The Ugliness of Freedom's Practices, Hyper-visibility, and Enjoyment

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Abstract This response to Elisabeth Anker's essays reads her analysis of "sugar" as both a metonymic object and an archive of freedom, showing not only *that* sugar reveals a modern theory of freedom, but that it also does so by producing *attachments* to the enjoyment of human suffering. I argue that it is primarily these attachments that are concealed by sugar's sickly sweetness, making it difficult to break such attachments merely by pointing them out. Rather, such attachments can only be broken by turning to alternate archives and practices of freedom that can disrupt the enjoyment of ugly freedom.

1. A Commodity (That Speaks)

Early in Jordy Rosenberg's novel, *Confessions of the Fox,* the mythic thief and jailbreaker, Jack Sheppard, is found looting a toyshop in eighteenth-century London. In Rosenberg's speculative, critical, and fabulous rendering, Sheppard is the "most through carouser of quim in all of London," gender queer, trans, and in the words of Bess (Jack's love, lover, and partner in crime and queer life): "A wonderful, fetching *Something*."[1]

While prowling through the toyshop, Jack is suddenly assaulted by the voices of the somethings on the shelves:

> And then the quiet broke. Sound flooded from every corner. … A tripling, quadrupling of sound. Vivid and desperate. Jack jumped, then spun, trying to fix on the source. He raced along the walls, grabbing at bebobs, sending them scattering. … The sounds came from *things.* A blond-haired doll in the window wailed. A stack of Chessboards emitted muffled groans. A roar emanated from clusters of marbles. All the objects shriek'd out to Jack, begging for something. Begging for release. … It was nonsensical, but Jack could hear what he felt sure was a wish. To be tangled, thrown, caress'd. A row of straw-haired dolls begged to be held. A pile of wooden Blocks jockey'd to be stacked. They all wanted something. They wanted him to take them.[2]

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Jack fears that he is mad, hearing these *things* speak to him in a way that "call'd to him, bawling out their miserable Biographies, their wants, their needs, their Histories and Travels … the entire crowded consecutions of labor, Exchange, and Fraud congealed in them." Bess assures him that "I think the world is quite mad. Not you."[3]

Rosenberg's Jack Sheppard had heard these voices before, during a period of incarceration during which he was put on display for curious onlookers and tourists. He had been "commoditized": (re) produced as a thing for consumption, given a new purpose in a circuit of material and affective exchange, revalued in relation to margins of profit, loss, and speculation. Rosenberg's narrator offers commentary on the recovered manuscript that details Sheppard's adventures. These marginal notes tell their own fabulous story of the narrator—Dr. Voss, a trans-masculine professor of English at an unnamed university in what sure feels like Amherst, MA—and in doing so also remind readers of Marx's famous question: what might happen if commodities themselves could speak? What would they say?

What happens when we take up speculative fictions and critical fabulations in those gaps and spaces and ask what exactly we are doing when we ask *things* to speak, and when we render persons as things in order to silence their speech? Anker's essay takes up the thing that is sugar—and we might even elevate it into proper noun: *Sugar*—and compels it to speak about the "crowded consecutions of labor, Exchange, and Fraud congealed" in it. For Anker, sugar is a commodity that speaks. Sugar tells us about itself, its miserable "Biography, its wants, its needs, its Histories and Travels." Through Anker's analysis, Sugar speaks of its circuits of production, its processing, its flows and circulation, its life and afterlife, all which reveal how contemporary political life has been built on oppression and suffering. This knowledge is something that we perhaps already know but are unable (or unwilling) to confront without questioning our own desires: that our freedom is unfree, that our desires for sweetness can be sickly, and that those things which "we cannot not want" shapes these desires and attaches us to things we (hopefully) despise.[4] The world of Sugar is quite mad, and if we are willing to listen, we will learn that its world is in fact our own.

