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**INSTITUTE** ON  
**INEQUALITY** AND  
**DEMOCRACY**  
*at UCLA Luskin*



# Race and Capitalism: Global Territories, Transnational Histories

In October 2017, the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin in partnership with the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at the University of Chicago convened a symposium on the theme, “Race and Capitalism: Global Territories, Transnational Histories.” A part of the national Race and Capitalism project led by Michael Dawson and Megan Ming Francis, the symposium sought to highlight how the study of racial capitalism in the United States must be situated in the long history of global systems of colonialism, imperialism, and development. With this in mind, the program was organized around four key themes: diasporas of racial capitalism; the land question; imperialism and its limits; race, capitalism, and settler-colonialism. Bringing together scholars from many different institutions, the symposium was also a space for shared work across different disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Writings and presentations by four scholars, Nathan Connolly, Keisha-Khan Perry, Allan Lumba, and Alyosha Goldstein, anchored a day of debate and dialogue. This collection provides a glimpse of their key provocations as well as of the questions and comments posed by invited interlocutors. It is not a culmination but instead a benchmark in the ongoing efforts to build collaborative scholarship concerned with race and capitalism. Central to our concerns has been the question of what this might mean for a new generation of curriculum and pedagogy and for the next generation of scholars, our graduate students. We hope that the conceptual and methodological frameworks and interrogations presented here are useful in the endeavor of speaking back to our disciplines and speaking across our disciplines.

Ananya Roy

Director, Institute on Inequality and Democracy, UCLA Luskin

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# Opening Remarks (1 of 2)

Michael C. Dawson

*Director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture, and  
John D. MacArthur Professor of Political Science, University of Chicago*

I thank Professor Roy, Christina Barrera, Jocelyn Guihama and their colleagues at the UCLA Institute on Inequality and Democracy at the Luskin School of Public Affairs for putting together such a critically important program. I also wish to thank the staff of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics and Culture at the University of Chicago (CSRPC) and particularly the former program coordinator Dara Epsilon as well as my colleagues Professor Megan Francis, Alfredo Gonzalez, and Emily Katzenstein who have provided leadership to the national project's work from the beginning. I thank all of you for your vital contributions to our joint efforts.

We are at a critical moment in the history of race and capitalism in the United States. The country has emerging from one of the most devastating recessions in history at the same time that anti-immigration rhetoric is ratcheting up and unarmed blacks are being killed in the streets. Even the so-called recovery has been illusory for the vast majority of black and brown communities. Few within public spheres, and all too many academic disciplines, have connected these processes and examined the mutually constitutive structures of capitalism and race. The near silence around this intersection in many academic discourses is especially troubling considering the protests that have rocked the nation throughout the last few years and heightened the need to expose the economic as well as the political and legal foundations of persisting racial inequality. To address this need, we launched a project to study the intersection of race and capitalism and to contribute to a national debate on the topic.

The Race and Capitalism Project is now a multi-institution collaboration that seeks to reinvigorate, strengthen and deepen scholarship on how processes of racialization shaped capitalist society and economy, and how capitalism has simultaneously shaped processes of racialization. This project was initiated and conceived at the CSRPC and the Washington Institute for the Study of Inequality and Race (WISIR) at the University of Washington. Central questions included: 1) What is the relationship between racial and economic inequality; 2) How has the relationship between various racial and ethnic groups, the economy and civil society changed over time; and 3) What theoretical approaches to the studies of capitalism and race best explain the empirical reality of 21<sup>st</sup> century capitalism. Four working groups were formed to investigate respectively the theoretical, historical, global aspects and contemporary empirical contours of this project. Key goals included: increasing collaboration between scholars across disciplines;

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advancing the state of scholarship on race and capitalism; and where appropriate, highlighting key findings from the project for use in public discourse.

We have work to do today and have four rigorous papers to anchor our discussions. These papers reflect in part some of the key intellectual questions that have emerged through our varied efforts. Questions that have emerged through our work are:

- 1) What is the relationship between settler colonialism and processes of racialization to the foundation of global circulations of capital that are themselves racialized in this era. We need to understand specificities and commonalities. Specificities of specific eras, specificities of different processes of racialization, specificities of different imperial projects and specificities of region and polity. Yet, there are commonalities that need equal attention. What is it about the relationship between anti-blackness and racial capitalism in Brazil and the U.S. that produces the same lack of empathy and desire for social justice when just demands are advanced by black social movements, that produce a lack of empathy for black death and devastation? Is the concept of internal colonialism useful for thinking about commonalities in processes of racialization? As Professor Roy said in a recent podcast, the global south is everywhere.
- 2) How do we understand indigeneity and anti-blackness in relationship to each other in the context of a global capitalist order: anti-blackness is sometimes counterpoised to indigeneity by some scholars, with some Afro-pessimist and indigenous studies scholars outright rejecting the claims of the others and holding one or the other to be the bedrock, often unchanging, foundation for racial oppression. Yet, it is more useful to look at the differences in processes of racialization both on the ground and in the views of colonizers who did differentiate while building racial capitalism as a global system of racialized difference. Slavery and dispossession are two critical aspects of global white racial capitalism, but not the only ones. Work on Asia and Oceania demonstrate that these processes existed within that region, but as did other processes of racialization and racial domination. These processes of racialization occurred throughout the world, and we have only begun to think through how these occurred differently and similarly across time and regions of the world including Asia, Africa the Western Hemisphere, Oceania and Europe. What is the relationship within white supremacy between anti-blackness and other narratives tied to capitalism such as anti-Chinese narratives?



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- 3) What is the relationship between systems of domination—of social orders based on capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy? We know that expressions of gender, race and class are often expressed in forms that are not only intersectional but mutually constitutive. We know that in most parts of the world that the greatest burdens of exploitation and expropriation are born by women of color whom also bear the, often unacknowledged, brunt of movements of resistance. What can we learn from these movements that can help us refine our theory and practice? What language do we need to develop? At a meeting of youth activists in Chicago last spring there was dissatisfaction expressed by the activists with the language of racial capitalism as is could be used in a manner that didn't fully incorporate the dynamics of patriarchy, but also with language that didn't capture the central role of capitalism and white supremacy as well.
- 4) Another question is how do we understand crisis? Is this a time of disruption, of rupture and/or the result of long processes of racial subordination and capitalist exploitation? I have argued and continue to maintain that there have been at least two types of changes that mark qualitative changes from the past that make this era different from either Jim Crow and the racial capitalism of that era and that preceded it. One is the degree to which financialization has not only transformed the everyday life of most of us in this and other regions globally, but perhaps as theorists such as Meister, and Ascher maintain, the nature of value itself. That may well be the case, but we have at best only begun to understand how this shift in the nature of capitalist economies and social orders are or are not related to continued systems of racial domination, although we can hypothesize how the marginalization, displacement and as some have argued banishment of racially marginalized groups are a consequence in the shifts in capitalism. Second, I and others have argued that the ideological component of the neoliberal project has narrowed the scope of the meaning of the political, robbed us of the vocabulary and analytical tools needed to fight the ravages of racial capitalism. But, is the language of neoliberalism as I have argued still useful for understanding the shifts in capitalism marked by financialization or the changes in systems of racial subordination and their relation to capitalist and patriarchal orders? This is an open and contested question.
- 5) How do we resist and build in the time of a global populist shift to the right, mostly recently marked by the rightwing shift in Austria? Globally this shift is tied to a resurgence in white supremacy, anti-immigration

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movements and Islamaphobia. How are social movements in barrios and ghettos; how have the tactics and strategies of labor working in a thoroughly racialized environment; shifted, learned, adapted, failed and succeeded? What lessons can we learn as engaged scholars from the movements fighting racial capitalism in this era? What can we learn from those around the world fighting against inequality, dispossession, displacement, exploitation, expropriation, oppression and repression?

These are of course not all of the critical questions that our work and the four important papers we are discussing raise. They do represent some of the central questions that our local and national work on racial capitalism in both accessible venues such as the podcasts and SSRC *Items* website articles and central scholarly journals have begun to illuminate and bring to a wider audience.

I conclude by saying that I am continually surprised and gratified by the support we receive from scholars and others from around the country, but have been stunned by not only the hunger for this work demonstrated by graduate students from one coast to another, but the initiative that graduate students in New York City, New England, Chicago and elsewhere have taken to organize themselves to work on these issues. This should give us some confidence that our work is timely and needed.

Our conversations this weekend during the conference and the informal side conversations that have already begun will be vital for moving the work forward and strengthening the intellectual and organizational foundations for our work locally and nationally.

I eagerly look forward to our conversations!

# Opening Remarks (2 of 2)

Peter James Hudson

*Assistant Professor of African American Studies and History, UCLA*

Today's gathering marks a rare, possibly historic, occurrence at UCLA: an uncommon meeting of scholars from across the campus and across the country, and from different departments and different disciplines, whose research on race and capitalism, taken collectively, engages a quite remarkable sweep of the world's regions. The United States is invariably represented on today's panels. But we are trying to marginalize or provincialize the US in our discussions. We are attempting to generate a set of cross-national and transregional conversations on race and capitalism through a number of broad overarching (and sometimes overlapping) themes—diasporas, settler colonialism, imperialism, resistance. We hope these themes will allow us, for example, to place land rights activism in Brazil in dialogue with Chicano displacement and Jamaica's informal economies, or to understand the politics of currency reform in the US colonial Philippines through the neocolonial economies of Cuba, the hyper-capitalist exchanges of East Asian bond markets, or the question of monetary sovereignty in British India.

This is what we hope UCLA can bring to the ongoing national conversation on race and capitalism: a cosmopolitanism, a worldliness, an internationalism—and with it, a current of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. Our hope is to expand the conversation on race and capitalism outwards. To try to speak to its transnational and global scales. To try to understand the problems of settler colonialism, white supremacy, and racial capitalism as *global* problems.

Yet at the same time, we also hope to forge an intellectual project that displaces metropolitan knowledge. We hope to spark an initiative that emerges from within the disparate and far-flung local spaces wherein the intellectual and political projects of sovereignty, of anti-capitalism, of anti-colonialism—of freedom—are being worked out without constant reference to the overbearing academic presence of the “colossus of the north,” to borrow Jose Martí's phrase. Without any illusions about our potential for success we are hoping to work at a planetary scale, but one that speaks through an ethics of local autonomy and regional ontology.

These are urgent matters. In these times of extreme nationalism, sordid nativism, and virulent xenophobia, an attempt at recovering and reinvigorating a radical internationalism and an intellectual and ethical cosmopolitanism is critically necessary. So too is the renewal of an anti-colonial politics unconstrained by nation-bounded invocations of “race and class” or “race and capitalism.” In part, this is the message coming from Puerto Rico and Haiti, and from Niger and Somalia. And it is the only logical path as we meet today under the white glare of the creeping threat of both nuclear annihilation and ecological apocalypse.



The background is a complex collage. On the left, there is a map of the African continent in shades of blue and green. On the right, there are vertical stripes in black, white, and brown, reminiscent of a zebra's pattern. In the center and bottom, there are faint, overlapping images of human faces, including a woman's face in the lower right and a man's face in the lower left.

*i:*  
Diasporas  
of Racial  
Capitalism

Nathan Connolly

Aisha K. Finch



# Diasporas of Racial Capitalism

Nathan Connolly

*Herbert Baxter Adams Associate Professor of History, Johns Hopkins University*

Try as we might, our thinking on race and capitalism remains boxed-in by a series of liberal ideal types. We love to talk about citizenship or democracy, even if only as a promise or, more cynically, as an impossibility. We sometimes even imagine eras as more or less progressive, people as more or less free. And we draw such measurements on the basis of how we imagine states should behave, how protected, say, wage-workers and racial and sexual subalterns ought to be.

As I've written elsewhere, "citizens, [under liberalism], stand in contract with their government. The government's job, in turn, has been to enforce contracts between individuals and groups. Thus, when people ask for rights, be they women's rights, gay and transgender rights, or rights as people of color, they are asking for contract rights." Thus, our living ideas about politics—on the page and in our lives—remain deeply structural. Nobody in here works without a contract; indeed, knowing the whims of the people in our business, we would consider it stupid to do so. We'd be just as foolish to maintain, though, that such labor relations have no bearing at all on our thinking.

Now, just to be clear, everyone in this room would and should consider themselves, as the kids today like to say, "woke." (We're at a conference on Race and Capitalism, after all.) And nobody here would say that we're not allowed to acknowledge our thinking as an ongoing work-in-progress. (I love y'all enough, Dear Hearts, to bring y'all into the hot, messy kitchen of my writing process, for starters). Perhaps most importantly, we depend existentially—mightily—on our political imaginings and hold fastest to our "oughts" and "shoulds"—not our contracts. The world as it *ought* to be spurs us to keep writing, working, and dreaming for and *on* each other. That said, I still think we stand to benefit, even just a little, from considering how, even as leftist scholars, our often polished and well-read indignation gets pulled into a set of liberal problem frames, how, indeed, we traffic in individualist abstractions about how this whole "society" thing is supposed to work.

