**After the End of the World? Rethinking Temporalities of Critique and Affirmation in the Anthropocene**

**Chandler, D. and Chipato, F.**

**After the End of the World? Rethinking Temporalities of Critique and Affirmation in the Anthropocene**

**Farai Chipato and David Chandler (forthcoming in *International Relations*)**

**Abstract**

The contemporary era of the Anthropocene has undermined linear views of progress and development. In its wake, alternative futural imaginaries have become central to critical and decolonial accounts in the discipline of International Relations. We argue that radical imaginaries of alternative non-modern futures risk failing to account fully for the ongoing violence and exclusions of modernity. We identify two strands of Anthropocene work, the first focusing on critique and reconstruction of governance in the face of climate change and environmental destruction, and the second looking for decolonial affirmative ways of being drawn from the experiences of the dispossessed of modernity. Both these approaches to futurity seek to move beyond a modernist world to new futures. In our argument, we set out an alternative perspective, the Black Horizon, which rejects the call to imagine new productive futures, and instead focuses on the deconstruction of modernity, in search of ending the current world of antiblackness, rather than critique or affirm its existence. Thus, even though contemporary critical and decolonial approaches stress the attention to ontology, alterity, and difference, in their attempts to ground alternative worlds in existing practices or knowledges, they offer salvific alternatives, whilst leaving the foundations of our current world intact.

**Keywords:** Temporality, Decoloniality, Coloniality, Anthropocene, Black Horizon

## Introduction

We live in an age where the idea of the future is increasingly controversial and uncertain, both in the discipline of International Relations (IR), and in the arena of Global Politics. The triumph of liberal capitalism at the end of the Cold War was widely seen as a vindication of a progressive vision of history, mapping out a future of accelerating modernisation spreading across a world of growing peace and prosperity. Over the last three decades, this liberal imaginary has become increasingly remote, as its foundations have come under sustained material and ideological attack. The political dominance of democracy, human rights, multilateralism and the ideological framework of liberal peace has been threatened by populist challenges from both the left and the right severely undermining visions of a future dominated by global liberal governance.[1] At the same time, the linear teleology of modernity, and its vision of relentless human progress has been questioned by critiques highlighting its basis in the destructive forces of Eurocentrism, colonialism and racial discrimination.[2]

The rising awareness of anthropogenic climate change has further undermined techno-utopian modernist futures, as it becomes clear that our digital, technologically driven modern society is predicated on unsustainable forms of ecological, geological and planetary exploitation.[3] Recent debates around planetary futures have centred on the concept of the Anthropocene, a new geological age where humanity has become a key planetary force, shaping the nature of our planetary environment, yet unable to control the unintended consequences of its actions.[4] Theorists engaged in a growing body of thought, which we heuristically classify here as 'Anthropocene critique', have argued that the separation of the natural and the social worlds is no longer tenable. It is precisely the entanglement of humanity and modernity with non-human actors that has resulted in increasing unpredictability in the age of climate change and environmental disaster.[5] These approaches seek to reconfigure planetary governance and to manage the negative impacts of modernity through the embrace of more-than-human elements and enablement of new governing practices.

Envisioning modernist futures in the Anthropocene becomes impossible, as the ability to imagine a discrete, powerful human agency is undermined by these critiques, which threaten the unitary liberal subject and a progressive historical world project. In response, theorists across the social sciences have begun to search for alternative futural imaginaries that can move beyond modernity, linear histories of development as progress and the destructive legacy of the will to master nature and humanity.[6] Even as critical voices deconstruct the modernist telos of progress, they maintain the desire for a futurity beyond, or outside modernity. As modern futures become delegitimised, another group of 'affirmative' scholars, drawing largely but not exclusively on decolonial frameworks of thought, have turned to alternative sources of futurity, looking to source these speculatively 'otherwise' worlds in the present and among those who have been marginalised, exploited, and oppressed by modernity. As Jairus Grove insists, 'The end of the world is never the end of everything'.[7] In this paper, we contextualise and explore the distinct temporalities of 'critical' and 'affirmative' alternative futural possibilities, focusing upon increasingly influential discourses of affirmative decolonial, Indigenous and Black futural imaginaries.[8]

In doing so, we seek to question both 'critical' and 'affirmative' wills to futurity, highlighting the tendency to fall back into modernist patterns of governance, discipline, and assimilation. This danger arises because attempts to move 'beyond' or 'after' modernity, through imaginaries of emergent, creative, nonlinear visions of futurity, risk allowing the dictates of progressive futures to re-emerge. This enables the suborning of both societies and individuals to the work of problem-solving and salvage. We seek to bring to the fore a third set of discussions focused upon the disruptive and deconstructive work of critique. We label this approach the 'Black Horizon', and forward a heuristic framing, largely neglected in International Relations, in which both critical and affirmative approaches to futurity are put into question. In doing so, we draw upon what we see as a minoritarian trend in decolonial thinking[9] which seeks to shine a more sceptical and less affirmative lens on our

contemporary condition; one that problematises futural approaches on the basis that the alternative imaginaries of decolonial, Indigenous and Black futurities frequently fail to fully account for the ongoing violences of modernity and the world of the present.

Our argument proceeds in three parts. Firstly, we highlight the importance of approaches of 'Anthropocene critique', which provide a critical account of a more-than-human or post-human humanity able to productively and creatively work *beyond* or *after* the 'end of the world' of modernity. This scholarship sets out alternative conceptions of the future, which builds on the rubble of the failed modernist projects, drawing on adaptive and resilient capacities to think in relation to other modes of human and non-human life. In these critical, relational, Anthropocene futures, the boundaries between the social and natural worlds break down, and the human is decentred, opening up new and exciting possibilities for being otherwise. For these 'critical' thinkers the catastrophe of climate change and global warming lies largely in the future, so alternative futures, after modernity, are those in which dominant modes of living are largely preserved through thinking and acting beyond the limits of the modernist episteme. In International Relations, these critical approaches propose ways to reconstruct or re-assemble governance structures to take account of new futural possibilities and address the destructive legacies of modernity.

In the second section we heuristically counterpose the framings of Anthropocene critique to the very different temporality of 'affirmative' work, largely drawn from decolonial, Black, and Indigenous scholars, who highlight that for many peoples, the apocalypse happened long before climate change, through colonial violence, genocide, and slavery. They argue that any futural re-articulations of the human and reconceptualization of the world after modernity must account for forms of survivance in the face of the violences of modernity, racial capitalism and coloniality. Black Feminists, Black Studies scholars and others have highlighted the spaces that have emerged on the margins of modernity, affirming forms of Black subjectivity and fugitivity that point towards alternative futures. These alternative 'lines of flight' are not understood as new linear narratives of the future as progress, but creative, corrective, reparative practices that produce futurity in the quotidian, the tangible and the ungovernable spaces that have refused to submit to the totalizing narratives of modernity.[10] These alternative futures, grounded in the experiences and capacities of those outside or excluded from modernist categories of the 'fully human', have increasingly began to inform debates in IR, which seek to articulate a futurity beyond the current limits of the discipline.

