Wake Work as Ethic: On Careful Exhibition in Slavery’s Afterlives

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Abstract: In this paper, I argue that scholars who reproduce photographs of Black people for subversive purposes should pursue alternative modes of re-exhibition other than carelessly reproducing said photographs as is. Christina Sharpe’s care-based method of wake work, performed within In the Wake: On Blackness and Being (2016), is one such form of ethical exhibitorship. Care, in this text, is the pursuit of the full context of the afterlives of slavery against oppressive narratives about Black people and their lived experience to reach a clearer level of understanding and engagement with people experiencing anti-Blackness. In section one, I will analyze Mariana Ortega and Saidiya Hartman’s engagements with photographic representation. In section two, I will explicate Sharpe’s account of the wake and wake work, emphasizing the role of care. In section three, I will explore the limitations of wake work, mainly the tension between wake-filled reproductions and careful discretion.

Introduction

It is not uncommon for photographs of racialized bodies to be featured in scholarly publications, even those unconcerned with photography in itself. These photographs are not only used to illustrate the oppressive conditions in which racialized bodies live, but they can also affectively and theoretically supplement antiracist and decolonial movements and...
scholarship. Whereas scholars have determined how image-making and image manipulation play crucial roles in emancipatory projects, what continues to go underdetermined is how scholars, who pursue similar ends, reproduce racialized bodies in their publications. Myriad are the interrogations of reproduction and viewership practices, yet even such critical scholarship can err in maintaining scenes of photographic subjection. I argue that the use of images of Black life and suffering for subversive purposes should involve alternative modes of curation that exemplify ethical exhibitorship. Thus, ethical exhibitorship is understood to play as essential a role as ethical viewership in resisting the reenactment of violence performed by the commissioner, photographer, and all those who carelessly (re)produce such images. In this study, I evaluate Christina Sharpe’s method of wake work—in particular, its practices of Black Annotation and Redaction (hereafter, “Black A&R”)—as a reflexive form of ethical exhibitorship. I argue that Sharpe’s In the Wake: On Blackness and Being (2016) presents wake work as a care ethic involving a context-specific sensibility and engagement with images of Black life and suffering. Undergirding wake work, I claim, is a unique conception of care which exacerbates a contradiction befalling every exhibitor, including Sharpe, between private care demands and public uses of images, namely photographs. In turn, I formalize one demand of Sharpe’s account which I will call careful discretion, and I address how Sharpe both rises above and falls short of this ideal of being discreet.

In section one, I analyze Mariana Ortega and Saidiya Hartman’s engagements with photographic representations to highlight two prominent accounts of artistic redress before distinguishing Sharpe’s contribution. In section two, I explicate Sharpe’s account of the wake and wake work while underscoring a crucial instance of photographic redress which permeates the entire project. In section three, I will explore a limitation that arises from Sharpe’s understanding of care as shared risk. This definition of care and its varied function in Sharpe’s text reveals a tension between wake-filled exhibitions and careful discretion. In conclusion, I propose an expanded performance of Black A&R.

Section 1—What do Scholars do with Photographs of Subjection?

In “Photographic Representation of Racialized Bodies: Afro-Mexicans, the Visible, and the Invisible” (2013), Mariana Ortega asks, “can photographic representations of racialized bodies not fall into the trap of essentializing race and promoting racist practices?” To explore this question, Ortega pulls from Black visual cultural theory to address photography’s long-standing role in indexing and materializing race, reinforcing racial-
ized bodies’ inferiority and undesirability. Ortega also presents different photographic representations of Afro-Mexicans in Mexico and the U.S. to demonstrate the paradoxical nature of race photography and explore photography’s coalitional possibilities and limitations in improving African American and Latino relations. By the end of this article, Ortega concludes that though contemporary photographers cannot fully break free of the paradox, they at least hold the vital capacity “to counter the index as well as to develop new photographic strategies” that disturb racial essentialism.