2. "The ugliness of Freedom"[5]

Anker tells us that sugar, "reveals a theory of freedom."[6] It "makes palpable, and palatable, the interconnections between individual personhood, rule of law, and private property with settler colonialism, enslavement, resource extraction and corporate consolidation."[7] It "offers both a theory of freedom and gustatory archive of freedom's violent practices."[8] These practices are wide and varied, but they include "the activities of the sugar slave plantation."[9]

With these sweeping opening claims, Anker runs the risk of turning sugar into too much, a stand-in for nearly anything and everything that marks global modernity. Yet in her historical and theoretical work that follows, Anker constrains sugar to two forms. First, sugar is a metonymic object of modern liberal freedom. It is, she writes, a "material sediment of liberal freedom," a globally produced commodity whose production fulfills desires of liberal subjects for autonomy and pleasure.[10] As Anker puts it: "The material of sugar, its addictively gratifying taste, contains exploitation, theft, and violence, which are concealed within its familiarity and sweetness, its cheap ubiquity and easy pleasure."[11] This materiality exposes liberal "freedom's ugliness" and its grounding in "enslavement and dispossession." As with sugar, therefore, modern liberal freedom—defined and defended as self-mastery, dominion, and property—is bittersweet and deadly.

Second, sugar is more than metonymic as it also contains, if it were to speak, a *record* of liberal freedom's history, its formation, and its assumptions. It is, following Lisa Lowe's work, an "archive of freedom." As an archival "object," it can "offer a more encompassing history of liberal freedom than standard readings of political theoretical texts of European archives because [its] very material incorporates the peoples, labor, and resources from across the globe."[12] In Anker's analysis, to read sugar as an "archive of freedom" is a way to attend not simply to its histories of production, circulation, and exchange, but to the "multisensory experience" of freedom. Sugar, Anker declares, is "what freedom *tastes like*."[13]

In both of these registers (sugar as metonymic object and sugar as archive of freedom), Anker theorizes freedom through how it has been (and continues to be) practiced, congealed into the object/archive of sugar. These two registers roughly map to the two substantive methods of the essay. In the first part—tracing the history of sugar plantations in Barbados and Carolina, practices of enslavement, and John Locke's own involvement in colonial sugar production—Anker follows sugar as the metonymic object through which a re-reading of Locke's account of freedom and property are shown to be "tethered" to enslavement and dispossession. In the second part—focused on Kara Walker's sculptural and performative work, *A Subtlety, Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant* – Anker reads sugar as an aesthetic archive, attending to how the constituted object of the artwork provokes a fully sensory experience, overpowering its audience's visual and olfactory senses. The archive of suffering congealed in the object overwhelms the viewer in a bodily way. As Anker argues, "the Marvelous Sugar Baby attends to the complexity of modern freedom's plantation practices. She brings together

violent, coerced labor and spaces of refinement, forcing the audience to see—and smell—their interconnections."[14] It is an archive as an object, read not merely through historical analysis, but primarily through sensory experience in relation to it.

Methodologically then, Anker does not merely turn to sugar as a text to read, but she asks us to productively "overread" it.[15] For Anker, this approach allows for a fuller picture of what modern liberal freedom entails (its destructive costs). But I would contend that it also (and perhaps more importantly) helps us to be become more attentive to the ways that we become *attached* to freedom through affective, material, sensory experiences of it. And such attachments become *necessarily* connected not just to freedom as a "product" of conditions of social relation, but to the conditions themselves: the concrete means of their production. That is to say, to overread sugar ought to show us the familiarity of what Enrique Dussel calls the "underside of modernity."[16]

It is here that we see how the core terms of political theory, especially in its liberal-democratic form, are deeply entangled in seeming opposites (or at least what ought to be contradictory forces). Such seeming oppositions—radical unfreedoms of bondage, forced labor, social and civil death—are in fact constitutive with liberal freedom, *and they always have been*. The dialectic between freedom and slavery is not merely an ancient one, but continually practiced and reinvented on new terms. The disruption of this dialectic requires, therefore, not merely the acknowledgment of these histories, but of new ways of practicing freedom.

3. Concealment and the "Unthought Known"

The difficulty, however, is not in pointing out *that* this is the case—that modern liberal freedom is practiced through violence—but in demonstrating *how* it has come to be this way.[17] Tracing out this *how,* by establishing the specific historical contingencies that gave rise to particular formations, grounds the hope that other formations *were* possible, and thus, *remain* possible. The difficulty, then, turns from the diagnosis to the cure: how deeply must we cut if we are to practice freedom otherwise than in this bittersweet form? The particular difficulty is not that modern liberal freedom is based in violence, it is rather the *embrace* of liberal freedom's violence *as* sweetness because we too seek to participate in the right of lords, to *enjoy* the taste of sugar, including its burned enfleshment.[18]

