

# Capture /Connect /Shift

A CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY OPEN BOOK

## INTRODUCTION: Mobility and Inhabitation Amidst Racial Capital

**SABINE MOHAMED**

**Johns Hopkins University**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4331-2648>

**JATIN DUA**

**University of Michigan**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2954-1166>

This series examines how the ecologies of race, labor, housing, and belonging are co-constituted within often rapid processes of infrastructural renewal. Through ethnographic, historical, and theoretical engagements, these essays explore how shifting environments in urban and maritime settings affect people's experience of racial subjugation and the structures of exposure and capture. The authors pay particular attention to modes of mobility and inhabitation through which a host of actors improvise, work, and live while navigating the forces of state control and economies marked by volatility. Instead of furthering a narrative of the urban poor and modalities of suffering, this collection of essays ethnographically describes aesthetic forms of improvisation and economic collaboration in material worlds. The modality to improvise is not merely an act of emergency but entails the search for relations (social movements, momentary alignments, diasporic modalities of kinship) and the mobilization of emergent

*The Open Book project is a space for experimental, peer-reviewed digital scholarship curated by Cultural Anthropology's editorial collective under the directorship of AbdouMaliq Simone. This Open Book is freely available to download, save, reproduce, and transmit for noncommercial, scholarly, and educational purposes under the Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0 license. Reproduction and transmission of this essay for the above purposes should credit the author and original source. DOI: 10.14506/ob.ccs.intro*

backgrounds. Intellectual histories of Pan-Africanism and Blackness, broad communities such as an Islamic *umma*, colonial and new social housing projects, and living together along economically volatile landscapes all serve as emergent backgrounds. The search for an elsewhere is often not articulated in terms of politics or something easily apparent but in aesthetic and tacit formations. Famously, infrastructure reveals itself as background. We learn about infrastructure only when it breaks down (Star 1999). But what if we do not capitulate to the notion of a breakdown and envision infrastructure rather as a spillover indicating unseen alignments? In this vein, each paper in this collection explores how backgrounds (as abyss, infrastructure, nonknowledge) appear as forceful agents, bonds, or even soundscapes and how residents themselves *shift* narratives in their everyday lives.

Ideas for this collection of essays emerged from a workshop (entitled Capture/Connect/Shift: Infrastructure, Blackness, and Racial Capital) that took place in 2022 at the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Chicago. In this workshop, we, the authors, aimed for an interdisciplinary conversation among anthropology, Black studies, history, urban and maritime studies. The thematic focus on registers of inhabitation seemed crucial and timely in terms not only of seeking to situate race, capital, and infrastructure outside the specificity of our own ethnographic regions but also of thinking about methods and theory within our discipline and, more importantly, beyond. In 2023, we returned to the conversation, with the editorial collective of *Cultural Anthropology* supporting our project. This time, we merged our efforts with scholars from the Beyond Inhabitation Lab, who had been conversing and discussing similar themes. We framed the project as an “Open Book” to signal the ongoing process of the endeavor and to make the relations visible. Developed over a series of conversations and workshops between 2024 and early 2025, the Open Book is a collective effort in building and resonating ideas. Each chapter not only emerges from an ongoing research project but also echoes and builds on ideas found elsewhere in the collection. We hope that this proposal of open-endedness invites more engagement and interventions. Building from ethnographic encounters and realities, this collection of essays has sought to think and engage them through the keywords of *capture*, *connect*, and *shift*. The interest in these keywords emerged from multiple avenues—from the specificities of our ethnographic and archival locations where these themes resonated across space and time and from a scholarly archive on infrastructure and capture.

## REVISITING INFRASTRUCTURES AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Recent literature on infrastructure in the Global South has fundamentally enriched our understanding on how we in this field think about infrastructure as sociality and surrounds (Simone 2004, 2022) as social meaning (“infrastructure as a condition of possibility for the relative commensurability of value judgments” across and within a community itself; Kockelman 2010, 419; Kockelman 2013; Larkin 2013) and how both visible and invisible infrastructures shape the spatial and temporal logic of a city (De Boek and Plissart 2004; Klinenberg 2015; Larkin 2008; Elyachar 2005, 2010). Instead of regarding the city as a mere extension of the state or simply as a refuse of state-led programs, scholars have shifted their attention to exploring more broadly the urban processes in the Global South. This has resulted in a scholarship on urban governance and urban planning that examines how urban residents navigate access to infrastructure, public goods, and belonging and that explores, vice versa, how infrastructure imposes itself on people, attachments, and the promise of a just future (Amin and Thrift 2002; Pieterse 2010; Larkin 2013; Caldeira 2000; Anand, Gupte, and Appel 2018; Anand 2017; Lancione 2016, 2020; Gastrow 2024). Scholars have also probed more explicitly the relationship between an anthropology of infrastructure and an anthropology of capture, a lens that is driven by centering the history and future of capitalism, climate, and fossil fuels (Cons 2025; Degani 2022; Degani, Chafin, and Cross 2020; Chafin 2019; Günel 2019; Mitchell 2009, 2013; see also Boyer’s 2014 proposition to understand “energopower” as a form of capture and power through the lens of electricity and fuel).

