us in terms of critical potential. This article is concerned with what Srinivas Aravamudan deems "the escapist philosophy of various dimension of the hypothesis concerning the Anthropocene." Following Erik Swyngedouw's indictment of apocalyptic discourses' vital role in displacing social antagonisms and nurturing capitalism, this article argues that the new regimes of Anthropocenean consciousness have been powerful in disavowing racial antagonisms. It discusses the ways in which Anthropocene ethics have foreclosed proper political framings by promoting a moral philosophy unequipped to face the racial histories of our current ecological predicament. It contends that the "political Anthropocene" (if there is or ought to be one) will remain an impossibility until it is able to wrestle with the problem of black suffering.

Keywords: blackness, Anthropocene, politics, race, ethics

To deny the "unprecedented" geological impact of humans' force on nature is now practically untenable. Theorists in the humanities, nonetheless, remain unimpressed with what this "new era" has afforded us in terms of critical potential. From accusations that what we now call the "Anthropocene" has merely established a hegemony of brute facts at the expense of critique, to concerns about the multiple ways in which the term continues to obscure catastrophic socio-ecological relations, it is fair to say that the scenes of the "Anthropocene" are still contested terrains. In her recent book, for instance, Claire Colebrook argues that "the Anthropocene seems to override a vast amount of critical work."[1] She worries that "if theory has become an attention to construction and composition, the Anthropocene often appears as a reactionary insistence on the real and the non-negotiable."[2] In a similar vein, Erik Swyngedouw accuses debates on climate change to relegate real political matters to "a terrain beyond dispute" that forecloses the very possibility of disagreement or doubt.[3] He writes that "in the climate change debate, the political nature of matters of concern is disavowed to the extent that the facts in themselves are elevated, through a circuited procedure, on the terrain of the political" and, consequently, scientific expertise "becomes the foundation and the guarantee for properly constituted politics polices."[4] In most cases, however, it is what Srinivas Aravamudan deems "the escapist philosophy of various dimension of the hypothesis concerning the Anthropocene" that appears to be the point of contention.[5] In other words, the insidious problem of the Anthropocene is the generalized—perhaps even calculated—unwillingness to account for past and current imperial injustices, coupled with a rampant inability to imagine alternative futures outsides an apocalyptic state of emergency that is mostly inspired by a narrative of vitality, and in which disposable life or "life-death" remains largely unaccounted for. This is why, in the same article I cite above, Swyngedouw also argues that apocalyptic imaginaries are not only vital for the maintenance and nurturing of capitalism. They are also, as he puts it, "powerful in disavowing or displacing social [. . .] antagonisms, [they are] decidedly populist and foreclose a proper political framing" while, ironically, they manage "to construct the enemy."[6]

It is precisely this formulation that I would like, in this article, to extend to the status of blackness both in the Anthropocene and its concomitant apocalyptic consciousness. More specifically, I would like to argue that apocalyptic sensibilities which have significantly monopolized Anthropocenean discourses are powerful in disavowing and erasing racial

antagonisms. They foreclose "proper political framings" while, simultaneously, they continue to construct and maintain growing numbers of both new and old enemies along racial lines. Inspired by recent philosophical interventions in the area of critical Black Studies, I contend that the political Anthropocene (if there is or to ought be one) will remain an impossibility unless it is able to systematically grapple with the problem of black suffering. I assert that black suffering—especially in the figure of slain black bodies—indefinitely haunts the possibility of a post-apocalyptic political afterlife. What "black death" promises, instead, is a post-apocalyptic world without any signs of ethical transformation—that is, if we are willing to inflect the project of ethics in the Anthropocene with the radical politics it is much in need of.

I do not think that my claims are far-fetched or simply a polemical attempt to insert matters of race in a discourse that promises—to use the language of feminist philosopher Nancy Tuana—"a new ontological appreciation of interrelations of humans, environments, and societies."[7] Racially driven police brutality, the criminalization of climate refugees along racial lines, neocolonial tourism, the outsourcing of toxicity and littering or the militarization of practices of resources extraction—all of which are performed in accordance with a very specific racial geography—deeply problematize what Colebrook names the "fetish of unity."[8] To politicize the Anthropocene—or perhaps, more accurately, to politicize "ethics in the Anthropocene"—and, therefore, to avoid also the haunting setbacks of surrendering to a discourse's mere potential to no transformative ends, will require—I think—refusing to lose sight of those for whom both the Anthropocene and its apocalyptic imaginaries do not necessarily hold any emancipating value. Given the pervasive silence on matters of race in this emerging discourse, nothing guarantees thus far that the world we could inherent, in the event of successful post-apocalyptic/post-Anthropocenean times, would *de facto* be non-racist. This is to say that the Anthropocene erasure of race rather anticipates a post-apocalyptic "recalibration" of anti-black racist practices. And it does so, I believe, by our indulging in two clandestinely insidious discursive inclinations. The first, I argue, is a type of "hyper-ethics" predicated on the naturalization of relationality, mutual dependency, and other narratives of "species entanglements." And the second, I contend, is an ahistorical and apolitical "hyper-valuation" of the concept of life.

My article is divided into two sections. First, I will survey works in the area of Anthropocene ethics, in order to show how both the notions of life and that of an intrinsic relationality among earthly beings dominate most interventions. Here my hope is to demonstrate how, even in the literature considered most radical in the field, problematic kinds of correlationism and vitalism hinder the possibility of thinking concretely about anti-black racism. I will then move to discuss recent philosophical interventions in the field generally identified here as critical Black Studies. I hope to show that, more than just meta-critiques of black agency and victimization, these philosophical interventions' own brand of what one could broadly name a radical historicism begets the possibility of truly reconfiguring our ethical grammar—a project, I think, only bound to remain a fantasy for theorists of the Anthropocene.