Let me be a bit more concrete, and answer, directly and pointedly, Prof. Roy's charge to speak about *how* exactly I go about doing my work. I use diaspora to disabuse myself—episodically as I'm able—of an otherwise well-practiced liberalism. Rather than begin my work with a sense of how democracy or, perhaps, society is *supposed* to work, I read racism and capitalism in a

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comparative frame, twice over, to get closer to how it actually works in the day to day.

Me being a historian, the first comparison is, naturally, back in time. For our purposes, that includes locating, for instance, when did a black people come to see themselves as a people in this context or that? What were the terms of that belonging? When and how did conflicts and fissures within that sense of peoplehood emerge.

Stuart Hall writes in his posthumously edited autobiography, *Familiar Stranger*, that “the first years of the 1950s [in] London was...an essential staging post in my transition to becoming a West Indian.” More inclusive concepts of being “Caribbean,” he explains, came with the mere fact of being a black subject in Britain. For the historian in me, then, diaspora is as much a *when* as a *where*. Political blackness, for Hall, would only appear in his own scholarly writings during the 1970s, in spite of the fact that his sensibilities as a Black Marxist were there twenty years earlier. (Political self-identification as “black” would come far earlier, Hall also concedes, for those trapped in closer proximity to the police state and bound to the means of blue-collar and no-collar production). Suffice it to say, I strive in my work to cast race-making as a political happening that itself has a history and a relationship to political economy. Easy enough.

I make a second comparison across political, really *geopolitical*, contexts, at least, again, as far as my skills allow. Capitalism and racism stand, for me, as sets of experiences of and encounters between people and places in at-times disparate, at-times entangled, and in always-concurrent processes of becoming. Place matters, put most elementarily. But it matters not because I’m invested in contrasting an imagined “here” with an equally, barely, kinda-true “over there.” It matters because, more times than not, we can better appreciate the contingent and unevenness of a social or historical process if we untether it from the context with which we’re most familiar. *Familiar Stranger*.

But here I go getting all abstract, again.

Liberalism. The draft essay I circulated for today’s session, “The Strange Career of American Liberalism,” represents an effort to explore the historicity of liberalism as a series of encounters between black and white people over the reach and health of white power. I use examples from education, labor, housing, and electoral politics to illustrate how important racial paternalism became to lubricating the day-to-day workings of a system built on the government defense of individualized contract. I also explore the decidedly “Southern” visions of liberalism that ultimately became the mode of governance under which we all live.

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The white South won the fight for America's political culture on several key fronts, I maintain. Institutionally we espouse a sense of racial justice that affirms individual over group claims. Our employment provisions remain based largely in volunteerism rather than mandated programs. Citizenship's meaning before the courts and on the streets gets determined largely by property ownership and one's possession of white allies. Each of these states of affair derive from the political designs of white segregationists who, by and large, remained in control of the federal government during the heyday of mid-twentieth century liberal governance.

I say all this to say further still that it's because of my work through the problems of diaspora, racism and capitalism—in and beyond the U.S. South—that, as many of you know, I really don't believe in any such thing as *neoliberalism*. If you got to the end of the paper, you have the beginnings of a sense of why. Real quick, to say neoliberalism, rather than simply liberalism or late capitalism, to my mind, is, among other things, to advance a theory of history about what came before. It's to traffic in ideal types about labor protections, publicly funded benefits, metrics of citizenship, participatory democracy, government accountability, and (and this is important), majoritarian black and brown radicalism that did not in fact exist. And I arrived at this conclusion by reading, not hand-wringing, integrationist U.S. political and social history, but by engaging literature written outside of Americans general intellectual subjectivity—literature in African, Caribbean, Latin American, and black European history. These were the foundation of my first book on Miami, and they now prop up my second book on working-class family migration across the twentieth-century Atlantic World.

In other words, it's taken a fair bit of comparative work—back and across—to disabuse me of the ideal types embedded, among other places, in fast and loose lamentations about “neoliberal” this or that. Exploring indirect rule and its dynamics in, say, Rhodesia or the Gold Coast, has proven much more fruitful. Locating, as colonial, the compromises around land distribution more benignly called the New Deal has been key. It's meant recognizing the US occupation of Haiti as dry-run for that same New Deal, in fact, or, going even earlier, seeing the plunder of 60% of all black wealth in America in 1873, stolen from the Freedman's Bank for investing in doomed railroad stock, as the precursor to the dreaded and seemingly exceptional “financialization” of the late twentieth century. “Imperial banking,” to borrow Dr. Peter Hudson's description of the early life of financialization as exercised in Haiti and Cuba, had roots in this decimation of Reconstruction's only brick and mortar institution. Nobody with sense believes darkies can and should govern, can and should bank. Late nineteenth and late-twentieth century cultures of capitalism are differences of degree rather

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than kind. And, at least for me, using diaspora as a step toward considering comparative colonialisms has been central to this and related learning.

The challenge for me, of late, comes in trying to write a diasporic history of the U.S. South at the level of *themes*, and not merely demographic snapshots. That proved easier when writing a book about Miami. It's been considerably more difficult getting readers to recast so-called "mainstream" political history, especially Southern political history, as representative of continuities in planter-dominated classical liberalism on the one hand, and colonial political and economic relations on the other. I'd appreciate any advice on those fronts.

Far less selfishly, as we open the floor and the day for discussion, I look forward to working through the stubbornness and complexity of the liberalism in our research sites, out and about in our body politic, and, should we wish to own it, in our mind's eye.



# Diasporas of Racial Capitalism

## *A Response*

Aisha K. Finch

*Associate Professor of Gender Studies and African American Studies, UCLA*

For someone unfamiliar with this historiography, Nathan Connolly's paper allowed unique insight into liberalism as a resilient structure of anti-black violence. Connolly argues that southern democrats during the Jim Crow Era converted liberalism into an efficient technology of racial management; moreover, he demonstrates that Jim Crow liberalism—and its later incarnation of neoliberalism—were not in fact radical forms of departure, but rather continuations of a longer history that maintained the same logic and mechanisms of control. Within this framework, Connolly sheds light on a privileged class of black capitalists who exploited the paternalistic culture of the Jim Crow South, and often became deeply invested in this model of liberalism. His paper makes the bold move of demonstrating that white and black interests converged around the principles of private property, individualism, and open markets, the central motors of liberal governance. Connolly thus complicates our traditional understanding of racial politics during this period by highlighting the strategic relationships that black entrepreneurs developed with white patrons, relationships that solidified the terms of black dispossession even as they rearranged them. Yet he shows that this seemingly malleable liberal ethos was ultimately rooted in familiar intractable forms of anti-black violence, and was thus inextricable from the terror of Jim Crow governance.

This model is very familiar to scholars of Latin America, especially in places like Cuba where black communities were constantly having to negotiate the politics of race and nation. In Cuba during the early twentieth century, these models of clientelism and corporatism were visible, expected, and deeply ingrained in the political culture of everyday life. Black Cubans were routinely obliged to navigate and manipulate this complex political terrain in order to access an appreciable level of resources. Given these parallel histories, I am interested in how black American entrepreneurs, homeowners, and politicians negotiated similar relationships in the U.S. South, and how they understood their own proximity to power. How did black capitalists challenge the limits of white racial power, even as they reproduced the logic of liberal capitalism? Can we think about these patronage relationships as a counter-hegemonic form of sociality for

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black people? What kinds of strategies did they use to enter the public sphere or critique white privilege, even as they chose to maintain the delicate balance of white benevolence? In particular, I am interested in how black liberals positioned themselves during moments of lynching and other episodes of anti-black terror. Did these moments destabilize (or rupture) their relationships with white liberals? I offer these questions to expand Connolly's already provocative analysis, a paper that offers valuable insight to the culture of paternalism in the U.S South. His work opens up new directions to think about the convergence of capitalism, liberalism, and the foundations of racial violence during this period.





*iii.*  
The  
Land  
Question

Keisha-Kahn Y. Perry

Ashleigh M. Campi

Jovan Lewis



# The Land Question

Keisha-Khan Y. Perry

*Africana Studies Brown University*

The workshop's attention to global territories and transnational histories reminds us of the urgency to frame our analyses of antiracism struggles globally. I welcome this opportunity to discuss my ongoing research on the racial and gendered logics of urban black land loss and to share my personal, intellectual, and political preoccupation with disseminating knowledge about a segment of the African diaspora most often ignored—blacks in Latin America—and those who occupy the margins of the margins in the region, black women. With a black population in Latin America that surpasses 100 million, and more than 3 million being displaced from their lands in Colombia, Brazil, and Ecuador, for example, I find it encouraging that we are working to invert the geography of our collective reasoning on the insidious nature of antiblack capitalist-driven genocide that is deeply gendered.

The essay I submitted for discussion reflects my ongoing research on the nature of antiblack violence evident in black dispossession (the loss of housing, land, and territorial rights and forced displacement) and the role of white supremacist police states in carrying out evictions and destroying black urban environments during unequal urban redevelopment processes. From North America to the Southern Cone, the black land heist necessarily informs our diasporic discussions on the afterlife of settler colonialism and slavery, and the ongoing permutations of racist ideas and practices. It's fascinating that when we re-read DuBois's *Black Reconstruction* and the original "Constitution of the Haitian Revolution" of 1805, we can see just how much land was emphasized in the black formulation of freedom and decolonization. Tianna Paschel in her book *Becoming Black Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial Rights in Colombia and Brazil* (2016) emphasizes the myriad ways that black people are dreaming that are oftentimes tied to territorial belonging.

In my research, I have been preoccupied with emphasizing how and why black women are the main political protagonists mobilizing at the grassroots against forced removals and for police abolition (sometimes putting their bodies in front of bulldozers and the military police). Focusing on their grassroots fight against mass evictions and the destruction of black urban environments, I document how black women are articulating critiques of racial capitalism and the impossibilities of racial democracy imbued in the logics of black dispossession. Poor black women have been ignored in the scholarship on urban policy, design, and social movements in Brazil, leading me to take on the questions that João Costa Vargas (2014) asks of recent street protests in cities around the country:



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Who is seen as a protestor? Who garners political sympathy? In a recent essay, I take these questions a step further and illustrate that these women operating on the “margins of the margins” have been organizing mass social movements in recent decades that challenge the gendered racism that is pervasive at all levels of Brazilian society, including among leftist activists who ignore the genocidal underpinnings of the demolitions and militarized policing of black urban spaces.

I am profoundly guided by the ideas of black feminist scholar-activists such as the late Luiza Bairros, Claudia Jones, and Toni Cade Bambara, who have taught us that we need to return our social scientific and humanistic studies to the real material issues that concern the lives of the marginalized poor. My research on black women’s activism shows that black spaces are racialized “terrains of domination” (Stuart Hall in Katherine McKittrick, 2006) in which women’s politics are deeply connected to resistance against “geographic domination” (Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, 2007) as practices in forced removals and land dispossession.

Hence, I understand loss of land to be a key black feminist issue today—the kind of issue that informed black feminist thought in the first place. My work is about the struggle for land and water for everyday survival, but also a geographic preoccupation of African descendant peoples in the diaspora with spatial belonging, resonating with Dionne Brand’s (2002) provocation with a certain kind of landing, claiming space and permanence. Land becomes important in the struggle for freedom and citizenship, not for its market value, but for its psychic significance.

But, like Carole Boyce Davies’s (2008) work on Claudia Jones and Barbara Ransby’s recent book on the life and politics of Eslanda Robeson, the focus on black women’s radical subjectivities in land struggles is primarily concerned with resisting erasure. Resisting the erasure of black women as key social, economic, cultural, and political actors. Resisting the erasure of black women as producers of knowledge, not just as objects of study, in countries such as Brazil, with the largest black population outside Africa. Resisting erasure is about centering the radical black female intellectual and activist as part of a black radical tradition in Latin America and elsewhere that has always taken place within nations and has always been influenced by diasporic consciousness and politics. This includes well-known thinkers and activists as well as the many unnamed women who stand on the frontlines of justice every day, oftentimes having already sacrificed their sons and daughters to the violence and subsequently themselves as political actors against pervasive racist impunity.

These women include domestic worker Marisa Nobrega, who died on October

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10, 2017 after the military police beat her in the head with a machine gun for defending her 17-year-old son against further police violence. This is an example of the everyday lives of black women resisting militarized policing and defending their families and communities.

Another example is nurse Iraci Isabel da Silva (Dona Iraci), who died at age 45 from a heart attack after defending her grandson during a routine military police invasion of the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood, just as I started this research in the early 2000s. It was Dona Iraci, one of the fiercest black women warriors in the Gamboa de Baixo neighborhood association fighting against coastal land evictions and for collective land rights, who told me that I could not understand urban redevelopment and forced displacement without thinking seriously about police abuse. She explained precisely how police violence and racial terror work in tandem with mass evictions. Every 23 minutes in Brazil, a young black between the ages of 15 and 29 is killed. Between 2005 and 2015, 61% of the women murdered by the police were black even though they represent only 24.5% of the Brazilian population.