In the third section, we seek to draw out a minoritarian strand of scepticism which we heuristically counter position to both 'critical' Anthropocene and 'affirmative' decolonial thinking. This strand, which we are calling the 'Black Horizon' is one which problematises both the critical and the affirmative impulses imbricated in the desire for futural approaches and imaginaries. This refusal of the promises of alternative futures, to be built upon already existing modes of living and alternative modes of lived experience, cuts against the futural impulses of both critical and affirmative scholarship. We question whether subaltern geographies, as an "outside" to modernity, allow alternative futures that move beyond the

coloniality of the world that they are created in, and whether the overwhelming violence of modernity can be overcome by the speculative visions proposed by affirmative decolonial imaginaries. To this end, we argue that affirmative speculative futural thinking necessarily tends to disavow the violence of the world of the present, no less than the critical and managerial projects of the Anthropocene, which seek to jump 'beyond' the Human without coming to terms with the inherent violence of its construction. As we restate in the conclusion, the critical task is that of negating the world (of modernity) not of salvaging it.

**Anthropocene Critique**

Critical accounts of the Anthropocene fundamentally challenge modernist or linear accounts of progress, which assert that the disaster of catastrophic climate change can be averted through the development of new processes and technologies, such as planetary geoengineering.[11] Modernist understandings construct a universal 'one world world'[12] that tends to imagine global warming as a threat that can be managed on the basis of rationalist science. This threat is often understood as caused by human actions as a totality, expressed in the term 'anthropogenic' climate change. This construction of the Anthropocene as a threat to come thereby constructs the human as universal both as threatened victim and as unwitting agent.[13] Linear framings of temporality construct the human in terms of universals of progress and development that require safeguarding against climate change. Approaches of what we call 'Anthropocene critique', on the other hand, seek to question modernist ways of knowing and engaging with the world, suggesting that global warming and catastrophic climate change signal the hubris of modernist assumptions of humanity as separate from or independent of nature.

Critical Anthropocene thinkers have sought to break down the boundary between culture and nature, and theorise human and nonhuman ecologies as entangled complex systems, characterised by non-linear causality.[14] From Bruno Latour's assertion that *We Were Never Modern* to Donna Haraway's call to 'stay with the trouble', radical activists, policymakers and academics, have argued for a very different imaginary of the human.[15] Rather than understanding the human in classical liberal or modernist terms, as existing prior to social engagement, as a rational and autonomous being; in order to survive after modernity, humanity needs to acquire relational sensitivities and capacities. Latour argues that this implies capacities 'to be affected', Haraway suggests 'making kin with…'. David Farrier suggests that this form of kin making, "starts with the dynamic of life itself; its capacity to swerve toward relation, its collaborative impulse".[16] Kin making is said to provide new forms of temporality, allowing us to reach back into "deep time", to entangle the future with the present, as we are attentive to the connections and spectral presences of nonhumans who share our coevolutionary histories.

William Connolly offers "entangled humanism" as way to move beyond anthropocentrism and the primacy of culture over nature, arguing that the numerous entanglements between

humans and non-humans, including bacteria, reptiles, glaciers, weather systems, and many more, form the basis for a more productive way of being human in the world.[17] Connolly's work is emblematic of the wider trend towards conceptions of the human that are embedded in and becoming with nature. As the background of the natural world comes to the foreground in critical Anthropocene thinking, the liberal, Western subject becomes enmeshed in it and is required to adapt to its surroundings in relation to its many nonhuman interlocutors. According to a wide range of contemporary critical theory, whether framed in terms of posthumanism, new materialism, actor network theory, speculative realism or cognate approaches, the Anthropocene thereby inaugurates not just a crisis but an opportunity.[18] The collapse of modernity, progress and the liberal subject is to be celebrated as an opening to a more creative, productive, convivial way of becoming with the other inhabitants of the planet.

These futural approaches increasingly posit critique as essential to providing a new way forward beyond the limits of the modernist episteme, arguing that life after modernity should be embraced as an opportunity for new constructive relations with nonhuman and more-than-human collaborators.[19] Isabelle Stengers illustrates this strikingly in her comments in conversation with Bruno Latour, Anna Tsing, and Nils Bubandt, asserting that:

> …what interests me is how to tell stories of enabling entanglements. What kind of stories do we tell about how enabling can be generative? What this means is that when you start noticing, you also meet other people who notice something else. This is what happens when Western activists, who notice some things meet up with Indian First Nations people who notice in different ways.[20]

The search for productive entanglements and relationships that allow for living otherwise, particularly in configurations that involve Indigenous people, is one of the key elements of this type of adaptive, improvisatory Anthropocene thinking. In a similar move, Stephanie Wakefield works with complex systems theories to argue for a reconfiguration of the human to focus on resilience and an adaptive approach to life in the 'Anthropocene back loop'.[21] Her work draws on resilience thinking, which sees ecological systems as existing in an adaptive cycle, with a front loop, characterised by growth and stability, and a back loop of release and change. If the Anthropocene sees the world in a transformative back loop, then, 'as back loop inhabitants, we have to fight for our ability to imagine, to dream and to create other worlds, but also to define their terms. Not just food, shelter, water, but how might we reimagine life, beauty, excellence, peace, security?'[22] These Anthropocene futures signal a move away from the technologically driven progress and mastery of nature, in favour of governance that folds together the human and the nonhuman and adapts to life in the ruins of capitalist modernity.[23]

These critical approaches to Anthropocene thought have become increasingly popular in International Relations scholarship, as traditional perspectives struggle with the complexities of political questions in an era of planetary crisis. Relational approaches have

been used to bring the natural world and non-humans into political analysis, hinging on flat ontologies that non-longer privilege human agency.[24] Focusing on infrastructural, animal, plant or meteorological materiality allows for the dispersal and entanglement of agency, providing new political ontologies that open up worlds beyond that of the liberal subject.[25] In a much-discussed intervention, Burke et al's 'Planet Politics' manifesto sets out a vision for a planetary governance that accounts for relationality, arguing that 'we cannot survive without accepting the cosmopolitan and enmeshed nature of this world'.[26] The authors contend that the scale of the environmental crisis, mass extinction and climate change must be framed in terms of a 'global ethics', requiring the mobilisation of 'multiple world views and lifeways – including those emerging from indigenous and marginalised cosmologies'.[27] This new vision of Anthropocene governance seeks to manage the effects of modernity, to recompose its effects and to govern otherwise.

These understandings of futures after modernity have faced a range of critiques, both for ignoring the experiences of Indigenous and Black thinkers and for appropriating their ideas in the service of salvaging the world. Thus, critical voices demonstrate that the futurity of new posthuman, materialist, complexity theory, and resilience-based approaches maintains many of the racial exclusions of liberal modernity. While it is true that Anthropocene theorists like Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers and Donna Haraway identify the problem of the construction of the Human, they do so within the Eurocentric tradition of thinking. Latour, following Habermas and before him, Husserl, understands the crisis of modernist thought as a problem for Europe, as the leading representative of a new planetary awareness.[28] It is posthuman Europeans that seemingly will mobilise the new approaches needed to tackle the global environmental crisis of the Anthropocene. For these thinkers there is little consideration that the rewriting or the remaking of the Human is not only a problem for European thought but a problem of the Eurocentric conception of the world itself.

Ironically even those critical International Relations theorists sensitive to the Eurocentric concerns of salvage at the heart of 'Anthropocene critique' tend to reproduce concerns with remaking the Western subject with new futural capacities and affordances. The critical approach is well articulated in Jairus Grove's *Savage Ecology: War and Geopolitics at the End of the World* , which argues the importance of imbuing the world after the end of the world of modernity with a critical 'sense of possibility'.[29] Against the modernist calls for survival as a linear extension of the present and a saving of understandings of human domination and control, Grove powerfully asserts that: 'The crisis is not the future of humanity; it is the necessity – which has always existed – to engage in profound acts of courage that defy the crass politics of survival (species or otherwise) and affirm instead the dissonant harmonies and plural antagonisms of life.'[30] The end of the world 'is the end of something but never *the* end'[31] for Grove then, there is still work to be done, the key question being the revaluation of creative potentiality: 'To what end then? And how do we mobilize a wild creativity with the intensity of just how fragile we are?'[32] The fragilities of the world and our assumptions of the human are not a problem but the futural potentiality, thus the call is for

'experimenting with the role of the seer in order to push further into the metaphysical fallout of cosmic fragility'.[33] The end of the world is an opportunity for open-ended and critical experimentation based on the inculcation of other-oriented skills of care.