In her turn to the photographer’s role in answering this call in the affirmative, Ortega refers to Ken Gonzalez-Day’s *Erased Lynching* series, particularly an image titled “East First Street (St. James Park).” The photograph depicts a lynching scene in which the individual lynched and the primary instrument, the rope, were redacted from the image. Like Ortega, in *Photographic Returns*, Shawn Michelle Smith engages with several contemporary artists who reimagine photographs from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though Smith is also interested in the artist and scholar’s role in making photographs legible beyond their indexical nature, she primarily seeks to emphasize the temporal quality of photography.

While Smith is interested in temporality, Ortega is interested in the tensions between the visibility and invisibility of race. She highlights this tension by commending Gonzalez-Day’s ability to counter the index by coaxing viewers into turning their attention to the typically more invisible portions of the photograph, such as the crowd, but also notes its inability to disturb the meaning of racial difference due to the eradication of difference. Though this kind of alternative photographic engagement, reprinting indexical and exploitative photos reimagined by artists, is another viable avenue for ethical exhibitorship, I hope to broaden Ortega’s call to scholars’ own photographic strategies.

Similar to Ortega is Saidiya Hartman’s critical fabulation which, while being an expansive mode of archival practice, also involves an alternative mode of photographic representation. Further Hartman’s theorization influences Sharpe’s own as the latter’s work echoes Hartman’s question: “In the end, was it better to leave them as I found them?” In “Venus in Two Acts,” Hartman ruminates on her inability to account for historical Black lives with scant detail, beyond their deaths, in the archive and in turn proposes a novel method that can extricate the titular Venus and other “minor figures” who are otherwise “an asterisk in the grand narrative of history.” This method seeks to resist the authoritative offerings of the archive, as is, in order “to write a cultural history of the captive, and at the same time, enhancing the impossibility of representing the
lives of the captives precisely though the process of narration.” In other words, it is the always incomplete form of narrative redress intended to go beyond archival limitations to discuss precarious lives, often Black women and girls deemed “minor” due to their lack of record. Using this practice, Hartman interrogates the hegemonic nature of the archive and encourages alternative engagements that tend to precarious lives in the past, present, and future. At the same time, Hartman acknowledges the boundaries of this method as one that cannot resuscitate the dead nor prevent deaths. The method demands that one toil between imagination and “narrative restraint.”

Though “Venus in Two Acts” is an evident influence on In the Wake, for a thorough performance of critical fabulation and a more concrete account of Hartman’s engagement with photographic representations, one must turn to Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Riotous Black Girls, Troublesome Women, and Queer Radicals (2019). In Hartman’s words: “Wayward Lives elaborates, augments, transposes, and breaks open archival documents so they might yield a richer picture of the social upheaval that transformed black social life in the twentieth century.” Centering Black women and girls as radical thinkers, Hartman engages an array of sources to create a counter-narrative. There is a sustained use of photography throughout this book and reflection as to the role photography plays in subjection. However, one instance of photographic engagement goes beyond the narrative redress of critical fabulation. Hartman performs narrative redress on a photograph of a child posed nude, representing the child’s circumstances extensively in writing before exhibiting the photograph. However, once she finally exhibits the photograph, she crops it and blows it up to engulf two pages. However, this is not to put the child in full view, as the enlarged image is a kind of faint watermark behind the full text printed on the same pages. Hartman’s first paragraph on this page reads, “Was it possible to annotate the image? To make my words into a shield that might protect her, a barricade to deflect the gaze and cloak what had been exposed?” While I will say more on the role of annotation in section three as Hartman is referring directly to Sharpe’s use of Black A&R, this instance of photographic augmentation by Hartman, this act of shielding the child is a novel moment in the text that gets closer to the creative liberty I believe scholars can practice embodying ethical exhibitor-ship. Let us turn to the work that likely inspired this moment.
Sharpe's *In the Wake* explores what it means to understand the transatlantic slave trade as a persisting disaster whose effects continue to ripple through Black being today.\textsuperscript{11} She depicts the transatlantic slave trade as the ship and Blackness as abjected in the turbulent waters that follow. Overall, Sharpe states that the purpose of *In the Wake* is to look at “current quotidian disasters in order to ask, what, if anything, survives this insistent Black exclusion, this ontological negation, and how do literature, performance, and visual culture observe and mediate this un-survival.”\textsuperscript{12} One of her central concerns while pursuing this end is the role of care. Sharpe describes *In the Wake* as “a work that insists and performs that thinking needs care (‘all thought is Black thought’) and that thinking and care need to stay in the wake.”\textsuperscript{13} Furthermore, in emphasizing an intrinsic link between work, care, and the afterlives of slavery is a praxis she calls wake work.