On the Politics of Relationality

The representation of climate change as a global humanitarian cause has reinvigorated an ethics known for its challenges to the problematic ontology of division between, for instance, nature and culture or the natural and the technological. In one of her contributions to climate change debates, Tuana, for example, urges us to imagine new and different forms of ethical sensibilities capable of transforming our relation to the earth. Because, as she argues, sensibilities affect our imaginaries, our symbolic understandings, and our inherited epistemes, cultivating what she later calls "Anthropocenean sensibilities" will engender "our apprehension of the inherent relationality among things, a relationality that is thoroughly corporeal."[9] It is the restructuring of a "commonsense about relatedness, one that attends to the complexities of influences and exchanges" that is immediately at stake for Tuana.[10] She argues that climate change is a phenomenon that necessarily reveals this inter-relationality through the natural and social material that generates it. Both here and elsewhere, she offers the term "viscous porosity" not only to illustrate this interconnectedness.[11] She relies on this idea of a thick and sticky permeability to insist on the essential co-emergence and co-relatedness of people, place, and historical contingencies—such as "sea level rises and industrialization, levee systems and shifts in wetlands, past colonization

practices and current poverty levels, or corporate framings and ecological degradation."[12] It is precisely this complex interrelatedness, this essential and inescapable exchange among natural objects and social phenomena that, according Tuana, demands "a new ethos for the Anthropocene."[13] She explains her use of "ethos" as follows:

> I use the term ethos to inform my account in order to return to the historical meaning of the term "ethic," namely, the ways we live together. The we's here are both human and nonhuman, but remember that the nonhuman are not just other animals or even other living things. The we's include the entities that occur in complex nature/culture relations—[that is], global economies, technologies, species, forests, shale formations, ecosystems, weather events, levees, transgenic crops, wetlands, [or] ice sheets. This is an ethos of inter-relationality. Not the disciplined study of values and principles, but an appreciation of and ability to respond to the deep interconnectivity between near and distant others, between the now and the future, between the local and the global, between lifestyles and weather, between humans and the world we are of and in. Simply put, Anthropocenean sensibilities effect an affective shift to embracing the corporeal vulnerability of things in the making and the concomitant accountability that accompanies this shift.[14]

It is not necessarily the opportunity to redefine ethics that the Anthropocene might have offered, which interests Tuana. Rather, she sees the emergence of this new geological epoch as a definitive occasion to strengthen the ontological dimension that is, paradoxically, both the condition for the possibility of a new global ethics of care and the very condition of our current anthropocenic demise: that is, the inherent inter-connectedness between humans and her own capacious category of the nonhuman. In other words, it is because the Anthropocene lays bare the intricate inter-relatedness among humans, non-human life, and geophysical processes that the sustained cultivation of its affiliated ethos encourages the "affective shift" necessary to survive both its precarious times and the multiple forms of vulnerabilities it inaugurated.

Though we are being told a number of things about the Anthropocene, it is at the level of the frequent repetition of a moral imperative to act

collectively that Colebrook identifies a thoroughly depoliticized imaginary incapable of articulating a political program or a socio-ecological project of transformation. In her recent coauthored book *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, she argues that the Anthropocene is not only "a geological declaration, but a series of diagnoses that generate imperatives."[15] Surveying the logic of rigid ethical alternatives prompted by this question, Colebrook contends that the Anthropocene conveyed us three crucial assertions: "first, we have passed a tipping point; second, this geological event is a game-changer and spells death both for social constructivism and post-humanism; and, finally, we are faced with a stark choice, either we radically transform the world or we are doomed."[16] To unpack the universalizing gestures central to each of these claims, Colebrook then interrogates this authoritative "we," which demands salvation. She writes:

> And who is the "we" that is being saved? It is the "we" that is constituted precisely by way of a death sentence: I mourn my future non-being and therefore I am. Further, I mourn my future non-being and therefore I must do all I can to survive. There is no longer time for post-humanism, anti-humanism, and—most of all—no time at all for questioning the prima facie value and existence of the human. The Anthropocene requires that we think of humans as a species, and (even though that unifying thought has been generated by evidence of destruction), once the species comes into being as a geological force its survival is constituted as an imperative.[17]

The unifying thought of the Anthropocene not only posits the inescapable category of the human, qua species. As Françoise Vergès points out in a recent anthology celebrating the work of the late Black radical theorist, Cedric Robinson, the presentism of Anthropocene discourses represent the threat on life, human life, as an "undifferentiated whole."[18] By jamming the possibility of questioning the ethical parameters of this compulsory category, it also establishes grievability—or the capacity (and the necessity) of mourning one's own life—as the constitutive imperative that both forms the category of the human and ensures its survival. To be human on this account, therefore, is to be grievable both in the present and the possible future. It is to be able to anticipate my possible death and, simultaneously, recognize my potential destruction as

a grievable loss. For Colebrook, however, it is precisely in this respect that the Anthropocene should not be regarded as a contingent concept suddenly appearing to remind us of our possible extinction and thus of the responsibility to nurture the earth required to avoid such destruction. Rather, as she argues, the Anthropocene is possible today because "its potentiality haunted the very constitution of the human as a political animal."[19] To be political, on her account, is precisely to be "*in-relation*."[20] It is this relationality, she continues, this "connectedness, attunement, mindfulness, and humanity as intertwined ecology" that pervades Anthropocenean consciousness— especially its pop-cultural renditions.[21] This insistence on the political nature of "man" is precisely what allows us to imagine the possibility of an eco-friendly humanity to come. As she neatly explains: "Both in social theory and in post-apocalyptic culture, capitalist 'man'—the isolated individual of self- interest, consumption and myopia—is displaced by the new humanity brought into being by the Anthropocene: humanity is (finally) revealed as an aspect of the earth as a living inter-connected system."[22] The redemptive nature of the Anthropocenean event, therefore, is the opportunity to finally dispose of the solipsistic Cartesian individual for a future eco-oriented humanity acutely aware of its "geo" co-constitution with other forms of earthly entities.

The power and popularity of the term "Anthropocene," indeed, testifies to its ability to evoke in one single authoritative word a generalized planetary anxiety opened up by realities about climate change and the possibility of the end of nature, the destruction of the world as we know it. What remains perplexing to me, however, is that—even in the age of the Anthropocene—it is still possible to talk of an earth crisis, of the danger the whole planet faces, and avoid the racial implications of this crisis. This is an argument that has been made in the context of the ecological treatment of Africa, for example. But it is also one that remains only dimly implicit in Anthropocene narratives. Even when critics acknowledge that intra-species inequalities are central to our current ecological crisis, that uneven extraction and distribution of resources in the service of capitalism are the conditions for ecological damages caused by modern fossil-fuel technology for example,[23] Anthropocene thinking has generally been unable to yield a sustained critique of the racist origins of global warming capable, in turn, of exposing the limits of its desire to rethink—to "revamp" perhaps—the concept of the "human."