This forces us to ask what exactly it is that is "concealed" and what is the "unthought known" for Anker? Anker writes, "The material of sugar, its addictively gratifying taste, contains exploitation, theft, and violence, which are concealed within its familiarity and sweetness, its

cheap ubiquity and easy pleasure."[19] Yet as her own analysis makes clear, the exploitation, theft, and violence—whether contained in the aesthetic archive of sugar or the metonymic object's history—is all too easily revealed. Rather, it seems that what is concealed and unthought is the *enjoyment* of liberal freedom's exploitation, theft, and violence. The "ugliness of freedom's practices" is found, I would argue, in the ways that the obvious *enjoyment* of suffering must be disavowed or constitutively excluded.

Anker's claim cannot simply be that that exploitation, theft, and violence are merely concealed, but rather that they are constitutively excluded from sugar and from liberal freedom. Constitutive exclusion, as theorized by Sina Kramer, marks the structure and process by which something intolerable to the formation and maintenance of a political body or body of thought, is excluded within that body, marked as intolerable to it, but nevertheless necessary for it.[20] The persistence of the constitutively excluded element is maintained (in part) through the formation of an epistemological block, Kramer writes, that prevents the excluded element from appearing as properly theoretical, or properly political. The violence, exploitation, and theft—these can only appear (if they do at all) as aberrations, historical anomalies, or past failures and never as necessary elements of the object in question. Sugar's sweetness, and liberal freedom's normative allure, rely on these unjustifiable foundations, and so must be made either justificatory or excluded within. This is what Anker must mean when she writes that "freedom is not simplistically a ruse to conceal enslavements… but more complexly it suggests that *practices of modern freedom include enslavement and dispossession*."[21] I would add that the *way* in which enslavement and dispossession have been "included" into modern freedom is *constitutively*. What does *appear* and what *is known* are the pleasures produced (for some) by this enslavement and dispossession. We remain attached (perhaps unthought and concealed under an epistemological block) to those practices without which we could not enjoy such pleasures.

This distinction—between mere inclusion and constitutive exclusion—matters because what is "ugly" about freedom in Anker's rendering is not something that can merely be excised, restoring modern liberal freedom to some pure or refined form (i.e. freedom, hold the slavery). Nor can we simply decide to embrace some second-best form, simply taking our freedom in an unrefined form (i.e. "raw" sugar is still, after all, sugar). This would be to accept as natural what is in fact historically contingent, to ontologize freedom's ugliness. Rather it means, following Kramer again, that *how* we identify the ugliness of freedom's practices is as important as *what* we identify. A clean distinction between epistemology, ontology, and politics is impossible with something like freedom. What freedom *is*, how it is *known*, and what

we *do* with it, are all implicated in a way that should make us uncomfortable.

4. Pleasure, Enjoyment, Use (the taste of freedom/property)

It is the *attachments* that make the difference. Anker establishes that the freedom enjoyed by some is co-constitutive with the domination of others. Attending to *sugar* in particular (with its ambivalent sweetness) helps us understand how the *desire* for freedom arises not in spite of its underside or its ugliness, but *because* of it. Without a proper accounting for the pleasures, enjoyments, and the use of such freedom, articulating a new mode of political life that challenges it is impossible. This is, I take it, what is at stake for Anker in the "intervention" she reads from Walker's exhibition.

Sugar appears to contain an archive of the parasitic form of social life produced by and lived under liberalism. This parasitic social life is purchased by attempting to render others socially dead. This archive, congealed in sugar, traces this mode of social life/death because it also powerfully tracks the ambivalence of modern liberal freedom. It tracks what Charles Mills calls white supremacy, the "unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today."[22] But what we ought to hear by "White" in this context—marked again not merely symbolically but also substantively by the Whiteness of sugar—is multi-racial, hetero-patriarchal, settler-colonial, ablest White Supremacy: the kind of freedom that, as Anker notes, operates through sorting people into categories, and then hiding that sorting away through an epistemological block.

Human parasitism (following Orlando Patterson) is the *living off* another's social life through relegating them to social death, through a killing abstraction that takes on concrete forms.[23] The parasite is dependent on the host, as Patterson notes, but parasitism is typically camouflaged, and supports the *life* of the parasite under that cover.[24] If this is the case, what does it mean to be *attached* to forms of social life produced by practices of social death? What does it mean to be attached to the *enjoyment* of such a life? What does it mean to be unable to confront such enjoyments because not only are they *difficult* to know (concealed, blocked epistemologically, impossible to measure), but to acknowledge them would *implicate* the enjoyment of one's own life in the reproduction of social death and maintenance of suffering? How is it possible to break our attachments to those things which we cannot even acknowledge as attachments?