Unfortunately, there is no sustained account of how Sharpe defines care.\textsuperscript{14} In one instance, she describes care as the “shared risk between and among the Black trans*asterisked.”\textsuperscript{15} Shared risk here relates to her ability to identify the “common conditions” of the wake across space and time, reinforcing a notion of diasporic time, of the afterlives of slavery.\textsuperscript{16} Lisa Bass also explores this idea of risk as a characteristic of Black feminist care. Bass’ description of risk, however, is distinct since it describes the necessary risks educators who practice an ethic of care face, such as losing their job when they defy educational policies and procedures to care for children.\textsuperscript{17} Still, these separate accounts of risk may be understood in the context of wake work in which the necessarily risky care work one performs is on the basis of shared risk. In another instance, Sharpe defines care “as a way to feel and to feel for and with, a way to tend to the living and the dying.”\textsuperscript{18} Shared risk in this sense can be understood as actional: one tends to the wake by way of sharing risk. In that sense, Sharpe’s second definition contrasts injurious appeals to care that justify “state-imposed regimes of surveillance.”\textsuperscript{19} Throughout the text, Sharpe makes several distinctions between care situated in the wake and oppressive forms of care. This distinction is not to say, for Sharpe, that these more damaging forms are not caring. Instead, she adopts an ambiguous understanding of care.\textsuperscript{20}

In sum, the definition of care I have deduced from *In the Wake* is the pursuit of the full context of the wake, of the afterlives of slavery, to reach a level of understanding that likely contrasts dominant narratives about Black people and their lived experience. Care in the wake is an
effort to minimize viewing an individual or group’s experiences of precarity as isolated moments and maximizes time-contextual approaches to understanding. Care is an effort to resist interpreting experiences as exceptional but instead foregrounds connections between experiences across the wake. Care is an effort to complicate for a complex clarity when the simplicity of dominant narratives occludes far too much. Care is also an effort to simplify when the context of dominant narratives inundates against seeing the surrounding wake. Wake work, a care ethic in the wake of slavery, is the labor of pursuing this situated knowledge and engaging in creative labor to reproduce this knowledge to provide clarity for others in the wake. Sharpe’s situated account of care is inextricable from an engagement with the transatlantic slave trade and its aftermaths. To alienate any representation of Black life from this context would be to feel and think about Black life carelessly. In a definitive and illustrative example of Sharpe’s performance of wake work in the text, she analyzes a photo of a Black child under duress, interrogating both careful and uncaring responses to the photo, and performs narrative redress.

The photo, described and included as a black-and-white image in Sharpe’s book, is of a Haitian child lying on something resembling a gurney. The child’s head lays atop plastic packaging, and their face appears in the lower right quadrant of the photo such that they are only visible from the shoulders up. The child appears to be gazing at the camera, making their presence felt throughout the frame. A label with the word ship is on the child’s forehead. In the book, we learn that the child is marked in this way because this photo’s setting is the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake. The child awaits additional medical treatment aboard the USNS Comfort, a hospital ship. Sharpe details her encounter with the photo in great depth, weaves the child into three of her four chapters, and even includes the child in the photo in her acknowledgments as someone who “accompanied and encouraged her.”