Domestic worker Rita Barbosa also taught me about the intricacies of white supremacy in Salvador and led conversations about the 37-story high-rise constructed by Odebrecht and how racial exclusion is built into the design and function of luxury real estate. I center in my work how poor black women critique the racist and classist implications of the demolitions and displacement taking place during efforts to “modernize” (hence, Europeanize) the city center of Salvador, informed by their unique subject positions on the margins of the margins. Nathan Connolly’s idea of black people as raw material—as both essential and disposable—is important here. The local narratives in Brazilian cities of the *bandido* (bandit), the *traficante* (drug dealer), and the *preto pobre* (black poor) are gendered racial class categories that signify a priori knowledge (to draw from Sylvia Wynter) of who deserves to be pushed out of hygienic new urban spaces, oftentimes by the bullet. These spaces represent what I call “diasporic zones of non-being,” highlighting Frantz Fanon’s assertion that a collective understanding of black inhumanity throughout the African diaspora in the Americas predetermines the state’s genocidal killings and denial of basic public goods and services.

The story of Jameelah El-Shabazz, who was violently kicked out of her apartment in the Bronx on May 4, 2011, has pushed me to connect the social and political experiences of black women in Brazil with those in cities in the United States. The police raided her apartment and arrested her after finding 45 small cups of eggshell powder that the high priestess used in Yoruba religious ceremonies, which later tested negative for cocaine. After spending a week in prison at

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Rikers Island, she returned home to find that her apartment had been sealed off and her family ordered to vacate. This is just one example of the thousands of nuisance-abatement actions locking black and brown people out of their homes each year, leaving them with little recourse to fight against their evictions (*The New York Daily News*, 2/6/2016). A crucial part of “tough” and “effective” policing in New York, especially in neighborhoods undergoing rapid economic redevelopment such as the Bronx and Harlem, these actions have contributed to mass displacement and an increasing homeless and prison population.

The comparative focus on how black dispossession has become a central prompt for black activism from North America to the Southern Cone will be the focus on my book, tentatively titled *The Historical Paradox of Citizenship: Black Land Ownership and Loss in the Americas*. I hope to complete a third book, *Evictions and Convictions*, that globalizes the narrative on how black women experience state violence in the United States and are leading the fight against police brutality and for housing rights. These books will provide more expansive narratives about how women experience the concrete intersections of these processes of black dispossession and their participation and leadership in urban social movements to combat interrelated forms of state violence.

Even as I extend this research to a more hemispheric view, I am constantly reminded that it is oftentimes poor black women workers with little formal education who live and die in the poorest neighborhoods who are leading conversations about the genocidal nature of the simultaneous disappearance of black people and spaces in cities. What lessons can we learn from the Marisas, the Dona Iracis, the Ritas about the complexity of race and the creative ways black communities resist them?

- 1) As Sylvia Wynter encourages us, we need to beware of reproducing liminal categories in our processes of knowledge production on race and capital and make visible the gendered dimensions of antiblack class-based racism.
- 2) Inverting the geography of reason—changing our geographic starting point when it comes to the diaspora—continues to be crucial for incorporating the vastness of black diasporic experiences, ideas, and politics.
- 3) This attention to the kinds of militancy that emerge from the margins—specifically from black woman workers mobilizing on the margins of Brazil and even on the margins of the black diaspora—brings new meaning for

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the future of the Left in North America. For example, knowledge produced by Afro-Brazilian activist-scholars, especially recent critiques of the Left, necessarily expands our critiques of gendered racial capitalism globally. The 2017 report on the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff that I co-authored reveals some of these critiques.

In that vein, I want to end with Claudia Jones's statement to the Left in her iconic essay, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman" (1949: 3):

An outstanding feature of the present stage of Negro liberation movement is the growth in the militant participation of Negro women in all aspects of the struggle for peace, civil rights, and economic security. Symptomatic of this new militancy is the fact that Negro women have been symbols of many present-day struggles of the Negro people. This growth of militancy among Negro women has profound meaning, both for the Negro liberation movement, and for the emerging anti-fascist, anti-imperialist coalition.

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# The Land Question

## *Response 1:*

### *thoughts on gendered dispossession and authoritarian neoliberalism*

Ashleigh Campi

*Research and Teaching Faculty of Gender Studies, USC*

My first question concerns what neighborhood organizing teaches us about how actors build political solidarities in the face of dispossession through capitalist development. Perry's work focuses on poor black women at the center of organized resistance to land grabs by state-aided developers in Palestina, Brazil. Affirming the importance of positionality to black feminist praxis, she pointedly shows how these women's racial consciousness, class consciousness and gender consciousness grows out of their position as guardians and defenders of basic material resources—land and housing—in their communities.

I would ask you to talk a bit more about how such consciousness and militancy was built and extended from these women, for instance to other women of color, black men, or those with more access to resources. While neighborhood solidarity in one sense so natural, we also know that capitalist development offers material and ideological bridges to some actors, and that these bridges often use racial and gender hierarchies within a community to strain solidarities. Did you encounter such lines of co-optation in your cases? How did the women you study work to sustain community consciousness?

My second question gestures at how theorizing from praxis can help us understand the co-production of race, gender, and capitalism. Modeling such an approach,<sup>1</sup> Perry helps us reframe a much-discussed distinction in recent

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1. For other models see the work of conference participants Kimberly K. Hoang, *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work* (University of California Press, 2015), Tianna S. Paschel, *Becoming Black Political Subjects: Movements and Ethno-Racial in Columbia and Brazil* (Princeton University Press, 2016), and Ashleigh M. Campi, "The Unstable Alliance for 'School Choice': Social Movements and American Neoliberalism," forthcoming, *Polity*.

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theories of racial capitalism, namely the distinction between exploitation, on the one hand, and dispossession or expropriation, on the other. From this analytic perspective, women of color's bodies are positioned at the margins, and they make up something of a limit case. They are both inside wage economies, where they are exploited, and outside wage economies, where they perform the social reproductive labor necessary to sustain homes and communities. From this perspective, the life-producing labor of communities on the margins can be understood as expropriated by capitalist development—subsumed as an asset at zero cost. The lives caring labor produces are consumed if they can be rendered resources for capitalist development, or displaced and abandoned if not.

Perry's paper re-centers this discussion by focusing on anti-capitalist struggles around the land and basic resources needed to reproduce. We see similar struggles happening elsewhere in central and South America, in Turkey, and elsewhere, in countries where liberal respect for property rights, always to some extent selectively enforced, frays further, and the state reveals itself more clearly as a security agent in support of allied capitalist development projects. We see this in the U.S. as well; in my work I have been trying to trace the integration of neoliberal economies with extra-economic structures of command, the authoritarian dimensions of neoliberalism.

Scholars of racial capitalism have long demonstrated that capitalism depends on command structures of rule, such as the police and infrastructure of the colonial state.<sup>2</sup> How do we best understand what is new in contemporary political-economies? This is something Perry's work has helped me think about. I would suggest that in seeking to understand our present we might tack back and forth between attending to new forms of authoritarian neoliberalism and the history of racial capitalism. What happens if we put current anti-capitalist and anti-racist struggles at the center of our attempts to understand how racial capitalism is working in the present? What happens to our understanding of capitalist modernity if we place women, and black women not at the margins, as limit cases, but at the center of our account, rather than white men? This is not a normative but an interpretive claim that I see coming out of these discussions, and I think it transforms how we understand modern domination and how to get free from it.

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2. For recent exemplars see the work of conference participants, Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (University of North Carolina Press, 2016), and Aisha Finch, *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Slave Insurgencies of 1841-1844* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

# The Land Question

## *Response 2*

Jovan Scott Lewis

*Co-Chair of the Economic Disparities Research Cluster at the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, and Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Geography, UC Berkeley*

The peripherality of the neighborhoods you discuss are critical to their vulnerability. So, in addition to the intersectional constellation of inequality represented by Dona Iracis as a particularly raced classed and gendered subject, the dimension of place offers an additional level of complexity for understanding that intersectionality. You offer place as a most powerful modality as it is most capable of intersectional representation. Therefore, as you show, it remains the most vulnerable. Targeting place as your paper shows, and as we've seen in global accounts of land dispossession and gentrification is one move that endangers all other notions and material representations of identity. But targeting land through rationale of property rights sanctions violence in one of the most egregious but sadly dismissible ways, operating as a kind of 'contract' killing.

### Question 1

You have this fantastic quote, "to speak of *terra de preto* (black land) is necessarily to speak of *terra de mulheres negras* (black women's land)." Your article positions land as a repository of black poor female inheritance, memory, agency, power, responsibility and leadership. How do geography and blackness anchored in female property relations work together to offer a different way of knowing land as capital? And what is the logic of capital that drives your paper's subjects to advocate as residents as opposed to workers?

### Question 2

Ambiguity is offered as a way of abstracting the conditions of blackness in a way that releases racist as well as liberal institutions and actors from responsibility. Central to the imperative of racial capitalism is the production of difference from which value is extracted. Those differences are most productive when they are capable of clear unequivocal articulation. How does that work within the racial condition of ambiguity?





*iii:*

# Imperialism and its Limits

Allan E. S. Lumba

Kimberly Kay Hoang

Vinay Lal

Michael Ralph



# Imperialism and its Limits

Allan E. S. Lumba

*Assistant Professor of History and Postdoctoral Scholar in the Michigan Society of Fellows, University of Michigan*

In thinking about the keywords of this session: imperialism and limits, I was reminded of Fanon's theorization of decolonization:

“Decolonization, which sets out to change the order of the world, is obviously a program of complete disorder.”<sup>1</sup>

If imperialism and colonization is a historical process of ordering and knowing, then decolonization is a historical process of disordering and unknowing, pushing beyond the limits of what is known, to welcome the unknowable.

What was, and still is so significant to me about Fanon's notion of decolonization is that it comes from the perspective of the colony, not empire. Or differently put, decolonization is framed by empire's limits rather than by empire in itself. This leads me to think that there can be no imperialism without colonialism, and that the colony always remains the limit of imperialism. What do I mean by this?

The colony is the limit in that it remains imperialism's horizon; the fantasy, the frontier, the new world to old empires. At the same time, the colony also remains the limit because the colony is always already a source of anti-imperialism. Thus, the colony was simultaneously a source of dread and terror, a thing to be dominated or domesticated. I can think of several ways that thinking through the colony could be generative in thinking through not only imperialism and its limits, but in addition, global histories of racial capitalism.

Thinking through the colony first, we see that modern imperial formation can only exist within a world of imperialisms. To imperialists, its limits are defined by other empires. There are always other sovereign powers, other territories to be coveted, borders to be contested and protected. The colony illuminates this world of rival empires, and rivalries are determined mainly by wealth and prestige. In one way, there is always anxiety that a colony could be exploited or taken by a rival empire, this becomes a justification for the continuation of colonization. For instance, Americans justified possessing the Philippines because of the centuries of Spanish colonialism in the Islands, and later throughout the 1920s and 1930s,

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1. Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963, p. 36



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Americans feared Japanese colonization of the Philippines.

At the same time, rivalry does not necessarily mean antagonism. Certainly, there was conflict between empires, but what was more crucial was the maintenance of order and security. And this is what I believe is distinct about so-called modern imperialisms, that they are ultimately grounded in, and bound to, the capitalist world-system. I don't mean that there is some conspiracy or that every political formation is ultimately controlled by capital. Rather, what I believe Fanon simultaneously meant by the "order of the world" is a global capitalist order.

On one hand, this notion of capitalism as the "order of the world" generates the fantasy for imperialists, that they belong to capitalist societies, that their race had achieved a level of modernity and development, that their riches came about through entrepreneurship, contractual exchange, free trade, and industry: a multitude of capitalist virtues. This is the fantasy that is produced, a kind of history of capitalism that is narrated by imperialists about themselves, that positions North Atlantic races as a normative and idealized model of society, economy, and politics.

On the other hand, in the colonies, capitalism had not taken hold, or at least not taken hold properly, and thus imperial sovereignty was justified. Through colonization, capitalism was supposed to help transform the primitive and the savage into modern humans. This was through the introduction of modern things, practices, and institutions. Things that were deemed as ordinary, quotidian, or normal in capitalist society were forced upon those colonized. That's why I believe the histories of seemingly mundane or ordinary things, like currency, banking, taxes, credit, or property can shed light on the conditions of possibility for seemingly more spectacular and melodramatic histories of imperialism, such as narratives of war or diplomacy.