Yet, if infrastructure and capture were to be understood as similar operations with the logic of attaining a complete grasp of the grid, territory, or colonization, the telos in which we would begin to “see” infrastructures would be seemingly “straight,” linear, reifying proper (formal) and improper (informal) infrastructures. Conceptually, this would mean that complications within this (whether emic or etic) logic would appear as “failure” or breakdown. Furthermore, these spaces of breakdown or failure would become imbued with potentiality (see Ojani [2023] on fog capture and its material impossibility). Being attached to these promises and failures at the same time can be cruel, especially if these promises are denied from the outset. Lauren Berlant (2011) discusses how political subjectivity is formed through “the good life fantasy” and through the cruelty that arises during dramas of adjustment to the transformation of what seemed foundational into binding kinds of optimism. For Berlant, cruel optimism is an embodied, affective, and historical state in which subjects find

themselves bound to objects of desire that prohibit their full “flourishing.” In a similar vein Prince Guma proposed to understand urban infrastructures as incompleteness (collapsing ends and means), arguing against an implicit assumption that infrastructures are “the completist lure and inclinations” (Guma 2020, 728). Andrea Ballestero has highlighted that not everything can be captured and traces moments when objects (such as aquifers) resist being “infrastructuralized” (Ballestero 2019, 22).

We have learned that infrastructures as material and affect not only emerge from the site of factory floors and public goods, but also gain their force through circulation. We build on this idea of circulation in relation to *capture/connect/shift* in this collection. As the essays in this collection attest, infrastructures are forged within fugitive spaces, defined through their temporality, and momentary intersections and are encapsulated within networks of kin, strategic alliances across oceans among merchants, politicians, pirates, migrants, and residents on land. In line with Édouard Glissant’s (1997) radical proposition of relations, which calls for a space that acknowledges opacity, we do not aim to formulate new categories or claim to have a grasp of how to make infrastructure transparent, which is often aligned with thinking of domination and discovery. These insights into infrastructure’s opacity and incompleteness resonate with how Blackness operates as infrastructure—circulating, structuring life, and exceeding capture.

### CAPTURE/CONNECT/SHIFT

This Open Book intervenes in infrastructure and Black studies scholarship by showing how capture, connect, and shift operate as co-constitutive rather than oppositional forces across diverse geographies of racial capital. Most essays extend the geographies of blackness beyond the North American context and classifications. In doing so, we aim to decenter race, Blackness, and oceanic movements from a U.S.-bound interpretation and perspective (see also Alves 2018; Shilliam 2015; Pierre 2013; Clarke and Thomas 2006; Gilroy 1993). Rather than proposing a singular origin of slavery and thus its afterlives, the Open Book traces how blackness emerges and circulates historically as an infrastructure, as an episteme, and as a diasporic and black experience in different geographies across time, space, and form. The aim is not necessarily to universalize or to compare but to think of the registers of inhabitation.

Capture has increasingly become a productive notion to describe the long durée of the transatlantic enslavement of Africans and the experience of forced labor within the plantations in the Americas, as well as the afterlives of slavery

more broadly and globally. “What is Man?” was a question often posed by scholars of the European Renaissance. Yet the idea of the “human” did not gain its force as a concept and a geographic identifier for Europe until the height of European imperialism and the Industrial Revolution. Ironically, this notion of the human deepened alongside the brutal scramble for Africa and a global logic of imperial and colonial expansion. Epistemologically, the idea of the human was co-constitutive to the term “nonhuman” (appearing under numerous aliases such as the “savage,” “enslaved,” “barbarian,” “native,” “colonized,” “postcolonial subject,” and “surplus labor”), which was simultaneously generic and specific (see also [MacLochlainn 2022](#) on indigeneity and the generic in Christianity). The complication arose when notions of humanity as universal, yet racialized and hierarchical, represented “both a system of thought and a mode of existence the meaning of which is a problem of historical analysis” ([Mafeje 1976](#), 309). For [Neferti Tadiar \(2022\)](#), the human, a reference to a society in which Man emerged, embodies a twofold capture in the regions of the Global South at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first century. First, it is embedded in war-making to bring “humanity” to a time or place where it had seemingly not previously existed (a war to be human); and second, it is the intricate process of becoming human in a time of war and decolonization (nonhumans being afforded humanity) ([Tadiar 2022](#), 6). The poet and politician Aimé Césaire wrote that it was not human contact between the colonizer and colonized, but relations of power that foregrounded a sensibility and reality of capture:

