New Humanisms

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A review of Rachel C. Lee, The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies *(New York: New York University Press, 2014), and Alexander G. Weheliye,* Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human *(Durham: Duke University Press, 2014). Cited in the text as* EC *and* HV, *respectively.*

Something strange is happening to the human. The dangers of climate change and the havoc of global capitalism have intensified calls for a universal political horizon. Many have sought to isolate the human as a species to be saved or as the prime suspect in looming planetary catastrophe.[1] At the same time, it has become increasingly difficult to ignore the human's shifting imbrications with nonhuman animals, vegetables, and minerals. These countervailing tendencies have simultaneously stretched the human into new relations and shorn its borders.

Rachel Lee's *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America* and Alexander Weheliye's *Habeas Viscus* emerge as critical voices in this theoretical and political moment. *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America* is an Asian Americanist examination of race across ecologies of biological matter, while *Habeas Viscus* is a black feminist account of how racialization distinguishes between humans through recourse to the biological. Read together, they illustrate the fragmentation of

the human as it is trafficked by biopolitics through ecologies and assemblages.[2] While criticizing how biopolitics solicits indifference to the violences inflicted upon the racialized, Lee and Weheliye neither restore the human to wholeness nor abandon it entirely. Their efforts go astray from politics based on agency and resistance as they seek to discern what the human could become, through minor desires and dreams that seem to be headed nowhere. Among these resonances lie productive differences, especially over orientations to the biological; while Lee explores the creative potency of biological matter, Weheliye treats the biological as a pernicious alibi for racialization. Across these divergent paths, both Lee and Weheliye stall the hasty forward march from the human to the posthuman and explore the worlds that shimmer on the periphery.

The Exquisite Corpse and *Habeas Viscus* are crucial starting points for what may be called "new humanisms." Both emphasize that the human cannot be thought apart from sociopolitical dynamics such as race, gender, and sexuality. This argument may be old hat, but recent theories of the human, reassembled through the dynamism of all life-forms and the vibrancy of matter, have tended to elide sociopolitical questions as well as insights from what Weheliye terms "minority discourses" such as black studies and Asian American studies. These omissions continue the trend of distinguishing critical theory from what is dismissed as lowly sociological inquiry: minority discourses are held to be incapable of theory's glorious flights above the heavy matters of race and sex (*HV,* 6–7). Lee and Weheliye work against these tendencies, blurring the divides between critical theory and minority discourses by addressing the materiality of race. They ask: What worlds may be glimpsed when the human is lashed, dismembered, or networked with nonhuman forces? Can the human be imagined apart from an aspiration toward repair? What might the human become if it is not treated as an organism or a species but as composites of fleshy, biological matter? How might the scholarship, literature, and arts of the historically dehumanized be received as theories of the human such that, without them, something vital is missing?

This essay is animated by the style of the books, which expand critique into the lateral and the suggestive (*EC,* 25–36; *HV,* 15–16). Lee and Weheliye pursue other worlds by relaxing the tendency to pinpoint

a clear target of critique. To follow these sideways endeavors means forgoing a comprehensive overview here in favor of excavating departure points for future inquiry. The selective reading below follows this sideways style by rehearsing a few key arguments, identifying similar takes on biopolitics and race, and tracking divergent views on the human. The first section reviews the books; the second critically engages their different accounts of the relationship between the biological and the racial to develop lines for new humanisms.

The Exquisite Corpse runs aslant from what Elizabeth Wilson would call an "antibiological" stance of Asian American studies.[3] Like much work in critical race and feminist studies, Asian American studies has critiqued the biological as a discourse that assigns an essence to human bodies. For Lee, these important criticisms share with essentialist discourses an image of biology as fixed and society as dynamic. Discerning that the biological is also rich with creativity illuminates new territories of thought. By drawing upon science and technology studies and posthumanisms, Lee joins other integral voices who have called for the humanities to learn with the biological sciences.[4] She urges Asian American studies to attend to the scales of cells, bodily processes, and more-than-human ecologies. *The Exquisite Corpse* exemplifies Jane Bennett's important point that because humans are composed of nonhumans, "it is thus not enough to say that we are 'embodied.' We are, rather, an array of bodies."[5] "Ecology" is Lee's name for such an array and serves as the hinge for the book's key question: "Is the primary technique and value of Asian Americanist literary and cultural criticism that of conserving the boundary between a liberal humanist subject (qua coherent, complex, interiorized self—e.g., character of depth) and an alienating world of economically and biologically exploitative parasites?" (*EC*, 7). Lee expands Asian American studies beyond phenomenological and historical materialist frameworks by tracking race as it interfaces with ecologies of biological matter.

