



FIGURE 1. Deborah Anzinger, *Before you realized you could be seen, I watched you soaked in the shade while I was conceiving*, 2018. Acrylic, mirror and synthetic hair on canvas, 72 × 54 inches. Photograph by Constance Mensh. Image courtesy of the artist.

Staging Mirrors

Deborah Anzinger's Eco-aesthetic Syntax of Dehiscent Being

C.C. MCKEE

Mirrors abound in Jamaican artist Deborah Anzinger's body of work from 2018 to 2019. In the painted assemblage *Before you realized you could be seen, I watched you soaked in the shade while I was conceiving* the mirror takes a fluid shape that oscillates between orifice and feature of the landscape (fig. 1). With *Inhospitable*, the mirror is less prominent, cut at jagged angles that counteract the rounded forms that structure the composition. And they exist beyond the wall; in *Eye* the mirror apposes ceramic forms and aloe plants, welling up on the gallery floor like a puddle or scintillating rupture in the visual landscape. Whatever their manifestation, they take on an active function within what she terms the "aesthetic syntax" that organizes her work.¹ Anzinger has intimated that her conceptualization of aesthetic syntax, rather than delimiting a set of signifying conventions, produces meaning via the material metaphors created between elements of given artworks and their interaction with viewers. The aesthetic is an active force "for transmitting logic by proposing relational priorities."² As one term in her material lexicon of acrylic paint, ceramic, synthetic hair, polystyrene, and *Aloe barbadensis* plants, the mirror's reflective surface acts as a catalyst through which her works inearth a black and feminine ecology to propose an environmental relationality.³

This essay centers on the mirror's conjunctive role in Anzinger's aesthetic syntax to explore the extent to which budding forms of ecologically informed being emerge when the variously animate humans, plants, and materials of her work are placed in inti-

mate, desiring relation with none taking priority in the encounter.⁴ Her investment in aesthetics eschews the disinterested transcendence of the beautiful to enfold the spectator into a dialogic relationality that dissolves the Enlightened anthropocentric hierarchy of animacy.⁵ This position, most famously articulated by Descartes and Kant, ennobled (white, European) Man above feminized nature and others deemed less-than-rational, thereby undergirding the colonialist stratification of race that drove the enslavement of Africans and exhaustive agriculture on the Caribbean plantation.⁶ Against the enduring dominance of the beautiful, Anzinger's approach to the aesthetic aligns with that of Jamaican theorist Sylvia Wynter, where the aesthetic is a discursive and metaorganic process that entwines culture with biochemical processes and instantiates the possibility for thinking aggregate forms of being beyond the colonizing silo of human uniqueness and exceptionalism.⁷ Wynter's capacious approach in "Rethinking 'Aesthetics,'" elucidates the dynamic exchange that emerges between discrete artworks and the relationships between them. It intimates Anzinger's syntactical use of materials to embody "a more complicated understanding of existence and relation to the 'other.'"⁸ Her paintings and sculptures transform "materials from their prior contexts," to "now embody, in a sense, newly constructed metaphors" that signify in relation to one another and fold the viewer into an ongoing conversation.⁹ They investigate the relational property of racialized and gendered alterity and open onto a psychoanalytic field of inquiry informed by Black feminist

THE MIRROR'S REFLECTIVE SURFACE ACTS AS A CATALYST THROUGH WHICH HER WORKS INEARTH A BLACK AND FEMININE ECOLOGY TO PROPOSE AN ENVIRONMENTALLY RELATIONAL HUMANITY

thought to unravel the colonizing borders of intersubjectivity. In ways this essay will trace at length, this unbounded territory blurs the distinction between desire—the libidinal craving for fulfillment in relation to an other that emerges from subjectivity's constitutive lack—and *jouissance*—the devouring satisfaction of feeling whole linked to the exteriority of the Thing and the death drive.¹⁰

"Staging Mirrors" engages what Black feminist theorist Hortense Spillers calls "an exercise in *psychoanalytics*" that "exposes the gaps that psychoanalytic theories awaken," looking to the ontologies that emerge when the split Lacanian subject comes into contact with pleasure alongside the fungible and abject objectivity imposed on blackness (as it affects the totality of colonized environments).¹¹ I take

up a set of critical reevaluations of Lacan from the often-intersecting fields of Afro-pessimism and Black feminism that coalesce around the intersection of negativity and the incoherence of the psychoanalytic subject, two concepts that have been central to theorizing Black life in the modern world as it was yoked to upholding white supremacy at the expense of human and nonhuman life.¹²

Anzinger's works address or allude to a negated subject on a range of fronts—including pollution, environmental racism, and the not-full humanity of queer Black femininity. Extending negation's role as a logic of manifold opposition, negativity operates as generative ontological possibility within and beyond the mire of an antiblack, climate-degraded present.¹³ The negating oppositions in her material vocabulary fold the human into the other as an ethical ecological materiality in relation. The artist formulates her position as follows: "By presenting alternative narratives that challenge their traditional associations and meanings, such as transforming polystyrene into support systems for living plants, I attempt to share the envisioning of new, more equitable paradigms for value and space."¹⁴ To glimpse forms of being through systems otherwise negatory to life is a form of Black feminist praxis set against the backdrop of climate change's disproportionate effect on the "global South" and its ramifications on the psychic landscape. Emblematic of Spillers's aim for cultural analysis, negation need not only function in the service of the anthropocentric subject as an "instrument trapped in a looping movement or behind-time mo-

mentousness that need jump ahead," but if we look to "the capacity to represent a self through masks of self-negation, then . . . the strategies of a psychoanalytic hermeneutic come together at the site of a 'new woman'/'man.'"¹⁵ Spillers's new human upends Lacan's theory wherein the subject is never whole, but is split where the ego and the ideal image it creates enter the symbolic order of language, a negation of subjective unity between a psychic and material environment he always seeks to regain. This foundational and unbridgeable rift is engendered by the subject's earliest enunciation of self as the illusory "I" appearing as an imago in the mirror. This essay holds engagements with Lacan in tension as they relate to Anzinger's use of the mirror, the challenges queer Black femininity poses to the Lacanian subject, and the ecologically relational selfhood that lies beyond.

Tarrying in the generative irreconcilability between the false coherence of the Lacanian subject and porous ecological selfhood central to Anzinger's aesthetic syntax furnishes a theoretical vocabulary capable of elucidating a queerly feminine Afro-Caribbean aesthetics that unravels the (post)colonial subject against a tropical environment perceived as an inexhaustibly fecund resource. Amid the abstract landscape of *An Unlikely Birth*, for instance, the superimposed black strokes glitch the painting to suggest un/multigendered human forms amalgamated within it (fig. 2). These corporeal landscapes may be said to take up the mantle of Spillers's characterization of the Black woman as "the principal point of passage between the human and non-human world,"



FIGURE 2. Deborah Anzinger, *An Unlikely Birth*, 2018. Acrylic synthetic hair, and polystyrene on canvas, 80 × 131 inches. Photograph by Constance Mensh. Image courtesy of the artist.

THE NEGATING OPPOSITIONS IN HER MATERIAL VOCABULARY FOLD THE HUMAN INTO THE OTHER AS AN ETHICAL ECOLOGICAL MATERIALITY IN RELATION

where the split psychoanalytic subject rubs against the animality of blackness as fungible property more akin to livestock than domestic femininity. This exclusion from proper humanity is essential to the fantasized coherence of whiteness by positioning the Black woman as vestibular to culture (to employ Spillers's phrasing) so that she formed "the route by which the dominant modes decided the distinction between humanity and 'other.'"¹⁶ Ultimately, the encounter between psychoanalysis and Black femininity trawls the colonial history that implicitly constitutes the libidinal drive to fill the lack at the heart of the modern subject.

Theorist Zakiyyah Iman Jackson extends these Black feminist lines of inquiry to direct blackness's ontological exclusion from humanity away from the epistemological universalism of subjectivity, severed from the animality that buoys its "natural" primacy. She disavows anthropocentric neoliberal discourses

that articulate bestialized Black femininity as *denied* or *excluded from* humanity. Instead Jackson develops an ontological position where "animalization is not incompatible with humanization: what is commonly deemed dehumanization is, in the main, more accurately interpreted as the violence of humanization or the burden of inclusion into a racially hierarchized universal humanity."¹⁷ Jackson's reevaluation of "black(ened) being" in relation to the animal produces plasticity as "a mode of transmogrification whereby the fleshy being of blackness is experimented with as if it were infinitely malleable lexical and biological matter, such that blackness is produced as sub/super/human at once, a form where form shall not hold: potentially 'everything and nothing' at the register of ontology."¹⁸ Expansive and experimental, the "both/and" of Jackson's black(ened) plasticity follows Wynter into the "demonic ground" where new ecological orientations challenge the epistemological security of "the human" as an ontological position emblemized by the split (white) psychoanalytic subject striving for the fantasy of wholeness against the Black Other's relation to the Thing.

The environmentally oriented aesthetic reflected in Anzinger's mirrors extends blackness's ontological plasticity beyond the human-animal dyad into an even more expansive field where a queered, Black, and feminine approach to the landscape reveals the ecological relationality of being across human, animal, plant, and manufactured plastics. These painterly assemblages and ceramic sculptures elicit a Caribbean frame where the human is interdependent with

and attentive to “nature.” Anzinger’s engagement with ecological crises began at a young age while working for her father, an environmental scientist, and further developed during her studies that culminated in a doctorate in immunology. Anzinger lives and works in Kingston, and her personal and aesthetic attention to the ecological are unflinchingly political:

I pay attention to how imperialism continues to structure our relationship to each other as well as to the land. . . . Our most fundamental, precarious and valuable resources are cheaply traded or sold to centers of power—human and natural resources—from exploited bodies, to the sacrificing of watersheds, mangrove forests, coral reefs and other resources for mining and tourism today. So while one might say we are in a postcolonial period right now, we are still very much in the clutches of imperialism.¹⁹

