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## Review – Vincent W. Lloyd and Andrew Prevot, editors, *Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics*

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***Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics.* Vincent W. Lloyd and Andrew Prevot, editors. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2017. Xxx, 210pp. \$26.00. Paper. ISBN: 9781626982512**

*Anti-Blackness and Christian Ethics* is an urgent, timely, beautiful, and prophetic text that breaks open the Word of God and new horizons in Christian theology and ethics. The theological academy owes a debt of gratitude to the contributors of this volume. Every chapter consistently exemplifies how the editors announce a prophetic voice of “the double negative—resisting anti-blackness---[that] allows the meaning of black life to remain open-ended (xxv).” That resistance includes incisive critique of the complex morphing of anti-blackness through history and celebrating the creativity of African peoples.

Major strengths of this collection include its robust intersectional analyses and diverse multidisciplinary ways of confronting the spiritual, moral, economic, political, and theological rootedness of anti-black white supremacy in modernity, coloniality and Christianity. Every contributor unpacks complexity in ways that resist postmodern indeterminacy as they expose the political passivity of predominantly white churches and academic societies. Ashon Crawley’s invitation to “hear the crisis announced by sound, by sounding out in black, by the performance of Black Pentecostal aesthetics, is to hear the *an*ethical force of blackness (96)” highlights the creative power of this book.

Kelly Brown Douglas uproots the depths of anti-blackness in U.S. American history and culture. She frames the question “What is it about America that has made the black body a prime target for unrelenting violence? (3)” around Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin’s (H. Rap Brown’s) proclamation: “Violence is a part of American culture. It is American as cherry pie.” Douglas proposes the counternarrative of the nonviolent crucifixion-resurrection event as the way of undoing and breaking the myth of white Anglo-Saxon supremacy. Santiago Slabodsky, a Jewish sociologist of knowledge, ventures beyond U.S. history and interrogates the “*longue durée* of coloniality (23)” to evaluate how “theology has been the problem and not the solution in the racially based denial of humanity (31)” in modernity. Katie Walker Grimes exchanges the discourse of white privilege and supremacy for the rhetorical power and efficacy of “anti-blackness supremacy” that more precisely names the evil that Saidiya Hartman elucidates in the “afterlife of slavery,” not only

in a "mere tale of victimization" but also "through contestation and struggle (50)."

M. Shawn Copeland's prophetic critique of the U.S. Catholic Church's entanglement in the origins of coloniality illuminates the depth of its complicity in the "custom, commerce, culture, and creed of slaveholding (67)." Copeland discloses how anti-black logics is not only constitutive of modernity, anti-black violence is integral to the "metaphysical violence"—the attempt to master the real by force—perpetuated by Catholicism. Until the U.S. Catholic Church contends with the "subtle and crude" ways Catholicism "demonstrate[s] contempt for God's black human creatures who share in the glory, beauty, and image of the Divine," Copeland warns, "such contempt" could "set U.S. Catholicism on the path of idolatry (74)."

The book concludes, appropriately, with Bryan N. Massingale exposing the erotic violence of anti-blackness in U.S. law enforcement and pornography. While I was deeply shaken by the sexual violence Massingale describes, I found hope in how he draws upon Trinitarian theology to invite development of a new anti-racist sexual ethics. Massingale's chapter exemplifies how this book unflinchingly confronts the horror of anti-blackness as it offers urgent theological reflection that nurtures hope for a new way of being.

While the book appropriately draws upon the religious Black radical tradition, secular variations of the Black radical tradition are less apparent. The secular Black radical tradition offers a parallel critique of colonialism, slavery, and racial capitalism that is critical both of European Marxian and liberal thought. We need both religious and secular variations of the Black radical tradition because together they offer resources necessary in the collective work of de-linking from Western modernity. Chapters by Santiago Slabodsky and M. Shawn Copeland demonstrate the power of utilizing the coloniality frame. A joining of Black Lives Matter and de-colonial movements, I believe, may create the conditions of the possibility of the full thriving of indigenous, black, and brown lives.

This book sets a new high standard of theological and ethical reflection. I am delighted to highly commend it to scholars and students alike.

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