Delf Rothe argues that these 'planetary realism' approaches, which rely on the critique of the Anthropocene as an opportunity to move beyond the limit of the modernist episteme and to enable the mobilisation of Indigenous and other lifeways, 'transvalue forms of knowledge only in so far as they can be appropriated by white people to guarantee their own survival in the turmoil of the Anthropocene'.[34] His critique echoes the work of Indigenous anthropologist Zoe Todd, who notes that the supposedly novel insights of Western theorists on the entanglement of nature and culture have been features of Indigenous thinking for generations.[35] Todd argues that framing the Anthropocene as an apocalyptic threat that overturns our understanding of the world overlooks the ends of numerous worlds as the result of modernity, including those of Indigenous people and enslaved Africans. Similarly, Axelle Karera highlights the ways that critical Anthropocene theorists can obscure the colonial violence and exploitation required to create the global system that is now in crisis.[36] She contends 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'.[37] Karera argues that radical discourses of the Anthropocene, such as those forwarded by Rosi Braidotti, Timothy Morton, Donna Haraway and others:

> …are unable to relinquish or effectively resist the homogenizing consequences of the discourse. 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.[38]

As Karera emphasises, critical imaginaries of entanglement and interconnection are forefronted to enable the (post)human to develop new forms of futural becoming. 'Anthropocene critique' as heuristically constructed here, thus welcomes the end of the world of modernity as an occasion to reject the modernist episteme with its human 'exceptionalism', universal causation and reductionist understanding of entities and essences, instead flagging up the importance of relational processes of emergence, entanglement, and creativity. The rejection of modernist assumptions and understandings is given urgency by the Anthropocene as a condition understood to have been caused by modernity's hubris and inability to think through relational responsibilities. The goal of salvage and of living on in the face of the climate crisis provides futural hopes of amelioration and mitigation based on new relational sensitivities and openness. Crucially,

this approach does not reject governance, but seeks to re-assemble it, to find new ways to govern after the human.

**Decolonial Affirmation**

For some Decolonial and Black Studies scholars, a reimagining of possible futures requires a more radical shift in perspective than is offered by the Eurocentric conceptions of the leading critical Anthropocene theorists. This approach to futurity relies upon a further critique of modernity, highlighting the problem of the Eurocentric Man at the centre of Western narratives of the Anthropocene. For Decolonial affirmation, we must shift our attention from Man to the Others of modernity, allowing a move from critique to an affirmative account of ethical ways of being and becoming in the world beyond modernity. From this perspective, the task is not to forestall the end of the world, as the world has already ended for modernity's many Others. Instead, we must find alternative ways to live after the world, to creatively and improvisationally engage with this world from these outside perspectives.

Much of this decolonial work highlights the ways that the Eurocentric imaginary of Man was constructed in relation to Europe's Others, the New World of the Americas and the Black(ened) inhabitants of Africa.[39] For Enrique Dussel, for example, a more productive understanding of the world and reframing of the modernist project needs to start from the point of creative alterity, from the subject position of the Other. He suggests that:

> It is now time to change skins and to see through new eyes. It is now time to put off the skin and the eyes of the I conquer which culminates in the ego cogito or the will-to-power… The new eyes are those of the Other, of the other ego, of the ego whose history requires reconstruction as modernity's other face… It is time to put on methodically the skin of the Indian, the African slave, the humiliated mestizo, the impoverished peasant, the exploited worker, and the marginalized person packed among the wretched millions inhabiting contemporary Latin American cities. It is time to take on the eyes of the oppressed, those from below.[40]

Dussel's decolonial perspective is futural in that it seeks to move beyond modernity's limited grasp of the world. In doing so there is a move to affirmation. The world becomes richer or more 'real' in that rather than the false universalism of the same, proffered by Eurocentrism, the future becomes open-ended through the creative meeting of difference. Decolonial approaches thereby expand and pluralize the understanding of the human. Thus, for Sylvia Wynter, what is at stake is the struggle:

> …between the ongoing imperative of securing the well-being of our present ethnoclass (i.e., Western bourgeois) conception of the human, Man, which overrepresents itself as if it were the human itself, and that of securing the well-

> being, and therefore the full cognitive and behavioural autonomy of the human species itself/ourselves.[41]

By dethroning Western Man as the paragon of humanity, Wynter points towards the ways 'we might give humanness a different future'.[42] Wynter argues that rather than abandoning the human, we should interrogate the different 'genres of being human', which are discursively defined and upheld through systems of knowledge that allow the enactment and performances of humanity.[43] Paul Gilroy has emphasised the importance of what Sylvia Wynter 'has described as the "re-enchantment of humanism"':[44]

> …how might we become more comprehensively estranged from the Anthropos in the Anthropocene in order to salvage a different, and perhaps re-enchanted human from the rising waters and transformed climates that characterize the future of our endangered species?[45]

This decolonial thinking has been taken up by theorists in International Relations, for example, in the debates around the possibility of 'Planet Politics'. Scholars have built on Wynter and other decolonial theorists to argue for a politics of pluriversality, which celebrates a world of multiplicity, drawn together by a cosmopolitics or a decolonial poetics.[46] Delf Rothe draws on Sylvia Wynter to argue for 'being human as praxis' through embracing a plurality of genres of human and more-than-human life in relation as a response to planetary change.[47] A decolonial IR on this model would celebrate a 'world of many worlds' and a futurity which embraces transformations of the human that emanate from outside of modernity.[48]

Decolonial approaches within the academy do not merely critique the failed projects of modernity but also hold out the promise of better futures. Not only is the claim to futurity key to the radical nature of decolonial work, but these better futures will be led by those who have been excluded from the existing system. As we have considered above, this move towards salvage acquires a radical edge precisely on the basis that the apocalypse has already happened and that in its wake new opportunities and possibilities are not just available but also a necessity. It should also be noted that these futures are available as an unintended consequence of rapacious racial capitalism itself which, in its blind desire to construct the Human as Eurocentric and rationalist, failed to fully assimilate non-modern ways of living and forced marginalised groups to improvise alternative forms of survival.

Radical and decolonial approaches seeking to move beyond modernity's constraints or to 'live on' after its demise seek to salvage understandings of both the human and the world but in non-modern forms that are less universal and linear in time and space, that stress difference and movement, openness, plurality, and non-linear possibilities. Decentring and pluralizing the human subject necessarily involves inverting the temporality of the Anthropocene, thus placing catastrophe in the past and the contemporary task as that of 'living on', 'after', or 'in the wake' of catastrophe, understood as the ending of the world. Thus, decolonial futures remove the ontological grounds taken for granted by modern constructions of the Human in a linear temporality. Living after catastrophe informs the

search for other ways of knowing and modes of being at the heart of decolonial and radical imaginaries. The ways of being for whom coloniality itself is the world ending catastrophe. Thus, the survival of and resistance to coloniality becomes the new basis for living on in the wake of what is imagined to be modernity's end.