Third, in this way, the colony reveals not only the collaboration between capitalism and imperialism, but also the tensions and frictions. Empires are supposed to be bound to particular territories and a certain sovereignty, while capitalism is, by its own logic, universal. The colony illuminates how capitalism needs to run in all directions, to escape political borders and boundaries, how it captures, valorizes, and orders before, and to the side of, the formal apparatuses of the colonial state. We can track this in the way the state attempts to regulate or manage how money and commodities circulate, how financial instruments are invented, how commercial and corporate contracts are drafted, and how land, resources, and bodies are stolen, fixed, and traded.

Fourth, the colony, as the limit to empire, is also a place where the invention, intensification, and contestation of racial difference and hierarchies are made

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possible. Race determines who is fully human and who is wholly autonomous in a capitalist system; who can possess, who is dispossessed, and who can be possessed.

On one hand we see this in the ways that empires were always already coded as rival racial populations; and rivalry between imperial races becomes a way to territorialize and demarcate the domestic national population in relation to the foreign other. On the other hand, since the colony appears as a limit, imperialism is justified in and through the management of racialized populations. Colonized races, after all, have to be brought into the world of capitalism, into the world of the normal, the modern, the human. This is of course the narrative of empire, which we must trouble.

And this kind of troubling is what the black radical tradition taught me, that world-systems couldn't; what Robinson emphasized, that Wallerstein, Frank, and Arrighi ignored. That race radically structures capitalism. From the global division of labor; to the conquest and dispossession of natural resources and land in the New World; to the transpacific and transatlantic movement and trade of metals, goods, and bodies: race—and particularly racial violence—organizes this global history of capitalism.

Finally, I want to emphasize how it's the limits of imperialism, that form imperialism. The anticipation of anti-colonialism in any form generated a proliferation of colonial policing and policies, modes of governing and administration driven by security and order. Imperial structures were constituted out of the fear of subaltern insurgencies; anxieties of the eruption of indigenous socialities and praxis that survived colonialism; whose roots Guha argues could be "traced back to pre-colonial times." This is not to say we should fantasize about some nostalgic idea of pre-colonial society, but rather to emphasize that subaltern insurgencies drew from histories of resistance that were much deeper, both in terms of time and structure; a resistance to systems of power that pre-date capitalist, racial, and colonial orders.<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, fears of anti-colonialism were not simply on a local scale, but always already on a global scale. The modern capitalist world was, after all, a colonial world. From the perspective of the colony, we see that there were a multitude of colonialisms, a world of colonies. Differently brutalized through racial violence and subjugation, differently exploited and utilized by global capital; colonies are commonly treated by imperialists as a source of terror, of the possible disorganization of the world as they knew it. Connected and drawn

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2. Ranajit Guha, "On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India," *Mapping Subaltern Studies and the Postcolonial*, 3-4,

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ever more intimately together through the webs of imperialism and capitalism, these different colonized and racialized peoples knew of one another, felt the resonances of struggle bouncing off each other, and formed relations—either real or imagined—that went beyond the intentions of capital or empire. This was a threat to the global order, the kinds of solidarities that emerged, the radical kinds of internationalisms that were constituted, the global struggles for revolutionary decolonization that were imminent.

These are the histories that I hope to draw forth, as we further explore the limits of imperialism.

# Imperialism and its Limits

## *Response 1*

Kimberly Kay Hoang

*Co-Chair of the Economic Disparities Research Cluster at the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society, and Assistant Professor of African American Studies and Geography, UC Berkeley*

### Question 1

What do you mean exactly by securitization? Your chapter allows you to theorize the term by engaging with both literatures on security and financialization. Securitization in international relations is the process of state actors transforming subjects into matters of “security.” In financial terms—securitization involves taking an illiquid asset, or group of assets and transforming it into a “security.” You use the term at the opening of the chapter but never define it. Yet the double meaning of the term seems to be a productive route for you to theorize your chapter. How does securitization from the vantage point of the state differ from the way we think about securitization through a financial lens?

### Question 2

There seem to be several layers of resentment here with regard to this monetary structure from U.S. teachers, to U.S. soldiers and colonial leaders to the Filipino citizens themselves. Can you unpack the hierarchy and distinctions between the resentment felt by the colonists, war personnel, and local Filipinos?

### Question 3

Much of this chapter reminds me of Karl Polanyi’s work in theorizing the relationship between the state, market, and civil society. How does your work push Polanyi’s ideas forward in an imperial and colonial context? Do you see a double movement here? How do we think through the battle over soft power in the Philippines between the U.S. and China?



# Imperialism and its Limits

## *Response 2*

Vinay Lal

*Professor of History and Asian American Studies, UCLA*

Settler-Colonialism: I would like to hazard the view that the distinction, by which a great many scholars appear to have been taken in, between colonialism and settler-colonialism has been drawn too sharply. It is only a decade or a little more since Patrick Wolfe's work on settler-colonialism became highly influential and I think a reassessment of it is already necessary at this juncture. If I may put it quite simply, much of the recent work on settler-colonialism has advanced the view that as bio-politics is to colonialism, so necro-politics is to settler-colonialism. Extermination, in this view, is characteristic of the mode in which settler-colonialism operated. The genocide of various Indian populations in the Americas and of the Aborigines in Australia would describe such cases; in the other widely accepted variant of this argument, even where the wholesale elimination of the indigenous people was not aimed at, or was only partly attempted or partly successful, it was accompanied by a systematic displacement of the indigenous groups. South Africa has been summoned as an instance of this form of settler-colonialism; more recently, attention has turned towards Palestine after the creation of the Jewish state of Israel and the onset of the *naqba* (holocaust).

It may certainly be argued that settler-colonialism gives us a better understanding of how Europeans took possession of certain territories not only with the aim of extracting wealth and establishing themselves as dominant economic powers but with the intent of displacing indigenous populations, putting down roots, and fulfilling their manifest destiny to plant their seed everywhere and so do God's bidding. However, I would suggest that proponents of the idea of settler-colonialism have, perhaps unwittingly, resurrected one of the oldest templates in the scholarship of colonialism, namely the distinction between good colonialisms and bad colonialisms. We can then think of the British in India or the Dutch in Indonesia as, comparatively speaking, not animated by the brutal passions and barbarous conduct that informed the lives of settler colonialists. I will not dwell on just how tenuous, or should I say bogus, the distinction is between good and bad colonialisms. But the more substantive problem of drawing the distinction between colonialism and settler-colonialism may be illustrated by a brief consideration of the doctrine of *terra nullius*. The fiction that the Europeans, in coming to North America, the Caribbean, or Australia, were confronted with 'empty land' was a critical component of the charter of conquest. Wide expanses of land were, in the

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European view, simply there to be laid claim to; they belonged to no one, except to the European who could, with a flourish of the hand so to speak, produce a legal document showing that he had now taken possession of the land. It is not only in English common law that possession is 9/10<sup>ths</sup> of the law: once possession had been taken, the indigenous peoples could be treated as trespassers and interlopers, and then as peoples whose very existence posed a threat to civilization.

But this doctrine of terra nullius has been interpreted much too narrowly and unfortunately, in most writings, as a purely juristic concept. It is my submission that the doctrine was just as important, for example, to the British in India, to the Dutch in Indonesia, or to the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber in the late 1930s when he was attempting to justify Jewish immigration into Palestine. We should view the doctrine of terra nullius as encompassing a larger register of meanings: ‘empty land’ was of course nothing but ‘waste’ land, or land that was not being put to productive use. And this notion of ‘waste land’ proliferates in colonial writings. In India, certainly, the British could not claim that they were arriving at a place that was empty—empty of people, empty of customs, and so on; quite to the contrary, they understood that they were confronting a people who had been settled on the land for centuries and who had, for instance, complex land revenue systems.

Nevertheless, the British effectively applied a variant of the terra nullius doctrine in India, and indeed the Permanent Settlement of 1793 lends itself entirely to such an interpretation. The notion of ‘waste’ abounds in 18th century English writings on land in India. In Palestine, to adduce another example at which I have hinted, Martin Buber, writing in response to a piece published by Mohandas Gandhi on 2 November 1938 called “The Jews,” argued that Palestine under Arab hands had been infertile—and that Jewish migration into Palestine could be justified *inter alia* on the grounds that Jews had the gift of transforming *barren* [waste] land into something productive. Of course, his argument resonates deeply with other elements of the colonial framework of knowledge, such as the idea that the native is always “lazy.” I do not propose at this juncture to enter further into this stream of thought, and would refer readers to Syed Hussein Alatas’s *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (1977). For the purposes of my present argument, I would like to reiterate only that I see a continuum from the notion of infertile and waste land to the classic form of the terra nullius doctrine that played a critical role in fomenting settler colonialism.

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Comments on Allan E. S. Lumba, Ch. 2, "Imperial Standards"

- 1) I found it remarkable if apposite that, as Lumba remarks, "only the so-called Wisconsin School [most famously associated perhaps with William Appleman Williams] has remained consistent in emphasizing profit and plunder as central to U.S. overseas imperialism" (p. 2). Though there have been systemic critiques of American foreign policy by the likes of Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, William Blum, and John W. Dower, American imperialism has largely remained off-limits as a subject of both scholarly investigation and more popular commentary. I would go so far as to say that, in many respects, even the critiques of someone such as Chomsky are rather timid. Over a decade ago, in a pamphlet entitled *Empire and the Dream-Work of America*, I suggested that most critics of American foreign policy adhered to the view that if the American public really knew what kind of atrocities were being committed in their name, they would never stand for it. I have always found this view extremely suspect. In recent years, Chomsky, perhaps chastened by the relentless American war machine and the appetite for self-aggrandizement, has adopted a more rigorously critical position and somewhat embraced the view that imperialism is intrinsic to American history. Before historians and scholars turn to the "profit and plunder" that have informed American imperialism, they need to be able to acknowledge the very narrative of imperialism.
- 2) Lumba's paper gives rise to some thoughts about the place of the "expert" in the enterprise of imperialism. We are aware of the unprecedented role of the "expert" in post-World War II in development and aid projects, but the fetish of the expert has a longer history. The expert generally has a rather different trajectory, I would say, in the course of American imperialism than he does in the histories of British imperialism. In Britain, the expert was rather frowned upon; a premium was always placed on the amateur. (This is, of course, the bedrock to the character of Sherlock Holmes.) The economic expertise of Charles A. Conant (pp. 6-7) arises from the same milieu which gave birth to Taylorism. While this point is perhaps not central to Lumba's paper, I believe that he would do well to probe further the culture and fetish of the "expert." In this vein, I would like to see a more detailed exploration of the collusion in the United States of economics as a discipline with imperialism. Lumba writes that "there was a critical mass of American economists who saw the destiny of the academic discipline bound to the future of imperial state formation" (p. 18), but this argument may be pressed further. There is a very large body of work on the relationship of British colonialism and state

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formation to knowledge production in the colonies and Lumba may be able to draw upon some of this work.

- 3) In a famous essay called “Shooting an Elephant” (1936), George Orwell drew attention to the fact that, more than anything else, prestige was critically important to colonial officials; whatever else might happen, the colonial official was not to lose face, certainly not in the presence of the native. Orwell nearly suggests that there was a mystique attached to the colonial official; he might carry a gun, or wield the iron rod to discipline recalcitrant natives, but it was fundamentally his aura that carried the day. When the colonial official found himself in a position where his authority was questioned, or where he could not, if I may use something of a clichéd expression, control the narrative, he was consumed by anxiety. There are some interesting passages in Lumba’s paper on the anxiety produced in American colonial officials and experts when they found that they had insufficient knowledge of local conditions and were dependent on the native or other outsiders to gain a better understanding of a certain phenomenon. In the Philippines, local smaller denominational currency was available mainly as cooper coins, a matter that troubled Charter Bank Representative G. Bruce Webster who realized that Americans had a certain “illiteracy or lack of knowledge of local currency” and who thus had to “necessarily depend upon the knowledge of the Chinese and Filipino retailers.” Lumba continues: “This scenario troubled Webster, not only because Chinese and Filipinos held authority over the prices of their commodities, but also because American customers had ‘to accept the ruling’ of Chinese and Filipino retailers concerning the value and authenticity of coins.” (p. 11). This point, it appears to me, can bear the weight of further interpretation—at least if we are interested both in the anxiety produced in the colonizer and the fear of loss of authority. As Lumba himself notes, “the Chinese and Filipino’s seeming arbitrary decisions over valuation and authenticity had the upsetting public appearance of being sovereign of any state authority” (p. 11).
- 4) There is, as we know, a large sociological and psychoanalytical literature on ‘money;’ there is also a degree of mystification attached to money. The very rich have, as a general rule, never carried money: that seems to as true today as it has been in the past. Charles Allen, in *Plain Tales of the Raj* (1975), narrates a story frequently told about Curzon, the autocratic Viceroy—was there any other kind of Viceroy, one might ask, considering that the Viceroy always had plenipotentiary powers—of India from 1899-1905. Apparently, in all the years of his Viceroyalty, Curzon,



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who also presided over monetary reforms in Indian currency, never once saw Indian currency or held any Indian money in his hands. He merely had to write a 'chit' whenever he required anything for his personal use. One suspects the narrative is also about a certain aristocratic disdain for 'money,' as something which concerns plebeians and shopkeepers but not those born to taste. Both in India and in Britain, there has been a class of people for whom trading in money is somewhat unseemly; but such an attitude is more rarely encountered in the US. There has never been the slightest embarrassment about money in the US: this is one country where God evidently loves the rich, not the poor, and the poor are wholly convinced of it as well. Perhaps Lumba has already drawn upon this wider literature on money in his manuscript; but, if he has not, I think it would add something to his discussion. More specifically, I would like to see a set of speculations on his part about how American attitudes to 'money,' as opposed to calculated decisions by economists and bankers, gave shape to the cultural imperialism of the American dollar.