In *The Exquisite Corpse,* the biological is the source of neither ironclad constraint nor full-blown freedom but rather another site in which the biopolitics of race unfolds. Lee understands biopolitics to follow "a logic that carves up life into localized and bounded sectors and lets die the nonmodern, nonoptimal biologies, a logic

foundational to the idea of enhancing life" (*EC*, 64). In this innovative version, biopolitics isolates populations from broader ecologies and deconstructs bodies into parts. Lee illustrates how recent technological practices have worked with mutating conceptions of race to make certain populations of color and their body parts "bioavailable" for capitalist plunder. Distinctions between *zoe* (mere biological life) and *bios* (politically qualified life) do not quite align with racial divisions based on phenotype; *zoe* itself is split as race trickles into molecular territories. Lee's brilliant notion of "*zoe* fetishism" captures the practice of harvesting biological materials for their potential to optimize those lives held to be valuable at the expense of bioavailable populations (*EC*, 225). In response to this biopolitical condition, Lee examines how Asian American authors and performers (such as Ruth Ozeki, Cheng-Chieh Yu, Margaret Cho, and Denise Uyehara) have turned to body parts and biological processes, playfully and artistically. Lee shows how these authors and performers do not aspire to the prevailing ends of Asian American politics: they neither build a case for legal recognition nor remain satisfied with pursuits of justice away from subjectivity.[6] They also do not seek restoration of the racialized human to a fictive state of intactness. Instead, they foreground a notion of the human that is "biosocial," which is Lee's description of ecologies that emerge between a biopolitics of dismemberment and "the living of oneself electively as fragments—as cuttable and extractable bags of parts" (*EC*, 28–29).

What kind of method could grasp the conflictual tendencies of the biosocialities that compose Asian America? The title of Lee's book is drawn from the surrealist technique of composite illustration by a group. To generate an exquisite corpse, one participant draws a part of the body and folds the paper to display but a few starting points for the following participant's section. What emerges is a strange being that is neither coherent nor entirely in disarray. Lee fashions the exquisite corpse aesthetic into a compelling "sideways" method that does not forge a narrow path to a closed conclusion. Nor does it fire up the engines of revolution. Her powerful book is slippery in the best possible way: it enables readers to skid into unexpected paths toward the human, and indeed there are many. Each installment pivots about body parts and fluids: corpse, blood, and kidney; lympho-

cytes; teeth, feet, and gamete; vagina and gastrointestinal tract; parasite and chromosome; head; breasts and skin; and tissue culture. Lee sews these biological materials into an exquisite corpse that is no less human for being partial or unorganized.

Each chapter uncovers sideways movements in literature and performance. For example, chapter 3 of *The Exquisite Corpse* is a masterful reading of Margaret Cho's stand-up comedy routine *Cho Revolution*, which reflects how "Asian Americans ruminate over their bodies and body parts as sites of governmentality and norming, as well as living testaments to the organism's resilience and unpredictabilty in expressing biopolitical agency" (*EC,* 101). *Cho Revolution* works through figurations of the vagina that run from the candid to the seemingly bizarre in lines such as "HER PUSSY EXPLODED!" (a reference to perineal tearing during childbirth) and "Pussy crack corn . . . and I don't care." Lee shows how these "pussy ballistics" are blows to interrelated biopolitical matters of United States empire, such as proper reproductivity, global heteronormative kinship, the militarist production of Asian sex work for armed forces, and the racial eugenics of transnational adoption. Yet pussy ballistics, according to Lee, do not merely resignify the Asian vagina away from racialized and sexualized meanings. Nor are they only forceful punches to the imperial powers that be. Pussy ballistics have material effects: they make an audience laugh. Lee discerns in the convulsions of laughter a bodily agency, a surprising movement of the gut that is not spurred by one's own conscious, willful intentions. The pussy ballistics of Cho's performance enact "an unconscious flesh-coordination shared across regions conventionally considered distinct zones of the body (e.g. the reproductive and the digestive systems, the uterus and the esophagus)" (*EC,* 101). Pussy ballistics assemble body parts in sideways movements, away from the only-ever-provisional nature of the arrangement that passes as "the body." By tracing biopolitics from global empire to the pussy and the belly, Lee shows how examinations of biosociality must traverse various scales—not only to track the capacious reach of biopower but to follow the sideways movements enacted through ecologies of biological matter.