One could argue that the devastating effects of the Anthropocene on the poor and the vulnerable are implicitly recognized by its periodization, since the term was first proposed to indicate the dominant impact of human activity on our contemporary global environment beginning with the Industrial Revolution. The problem, however, is not so much that the Anthropocene is "another example of western linguistic imperialism"—to use Colebrook and Jami Weinstein's language.[24] Rather, it is the ways in which its discursive proliferation has helped to conceal systems of racial oppression—even when the term is deployed in post-humanist philosophical circles. In other words, it is not merely Anthropocenean discourse's reliance on "anthropos" but the ways in which both its brand of realism and its premature fantasies about post-apocalyptic futures have worked to obscure a deeply fragmented ethos unequipped to account for the suffering of racialized bodies.

Even in the critical efforts of the most celebrated contemporary theorists on the subject matter like, for example, Rosi Braidotti or Timothy Morton, a systematic analysis of environmental violence unleashed along racial lines is drastically dimmed. Rather, one finds that the apocalyptic catastrophe anticipated by the Anthropocene is, strangely, both considered comforting and ethically welcomed. Take, for instance, Morton's famous interventions. In his book *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, in which he takes up the object-oriented ontology that responds broadly to Quentin Meillassoux's call to abandon the correlationism of phenomenology, Morton argues that "true planetary awareness" or a profound eco-political act would be to reject—in fact, to end—the world. For Morton, the world as a foundation for ethics, is not only a weak concept altogether. The world and its multiple cognates—i.e. Nature, the environment, etc.—are mainly over-determined, over-objectified, containers no longer capable of giving an accurate account of what they comprise. For Morton, the world as we know it is over and what we are left with are "hyperobjects" that exceed anything like a world. Climate change is, he argues, the hyperobject par excellence. This inherent disjunction between our concept of the world and the "hyperobjects" that exceeds it must then compel us to renew ecological criticism and move beyond its stale debates around sustainability. Only an ethics fundamentally directed toward the unknowable future—the future that Jacques Derrida names *l'a-venir*—is capable of facilitating new ethical relations. As Morton puts it:

> In the present moment, we must develop an ethics that addresses what Derrida calls *l'arrivant*, the absolutely unexpected and unexpectable arrival, or what I call the strange stranger, the stranger whose strangeness is forever strange [. . .]. What we need is an ethics, based on the proximity of the strange.[25]

This ethics is one predicated on the end of the world because, as he insists, "without a world, there are simply a number of unique beings (farmers, dogs, irises, pencils, LEDs, and so on) to whom I owe an obligation through the simple fact that existence is *co-existence*."[26]

In *The Posthuman*, Braidotti is concerned with finding ways to bridge the gap between empirically grounded research and critical theory. Without abandoning the promises of the posthuman, she sets out to "approach posthuman theory as both a genealogical and a navigational tool."[27] More specifically, her wish is to map out the ways in which the posthuman, as a generative theoretical tool, has helped re-think the category of the human in the "bio-genetic" age known as the Anthropocene. For Braidotti, a genealogical approach to the posthuman can also assist us in re-thinking current human interaction with non-human agents on a planetary scale. While the crisis of humanism, she argues, empowered sexualized and racialized others, the crisis of *anthropos* called into play naturalized beings and has forced us to re-evaluate our relation to "the productive and immanent force of *zoe*, or life in its non-human aspects."[28]

What makes the Anthropocene an important occasion to reconfigure our planetary alliances, for Braidotti, is precisely its successful displacement of anthropocentrism. She argues that the anthropocenean phenomenon known as "geo-morphism" need not be perceived as a negative term signaling our eco-environmental demise.[29] Rather, it reminds us that the earth, or the planetary dimension of our environment, is our common ground—the milieu for us all, humans and non-humans. In other words, we are all part of this thing we used to call nature. The task of critical theory, therefore, is to reconfigure the boundaries of subjectivity so as to include "the human, our genetic neighbors the animals, and the earth as a whole [. . .] within an understandable language."[30] This is to say that our responsibility, as critical theorists, is to reinvent subjectivity within the parameters of intelligibility. Beyond the post-anthropocentric

tendencies of decolonial philosophy, feminist and postcolonial analysis, social-constructivist and Marxist approaches to subjectivity, Braidotti offers what she then calls "a materialist politics of posthuman differences."[31] Committed to the actualization of potential becomings, here is how Braidotti describes how concrete projects of contestation and transformation are carried through. She writes:

> They [the potential becomings] are enacted through collectively shared, community-based *praxis* and are crucial to support the process of vitalist, non-unitarian and yet accountable recomposition of a missing people. This is the 'we' that is evoked and actualized by the postanthropocentric creation of a new pan-humanity. It expresses the affirmative, ethical dimension of becoming-posthuman as a gesture of collective self-styling. It actualizes a community that is not bound negatively by shared vulnerability, the guilt of ancestral communal violence, or the melancholia of unpayable ontological debts, but rather by the compassionate acknowledgement of their interdependence with multiple others most of which, in the age of the anthropocene, are quite simply not anthropomorphic.[32]

For Braidotti, it is a matter of systematically *experimenting* with what the "we" might be able to become. It is, first and foremost, an affirmative approach to the project of redefining subjectivity. Beyond contemporary politics' nostalgia and the melancholia of the progressive Left, this critical post-anthropocentrism emphasizes life/*zoe* itself as a robust medium toward a more lucid affirmative politics. Braidotti is perhaps the clearest she can be on this when she writes:

> For one thing, it [critical post-anthropocentrism] produces a more adequate cartography of our real-life conditions because it focuses with greater accuracy on the complexities of contemporary technologically mediated bodies and on social practices of human embodiment. Furthermore, this type of vital materialism, unconstrained by clear-cut distinctions between species composes the notion of *zoe* as a non-human yet generative life-force. [. . .] A nomadic *zoe*-centered approach connects human to non-human life as to develop a comprehensive eco-philosophy of becoming.[33]