No human contact, but relations of domination and submission which turn the colonizing man into a classroom monitor, an army, a prison guard, a slave driver, and the indigenous man into an instrument of production. My turn to state an equation: colonization = “thingification.” ([Césaire 2000](#), 42)

Frantz Fanon, who was taught and deeply influenced by Césaire at the Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France in Martinique, elaborated on the structures and objects of domination in [Césaire’s \*Discourses on Colonialism\* \(2000\)](#) by attending to the embodied affect of capture. Fanon described capture under (de)colonialism as “atmospheric violence, this violence rippling under the skin” ([Fanon 1963](#), 31) and connected the ephemeral feeling “rippling under the skin” to infrastructures. “We have seen as it develops how a number of driving mechanisms pick it up and convey it to an outlet.” ([Fanon 1963](#), 31). For Zimbabwean novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga, feeling, breathing, screaming, and pain are ways

of describing empire after colonialism (“The first wound for all of us who are classified as ‘black’ is empire,” [Dangarembga 2023, 19]). Disembodiment and embodiment are not necessarily dialectical; they can be operations and forces that are felt prior to definitions and classifications.

Wanguï Kimari’s essay (in this collection) frames the afterlives of slavery in urban Kenya (a landscape “replete with both the spectre and reality of capture”) as the promises of “enshacklement.” Capture enforces a modality of enclosure, and yet it also operates as a relation, potentiality, and life. These openings, caused by the pressures of capture and surveillance, entail numerous outlets. Capture as well as its countermovement can be written on the bodies of young people (Diouf 2003; Mohamed in this collection; Siegel 1998) and appear in music productions as counterculture (Gilroy 1993; Cielo, Vera, and Bone in this collection); capture can be configured spatially in the built environments (Beaujon in this collection; Gupte in this collection; Peano in this collection) and seen in the refusal of accepting the gifts/cargo from the ocean (Dua, Ben-Yehoyada, and Carnì in this collection).

One example of the afterlives of the histories of slavery as a global phenomenon is the exploration of how places and bodies in the Global South were translated as mere sites of resource extraction and waste (Tadiar 2022; Rodney 2018 [1972]). These afterlives of the histories of slavery also include an inquiry into how the sea beyond the Black Atlantic has become a site to think about “anti-imperial oceanic routes” and anticolonial imperialism (Hawthorne and Lewis 2023, 4; Ho 2004) as well as about how the sea has become capitalized as a mode of global shipping (Khalili 2020; Dua 2019; Cowen 2014). Scholars have had to theorize not only the notion of capture but also “escape” and the emergent fugitive spaces that became a generative site for escaped enslaved Africans, illicit kinship and trade, Black reconstruction, and anti-imperialism (Du Bois [1935] 2021; Spillers 1987; Moten 2018; Thomas 2019; Lewis 2020, 2022; Getachew 2019; Hawthorne and Lewis 2023). For Fred Moten, “fugitivity, then, is a desire for and a spirit of escape and transgression of the proper and the proposed. It is a desire for the outside, for playing or being outside, an outlaw edge proper to the now always already improper voice or instrument” (Moten 2018, 131). Yet, as everyone knows, music can simultaneously captivate and lure one into a different space, offer solace, and create a space and site for a spontaneous ensemble (Sun Ra; Alice Coltrane; Hartman 2019; Simone 2019; see also Abels 2022 for sound and co-becoming). That is to say, music itself can be a site of intervention and allows for rupture. For example, Cielo, Vera, and Bone’s essay on how

young Ecuadorian Afro-descendant residents in coastal Ecuador inhabit extreme violent enclosures and yet, despite the risk of being captured by gangs, engage in musical collaborations and percussion ensembles. These ruptures extend beyond music and also appear in other spaces such as piracy at sea, rebellion on land, sabotage within production sites, sirens/shrieks in the domestic space, and self-invention to elevate one's social positionality.