The sixth chapter, "Allotropic Conclusions," continues Lee's sideways method by serving less as a conclusion than a series of com-

pelling propositions for further inquiry into the biopolitics of race. In the following "Tail Piece," Lee briefly examines those propositions through the bio-art of Terreform ONE and Allan DeSouza before trailing off into her acknowledgments. Through these sideways methods, *The Exquisite Corpse* is itself an open, wild ecology. It defies efforts to repair the human, to follow the immunitary impulses of whiteness, to muster up heroic forms of agency, and to abide by the conventions of humanistic study that favor straightforward arguments and tight conclusions. Lee treats openness, curiosity, and a touch of messiness as intellectual virtues in the effort to understand how the human is reassembled through the biopolitics of race.

What Lee calls "*zoe*-ification," or "the process by which the human is reduced to the insect, rodent, bird, or microbe" (*EC*, 48), is akin to the key aim of what Weheliye names "racializing assemblages," which "create and maintain distinctions between different members of the Homo sapiens species that lend a suprahuman explanatory ground (religious or biological, for example) to these hierarchies" (*HV*, 28). By arguing that racializing assemblages are central to the functioning of biopolitics, *Habeas Viscus* is a powerful critique of work inspired by Michel Foucault and Giorgio Agamben. According to Weheliye, many scholars treat biopolitics as if it were a unique form of political violence. Weheliye criticizes Foucault for finding the highest form of biopower to lie in modern Europe, and faults Agamben for finding bare life to be epitomized in the Muselmann of World War II concentration camps. Through methods of exemplification, Foucault and Agamben locate "bare life" and "mere living" in a biological stratum that supposedly underlies sociopolitical markers. But as Weheliye points out, generation of the biological sphere is precisely how racializing assemblages operate. "Bare life and biopolitics are but alternative names for racism," he continues, "through a designation that attempts to conjure a sphere more fundamental to the human than race" (*HV*, 72–73). This recalibration calls for the replacement of exemplification with a relational method that instead tracks biopolitics across colonialism, racial slavery, and indigenous genocide.[7] By undermining the theories and methods of Foucault and Agamben, *Habeas Viscus* persuasively shows that future work on biopolitics must

address the centrality of racializing assemblages by taking up minority discourses such as black studies.

Weheliye draws upon Hortense Spillers and Sylvia Wynter to recast biopolitics through enfleshments of race. According to Spillers, the flesh is not a natural occurrence that comes intact; it is produced through mutilation and torture. It consists of "eyes beaten out, arms, backs, skulls branded, a left jaw, a right ankle, punctured; teeth missing, as the calculated work of iron, whips, chains, knives, the canine patrol, the bullet."[8] Although the flesh principally concerns the materialization of race, Spillers and Weheliye examine its gendered and sexual dimensions within the frame of "pornotroping," which has rendered the black female body as simultaneously a passive thing and a source of unwieldy sensuality (*HV*, 90). Spillers distinguishes the flesh from the body—not the body often discussed in feminist work (which is closer to this notion of the flesh) but that of liberal personhood in law, as in the purchase of legal rights through habeas corpus ("you should have the body"). The human appears to be beyond race when it is coordinated by the body (legal personhood) and its absence (bare life). Yet granting the body does not counter how the flesh of race prevents some humans from counting as such. For example, the abolition of slavery and civil rights gains in the United States have done little to address the long-standing enfleshment of black life. Weheliye shows through the flesh that black feminism can illustrate what Agamben cannot: how biopolitical violence consistently descends upon certain humans across time. Agamben insists that the line between politically qualified life and bare life is "moving into zones increasingly vast and dark, to the point of ultimately coinciding with the biological life itself of citizens." As a result, he avers that, "If today there is no longer any clear figure of the sacred man [bare life], it is perhaps because we are all virtually *homines sacri* [bare lives]."[9] Actually, there long have been very clear figures of bare life. When Black Lives Matter activists have called worldwide attention to the alarming precarity of black life, Agamben's narrative of "bare life" fails to grasp how biopolitical violence targets specific populations. Weheliye persuasively demonstrates that the biopolitical disposal of people of color is not the arbitrary effect of a juridical conundrum but rather the precise result of racialized