With this assertion, Anzinger telescopes Jamaica’s colonial history with its attendant forms of bodily, vegetal, and mineral resource extraction that persist today. She alludes to the fact that tourism produces one of the largest sources of revenue *and* pollution on the Caribbean island.²⁰ Additionally, decades of bauxite mining, the largest extractive industry in Jamaica, have resulted in mass deforestation and soil degradation.²¹ Yet her engagement with ecological issues is not only bound to policy; her approach also folds the psyche into a nonanthropocentric subjectivity that allows her to feel her “own mortality and precariousness and it heightens this awareness of co-dependence on the environment.”²² Anzinger’s

assertion of a codependence between human and environment takes aesthetic form in the multifaceted material interactions of her painterly assemblages. They articulate an ecologically relational black ontology aligned with what theorist Tiffany Lethabo King calls “black porosity” where “at the scale of the pore, black bodies are sensual, non-gender-specific, penetrable, sexual, fecund, and boundless.”²³ The fungibility of black bodies makes them porous and capable of merging with nature to “make new kinds of flesh” that “represent an alternative orientation and relation to objects, plants, and human and nonhuman elements in the world.”²⁴ King’s theorization of the black pore furnishes a bridge between psychoanalysis and Black feminist ecocriticism in Anzinger’s oeuvre and underscores the extent to which a plastic art practice can shape environmental discourses beyond “greenness” and restoration, dwelling in the psychic muck of desire and *jouissance*.²⁵ Anzinger’s rejection of colonialism’s allegorization of a passive feminine nature to be owned and enclosed orients black eco-aesthetics toward the excess pleasures in deterritorialization and relation.²⁶

This essay is structured as a set of three encounters between Anzinger’s painterly assemblages in their 2018–19 installation contexts and investigates the extent to which an eco-aesthetic Black femininity opens new modes of engaging Lacan’s mirror stage to bring an ontic position of environmental devastation and promise into view. These intersections between Anzinger and Lacan do not progress toward a singular developmental conclusion. While offering a

sustained engagement with Lacan, I press the limits of his theory by installing Anzinger's practice within a Black feminist philosophical and artistic tradition that engages Caribbean ecology.²⁷ In short, I argue that this corpus of paintings and sculptures posits an affirmative answer to Fred Moten's question "Is there a black mirror stage? Is the plenitude of Lacan's mirror stage always already an illusion, one that always already demands compensation for or an impossible reconstitution of that which it would constitute?"²⁸ But the black mirror stage is necessarily relational in its impossible reconstitution. This essay draws out the existential foundation in Anzinger's oeuvre as an *ontological dehiscence*—concomitantly a burst wound, a vegetal rupture that facilitates seed dispersal, and the incoherence of the subject. This dehiscent being dwells in the antiblack roots of the climate crisis from the vantage point of Caribbean blackness and femininity. Her works weave the physical environment together with the psychic landscape, a fabric constituted by the recursions of colonialism across time, the desire of a self entwined with alterity, and the *jouissance* of ecological relation.

Desired Others and Dehiscent Being in the Official Mirror

The loosely elliptical mirror that appears to both recede into and project out of Anzinger's *Before you realized you could be seen, I watched you soaked in the shade while I was conceiving* (fig. 1) conjoins the subjectification of Lacan's mirror stage with blackness's ontological dehiscence. The canvas brims

with washy umbers and grays suggestive of sediment, browns and peaches that intimate skin as much as dirt or fruit, and a soft blue that shades into crepuscule and aquatic depth. The mirror enacts an invagination—in its Motenian sense of "a folding that opens the whole that it would also enclose"—that roils the terrestrial, aquatic, and corporeal to suggest a racialized and gendered body of assembled "others" interpenetrating and becoming landscape.²⁹ Evanescently holding the reflections of an environment that passes before it, this mirrored surface invites the beholder to reflect, however momentarily, on what Lacan asserts as the foundational *identification* that occurs before the mirror.³⁰ For the psychoanalyst, the young child who catches his reflection epiphanically understands himself as a unified subject by recognizing and assimilating the imago in the mirror as a selfsame object distinct from the surrounding environment.

The apparent telos of this development from presubjective infancy to the individuated subject reflected in the mirror is deceptive in its simplicity. The mirror stage manifests "the symbolic matrix in which the *I* is anticipated in a primordial form prior to being objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other, and before language restores to it, in the universal, its function as a subject."³¹ A jubilant moment of recognition in the mirror produces an "ideal-I" that does not constitute a subjective unity. Rather, the mirror stage envelops the ego in the makeshift gestalt of the "constitutive rather than constituted" exterior specular imago.³² Nevertheless, vision enacts an un-

ULTIMATELY, THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND BLACK FEMININITY TRAWLS THE COLONIAL HISTORY THAT IMPLICITLY CONSTITUTES THE LIBIDINAL DRIVE TO FILL THE LACK AT THE HEART OF THE MODERN SUBJECT

deniable separation of self from world such that the mirror stage is emblematic of “the imaginary relation that links [the individual] to the subject qua ego.”³³ This relation emerges from the fact that the ego’s drive for coherence and unity over fragmentation may only be momentarily sated by recognizing oneself as an external object in the mirror. Lacan resolves this contradiction by construing the mirror stage as central to the revelation that one will only ever “asymptotically approach the subject’s becoming.”³⁴

Before you realized . . . performs the discordant relation of perennial becoming as other to oneself, while beclouding Lacan’s assumptive focus on the human as unitary; in the mirror, there are manifold others reflected with the imago. Anzinger’s liquescent mirror doubly refuses any identification of the self as a singular image or discrete subject: Centrifugally, the mirror’s diminutive size precludes the reflection of whole entities and re-presents an environment of cohabitating partial objects. Centripetally, its invaginative recombination takes the reflected fragments of objects and spectators in the gallery and integrates them into

the painting’s abstract bodily landscape. Located in the lower left-hand quadrant of the work, the mirror is traced by a mass of synthetic black hair and situated between two cone-like painted shapes that resemble hillocks as much as legs bent at the knee. The slippery multivalence of these abstract elements suggests the mirror as a reproductive orifice, imbuing the composition with an eroticism that exceeds human corporeality and denies the illusion of autonomy.³⁵

Anzinger’s title signals the intersubjective erotic relationality engendered by the mirror as a conceiving orificial eye/“I” that took note of an anticipated spectator peering onto a moment of copulation before she considered she might be seen. At the convergence of text and image, the mirror would seem to slide into a singularly feminine register: if positioned between two brown legs, then the oblong mirror is vaginal, belongs to a woman of color’s body, and therefore participates in a facile history of colonial violence that conflated the supposed hypersexuality of Black women with the fecund abundance of the tropical Caribbean environment.³⁶ But with her

emphasis on the ontological expansiveness of relation, the mirror, according to the artist, “departs from the embodiment of a particular Black female subjectivity and its positionality within any demarcated space—the spaces I demarcate by design often optically include the viewer.”³⁷ The copulating mirror in *Before you realized* . . . dispenses with the essentialist recapitulation of conceiving-subject constrained to singular womanhood, replacing the narcissistic illusion of autonomous subjectivity before the official mirror with a relational selfhood constituted in Black feminine otherness.

The mirror stage ushers in an incipient understanding of one’s subjective cohesion as the recognition of an external entity, autonomy constituted in the desire for the other.³⁸ The conception painted in *Before you realized* . . . unravels the subject by returning selfhood to its infantile relational plurality via the maternal. Prior to Lacanian subject constitution via desire for the other as a lost object, the Other bridges the incorporable difference of the symbolic with the radically unassimilable alterity in the abyss of the Real beyond language. The Other aligns with the mother because she ushers in the primal oedipal recognition of phallic absence “in the name of the Father”; the Other both reveals and conceals the concatenated lack, incoherence, and dissolution that both threatens and constitutes the subject reflected in the mirror.³⁹ For Amber Jamilla Musser, maternity entwines otherness and engenders a presubjective *jouissance* constituted by mutuality and “corporeal co-dependence” beyond the absence of desire. Maternal alterity, the

“m/Other,” compels us to explore “the generative possibility of queer m/Other love (alongside, but not restricted to the figure of the lesbian) [and] . . . its status as excessive relative to the order of sexuality dominated by the phallic and reproductive.”⁴⁰ Musser’s provocation furnishes a vantage point from which to understand the surfeit of queer pleasure that reverberates from fragmented spectatorial invagination with the maternal Other in *Before you realized* . . . However, I also follow Anzinger’s statement about her work to insist on the extension of the Black feminine beyond a bodily analogical relationship and into the queerness of the environment. This conceptual position manifests formally: the meandering mass of synthetic “pubic” hair traces the mirror and joins it to legs-cum-hills as it conversely leads into a swath of pitch-black paint, more difficult to anthropomorphize, that seems to reside somewhere between surface and depth (e.g., the small triangular interruption of peachy brown between hair, paint, and mirror). Within this wombed black surface, quick strokes of washy umber highlighted with a muddy white caress the opaque painted “knee” and echo the mirror’s ovoid shape below it. These formal repetitions across media syntactically order and reorder, mine and undermine, their investment in “the human” as a discrete category. Here is a jarring glimpse into dehiscent being articulated by the Other’s recognition that may ultimately be the appearance of one’s own reflection in the official mirror.

Extending these refractory sight lines into the landscape, the mirror stage produces being as an

ecological rupture constituted by the false coherence of the subject in relation to both the psyche and the environment. Here I hope to productively overread the ecological in Lacan when he characterizes this as a desire “to establish a relationship between an organism and its reality—or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*.”⁴¹ This desire extends beyond the anthropocentric hierarchy of animacy when attuned to the environmental inflections of this ontology constituted as much by the inner environment of the psyche, the *Innenwelt*, as it is by the proprioceptive relation to the world, the *Umwelt*.⁴² Lacan nevertheless draws human parameters around this iteration of the mirror stage: “In man, however, this relationship to nature is altered by a certain dehiscence at the very heart of the organism.”⁴³ Lacan divulges the mirror stage’s Cartesian heritage by rephrasing the break between less-than- or other-than-human entities and the autonomous subject extricated from any ecological lattice because of the ego’s false cohesion around the imago. As such, the *ontological dehiscence* at the heart of being shades negative toward an anxiety-producing absence that seeks a false fulfillment through the extractive and introjective desire for object others. It is this profound narcissism at the heart of psychoanalytic subjectivity, when presumed to be white, European, and male, that precipitated our current climate collapse with colonialism’s evisceration of Black being under enslavement and rape of the land with the resource extraction of strip mining, plantation agriculture, and industrial pollution. Referencing the pollution caused by sewage from

THE BLACK MIRROR STAGE IS NECESSARILY RELATIONAL IN ITS IMPOSSIBLE RECONSTITUTION

cruise ships in Jamaica, Anzinger adds to a growing number of journalist and scientific critics who point to the iniquity of the tourist industry: “To earn that foreign exchange, we take the sewage, which as you can imagine impacts the ecosystem, the coastal ecosystem and the coral reef ecosystem.”⁴⁴ With her eco-aesthetic syntax, Deborah Anzinger turns Lacan’s universal subject on its head to see anew the generative porosity of dehiscent being.

