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You know those moments—the ones where it isn’t until you’ve said something aloud that you realize how true it is? Perhaps this is the case only for other “verbal processors” out there, but frequently it isn’t until I’ve given voice to a thought that I become able to notice how that thought can be traced through my life, making sense of themes or patterns or habits. By saying it aloud, I realize how much that thing explains some element of my life experience. Regardless of the circumstance, my reaction is usually the same: “Why didn’t I notice that sooner?”

Terra Schwerin Rowe’s exceptional monograph, *Of Modern Extraction: Experiments in Critical Petro-theology*, feels like an extended revelation in this kind of way. Rowe unveils what should have been obvious all along but has remained underexplored and inadequately considered until now: the profoundly affective and theological dimensions that undergird extractive energy practices and the cultures they’ve unleashed. My reaction is the same: Why haven’t we noticed this sooner?

Reframing climate injustice not as an “emissions” problem so much as an extraction problem, Rowe reorients the reader’s attention to the subterranean—not only of the industrialized West’s relation to the terrestrial but also in its constructions of gender, race, and the like. That is, Rowe’s book attends to “the ways energy, extraction, and oil have been entwined with white Western gender constructs and Christian narratives” (p. 3). As Rowe rightly notes, extractive industries—not least multinational purveyors of petroleum—rely on cultural, symbolic, and, most pressingly, theological affects that create cultures of enchantment with oil. Thus, *Of Modern Extraction* proposes that “environmental degradation and resource exploitation” should be “diagnosed less as a way modern Westerns fill a void of spiritual meaning, less as a loss of shared values or morals, and more as the function of a theological overflow ... on to eco-
onomic and imperial practices” (p. 15), thereby creating what she refers to as a “modern extractive imaginary” (p. 16).

Crucially, then, Rowe situates extractive industries and their attendant environmental injustices not as a betrayal of Christian theology, so to speak; rather, she figures the colonial manifestations of Christian sensibilities related to divine sovereignty and white exceptionalism as catalyzing the exploitations and displacement of “unformed” matter—whether of raw petroleum or racialized bodies. It is thus the deformations of Western Christianity that form an imaginary predicated on the imposition of a divine sovereign force that has been promised to redeem by means of “industrialization” and “development,” not to mention capitalistic “growth.” One might consider Rowe’s *Of Modern Extraction* as the theological analog to Kathryn Yusoff’s 2018 *A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None*: unearthing the religious dimensions that buttress our geo-social, indeed socio-geological, imaginaries.

What this book offers, then, is an extensively researched, interdisciplinary meditation on the animacies of oil as a supposed savior and redeemer, which combusts into racialized and gendered conceptions that contribute to ongoing white colonialism of land, bodies, and climate—entangled. The sequence of its first four chapters—“Energy,” “Extraction,” “Capital,” and “Oil”—unveil how deeply entangled these matters are before offering a paradigm for resisting the reification of activist tendencies in its final chapter—“Alternative Energies”—in which Rowe offers the possibility of mobilizing Holy Saturday as a disruption of triumphalism in order to press “attention toward alternative energies embodied in the lives of those who have not served extractive capitalism well, who have been excluded or deemed unfulfilled by its doctrine of Man” (p. 162).

*Of Modern Extraction* weaves together affect theory, energy sciences, new materialisms, and feminist and womanist theologies, among other disciplines and methodologies, ultimately providing a compelling postsecular account of oil as an *enchanting* force driving climate catastrophe. Rowe successfully pushes the field of “religion and ecology” into more critical contention with the energy humanities, broadly speaking, while simultaneously holding these disciplines accountable to the key lessons offered by political theology and beyond.

Terra Schwerin Rowe’s *Of Modern Extraction: Experiments in Critical Petro-theology* should be considered a foundational text for understanding the tenacious staying power of petrocultures, even and especially in the face of almost certain disaster. Let us hope that Rowe’s scholarship has come to us soon enough, knowing that time is short.
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