The problem we face is not simply that social death is produced and maintained through practices of freedom, but also that *enjoyable forms of freedom and social life* are produced which are dependent on the social death of others. That some persons are marked as "free" through

the enslavement, torture, exploitation, and consumption of others, is evidence that social lives are built upon social deaths as a matter of what Saidiya Hartman calls a "property of enjoyment."[25] Suffering, Hartman argues, is enjoyed consciously and unconsciously by those in positions of privilege, building investments in the world produced by that suffering and which cannot simply be abolished without disrupting those forms of privilege directly. In Hartman's analysis of chattel slavery, the legal status of the enslaved person as a thing, as a property, indelibly links the "use" of that property to its "enjoyment." The fungibility of the enslaved persons as an interchangeable commodity was the basis of the "joy" experienced by the master's ability to project their "feelings, ideas, desires, and values" onto the body of another.[26]

Such enjoyment, such a "use" of the enslaved person, is both affective (in that it provides concrete instances of "enjoyment" through the bodily suffering of the slave), and conceptual (in that the meanings of very terms of the civil society are formed in and through the abjection of the slave). "The slave," Hartman argues, "is the object or the ground that makes possible the existence of the bourgeois subject and, by negation or contradistinction, defines liberty, citizenship, and the enclosures of the social body."[27] As such, to abolish slavery it is also necessary abolish these specific enjoyments: white liberty, white citizenship, and the white social body.

5. The Commodity (That Screams)

The enslaved person, of course, is a commodity as well. If we return to Rosenberg's Jack Shepperd—blessed/cursed with the ability to hear commodities speak after having been commodified himself—we also remember that the commodity does more than simply speak. Invoking the work of Fred Moten, Rosenberg's narrator reminds us that the commodity sometimes *screams*. Rosenberg's narrator, again in the margins (which turn out to be anything but marginal to Rosenberg's critical fabulation) writes:

> A commodity is an entity without qualities. It is without qualities because at its root, a commodity is simply something that can be exchanged for money. And, about this, Marx was saying: we know that these ciphers cannot speak, but if they could they'd tell us that what has meaning, for them, is their price.
>
> Or *can* they speak? [It is] theorist Fred Moten, who has called Marx's bluff. What of the slave, asks Moten. A human commodity possessed of speech, or—as Moten has it—of "a scream" … Surely, says Moten, the commodity does speak. To say that it doesn't is to blot out an entire bloody history—one without which any history of the West is partial, tendentious."[28]

Moten tells us that "Between looking and being looked at, spectacle and spectatorship, enjoyment and being enjoyed, lies and moves the economy of what Hartman calls hyper-visibility."[29] And what is striking to me, throughout Anker's engagement with Sugar, with Locke, with Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, and Kara Walker, is the way in which the ugliness of freedom's practices is just this: hyper-visible. And as Anker's own work demonstrates, freedom's entanglement with domination is anything but concealed during its enjoyment and use. It is constantly present, shaping social life built on social death, and in ways that appear to us as *necessary* both logically and historically. Yet they appear necessary only because of *how* we have known them, through the defenses given by the enslavers rather than the enslaved, and through our own participation in the use and enjoyment of property.

If domination and coercion are both entangled with modern liberal freedom's claims to autonomy and non-coercion, then yes: it is time to be done with liberal freedom. It may even, therefore, be time to be done with freedom-as-such. But the logic of necessity assumes that this world is in fact all that we have, and that there aren't already other worlds within, against, and underneath the world of liberal freedom. That is, another world is possible because other paths and options have always been open, screaming from the margins (which turn out to not have been marginal at all in alternate traditions to liberalism).