By naming the constitution of being in *Before you realized* . . . one of ecologically informed ontological dehiscence, I reinforce the contributions Anzinger’s artistic practice makes to contemporary black aesthetic theory. Both Fred Moten and Jared Sexton cite Lacan as a predecessor to, and point of departure for, black ontologies with his use of “dehiscence” to describe the split inherent to subject formation.⁴⁵ They also draw from Frantz Fanon as a foundational precursor to demonstrate the long-standing engagement with, and critique of, the mirror stage from the perspective of blackness. Fanon states that in the mirror “there is no doubt that the

WITH HER ECO-AESTHETIC SYNTAX, DEBORAH ANZINGER TURNS LACAN'S UNIVERSAL SUBJECT ON ITS HEAD TO SEE ANEW THE GENERATIVE POROSITY OF DEHISCENT BEING

veritable Other of the White is and will always be the Black. And inversely. Only, for the White, the Other is perceived on the map of the corporeal image, the absolute non-ego, that is to say the non-identifiable, the non-assimilable."⁴⁶ Fanon adds that for the Black, and specifically the Afro-Caribbean, the "dehiscence at the heart of the organism" must be determined by the doubled cleavage of racialization: "For the White there is an elaboration of the *imago* of the *semblable*, an analogous phenomenon should be produced in the Caribbean, visual perception being the tapestry of this elaboration. But this would forget that in the Antilles perception always situates itself in the map of the imaginary. It is in White terms that one perceives the *semblable* there."⁴⁷ Fanon lodges a powerful critique against Lacan's myopic universalism without fully accounting for a Black being.⁴⁸ As Moten articu-

lates in his reading of Fanon, "It seems to me that this special ontic-ontological fugitivity of/in the slave is what is revealed as the necessarily unaccounted for in Fanon. . . . The lived experience of blackness is among other things, a constant demand for an ontology of disorder, an ontology of dehiscence, a para-ontology whose comportment will have been (toward) the ontic or existential field of things and events."⁴⁹

Anzinger's aesthetic syntax further nuances Fanon's critique, allowing dehiscence to take on an ecological corporeality by conjoining its psychoanalytic sense to the surgical meaning of the term, referring to a burst wound where the edges do not meet, and its botanical definition as a stage of vegetal reproduction where an intrinsic weakness in a plant structure splits open so that it can release its contents.⁵⁰ *Before you realized* . . . intimates the simultaneity of concatenated homographs. Consider the upper right-hand corner: At the base of this loosely triangular passage gradations of dark brown play with the illusionistic depth of the picture plane, echoing the leggy geological forms that frame the mirror; these shades are sedimented beneath wobbly, angular black and white forms that stiltedly drip down the canvas. On the horizon above the ombré brown storms a washy accretion of strokes where clear blue, peach, aubergine-tinted umber, dusky sage and rose, and the cream weave of the canvas confound the distinction between bodies, plants, and materials held together by the mirror.

The fantasy of sex, voyeuristic witness, and conception in *Before you realized* . . . produces a desire

"touched by the mother," to evoke Spillers's dictum that encapsulates the absence of black maternal self-possession in the modern Atlantic world without reducing it to an essential vision of womanhood.⁵¹ Braiding psychic division, bodily violence, and reproductive dispersal, dehiscent blackness holds the history and afterlives of slavery together with the ontological rupture that adhered to the transformation of enslaved humans into fungible things. Beyond the brutal legacy and present of slavery's wound, the erotic desire of Anzinger's work also enacts what Moten articulates as "a thinking of blackness as a dehiscence both anticipatory of and internal to the normative discourses of race."⁵² *Before you realized . . .* opens a space to sow instantiations of personhood where normative discourses would position race as a biopolitical category intrinsic to Black people because of the ontic magnetism between blackness and thingliness. The queerly feminine desire sparked by Anzinger's painting dispenses mediating phallic lack, pronouncing the fullness of being-in-relation in the orificial mirror's kaleidoscopic alterity and the painterly grammar of a denatured landscape.⁵³

Within this fluctuating field of ontological rupture, Anzinger's clever disarrangement of the mirror stage in *Before you realized . . .* eschews the coherence of discrete subjects and conceives a desirous relation before the mirror. Formally reinforcing the erotic confluence of corporeality and ecology is the mass of sky-blue strokes flowing in a right angle from or into the assemblage of mirror, hair, and rounded forms: a liquidity that is both bodily fluid and a body of water.

Anzinger's aesthetic syntax participates in Sylvia Wynter's collective reconceptualization of the human as a relational category characterized by Katherine McKittick as "a manifestation of new ways of living with each other that emerges from an interspecies and interecological schema."⁵⁴ In the mirror's reflection these interecological elements are aesthetic terms that generate an ontologically dehiscent self through a relational and invaginated living space oppositional to the anthropo- and androcentric phallic lack the subject strives to fill through the other.

When the mirror's reflective surface is positioned within the internal aesthetic syntax of the composition, the dehiscent ontology in *Before you realized . . .* refuses blackness's circumscription to the ambit of the wound. Rather, with the fluid passage between the "I" and its homophonic proprioceptive guide, the eye, Anzinger materially enacts a blackened eco-aesthetic engagement with Moten's description of aesthetic representation as bridging "the gap between thing and object even as it seeks to guard against the danger such passage makes possible; at the same time, representation collapses the bridge between the ontic and the ontological."⁵⁵ This interpretation belies my assertion that aesthetic syntax demands we contend with ontological dehiscence as a black psychoanalytic notion in the interval between desire and the *jouissance* of relation in Anzinger's artworks, encompassing parallel forms of being that articulate a personhood in defiance of the violence imposed upon the black body.

Black Ecology in the Looking Glass, between Desire and Jouissance

In her sculptural installation *Eye*, a small and sensuously curved mirror pools on a plinth and mimics the form of the jet-black ceramic sculpture before it (fig. 3). The cylindrical ceramic tube is shaped into an elliptical form, revealing the maker's hand in the sporadic indentations of fingers pressed across the surface and smoothed joins in the clay. Nested within



FIGURE 3. Deborah Anzinger, *Eye*, installation photograph from Sargent's Daughters Gallery (New York City), 2018. Acrylic, *Aloe Barbadensis* and ceramic, 30 × 28 × 20 in. Image courtesy of the artist.

this form is a second ceramic: a cantilevered slab reaches up to nearly tongue the elliptical orifice. This moment of unconsummated erotic tension protrudes from the side opposite the mirror, a now diminutive puddle in comparison to the sculpture whose reflection it only fragmentarily captures. Potted atop the elliptical ceramic, a trio of *Aloe barbadensis* protrude and penetrate the space. Anzinger includes these plants not as sculptural material, but as something more akin to performers. She sources the plants locally for each installation and includes extensive instructions for their care. "It makes the work more challenging to show," Anzinger states, "but it also ekes out space for consideration and care of a particular life form with little agency, which happens to be a species we've extracted from and used a lot throughout the course of humanity."⁵⁶ *Eye* announces this space for consideration with the intra-action—to evoke Karen Barad's concept of agency beyond human consciousness—of speckled green succulent leaves that enliven the residual touch of obsidian paint and the mirror's delineated edge.⁵⁷ Much like *Before you realized . . .*, *Eye* folds other works into its frame as a means of constituting being-in-the-world through the *jouissance* of relation across animacies.

At this juncture of ceramic, mirrored glass, and living biota, Anzinger's composite sight organ comes into view. Her laconic title guilefully tempts the spectator to constrain their view of the sculptural assemblage to understand it representationally. Yet if we perambulate the sculpture, the representation of an eye we thought we saw shifts in and out of view.

Eye—wavering between sensory organ and tonguing eroticism—performs the desire of the O/other's desire endowed with an agential capacity that affirms the subject by way of material presence as it also shatters that wholeness via the gaze.⁵⁸

The scopic dimension of the subject's desire is central to Lacan's first revision of the mirror stage, which posits a more complex machinery for the fledgling ego (fig. 4).⁵⁹ In the experiment of the inverted bouquet, a concave mirror is situated in front of a box; a vase is placed atop the box and a bouquet of flowers is installed upside down inside it. When viewed from the appropriate position behind the box, the concave mirror should reflect the inverted bouquet right side up, as if it were placed in the material vase before the viewer, although this optical illusion is often half convincing at best.⁶⁰ The inclusion of the "eye that moves about" indicates the becoming of a subjective I; the conditions of reflective vision provision a malleable syntax around which the pre- or protolinguistic ego coheres.⁶¹ Despite its mobility in space, Lacan's eye-as-subject is fixed insofar as "the subject is subject only from being subjected to the field of the Other"; the field of desire is engendered by partial maternal objects—like the breast or womb—that withholds wholeness.⁶²

From within the looking glass, Anzinger's Eye distorts Lacan's negated false promise of autonomy before the mirror from the vantage point of the (literal, figurative, and juridical) stasis imposed on maternal blackness under enslavement. Spillers names this racialized and gendered immobility "pornotroping"—

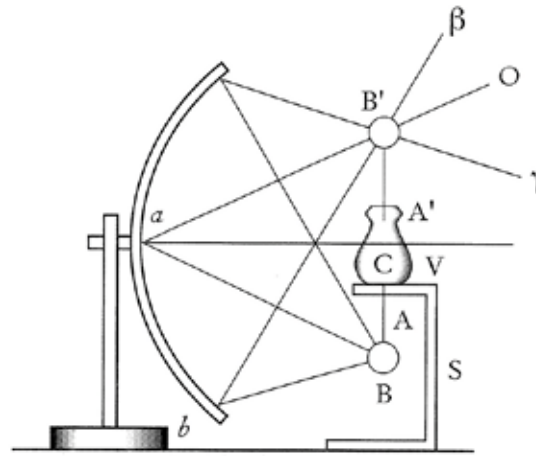


FIGURE 4. Expérience du bouquet renversé (simplified diagram), from Jacques Lacan, "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure,'" in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2006).

the erotic desirability of the other as "being for the captor" and violently produced on prediscursive flesh marked with the "hieroglyphics" of Black and woman.⁶³ Alexander Weheliye draws out the psychoanalytic resonance of the concept when he contends, "The violence inflicted upon the enslaved body becomes synonymous with the projected surplus pleasure that always already moves in excess of the sovereign subject's *jouissance*; pleasure (rapture) and violence (bondage) deviate from and toward each other."⁶⁴ Unconsummated pleasure and pain multiply when the sculpture's looking organ slides into the conflated lick of a tongue or whip. Anzinger holds the history of slavery in the present by abstracting the pornotrope's coterminous violence and eroticism manifest in the slave narrative of Mary Prince, who decried the "flesh ragged and raw with

THESE SUCCULENTS ENACT A QUEERED AND DEANTHROPOCENTRIZED AGENTIAL PRESENCE IN RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT

licks.—Lick—lick. . . . I was licked.”⁶⁵ To the excess violence of looking and licking captured in *Eye*’s watery mirror, Musser reminds us, “The violence and projection that produce the pornotrope require at their core a subject who desires and who thereby objectifies and possesses others through this desire.”⁶⁶ When *Eye* encounters the Lacanian mirror stage, the intersubjectivity of desire lays itself bare by unraveling the distinction between the desire for the Other and the *jouissance* of the Thing.