It is important to highlight the radical consequences of decolonial approaches and their visions of alternative futures. Firstly, as noted above, while 'critical Anthropocene' approaches can be easily construed as seeking to maintain or to save colonial modes of being from the threat of climate change and global warming, the affirmative decolonial approaches considered here invert the problematic. The threat of climate change is one symptom of the colonial order of ecological and social destruction; survival under and resistance to this order thereby draws upon sources seen as valuable precisely for their capacities for resilience and resistance via adaptation and innovation. It is from the phenomenological perspective of catastrophe that radical imaginaries of other ways of being, beyond the Human, can be constructed. Every subaltern perspective, every alternative cosmology, every alternative set of relational beliefs and practices therefore not only brings additional ways of thinking into the world but also, literally, other 'worlds', other forces or relations, that are ignored in the deadening, flattening and homogenising approach of Eurocentric coloniality. Thus, what is required is not new forms of futuristic planetary governance but the affirmation of the creative, open ways of being of those on the margins of modernity.

The key concept which enables an inversion of a modern temporal imaginary is that of *coloniality*.[49] Whereas formalised colonial relations can be understood as transitory, even as marking a transitional step in the liberal telos towards universal progress, the concept of coloniality marks a catastrophic break; one which maintains and divides the world between colonisers and colonised. The concept of coloniality marks the modernist construction of a 'world' from a Euro-centred perspective as a colonised and colonisable other to the European self. The binaries of self/other, subject/object, human/non-human were to shape modernist understandings of both the natural and the social sciences.[50] This narrative of history, central to the development of decolonial approaches, highlights the creation and maintenance of coloniality separate from colonialism, as a structure of power, rationality and meaning that continues to endure beyond the end of formal colonial relations.[51] This is important, as it highlights the possibility that new forms of posthuman planetary governance can be constructed which, while seeking to address the problems of climate change and environmental destruction, may still maintain the structures of coloniality.

This shift of perspective allows us to see that the opposition in modernity between liberal subjects and those who are denied political and social subjectivity, can be reversed, demonstrating the importance of the perspective of the Other. This divide between those imagined to be subjects with a world and those without is powerfully captured by de Souza Santos' view of the colonial abyss, a fundamental break which separated the world of the modernist subject and that of the colonized.[52] It is this break, imagined in both spatial and

temporal terms, that provides the possibility for the existence and revival of subjugated knowledges as the basis for new futural imaginaries. As Pellegrino and Ricotta note (2020), the abyssal break is the condition for new practices and understandings derived from the knowledge held by modernity's disavowed and excluded Others.[53] The temporal and spatial divide that implies a break from modernity thereby affirms the world-making powers denied or unrecognised by the colonial gaze. Thus, the key task for decolonial approaches is the 'critical reactivation of subaltern knowledges':[54]

> Dussel's conception of linguistic and "cultural" diversity today is based on the idea that while it may be true that coloniality structures the modern world, neither modernity nor coloniality… has entirely erased the histories, the memories, and the epistemological and hermeneutical resources of colonized cultures or religious traditions… the world, for Dussel, has a reservoir of knowledges and memories that can help undo the devastating and self-destructive effects of modernity's violent tendencies and its naturalization of war.[55]

Critically affirming alterity, enabling cultures and knowledges excluded by modernity, is of value to humanity as a whole as subordinated peoples 'are also responsible for articulating historical projects that can simultaneously help their cultures and help humanity in the process of overcoming the limits of modernity and the legacy of coloniality'.[56] Arturo Escobar articulates this through his conception of pluriversal design,[57] whilst Walter Mignolo offers his own version of a 'critical cosmopolitanism'.[58] The 'fundamental task of decoloniality' thus is 'enacting resurgences and re-existence of devalued and demonized praxis of living, whatever form they take in the myriad local histories that have been intervened by modernity/coloniality'.[59] This is a key difference with 'critical Anthropocene' approaches, as the goal is not to repair and retool the governing edifices of modernity, but the futural resurgence of marginalised ways of being, a politics which does not just critique but affirms the outside.

It is important to highlight that it is not a matter of essentializing subaltern modes of being or knowing. In fact, the experience of living under and surviving through colonial domination means that the capacities and skills that are being salvaged - and enable the salvation of others - are precisely those of adaptation, openness, and change. The foundationally important decolonial thought of Dussel, Mignolo, Escobar, Santos, and others referred to above, therefore has close affinities with some contemporary work in Black Studies, which also seeks to build visions of alternative futures from the margins of modernity. The capacity to 'live on' to imagine and be creative after 'the end of the world' or without 'world' is a vital connecting link. One thinker who is a key interlocutor for much affirmative contemporary work in this area is Édouard Glissant.[60] Central for Glissant was the need to start from the abyss of the Middle Passage and plantation slavery, understood as an ontological loss of world. It is this loss of world that enables futurity understood as the necessity of living on 'in the wake' of world-ending catastrophe.[61]

Glissant's work, his *Poetics of Relation* (1997) in particular, established a powerful discourse of affirmation and of alternative possible worlds.[62] Rather than the understanding of coloniality as purely producing abjection, subaltern life worlds and practices are understood to be a continual source of experimentation, improvisation, and creativity, often taking forms that are not visible to the colonial gaze or understanding. For Glissant, catastrophe - the abyss, the end of the world - was the essential starting point for the development of a new humanism, one based upon movement in a world of relation rather than essentialised essences. The abyssal experience of the Middle Passage and of the plantation meant that there could not be a 'before'; there was no one root or single ground as populations were forcibly removed from social backgrounds and past communities of belonging and meaning. The end of the world was thus, paradoxically, the beginning of the new - the destruction and fragmentation of being is the raw material for new forms of becoming and community-building. Without a past all there can be is the future, reframed as an open process of becoming with others.[63]

Writers such as Glissant and Wynter productively help bridge the work of decolonial theorists and Black Studies scholars in their articulation of similarly constructed futural endeavours.[64] This conjunction is highlighted by an important edited collection, *Otherwise Worlds*, which brings Black and Decolonial perspectives together in conversation.[65] The editors suggest that 'one way to think beyond the coordinates of settler, anti-Black modes of being is to actively create otherwise ontologies'.[66] They stress the need to 'live an otherwise life, to assert an otherwise being' and to invest in decolonization as a programme of disrupting and 'disordering' dominant practices and understandings.[67] This programme is one that is 'rooted in life' but also one that 'strategically employs imagination'.[68] The point that comes across most strongly is that of movement, of flux, as the struggle for worlding otherwise is one of perpetual struggle to hold futurity open.

The editors' introduction to the collection highlights Fred Moten's assertion, in regard to the Black radical tradition that: '[it] is not antifoundationalist but improvisatory of foundation'.[69] Decolonial struggle to bring otherwise worlds into being is thus, in this reading, never merely a rejection of a modern ontology nor is it a transition to some definite end but necessarily a continual process of 'improvisation', of moving. It is this drive and desire that creates the unity in difference that continually improvises the grounds of futural possibility. As the editors conclude: 'How can we build Black and Indigenous lifeways that are joyfully unbound and purposefully evade rest/stagnation/fixation?'[70] These futural imaginaries thereby depend upon openness rather than closure and movement rather than sedimentation. Black Studies theorists who engage with ideas of decolonial futures ground their imaginaries in the interstitial places where Black lives have been subject to violence and yet have been able to thrive and carve out ways of being and thinking otherwise. These liminal spaces, where Black sociality, life, culture, and resistance were fostered, allow for the affirmative imagining of futures beyond modernity.