If capture is about being held, about restraint, but is also captivating in its possibilities for fugitivity, escape, and rupture, it holds within itself the possibility of connection and relation. This mode of capture is resonant with an older anthropological tradition of building and sustaining relations. From marriage by capture (Herzfeld 1985; Barnes 1999) to the anthropologies of pastoralism (Fleisher 2000) to ontologies of hunting (Nadasdy 2007) to more recent discourses of extraterrestrial captivity and conspiracy theories (Lepselter 2016; Masco 2014; Masco and Wedeen 2024), capture has foregrounded and sustained socioeconomic, spatial and temporal relations. Far from refusing to enter a world of exchange, capture is often a privileged modality of inaugurating and sustaining social relationships (O'Neill and Dua 2018). This is not taking without giving; instead, capture conceals a reciprocity that often undergirds what initially appears as expropriation.

The ethnographic pieces in this collection bring together these multiple insights on capture, archives of maroonage (Brown 2020; Cielo, Vera, and Bone in this collection), practices of solidarity in face-to-face worlds (Diallo in this collection; Peano in this collection), and histories of transregional and of a “deep, global infrastructure of anticolonial connectivity” (Lee 2010; Shilliam 2015) spanning oceans, deserts, and other “vast expanses” (Rozwadowski 2018). As they do so, the contributions to this collection consider in what moments and under what conditions are connections and relations forged and reforged through practices of infrastructural engagement and mobility. Connections can be ephemeral as well as enduring, they bring human and nonhuman energies together and foreground the material affordances and possibilities of infrastructures within a variety of ethical and political projects (Keane 2016). Connections made and unmade are also stories of scale and temporality. Here, too, the question of relation becomes salient. For Glissant (1997, 171), relation is “a totality as openness and a temporary product of the process: ‘what is totality, once again, and through return, if not the relation of each matter to all others?’” These relations are forged in and through histories, but always in ways that emphasize futurity and becoming. Yet, connections are also toxic and corrosive, as

a number of our contributors note. To be connected is also to be hierarchically related, to be subjugated and burdened with the detritus of history such as the histories of capitalism and transnationalism. Relations, however, are not bound to the knowing subject and its constructs, but rather produced by its concept and within this order emerge through “its own specifications producing phenomena of a particular kind (ideas linked in a narrative)” (Strathern 2020, 18). As discussed above, infrastructurally, relations and connections are crucial not only materially but also socially. However, what and who is related and seen as connected is neither stable, nor fixed, nor ontologically preexisting (and thus cannot be understood through the dominant Western metaphysics of individualism). Against the notion of givenness and in line with Karen Barad’s proposition of inter-action, relations become determinate and exist within ongoing materializing relations (Barad 2007). Similar and yet different is Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s (2015) proposition of perspectivism, which provides a context for and genealogy of Amerindian thought that elicits forms of relationality and distinction that do not align with or mirror ingrained Western forms and insists on a radical alterity of the “native” conceptions.

Neither valorizing connection nor always seeking escape, the contributions emphasize the ever-present modes of captivity and care; they call attention to connection and corrosion and to the possibility of shift (shifting terrains; shifting relations; shifting power dynamics) that is at the heart of these sinews of connection (see, for example, Grewal and Kaplan 1994 on scattered hegemonies and transnational solidarities).

The essays in this collection describe the spaces within and beyond capture. Moreover, they engage with infrastructural spaces and life that exceed the logic of capture and extraction. For example, Aïcha Diallo’s essay reorients Dakar’s colonial and transatlantic history and contemporary forms of urban dispossession from capture to refuge. She shows how artistic collaborations and practices in Dakar unveil a different map, one that leads to sacred and spiritual spaces. Danielle Beaujon highlights in her description of the history of segregation in Algiers, a history shaped by expropriation, racism, and unequal urban planning, how the very attempt of capture also “lent itself to the subversion of the colonial panopticon. . . . The opacity of the Casbah became a resource, fostering a zone of fugitivity where rebellion flourished.” Sabine Mohamed’s essay equally emphasizes that even in the urban core, a site saturated with all kinds of surveillance, residents evade capture by turning its imperial logic of domination upside-down and turning a space to a site where one has nothing to lose (“A poor kid has

nothing to lose and a *4 kilo* [Arat Kilo] kid has nothing to fear.”) Rupali Gupte’s essay analyzes inhabitation, examining how residents of a large settlement in Mumbai have appropriated unaccounted space within the settlement’s housing scheme. She describes how they settled in the “gap” created by these policies and built a common space that extended the boundaries of their home. An extension of space not formally afforded to them. Similarly, Irene Peano’s essay suggests campization to understand the physical site of racialized labor force for Italian agribusiness. While these encampments act as a reservoir of workforce and a space of abandonment and enclosure, they are also sites of autonomous infrastructure and fugitivity and thus need to be understood as an extension.