More than an inverse approach to the desiring gaze into the mirror, Anzinger’s *Eye* questions the refuge of subjectivity’s “black space . . . assimilated in the interior of the mother’s body” to enact dehiscent being amid *jouissance* across, and in the interstice between, the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*.⁶⁷ In the face of the Other’s invaginating maternity Lacan nuances the subject’s capacity to veil its (in)coherence by way of *jouissance*. Defined as “enjoyment beyond the pleasure principle,” *jouissance* is the excess pleasure

engendered by the fantasy of singular wholeness that congeals at the antinomic pole of desire for the externalized *objet petit a*.⁶⁸ Néstor Braunstein conceptualizes *jouissance* as an ostensible opposition to the desiring *lack* of the o/Other; *jouissance* “is positivity, it is a ‘something’ lived by a body when pleasure stops being pleasure. It is a plus, a sensation that is beyond pleasure.”⁶⁹ In one of his most salient comments on the relationship between the two, Lacan maintained “desire comes from the Other, while *jouissance* is on the side of the Thing,” where the Thing extends Freud’s *das Ding*, the lost primordial object one always seeks to find again.⁷⁰ Lacan transforms this loss into a negated presence—“the Thing is not nothing, but literally is not.”⁷¹ The Thing, according to psychologist Derek Hook, is “a voracious absence, a kind of swallowing abyss. . . . [It is] the engulfing Thing of amassed primal *jouissance* that gives sudden material substance to the constitutive emptiness of the subject’s desire.”⁷² Hook’s visceral image illustrates the radical exterior agency of the Thing beyond the tête-à-tête of subjective desire for the other as fulfillment of lack.

Yet circuitry abounds in Lacan’s theory; in the intervals between his irresolutions, Anzinger’s eco-aesthetic syntax interjects its rejoinder to the fatuous presumption of autonomous selfhood. Holding the history of enslavement and its gratuitous violence across time in the body and mind, black aesthetics interrogate ontology from the position of the Thing excised and held in intimate proximity to the category of Man it was meant to prop up.⁷³ Although *Eye*

is installed on a plinth elevated just off the ground, its floating position in the middle of the floor confronts the spectator and heralds the primal objectivity of the Thing. *Eye* resonates with Lacan's articulation of the Thing's *jouissance* as a sublime exteriority inhabited by the other: "The subject will realize that his desire is merely a vain detour with the aim of catching the *jouissance* of the other."⁷⁴ The split subject comes to the precipice of abyssal *jouissance* through its mediation with the o/Other and desire. In her theorization of "brown *jouissance*," Amber Jamilla Musser critiques Lacan's navel-gazing: "While focusing on Thingness calls attention to the agency inherent in being material, it neglects to grapple with the way that this materiality circulates within the social world."⁷⁵ Brown *jouissance* maintains the Lacanian Thing's beguiling being-not and corrects this lacuna with an emphasis on the unknowability of the Other and "the simultaneous projections of racialization and gendering that occur through its particular modes of Objectification. . . . Brown *jouissance*," according to Musser, "occurs in the moments when Thing, Other, and object converge to form selfhood."⁷⁶ Through brown *jouissance* she looks to works of art that suggest "the possibility of permeable, dialogic selfhood—selves that illustrate the impossibility of a border between self and Other."⁷⁷ Musser's conceptualization of a porous selfhood through *jouissance* opens onto the pleasure at the heart of Anzinger's aesthetic syntax.

When observed from different positions in the gallery, the queer irresolution between violent desire and *jouissance* in Anzinger's mirror pieces becomes

apparent. Take the dynamic interplay that occurs when the spectator catches *Eye*'s small mirror from just the right angle so that it reflects a fragment of the adjacent painting, *An Unlikely Birth* (fig. 5). A palette of dusty peach, creamy tan, matte black, and vegetal green are distilled on the horizontal surface of the mirror. This ephemeral conglomeration of colors points to a critical juncture in the lower right quadrant of *An Unlikely Birth*, where the expansive flatness of the painted landscape-body on unstretched canvas adjoins a habitat that commingles the vegetal, the bodily, and waste. Modes of being in the world remain present, even as a legible body fades from view. Anzinger suggests the jumbled landscape of *An Unlikely Birth* has masculine overtones that, as one reviewer notes, construct a pictorial space "in which the male body might enter the connotative space of nature alongside women."⁷⁸ The queer muddling of the masculine and feminine, the both and neither, of *An Unlikely Birth* carries over into our own interest in its lower right portion reflected in *Eye*. Here a polystyrene structure covered in a mass of tightly curled synthetic black hair is attached to the canvas; it projects off the surface and juts out to the right, where two aloe plants are nestled into its tactile surface. These succulents enact a queered and deanthropocentrized agential presence in relation to the environment because the plant, as Anzinger describes, "morphologically possesses the phallic trait of penetrating flesh, but it also has an intrinsic ability to heal—a conventionally feminine attribute."⁷⁹ Moreover, Anzinger transforms the enveloping Sty-



FIGURE 5. Reflection of *An Unlikely Birth in Eye*, installation photograph from Sargent's Daughters Gallery (New York City), 2018. Image courtesy of the artist.

rofoam—the omnipresent commercial trash that fills oceans and was a daily part of Jamaican life until the country recently banned the product—into an environment that does not ignore waste.⁸⁰ The disguised Styrofoam habitat proves itself capable of supporting

other-than-human life in the gallery despite its toxicity and role as a pollutant that plagues the Caribbean.⁸¹ The rhythmic conversation between *Aloe barbadensis* in *Eye* and *An Unlikely Birth* postulates new forms of persistence in the midst of ecocide. These queer veg-

etal performers, marked as proximate to blackness by textured synthetic hair and glaze, undermine gender and install the capacity for *jouissance* and futurity in a Caribbean environment imperiled by pollution and climate change.

Evanescently held in the refractive sight of the sculptural eye, this encounter distills an ontological dehiscence engendered by the intimate relation between blackness and ecology. Riven being is necessarily intersubjective in its most capacious sense, an ecological network of flows into, outside of, and beyond the human. Despite Lacan's expanded lexicon meant to elucidate the confrontation with the mirror, it holds (human) subjectivity in a static position between the world's external and the psyche's internal ecology.⁸² By contrast, the mirror play central to *Eye* dissolves this purported fixity. Anzinger's mirrors enact a racialized and gendered aesthetic syntax capable of articulating the impossible—that is, black selfhood within the void of recursive nonbeing—that emerges amid interpenetrating ecologies of erotic and libidinal Black feminine *jouissance*. Here the ontological dehiscence of reflective capture is released across materials, surfaces, and animacy: the desirous evanescence of material bodies in mutual constitution.

Eco-aesthetics and the Mirror's Impasse

To this point, we have attuned ourselves to the mirror's function as a syntactical conjunction operating in the negative interval between desire (for the Other's desire) and *jouissance* (on the side of the Thing) to wrench open the subject's illusory coherence and

THE ONTOLOGICAL DEHISCENCE OF REFLECTIVE CAPTURE AND RELEASE ACROSS MATERIALS, SURFACES, AND ANIMACY: THE DESIROUS EVANESCENCE OF MATERIAL BODIES IN MUTUAL CONSTITUTION

install an eco-aestheticized dehiscent being that pervades the abstracted Caribbean landscape. Yet by relying on the mirror as a catalytic material, we have occluded, to a degree, the rhizomatic recurrence of these poles. A queer, Black, and feminine approach to the body-as-landscape refracts the pleasures that might be gleaned from the Other and the Thing. It reveals points of cyclical nonlinearity, troubles Lacan's intimation that "the eye is already a mirror," and sees itself within the illusion: "As soon as there is an eye and a mirror, an infinite recursion of inter-reflected images is produced."⁸³ When the spectator is folded into the relational dynamics of Anzinger's aesthetic syntax the mirror does not replicate the Lacanian eye as a penetrating organ. Rather, this revision dispenses with the illusion of coherence from an aporetic rift in



FIGURE 6. Installation photograph from *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth*, Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), 2019. Photograph by Constance Mensh. Image courtesy of the artist.

identification between the imago and the ego, installing in its stead an invaginated flight into an autogenous landscape that spans the *Innen-* and *Umwelt* with rippling refractions.

I conclude this essay by analyzing the reflective ecology among works included in Anzinger's 2019 solo exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia) (fig. 6). In these dialogues, aesthetic syntax proposes dwelling in the desirous presence of the Black feminine as Other, only to disperse the mechanisms of Lacan's mirror stage across the installation space and seed a porous form of ecological being in the pleasures of *jouissance*.

Roving amid paintings, ceramics, and a shack

made of salvaged materials housing a garden of local plants, Anzinger's expansive eco-aesthetic syntax refuses the expected consumptive dynamics of display. She conceptualizes the aesthetic encounter anew with the dense interiority of her unframed canvases. For instance, the Jamaican landscape of *An Unlikely Birth*—abstracted in thick acrylic strokes that waver between virtuosic hand and CGI's exacting improvisation—defies the painterly rectangular frame and intrudes into the space of the gallery with its protruding environment of synthetic "afro-kinky" hair and aloe plants.⁸⁴ This cohabitation of living biota and the partial suggestion of a racialized human presence deprivileges enunciatory fixity and reflexively beckons

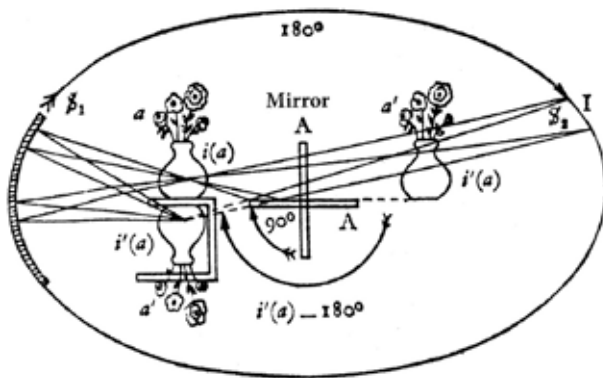
the viewer to feel themselves indiscrete in the face of relation.