- 5) Apropos of Lumba's observation that "the Philippine Commission was obsessed with linking money to the figure of the Chinese" (p. 32), and his further discussion of the jaundiced American view of the Chinese merchant and middleman as a fundamentally deceitful character who was engaged in systematic adulteration and would cheat the native at the first opportunity (p. 33), I would like to offer two suggestions. First, the Chinese in this discourse appears to hold the same place as the Indian does in European discourses about the Indian middleman and merchant in Africa. The comment by one Edwin H. Warner, "The Chinaman comes here as coolie; he saves a little money and at once goes into the country and starts a small store" (p. 33), could, without having to make the slightest change, have been said about the Indian "coolie" in East Africa. We are speaking here of a well-established discursive formation. Secondly, we should recognize the colonial argument for what it is, namely an attempt to put forward the colonial power as a force of transcendence. One reason why the colonial power is needed is because the native—here the Filipino—is subject to the arbitrary abuses and exploitation of the clever and conniving Chinese: the brown man is saved from another brown man by a white man. The American or European transcends those internecine and communal conflicts that have always pitted one Asian against another, the Chinese against the Filipino, the Hindu against the Muslim, and so on. This is one reason among others why only the European is capable of adjudicating conflicts and dispensing justice.

# Imperialism and its Limits: *Response 3*

Michael Ralph

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Allen Lumba's book chapter, "Imperial Standards," discusses how sovereignty and currency emerged as related concerns amidst the US colonial project in the Philippines. Lumba does a fantastic job of discussing the micropolitics—or, with a nod to Robin D.G. Kelley, we might even say the infrapolitics—that helped people make sense of this emergent economic reality (as in their particular affinity for one currency rather than another). My comments will center on the fact that, at times, I felt like the argument shifted scales dramatically without tying them together. Lumba discusses a colonial military project implicated in financial practices and a racialized discourse on currency; but, he doesn't explain how we get from this geopolitical project to these specific ideas about different groups of people.

Lumba hints at an answer to this question in his insightful discussion of the Boxer Rebellion. The Boxers were steadfast against European efforts to occupy China. The belief that armed resistance made them bulletproof enabled the Boxers to overcome a tremendous deficit in arms. But, as Lumba notes, by 1900 the Boxer Rebellion made the value of silver volatile, creating a contentious political scenario in which US General MacArthur "accused banks in the Philippines of exploiting the U.S. military government during this moment of wild fluctuations."

The fact that a military conflict in China concerning several European nations shaped US policy in the Philippines, suggests that Lumba can strengthen this important intervention with a more deliberate argument about the tactics used to justify colonial conquest across regions and empires. As Lumba notes at the bottom of page 37, "[Colonial economic advisor Charles] Conant made certain to argue that the correct plan for currency reforms not only fulfilled economic aims, but" would likewise "ensure the 'progress of pacification.'"

When Lumba argues persuasively that "pacification" became a priority at the turn of the century like never before, we are reminded that pacification by conquest engendered a calculus concerning race, religion, character, gender, ability, and geography that shows up very clearly in military expeditions. In my 2015 University of Chicago Press book, *Forensics of Capital*, I argue that the diplomatic profile of any country is a forensic profile as well as a credit profile. Lumba's

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analysis suggests that military expeditions provide a context for evaluating how different groups manage access to capital. Examples from elsewhere substantiate this important intervention.

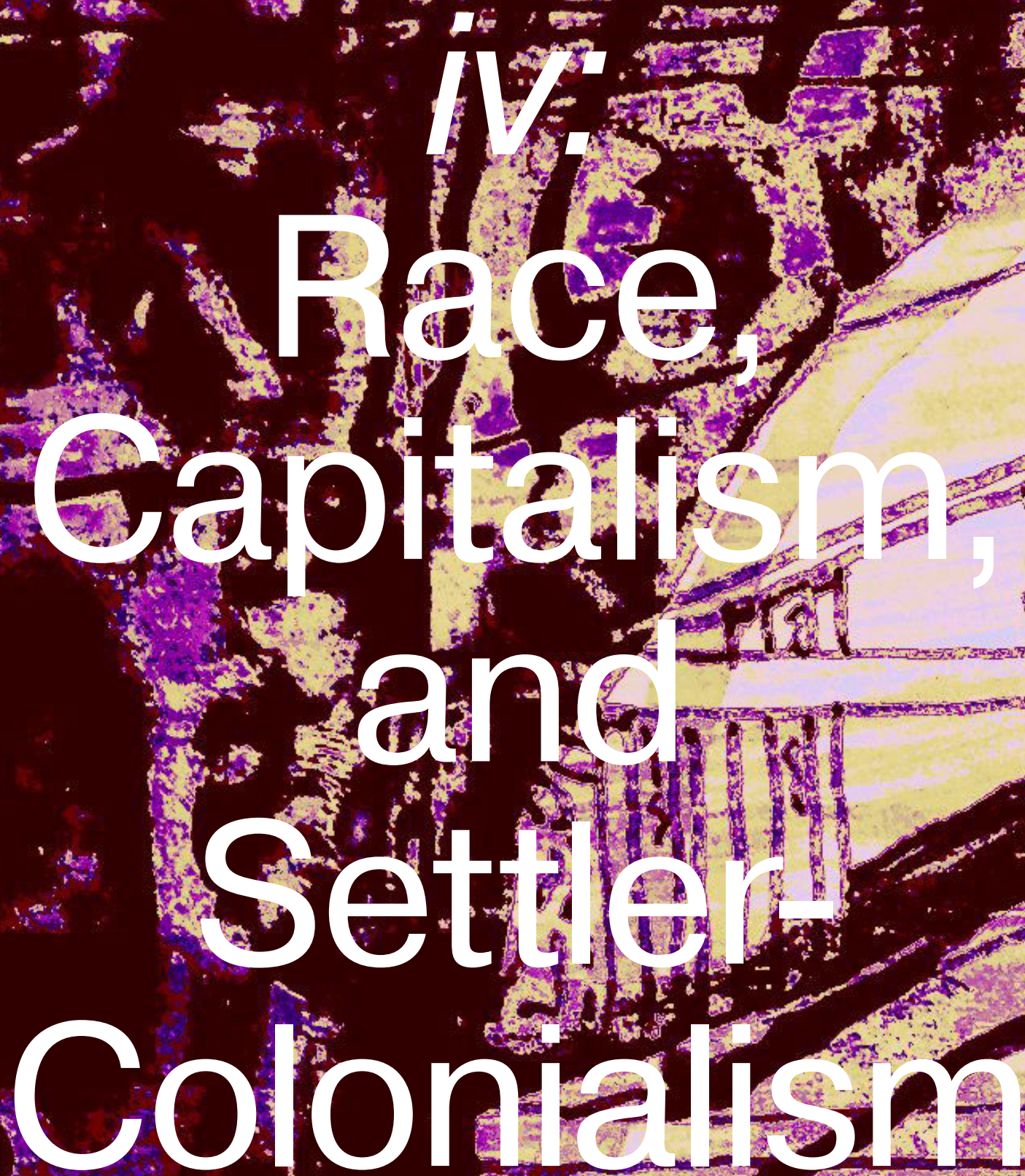
France dispatched troops to the Boxer Rebellion under the command of Alfred Amédée Dodds, who was born and raised in Senegal in a multi-racial family that controlled trade routes the French relied on. Dodds went on to be a war hero: he was knighted after escaping from captivity during the Franco-Prussian war. His resumé included stints in Réunion and what would later be known as Vietnam. But, his most famous military expedition involved leading French troops in the conquest of the African kingdom of Dahomey. It might seem unusual that an African man would play such a pivotal role in French colonial conquest except that Dodds was from one of the districts in Senegal that had been granted most of the rights associated with French citizenship. As such, Dodds was a citizen of the French empire. We might consider how these specificities shape notions of race and civilization central to the question of economic consolidation at the turn of the century. French conquest of Dahomey involved eradicating indigenous forms of debt adjudication in which a family member could be seized to work off a debt. But, the French allowed people to work off their debts to others under conditions of their choosing. The latter idea is compatible with the capitalist tenet, more true in theory than in practice, that labor is voluntarily alienated. As we saw in Nathan Connolly's paper, "The Strange Career of American Liberalism" this morning, even Jim Crow often involved at least the pretense of consent by oppressed African Americans (and Adom Getachew suggested during the question and answer period, colonial rule inspired key features of Jim Crow and, even when there is not a direct connection between these coercive systems, they sometimes relied on the same logics). In addition to being a key capitalist convention, restricting labor to voluntary agreements made it easier for colonial officials to manage human capital since workers could always be accounted for. The idea that workers could be seized to work off debts the French did not issue threatened plans for economic consolidation since the pool of laborers could be changed by conditions the French could not control.

To appreciate Lumba's argument about how monetary reform was used to pursue profit and secure capital, we would benefit from knowing more about practices of exchange and debt adjudication that challenged colonial policy. Did the people of the Philippines practice forms of exchange and debt adjudication that US colonial officials found threatening? If so, what were they and how did they work? If such practices can be identified, how did they lead to particular associations about the kind of exchange and the medium of exchange that some groups allegedly prefer? More careful attention to these discrepant forms of commercial activity might

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reveal how colonial officials developed the associations of different peoples with particular currencies that Lumba discusses with so much care and nuance in this paper. He characterizes the US colonial discourse on “cunning Chinese retailers” and “suspicious native laborers” as racial slurs. And they are, but they are also notions of race, ability, and residence, tied to forms of profiling used to justify and substantiate conquest. Lumba notes that Conant’s monetary policy was influenced by “reports of the unruly economic behaviors and racial incapacities of natives and Chinese in the archipelago.” Finding out what colonial officials meant by this characterization will only strengthen an intervention that is clearly essential for us to consider very carefully.





iv:  
Race,  
Capitalism,  
and  
Settler-  
Colonialism

Alyosha Goldstein

Adom Getachew

Katsuya Hirano

Kyle Mays



# On the Reproduction of Race, Capitalism, and Settler Colonialism

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Just as substantive endeavors for decolonization require an analysis of contemporary racial capitalism, a critical understanding of the specificities of racial capitalism in the United States demands confronting Indigenous dispossession and settler colonialism as ongoing in the present. This essay offers some preliminary thoughts on the question of social reproduction as a means of addressing the constitutive triangulation of race, capitalism, and colonialism today. Thinking with Glen Coulthard’s call for “reestablishing the colonial relation of dispossession as a co-foundational feature of our understanding of and critical engagement with capitalism,”<sup>1</sup> my intention here is to sketch one possible approach to the multiply-inflected processes of reproduction<sup>2</sup> as a way to apprehend the colonial relation as both co-foundational for the historical development of capitalism and variously articulated with present-day regimes of capitalist accumulation. Attending to the historical significance of racial capitalism and colonialism as distinct and intertwined, this essay thus asks how and why might the conditions and practices of the colonial relation likewise be remade—be both enduring and mutable—in the context of the historical present.<sup>3</sup>

In what follows, my focus is on the ways in which property relations and prevailing conceptions of ownership are key sites for the social reproduction of race, capitalism, and the particularities of U.S. settler colonialism. I begin with a consideration of racial capitalism in relation to reproduction. I then discuss how “so-called primitive accumulation” continues to serve as an important referent in debates on the relationship between colonialism and capitalism. In conclusion, I briefly consider the ongoing fractionation of Native American land in the wake of the 1887 allotment act and the attrition of African American land ownership through the partition of tenancy-in-common of heirs’ property. I use these examples to show how the racial, colonial, gendered, and generational making of property and the capacity for possession are both a consequence of particular historical conditions of dispossession and continue to be reproduced in new ways in the present. Inheritance in this sense is quite literally a matter of social reproduction and a site of struggle over power and history in the context of the current moment.