When first introducing the photo, Sharpe describes it and details her entrancement and ongoing reflections about what was happening in the photo. In one particular extrapolation, she asks, what was she to do with the image, and her conclusion is to situate the crisis the child was experiencing beyond the earthquake. She does this by accounting for the country’s history as a former French slave colony, its successful revolution, and the reparations it paid for managing to “steal” themselves free by 1804 to situate the 2010 earthquake as happening in a country that has been paying for their freedom in multiple senses of the word. With such framing, it was overdetermined for this nation to be susceptible to such an event and a suspicious global response. Sharpe, on this basis, resists
a simplistic reading of the label as indicating imminent aid and instead connects it to the treacherous experience of the Middle Passage, various contemporary water-based migration crises, and the history of medical experimentation on Black and brown people. Notably, Sharpe thinks the label “child,” noted in the caption rather than the photo, through the wake and instead refers to the child as a girl to resist the photograph’s impersonal metadata by implicating histories of ungendering Black individuals. Sharpe states, “It was not better to leave her as I found her. In my reading and praxis of wake work, I have tried to position myself with her, in the wake.” Sharpe demonstrates wake work by pushing past the given caption of the photo, contextualizing the photo anew.

She returns to the photo in her fourth and final chapter for a final attempt at wake work via Black A&R. Black A&R functions as an alternative viewing and exhibitory praxis in which substance is added (“annotation”) or obscured (“redaction”) in a way that reconfigures images through and in the wake and in turn functions as a novel form of sense-making. Performing wake work, Sharpe re-annots the young child’s image by backgrounding the label ship and foregrounding another feature of the photograph: a leaf in the child’s hair which draws the viewer’s attention to the neat braid that lies there and shifts the focus from labeling to an obscured care relation, whoever braided the child’s hair before the earthquake. Two years after In the Wake, Sharpe reiterates, “To return to the particular image of the injured little girl, as I write in the book, I had to take care. I thought that my careful work was to attend to the photograph’s presence, its capture of her and then its deployment of violence as ‘care,’ the gesture of violence in the attaching of the word Ship to her forehead and the photograph’s reinscribing of the wake. My work was to refuse the photograph’s ethnographic claim, its spectacular register of abandonment, and its erasure of a recent past and any possible future of relation.”

Sharpe annotates the photograph, a narrative redress akin to critical fabulation. This annotation indicates the subjection exercised in both the image and former caption. The practice recalls Leah Gordon’s critique of Bruce Gilden’s photography of Haiti for mythologizing the country. Gordon critiques Gilden’s choice of subject matter, Vodou, particularly his spectacular depictions of possession and choice to forgo captions to surrender the photographs for a decontextualized, subjective judgment. Gordon states that while those familiar with the religion may be able to deduce context, those who are unfamiliar are left “drawing deep from a well of colonial and racist history and stereotype.” Relatedly, when Hartman analyzes slum photography, she attests to captions’ capacity to
index, moralize, police, and divide while determining the overall quality of a photograph. Notably, some of the captions of the slum photographs under Hartman’s purview appear within the photo’s frame rather than below or behind. Thereby, in contrast to Gilden’s work, this captioning practice attempts to completely determine visual understanding and also brings new light to Hartman’s decision to entirely cover her first exhibition of the nude girl with her annotation. However, another overlap between Sharpe and Hartman’s method is that they both go on to include these photographs of young girls in their books as is. Hartman includes a photo of the same nude girl along with the annotated spread. However, it is significantly smaller in comparison, cropped, and follows the augmented spread rather than preceding it.

In the next section, I use Sharpe’s example of wake work on this photograph to understand the potential limitations of wake work as an ethic of care, of which I will explore the strained relationship between shared risk and discretion. I also turn to another of Sharpe’s photographic engagements that demonstrate a scholar’s ability to annotate, redact, and use the final photographic product as the stand-alone instance of ethical exhibitor-ship.