Here ontological dehiscence is conveyed by the conceptual, rather than strictly optical, refractions between works across the space of the gallery. Both *Before you realized . . .* and *Inhospitable* have mirrored glass incorporated in the composition—liquescent and orificial in the former, jagged and delineated in the latter. They are hung next to one another and separated by a doorway. Although one cannot directly reflect the other, the queerly masculine landscape and penetrative aloe of *An Unlikely Birth* connects them as the only work that finds its reflection in both of these mirror compositions (fig. 7). These sensuous material assemblages project and solicit a libidinal desire for selfhood that folds the human body into a dehiscient relationality to the extent that, according to Anzinger, “the viewer also becomes materially involved in the relational configuration of these works.”⁸⁵ This mise-en-abyme eschews the “distraction of symbolism,” as the title of another work in the installation puts it, to highlight what might emerge in the narrative gap between object and Thing, desire and *jouissance*.

In Lacan’s third revision, a complexified diagram of the inverted bouquet experiment introduces the presence of the Other as a maternal wellspring of radical alterity and desire for the seeing subject (fig. 8). Here the subject does not coalesce around the unified perspective of an eye; rather, subjectivity is bifurcated across the impasse of the Other symbolized by intersecting planar mirrors. The refractory intermedi-



FIGURE 7. Reflection of *An Unlikely Birth*, 2018, in *Before you realized you could be seen, I watched you soaked in the shade while I was conceiving*, 2018. Installation photograph from *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth*, Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), 2019. Photograph by Constance Mensh. Image courtesy of the artist.



Complete diagram

FIGURE 8. *Expérience du bouquet renversé*, from Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire*, vol. 10: *L'angoisse* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2004).

ary of the Other stands stalwart between the specular image—of the bouquet reflected right side up—and the virtual image of the real image—the reflection of the reflected bouquet reflected across the planar mirrors. Amid these myriad projections, “not all of the libidinal investment passes by way of the specular image. There’s a remainder.”⁸⁶ What remains is the phallus that “appears in the form of a lack, a blank,” a paradox that points to the limits of subjective coherence in the face of radical alterity (the Other).⁸⁷ These proliferating reflected images reveal the projected ego to be a residual object “whose status escapes the status of the object derived from the specular images, that is, the laws of transcendental aesthetics.”⁸⁸ Breaching the laws of Kantian aesthetics, then, allows

the analyst to recognize the self as an object who escapes objecthood within a world of specular images that all engage the phallus as a foundational lack.

When approached from the queer Black feminine Other in Anzinger’s aesthetic syntax, escaping this Lacanian formulation gains traction where racialized femininity reframes phallic lack as an ecological desire for a generatively negated selfhood. In the midst of these conceiving, birthing, and maternal artworks, objectivity is not meant to be escaped, but held onto as the riven body finds new nodes of attachment. Moten’s appositional reading of the object in Kant’s aesthetics and racial anthropology aligns with and informs the black ontological position developed by the eco-aesthetics of Anzinger’s oeuvre. With the imbricated figures of blackness and womanhood, Moten endeavors to invaginate the materiality and rationality of the beautiful against the irrationality of the agreeable.⁸⁹ In Kantian terms, the beautiful is a properly transcendent universal aesthetic judgment insofar as it is disinterested and “must depend upon reflection on an object that leads to some sort of concept,” whereas the merely agreeable is inherently contingent and interested, a nonrational claim that “rests entirely on sensation.”⁹⁰ Because the beautiful relies on the distillation of rational reflection, blackness is both expelled from and ingested by Kant’s aesthetics. Despite its elision, Moten’s precise cartography of the disagreeable holds an aesthetic function when gendered blackness emerges in its shadow and challenges the contours of rationality from within. This

invaginated position is “a foundational aesthetic experience of blackness, contained in the register of the merely sensual, held in the relay between the agreeable, which in any case blackness cannot attain, and the disagreeable, which blackness could be said almost to define, that Kant appeals to espouse the importance of teleological principle.”⁹¹ Blackness holds the potential to undo the juridical regulation of the imagination because of its relationship to lawlessness, flight, and improvisation inaugurated under slavery; to inhabit the position of the Black woman is to be excluded from ontic recognition on the apoposed terms of the Thing’s *jouissance* and Hortense Spillers’s theorization of flesh.⁹² Moten develops a ground for blackness to hold this position by articulating that the Black woman is the figure on which Kant’s premise of a disinterested aesthetic judgment is built precisely because blackness, as disagreeable, resides in the realm of the sensual, haptic, and organismic and is thereby excluded from judgments of the beautiful. Thus, starting from the anoriginal position of Black womanhood, Moten posits the irreducible ontological dehiscence of blackness as an aesthetic experience that holds the wound open in its negated void as an act of efflorescent becoming.

The aesthetic politics of syntax speak from the position of a queered Black femininity entering into an improvisation already underway. Augmented by the mirror’s reflective conjunction with the seeing eye, the recurring representation of or allusion to the maternal breast reveals the reciprocities that undergird

RACIALIZED FEMININITY REFRAMES PHALLIC LACK AS AN ECOLOGICAL DESIRE FOR A GENERATIVELY NEGATED SELFHOOD

what has been discussed to this point as the polarity between desire and *jouissance*. Nowhere is the relationship between eye and breast clearer than in the painting *Inhospitable* and the relations it births throughout the gallery (fig. 9). Near the center of the canvas, a loosely rendered eye takes shape as a set of gray strokes contoured with a dusty pink. The eye floats on a ground of tinted mauves and sages encircled by thick strokes of black paint. This seemingly impenetrable, yet fragile, black shape anchors the composition’s vertical directionality with strokes and drips that follow gravity’s pull. A jagged mirror is nestled within the circular jet-black perimeter and proclaims the confluence of sight and reflection staged by the lyrical proximity between eye and reflective surface. Body and environment again meld in *Inhospitable*; whereas the mirror became an invaginating orifice in *Before you realized . . .*, here the corporealized landscape looks out from passages of swirling green-blues that confound the horizon line and a ruddy stream of thick paint that tortuously flows



FIGURE 9. Deborah Anzinger, *Inhospitable*, 2018. Acrylic, mirror, and synthetic hair on canvas, 68 × 54 inches. Photograph by Constance Mensh. Image courtesy of the artist.

across the upper register. Chromatic and racialized blackness touch where a strip of synthetic hair caresses the circular boundary loosening its grip on the compositional structure as it plows vertically across the canvas and echoes the furrow of hair that winds throughout the nearby painting *Garden*. The variously

washy and opaque strokes of light blue and green paint that predominate below this black ring lead the eye downward toward the representation of a single grisaille breast in the lower right-hand corner of the work. Shading from a bright white to deep charcoal gives the breast a coyly volumetric form that shifts in and out of view against the flat “bullseye” of the areola and the stylized black drips layered on top of it.

The eye and mirror announce, from a dispersed position in the landscape, a grammatically plural subject within the painting’s aesthetic syntax. But where does the disembodied breast fit into this ecology? In an interview with curator Daniella Rose King, Anzinger indicates that the painting considers the “quality of a space that is watching, observing, and has its own subjecthood” that becomes increasingly inhospitable with greater knowledge of and interconnection with the contemporary Jamaican environment. The painting questions hospitality’s relationship to spaces that are “penetrated, mined from . . . [and] bear the burden of whatever capitalistic developments are underway.”⁹³ Pulling a Caribbean personhood close to environmental crisis, *Inhospitable* invaginates an ecological totality comprised of salubrious and deleterious objects that necessarily coexist and depend on one another in the polluted spaces of the archipelago. Extending this environmental frame to the interior psyche, the breast’s relationship to the porous selfhood offered by *jouissance* and the Thing comes to the fore alongside the mirror’s revelation of the split psychoanalytic subject’s desire for the Other.

For the nascent ego of Melanie Klein's infantile object relations, the maternal breast is the exemplary cathected object split between its good, nourishing dimension to which the infant clings, and the bad, withholding dimension toward which the child directs its anger.⁹⁴ The maternal Other looms large in Klein's theory, to the extent that she occupies the abyssal space of the Thing.⁹⁵ Anzinger's *Inhospitable* reveals what might be nursed in the interstice between the good and bad breast when normative Western kinship and domestic structures were denied to Black and mixed-race women under enslavement.⁹⁶ Against the watchful eye and reflective mirror, the floating breast signals the *jouissance* that materializes subjective lack as the fullness of selfhood. Folding the maternal into Anzinger's critique of environmental literacy presents ontological dehiscence as a means of persistence that dwells with the duality of conservation and pollution as two sides of one colonial capitalist coin.

Advancing the polyphonic pleasures enacted across the gallery, the nourishing/withholding breast naturalistically represented in grisaille, reappears in reflections and formal echoes between *Inhospitable*, *An Unlikely Birth*, and *Unfeed* (fig. 10). In the upper right-hand corner of *An Unlikely Birth*, thick pendulous strokes of black paint extend beyond the picture plane and present a statement that is echoed (and transmuted) in the repeating, black ceramic parabolas of *Unfeed*. Only when seen together and in the reflection of *Inhospitable* do these abstracted shapes take on mammary form. Curator Daniella Rose calls



FIGURE 10. Reflection of *An Unlikely Birth* in *Inhospitable*. Installation photograph from *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth*, Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), 2019. Photograph by Constance Mensh. Image courtesy of the artist.

THIS RIVEN ONTOLOGY OF BLACK FEMININITY COHERES IN THE GERMINATION OF DEHISCENT DISPERSAL

this sculpture one of Anzinger's "teasingly ambivalent figures; its form seems to oscillate between our slippery conceptions of human/non-human."⁹⁷ This triangulation around the breast suggests that a dehiscent ontology flourishes when Thing, Other, and object come into ecological relation. Moten affirms the false coherence of blackness when it is limited to a negative foundational presupposition, describing it as "a dubious operation and delimitation of the ontic."⁹⁸ In this sense, Anzinger's reflective ecology of the mirror elucidates the extent to which the Black feminine has already undone the binary on which its anti/anteontological status would appear to be defined. Folding *Inhospitable* back into this trio of works materially articulates ontological dehiscence as a transmutation of the Other from a foundational source of phallic lack to diffuse invaginated *jouissance* across the false coherence of thresholds between the psychic and material world. *Inhospitable* entwines contradictory vines of pleasure and gratuitous violence that adhere to Black being. From one angle, the mirror reflects the subject

eviscerated under the objectivity of blackness in the afterlife of slavery. A disembodied breast, an imprisoned eye, and an abstract landscape threatened by a muddy void of white, these are formal elements that register persistence under the scopic regimes of desire. From another vantage point, the jagged edges refract glimpses of a generativity that is fungible in its dissemination—drift seeds that sail oceans to find refuge.