But the infrastructures of capture can also create surplus and disavowal. In Jatin Dua, Naor Ben-Yehoyada, and Andrea Carni’s essay, Dua’s friend in Somalia learned about buried toxic material on land in Puntland and refused to get involved: “Oh, it’s on land? No. You don’t want to go there. If it’s on land it means someone drove it there. Someone buried it there. Don’t even send me the picture.” This statement illustrates not only disavowal but also the agency of the interlocutor to not be involved in the complicated nature of sovereignty and capture on land. Here, too, there is possibility of shift. If land is marked by refusal and disavowal, containers that wash ashore or shipwrecks at sea allow for the possibility of reflecting on relations, including toxic relations.

### “THERE ARE NEW SUNS”

AbdouMaliq Simone (2022) proposes to think about the surrounds as a site (“as not this, but could be,” 33) that utterly refuses definition “where its nature is not captured in any specific manifestation but can nevertheless manifest itself in forms and situations that do not inherently belong to it” (Simone 2022, 33). Simone’s insistence on looking at the surrounds as a site is not only a radical re-configuration of what it means to inhabit but also points to places (the need for new vocabularies) and the sites that need to be prefigured and created (“there is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns,” Octavia Butler [1998]).

The search for new suns is a shared method across these contributions as they inhabit, however contingently and tenuously, conceptual and empirical worlds where capture and connection are not contradictory pulls but work together in constantly shifting constellations. But this world of shifting constellations is not just contingent and fleeting (albeit saturated with politics, affects that are precisely fleeting and evasive); it is one framed within histories of imperial relations and refusals, of genealogy and alliance.

Through our respective ethnographic and archival work, this collection reflects the intricacies of *capture/connect/shift* in the everyday and the long *durée* of (infra)structures and backgrounds. We are committed to exploring the thresholds that allow people to enter spaces of new potentialities. Of course, the politics of capture (in particular forms of neoliberalism, racial capital orderings, and effects of climate change) have entrapments that are neither easily sidestepped nor allow for an isolated “outside.” Blackness evaluated within preexisting paradigms and value systems makes it difficult to relocate the complicated and complex lives of Black and Brown people. However, our work describes how people (often in collaboration with nonhuman actors) are in search of a new language, new assemblies and gatherings, and environments that are as yet unarticulated. That is to say that often these assemblies, gatherings, or collectives (humans and nonhumans) are not seen as sufficiently legible or transparent within dominant logics of capital, politics, and classification.

We aim to tease out the relationship between modes of *capture*, *connect*, and *shift* among people, places, and meaning across planetary geographies. This Open Book leans conceptually on the Black radical tradition and anthropological literature that have engaged infrastructures in the Global South as well as on the study of affect in the world. In addition to arguing for the centrality of the Black radical tradition to anthropological formations (in the past, present, and possible futures of the discipline), we wager collectively that Black studies is generative in taking apart certain limits to categories such as the “urban poor” and the “Global South” that end up being trapped in a dualism where our interlocutors emerge as surplus or frozen in a never-ending dialectic. Capture/connect/shift is a gesture of dynamism and that points to the potential ends to the dialectic.

### ESSAYS IN THE OPEN BOOK

The eight original inquiries in this collection explore the relationship between modes of capture, connect, and shift in a wide variety of contexts. Cristina Cielo, Cristina Vera, and Vanessa Bone’s essay examines future-making projects and trickster pasts in Black coastal Ecuador under conditions of military surveillance and racialized violence; Aïcha Diallo explores creative practices of enacting refuge as method and collectivity in Dakar’s spiritual and cultural landscapes, as well as in sites of disposability. Some essays address issues related to (post)colonial urban registers: Irene Peano looks at the colonial specters of migrant encampments in Italy and how these spatial formations function as extensive spaces of resistance; Wangui Kimari focuses on postcolonial urban governance practices in Nairobi, employing the notion of ensnarement as a mode

