Anthropocene, Matthews argues, *the planetary* is not simply a geoscientific designation. Or, rather, the planetary has never been exclusively geoscientific. Terms like *land*, *territory*, *property*, and *terrain* demonstrate the extent to which geoscientific and legal idioms are reciprocal. For Matthews, the planetary suggests the opportunity of a novel sovereign aesthetic. But what about the subject that this aesthetic orients? Who is the "we" of the Anthropos? What aesthetics does *it* occasion? Hannah Landecker has recently emphasized the Margulian strand of the Anthropocene: human physiology is a process of exchange between promiscuous bacteria, such that where 'body' ends and 'environment' begins is pure contingency. The immune system has no location. That is the story of the Anthropocene too. And it is a story not so much of Promethean stewardship but of humanity decomposed into a process of sedimentary accumulation. The same partiality that characterizes the aesthetics of planetary sovereignty applies to the category of 'human.' What would it look like to bring the aesthetics of Earthbound sovereignty into conversation with the category of 'human'? What would such a dialogue mean for law? *Earthbound* provides an essential stepping stone toward the bridging of disciplinary boundaries so that such a dialogue may, at last, commence.

Alexander Damianos
University of Kent

The Living from the Dead: Disaffirming Biopolitics.
By Stuart J. Murray. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2022.
218pp. $27.50 (paper). ISBN: 978-0-271-09340-6

Seeking to fundamentally recalibrate a politics of life, Stuart J. Murray's *The Living from the Dead* suggests that we need to allow for a deeper resonance with death itself. The book attempts to move away from thinking about death as a counterpoint or negation of life, toward thinking about death as a formative space through which we might challenge a current and corrosive biopolitics. In many ways, the book is about our collective culpability in making death and killing far too palatable. As the author asks in the opening, "what might it mean to heed those we have let die, those who have been disappeared or disclaimed as the quiet casualties, the collateral damages, the opportunity costs of life today?" (p. 1). The crux of this book is arguably the verb in this very first sentence, "let." For the author, the power in a contemporary biopolitics lies in the strange cocktail of active intent and passivity in "letting die." The phrase, borrowed from Michel Foucault, is a clear gesture to the literatures to which the author is not only indebted, but on which the argument of the book is built.

The Living from the Dead is essentially a series of essays reflecting on the edges and what the author hopes are some weak spots of our current biopolitics—a biopolitics in which "the state-sanctioned power to make live is never far from its unspeakable counterpart, the power to let die" (p. 24). Over the course of the book, the author discusses a number of notable (or notably sensationalized) deaths in order to highlight how death itself has become deeply estranged from an ethics of living. There is nothing

"ripped-from-the-headlines" about these discussions, however. Each case is thoroughly interrogated, and for the most part, the studies resonate with the reader. Murray is an eloquent writer. Even if at times the discussions veer into the deeper reaches (and terminology) of the expansive literature on biopolitcs, the author's passion, indeed anger, about how life is so easily played with, is apparent in the tone of writing.

The book is organized into four chapters, along with an introduction and a refrain. Chapter 1 takes up the COVID-19 pandemic as a case study in the limits of the discursive power in delimiting life from death. The recent pandemic, unsurprisingly, offers a pointed example of how life and death are managed by the state and its institutions. Murray does a wonderful job of describing how biopower and the biopolitical came into a fuller focus for all of us during these past years. They highlight how many of the contradictions and hypocrisies embedded in the management of the pandemic were tethered to broader and more fundamental contradictions in how contemporary life is understood and regulated. Building on Lauren Berlant's discussion of *slow death*, Murray suggests the pandemic anesthetized us collectively to the biopolitics of our time (e.g. the asymmetries in how different lives were treated, while everyone was being submitted to ostensibly the same ethical discourse on the value of life). At the same time, the author suggests the pandemic also opens up a "rare occasion for a critique of biopolitics, and the chance to expose life-and-death powers that are normally clandestine in their operation" (25).