Tracing illusory cohesion and inevitable rupture before the mirror, Lacanian psychoanalysis throws us into the weeds of subjectivity's turnings around the Other and the Thing. The split subject clings to their autonomy as a means of papering over the abyssal, insatiable pull toward dispersal. But there is a pause, an almost imperceptible beat of rest between desire and *jouissance* that opens the circle onto a relational being that dissolves the distinction between entities. Anzinger's work dwells in the interval that magnifies the incision lines of the fetid wound at the base of modern aesthetics, a wound borne by blackness and relegated to the vestibule of culture. Her aesthetic syntax politicizes, along Wynter's lines, the interecological dissolution of the presumed gap between the human psyche and "nature." Staging mirrors to fragment, reflect, and reassemble the human as embedded in its ecological matrix exalts planetary life while redressing the moribund reflection alongside it. This riven ontology of Black femininity coheres in the germination of dehiscent dispersal. ■

C.C. MCKEE is an assistant professor in the Department of History of Art at Bryn Mawr College. Their book *Cultivating Visible Order: Representations of Tropical Ecology and Race in the French Atlantic* is forthcoming.

Acknowledgments

I express my gratitude to the artist for providing the images used in this publication and for shaping the project with an email correspondence. The Institute of Contemporary Art (University of Pennsylvania) generously shared proofs of the catalog accompanying Anzinger's 2019 exhibition so that I might engage the most recent scholarship on the artist. Thanks also to Jamison Edgar, Emily Leifer, and Chikezie Wood for reading early drafts of the essay; it was invaluable marked by your generous and perspicacious critique.

Notes

- 1 Rayn, "Deborah Anzinger," 23.
- 2 Deborah Anzinger, pers. corr. with the author, June 12, 2021.
- 3 Brown ed., "Black Ecologies"; Thompson, *Shine*, 9, 13, 22; Yusoff, *Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. While focused on the aesthetic of light itself, Thompson's investigation of reflective engagements with bodies and surfaces provides critical concepts for the consideration of the new forms of intersubjectivity that emerge in African diasporic representational practices. By shifting the focus of the mirror toward the landscape, this essay joins a rich and burgeoning conversation around the generative scholarly and creative openings offered by ecological considerations of blackness and black considerations of the ecological. With its psychoanalytic contribution, my essay positions Kathryn Yusoff's book and issue 2 of *March* edited by Imani Jacqueline Brown as two of its most generative interlocutors.
- 4 Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*. Although it is not the central focus of this essay, Glissant's theorization of relation informs my use of the term throughout. For Glissant, the abyss of the unknown, inaugurated by the Middle Passage, produces a knowledge that is "not just a specific knowledge . . . of one particular people . . . but knowledge of the whole, greater from having been at the abyss and freeing knowledge of Relation within the Whole" (8). Significantly, Africa is rhizomatically, via Deleuze and Guattari, folded into the schema of Caribbean creolization: "Indeed, the image of the rhizome brings to knowledge that identity is not entirely in the root, but also in the Relation. . . . Wandering thought is a poetics, which is implied at the point it is said. The wandering expression is that of Relation" (31).
- 5 Kant, *Critique of the Power*, 93. .
- 6 See Sala-Molins, *Dark Side*.
- 7 Wynter, "Rethinking 'Aesthetics,'" 240–43, 272. "Equally," says Wynter, "a deciphering practice's rejection of the ontocentric definition of the human and, therefore, of the Cartesian and Darwinian premises of any purpose given to humans by nature, rather than by the discursive-cum-neurochemical signaling systems by which we are instituted as a meta-organic form of life, purposes that 'human purposes,' like the modes of the subject, of sociology, of which they are the correlate, are also to be seen as alterable, to the extent that they have proven to be inconsiderate, both for the human species as a whole (witness the ongoing deterioration of the set of conditions of the planetary environment by means of which the species is alone viable) and most directly, for the concrete individual subject of the jobless archipelagos" ("Rethinking 'Aesthetics,'" 272).
- 8 "First U.S. Solo Museum Exhibition."
- 9 Anzinger, "Correspondence."
- 10 Braunstein, "Desire and Jouissance."
- 11 Spillers, "'Freud's Wife Was Your Mother,'" in *Black, White, and in Color*, 383; Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 102–34. Sharpe asserts "the weather is the totality of our environments; the weather is the total climate and that climate is antiblack. . . . The weather necessitates changeability and improvisation; it is the atmospheric condition of time and place; it produces new ecologies" (104, 106). Sharpe's theorization of the weather conceptualizes the potential for the relationality and plurality of Anzinger's black and

feminine subject to reorient human-nature relations against the exacerbation of climate crisis in the face of environmental racism.

12 See Copeland and Aranke, "Afro-pessimist Aesthetics"; Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; George, *Trauma and Race*; George and Hook, *Lacan and Race*; Marriott, *Lacan Noir*; and Wilderson, *Red, White and Black*, 54–91. Orlando Patterson's conceptualization of the social death inaugurated by the Atlantic slave trade historically speaks to many of the conditions psychoanalysis would name as problems of the subject. However, the natal alienation enslaved women faced as property reproductively exploited for childbirth and the prohibition of kinship ties produced a black subject that was not one. The slave was socially dead not merely as a result of being juridically marked as property, but due to her exclusion from societal recognition as fully human. In one instance, literary scholar Sheldon George takes a Lacanian approach to assert that despite the objectivity imposed on blackness by the trauma of slavery, "what slavery made manifest to black Americans was the fundamental psychic condition of the subject who, at root, is alienated from being" (*Trauma and Race*, 8). Afro-pessimist film theorist Frank B. Wilderson III similarly engages the alienation of blackness from being but would deny any redemptive possibility implicit in George's analysis. Confined to the ontology of slavery, Wilderson contends that "the Black" cannot be adequately thought by either Marxism or psychoanalysis because of their emphasis on the constitution of subjectivity through relationality. Blackness cannot be relational as a result of its expulsion from the realm of the Human; it is fully outside the dialectical structures that govern the world as it exists. The necessity for the constitution of a new world would be the only means by which Blacks could assume subjectivity. It is for this reason that Wilderson concludes his chapter with the Afro-pessimistic call for a reconstituted world: "Perhaps psychoanalysis and promise of full speech are not ready for the end of the world" (*Red, White, and Black*, 91).

13 My engagement with Black negativity in Anzinger's oeuvre is informed by David Marriott's assertion that the constitution of blackness as the Fanonian *n'est pas* "is the mark of a negativity that cannot be phenomenalized as the work of negation in the sense in which Hegel gives it, and by virtue of the fact that its very enunciation and inscription signify how the black-

est part cannot in any sense either be meant or give way to a definable or reversible meaning" (*Whither Fanon*, 121). Tyrone Palmer extends Marriott's theorization into an investigation of anti-relational Black affect: "Pleasure, joy, and the like cannot be disentangled from an essential negativity; they do not negate the negativity of Blackness but exist as extensions of it. Black affect emerges at the limit of thought, in the recesses of desire" ("Otherwise than Blackness," 267). My location of a Black feminist negativity in the interval between desire and *jouissance* in Anzinger's assemblages is not opposed to the Black non-being proposed by Marriott, Palmer, and others. Rather, I contend that Anzinger's queer Black feminine eco-aesthetics offer speculative glimpses of an ontology after the "end" of the World presaged by our contemporary climate crisis.

14 "First U.S. Solo Museum Exhibition."

15 Spillers, "'Freud's Wife Was Your Mother,'" 407.

16 Spillers, "Interstices," in *Black, White, and in Color*, 155.

17 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 18.

18 Jackson, *Becoming Human*, 3.

19 Bishop, "For Deborah Anzinger."

20 Barnes, "Sewage Pollution"; Jones and Bacon, "Beach Tar Contamination"; Lapointe, Thacker, and Getten, "Sewage Pollution in Negril."

21 Berglund and Johansson, "Jamaican Deforestation"; Beckford, "Social Economy of Bauxite"; Coke, Weir, and Hill, "Environmental Impact of Bauxite Mining"; Jamaica Environment Trust, *Red Dirt*.

22 Bishop, "For Deborah Anzinger."

23 T. L. King, *Black Shoals*, 128.

24 T. L. King, *Black Shoals*, 130.

25 Cohen and Buell, *Prismatic Ecology*, xx–xxiii; Frazier, "Thinking Red, Wounds, and Fungi," 168, 170. Cohen and Buell use painting as a metaphor and practice to introduce the

epistemological significance of conceptualizing ecologies beyond the greenness that overdetermines discourses of sustainability and an antirelational environmental purity at the expense of the catastrophic, the excessive, and the polluted. It has since been employed by Chelsea Mikael Frazier to elucidate the elisions of blackness and racism that dominate ecotheory.

26 Cervenak, *Black Gathering*, 9; McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, x. I approach Anzinger's oeuvre with an eye toward what Katherine McKittrick calls, after Wynter, the "demonic grounds" of black women's spatial practice that allows us "to engage with a narrative that locates and draws on black histories and black subjects in order to make visible social lives which are often displaced, rendered ungeographic" (*Demonic Grounds*, x). This also aligns with Sarah Jane Cervenak's recent engagement with the imaginative and liberatory practice of Black eco-aesthetics that considers "how deregulated togethernesses undulate in sentences, images, and artistic arrangements that pulse against enclosure, extending the ecological beyond even its own regulative pretense" (*Black Gathering*, 9).

27 In addition to my development of "ontological dehiscence" in this article, I also propose, in my forthcoming monograph *Cultivating Visible Order: Representations of Tropical Ecology and Race in the French Atlantic*, a historical theorization of the concept that uses colonial art and visual culture to draw out parallel modes of personhood cultivated by Afro-Caribbeans in the French Caribbean against the denial of black being before and after the abolition of slavery in 1848.

28 Moten, *In the Break*, 184.

29 Moten, *Stolen Life*, 4.

30 Laplanche and Pontalis, *Language of Psychoanalysis*, 625–33. Identification in its psychoanalytic sense does not primarily refer to the recognition of the self as constitutive of the ego. Rather, identification refers to the constitution of the ego by internalizing the entities it encounters in the world that differentiate self from other. Yet for Freud and Lacan, the porosity and relationality of this being, which we have already glimpsed in Anzinger's work, is one part of the delusion that sustains the fantasy of a whole and

unified ego. Deleuze and Guattari propose a pointed alternative with their rhizomatic schizoanalysis that divorces the subject from a unified imago and returns it to its fragmentation.