These readings of Black futures have many affinities with decolonial futures proposed by Latin American theorists. As Kara Keeling states, 'Black existence is generative of Black Belonging, futures are animated by an invention that renders "the future" opaque – Black

futures exist "after the future," blossoming in spite of what presently seems destined to be the future.'[71] It is seen in the Afrofuturism of artists and musicians like Alice Coltrane, Sun Ra and George Clinton.[72] This type of Black futurity is also about imagining alternative futures, taking the dreams of those in the periphery to construct worlds otherwise. Rather than the technocratic governance of modernity, Afrofuturism draws on Black musical knowledge, on blues as a 'black secret technology'.[73] Keeling argues that:

> …what Afrofuturism offers to thinking, with its yearning for another world, another planet that operates according to the space-time of Black liberation, is a way to enter into relation with an autochthonous space of and for Black existence… this mode of relation can be conceptualised as a creative, eccentric way of sinking deeply into the space held open in music and engaging with what is always there already.[74]

These Black futures are also based on relational ontologies, on creativity and the shifting, improvisatory interaction with community and others who have been excluded from humanity. They are grounded in the affirmation of peoples' experiences of suffering and exploitation that provide a radically different perspective and urgency to their futural endeavours. For Tina Campt, Black futures provide a grammar of possibility, pointing towards a future that 'hasn't yet happened but must'.[75] This kind of futurity is embodied in practices, it does not merely exist after the present, but is produced and performed in the everyday of Black life. For Campt, creating new futures is a responsibility, a requirement for survival in the face of the destruction of modernity and antiblackness.[76]

Decolonial futures of radical possibility are available in the here and now, after the 'end of the world' of modernity. It is important to note that the availability of alternative futures should not be understood in a narrow or essentialist way, in a literal sense as survivals of premodern forms of existence or legacies passed on via opposition or resistance. Futural approaches stem from adaptive and resilient practices of reinvention and imagination, thus it is capacities, affordances and sensibilities that can be nurtured, taught and reenvisaged that are important, as highlighted, for example, by the 'Community Futures Lab' and work undertaken by the Black Quantum Futurism Collective.[77] However, this lack of modernist grounding or foundation can also be understood as problematic: the task of creatively making the world is never ending. The world is already 'over' according to these approaches, so all that remains is affirmation of what exists, that which is always in process, in relation, on the move. Starting out after 'the end of the world' necessarily affirms the possibilities of life in the antiblack world of the present.

**Against Futurity: The Black Horizon**

In this third section we seek to problematize this futural framing of an alternative pluriversal world after modernity: a world grounded upon the richness of alterity rather than the closures of the universal. Inverting the temporality of modern ontology and placing the catastrophe in the past rather than in the future seeks to affirm modes of survival and resistance which are necessarily suborned to the world of modernity. We wish to suggest, perhaps counter intuitively, that the work of affirmative futural imaginaries paradoxically closes off any possibility of a future being different from the present. Reconstructing the

Human as capable of resilience and of 'living on' in the ruins, or 'after the abyss', closes off the future rather than opening it. This is because 'this world', the present, understood as an ongoing process of survival and adaptation to insecurity and uncertainty can only ever then be all that there is. Rather than affirming this world, imagined to be 'after' modernity, we suggest that other alternative approaches, to both temporality and the Human, are possible, grounded in radical scepticism and the rejection of speculative futurities beyond the Human.

We are not the first to highlight the limits or 'impasse' with dominant decolonial understandings, located in an instrumentalized and reductive approach to alterity.[78] As Cristina Rojas notes in her *International Political Sociology* piece from 2016, the Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality (MCD) research program is problematic despite its aim at producing 'worlds and knowledges otherwise'.[79] Here, we seek to build on Cristina Rojas' analysis. In the desire to give a practical, activist, or political edge to a critique of coloniality/modernity, there is the inevitable danger that an essentialising set of binaries are brought into play, where peoples or communities in certain times and places are seen to be the bearers of salvific non-modern or relational understandings. This problematically affirms existing modes of life and the struggles imagined to be ways forward to alternative non-modern futures. As we have seen above, futural imaginaries depend upon the affirmation of alternative spaces or places existing in the here and now, hidden within or on the margins or the periphery of the antiblack world.

However, a minoritarian line of decolonial thought, which we call the Black Horizon,[80] could instead be followed, one that is less affirmative and brings scepticism to the fore, questioning assumptions of a literal spatial or temporal break from modernity, living *after* abyssal catastrophe. This is an approach, based on the idea that the world is foundationally antiblack, that focuses on subtraction from modernity, rather than repairing it or affirming an outside. Thus, there is no Black Horizon futurity, as we have the world of the present to deal with, the world of modernity to deconstruct, before we can start thinking about something better. Moreover, we would argue that a Black Horizon perspective resists affirmation, as this too relies on the maintenance of the world, albeit with a recentring on the marginalised. With this shift in perspective, we might re-read work by Glissant or Moten, seeing them not as affirmative, but providing an account of a disruptive, destabilising form of black sociality, which eats away at the intellectual foundations of modernity, rather than offering a concrete alternative for Anthropocene futurity. Indeed, Glissant's concept of "opacity" is crucial to a Black Horizon approach, as it highlights Caribbean black life as a form of being that defies knowability, that is unquantifiable, and thus impossible to replicate.[81]

A good example of this approach is Maldonado-Torres' critique of Dussel for attempting the 'direct application of Levinas's ethical metaphysics to concrete historical reality'.[82] Dussel sought to find an alternative mode of being and of reasoning in the actually existing Other to the modern subject, arguing that 'this Other encompasses the peripheral colonial world,

the sacrificed Indian, the enslaved black, the oppressed woman, the subjugated child, and the alienated popular culture—all victims of modernity's irrational action in contradiction to its own rational ideal.'[83] Dussel's Other, unlike Levinas's, is knowable and functions more like a justification for the Subject's normative ideals than a point of true alterity that can never be fully understood. Maldonado-Torres argues that: 'Dussel seems to commit a double error: first he mistranslates Levinasian ethics to concrete reality and then he uses the translated terms for the analysis of a context in which ethical categories do not seem to apply in the first place.'.[84]

The reason that ethical categories do not apply for a more sceptical reading is that, from this perspective, there is nothing to affirm in life under coloniality and racial capitalism. The affirmative reading of Dussel and others conflates an outside or Other to modernity with the experience of colonization, of being Other to the colonizer. While, for Levinas, the Other is never literally present but 'a continuous source of destabilization' that 'never becomes a ground':[85]

> …for Dussel, the Other is a concrete human subject in a position of subordination. The Other for him is precisely the subject who lives on the periphery. It is the poor and the oppressed. In this way Dussel identifies metaphysical exteriority with exclusion. The Other is not so much the Other qua Other but the Other qua poor. Dussel (con)fuses here the "beyond Being" with the non-being.[86]

Maldonado-Torres argues that Dussel shifts from the modernist understanding of the subaltern as a 'non-being', lacking ontological weight, to 'beyond Being', in a space outside of modernity, the antiblack world and coloniality.[87] This understanding reproduces a modern ontology, not only essentializing the subaltern subject, held to possess non-modern beliefs and practices, but dividing the world according to the binary imaginary of coloniality - between Colonial and Non-colonial subjects. Thus, rather than challenging discourses of mastery, ironically, decolonial approaches of affirmation can easily end up reproducing them, once there is a category error of confusing levels of analysis.