As Moten concludes in *In the Break,* the scream (in this case, of Frederick Douglass' Aunt Hester) is the resistance of the object, the "performance-in-objection" that is a pre-figurative work of the revolutionary revaluation of value.[30] It is the revolutionary force that was already apparent in the call and response between subject/objects who have been relegated to object status, who have been sorted into the hierarchy of White supremacy as a global system of rule. For Anker, the affective presence of the Marvelous Sugar Baby "invites audiences to imagine alternatives to freedom beyond the sugar plantation."[31]

This is an alternate way to read Kara Walker's *A Subtlety...*, following Christina Sharpe's description of it as a "gift."[32] But gifts, it must be remembered, ought not be reduced to a circuit of commodity exchange. They always also establish (or reveal) relationships. [33] As Sharpe puts it (quoting Lewis Hyde's *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World*):

> Walker's sculpture is a "gift," and "unlike the sale of a commodity, the giving of a gift tends to establish a relationship between the parties involved.* [That asterisk appears in the text, right there.] … Furthermore, when gifts circulate within a group, their commerce leaves a series of interconnected relationships in its wake." What kinds of relationships are established in this giving? And receiving? It depends on what is on one's retina.[34]

Anker points us toward the possible relationships that emerge between the audience and Walker's piece, that when confronted with the "fullness of freedom's ugliness," in that they might build new ways of life and new practices of freedom alongside others.

But as we know now, for those of us who visited the Domino Sugar Factory and stood in that massive space with these sugar sculptures, we were not merely alongside others, we were being recorded for an additional aesthetic object, a new archive of freedom.[35] Walker produced a 30-minute film called *An Audience* documenting how the encounter that she constructed played out.[36] What appears to be documented in this film resembles what Moten calls the object's resistance, played out in the space between enjoyment and being enjoyed. Perhaps it is the case, as Anker insists, that even in the face of attempts by viewers to repeat the past, to recreate in the histories of sexualized violence and rape congealed in in the sculpture, that the Marvelous Sugar Baby remained outside the audience's grasp, that it resists in the way that Moten describes. The film (of which I have only seen part) captures such repetitions, but it also archives a wide array of other reactions, comments, and responses. As one commentator claims, "the reactions … were as singular as each of the visitors themselves."[37]

But even as the archive of sugar captured in *A Subtlety* was destroyed as part of the redevelopment of the Brooklyn waterfront to make way for luxury condominiums, Walker gave us a new archival object, one in which the encounter of the object's resistance comprised a new archive of freedom. This new archive establishes a new economy of hyper-visibility, one in which the enjoyment of suffering seems to continue. What Sharpe reminds us to do, however, is to attend to the *relationships* established in the giving and receiving.

Again, what appears to be at stake is not merely *that* modern liberal freedom is co-constitutive with violence, exploitation, and theft. What matters perhaps more is the deeply held attachment to the *world* constituted as such, in its use and enjoyment. Confrontation (as evidenced in *An Audience)* seems insufficient to the task of breaking these attachments. Perhaps more needs to first be lost. Or rather, something *else* needs to be lost: the *enjoyments* of liberal freedom constituted by the relationships established in the sickly-sweet gift of freedom: the individual personhood, the rule of liberal law, and the right of private property. Sharpe, writing in the aftermath of the 2016 election in an essay entitled, "Lose your Kin" makes the stakes starker:

> Slavery is the ghost in the machine of kinship. Kinship relations structure the nation. Capitulation to their current configurations is the continued enfleshment of that ghost.

> Refuse reconciliation to ongoing brutality. Refuse to feast on the corpse of others. Rend the fabric of the kinship narrative. Imagine otherwise. Remake the world. Some of us have never had any other choice.[38]

If gifts establish and reveal relationships, especially those of kinship that tie (and hold) together political communities, then perhaps it is precisely such relationships, and our attachments to them, that need to be lost, as Sharpe insists. If it is the world that is quite mad—the world of racial capitalism that turns from sugar refinement to neoliberal housing development—then perhaps we must be willing to lose that entire world, and the kinship relations that structure it, in order to remake it. If this is what Anker is truly calling for in her closing line, then I am entirely on board.

Notes

1. Jordy Rosenberg, *Confessions of the Fox* (New York: One World, 2018), 5, 109.
2. Rosenberg, 102–3.
3. Rosenberg, 111.
4. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 110.
5. Elisabeth R. Anker, "'White and Deadly': Sugar, Slavery, and The Sweet Taste of Freedom," Theory & Event 23, no. 1 (January 2020): 172.
6. Anker, "'White and Deadly'," 169.
7. Ibid, 169.
8. Ibid, 169.
9. Ibid, 172.
10. Ibid, 172.
11. Ibid, 190.
12. Ibid, 169.
13. Ibid, 191.
14. Ibid, 196.
15. I take the term overreading from David Kazanjian: "What if we repurposed the term "overreading" and used it … as a name for the activity of reading for the singular and unverifiable in the putatively empirical?" David Kazanjian, "Freedom's Surprise: Two Paths Through Slavery's Archives," *History of the Present* 6, no. 2 (2016): 143, https://doi.org/10.5406/historypresent.6.2.0133.
16. Enrique D. Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation*, trans. Eduardo Mendieta (Atlantic Highlands, N.J: Humanities Press, 1996).