31 Lacan, "Mirror Stage," 76.

32 Lacan, "Mirror Stage," 76.

33 Lacan, "Function and Field of Speech and Language," 211.

34 Lacan, "Mirror Stage," 76.

35 Copeland, "'Bye Bye Black Girl.'" Beyond the titular evocation of maternal conception, I read this particular pseudo-bodily form as feminine (although unequivocally not sexed as woman) because of a longer tradition of figural retreat enacted by black women artists as a means of addressing and constituting the Black female body against a history of enslaved hypervisibility, materiality, and its afterlives in the present. In his analysis of Lorna Simpson's *Guarded Conditions*, Huey Copeland, drawing from Fanon and Saidiya Hartman, articulates this point in psychoanalytic terms: "It is the specular malediction of the black subject not only to recognize this disjuncture [between racialized capacities for sight] but also in a certain sense to inhabit it in order to preserve the bodily ego from the deidealizing images of blackness that litter the cultural landscape and cling to black skin" (76).

36 Mohammed, "Gendering the Caribbean"; Bagneris, *Colouring the Caribbean*, 136–81; Anzinger. Anzinger thinks of her work as a pointed commentary on these colonial histories that endure as acculturated stereotype.

37 Anzinger, "Correspondence."

38 Lacan, *Psychoses*, 103–4, 112, 183–86. In one instance, Lacan describes the *objet petit a* as "something from which the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself of as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say, of the phallus, not as such, but in so far as it is lacking" (*Four Fundamental Concepts*, 112). This lack emerges from the subject's position in relation to desire for the other as a fantasy of wholeness.

39 Lacan, *Psychoses*, 193; Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 97. Butler—taking up a lineage of feminist rejoinders to phallogocentric psychoanalysis by the likes of Luce Irigaray, Julia Kristeva, and, to a

lesser degree, Klein—reminds us that desire for the mother precedes gendering because in oedipal eroticism the incest taboo bars the masculine “subject” from the mother and maternal absence reifies feminine lack.

40 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 75.

41 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 78.

42 Uexküll, *Foray into the Worlds*, 42. Lacan draws from the German biologist Jacob von Uexküll’s theorization of the *Umwelt* that dissolves the Cartesian separation of mind and material world because it is the mind of humans and other-than-human entities that interprets their world. Uexküll summarily dismisses the reduction of nonhuman life to a machinic consciousness devoid of interpretive capacities. In the biosemantic *Umwelt*, the two seemingly distinct worlds of perception and effect (*Merkwelt* and *Wirkwelt*) merge in “one closed unit, the environment.” Each living being has distinct and multiple proprioceptive *Umwelten* that intersect, overlap, and are dependent on others “even though they are revealed only to our mind’s eye and not to our body’s” (*Foray into the Worlds*, 42).

43 Lacan, “Mirror Stage,” 78.

44 D. R. King, *Deborah Anzinger*, 79; “Focus on Marine Pollution Increasing”; “Tourism Players Urged to Act against Pollution”; Lacks et al., “Effects of Tourism-Derived Sewage on Coral.”

45 Moten, *Stolen Life*, 35; Sexton, “Social Life,” 9.

46 Fanon, *Peau noir, masques blancs*, 131. All translations are from this edition and are my own. I have chosen to translate from the original in order to maintain terminological nuances in the text and conceptual parallels between Fanon and Lacan that are difficult to convey in translations. “Quand on a compris ce processus décrit par Lacan, il ne fait plus de doute que le véritable Autrui du Blanc est et démeure le Noir. Et inversement. Seulement, pour le Blanc, Autrui est perçu sur le plan de l’image corporelle, absolument comme le non-moi, c’est-à-dire le non-identifiable, le non-assimilable.”

47 Fanon, *Peau noir, masques blancs*, 132: “pour le Blanc il y a élaboration de l’*imago* du semblable, un phénomène analogue

devrait se produire chez l’Antillais, la perception visuelle étant le canevas de cette élaboration. Mais ce serait oublier qu’aux Antilles la perception se situe toujours sur le plan de l’imaginaire. C’est en termes de Blanc que l’on y perçoit son semblable.”

48 Seshandri-Crooks, *Desiring Whiteness*, 31–32. In her analysis, Seshandri-Crooks also underscores the limitations of Fanon’s interpretation on the grounds that in such a reading race is an “illusory narcissistic construct, and racism is an ego defense” (32). She later continues her critique without naming Fanon explicitly by drawing race into the dynamics of the imaginary: “The subject of the imaginary is constituted as *seeing* by the signifier, whereas the subject of race is constituted as *seen*, the subject of the gaze” (38). However, I stop short of fully endorsing Seshandri-Crooks’s criticism. As Moten demonstrates, binary oppositions cannot accommodate the ontic-ontological fugitivity in the case of blackness.

49 Moten, “Case of Blackness,” 187.

50 Barber, “On Black Negativity.” In his distinctly Afro-pessimist vein, Sexton similarly underscores the “helpful polyvalence” of the concept insofar as the disparate “themes of [surgical] wounding, [botanical] dissemination, and [otological] vertigo” can be generatively held in tension, allowing black ontologies to develop interstitially in the cut where blackness is denied proper being.

51 Spillers, “Mama’s Baby,” in *Black, White, and in Color*, 228.

52 Moten, *Stolen Life*, 34.

53 Lacan, *Desire and Interpretation*, 111–29.

54 Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality,” 315–17; McKittrick, *Dear Science*, 42.

55 Fred Moten, *Stolen Life*, 29.

56 Bishop, “For Deborah Anzinger.”

57 Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 141–43. Barad defines intra-action as “the larger material arrangement” of the world that “enacts a cut that resolves the inherent ontic-semantic indeterminacy through which the ‘subject’ and ‘object’ emerge” (*Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 143). Intra-action posits agency as a dyna-

mism of forces rather than the property of discrete individuals or humans to be exercised.

- 58 Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 105–8, 114–16.
- 59 Lacan, *Le séminaire: Les écrits techniques de Freud*, 1:93. All translation are from this edition and are my own. By translating from the original French, I hope to convey some of Lacan's impactful wordplay because these passages are critical to this essay's argument.
- 60 I thank the graduate students in my seminar "Art, Affect, and Psychoanalysis" at Bryn Mawr College for occasioning a consideration of the experiment itself that revealed this shortcoming.
- 61 Lacan, *Le séminaire: Les écrits techniques de Freud*, 1:94.
- 62 Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 188.
- 63 Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 206.
- 64 Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 91.
- 65 Prince, *History of Mary Prince*, 19; McKee, "'A Salting of Sorts,'" 24; Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, 169. Weheliye also notes the connection between the tongue and the whip in Prince's narrative, and I have previously written about contemporary Caribbean artist Deborah Jack's evocation of licking as a violent and erotic act connected to slavery in the context of the Dutch Caribbean.
- 66 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 7.
- 67 Lacan, *Le séminaire: Les écrits techniques de Freud*, 1:97.
- 68 Braunstein, "Desire and Jouissance"; Lacan, *Anxiety*, 257–66; Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 83; Lacan, *Encore*, 24. For the sake of clarity, I have characterized Lacan's formulation of the *petit objet a* as the "antinomic pole," to employ Braunstein's language, of *jouissance* that would accompany wholeness in union with another entity at the register of the Symbolic (i.e., in signifying language). However, Lacan makes clear that the conditional nature of desire is narcissistic: "The interest the subject takes in his own split is bound up with that which determines it—namely, a privileged object." Desire speciously affirms the subject via desire for the other, but this coherence for the "individual" rests at

the level of the Symbolic and emerges from "some self-mutilation induced by the very approach of the real" (*Four Fundamental Concepts*, 83).

- 69 Braunstein, "Desire and Jouissance," 104.
- 70 Lacan, "Du 'Trieb' de Freud," 853.
- 71 Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 63.
- 72 Hook, "Das Ding as Object," 493.
- 73 Moten, *Universal Machine*, 167–70; Sexton and Copeland, "Raw Life"; Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 206; Warren, *Ontological Terror*, 9–15, 152–54. These writings on the objecthood of blackness take distinct positions but are nevertheless united in their evocation of Black aesthetic culture via the visual; their interrogation of the Heideggerian *Ding* that also influenced Lacan but is beyond the scope of this essay; and, most important, the presence of slavery's history as an epistemological ground from which to work within and around blackness's fungible objecthood. Placing Anzinger's work within this constellation of black thought, I engage Warren's assertion that "blacks lack being but have existence," meaning "they inhabit a world in concealment and non-movement (this is the condition of objects)" (13). Also central to this essay is the blackness of abstract painting that Moten locates in Mondrian and Reinhart: "To insist on the distinction between the canvas as scene and the canvas as thing is to detach oneself from the scene as much as it is also to represent the scene" (167). Anzinger's sculptures and canvases are active, performing things, assemblages that materially speak dialogic selfhood.
- 74 Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, 184.
- 75 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 13.
- 76 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 13.
- 77 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 21.
- 78 Musser, *Sensual Excess*, 21.
- 79 Das, "Labor and Nature."
- 80 Jamaica Information Service, "Styrofoam Ban Takes Effect."

- 81 Bòzena et al., "Styrofoam Debris"; Dietz et al., *Marine Pollution*, 41–42.
- 82 Lacan, *Le séminaire: Les écrits techniques de Freud*, 1:94. For the psychoanalyst, the box signifies the body, the bouquet represents "objects of desire that roam about," and the "cauldron" is the cortex to which the eye (a symbol for the subject) is "fixed, like a titillating little appendage."
- 83 Lacan, *Le séminaire: L'angoisse*, 10:259. "Pour donner la fonction du miroir dans cette dialectique de la reconnaissance un sens qui ne soit de l'ordre du tour de passe-passe, de l'escamotage, de la magie, il convient de faire quelques remarques, dont la première, qui n'est à prendre dans le sens idéaliste, est que l'œil est déjà un miroir."
- 84 D. R. King, *Deborah Anzinger*, 11.
- 85 Anzinger, "Correspondence."
- 86 Lacan, *Le séminaire: L'angoisse*, 10:259: "Tout l'investissement libidinal ne passe pas par l'image spéculaire. Il y a un reste."
- 87 Lacan, *Le séminaire: L'angoisse*, 10:259: "le phallus apparaît en moins, comme un blanc."
- 88 Lacan, *Le séminaire: L'angoisse*, 10:259: "De l'autre, le a, qui est ce reste, ce résidu, cet objet dont le statut échappe au statut de l'objet dérivé de l'image spéculaire, c'est-à-dire aux lois de l'esthétique transcendantale."
- 89 Moten, *Stolen Life*, 4–5.
- 90 Kant, *Critique of the Power*, 93.
- 91 Moten, *Stolen Life*, 13.
- 92 Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 206.
- 93 D. R. King, *Deborah Anzinger*, 80.
- 94 Mitchell, *Selected Melanie Klein*, 148–49.
- 95 Lacan, *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, 106; Brini, "Das Ding."
- 96 Spillers, "Mama's Baby," 215–17; Segato, *L'œdipe Noir*, 54–64.