Similar sceptical approaches in Black studies draw on the sociological work of W.E.B. Du Bois at the start of the last century.[88] For Nahum Chandler, Du Bois opens up the problematic of the modern ontology and the subject per se, suggesting that the task for critical thought is one of 'desedimentation' or 'destablization' rather than 'primarily one of recovery and return'.[89] Where the dominant strand of decolonial thinking seeks to expand and rework the concept of human and expand the world available to it, this minoritarian strand of thinking (for example, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Axelle Karera, Denise Ferreira da Silva, David Marriott, Nahum Chandler, Frank Wilderson and Jared Sexton among others)[90] seeks to undertake very different work further deconstructing the production of the human.

Undertaking the work of 'desedimentation' and 'destabilization', as David Marriott crucially argues, means rejecting decolonial approaches which continue 'to think inventivity in teleological terms (as a moment wherein the "human" and the "historical" can be

reconciled'.[91] In his powerful critique of Sylvia Wynter's reading of Fanon he concludes that 'any attempt to claim an *escape* from racism necessarily involves a teleological appeal to a post-racial future that compromises the escape the moment it is claimed'.[92] The assumption of another world 'within' or 'beyond' the present necessarily shifts the critical focus from negation to affirmation of existing agencies and potentials. Thus Wynter, like Dussel, affirms the phenomenological status of lived experience without explaining how post-racial humanism can arise as part of a project of temporal adaptation and resilience.[93]

It is for this reason that Marriott highlights the problem with much contemporary discourse as the conflation of Blackness as an outside to a modern ontology of Being with Black(ened) subjects and their phenomenological or lived experience of an antiblack world.[94] Imaginaries of Black futures necessarily seek to ground these futural temporalities in the affirmation of modes of life and practices existing in the present. A sceptical decolonial approach, that of the Black Horizon, resists this focus on Black and Indigenous practices as somehow an already existing alternative to or an outside of coloniality/modernity. As Calvin Warren writes, Blackness only has meaning in an antiblack world and, in fact, gives meaning to a modernist ontology of Being: without antiblackness there can be no 'world'.[95] Thus, the task is the refusal of this world rather than the hope that alternative futures can be carved from within it:

> The Politics of hope, then, is bound up with metaphysical violence, and this violence masquerades as a "solution" to the problem of anti-blackness. Temporal linearity, perfection, betterment, struggle, work, and utopian futurity are conceptual instruments of the Political that will never obviate black suffering or anti-black violence; these concepts only serve to reproduce the conditions that render existence unbearable for blacks.[96]

An analogy could perhaps be made with a Marxist approach to class and the human. While Dussel is right to suggest that 'exteriority' is an important category for Marx's thought it was not as a 'people' rather than as a 'class' that human praxis represented the future.[97] Marxist approaches refused the romanticization of working-class culture, instead arguing that the immiseration, dependency and degradation of this mode of living necessitated overthrowing the 'world' that existed rather than affirming it. For Marx, there could be no existing practices or blueprints for future society merely the knowledge that for the human to exist capitalist social relations needed to be abolished. Marx and Engels thereby argued that 'communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things'.[98] For this reason, affirmative and futural imaginaries were considered problematic, inevitably detracting from and making more difficult the task of abolishing the present system.[99]

Thus, for a sceptical, Black Horizon, decoloniality the task is that of negation rather than affirmation. In fact, we would suggest that increasing attention is being paid to a range of

approaches focusing less on futurity and more on deconstruction, on the refusal of modern subjectivity and the constraints of modernity. Two recent examples are the approaches of Jayna Brown and Rinaldo Walcott.[100] Walcott's powerful essay, *The Long Emancipation* is very much in the vein articulated here, reading Black life as resistance, as a force of negation rather than affirmation. Thus, '*the long emancipation* … insists that Black people continually are prohibited and interdicted from authorizing what exactly freedom might look like and mean for them collectively'.[101] Walcott is therefore sceptical of what he calls the '"big" narratives of freedom' of Moten and other writers, which affirm narratives of 'marronage and fugitivity'.[102] He rightly argues that these terms 'only make sense in the space of unfreedom' and that Black unfreedom and anti-Black violence are their precondition.[103]

Another path to refusal can be found in Brown's reading of the utopian thought of jazz musician Sun Ra and the argument that Ra embraced Blackness as nothingness in order to escape the ontological terms of modernity. Ra's relationship to the future is complex, as he rejects traditional concepts of linear time, striving towards an alterity which reaches beyond time and space. This allows for thinking that achieves a more radical shift in paradigm, "a jump into the unknowable".[104] She suggests that:

> Nothing, the subject of many of Ra's poems, is blackness, but nothing is not the negation of being itself. Blackness is nothing – that is, anterior to ontological possibility, but only on earthly terms. Nothing is the "freedom not to be", the refusal to respect sovereignty or acquiesce to its terms.[105]

For Brown, Ra's rejection of modernity and humanity demonstrates an ambivalent practice, one that is utopian in its refusal, its disengagement from modernity. He refuses to demand recognition or engage in conversation with the Human but does so on his own terms. His embrace of the void, of nothing, in his music provides a generative space that rejects the reconstitution of the Human, holding out for something beyond the abyss. Brown argues that Ra's thought, which blends a mystical affinity with the cosmos with insights from science, has an affinity with quantum physics, depicting the universe where traditional conceptions of ontology and epistemology do not hold. His thought is not futural, as it does not accept the idea of a future that comes after the present. For Ra, 'one reaches into the impossible not forward into the future'.[106]

**Conclusion**

The Anthropocene opens new avenues for thinking about the future and offers up new lines of flight away from the liberal subject of modernity, towards plural, relational worlds. These futures seek to avert the apocalypse of climate change, by breaking the progressive trajectory of modernity in favour of new temporalities that eschew mastery of the world and work with nature. However, these theorists of 'Anthropocene critique' have faced their own critiques by decolonial and other allied scholars, who charge them with disavowal of the ongoing effects of colonialism, racial capitalism, and environmental destruction on those excluded by modernity. As we have explored above, a range of alternative and decolonial

approaches have sought to present an affirmative and radically different temporal understanding of the Anthropocene as a condition that we are already in, a post-apocalyptic vision in which climate catastrophe can only be lived with rather than prevented. In this post-catastrophic imaginary, new ways of living on and with catastrophe need to be imagined, drawing upon the resilience and adaptivity of those who have survived and lived on in the face of genocide and oppression and the destruction of their ways of being. Thus, alternative worlds can be imagined, drawing upon and affirming the experience of resisting racial capitalism and coloniality rather than in attempting to instrumentalise non-modern understandings which can then serve to save and sustain it.

We have suggested that the inversion of linear temporal imaginaries of catastrophe to come with affirmative narratives of coping and living on in the wake of catastrophe and the destruction of worlds fails to deliver on its promises. Firstly, these alternative futures inevitably risk naturalising the present rather than enabling any creative alternative. If catastrophe is already here, and the grounds for stable identities and relations are removed, then affirmation only serves to maintain the world as it is. The reification of imaginaries of more-than-human relation, of flux, of process and of perpetual movement naturalise contemporary exclusions and inequities as much as earlier imaginaries of ontological essences, fixity, and linear causality. Secondly, these futural imaginaries, in affirming existing alternative modes of being and working, disavow the antiblack world and the degradation of life ways under the domination of coloniality and racial capitalism.