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Cedric Robinson's theorization of racial capitalism is an invaluable point of departure for the ways in which he situates the emergence of capitalism in tandem with racialization in Europe and for his account of the Black radical tradition and rejection of Karl Marx's narrative of the white male industrial working class of Europe as the privileged agents of historical transformation. Building on Robinson's analysis, Robin D. G. Kelley specifies that "Race and gender are not incidental or accidental features of the global capitalist order, they are constitutive. Capitalism emerged as a racial and gendered regime... The secret to capitalism's survival is racism, and the racial and patriarchal state." Thus, to speak of racial capitalism is to acknowledge that, in Kelley's words, "Capitalism developed and operates within a racial system or racial regime. Racism is fundamental for the production and reproduction of violence, and that violence is necessary for creating and maintaining capitalism."<sup>4</sup> Jennifer Morgan argues further that "reproduction functioned foundationally in the development of racialist thinking, the onset of modern slave-ownership, and the experience of enslavement."<sup>5</sup> It remains crucial to likewise think about the specific ways in which contemporary capitalism depends on and seeks to reproduce, remake, and repurpose the dynamics of possession and expendability with regard to Indigenous peoples, land, and differentially devalued gendered and racialized labor in the service of the particular political economies, biopolitical orders, and normative sociality of the present conjuncture.

How is it that property relations and possessive capacities require reproduction under historically shifting capitalist modes of accumulation and in ways that constitutively entail differentially racialized value and Indigenous dispossession? According to Marx, "When viewed... as a connected whole, and in the constant flux of its incessant renewal, every social process of production is, at the same time, a process of reproduction."<sup>6</sup> Yet, if this social process of reproduction relies on restaging colonial possession and differentially racialized devaluation in order to sustain and extend capitalist social relations, the precise way in which this process occurs—its deliberately racial and dispossessive dynamics—take on ever greater significance. As the historical circumstances of racial capitalism shifted, Nikhil Singh notes "The production of race as a method for aggregating and devaluing an entire group has depended on assessing the value of Black social and biological reproduction in terms of capital accumulation and its social reproduction."<sup>7</sup> Silvia Federici contends that capital will always need these non-subsumed or partially-subsumed forms of devalued labor, is "structurally dependent on the free appropriation of immense quantities of labor and resources that must appear as externalities to the market," which are naturalized onto the bodies of those gendered as women and non-white people, in order not only to expand profit margins, but also to pacify, discipline, and divide.<sup>8</sup> Racialized and

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gendered relations of appropriation and reproduction in this sense have directly to do with the specific question of property and possession at work in colonialism and empire.

Marx's formulation of "so-called primitive accumulation"—the coerced incorporation of noncapitalist forms of life, land, and labor into capitalist social relations—continues to serve as a key referent for the analysis of and debate on the intertwining of capitalism, race, colonialism, and imperialism. Disputes over "so-called primitive accumulation" in this respect often focus on whether or not it is conceived as a foundational moment within the historical development of capitalism or is ongoing and, as Jodi Melamed argues, "interlinked and continuous with expanded reproduction."<sup>9</sup> In Marx's often quoted phrasing: "The discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population, the beginning of the conquest and looting of the East Indies, the turning of Africa into a warren for the commercial hunting of black-skins, signaled the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production. These idyllic proceedings are the chief moments of primitive accumulation."<sup>10</sup> As a counter to the fabulations of classical political economists, in Marx's account, the unadulterated violence of primitive accumulation serves as the historical precondition for capitalist value and development. Further exemplified by the enclosure of the so-called "commons" in England, it is the brutal transformation through which the property relation is consolidated, land is privatized and commodified, and people previously able to live outside capitalist market relations are proletarianized. Primitive accumulation is thus the foundational process through which noncapitalist forms of life are forcibly incorporated into capitalist social relations; the ground upon which subsequently, in Marx's phrasing, "the silent compulsion of economic relations" becomes the principal means through which "the domination of the capitalist over the worker" is secured and perpetuated. The violence of modern capitalism, in this teleological version, has become primarily immanent and "no longer requires direct applications of coercive force" to maintain the labor relation.<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps the most influential reassessment of Marx's thesis recently has been David Harvey's theorization of "accumulation by dispossession," which, although not focused on the specificities of settler colonialism, is nonetheless concerned with demonstrating how primitive accumulation continues in relation to capital accumulation and figures prominently within the neoliberal era. Harvey's conception of "accumulation by dispossession" jettisons the teleological stagist narrative in order to call attention to the fact that such dynamics persist. Violent dispossession and the silent compulsion of the market coexist and, in fact, are complementary. Rather than a temporal prior, accumulation by dispossession



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serves as a spatial form of prior to capitalist incorporation that is the fodder for imperialist expansion. The reiterative prior of “so-called primitive accumulation” in this sense remains external to the capitalist labor relation as the process by which capitalism continues to pursue and appropriate the constitutive outside that is its condition of possibility. Despite the fact that Harvey’s conception of “accumulation by dispossession” serves explicitly as a means of theorizing what he calls the “new imperialism,” and that the Zapatista uprising figures prominently in his account, he remains largely unconcerned with how the specific conditions of ongoing colonialism or the significance of racialized dispossession might matter for his analysis.<sup>12</sup>

Yet in places such as what is now the United States, colonialism and the legacies of racial slavery remain actively constitutive for capitalist accumulation. Colonialism in this context is not or not only a process of expansion and incorporation, but is a primary social, economic, and political feature of the United States itself; a retrospective and prospective feature that works in tandem with U.S. imperial exploits globally. Thus, Native dispossession is not one historical moment in a teleology of capitalist development, but continues and changes over time in ways that operate in conjunction with other forms of expropriation and subjection and the differential devaluation of racialized peoples.<sup>13</sup> Chattel slavery and its afterlives similarly shape both the historical conditions and present-day dynamics of racialized dispossession.

The fractionation of landed property for Native peoples in the wake of the allotment policy era (1887-1934) and the partition of heirs’ property not limited to but disproportionately affecting African Americans since Reconstruction are significant for the ways in which they link past and present dispossession. For the wealthy, inheritance provides a genealogical distance from conquest, genocide, and colonial slavery that offers a cover of ostensible innocence and launders accumulated fortunes. For Native peoples, the descendants of enslaved Africans, and other racialized peoples dispossessed by colonization, inheritance endures as struggle and demand. Inherited wealth contributes to racially overdetermined economic inequality and advantage far more than present-day income.<sup>14</sup> Thus, as problems arising from protracted dynamics of inheritance, fractionation and the partition of heirs’ property have directly to do with the conditions of racial capitalism and colonial calculations of reproducing dispossession. Both participate in the production of property and the reproduction of differential dispossession today.

In 1887, the General Allotment Act, also known as the Dawes Severalty Act, unilaterally sought to render the homelands of Native American nations as alienable private property and distributed 80 to 160-acre parcels to individual

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Indian “heads of household.” Supposedly designed to protect Native peoples from further genocide and initially placing allotments into trust status until allottees were deemed “competent,” allotting tribal lands into individual private properties in fact not only facilitated further land loss by direct sale and the appropriation of “surplus” land by the federal government, but also accelerated sales to non-Indians by tax forfeiture. Under allotment, Native landholding fell sharply from an already diminished 138 million acres in 1887 to 52 million acres in 1934, when allotment policy officially ended. At the same time, tribal sovereignty was further eroded by the expansion of U.S. federal authority through the administration of allotment.

The allotment act instituted a single regime of private property over and against the heterogeneous forms of property organized through the distinct political authority of each Native nation.<sup>15</sup> The 1900 *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Department of the Interior* infamously described the law as “a mighty pulverizing engine for breaking up the tribal mass” and a means through which to “recognize the individual” and “protect the family.”<sup>16</sup> Although the law was intended to create “independent” property-owning individuals out of Native peoples, the allotments were conceived as a unique kind of property right over which the federal government continued to act as trustee. As legal scholar Jessica Shoemaker explains:

While held in trust, allotments were to be subject to complete federal restraints on alienation, which meant that individual Indians could not transfer their property freely nor could tribes effectuate local property norms or apply their common law of descent. In addition to the rigid restrictions during life, allottees were denied the right to devise or otherwise determine the distribution of their allotments at death. Instead, all allotments necessarily passed by the intestacy laws of the state that surrounded them, often to multiple children and relatives. Thus, allotment required sharing of land among an ever-increasing number of heirs, as the original allottees died, and left no means for flexible management, sale, or consolidation at any point in the process.<sup>17</sup>

The immediate and long-term consequence of allotment was the escalating problem of fractionation, the division of property into ever smaller units through the exponential increase in individual owners as a result of inheritance.<sup>18</sup> Allotment also sought to denationalize tribes and minoritize American Indians as a racial group within the United States.<sup>19</sup> The legal recognition of the right of individual Indians to draft federally approved wills granted in 1910 only amplified logics of liberal individualist “estate planning” that remained anathema to many Indigenous peoples. Despite certain reform initiatives, the dispossessive

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force of fractionation continues to accelerate today as a direct consequence of allotment policy. Thus, allotment and fractionation are ongoing colonial logics of private property that seek to reproduce normative property and personhood and the deferral of both “proper” possession and self-determination for Native peoples under U.S. rule.

Although fractionation is an especially severe problem for Native peoples as a direct result of U.S. policy and colonization, it is also a substantial issue for other impoverished people of color that remains in some sense an effect of the colonial present.<sup>20</sup> According to a 2016 national Gallup poll, 56 percent of those surveyed, 69 percent of those identified as poor, and 72 percent of “nonwhite” respondents were without legal wills.<sup>21</sup> Intestacy, the status of someone’s estate who dies without having made a valid will or other binding declaration, is the basis for tenancy-in-common as the principal form of concurrent real estate ownership in the contemporary United States. Without clear title, tenancy-in-common property cannot be mortgaged or used as a basis of credit, and under default inheritance rules it produces a distinctly unstable form of ownership called heirs’ property. Heirs’ property is the result of exponential generational transmission wherein the co-tenants each have an undivided interest in the entire parcel of land even though their ownership interests remain fractional shares. A real estate speculator seeking to acquire the property can purchase a single heirs’ share and, with the procurement of this interest, has the right demand that it be partitioned from the property as a whole. As one legal scholar explains: “If the land cannot be easily subdivided, the court will order a sale of the land and a division of the proceeds. Often, by design, the person triggering the sale will then purchase the entire tract” with the other co-tenants frequently not having access to cash or credit to bid for the property.<sup>22</sup> A lawyer in Mississippi thus observed that “the partition action has been greatly abused by land developers. By purchasing the interest of one joint owner, the developer is entitled to sue for partition and have the land sold at auction where he is able to buy the entire tract and force any occupants to vacate the land.”<sup>23</sup> With multiple heirs of a single property, tenancy-in-common makes such land particularly vulnerable to such tactics.

Partition sale of heirs’ property has directly contributed to significant African American dispossession. In spite of the failed promise of land redistribution during Reconstruction and concerted antiblack laws and violence in the former epicenter of colonial slavery, Black landholding in the U.S. South gained slowly but significantly between 1865 and 1910 to a high of 16 million acres of farmland. Yet, partition sale of heirs’ property was part of the precipitous loss of more than ten million acres of Black-owned land between 1910 and 1970. By the 1970s, approximately one-third of all land held by African Americans living in

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the rural South was held under tenancy-in-common.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as legal scholar Heather Way observes, “It’s most definitely an urban issue too... It’s very common to see heirs’ property issues in low-income, older neighborhoods, where a house has been in the family and passed down for generations.”<sup>25</sup> Way also notes cases in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in which Black homeowners affected by the storm were unable to receive disaster recovery assistance because of title questions arising from heirs’ property issues.<sup>26</sup> Such dynamics intensified the disproportionate foreclosure and eviction among impoverished African Americans during the 2006-2008 financial crisis triggered by subprime loan practices.<sup>27</sup> Recent legislation such as the 2010 Uniform Partition of Heirs Property aims to develop due process protections and provide legal recourse for co-tenant heirs, but predatory uses of forced partition sale continue to link past and present precarity overdetermined by racism.

Perhaps most significantly for the argument that I am making here with regard to reproduction is that both fractionation and the partition of heirs’ property simultaneously advance a particular normative relation to ownership while holding the possibility of possession itself in abeyance and presuming the inevitability of loss as part of their instantiation. What is reproduced is at once an individuated possessory relation to private property and the deferral of possession itself. Both are manifest through familial and generational processes that incorporate heteronormative and racial dispositions into their logics and logistics of reproduction, severalty, and property. Furthermore, both are methods of dispossession seemingly detached from the intentions of the state and capital, that nonetheless are direct outcomes of colonial and racial capitalist dispossession historically with significant consequences in the present. Fractionation and heirs’ property are not especially exemplary or exceptional instances through which to foreground such practices and circumstances. But considering them together provides a means of acknowledging the conditions of the historical present in this regard, as well as suggest a particular logic of property and value that emerges in concert with the triangulation of race, capitalism, and colonialism.