to maintain the unjust operations of the city; and a third, Danielle Beaujon's essay explores how racial segregation under French colonial rule in the city of Algiers emerged not from one legal ruling or policy, but rather from a slow yet persistent project of erasure, racial violence, and expropriation, reducing the urban opportunities for Algerians in the city. Rupali Gupte's essay is about inhabitation, analyzing how housing policies in Mumbai have brought to the fore the absurdity of demand-supply logics and how evasive domestic arrangements remind us to conceptually reframe the question of housing around questions of inhabitation and its spatial dimensions. Sabine Mohamed's essay on blackness as affective infrastructures spotlights a T-shirt that demonstrates how urban residents in Addis Ababa inhabited and critiqued the foreclosure of their urban district with the resonances of displaced bodies and their futures. Jatin Dua, Naor Ben-Yehoyada, and Andrea Carni's essay is on toxic relations and the disavowal of toxic waste circulating from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea.

#### NAVIGATING CAPTURE/CONNECT/SHIFT

In envisioning this collection as an Open Book we want to make explicit the forms of hospitality that structure our relations of writing and reading. While each essay can—and should—be read as a stand-alone piece, the conceptual work on the thematic ideas of capture, connect, and shift exceeds the boundedness of each piece. Rather it emerged very much in the conversations that structured the collaborations as well as juxtapositions from reading pieces that are otherwise separated by geography and disciplinary boundaries. We encourage readers to think of capture/connect/shift as both keywords that organize these essays, but also as invitations to think between and across these pieces. We invite you to read and think across, for example Danielle Beaujon and Rupali Gupte's essays and what thinking across time and imperial histories (French and British) can spark on homes and habitability? How might disposability (and resistance) emerge in Irene Peano's essay on migrant encampments in contemporary Italy and in Aïcha Diallo's essay navigating Dakar's spiritual and cultural landscapes? How do histories of enslavement and (anti)colonialism frame urban governance practices in Nairobi and Addis Ababa as explored by Wangui Kimari and Sabine Mohamed? What is gained in thinking from the littoral in both coastal Somalia and Ecuador as in the pieces by Jatin Dua, Naor Ben-Yehoyada, and Andrea Carni and Cristina Cielo, Cristina Vera, and Vanessa Bone? These juxtapositions are one possible itinerary, amidst multiple journeys, and we invite annotations, reflections, and comparisons to continue the conversations whose snapshots frame these pieces.

**ABSTRACT**

*The introduction proposes capture/connect/shift as a dynamic framework for understanding how infrastructures operate through spillover, opacity, and incompleteness. Capture operates not only as enclosure but as a modality that holds within itself possibilities for fugitivity, rupture, and relation. Connections—whether through marronage archives, transregional solidarities, or toxic circulations—are simultaneously generative and corrosive, material and affective. Shift attends to how terrains, relations, and power dynamics remain in constant flux, revealing spaces within and beyond capture’s logic. Across eight essays that traverse diverse geographies and draw from historical archives, ethnographic encounters, legal and urban fields, and sonic engagements within black (maritime) geographies, the collection aims toward new vocabularies for inhabiting worlds where “there are new suns.” [Black studies; race; capitalism; infrastructure; urban planning; aesthetics; architecture; oceans; colonialism; Global South]*

**NOTES**

*Acknowledgments* At the University of Illinois at Chicago, we would like to thank the Department of Anthropology (especially Tarini Bedi), the Institute for the Research on Race and Public Policy, and the Institute for the Humanities— particularly Mark Canuel for his vision and support of the initial workshop in April 2022. At Johns Hopkins University, we would like to thank the Center for Africana Studies (especially Minkah Makalani), the Alexander Grass Humanities Institute (especially William Egginton), the Program in Latin American, Caribbean and Latinx Studies (especially Angelina Cotler), and the Department of Anthropology for supporting our second workshop in August 2024. We are indebted to AbdouMaliq Simone for his unwavering support, intellectual guidance, and generosity, in keeping the fire of this project alive. We would also like to thank the managing editor, Kate Herman, and the editorial collective at *Cultural Anthropology* for entrusting us with this special project, which we named an Open Book.