constructions of the flesh. By taking up black feminisms as integral theories of the human, Weheliye diminishes the sway of Eurocentric thinkers over work on biopolitics.

Yet *Habeas Viscus* is not merely critical and corrective. It is "purposefully written in an at times fragmentary and often suggestive style in order to launch alternate ways of understanding our uneven planetary conditions and imagine the other worlds these might make possible" (*HV*, 15). While Lee's chapters swell with rich insights, Weheliye's are far shorter and more focused (though not at all less insightful). This brevity, explains Weheliye, is inspired by manifestos by people of color, such as "The Combahee River Collective Statement" and "INCITE! Statement: Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex." Each chapter of *Habeas Viscus* ends with a section break that is followed by an aphoristic line of flight, such as "To subsist in the force field of the flesh, then, might just be better than not existing at all" (*HV,* 45). These little ruminations echo Lee's "allotropic conclusions" but more importantly disfigure Agamben's style in *Homo Sacer*. As Andrew Norris points out, Agamben concludes each part of *Homo Sacer* with a "Threshold" that "ends in the 'no-man's land' between life and death . . . to the same goal, that of the confusion of politics and life."[10] Replacing thresholds with transitions, *Habeas Viscus* effectively breaks down the confines of Agamben's approach to biopolitics with an aesthetic of imagination.

The suggestive style of *Habeas Viscus* effectively attunes readers to pockets of alternativity within the flesh. What Weheliye calls "habeas viscus" registers the entanglement of racialized violence and deprivation with "miniscule movements, glimmers of hope, scraps of food, the interrupted dreams of freedom found in those spaces deemed devoid of human life" (*HV*, 12). The flesh is an assemblage that forms in the murky mix of violence and freedom. "Assemblages are inherently productive," writes Weheliye, "entering into polyvalent becomings to produce and give expression to previously nonexistent realities, thoughts, bodies, affects, spaces, actions, ideas, and so on" (*HV*, 48). It is not entirely clear what the concept of assemblage adds to Weheliye's fine explication of the flesh, though it is important to note that Weheliye helpfully revises the term. While Deleuze and Guattari are adamant

that assemblage entails that "There is no ideology and never has been," Weheliye is not picky.[11] He inflects assemblage with Stuart Hall's idea of "articulation" in order to emphasize "the productive ingredients of social formations while not silencing questions of power, reinstituting an innocent version of the subject, or neglecting the deterritorializing capabilities of power, ideology, and so on" (*HV*, 48–49). Weheliye does not allow concepts of assemblage to escape the hold of racialization even as lines of flight for the human emerge therein.