97 D. R. King, *Deborah Anzinger*, 11.

98 Moten, *Stolen Life*, 34.

Works Cited

- Bagneris, Mia. *Colouring the Caribbean: Race and the Art of Agostino Brunias*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018.
- Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Barber, Daniel. "On Black Negativity, or The Affirmation of Nothing: Jared Sexton interviewed by Daniel Barber." *Society + Space*, September 18, 2017. www.societyandspace.org/articles/on-black-negativity-or-the-affirmation-of-nothing.
- Barnes, Elspeth S. "Sewage Pollution from Tourist Hotels in Jamaica." *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 4, no. 7 (1973): 102–5.
- Beckford, George L. "The Social Economy of Bauxite in the Jamaican Man-Space." *Social and Economic Studies* 36, no. 1 (1987): 1–55.
- Berglund, Christer, and Tommy Johansson. "Jamaican Deforestation and Bauxite Mining—the Role of Negotiations for Sustainable Resource Use." *Minerals and Energy—Raw Materials Report* 19, no. 3 (2004): 2–14.
- Bishop, Jacqueline. "For Deborah Anzinger, Ecology Is of Utmost Importance." *Daily Observer* (Kingston, Jamaica), March 29, 2020.
- Bòzena, Graca, Magdalena Beldowska, Patrycja Wrzesień, and Aleksandra Zgrundo. "Styrofoam Debris as a Potential Carrier of Mercury within Ecosystems." *Environmental Science and Pollution Research*, no. 21 (2014): 2263–71.
- Braunstein, Néstor A. "Desire and Jouissance in the Teachings of Lacan." In *The Cambridge Companion to Lacan*, edited by Jean-Michel Rabaté, 102–15. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Brini, Colette. "Das Ding et l'Autre maternel chez Melanie Klein." *La revue lacanienne* 9, no. 1 (2011): 183–87.
- Brown, Imani Jacqueline, ed. "Black Ecologies." Special issue, *March*, no. 2 (Fall 2021).
- Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1990.

- Cervenak, Sarah Jane. *Black Gathering: Art, Ecology, and Ungiven Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021.
- Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome, and Laurence Buell. *Prismatic Ecology: Ecotheory beyond Green*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013.
- Coke, Lloyd B., Colin C. Weir, and Vincent G. Hill. "Environmental Impact of Bauxite Mining and Processing in Jamaica." *Social and Economic Studies* 36, no. 1 (1987): 289–325, 327–30, 332–33.
- Copeland, Huey, and Sampada Aranke, "Afro-pessimist Aesthetics: An Open Conversation." *ASAP/Journal* 5, no. 2 (2020): 241–45.
- Copeland, Huey. "'Bye Bye Black Girl': Lorna Simpson's Figurative Retreat." *Art Journal* 64, no. 2 (2005): 62–77.
- Das, Jareh. "Labor and Nature: Deborah Anzinger Interviewed by Jareh Das, an Art of the Body and the Environment." *BOMB Magazine*, August 6, 2019. bombmagazine.org/articles/labor-and-nature-deborah-anzinger-interviewed/.
- Dietz, Sylvia Michelle, Pawan Patil, John Morton, Diego J. Rodriguez, Alessandra Vanzella, David Robin, Thomas Maes, and Christopher Corbin. *Marine Pollution in the Caribbean: Not a Minute to Waste*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2019.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Peau noire, masques blancs*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1951.
- "First U.S. Solo Museum Exhibition of Deborah Anzinger to Open at ICA in Philadelphia." News release, Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia, December 18, 2018.
- "Focus on Marine Pollution Increasing; Tourism Industry Has Discussions to Rectify Growing Issue." *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 7, 2019.
- Frazier, Chelsea Mikael. "Thinking Red, Wounds, and Fungi in Wangechi Mutu's Eco-art." In *Ecologies, Agents, Terrains*, edited by Christopher P. Heuer and Rebecca Zorach, 167–95. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2018.
- George, Sheldon. *Trauma and Race: A Lacanian Study of African American Racial Identity*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016.
- George, Sheldon, and Derek Hook, eds. *Lacan and Race: Racism, Identity, and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Glissant, Édouard. *Poétique de la relation*. Paris: Gallimard, 1990.
- Hook, Derek. "Das Ding as Object of Melancholia." *Psychoanalytic Dialogues* 28, no. 4 (2018): 491–95.
- Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiracist World*. New York: New York University Press, 2020.
- Jamaica Environment Trust. *Red Dirt: A Multidisciplinary Review of the Bauxite-Alumina Industry in Jamaica*. Kingston: Jamaica Environment Trust, 2020.
- Jamaica Information Service. "Styrofoam Ban Takes Effect." December 31, 2019. jis.gov.jm/styrofoam-ban-takes-effect-january-1/.
- Jones, Margaret A. J., and Peter R. Bacon. "Beach Tar Contamination in Jamaica." *Marine Pollution Bulletin* 21, no. 7 (1990): 331–34.
- Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, edited by Paul Guyer. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- King, Daniella Rose. *Deborah Anzinger: An Unlikely Birth*. Philadelphia: Institute of Contemporary Art, 2021.
- King, Tiffany Lethabo. *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X*, translated by A. R. Price. Malden, MA: Polity, 2014.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Desire and Interpretation: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VI*, translated Bruce Fink. New York: Polity, 2019.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Du 'Trieb' de Freud et du désir du psychanalyste." In *Écrits*, 851–54. Paris: Seuil, 1966.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Encore: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX*, translated by Bruce Fink. New York: Norton, 1998.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–60: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, translated by Dennis Porter. New York: Norton, 1992.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI*, translated by Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1998.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis." In *Écrits*, edited by Bruce Fink, 197–268. New York: Norton, 2006.
- Lacan, Jacques. "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." In *Écrits*, edited by Bruce Fink, 75–81. New York: Norton, 2006.

- Lacan, Jacques. *The Psychoses, 1955–56: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III*, translated by Russell Grigg. New York: Norton, 1993.
- Lacan, Jacques. "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure.'" In *Écrits*, edited by Bruce Fink, 543–74. New York: Norton, 2006.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Le séminaire*, vol. 1: *Les écrits techniques de Freud*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Paris: Seuil, 1975.
- Lacan, Jacques. *Le séminaire*, vol. 10: *L'angoisse*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Paris: Seuil, 2004.
- Lacks, Liam, Nur Arbaeen Mohd Johari, Dung Quang Le, Che Din Mohd Safuan, Nicolas N. Duprey, Kentaro Tanaka, Tan Chun Hong, Nicolas C. Ory, Zainudin Bachok, David M. Baker, Marc Kochzius, and Kotaro Shirai. "Effects of Tourism-Derived Sewage on Coral Reefs: Isotopic Assessments Identify Effective Bioindicators." *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, no. 148 (2019): 85–96.
- Laplanche, Jean, and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis. *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac Books, 1988.
- Lapointe, B. E., K. Thacker, C. Hanson, and L. Getten. "Sewage Pollution in Negril, Jamaica: Effects on Nutrition and Ecology of Coral Reef Macroalgae." *Chinese Journal of Oceanology and Limnology* 29, no. 4 (2011): 775–89.
- Marriott, David. *Lacan Noir: Lacan and Afro-pessimism*. New York: Palgrave, 2021.
- Marriott, David. *Whither Fanon: Studies in the Blackness of Being*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2018.
- McKee, C.C. "'A Salting of Sorts': Salt, Sea, and Affective Form in the Work of Deborah Jack." *Art Journal* 78, no. 2 (2019): 14–27.
- McKittrick, Katherine. *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021.
- McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Mitchell, Juliette, ed. *The Selected Melanie Klein*. New York: Free Press, 1986.
- Mohammed, Patricia. "Gendering the Caribbean Picturesque." *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, no. 1 (2007): n.p.
- Moten, Fred. "The Case of Blackness." *Criticism* 50, no. 2 (2008): 177–218.
- Moten, Fred. *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Moten, Fred. *Stolen Life*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Moten, Fred. *The Universal Machine*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Musser, Amber Jamilla. *Sensual Excess: Queer Femininity and Brown Jouissance*. New York: New York University Press, 2018.
- Palmer, Tyrone S. "Otherwise than Blackness: Feeling, World, Sublimation." *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences* 29, no. 2 (2020): 247–83.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Prince, Mary. *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave, Related by Herself*. Chapel Hill, NC: DocSouth Books, 2017.
- Rayn, Zoe, ed. "Deborah Anzinger." *Caldera* 1, no. 2 (2018): 23–29.
- Sala-Molins, Louis. *Dark Side of the Light: Slavery and the French Enlightenment*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Segato, Rita Laura. *L'œdipe Noir: Des nourrices et des mères*, translated by Lea Gauthier. Paris: Petit Bibliothèque Payot, 2014.
- Seshandri-Crooks, Kalpana. *Desiring Whiteness: A Lacanian Analysis of Race*. New York: Routledge, 2000.
- Sexton, Jared. "The Social Life of Social Death: On Afro-Pessimism and Black Optimism." *InTensions*, no. 5 (2011): 1–47.
- Sexton, Jared, and Huey Copeland. "Raw Life: An Introduction." *Qui Parle* 13, no. 2 (2002): 53–62.
- Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Spillers, Hortense. *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Thompson, Krista. *Shine: The Visual Economy of Light in African Diasporic Aesthetic Practice*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015.
- "Tourism Players Urged to Act against Pollution." *Jamaica Gleaner*, August 17, 2016.
- Uexküll, Jakob von. *A Foray into the Worlds of Animals and Humans: With a Theory of Meaning*, translated by Joseph D. O'Neil. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

- Warren, Calvin. *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018.
- Weheliye, Alexander. *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.
- Wilderson, Frank B., III. *Red, White, and Black: Cinema and the Structure of U.S. Antagonisms*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Rethinking 'Aesthetics': Notes towards a Deciphering Practice." In *Ex-iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*, edited by Mbye B. Cham, 237–79. Trenton, NJ: Africa World, 1992.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, after Man, Its Overrepresentation—an Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 257–337. doi:10.1353/ncr.2004.0015.
- Yusoff, Kathryn. *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018.