**REFERENCES**

- Abels, Birgit  
 2022 “Resonance: Co-Becoming with Sound.” In *Music Worlding in Palau: Chanting, Atmospheres, and Meaningfulness*, by Birgit Abels, 149–62. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.
- Alves, Jaime Amparo  
 2018 *The Anti-Black City: Police Terror and Black Urban Life in Brazil*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Amin, Ash, and Nigel Thrift  
 2002 *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. New York, N.Y.: Polity Press.
- Anand, Nikhil  
 2017 *Hydraulic City: Water and the Infrastructures of Citizenship in Mumbai*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Anand, Nikhil, Akhil Gupta, and Hannah Appel, eds.  
 2018 *The Promise of Infrastructure*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Barad, Karen  
 2007 *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

- Barnes, Robert H.  
 1999 "Marriage by Capture." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 6, no. 1: 57–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.00008>
- Ballesterio, Andrea  
 2019 "Underground as Infrastructure? Figure/Ground Reversals and Dissolution in Sardinia." In *Environment, Infrastructure and Life in the Anthropocene*, edited by Kregg Hetherington. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Berlant, Lauren  
 2011 *Cruel Optimism*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Boyer, Dominic  
 2014 "Energopower: An Introduction." *Anthropological Quarterly* 87, no. 2: 309–33. <https://doi.org/10.1353/anq.2014.0020>
- Brown, Vincent  
 2020 *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*. Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press at Harvard University Press.
- Butler, Octavia E.  
 1998 *Parable of the Trickster*. Unfinished manuscript. Octavia E. Butler Papers. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.
- Caldeira, Teresa Pires do Rio  
 2000 *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Césaire, Aimé  
 2000 *Discourse on Colonialism: A Poetics of Anticolonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Chalfin, Brenda  
 2019 "Wastelandia: Infrastructure and the Commonwealth of Waste in Urban Ghana." *Ethnos* 84, no. 1: 9–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2015.1119174>
- Clarke, Kamari Maxine, and Deborah Thomas  
 2006 *Globalization and Race*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Cons, Jason  
 2025 *Delta Futures: Time, Territory, and Capture on a Climate Frontier*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cowen, Deborah  
 2014 *The Deadly Life of Logistics: Mapping the Violence of Global Trade*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dangarembga, Tsitsi  
 2023 *Black and Female: Essays*. Minneapolis, Minn.: Graywolf Press.
- De Boeck, Filip, and Marie-Françoise Plissart  
 2004 *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City*. Leuven: Leuven University Press.
- Degani, Michael  
 2022 *The City Electric: Infrastructure and Ingenuity in Postsocialist Tanzania*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Degani, Michael, Brenda Chalfin, and Jamie Cross  
 2020 "Fuelling Capture: Africa's Energy Frontiers." *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* 38, no. 2: 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.3167/cja.2020.380202>
- Diouf, Mamadou  
 2003 "Engaging Postcolonial Cultures: African Youth and Public Space." *African Studies Review* 46, no. 1: 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1514823>
- Du Bois, W. E. B.  
 [1935] 2021 *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880, & Other Writings*. New York: The Library of America.
- Dua, Jatin  
 2019 *Captured at Sea: Piracy and Protection in the Indian Ocean*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Elyachar, Julia  
 2005 *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

- 2010 "Phatic Labor, Infrastructure, and the Question of Empowerment in Cairo." *American Ethnologist* 37, no. 3: 452–64. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01265.x>
- Fanon, Frantz  
1963 *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York, N.Y.: Grove Press.
- Fleisher, Michael  
2000 *Kuria Cattle Raiders: Violence and Vigilantism on the Tanzania/Kenya Frontier*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gastrow, Claudia  
2024 *The Aesthetics of Belonging: Indigenous Urbanism and City Building in Oil-Boom Luanda*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Getachew, Adom  
2019 *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Gilroy, Paul  
1993 *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. New York: Verso.
- Glissant, Édouard  
1997 *Poetics of Relation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan  
1994 *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Guma, Prince K.  
2020 "Incompleteness of Urban Infrastructures in Transition: Scenarios from the Mobile Age in Nairobi." *Social Studies of Science* 50, no. 5: 728–50. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306312720927088>
- Günel, Gökçe  
2019 *Spaceship in the Desert: Energy, Climate Change, and Urban Design in Abu Dhabi*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Hartman, Saidiya V.  
2019 *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Hawthorne, Camilla, and Jovan Scott Lewis  
2023 *The Black Geographic: Praxis, Resistance, Futurity*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Herzfeld, Michael  
1985 "Gender Pragmatics: Agency, Speech, and Bride-Theft in a Cretan Mountain Village." *Anthropology* 9, no. 1: 25–44.
- Ho, Engseng  
2004 "Empire through Diasporic Eyes: A View from the Other Boat." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 46, no. 2: 210–46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041750400012X>
- Keane, Webb  
2016 *Ethical Life: Its Natural and Social Histories*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Khalili, Laleh  
2020 *Sinews of War and Trade: Shipping and Capitalism in the Arabian Peninsula*. New York: Verso.
- Klinenberg, Eric  
2015 *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kockelman, Paul  
2010 "Enemies, Parasites, and Noise: How to Take Up Residence in a System Without Becoming a Term in It." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20, no. 2: 406–21. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1395.2010.01077.x>  
2013 *Agent, Person, Subject, Self: A Theory of Ontology, Interaction, and Infrastructure*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lancione, Michele  
2016 *Rethinking Life at the Margins: The Assemblage of Contexts, Subjects, and Politics*. London: Routledge.  
2020 "Radical Housing: On the Politics of Dwelling as Difference." *International Journal of Housing Policy* 20, no. 2: 273–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19491247.2019.1611121>