**Section 3—What are the Limitations of Wake/Care Work on Photographs?**

As a reminder, wake work is the labor of pursuing knowledge situated in the afterlives of slavery and engaging in some creative labor to reproduce this knowledge to provide clarity for others. Thus far, we have seen this evinced in Sharpe through narrative. She sees herself situated in the wake with the girl with the label ship and proceeds to extrapolate from this photo a situated reading that offers an alternative meaning. This care performance in the wake of slavery is not free of potential constraints. In what follows, I will explore a limitation of wake work, mainly the tension between wake-filled exhibitions and careful discretion. That is, how photos of Black life and death that would otherwise be held close and personal are instead rendered hyper-visible political and theoretical tools, as a warning or cautionary tale, as a demand for justice, as an assertion of the spectacular and the mundane, as a display of inferiority and equality, as an investigation in the visible and invisible, as practice for seeing and imagining otherwise, and much more. To do this, I consider the distinction between Sharpe’s critique of the Cradle 2 Grave initiative and their use of gratuitous images and narratives as “educational” tools for children and Sharpe’s discretion when including her family in the introduction of the book. This limitation is not exclusive to wake work. However, I use Sharpe’s theoretical framework against itself as it can somewhat
absolve this limitation in her performance of wake work on the Louis Agassiz daguerreotypes of Delia and Drana. This example speaks to the simultaneous well-worthiness but still always incomplete nature of such archival engagements that Hartman acknowledges. Therefore, what I turn to in this section is not Sharpe’s development of an alternative archival reading method nor the encouragement that readers adopt this practice, but instead a turn to ethical exhibitor-ship that involves altering photographs of subjection themselves based on careful discretion.

Sharpe begins her book by positioning herself relative to thinking about ontological Blackness. In other words, she accounts for her place within that context. She does this by vulnerably sharing a rapid succession of losses and precarity her family experiences. These experiences include financial insecurity, anti-Black death, police brutality, education inequity, environmental racism, and additional forms of social and systemic neglect. Sharpe asserts that the compound effects of her experiences influence her and how she interacts with the world. She states, “They [the precarity wrought by the afterlives of slavery] texture my reading practices, my ways of being in and of the world, my relations with and to others.”

In reflecting on her own experiences, Sharpe demonstrates how she also exists within the wake before analyzing how others think with or without care. She is situating herself alongside the objects of care and carelessness. It is an act of solidarity that reinforces this notion of the wake as a shared space. To some extent, then, Sharpe asserts that she is speaking from the wake.

A crucial moment in Sharpe’s disclosure of her family’s experience is when Sharpe describes the death of her nephew Caleb, who was shot and killed at age 20. Caleb was her sister’s child, adopted at the age of five, and whom they learned was severely abused and traumatized before he was adopted. The critical moment in this recounting is that Sharpe shares these aspects of Caleb and her sister’s lives but states, “There are other stories to be told here; they are not mine to tell.” Here Sharpe recognizes the necessity of including the personal while maintaining a standard of discretion. In this case, discretion is motivated by her relationship with Caleb, her relationship with her sister, and her sister’s relationship with Caleb. Therefore, in her recognition that her situatedness in the wake is shared, there is also recognition that there still exists varying levels of proximity characteristic of care when situating yourself in the wake with other beings. This standard then acknowledges both relationality and boundaries in the wake.

In contrast, Sharpe includes an account of an organization that attempts to perform care work but fails to do so from the wake. The Cradle
The initiative is “a hospital-based education program that uses stories of real victims to give an inside perspective on what happens when someone is shot.” Temple University’s Hospital trauma department launched this initiative in response to the rates of young people dying from gun violence. While the initiative might view its work as caring for communities plagued by gun violence, Sharpe delineates the violence of the program as it exposes teens and pre-teens to photos of mutilated bodies that were victims of gun violence. She labels this violent because it “exposes children, many of whom are already experiencing trauma from their material, lived violence, to photos and reenactments of graphic violence as a deterrent to more violence.” Additionally, in displaying these photos and performing these reenactments, such as having children lay on gurneys to pretend to be another dead child, the initiative abstracts the actual children who have passed to create a “teachable moment.”

