

# Review of: "From Necro-Politics to Necro-Ecology: framing the current climate environmental politics in the Americas"

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The anthropogenic climate change has already posed a tricky problem to “human” agency—i.e. the generic master which, we assume, is central to environmental politics. On the one hand the disaster spells a call to action for those who occupy the epicentre of the environmental politics. But, on the other hand, the making of the disaster reminds us of the perils of the anthropocentrism that the call to action takes for granted. At hand, is not only an environmental disaster but above all a crisis of agency. In this respect, the article can be read in dialogue with a growing concern for the limits of human mastery over nature. The concern of course cuts both ways: we the humans have mastered but a life-in-death, and neither can we give up on the ideal of mastering life. A sense of radical instability both pervades the anthropogenic climate change and provides for a critical standpoint to frame the current environmental politics.

I believe this is the context in which the necro-ecological approach could so compellingly engage its reader. We may have our own doubts about the anthropocentric ideal of ‘calculated management of life’. And now, precisely in view of its underlying threat of marginalisation, this biopolitical façade has come to divulge the ‘social murder’ that sustains it. This is to say, the sheer scale of ecological exhaustion exposes the generic claim to mastery as the flip side of the economic-societal inclusion/exclusion (of carrot and stick) that we, the living ones, endure under the threat of social death. Briefly put, the biopolitical promise of adaptive life is dependent on the necropolitical blackmail that constantly runs in the background. Consider the everyday ‘monetisation’ of life the article suggests, specifically as a prelude to its invisible ‘destruction’. Aren’t they in fact inseparable, precisely where the obscene invisibility of the latter is a precondition of the former’s acceptable visibility. In effect, the obscure underside of the decent ideal of managed-life, could thus be perceived as the unacceptable ‘subjugation of life to the power of death’.

Clearly, necro-ecology is not just a matter of ‘negative governance’. This is all the more the case as per the article’s critical take on ‘power upon life’. Namely, necropolitical criticism cannot stop short of questioning the epistemological tenets of biopolitical justification. Extractivism, for one, justifies itself not just by wielding ‘economic growth’, as it were, for the good of the humanity; at a more subtle level, resource extraction sustains itself, much like colonisation, by using the geographic knowledge that the human mastery of the “other” life depends on. Any escape to such a necropolitical solution is epistemologically premised on the spatial demarcation of this rather than that mode of living. The god’s-eye cartography extractivism unleashes is indeed a rare insight into the otherwise mindboggling necropower, especially into the worlding it effects. It is then important to note that the sentencing (in the authors words) of the human and non-human populations to death and extinction, should not obscure those who thrive on the geography that the ‘sentence’ suggests. Indeed, necro-

ecology foregrounds, in Mbembe's terms, not just physical violence but the anthropocentric creation of 'death-worlds'.