Habeas Viscus counters scholarship in which biopolitical violence can appear to be domineering due to its negligence of the liveliness of those cast as bare life.[12] That tendency, which Weheliye briefly notes to be shared by Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics and Orlando Patterson's idea of social death, is exhibited chiefly by Agamben, who insists against towers of important work in feminist, critical race, and queer studies that "the 'body' is always already a biopolitical body and bare life, and nothing in it or the economy of its pleasure seems to allows us to find solid ground on which to oppose the demands of sovereign power" (*HS*, 187). He prefers instead the transcendence of bare humanity in the future through a different, more playful relationship to law that disallows its present functions.[13] Weheliye rejects this posthumanist politics, which cedes the human to liberal personhood, neglects its fleshy constitution, and brushes aside "cultural and political formations outside the world of Man that might offer alternative instantiations of humanity" (*HV*, 10). Following Wynter, Weheliye writes, "Man represents the western configuration of the human as synonymous with the heteromasculine, white, propertied, and liberal subject that renders all those who do not conform to these characteristics as exploitable nonhumans, literal legal no-bodies" (*HV*, 135). Man overextends itself by discarding other figurations of the human. Joining Zakiyyah Jackson and Tavia Nyong'o, Weheliye points out that posthumanisms end up perpetuating Man by conflating the human with it. This neglect of minoritarian genres of the human extends anti-blackness and colonialism in self-defeating efforts to halt the deadly thrust of anthropocentrism.[14] A more exquisite sensitivity to the flesh may result, as it does for Weheliye, in the insistence that there is more to the human than Man

and that there are other worlds in the here and now. To dismantle Man is to elevate discarded notions of the human and to recuperate trivialized desires in the pursuit of new humanisms.

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What might theory after the human look like—theory that is not beyond the human but that chases after it, urgently and desperately, as it becomes increasingly elusive in the present moment? Spied in sideways glances, the emergent field of new humanisms is richly diverse, as exemplified by the divergent understandings of the biological and the racial offered in *Habeas Viscus* and *The Exquisite Corpse*.

Weheliye views the biological to be a subset of the racial. "There can be no absolute biological substance," he insists, "because in the history of modernity this field always already appears in the form of racializing assemblages" (*HV*, 65). The emphasis here is on "absolute"; Weheliye does not reduce biology to race, for he acknowledges the species-being of *Homo sapiens* and the neurobiology of pain and pleasure. Nonetheless, biology is principally another vector for racism, and biopolitics is a racializing assemblage whose gratuitous violences never register as such because they appear to be deserved by those enfleshed as less-than-human. One might say that the human is caught up in the world of Man because it has been racialized via the biological.

In contrast, Lee acknowledges capacities of biological matter that are not quite explicable by criticisms such as Weheliye's. The pluripotentiality of stem cells, amphimixis, and peristalsis (more on this below) are but a few examples that indicate how the biological is irreducible to the sociopolitical. The biological of course may be influenced by and tailored to racial ends to some uncertain degree, but its capacities exceed sociopolitical molding. Lee shares Weheliye's critique of racialization but insists that there is more to the biological than race and treats that excess as worthy of attention. One might say that the human is always elsewhere than the world of Man partly *because* it is biological.

As a result of divergent understandings of the biological and the racial, Weheliye and Lee reimagine the human differently. For Weheliye the biological is always already racialized, and any political po-

tential that could be discerned therein is only ever activated through its sociopolitical history. Notably, Weheliye insists that the excesses of the flesh are born of the very violences that have shaped it. (Like Lee, he develops an understanding of the human beyond the logic of repair.) Though Weheliye may be suggesting that racialized violence produces the conditions of its own dismantling, he might alternatively be emphasizing that political potency does not reside in a biological zone that is untouched by race. A new humanism that is informed by black feminism attunes to the racialized flesh in all its scars and longings for something else (*HV*, 52). It does not emerge through the biological human but through a criticism of the biological in favor of the flesh.

Readers should admire the care, subtlety, and imagination with which Weheliye handles the tricky task of navigating the gravity of racializing assemblages *and* the flights of the human that escape their orbit. Still, they might wonder how it is that Weheliye can insist upon the capture of the biological within a racialized modernity while allowing the flesh to wiggle away into other spaces and times. Is the biological only the effect of racializing assemblages that are rooted in the human and natural sciences? What is it about the flesh that enables the human to slip away from Man? Could it partly be the potency of biochemical matter, inflected though it may be through racializing assemblages, as seems to be the case in Weheliye's provocative discussion of the dreams of freedom born of hunger, the evolutionary development of the human taste for sweetness, and the historical place of sugar in plantation slavery (*HV*, 128–30)? How might greater acknowledgment of the capacities exhibited by the biological change what is understood to be properly human? To be clear: although Weheliye does not surrender the flesh to sociopolitical formations, he does not adequately acknowledge the role of biological processes in refiguring the human. In this manner, his critique is antibiological, at least implicitly; creativity lies on the side of the social, because Weheliye does not elaborate enough the capacities of the biological. What if departures from the world of Man could be sparked through a different understanding of the biological?