Sharpe states that the initiative fails to realize that, in the case of these murdered youth, specifically in the case of the murder of 16-year-old Lamont Adams, the children brought in to “learn” from his death do not need to participate in such crude exercises. Instead, she asserts, “These young people’s bodies are always already in the space of Lamont Adam’s body.” In other words, these young people cannot educate themselves out of their situatedness in the wake. Their proximity to trauma and death is not by simple ignorance or poor decision-making. It is a condition of the wake which manifests underfunded school systems, lack of job opportunities and other resources, redlining, and more. Therefore, though this program stems from the desire to treat gun violence victims “beyond hospital walls” (a careful inclination towards contextualization), it still stops short of wake work in its execution. Overall, this program fails to practice care. It does not tend to the dead but merely instrumentalizes them, their photos, and narrow stories of their lives, for “education” and fails to account for the full context of the participants. Nicole Fleetwood also explores the use of images of Black bodies, specifically highly publicized images. However, Fleetwood’s description of racial icons is distinct because it describes the “public burden” of expecting said images to counter negative representations, uplift the race, and stimulate social and political action. Most relevant to Cradle 2 Grave, Fleetwood contrasts the highly publicized photographs of Trayvon Martin and Emmett Till. While the images differ in their depiction of the “ordinary” versus utter brutality, both cases involve parents who wanted to use the photos of their children, not to reproduce violence but as part of their tireless efforts to incite some formal political response. In this case, then, we see how the exhibition of photographs by parents can also combat violence.
by refusing to accept the encounter with death as a singular archival moment but rather situate their child in a broader movement.

Despite the standard of care Sharpe performs when discussing her family and her critique of Cradle 2 Grave for their inability to perform wake work, Sharpe struggles to extend care to the child in the photograph in her ultimate decision to put this child’s photo in her book as is. While reflecting on the photo, Sharpe says, “I see this intrusion into her life and world at the very moment it is, perhaps, not for the first time, falling apart. In her I recognize myself, by which I mean, I recognize the common conditions of Black being in the wake.”

Despite this admission, Sharpe does not extend this recognition through practice. This critique does not say that Sharpe should not discuss the child’s photo. It is to juxtapose cases where Sharpe relates herself to a child in the wake and an organization’s failed attempt to situate already situated children in the wake. Sharpe includes several family photos in this text, but none visually document the exact moment in which her family is experiencing the various moments of violence she so vulnerably outlines. She does not permanently affix any photos of this nature to this text, yet she affixes someone else’s child in this way. Therefore, Sharpe’s inclusion of her family highlights unique considerations regarding contemporary archives. Specifically, how close, relational proximity to those with whom you share risk encourages additional consideration especially with regard to their needs and desires. Whereas further proximity may lead to less consideration, of the individual and their relations. While wake work, like critical fabulation, has the desire to bridge precarity over time and space, performing wake work on more contemporary images seems to increase proximity within shared risk, at least temporally, and begs for a more incumbent discretionary practice. In the case of the photograph of the child with the label “ship,” both the individual and the relations Sharpe foregrounds in encouraging us not to consider the child abandoned requires a more careful exhibitory style that meditates further on the idea that, “There are other stories to be told here; they are not mine to tell.”

Though it seems that the main distinguishing characteristic between these two cases is that in one case, Sharpe’s engagement with family, shared risk and proximity, and engagement with non-family, shared risk and less proximity, this distinction does not hold. Reading photos is a crucial feature of wake work in Sharpe’s text, and she analyzes select daguerreotypes with the same careful discretion regardless of proximity in the wake. Sharpe performs Black A&R on the Louis Agassiz daguerreotypes of Delia and Drana. Louis Agassiz, “one of the founders of the American school of ethnology,” commissioned ethnographic
photos to capture seven “pure” enslaved men and women. The hope was that these photographic examples of “unmiscegenated” Blackness would make clear the inequality of the races as the photos would convey Black inferiority. Of those photographed, Sharpe finds herself particularly drawn to the photos of Delia and Drana. Using wake work, Sharpe performs redaction in a manner that she notes as distinct for redacted visual representations of people. It is common to redact the eyes if one wants to exercise some form of care or concern for an individual’s life post-photograph or any other visual documentation. This same act of discretion is also sometimes performed by blurring the whole face or distorting the voice in the case of audio. These acts of concealment usually mask the individuals’ identity or signify a lack of permission from the individual themself or parents and guardians in the case of minors. These acts of concealment can also be performed out of care or concern for any potential viewer if the image is deemed inappropriate or excessive for specific audiences. In this case, the potential viewer might be a child thought too young to view such graphic, excessive, or grotesque visuals. This might also be achieved by showing the image fully but providing age-based content or trigger warnings.