Rather than producing critical or affirmative visions of the world, we suggest drawing upon a different decolonial approach that requires the negating of the current world before imagining a new one. Drawing on this overlooked strand of thinking, which we heuristically (re)assemble under the framing of the Black Horizon, creates new possibilities for IR debates on the Anthropocene, by shifting the focus away from affirmative, speculative futures, back to the present. The will to futurity has, we believe, gone largely unquestioned in the discipline of International Relations, where even work focused upon the planetary catastrophe of the Anthropocene has been driven to welcome this alleged 'break' from the hegemony of liberal or modernist thought. The Black Horizon provides a framework to challenge the assumptions of this break and the temporalities of the 'end of the world' which perceive modernity to be over and the ground cleared for new and more creative forms of climate change mitigation or for new creative and experimental ways of 'making life in the ruins'. While non-liberal futures may well be dreamed of by those engaged in multi-species and more-than-human imaginaries or in affirming the spaces and struggles of those excluded from the realm of the fully human or liminal to capitalist logics of co-optation and appropriation, the multiple and ongoing violences of the present alert us to the fact that the task of ending this world still remains.

**Notes**

[1] Rita Abrahamsen, Jean-Francois Drolet, Alexandra Gheciu, Karin Narita, Srdjan Vucetic, and Michael Williams, 'Confronting the International Political,' *International Political Sociology* 14, 2020, pp. 94–107; Michael W. Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies, and Foreign Affairs', *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 12(3), 1983, pp. 205–35; Roland Paris, 'Saving Liberal Peacebuilding', *Review of International Studies,* 36 (2), 2010, pp. 337–65.

[2]Jairus Grove, *Savage Ecology: War and Geopolitics at the End of the World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019); Meera Sabaratnam (2020) 'Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Texts', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49 (1), 2020, pp. 3–31; Zeynep Gulsah Capan, 'Decolonising International Relations?' *Third World Quarterly* 38(1), 2017, pp. 1–15; Karen Tucker, 'Unraveling Coloniality in International Relations: Knowledge, Relationality, and Strategies for Engagement', *International Political Sociology* 12 (3), 2018, pp. 215–32; Kerem Nisancioglu, 'Racial Sovereignty', *European Journal of International Relations* 26(1), 2019, pp. 39-63.

[3] Cameron Harrington, 'The Ends of the World: International Relations and the Anthropocene', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 44 (3), 2016, pp.478–98.; Madeleine Fagan, 'Security in the Anthropocene: Environment, Ecology, Escape', *European Journal of International Relations* 23 (2), 2017, pp.292–314.

[4] Dahlia Simangan, 'Literature Review Where Is the Anthropocene? IR in a New Geological Epoch', *International Affairs* 1 (96), 2020, pp.211–24; Paul J. Crutzen, and Eugene F Stoermer, 'The "Anthropocene"', *IGBP Newsletter*, 41, 2000, pp.17–18; Donna J. Haraway, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin', *Multitudes* 65 (4), 2017, pp. 75–81.

[5] Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018); Haraway, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene'; Philip R. Conway, 'On the Way to Planet Politics: From Disciplinary Demise to Cosmopolitical Coordination', *International Relations,* 34(2), 2020, pp.157-179.

[6]Erika Cudworth and Stephen Hobden, 'Of Parts and Wholes: International Relations beyond the Human', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 41(3), 2013, pp. 430–50; Daniel J. Murphy, 'Ecology of Rule: Territorial Assemblages and Environmental Governance in Rural Mongolia', *Anthropological Quarterly,* 87(3), 2014, pp.759–92; Julietta Singh, *Unthinking Mastery: Dehumanism and Decolonial Entanglements* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

[7] Grove, *Savage Ecology*

[8] We should emphasise here that our division into 'critical' and 'affirmative' approaches to the Anthropocene condition is a heuristic framing enabling us to highlight certain distinctions regarding the temporality and meaning of the climate crisis. We are well aware that other ways of engaging contemporary theorising in IR would result in very different divisions and we are also aware, as Suvi Alt highlights ('Conclusion: Critique and the Politics of Affirmation in International Relations', *Global Society*, 2019, 33(1): 137-145), that the distinction between critique and affirmation can often be more a matter of mood or tone as all critique involves the affirmation of certain values (such as truth or reason) and vice-a-versa (affirmative approaches are clearly critical, for example, of racial capitalism and coloniality).

[9] Farai Chipato and David Chandler, 'The Black Horizon: Alterity and Ontology in the Anthropocene', *Global Society*, 37 (2), 2023, pp.157-175.

[10] 'Blackness operates as the modality of life's constant escape and takes the form, the held and errant pattern, of flight'. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Study and Black Planning* (New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), p.51.

[11] Matt McDonald, 'Geoengineering, climate change and ecological Security', *Environmental Politics*, online first 22 August 2022.

[12] John Law, 'What's Wrong with a One-World World?' *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 16 (1), 2015, pp. 126–39; Arturo Escobar, 'Thinking-Feeling with the Earth: Territorial Struggles and the Ontological Dimension of the Epistemologies of the South', *AIBR Revista de Antropologia Iberoamericana,* 11(1), 2016, pp.11–32.

[13] Fagan, 'Security in the Anthropocene'; Axelle Karera, 'Blackness and the Pitfalls of Anthropocene Ethics', *Critical Philosophy of Race,* 7(1), 2019, pp.32–56.

[14] Cudworth and Hobden 'Of Parts and Wholes'; Stefanie Fishel, 'Of Other Movements: Nonhuman Mobility in the Anthropocene', *Mobilities* 14 (3), 2019, pp. 351–62.

[15] Bruno Latour,*We Have Never Been Modern* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1993); Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016)

[16] David Farrier, A*nthropocene Poetics: Deep Time, Sacrifice Zones, and Extinction. (*Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), p. 121

[17] William Connolly, F*acing the Planetary: Entangled Humanism and the Politics of Swarming* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017)

[18] Ihnji Jon, (2020) 'Deciphering Posthumanism : Why and How It Matters to Urban Planning in the Anthropocene', *Planning Theory,* 19(4), 2020, pp. 392-420; Isabel Stengers, 'Autonomy and the Intrusion of Gaia', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116 (2), 2017, pp. 381–400..

[19] Pol Bargués-Pedreny, 'From Critique to Affirmation in International Relations', *Global Society* 33 (1), 2019, pp. 1–11

[20] Bruno Latour, Isabel Stengers, Anna Tsing , and Nils Bubandt, 'Anthropologists Are Talking – About Capitalism, Ecology, and Apocalypse', *Ehnos*, 2018, DOI: 10.1080/00141844.2018.1457703, p.17.

[21] Stephanie Wakefield, 'Inhabiting the Anthropocene Back Loop', *Resilience* 6(2), 2018, pp. 77–94.

[22] Wakefield, 'Inhabiting the Anthropocene', p. 90.

[23] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015)

[24] Ignasi Torrent, Entangled Peace: UN Peacebuilding and the Limits of a Relational World (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021); Morgan Brigg, 'Relational and Essential: Theorizing Difference for Peacebuilding', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 12(3), 2018, pp. 352-366; Mija Kurki, *International Relations in a Relational Universe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020)

[25] Cudworth and Hobden 'Of Parts and Wholes'.

[26] Anthony Burke, Stefanie Fishel, Audra Mitchell, Simon Dalby, and Daniel J. Levine (2016) 'Planet Politics: A Manifesto from the End of IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 44(3), 2016, p.4.

[27]Burke, Fishel, Mitchell, Dalby and Levine, 'Planet Politics', p. 19.

[28] Latour, *Down to Earth*, p. 106

[29] Grove, *Savage Ecology*, p.240.

[30] Grove, *Savage Ecology,* p.267.

