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Fledgling: Octavia Butler and the Gifts of Black Thinking

What are the possibilities open when the imagination is allowed in that space between the thing and the thinking of the thing? This paper explores this question by reading Octavia Butler's work against Kant's three Critiques. Through an analysis of Butler's appropriation of the body that explores how her writings disassemble Kant's pure intuitions, namely time and space, I hope to assemble the outline of an onto-epistemological critical programme that acknowledges Fred Moten's invitation to read through black suffering. More particularly, this paper joins Moten's response to Saidiya Hartman's refusal to re-present black suffering; in the cut, the interval birthing representation; in the cut Moten's anticipate gifts; gifts thought might cherish if un-hinged. Not long ago Lindon Barrett yelled at a few of us, annoyed at our relishing in the recitation of suffering. David Sealy and I shared one of these moments. But we were annoyed at what we saw as a dread of thinking. With Octavia Butler's writing, in the company of Moten, Hartman, Barrett, and Sealy, this paper explores the gifts that only the thinking through the suffering allows, with an attention to the future that refuses the ruse of the real.