Whereas Weheliye aims to free the human from the racialized hold of the biological, Lee seeks a new human through a reconcep-

tualization of the biological. Instead of the excesses of racializing assemblages, Lee attends to the potency that develops across ecologies of biological matter. Because the biological is never only placed in the service of the racial, the human may emerge from the odd fit between the two. This new humanism does not only challenge the manner in which humans are racialized through recourse to the biological. Nor does it aspire to restore the human to wholeness, as an undamaged body, organism, or species. It strings together biosocial ecologies in order to carry the human back into the unknown. "An alternative to modernist biopower," Lee imagines, "may also lie in a retrieved cosmological orientation . . . in which the extracted part is returned not to a political community of liberal rights-bearing subjects but instead to a planetary commons of entangled biological life" (*EC*, 65). One might recall Lee's discussion of peristalsis, those wave-like muscle contractions that, among other things, push food through the intestines. Although Lee primarily attends to peristalsis through laughter, one might remember that the larger digestive process of which gut peristalsis is a part also includes the operations of bacteria. This small example recalls that the human is composed of nonhumans; that the human is not an organic body but an ecology; that human activity, political or otherwise, is inseparable from nonhuman biological processes; that human agency is enacted through nonhumans; and that, just maybe, the biological may open paths on tangent from Man. In this new humanism, the human is biological but not quite an organism, ecological but not quite a species.

I am drawn to Lee's provocative call to re-immerse the human in a broader web of life-forms. However, great caution is needed due to Weheliye's powerful account of how racialization proceeds through the biological. And because, as Lee admits, the racialized have been long associated with nonhuman animals, toxins, and viruses, re-entanglement of humans with nonhumans on its own may not counter the biopolitics of race. How and to what extent might biological processes be isolated from the racialized, colonialist, capitalist frameworks in which they are set? How might they stir movements aslant from liberal personhood and racial exclusion? What happens to race as the human is reassembled through bodily processes and ecologies of biological matter? To what extent can the re-entanglement of the

human with other life-forms be parsed from deeper entanglements with racializing assemblages?

In the face of these pressing questions, Lee convincingly argues that without a re-entanglement of humans and nonhumans, attempts by the racialized to overcome dehumanization may (1) reinstate an anthropocentric worldview by (2) objectifying others while (3) missing how whiteness operates in regard to humans and nonhumans alike. As Lee writes, "If 'whiteness' as I describe it above bespeaks the extremes of disavowing, projecting, and indeed materializing the contagious status of fungible exchangeability as someone else's—another race's qua species-being's—problem, to what extent can we say that 'whiteness' also bespeaks phobic disdain toward microbes?" (*EC*, 238). Reminiscent of Wynter's critique of Man, Lee's argument brilliantly indicates that anthropocentrism (and its consolidation of sovereignty, freedom, and value in humans alone) cannot be thought apart from whiteness (and its racializing imperative to immunize oneself against others, whether human or not). At the same time, efforts to reassemble the human through matter and nonhuman animals cannot effectively counter the dangers of anthropocentrism without careful attention to the role played by race in dramas of the human.

New humanisms that emerge through the biopolitics of race neither dismiss the biological nor embrace it wholeheartedly. They reject essentialist versions of the biological while crafting a careful openness to nonanthropocentric, emergent biologies. They do not exaggerate the capacities of the biological to, among other things, undo the biopolitical.[15] They neither reduce the biological to a (racist, colonialist) discursive practice nor elevate it to a site of scientific inquiry whose recent discoveries issue forth new realisms. They treat the biological as "ontogenetic" in Brian Massumi's sense; it is not reducible to nature or culture, to ontology or phenomenology.[16] The biological emerges through these related domains. If that is so, then attention to the human, its parts, and the ecologies in which it transits may shift theory into the registers of the scientific and the intuitive, the critical and the creative. New humanisms would then no longer be the province of the humanities alone.