In the case of the photo of Delia and Drana, Sharpe decides that the best way to exercise wake work was to redact everything but the eyes from the photograph. She also places these redacted images vertically adjacent to one another, separated only by captions. She states, “I redact the images to focus their individual and collective looks out and past the white people who claimed power over them and the instrument by which they are being further subjected in ways they could never have imagined or anticipated. I want to see their looks out and past and across time.” Sharpe’s redaction shifts the viewers’ experience of the image from Delia and Drana’s subjection and our ability to witness it to an experience that can apprehend their experience. Additionally, Sharpe reaches their experiences out towards each other to connect the two and extend their photographic indexing out towards the child with the label ship, who, too, bears a striking gaze.

**Conclusion: Expanding Black Annotation and Redaction**

Sharpe can use this very practice of wake work via Black A&R to ethically exhibit the child with the label ship on their forehead. I assert that rather than including the photo of the child as is when initially introducing the photo, Sharpe could have included her description of the photo with a similar redaction style that solely featured horizontal redacted slices of the child’s label and the child’s eyes. Then, when Sharpe returns
to the photo at the end of the text, she could have featured another set of horizontal redacted slices that only featured the child’s braid and the child’s gaze, along with her final annotation. Of course, regarding the book’s structure, redacting the child’s photo from chapter two without accounting for Black Annotation and Redaction until chapter four does not represent an ideal linear succession of ideas. Despite this, with care being a core component of wake work, I believe, like Bass, that careful consideration of the child may require that one take such a risk. In other words, this praxis should give itself room to break from such conventions. With this, then, in total, we preserve the annotation of Sharpe’s own experience with the photo as it was, as well as her extrapolation from the wake while preserving the child’s own experience with the same care as Delia and Drana.

In conclusion, in this paper, I argued that scholars who reproduce photographs of Black people for subversive purposes should pursue alternative modes of re-exhibition that instead embody ethical exhibitor-ship. In section one, I analyzed Mariana Ortega and Saidiya Hartman’s engagements with photographic representations to distinguish Sharpe from other accounts of photographic exhibitor-ship. In section two, I explicated Sharpe’s account of the wake and wake work, emphasizing the role of care and a crucial example of redress. In section three, I explored a wake work limitation that arises from Sharpe’s understanding of care as shared risk. In conclusion, I proposed an expanded performance of Black A&R. The importance of Sharpe’s project to care ethics otherwise is threefold. One, it contributes to a body of care ethics concerned with difference, specifically how “caring activities are racially marked.” Two, as varying approaches to care ethics find themselves interested in exploring care through case studies, it is an ethic of care that prioritizes a careful approach to tending to the oppressed. In other words, rather than simply using particular cases to expand our understanding of care, it begs an exploration of what it even means to approach these cases with care. Third, this kind of care work opens a new technique for academics engaging with images of racialized bodies. One that goes beyond an include/exclude binary by encouraging scholars to reimagine the nature of the possibilities of inclusion.
Endnotes


11. I use Black “beings” rather than Black “people” or “humans” to preserve Sharpe's language rather than personal preference.


14. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 131–134. Sharpe is inspired by textual examples of care such as the writings of Toni Morrison, the poetry of Dionne Brand and M. NourbeSe Phillip, and photographic examples, such as the photography of Roy DeCarava.


32. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 89.
33. See note 30 above.
35. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 45.
37. Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 118.