17. Tracing out a distinction between "that" and "how" is properly the work of critical genealogy, by which I mean something along the lines of what Ladelle McWhorter calls "a critical description of a dominant description." Ladelle McWhorter, *Bodies and Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Sexual Normalization* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 43. See also Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013); Verena Erlenbusch-Anderson, *Genealogies of Terrorism: Revolution, State Violence, Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018); Andrew Dilts, "Toward Abolitionist Genealogy," *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 55 (September 1, 2017): 51–77, https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12237.
18. C.L.R. James, in his account of how sugar and flesh were tied together on the cane plantation, spares us nothing: "But there was no ingenuity that fear or a depraved imagination could devise which was not employed to break their spirit and satisfy the lusts and resentment of their owners and guardians-irons on the hands and feet, blocks of wood that the slaves had to drag behind them wherever they went, the tin-plate mask designed to prevent the slaves eating the sugar-cane, the iron collar. Whipping was interrupted in order to pass a piece of hot wood on the buttocks of the victim; salt, pepper, citron, cinders, aloes, and hot ashes were poured on the bleeding wounds. Mutilations were common, limbs, ears, and sometimes the private parts, to deprive them of the pleasures which they could indulge in without expense. Their masters poured burning wax on their arms and hands and shoulders, emptied the boiling cane sugar over their heads, burned them alive, roasted them on slow fires, filled them with gunpowder and blew them up with a match; buried them up to the neck and smeared their heads with sugar that the flies might devour them; fastened them near to nests of ants or wasps; made them eat their excrement, drink their urine, and lick the saliva of other slaves. One colonist was known in moments of anger to throw himself on his slaves and stick his teeth into their flesh." C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint l'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Second edition, revised (New York: Vintage Books, a Division of Random House, Inc., 1989), 12–13.
19. Anker, "'White and Deadly'," 190.
20. Sina Kramer, *Excluded Within: The (Un)Intelligibility of Radical Political Actors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
21. Anker, "'White and Deadly'," 172.
22. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.
23. Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). On racism and "killing abstractions," see also Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007); Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

24. Resistant social life may, of course, also operate under various forms of "cover." See, for instance, James Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992); Robin D. G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Cathy J. Cohen, "Deviance as Resistance: A New Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 1, no. 1 (2004): 27–45; Scott (1992), Kelley (1994), Cohen (2004).
25. Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Saidiya Hartman and Frank B. Wilderson III, "The Position of the Unthought," *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2 (2003): 183–201.
26. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, 21.
27. Hartman, 62.
28. Rosenberg, *Confessions of the Fox*, 296.
29. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 1.
30. Moten, 252.
31. Anker, "'White and Deadly'," 198.
32. Christina Elizabeth Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 99.
33. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Halls (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000).
34. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 99.
35. Carolina A. Miranda, "Kara Walker on the Bit of Sugar Sphinx She Saved, Video She's Making," *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 2014, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-kara-walker-on-her-sugar-sphinx-the-piece-she-saved-video-shes-making-20141013-column.html; Rachel Corbett, "Kara Walker Secretly Filmed You Taking Selfies in Front of Her Sphinx," Vulture, November 19, 2014, https://www.vulture.com/2014/11/kara-walker-filmed-you-in-front-of-her-sphinx.html.
36. A five-minute trailer for the film is available online at *https://vimeo.com/112396045*
37. Carolina A. Miranda, "Kara Walker's Sphinx Draws Less-Charged Reactions in Person," *Los Angeles Times*, November 24, 2014, https://www.latimes.com/entertainment/arts/miranda/la-et-cam-kara-walker-sugar-sculpture-video-reaction-20141125-column.html.
38. Christina Sharpe, "Lose Your Kin," *The New Inquiry,* November 16, 2016, https://thenewinquiry.com/lose-your-kin/.