In order to get at why and how the multiple valences of reproduction are key for analyzing the co-constitutive dynamics of racial capitalism and settler colonialism, it is important to note that although both forms of power and dominion imagine themselves to be in some sense total, inevitable, and in perpetuity, both in fact remain partial, incomplete, and vulnerable to fundamental undoing. Indeed, both racial capitalism and settler colonialism are heterogeneous formations. Both present their logics of expansion as absolute and permanent—ostensibly there is no end to settler colonial occupation just as there is supposedly no truly feasible alternative to capitalism. But attending to the imperative for and work



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of reproduction not only underscores the unfinished and precarious character of each, but might also demonstrate the ongoing prospects for their disruption and disassembly. Most importantly focusing on reproduction underscores how both are counter-formations responding to and seeking to contain and subsume such interruption and collective contestation.

## Endnotes

1. Glen Coulthard, *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 14. Early work on settler colonialism that foregrounded its inter-articulation with capitalism includes: Arghiri Emmanuel, "White-Settler Colonialism and the Myth of Investment Imperialism," *New Left Review* 73 (May 1972); Werner Biermann and Reinhart Kössler, "The Settler Mode of Production: The Rhodesian Case," *Review of African Political Economy* 7, no. 18 (1980); J. M. Blaut, "Colonialism and the Rise of Capitalism," *Science & Society* 53, no. 3 (Fall 1989); Daniel Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983). In addition to Patrick Wolfe's widely cited work, for more recent scholarship that theorizes race, capitalism, and colonialism as mutually constitutive see especially: Manu Vimalassery, "The Wealth of the Natives: Toward a Critique of Settler Colonial Political Economy," *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, nos. 3-4 (2013); Shiri Pasternak, "How Capitalism Will Save Colonialism: The Privatization of Reserve Lands in Canada," *Antipode* 47, no. 1 (January 2015); Joanne Barker, "The Corporation and the Tribe," *American Indian Quarterly* 39, no. 3 (Summer 2015); Iyko Day, *Alien Capital: Asian Racialization and the Logic of Settler Colonial Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).

2. My reference here to the multiple valences of reproduction is intended to gesture toward the expansive possibilities for analysis. From a Marxist perspective, reproduction is understood in terms of conceptions of simple and expanded social reproduction; the Marxist-feminist focus on unwaged reproductive sexual and social labor; and the link between reproduction and ideology examined by Stuart Hall and others through the work of Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci. Étienne Balibar's contribution to *Reading Capital*, "On the Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism," usefully situates the question of reproduction as a means of upending the base-superstructure hierarchy and the economic determinism of historical analysis that predominated in Marxist theory at the time. Balibar writes: "for Marx the conceptual pair of production/reproduction

contains the definition of *structure* involved in the analysis of the mode of production. On the plane instituted by the analysis of reproduction, production is not the production of things, it is the production and conservation of social relations" (437). As such, social relations are at once the conditions for and consequence of a particular historical mode of production. Extending Balibar's argument, social relations—including racial formation, heteronormativity, patriarchy—should be understood as always already constitutive of and shaped in relation to the economic in a manner that remains vulnerable to contestation and disruption in their need for perpetual re-creation, reiteration, and reinscription. Louis Althusser et al., *Reading Capital: The Complete Edition*, trans. Ben Brewster and David Fernbach (1965; Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2015), 357-480.

For scholarship on social reproduction that focuses on the economies of race, gender, and sexuality see, for example: Michael McIntyre and Heidi J. Nast, "Bio(necro)polis: Marx, Surplus Populations, and the Spatial Dialectics of Reproduction and 'Race,'" *Antipode* 43, no. 5 (2011); Maria Miles, *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (London: Zed Books, 1986); Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012); Encarnación Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, *Migration, Domestic Work and Affect: A Decolonial Approach on Value and the Feminization of Labor* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Eleonore Kofman and Parvati Raghuram, *Gendered Migrations and Global Social Reproduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Premilla Nadasen, *Household Workers Unite: The Untold Story of African American Women Who Built a Movement* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2016); Tithi Bhattacharya, ed., *Social Reproduction Theory: Remapping Class, Recentering Oppression* (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

Moreover, although my brief remarks here cannot adequately address the interrelation of social reproduction broadly and the racial and political stakes of reproductive justice specifically, further developing such an analysis with respect to settler colonialism and racial capitalism remains essential. Scholarship such as the following provide indispensable points of departure: Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning*

- of *Liberty* (1997; New York: Vintage, 2007); Loretta J. Ross et al., eds., *Radical Reproductive Justice: Foundation, Theory, Practice, Critique* (New York: Feminist Press, 2017); Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017). Likewise, building on the innovative work of scholars such as Anne McClintock, Ann Laura Stoler, and Elizabeth Povinelli, among others, studies on the economies of intimacy and empire are also important in this regard; see for instance: Nayan Shah, *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality and the Law in the North American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015); Yu-Fang Cho, *Uncoupling American Empire: Cultural Politics of Deviance and Unequal Difference, 1890-1910* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015); Joanne Barker, ed., *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017). The history of boarding schools for Indigenous peoples in the U.S. (and elsewhere) is relevant in this regard as well; see for example, David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); K. Tsianina Lomawaima, *They Called It Prairie Light: The Story of Chilocco Indian School* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995); Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, eds., *Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Brenda J. Child and Brian Klopotek, eds., *Indian Subjects: Hemispheric Perspectives on the History of Indigenous Education* (Santa Fe, NM: SAR Press, 2014).
3. The argument I develop here is shaped in part by my collaborative work on the “Economies of Dispossession: Indigeneity, Race, Capitalism” special issue of *Social Text* 135 (forthcoming May 2018) and the “On Colonial Unknowing” special issue of *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016). See especially the collectively authored essays: Jodi A. Byrd, Alyosha Goldstein, Jodi Melamed, and Chandan Reddy, “Predatory Value: Economies of Dispossession and Disturbed Relationalities,” *Social Text* 135 (forthcoming May 2018); Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein, “On Colonial Unknowing,” *Theory & Event* 19, no. 4 (2016); Manu Vimalassery, Juliana Hu Pegues, and Alyosha Goldstein, “Colonial Unknowing and Relations of Study,” *Theory & Event* 20, no. 4 (2017). On racial order, crisis, neoliberal capitalism, and reproduction see also the exchange between Michael C. Dawson and Nancy Fraser in *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2016).
4. Robin D. G. Kelley, “What Is Racial Capitalism and Why Does It Matter?,” Katz Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities and the John E. Sawyer Seminar on Capitalism and Comparative Racialization, Simpson Center for the Humanities, University of Washington, November 7, 2017, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REo\\_gHIpvJc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=REo_gHIpvJc)
5. Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 144.
6. Karl Marx, *Capital, Vol. 1: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, ed. Frederick Engels; trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling (1867; New York: International Publishers, 1967), 35, 565.
7. Nikhil Pal Singh, “On Race, Violence, and ‘So-Called Primitive Accumulation,’” in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, ed. Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin (New York: Verso, 2017), 57-58.
8. Silvia Federici, “Feminism and the Politics of the Common in an Era of Primitive Accumulation,” in *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2012), 140.
9. Jodi Melamed, “Racial Capitalism,” *Critical Ethnic Studies* 1, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 76.
10. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, 703.
11. Marx did reconceive of “so-called primitive accumulation” in less teleological and more dynamic terms in his later work, but his most substantive elaboration remains the final sections of *Capital*, Volume 1, which retain a historical stagist orientation and emphasis.
12. David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 137-82. For especially insightful critical engagements with Harvey’s conception of “dispossession by accumulation” see Paula Chakravarty and Denise Ferreira da Silva, “Accumulation, Dispossession, and Debt: The Racial Logic of Global Capitalism—An Introduction,” *American Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2012) and Robert Nichols, “Disaggregating Primitive Accumulation,” *Radical Philosophy* 194 (November/December 2015).
13. Lisa Marie Cacho, *Social Death: Racialized Rightlessness and the Criminalization of the Unprotected* (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 17.
14. Melvin L. Oliver and Thomas M. Shapiro, *Black Wealth/White Wealth: A New Perspective on Racial Inequality*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006); Palma Joy Strand, “Inheriting Inequality: Wealth, Race, and the Laws of Succession,” *Oregon Law Review* 89, no. 2 (2010).
15. Kenneth H. Bobroff, “Retelling Allotment: Indian Property Rights and the Myth of Common Ownership,” *Vanderbilt Law Review* 54, no. 4 (May 2001).
16. *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Department of the Interior* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1900), 660, 658. See also, Merrill E. Gates, “The Next Great Step to Break Up Tribal Funds into Individual Holdings,” *Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Lake Mohonk Conference of Friends of the Indian* (New York: Lake Mohonk Conference, 1900), 120. Gates also commends the allotment act for having “given

a mighty impulse toward family life and the cultivation of home virtues” (120).

17. Jessica A. Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time: Allotment, Fractionation, and the Indian Land Tenure Problem,” *Wisconsin Law Review* 4 (2003), 738.

18. In addition to Shoemaker, “Like Snow in the Spring Time,” see also Jessica A. Shoemaker, “Complexity’s Shadow: American Indian Property, Sovereignty, and the Future,” *Michigan Law Review* 115, no. 4 (2017); Daniel McGrath, “The Model Tribal Probate Code: An Opportunity to Correct the Problems of Fractionation and the Legacy of the Dawes Act,” *Journal of Gender, Race, and Justice* 20, no. 2 (Spring 2017); Judith V. Royster, “The Legacy of Allotment,” *Arizona State Law Journal* 27, no. 1 (Spring 1995).

19. Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011); David A. Chang, “Enclosures of Land and Sovereignty: The Allotment of American Indian Lands,” *Radical History Review* 109 (Winter 2011).

20. Thomas W. Mitchell, “From Reconstruction to Deconstruction: Undermining Black Landownership, Political Independence, and Community through Partition Sales of Tenancies in Common,” *Northwestern University Law Review* 95 (2001); Faith Rivers, “Inequity in Equity: The Tragedy of Tenancy in Common for Heirs’ Property Owners Facing Partition in Equity,” *Temple Political and Civil Rights Law Review* 17 (2007); Thomas W. Mitchell, “Reforming Property Law to Address Devastating Land Loss,” *Alabama Law Review* 66 (2014).

21. “Majority in U.S. Do Not Have a Will,” *Gallup News*, May 8, 2016 <http://news.gallup.com/poll/191651/majority-not.aspx>

22. C. Scott Graber, “Heirs Property: The Problems and Possible Solutions,” *Clearinghouse Review* (September 1978), 277.

23. Quoted in Graber, “Heirs Property,” 277.

24. Graber, “Heirs Property,” 273.

25. Anna Stolley Persky, “In the Cross-Heirs,” *ABA Journal* 95 (May 2009) [http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/in\\_the\\_cross-heirs](http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/in_the_cross-heirs)

26. *Ibid.*

27. Jessica Gordon Nembhard and Charlotte Otabor, “The Great Recession and Land and Housing Loss in African American Communities: Case Studies from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi—Part 2: Heir Property,” (Working Paper, Center on Race and Wealth, Howard University, Washington, DC, July 2012).

# On the Reproduction of Race, Capitalism, and Settler Colonialism

## *Response 1*

Adom Getachew

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(1) Racialization, Goldstein argues, is a constitutive feature of property. In settler colonial contexts, the dispossession of land has a racial logic. In what sense racialization is constitutive of property should be fleshed out further. Is racialization itself produced in the context of and internal to the making of property or are we to understand racialization as a necessary, but external feature of this process? If we follow Dipesh Chakrabarty's account of the two histories of capital, should we understand racialization as part of "History 2"? For Chakrabarty, while History 1 represents the universal logic of capital, History 2 refers to relations or institutions that are not subsumed by the former's logic. "These relations could be central to capital's self-reproduction and yet it is also possible for them to be oriented to structures that do not contribute to such reproduction. History 2s "inhere in" and at times "interrupt" the logic of History 1.<sup>1</sup> Alternatively Manu Goswami has argued that we should not disaggregate History 1 and History 2. According to Goswami, "History 2 represents an internal dimension of History 1, not an absolute outside that episodically interrupts the supposedly homogenous, linear progression of an abstract logic of capital as such." History 1 should itself be understood as "a global, differentiated and hierarchical space-time." In this account racialization would be one of capital's internal structures of differentiation.<sup>2</sup>

(2) Goldstein and other scholars of settler colonialism have argued that dispossession is a continuous and on-going process. In doing so, they have pushed against a standard Marxist account in which dispossession precedes and ends in exploitation, highlighting the autonomous logic of dispossession. What place does exploitation have within this account especially in contexts like the United

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1. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 64.

2. Manu Goswami, *Producing India: From Colonial Economy to National Space* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 40.



