

# The Literacy Lowdown: A Billion Black Anthropocenes

## A Billion Black Anthropocenes or None

Kathryn Yusoff

A level geography students, remember, you should:

- undertake wider reading
- use factual texts, discursive / creative material

### Summary

The 'Anthropocene' is the current geological epoch in which humans are the key driver of changing climate. In this short book Prof Kathryn Yusoff examines the relationship between the Anthropocene and Black and Brown people. She shows that the Anthropocene was powered by colonial ideas that exposed, and continue to expose, Black and Brown people to extreme violence and harm. But she also explains the ways that the science behind geology – the way it organises the world for mineral extraction – also shapes the entire way that race is commonly understood.

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### Specification links

AQA 3.2.5.5 Mineral security and 3.2.5.6 Resource futures.

Edexcel Option 8B: Migration, Identity and Sovereignty.

OCR Option B 2.a. Global migration patterns are influenced by a multitude of factors.

WJEC Development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Key quotes

Race “is tied most noticeably to fossil narratives and racialized processes of extraction, but it is also resident in modes of racial discourse in relation to ideas of property, possession and land use.” (p5)

“Geology is a relation of power and continues to constitute racialized relations of power, in its incarnation in the Anthropocene and in its material manifestation in mining, petrochemical sites and corridors, and their toxic legacies.” (p10)

“The Anthropocene cannot dust itself clean from the inventory of which it was made: from the cut hands that bled the rubber, the slave children sold by weight of flesh, the sharp blades of sugar, all the lingering dislocations...” (p32)

“The financial benefits of ending slavery reshaped the world to provide the material preconditions for the industrial revolution.” (p42)

“While Blackness is the energy and flesh of the Anthropocene, it is excluded from the wealth of its accumulation.” (p82)

“The origins or the Anthropocene continue to erasure and dissimulate violent histories of encounter, dispossession, and death in the geographical imagination.” (p101)