Here is where it gets interesting! In the chapter immediately following the one from which I have just quoted, Braidotti raises the ante on a vitalist posthuman politics as to expand its matters of concern and action beyond the realm of the living into that of the dying. Because, in the time of the Anthropocene (as opposed to the nuclear era), the boundaries between life and death are so deeply blurred, and because death in these times is no longer strictly a human prerogative since the threat of climate change extends the possibility of death to nature and most species, she insist that death and destruction should be "the common denominator" for a "pan-human" and inter-species alliance.[34] In other words, extinction should not only be the impetus to reconfigure human subjectivity. It should also be the ground for creating a shared multi-species planetary community. I unfortunately cannot expound on her posthuman theory of death, in the space I am allowed here. Suffice to say, however, that Braidotti is a vitalist through and through—a critical one perhaps. Unlike the philosophical tradition that "sacralizes death as the defining feature of human consciousness,"[35] death is not a teleological destination. Rather, as she puts it, death is "the inhuman within us, which frees us into life."[36] Being aware of our finitude nurtures our ontological drive to live and, if this desire is sustained long enough, life "becomes a habit."[37]

In recent feminist intervention on the question of the Anthropocene, Lynne Huffer is perhaps one among a restricted number of thinkers who remain suspicious about this vitalist turn in critical theorizing. In a recent anthology dedicated to feminist approaches to the Anthropocene, Huffer questions the ethics that drives critical theory's investment (particularly feminist theory) in the concept of life. Taking Michel Foucault's biopower as a starting point—particularly the contingent nature of life's appearance onto the modern stage of historico-scientific calculations—Huffer asks whether "the vital matter of life itself" is a given. She argues that "life itself is a problem of our time and, specifically, of our anthropogenic age."[38] Suspicious of the celebration of life in contemporary feminist philosophies, she wonders what exactly gets lost when we systematically disregard the "contingent epistemic frames" which not only naturalize claims about nature and life but which, in addition, obscure the ways "the invention of life and the invention of the human go hand in hand."[39] Against this transhistorical conception of life, and in her own attempt at showing the fragmented, incomplete, and shifting epistemic grounds of our conception of life, Huffer opts to follow Foucault's archival approach. As she follows

Foucault, however, she understands her project to be an ethical one—one that asks more precisely: "How do we approach the question of ethics in the Anthropocene?"[40]

Blackness in the Age of the Anthropocene

In 1991, then the chief economist to the World Bank, Lawrence Summers writes in a secret memo (which eventually leaked):

> Just between you and me, shouldn't the World Bank be encouraging more migration of the dirty industries to the LDCs [least developed countries]? [. . .] I think the economic logic behind dumping a load of toxic waste in the lowest wage country is impeccable and we should face up to that. I've always thought that underpopulated countries in Africa are vastly underpolluted; their air quality is vastly inefficiently low compared to Los Angeles or Mexico City.[41]

In all their shocking glory, Summers's remarks epitomize a pervading instrumentalization of black existence, which challenges much of the totalizing gestures of Anthropocene narratives. It is the logic intrinsic to these gestures that I have attempted to lay out thus far. Braidotti, Morton, Tuana, and even Colebrook in her incisive interventions, are unable to relinquish or effectively resist the homogenizing consequences of the discourse.[42] Their respective ethical and critical prescriptions sidestep an engaged account of social antagonisms, and more specifically those enacted along racial lines. Instead, these are smoothed over and displaced in the name of an ethics of futurity grounded on a deeply naturalized variation of relationality—namely that all beings, insofar as they are earthly at least, are fundamentally interconnected and can (or must) only be perceived as such. This affirmation, as well as Braidotti's own brand of vitalism, is not only symptomatic of a more entrenched form of historical amnesia concerning questions of culpability (i.e., how did we end up here and who is responsible). More perniciously, they appear to be yet another instantiation of Saidiya Hartman's provocative claim that "the white bourgeois family can actually live with murder in order to reconstitute its domesticity."[43] In its most blatant form, Summers's secret memo is precisely this! There is nothing sacrificial in his proposition; it is not about preserving the air quality

that matters—so to speak—at the expense of Africans. Rather, Africa—and therefore blackness—remains the disposable trash container of the world par excellence; a case of instrumentalization in its most primitive execution. Under these conditions, one is thus pressed to inquire how can a global ethics of care[44] be possible when fundamental questions of racial culpability are eluded in the name of a shortsighted conception of "becoming" and an aggrandized notion of ontological relationality—both of which remain unwilling to sustain engagements with their violent racial foundations. Indeed, in her critical essay evocatively titled "The Mattering of Black Lives: Octavia Butler's Hyperempathy and the Promise of the New Materialism," Diana Leong asserts that the "reduction and disavowal of race [. . .] is something of a structural necessity for the new materialisms."[45] In ways that significantly resonate with my own argument in this article, she contends that, in addition to being a discursive necessity, circumventing the race question in this discourse "enables an ethics of relation or affect that further legitimizes the reduction and dismissal of race."[46] In other words, as I have also maintained, the ontological realism that naturalizes this "hyper-ethics" of relationality can only be maintained by the concealment of systems of racial oppression.

Recall that the ethical dimension of Braidotti's becoming-posthumanist strives for the actualization of a community-to-come unrestrained by "the guilt of ancestral communal violence, or the melancholia of *unpayable ontological debts*."[47] This suggests that posthumanist reconfigurations of subjectivity and its creative invention of a "future people" as solutions to our ecological demise, hinge on the forgetting of the atrocious making of "another people" by slavery and the responsibility such violent history bestows on the Western world. What remains at stake here, however, is not so much the general (and generic) recognition of the differential effects of our environmental crisis on vulnerable populations. The literature exists, and the work continues to be done.[48] Rather, we must return to the structural conditions that facilitates and renders possible the "symptomatic desire to abandon race."[49]

If indeed, as Leong forcefully argues, "Blackness [. . .] is the specter that haunts the Anthropocene and its possible futures," it is imperative that we incisively revisit the conditions that make "blackened" life and death unregisterable and therefore un-grievable. And if indeed grievability and the imperative to survive constitute, as Colebrook suggests, the "we" of the Anthropocene, it behooves us to attend to those ungrievable lives for which

even survival requires facing death. That is to say, those lives for which existence requires suicidal decisions such as deadly expeditions across the Mediterranean Sea, the Mexico-United States border, and the many "border-fortresses" of the EU. How can we possibly ascertain to possess an "adequate cartography of our real-life conditions," when we continue to sidestep considering the precarity of "social practices of human embodiment," which necessitate one to gamble with one's own death in order to envisage the possibility of a future?[50]