[31] Grove, *Savage Ecology,* p.280.
[32] Grove, *Savage Ecology,* P.279
[33] Grove, *Savage Ecology,* p.280
[34] Delf Rothe, 'Governing the End Times? Planet Politics and the Secular Eschatology of the Anthropocene', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 48(2), 2019, pp. 155-6.
[35] Zoe Todd, 'An Indigenous Feminist's Take On The Ontological Turn: "Ontology" Is Just Another Word For Colonialism', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 29 (1), 2016, pp. 4–22; Heather Davis and Zoe Todd, 'On the Importance of a Date, or Decolonizing the Anthropocene', *Acme* 16 (4), 2017, pp. 761–80.
[36] See also Kathryn Yusoff's points about the disavowal of colonial responsibility for the ravages of the Anthropocene, *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp.26-7.
[37] Karera, 'Blackness and the Pitfalls of Anthropocene Ethics', p.44.
[38] Karera, 'Blackness and the Pitfalls of Anthropocene Ethics', p.43.
[39] Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017); Walter D. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011)
[40] Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of the 'Other' and the Myth of Modernity*. (New York: Continuum, 1995), p.74
[41] Sylvia Wynter, 'Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/ Power/ Truth/ Freedom', *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3(3), 2003, p.260
[42] Ibid, p.9.
[43] Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, 'Unparalled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, To Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations'. In Katherine McKittrick (ed.) *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015) P.31.
[44] Paul Gilroy, '"Where every breeze speaks of courage and liberty": Offshore Humanism and Marine Xenology, or, Racism and the Problem of Critique at Sea Level', *Antipode*, 50(1), 2018, p.7.
[45] Gilroy, 'Where every breeze speaks', p.12.
[46] For example, Conway, 'On the Way to Planet Politics'; Louiza Odysseos, 'Prolegomena to Any Future Decolonial Ethics: Coloniality, Poetics and "Being Human as Praxis"', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies,* 45 (3), 2017, pp. 447–72; Audra Mitchell and Aadita Chaudhury (2020) 'Worlding beyond "the" "End" of "the World": White Apocalyptic Visions and BIPOC Futurisms', *International Relations,* 34(3), 2020, pp. 309-332.
[47] Rothe, 'Governing the End Times', p.21.
[48] Marisol De la Cadena and Mario Blaser, *A World of Many Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018); Escobar, 'Thinking-Feeling with the Earth'.
[49] Anibal Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality', *Cultural Studies* 21 (2), 2007, pp. 168–78.
[50] Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020); Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Towards a Global Idea of Race*. Minneapolis, (MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007)
[51] Quijano, 'Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality'; Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2008)
[52]Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 'Beyond Abyssal Thinking: From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges', *Review (Fernand Braudel Center),* 30(1), 2007, pp. 45-89.

[53] Vincenza Pellegrino and Giuseppe Ricotta, 'Global social science. Dislocation of the abyssal line and post-abyssal epistemologies and practices', *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia,* 4, 2020, pp. 803-828.
[54] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p.11.
[55] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p. 232.
[56] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p. 233.
[57] Arturo Escobar (2017) *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press: 2017).
[58] Walter D. Mignolo, 'The Many Faces of Cosmo-Polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism', *Public Culture,* 12(3), 2005, P. 745.
[59] Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), p.173.
[60] See also Kara Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures* (New York: New York University Press, 2019); An Yountae, *The Decolonial Abyss: Mysticism and Cosmopolitics from the Ruins*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2016).
[61]Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
[62] Eduard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).
[63]John E. Drabinski, *Glisssant and the Middle Passage: Philosophy, Beginning, Abyss*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).
[64] Tiffany Lethabo King, Janelle Navarro, and Andrea Smith, 'Beyond Incommensurability: Toward an Otherwise Stance on Black and Indigenous Relationality,' in Tiffany Lethabo King , Janelle Navarro and Andrea Smith (eds), *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*. Durham, (NC: Duke University Press, 2020), pp. 1-23.
[65] Tiffany Lethabo King, Janelle Navarro and Andrea Smith (eds.), *Otherwise Worlds: Against Settler Colonialism and Anti-Blackness*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).
[66] King, Navarro, and Smith, 'Beyond Incommensurability', p.12.
[67] King, Navarro, and Smith, 'Beyond Incommensurability', p.13.
[68] King, Navarro, and Smith, 'Beyond Incommensurability', p.13.
[69] Cited in King, Navarro, and Smith, 'Beyond Incommensurability', p.8.
[70] King, Navarro, and Smith, 'Beyond Incommensurability', p.21.
[71] Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Future*, p.36
[72] Kodwo Eshun (2003) 'Further Considerations on Afrofuturism'. *New Centennial Review* 2(3), 2003, pp. 287-302.
[73] Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures*, p.127.
[74] Keeling, *Queer Times, Black Futures*, p.69.
[75] Tina M. Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).
[76] Campt, *Listening to Images*, p. 114.
[77] See, for example, Rasheedah Phillips (ed.) *Space-Time Collapse II: Community Futures* (Philadelphia, PA: The Afrofuturist Affair/ House of Future Science Books, 2020).
[78] Cristina Rojas, 'Contesting the colonial logics of the international: Toward a relational politics for the pluriverse', *International Political Sociology*, 10(4), 2017, p 377.
[79] Rojas 'Contesting the colonial logics', pp. 376-7.
[80] We take this term from Nahum Dimitri Chandler, *Toward an African Future – of the Limit of the World* (London: Living Commons Collective 2013).
[81] Glissant*, Poetics of Relation.*

[82] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p. 183.
[83] Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas*, p.137.
[84] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p.185.
[85] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p.181
[86] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p.181-2
[87] Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p.182
[88] W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Amazon Classics, 1903); Maldonado-Torres, *Against War*, p.226.
[89] Nahum Dimitri Chandler, *X: The Problem of the Negro as a Problem for Thought.* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), p.65.
[90] Jackson, *Becoming Human*, Karera, 'Blackness and the Pitfalls of Anthropocene Ethics'; Da Silva, *Towards a Global Idea of Race,* Chandler, *X: The Problem of the Negro,* Frank D. Wilderson, *Red, White and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); David Marriott, *Whither Fanon: Studies in the Blackness of Being* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018); Jared Sexton, 'The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism', *InTensions Journal* 5, 2011, pp. 1-47.
[91] Marriott, *Whither Fanon*, p.281.
[92] Marriott, *Whither Fanon*, p.281.
[93] Marriott, *Whither Fanon*, p.288-9.
[94] Marriott, *Whither Fanon*, p.209-222.
[95] Calvin Warren, 'Black Nihilism & the Politics of Hope', *CR: The New Centennial Review,* 15(1), 2015, p.226.
[96] Warren, 'Black Nihilism', p.243.
[97] Enrique Dussel, *Towards an Unknown Marx: A Commentary on the Manuscripts of 1861-63* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.240-5.
[98] Cited in Roger Paden (2002) 'Marx's Critique of the Utopian Socialists', *Utopian Studies* 13(2), 2002, p.71.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Jayna Brown, *Black Utopias: Speculative Life and the Music of Other Worlds* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021); Rinaldo Walcott, *The Long Emancipation: Toward Black Freedom* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).
[101] Walcott, *The Long Emancipation*, p.105.
[102] Walcott, *The Long Emancipation*, p.106.
[103] Walcott, *The Long Emancipation*, p.107.
[104] Brown, *Black Utopias*, p.159.
[105] Brown, *Black Utopias*, p.174.
[106] Brown, *Black Utopias*, p.171.