- Larkin, Brian  
 2008 *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.  
 2013 “The Politics and Poetics of Infrastructure.” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 42: 327–43. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-092412-155522>
- Lee, Christopher J., ed.  
 2010 *Making a World After Empire: The Bandung Moment and Its Political Afterlives*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Lepselter, Susan Claudia  
 2016 *Resonance of Unseen Things: Poetics, Power, Captivity, and UFOs in the American Uncanny*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lewis, Jovan Scott  
 2020 *Scammer’s Yard: The Crime of Black Repair in Jamaica*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.  
 2022 *Violent Utopia: Dispossession and Restoration in Tulsa*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- MacLochlainn, Scott  
 2022 *The Copy Generic: How the Nonspecific Makes Our Social Worlds*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Mafeje, Archie  
 1976 “The Problem of Anthropology in Historical Perspective: An Inquiry into the Growth of the Social Sciences.” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 10, no. 2: 307–33. <https://doi.org/10.2307/483835>
- Masco, Joseph  
 2014 *The Theater of Operations: National Security Affect from the Cold War to the War on Terror*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Masco, Joseph, and Lisa Wedeen  
 2024 *Conspiracy/Theory*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Mitchell, Timothy  
 2009 “Carbon Democracy.” *Economy and Society* 38, no. 3: 399–432. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140903020598>  
 2013 *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil*. New York: Verso.
- Moten, Fred  
 2018 *Stolen Life. Consent Not to Be a Single Being*, volume 2. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Nadasdy, Paul  
 2007 “The Gift in the Animal: The Ontology of Hunting and Human–Animal Sociality.” *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 1: 25–43. <https://doi.org/10.1525/ae.2007.34.1.25>
- Ojani, Chakad  
 2023 “The Promise of Fog Capture: Ground-Touching Clouds as a Material (Im)Possibility in Peru.” *Cultural Anthropology* 38, no. 2: 225–50. <https://doi.org/10.14506/ca38.2.03>
- O’Neill, Kevin Lewis, and Jatin Dua  
 2018 “Captivity: A Provocation.” *Public Culture* 30, no. 1: 3–18. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-4189131>
- Pierre, Jemima  
 2013 *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pieterse, Edgar  
 2010 “Cityness and African Urban Development.” *Urban Forum* 21, no. 3: 205–19.
- Rodney, Walter  
 2018 [1972] *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. New York: Verso.
- Rozwadowski, Helen M.  
 2018 *Vast Expanses: A History of the Oceans*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Shilliam, Robbie  
 2015 *The Black Pacific: Anti-Colonial Struggles and Oceanic Connections*. London: Bloomsbury.

- Siegel, James T.  
 1998 *A New Criminal Type in Jakarta: Counter-Revolution Today*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Simone, AbdouMaliq  
 2004 "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg." *Public Culture* 16, no. 3: 407–29. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-16-3-407>  
 2019 *Improvised Lives: Rhythms of Endurance in an Urban South*. Cambridge: Polity Press.  
 2022 *The Surrounds: Urban Life Within and Beyond Capture*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Spillers, Hortense J.  
 1987 "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book." *Diacritics* 17, no. 2: 65–81. <https://doi.org/10.2307/464747>
- Star, Susan Leigh  
 1999 "The Ethnography of Infrastructure." *American Behavioral Scientist* 43, no. 3: 377–91. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027649921955326>
- Strathern, Marilyn  
 2020 *Relations. An Anthropological Account*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Tadiar, Neferti X. M.  
 2022 *Remaindered Life*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Thomas, Deborah A.  
 2019 *Political Life in the Wake of the Plantation: Sovereignty, Witnessing, Repair*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo  
 2015 *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds*. Chicago: HAU Books.