Insofar as Tuana's viscous porosity, Morton's hyperobject, and Braidotti's vitalist posthuman politics are mostly interested in giving an account of the ontological foundation of species entanglements, they cannot account for the violent foundational structures that make Summers's indifference I mention above possible. In my opinion, this is the discursive gift that philosophical interventions in the study of anti-black racism have offered us in the past couple of decades, namely (and I quote Jared Sexton here): "A meditation on a poetics and politics of abjection wherein racial blackness operates as an asymptomtic approximation of that which disturbs every claim or formation of identity and difference as such.[51] Unlike Braidotti, whose main concern is to reconfigure the boundaries of subjectivity so as to recompose, with a materialist politics of posthuman difference, a "missing people," critical black philosophies interrogate the very foundation of becoming—of this "we" to come. In addition to its demystifying agenda, which unremittingly unsettles the self-aggrandizing gestures of Western theory, critical black philosophies consider black suffering to be a crucial site of interrogation. They question what it means to inhabit a structural position whereby by the black philosopher is always already forced to align herself with exclusionary terms in order to register anti-black violence as violence. They investigate, for instance, what using the general lexicon and terms of philosophy "insubordinately" entail for the black philosopher. What matters for this critical tradition is to assess the conditions of a world when blackness is, at last, understood to be a decisive organizing principle.

In his poignant essay "Onticide: Afro-Pessimism, ~~Gay~~ Nigger #1, and Surplus Violence," Calvin Warren challenges us to think of those who fall "outside the cultural space of ethics, relationality, and the sacred."[52] In fact, he provides us with robust grounds to remain suspicious of the hasty impulses of an affirmative politics of life and relationality profoundly unequipped to recognize the mundane and persistent ways in which death

and perhaps even extinction always already constitute existence for the "fungible" object/being. In this text, Warren returns to the brutal killing of Steen Keith Fenrich by his white stepfather. It is not the gruesome details surrounding Fenrich's death that are at stake here; in the same ways the morbidly grandiose performances of anti-black violence across the globe do not necessarily hold explanatory power in and of themselves. Rather, Warren uses this story to show how the violent spectacularity of Fenrich's death—its operation, protocols and structure - "indicate a certain ontological violation that preconditions physical injury."[53] This violence that shocks both in the simultaneity of its excessive gratuitousness and indiscriminate indifference, a violence that "exceeds the logics of utility," to use Warren's language, is indispensable for the constitution of the human self and necessary to maintain the coherence of its solipsistic contours and concomitant socio-political institutions.[54]

If the grand edifice of humanism excludes the black and is sustained by this structural exclusion, one could argue that new materialists' bids to move beyond the human such as I discuss in the previous section of this article may represent an exit route away from the ontological violence Warren describes. Once again, interventions in critical black studies invite careful examination. In her concise and yet deeply evocative essay, "Outer World: The Persistence of Race in the Movement 'Beyond the Human,'" Zakiyyah Iman Jackson reveals the ways in which posthumanist appeals to discard of the "human" remain unable to account for the disruption blackness bestows on the very conceptual displacement this discourse invites. More precisely, she argues that posthumanist, object-oriented, and new materialist philosophical positions bypass the necessity to confront the role of race in the "Western metaphysical matrix"—the crucial fact that race in its unfolding historical reiterations determines and sustains "Man's historical horizon of possibility."[55] By circumventing a comprehensive investigation of the role of race in the making of "Man," Jackson contends, we fail to recognize the sustained manners in which race continues to bear directly on our epistemic realities. In its most provocative dimensions, however, Jackson's argument shows that posthuman calls to move beyond the human necessarily entail a "movement toward blackness, whether blackness is embraced or not."[56] As an organizing principle of racial regimes, particularly sedimented by the knowledge authorities of racial slavery such as Jefferson, Hegel, or Kant, one must remember that racial blackness came to represent the paradigmatic figure of the nonhuman. Posthumanist

discursive circumventions on matters of race therefore expose, as Jackson eloquently points out, "(racial/ized) metaphysics' return, its *longue durée* and spectropoetics, such that race, particularly blackness, is precisely tasked with arbitrating fundamental questions of orientation"—even if the functions of its arbitrations are constitutively disavowed.[57] Far from its coveted attempts at rejecting the concept of the human with hopes of inaugurating a quasi-Deleuzian earthly plane of immanence whereby the hierarchizing impulses of transcendental philosophies would finally be jettisoned, Posthumanism's silence on matters of anti-black racism betrays the very fact that blackness continues to determine the directions of onto-epistemic decisions, orientations, and petitions even when its operations are discursively ignored. More than merely recognizing this silence, Jackson suggests that attending to one's location and positionality within the larger context of Western metaphysics requires of one to acknowledge the multivariate field of perspectives that includes alternative expression of the "human" such as those articulated by the beings who precisely remain radically excluded from the human world. Hence, "movements beyond the human" must redirect their critical attention away from Eurocentric terms of assessment. They must attend to blackness' occult repetitions, as they elude and annul formal schedules of iteration, which have and continue to be uttered and performed by humanism's racial pariahs. We therefore must face the unsettling existence of a captured being expelled from the normative perimeters of ethics who nevertheless resists complete annihilation through the iterative character of language.