Calls for new humanisms are not new, though they proceed from a different sense of urgency in the current moment. New humanisms

maintain the human without falling back onto species-being per se, whether defined biologically, rationally, or politically. They recall that black studies, Asian American studies, indigenous studies, and similar fields offer invaluable theories of the human. They follow the human away from anthropocentrism with its hoarding of freedom, agency, and value, away from Man and its colonialist, capitalist, and gendered hierarchies, away from bodily and species boundaries, away from repair, away from liberal personhood, away from the biological as an isolated domain, away from partitions between the humanities and the sciences. They find the human to be inseparable from the flesh, a flesh that is not altogether human as it stretches across nonhuman ecologies. They find the interfaces between the biological and the racial to potentially open flights into other worlds—worlds that, in some strange way, are already here. For, as a refrain that recurs throughout *Habeas Viscus* goes, "It's after the end of the world. . . . Don't you know that yet?"[17] Through Lee's and Weheliye's forceful and visionary texts, we might indeed know that. Journeying thenceforth may lead to new senses of the human—even if that human is one that we cannot yet begin to imagine.

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Notes

1. Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 2 (2009): 197–222; William E. Connolly, *The Fragility of*

Things: Self-Organizing Processes, Neoliberal Fantasies, and Democratic Activism (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013); Roy Scranton, *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene: Reflections on the End of a Civilization* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015).

2. Other important works in this vein include Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Arun Saldanha, "Re-ontologising Race: The Machinic Geography of Phenotype," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24 (2006): 9–24.
3. Elizabeth A. Wilson, *Gut Feminism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015). Hereafter cited as *GF*.
4. One might also note William E. Connolly, *Neuropolitics: Thinking, Culture, Speed* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002); Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); and *GF*.
5. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 112.
6. Kandice Chuh, *Imagine Otherwise: On Asian Americanist Critique* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
7. Against Weheliye's departure from exemplification, I want to flag Lisa Lowe's fine practice of a relational method in an investigation of the relations between settler colonialism, racial slavery, indentured servitude, and the rise of liberalism in *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).
8. Hortense J. Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book," *diacritics* 17, no. 2 (1987): 67.
9. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 114–15. Hereafter cited as *HS*.
10. Andrew Norris, "Introduction: Giorgio Agamben and the Politics of the Living Dead," in *Politics, Metaphysics, and Death: Essays on Giorgio Agamben's* Homo Sacer, ed. Andrew Norris (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 22n16.
11. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 4.
12. A similar argument is made by Yến Lê Espiritu, who observes the political activities of refugees (what Agamben might call "bare life") in detention centers ("spaces of exception") in *Body Counts: The Vietnam*

War and Militarized Refuge(es) (Oakland: University of California Press, 2014).

13. Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 64.
14. Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Animal: New Directions in the Theorization of Race and Posthumanism," *Feminist Studies* 39, no. 3 (2013): 669–85; Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, "Outer Worlds: The Persistence of Race in Movement 'Beyond the Human,'" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, nos. 2–3 (June 2015): 215–18; Tavia Nyong'o, "Little Monsters: Race, Sovereignty, and Queer Inhumanism in *Beasts of the Southern Wild*," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 21, nos. 2–3 (June 2015): 249–72. I also want to note, from a slightly different angle, the work of Monique Allewaert, who elaborates a "parahumanism" from the world-making activities of slaves and maroons in the American tropics in *Ariel's Ecology: Plantations, Personhood, and Colonialism in the American Tropics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).
15. See Catherine Malabou, "The King's Two (Biopolitical) Bodies," *Representations* 127, no. 1 (Summer 2014): 98–106; and Catherine Malabou, "One Life Only: Biological Resistance, Political Resistance," trans. Carolyn Shread, *Critical Inquiry* 42, no. 3 (Spring 2016): 429–38.
16. Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 8–9.
17. The line is from Sun Ra Arkestra's 1974 *Space Is the Place*.