Chapter 2 more fully engages the nature of language. In particular, Murray discusses how the rhetorics of the biopolitical are predicated on the cohesion of a speaking "I." To find the beating heart of the biopolitical, and the liberal subject upon which the biopolitical is predicated, Murray suggests we must look to the discourse of biopolitics. Thus, throughout this chapter, Murray pushes us to consider the relationship between life and speech. We might assume life is itself the condition of speech but Murray argues it isn't. If this is the case, we may find a way to stop speaking *of* death and *speak* death; alternatively, we may no longer speak on behalf of the dead, but rather listen to the dead speaking.

Chapter 3 considers the legalistic phrase "the necessaries of life," and two cases revolving around the death of children. Murray describes how these cases, concerned with state protection of children in the face of parental irresponsibility, reveal the expansive claims of state sovereignty over life and the body. This chapter then explores the different spaces in which such sovereignty is contested, surprisingly mirrored, or quietly slips out of focus. Interrogating claims of indigenous sovereignty and the not-dissimilar claims to the right to life by those who hold anti-vaccination beliefs, the chapter show how sovereignty (especially of the self) in the end is essentially a "biopolitical ruse" (p. 91), pulling our attention away from the state's disciplinary undercurrents.

Chapter 4 discusses the case of Jamel Dunn, whose death by drowning in 2017 was recorded, and then quickly went viral. The taunting and disregard for life demonstrated by those who watched and recorded Dunn die was widely held to be shocking, unethical, and in the end legally unpunishable. This chapter highlights the biopolitics of the racialized body, and together with the concluding refrain, reiterates how in the circulation of death, we see the toxicity of an untroubled ethics of life. We are all interpolated into seeing and mediating the dead in ways that leaves us seemingly untouched, and ultimately alienated not only from the death but from life as well.

A through-line in the book is the concept of *thanatopolitics* (p. 38). This concept will appear to many to be a near neighbour of Achille Mbembe's famous *necropolitics*. For Murray though, necropolitics is still wholly embedded within a biopolitical order. There is a need, they argue, for a wholesale "disaffirmation of biopolitics," and a concept that "should not reduplicate its normative tropes and tendencies but should arrive, instead, from another order of discourse, beyond mere corporeal life and death" (p. 39). One could imagine some readers will be convinced of this reading of necropolitics, while others will find it superfluous. I think Murray is not so much critiquing Mbembe or necropolitics, as he is suggesting we need to find (or create) vital spaces outside of the language of biopolitics to talk and listen.

There is a meta quality, or perhaps better, an after-the-fact quality to this book. The author is writing from a position that admits that we have already analyzed, critiqued, and shined a light on how the biopolitical defines and devalues life. Nevertheless, we seem to continue submitting to and reproducing egregious forms of biopower. What does one do then? What do we do when we have read our Giorgio Agamben, our Lauren Berlant, and our Achille Mbembe? What do we do when we've disentangled the ideologies of the liberal subject, only to find that this subject is inescapable? What do we do to resist when resistance is already built into the system? Unsurprisingly then, there is a frustration in reading this book. The author clearly shares this frustration, however. And while Murray promises no succour, they do propose that the ground upon which we might counteract the biopolitical is discourse itself. If it is through language that the biopolitical is often enacted (how the state speaks to and about the living), then it might be in language that we can find a way out. In particular, reconsidering the subjectivity of the speaking "I," its role as addresser and addressee, the ways in which it is interpolated and implicated, might allow us to think better about being with the dead.

This book is a welcome reflection on the role of language, especially in how the author locates the speaking subject so fundamentally within the forms and shapes of biopower. If the reader is not well acquainted with theories of language, or indeed steeped in Michel Foucault and literatures on biopolitics, they might feel they have to play catch-up to get the most out of Murray's discussions. Nevertheless, *The Living from the Dead* is an important text for those readers interested in broadening our theories of death. And for those readers more concerned with an engagement with the deep literature on biopower, and how we might begin to apply its critiques to a contemporary moment, this book is a useful port of call.

Scott MacLochlainn
Johns Hopkins University