I turned to the work of Warren and Jackson in an attempt to begin showing how, as saturated references in Anthropocene discourses, the "posthuman," the concept of life, and "relationality" are unequipped to account for the ongoing and brutal victimization of black people. To begin with, the juxtaposition of Warren's and Jackson's works, forces us not only to return to the inner workings of disposability, surplus existence, and being-without-value. Perhaps more urgently, it demands from us to consider the ways in which blackness ruptures the "spaces of ethics" and throws its most revered concepts—like relationality—into crisis. In this regard, therefore, allow me to place the following propositions on the table—both of which are fundamentally an invitation to consider the crucial role of anti-black victimization in our theorizing or in our imagining other futures. Concerning what I named in my introduction a "hyper ethics of relationality," I wonder here what would an ethics based on the

radically non-relational look like?[58] Insofar as the constant recognition of our existential interdependency cannot substantially challenge the many forms of segregations on the steady rise in our current times, it seems to me that assuming the inevitability of our ontological entanglement may need some re-thinking. In light of what I perceive to be relationality's inability to maintain its ethical currency when faced with the extended rupture blackness sustains on ethics, Fred Moton's understanding of relationality is pertinent here. In his famous essay "Blackness and Nothingness," Moten understands relationality to be "an expression of power, structured by the giveness of a transcendental subjectivity that the black cannot have but by which the black can be had."[59] It is, indeed, "a structural position that he or she cannot take but by which he or she can be taken."[60] In other words, relationality is inherently not only a position that the black cannot afford or even claim. The structure of relationality is essentially the condition for the possibility of their enslavement. I wonder, therefore, whether our naïve reliance on a type of inherent co-dependence has recently done more harm than good—that is to say, has instead worked to obstruct the very possibility of a positive transformation of our ethical sensibilities.

In her much celebrated book *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Christina Sharpe asks, "What happens when instead of becoming enraged and shocked every time a Black person is killed in the United States, we recognize Black death (and slow death) as predictable and a constitutive aspect of democracy?"[61] Or, she continues, "what will happen [. . .] if instead of demanding justice we recognize (or at least consider) that the very notion of justice [. . .] produces and requires Black exclusion and death as normative?"[62] For Sharpe, the unrelenting sanctioned and extra-legal murders of black people are necessary for democracy. To the extent to which she finds the legal language of American democracy unequipped to articulate the utter disruptive force of blackness, the fact that Black death is not an aberration but our very legal grounds, Sharpe argues that living and resisting must perhaps begin in relation to "this requirement for death." In this regard, she asks again: "What happens when we proceed as if we know this *antiblackness* to be the ground on which we stand, the ground from which we are to attempt to speak, for instance, an "I" or a "we" who know, an "I" or a "we" who care?"[63] Far from a facetious obsession with death and dying—with Black death—Sharpe is insisting on taking up the challenges that the absolute instrumentalization of Black life bestows upon our critical imaginations. It seems to me that for her the stakes are not the "realizability" of

a political project. Rather, I believe, the task is to relentlessly press on the limits of an aporia without necessarily being fully able to draw its contours, to delimit its precise scope while refusing nonetheless to desert the task of finding—to use Sexton's evocative prose—"that edge beyond or before which true living unfolds."[64]

Sharpe is radically lucid on the complex conditions surrounding Black intellectuals' ability to produce legible work. She posits the necessity of recognizing the conditions of opacity from which the impossible work of thinking about, and writing for, black lives begins. She admits that, for Black academics, the possibility of legibility begins precisely with self-betrayal. She writes, for instance:

> . . . for Black academics to produce legible work in the academy often means adhering to research methods that are 'drafted into the service of a larger destructive force, thereby doing violence to our own capacities to read, think, and imagine otherwise. Despite knowing otherwise, we are often disciplined into thinking through and along the lines that reinscribe our own annihilation, reinforcing and reproducing what Sylvia Wynter [. . .] has called our "narratively condemned status.[65]

This is why, as it is for black philosophers like Moten, Hartman, Jackson, Sexton, Warren, and many others, to be black and critical is necessarily to engage in disorderly conduct, to become "undisciplined" as Sharpe herself puts it, whereby thinking is not only about being skeptical of traditional discourses' givens, but it is also about the audacity to forego subjective sovereign claims about our capacity to apprehend blackness. What she calls "wake work," I believe, is precisely the kind of discursive heavy-lifting required to shift our efforts from "seeking a resolution to blackness' ongoing and irresolvable abjection,"[66] and attend to the "largeness that is Black life insisted from death."[67] "Wake work," therefore, is both inhabiting and rupturing this onto-epistemic condition. Hence, in spite of my own desire to provide a definitive prescription to the problem of ethics in the Anthropocene, I am compelled to remain reluctant to leave prematurely the ongoing critical project of unravelling the scenes of violence that characterize the underbelly of normative projects. Rather than definitively answering the question I posed above—namely, what would an ethics based on the radically non-relational look like?—we must perhaps investigate how to

approach the Anthropocene from a non-relational perspective. These are indeed two different commitments. The former demands from us to engage in the prescriptive endeavors of finding "a solution," which in the end risk to leave the fungible subject/object on the wayside. For, one must remain vigilant of what gets lost when the urgencies of anxious petitions to obtain "a solution" aggressively compete with the difficult work of finding the conditions that render stable the repetitions and the duration of anti-blackness, or the legacies of slavery and colonialism. Under the ongoing conditions of surplus violence, in which mundane activities (like playing in a park) or one's attempt to secure a safer life (asylum seekers) can easily result in one's death, we must opt to be suspicious of a discursive ethical establishment that appears unable to register these deaths. In these conditions, therefore, we are left with what I would like to call here the potential of "speculative experimentations" whereby one can experiment with ethically counterintuitive terms like the "non-relational" in the attempt to renew the central tenets of our critical endeavors. Indeed, if Moten is right to assert that relationality signals a term of captivity and enslavement for the black, and if Sharpe is justified to argue that relationality (and affect) permits the "monstrous intimacies" of antiblackness that transform the horror of these encounters into concepts such as historicity and kinship, it seems to me that we are pressed to question our irreverent commitments to such ethical language.[68]

Insofar as black critical thought and its radical philosophical traditions have provided critical tools to excavate the changing meaning of racial concepts and discursive events, to wrestle with the forces at work behind new and old forms of anti-black racism, to decipher the transformation of racial institutions overtime, they have consistently revealed the structural problem that blackness poses. They have demonstrated that it is no longer sufficient to abide to liberal romantic dictums according to which any configuration of a "we"—"we" the people, "we" the posthuman, "we the hyper-objects," "we" earthy beings—can secure the good life so long as we can escape the constraints of the state, of racial capitalism, and now of our ecological demise. Rather, what we are witnessing are the emergence of Black counter-narratives and discursive insurgencies that have thrust established agendas into deep crisis by critically probing the limits of their normative appeals, by pressing against the waves of their legal and ethical pronouncement which, in the end, still dictate our epistemological allegiances and decisions. They ask what writing about and for black lives entail? What

would be refusing to recirculate a violence by discursive means force us to reconsider in our philosophical lexicons? How would dealing with a more perverse kind of historical repetition—dealing with the afterlives of slavery and colonialism—help us unmask the violence and the terror that arrive armed with the language of critique, care and empathy? What would it mean, therefore, to dispose of the pitfalls of sentimentality (however, "post-human" they claim to be)? How should we reckon with the ways we have felt compelled—implicitly or otherwise—to respond punctually to the seductive promises of critical discursive institutions? How should we re-assess where and how we look for our intellectual models? And, what language should we choose (strategically or otherwise) to hold onto?

These observations, I believe, are also germane to what I have called the "hyper-valuation" of the concept of "life." The disturbing biopolitical function of "life" notwithstanding—here I am, of course, referring to what Foucault and Huffer tell us about the ways in which the concept itself sanctions various forms of necropower—I am also unsure of the value of the concept in itself in the age of the Anthropocene. More specifically, it is the vital role of the concept of life in the current renewals of apocalyptic frenzies that I find particularly unsettling. The *prima facie* value of the concept of life seems untenable in the face of stark evidence to the fact that the life worth saving—the "grievable life"—is determined by the color of its skin. Unless Anthropocenean ethics and its apocalyptic imaginaries are willing to wrestle with the challenge that disposable blackness entails, it is unclear to me as to why this emerging ethics should continue to rely so firmly on the concept of life. More insidiously, however, if (hypothetically) the survival of this "we" were to be secured, I am unconvinced that tragic scenes, and their abject images, like that of Michael Brown's body rotting under the sun would be a thing of the past. If the Black philosophers are right, if indeed blackness is inherently a necropolitical imitation of life that continues to thrust our ethical impulses and inclinations into critical crisis, the silence on matters of race that permeates our current discursive choices in thinking the Anthropocene are dangerously at risk of working only to reproduce anti-Black sentiments.

In light of the disorderly, disruptive, de-formative, and ungovernable character of blackness, we must be forced to revisit our basic critical modalities. We must find ways to stretch our thinking to the limits of their logic, complicate our questions, and investigate the ways in which many of our philosophical commitments to anti-oppression can betray

their own potential radicality in thought and action. For it is possible, as Sexton argues, that "the very procedure that complicates thinking, that makes things difficult and uncomfortable, that ruins the initial plan, that throws things of balance, we might even say that which blackens things, is also that which enables the potential for genuine care [. . .]."[69] Perhaps, Sexton's call to complicate our thinking invites us to engage in the kind of speculative experimenting I have signaled above. In this regard, thinking ethics and care "nonrelationally" would constitute re-centering their constitutive outside—that is, the racial outcasts whose illegible plights continue nonetheless to determine the boundaries of ethics even when their constitutive operations are unrecognizable. "Nonrelationality," therefore, becomes a modality of disruption intended to jam discursive syntax, ethical arrangements, and a discourse's desire to secure its coherence by discarding the earth's vulnerable inhabitants. One can also read the exhortation "Black Lives Matter" as a political instantiation of such experimenting. It is indeed in the midst of death and dying that the urgent question of black lives mattering fiercely emerges. My claim here is that one can only make sense of the pervasive counter-uproar of "All Lives Matter" by recognizing that the juxtaposition of blackness and life continues to be ferociously contested as oxymoronic. To think the Anthropocene from a non-relational perspective, therefore, is to invite and encourage the oxymoronic, to begin from the excluded elsewhere, and to dare forbidden juxtapositions. It would mean, ultimately, allowing the afterlives of slavery and colonialism on the rise to inform us on how to face the Anthropocene.

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NOTES

1. Tom Cohen, Claire Colebrook, and J. Hills Miller, *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2016), 91.
2. Ibid., p. 94.
3. Erik Swyngedouw, "Apocalypse Forever? Post-political Populism and the Spectre of Climate Change," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 27, nos. 2–3 (2010): 213–32, 217.
4. Ibid.

5. Srinivas Aramavudan, "The Catachronism of Climate Change," *Diacritics* 41, no. 3 (2013): 6–30, 20.
6. Swyngedow, "Apocalypse Forever?," 222.
7. Nancy Tuana, "Being Affected by Climate Change: The Anthropocene and the Body of Ethics" (DRAFT), in *Ethics and the Anthropocene*, ed. Kenneth Shockley and Andrew Light (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, forthcoming), 2.
8. Cohen et al., *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, 82. The vast racial disparities in the use of lethal force by US police is continuously apparent in national statistics; for a complex discussion of racial difference in police shooting see Roland G. Fryer Jr.'s "Reconciling Results on Racial Differences in Police Shootings" (https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/fryer/files/fryer_police_aer.pdf). Although there still is no standard definition of what makes a "climate refugee," both the violence and economic hardships that lead most Sub-Saharan Africans to undertake suicidal voyages across the Mediterranean Sea are inextricably linked to deteriorating global environmental conditions. Repressive uses of police force and judicial proceedings like immigration detentions and criminal trials of migrants (including young children) have become standard practice both in Europe and the United States. Days after the racially motivated shooting of six African migrants in Macerata, for instance, Silvia Berlusconi's party (Forza Italia) entered a coalition with the far-right Northern League and the Brothers of Italy, promising the deportation of 600,000 migrants if their coalition came to power. In this regard, Berlusconi stated: "These 600,000 people, we will pick them up using police, law enforcement and the military . . . everyone can help identify them by pointing them out" (https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/italy-elections-migrants-living-conditions-immigration-silvio-berlusconi-refugees-treatment-a8201121.html). In the following section, I discuss Lawrence Summers (former chief economist to the World Bank)'s notorious call to dump toxic waste in least developed countries in the attempt to show the perverse logic behind the outsourcing of toxic littering. The tragic conditions behind extractions of raw material in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1994 suggest that the militarization of these practices have considerably prolonged the interminable civil unrest in the region, see for example the International Crisis Group's report on mineral extraction the DRC https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/democratic-republic-congo/behind-problem-conflict-minerals-dr-congo-governance. For a discussion of the negative effects of neocolonial tourism see Tammy Ronique Williams's "Tourism as a Neocolonial Phenomenon: Examining the Works of Patullo and Mullings" in *Caribbean Quilt* (2012) or Stephanie Black's timeless documentary film *Life and Debt* (2001).
9. Nancy Tuana, "From a Lifeboat Ethics to Anthropocean Sensibilities," in *Environmental Philosophy* (forthcoming).
10. Ibid., 14.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., 15. See also "Viscous Porosity: Witnessing Katrina" in *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacy Alaimo, Susan Hekman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Cohen et al., *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, 82.
16. Ibid., 81–82.
17. Ibid., 82.
18. Vergès's chapter in *Future of Black Radicalism* (New York: Verso, 2017) is also available here: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3376-racial-capitalocene.
19. Cohen et al., *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, 82.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 83.
23. See for instance Raj Patel and Jason Moore's *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature and the Future of the Planet* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017); and Jason Moore's *Capitalism in the Web of Justice: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (New York: Verso, 2015).
24. Claire Colebrook and Jamie Weinstein, " Anthropocene Feminisms: Rethinking the Unthinkable," *philoSOPHIA* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2015): 167–78, 170.
25. Timothy Morton, *Hyperobjects: Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 125 .
26. Ibid.
27. Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013), 5.
28. Ibid., 66.
29. Ibid., 81.
30. Ibid., 82.
31. Ibid., 100.
32. Ibid., 100–101.
33. Ibid., 104.
34. Ibid., 111.
35. Ibid., 132.
36. Ibid., 134.
37. Ibid.
38. Lynne Huffer, "Foucault's Fossils," in *Anthropocene Feminism*, ed. Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), 66
39. Ibid., 77
40. Ibid., 67
41. http://www.whirledbank.org/ourwords/summers.html.
42. However, one sees recently with Colebrook the beginning of a problematization of Anthropocene discourses' indifference to difference. In fact, she argues in the anthology *Anthropocene Feminism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016) that what has now come to be known as the Anthropocene is deeply characterized with a "logic of mastering and erasing difference" which, in turn, masks the injustices of history by making the threat of extinction a compulsory and yet totalizing fate for all earthly beings. See especially 8–9.

43. Saidiya Hartman and Frank B. Wilderson III, "The Position of the Unthought," *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2 (Spring–Summer 2003): 183–201, 191.
44. Without abiding to rights and/or duty based traditional ethics , here I join long-standing critiques of care ethics who have called into question its naturalization of care and benevolence. More specifically, I remain theoretically suspicious of the paradigms of maternal and dependency relations central to the philosophies of care ethicists like Virginia Held or Eva Kittay primarily because of the robust ontological character of the concept of "dependency" operative in their moral philosophy. In line with my argument in this article, I wonder whether the affirmation that dependency is a necessary ontological human condition can be sustained in the face of long global histories of racial apathy and fragmentations.
45. Diana Leong, "The Mattering of Black Lives: Octavia Butler's Hyperempathy and the Promise of the New Materialisms," *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience* 2, no. 2 (2016): 6.
46. Ibid.
47. Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, 101 (my emphasis).
48. Noteworthy scholarship on vulnerable populations, including racialized and colonized people, from an Anthropocene perspective includes: Kyle Whyte's prolific essays extending across almost a decade, see for instance "Indigenous Science (fiction) for the Anthropocene: Ancestral Dystopias and Fantasies of Climate Change Crises in *Environmental and Planning E: Nature and Space* 1, nos. 1–2 (2018): 224–42; or "The Roles for Indigenous Peoples in Anthropocene Dialogues: Some Critical Notes and a Question," which can be found at https://inhabitingtheanthropocene.com/2017/01/25/the-roles-for-indigenous-peoples-in-anthropocene-dialogues-some-critical-notes-and-a-question/ ; Rob Nixon's *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013); T. J. Demos's *Against the Anthropocene: Visual Culture and Environment Today* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2017); and *Decolonizing Nature: Contemporary Art and the Politics of* Ecology (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2016); feminist philosopher Chris Cuomo, who continues to resist the adoption of the term "Anthropocene" because of its negative effects on vulnerable populations, for instance see her article in *Earth* magazine (October 2017) entitled "Anthropocene: Foregone or Premature Conclusion? Examining the Ethical Implications of Naming a New Epoch."
49. Leong, "The Mattering of Black Lives," 12–13.
50. Here I use Braidotti's affirmative language, which I cite previously, in order to expose its limitations when considered alongside the fate of precarious lives. See *The Posthuman*, 104..
51. Jared Sexton, "Afro-Pessimism: The Unclear Word," *Rhizome* 29 (2016), http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/sexton.html.
52. Calvin Warren, "Onticide: Gay Nigger #1, and Surplus Violence," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian Queer Studies* 23, no. 3 (2017): 391.
53. Ibid., 393.

54. For a sustained philosophical treatment of the metaphysical foundations of anti-black violence see also Warren's incisive arguments in *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).
55. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Outer Worlds: The Persistence of Race in Movement 'Beyond the Human,'" in *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, nos. 2–3 (June 2015): 216.
56. Ibid., 217.
57. Ibid.
58. In their famous essay "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor," E. Tuck and K. W. Yang argue that the possibility for solidarity across projects of contestation lie in "what is incommensurable rather than what is common across [. . .] efforts." Their "ethic of incommensurability" not only aims at uncovering "the imbrication of setter colonialism" with various movement of anti-colonial resistance. An ethic of incommensurability on their account recognizes what is distinct in these projects while it underscores "opportunities for what can only ever be strategic and contingent collaborations, and [. . .] indicate[s] the reasons that lasting solidarities may be elusive, even undesirable." See "Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor" in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1, no. 1(2012): 28.
59. Fred Moton, "Blackness and Nothingness (Mysticism in the Flesh)," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 738–80, 749.
60. Ibid.
61. Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 7.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Jared Sexton, "Afro-pessimism: The Unclear Word," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge* 29 (2016), http://www.rhizomes.net/issue29/sexton.html.
65. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 13.
66. Ibid., 14.
67. Ibid., 17.
68. See Sharpe, *Monstrous Intimacies: Making Post-Slavery Subjects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
69. Jared Sexton, interviewed by Colucciello Barber, "On Black Negativity, or the Affirmation of Nothing," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, September 18, 2017, http://societyandspace.org/2017/09/18/on-black-negativity-or-the-affirmation-of-nothing/.