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States where native dispossession and black enslavement were simultaneous? In his book, *Two Faces of American Freedom*, Aziz Rana argues that both of these racialized projects were constitutive to securing settler freedom. The model of republican liberty settlers espoused depended on westward expansion (at the expense of Native Americans) and freedom from labor secured through chattel slavery. In this account, dispossession and exploitation are parallel projects rather than sequentially linked.<sup>3</sup>

(3) Goldstein's presentation illuminated the limits of anti-discrimination law. As he notes, both Native American and African-American farmers have tried to use anti-discrimination protections to challenge the ways they are denied the loans and other investments to sustain their farms and property. Goldstein traced how federal loans to farmers emerged from the New Deal era where the United States Department of Agriculture and Farm Security Administration intervened to ensure that farmers had access to lines of credit and could continue farming operations in the aftermath of the depression. The expansion of this program conscripts indigenous peoples and African Americans in regimes of property that were initially organized at the expense of their exclusion and domination. What is striking here is not so much that African-Americans and indigenous peoples are denied access to land, but instead that they become landowners through an imposed and conscripted incorporation that effaces dispossession and can only make anti-discrimination available as redress. This raises that question of the state's role as mediator and guarantor of property. And as was the case in Nathan Connolly's presentation earlier in the day, it raises more critical questions about the New Deal era. Connolly's paper provocatively located what we have come to call neoliberalism in the welfare state of the New Deal and pressed the question what is neo about neoliberalism. In a similar fashion, Goldstein illustrates how the moment of expansion and inclusion (of access to landownership) also entails conscription and entrapment in the logics of racialized regime of property. Both papers call for further exploration of the role of the state at the nexus of race and capitalism and demand are more critical orientation to the welfare state.

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3. Aziz Rana, *The Two Faces of American Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

# On the Reproduction of Race, Capitalism, and Settler Colonialism

## *Response 2*

Katsuya Hirano

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Since my expertise lies in the history of the Japanese colonial empire with a focus on the intersection between racial capitalism and the settler-colonization of the indigenous Ainu, I am not in a position to comment in detail on Professor Alyosha Goldstein's paper that offers an illuminating genealogy of the politics of dispossession, especially the United States Department of Agriculture's role within the latter, from the 1960s to the 1980s. I see my task here as addressing a larger conceptual question about race, settler-colonialism, and capitalism.

As part of my attempt to complicate and revise Marxism to respond to the challenges posed recently by critical inquiries into the history of racially-motivated genocide, assault, dispossession, and exploitation, I have been thinking about the question of expropriation or what Marx called "brute force" as being distinct from exploitation. Similar to Professor Goldstein's attempt in the paper, I am interested in bringing theories of settler colonialism and primitive accumulation in dialogue through the optic of racialization. My comments here focus on how such a perspective may help deepen our understanding of the workings of expropriation as a racialist practice and consider the epistemological conditions for a new kind of solidarity against such a practice.

I learned a great deal from Professor Goldstein's genealogical investigation of the settler-colonial present in the US. But what concerns me here is the manner in which the paper uses settler colonialism and primitive accumulation. These two conceptual terms appear interchangeably, and the former seems to subsume the latter as a dominant category that elucidates the USDA's historical role in the institutional practice of dispossession of minoritized people such as African Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans. The conflation of settler colonialism and primitive accumulation obscures the difference, as well as relationship, between the two distinct logics of dispossession, and the role that racialization plays in engendering the difference and structuring of the relationship. Put

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differently, as Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini have argued, if the settler colonial logic of dispossession tends necessarily towards the elimination of indigenous peoples, how is it different from (or related to) the process of expropriation which Marx referred to in *Capital* as enclosure, or the “so-called primitive accumulation”?<sup>1</sup>

Both proletarianization and settler-colonization presuppose the dispossession of means of sustenance, but the crucial difference emerges in the objective, effect, and process of dispossession: proletarianization transforms the dispossessed peasants, workers and slaves into wage laborers (commodification of their labor power) whereas settler-colonization condemns indigenous peoples to the status of redundant population. The former turns dispossessed peasants, workers and slaves into “relative surplus population,” or what Marx called the “industrial reserve army”, to be exploited as expendable labor power for capitalist accumulation whereas the latter reduces indigenous people to a vanishing race, a race that is outside of humanity, that is unworthy of life to be effaced for capitalism to take root and to secure its continuous existence. In Patrick Wolfe’s words, “(a) relationship premised on the exploitation of enslaved labor requires the continual reproduction of its human providers. By contrast, a relationship premised on the evacuation of Native people’s territory requires that the peoples who originally occupied it should never be allowed back.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, what settler colonial studies has contributed to our understanding of the formation of the modern capitalist world(s) is the perspective that those encountering the “pre-history” (Marx’s phrase) or “pre-accumulative” phase (Wolfe’s phrase) of capital don’t necessarily end up becoming wage laborers, but rather become subjected to the “brute force” of *both* expropriation (of their land) and elimination (of their lives) by the State and its various apparatuses. Under settler-colonial conditions, judicial, police, military, and financial institutions are designed to not only dispossess but more significantly to displace, abandon, even massacre indigenous peoples as an impediment to the creation of new social formations under capitalism. Of course, as many historical instances demonstrate from around the world, indigenous peoples also became laborers under the semi-slave conditions, or even wage laborers under the capitalist order. They were not always subjected to the “thanatopolitics” of elimination. Other racialized minorities such as African Americans, who were not indigenous to the colonized land, were, and still are, confronted by eliminatory politics as well. We must therefore be prudent not to create a simplistic binary opposition between the indigenous and the non-indigenous in our understanding of the distinct logic of settler-colonial dispossession. Such logic can be in principle imposed on *any* minoritized peoples and individuals at any given moment through the politics of racialization. This is why recent scholarship on primitive accumulation has called

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into question Marx's characterization of its process as a destructive yet necessary transition to fully-fledged capitalism, and reformulated it as the ongoing process of "brute force" and "naked violence" of the State as exemplified by the recent racist brutalities against African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, or other diasporic communities in the US and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup> The brutalization of minoritized people, whether through massacre, police torture, or forcible deportation is not reducible, albeit related to, the logic of the commodity form and the abstraction of labor power. The important question here is how racialization – the imposition of "classificatory grids on a variety of colonized [and enslaved] populations"—is linked to different targets and procedures of expropriation (labor, land, and life).<sup>4</sup> Whether massacred, brutalized or proletarianized, those dispossessed are considered expendable and disposable because of their race, and trapped within capitalist social relations. Yet, based on the matrices of racial classification under capitalism, they experience violence in vastly different ways and degrees. Their differential experience in violence reflects the degree to which they are perceived as incapable of laboring and functioning in a society designed to serve the logic of capitalist accumulation. These differences are crucial for our understanding of not only how the regime of capitalist accumulation works under varied social and historical conditions but also how counter-hegemonic politics are formed and engaged in locally.

At the same time, the structural perspective is equally essential for us to be able to recognize the interconnectedness of the world. A type of sociality that enables us to forge solidarity across racial, gender, and ethnic divides is conceivable only through attentiveness to our interconnectedness as well as acute sensitivities to our differential experiences. If Marx and Engels's vision of the possibility of borderless communist solidarity in *The German Ideology* risked class-determinism by unproblematically positing the scenario where the universal development of productive forces and global exchange would give rise to the proletariat as "a world-historical existence," we need to revise and complicate their vision by considering the various structures of monstrous unevenness and the resultant experiences and perceptions in diversity and conflict as the condition of the possibility for solidarity.<sup>5</sup>

Here, I would like to turn to Michael Dawson's recent intervention in the debate about racial capitalism.<sup>6</sup> In response to Nancy Fraser's analysis of the background conditions, the "hidden abodes," that enable the production and reproduction of capitalist society, he endorses her theorization by stating that "(a)ll of these background domains [the ecology and the political] are not only necessary for the functioning of capitalism but *are also integral to capitalism itself and, as each has its own logic, are potential sources of friction and resistance.*"<sup>7</sup> Nonetheless, Dawson



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points out, there is a curious lack of sustained analysis of a “rather violent story of dispossession and expropriation” in Frazer’s list of hidden abodes of capitalism despite her claim that “this back-story [of dispossession and expropriation] is not located only in the past, at the ‘origin’ of capitalism. Expropriation is an ongoing, albeit unofficial, mechanism of accumulation, which continues alongside the official mechanism of exploitation – Marx’s ‘front-story,’ so to speak.”<sup>8</sup> Then, Dowson argues, “(u)nderstanding the foundation of capitalism requires a consideration of ‘hidden abode of race’: the ontological distinction between superior and inferior humans—codified as race—that was necessary for slavery, colonialism, the theft of lands in the Americas, and genocide.”<sup>9</sup> For Dawson, this racial distinction is manifested in the “division between full humans who possess the right to sell their labor and compete within markets, and those that are disposable, discriminated against, and ultimately either eliminated or superexploited.”<sup>10</sup> Following Dawson’s crucial insight, I argue that unless we understand how racialization enables the mechanism of expropriation to persist and continue to divide our world by bringing the “backstory,” the ongoing unofficial mechanism of accumulation to the forefront of our inquiry, we will confine ourselves to the story of “full humans,” and of their exploitation. The interconnectedness of the world can be brought into full view only when we recognize the story of “lesser humans,” of their expropriation, *in relation* to that of “full humans.”

Lastly, I would like to add the following: the valuable contribution of racial capitalism studies lies in its inquiry into how various forms of violence such as expropriation, dispossession, assault, and elimination brought about by brute force are necessarily perceived and experienced as a race problem. If one follows the logic of capital alone, brute force that creates the condition of the possibility for capitalist accumulation can and should be directed towards *anyone*. Nonetheless, in reality, brute force concentrates on those who are considered “colored” and continues to inscribe its irretrievable traces of violence in their bodies. And in doing so, it substitutes identity politics for the problem of capitalism, and precludes us from recognizing the contingency of subject-formation (i.e. racial and ethnic subjects) and the larger structural connectivity of the world. Accordingly, division deepens, and antagonism intensifies along racial lines. What the study of racial capitalism can achieve is to make us see the ruses and effects of substitution, and to call for our imagining of a new form of solidarity.

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## Endnotes

1. I have explored this question in “Thanatopolitics in the Making of Japan’s Hokkaido: Settler Colonialism and Primitive Accumulation,” *Critical Historical Studies* 2, no. 2 (September 2015): 191-218. In my comments, I focus on the difference between the two modes of dispossession. I tried to define the relationship between settler colonialism and primitive accumulation in the aforementioned article. Its purpose is not to formalize the relationship in a universalistic term but to tease out its historical characteristics in comparison with Marx’s explication of colonial America. In the article I argue that the processes of settler colonization and primitive accumulation went hand in hand in making Japan’s Hokkaido in such a way that the settler colonization was both the result and a necessary condition of Japan’s drive for capitalist accumulation. When the Meiji government began implementing the policies of extracting capital from the peasantry through the new land reform of 1873, it simultaneously embarked on the settler colonization of Hokkaido as a way to absorb the displaced population from the main islands and create the socioeconomic conditions necessary to launch the process of primitive accumulation—to produce free labor, a labor market, and thus the capitalist mode of production—in the colony. This correlation in the process of capitalist accumulation between displacing superfluous populations and settler colonization would continue into the twentieth century as Japan’s industrialization pushed the surplus population to emigrate to Hokkaido and other colonies of the Japanese empire, including Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria.

2. Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race* (London: Verso, 2016): 3

3. Marx defined “brute force” as the employment of the “power of the state, the concentrated and organized force of society, to hasten, as in a hothouse, the process of transformation of the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode, and to shorten the transition” in *Capital*, vol. 1 (London: Vintage, 1976): 915-16.

4. Patrick Wolfe, *Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race*, 10.

5. Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (New York: International Publishers, 1995): 56

6. Michael C. Dawson, “Hidden in Plain Sight: A Note on Legitimation Crises and the Racial Order,” *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 143-161.

7. *Ibid.*, 147.

8. Cited in *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, 147-48.

# On the Reproduction of Race, Capitalism, and Settler Colonialism: *Response 3*

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1) What might we learn by reframing our understanding of capitalism, and race, through the lens of settler colonialism, Indigenous possession and Indigenous erasure?

2) Beyond labor and dispossession, beyond colonized land and exploited labor, what are other ways we can explore the processes of antiblackness and settler colonialism?





# Closing Remarks

**Ananya Roy**

*Professor of Urban Planning, Social Welfare and Geography, and Director of the Institute on Inequality and Democracy at UCLA Luskin*

We titled this symposium global territories, transnational histories. All through the symposium today, the question of historical conjuncture in relation to territorial conquest and territorial claims has been on my mind. We are gathered here in the City of Angels, in the midst of the first year of the Trump presidency, and as our colleagues in American-Indian Studies remind us, on land that was once in the care of the Tongva peoples. As Nathan Connolly boldly stated in the first session, naming and analyzing this moment as neoliberalism seems terribly insufficient. Instead, this symposium has been an opportunity to plot the transnational histories of racial capitalism and to situate the resurgence of white power in this global context. As an urbanist, my own research interests currently lie in studying forms of dispossession and banishment through which working class communities of color are expelled to the far edges of city life. This is the “racial terror”—to borrow a phrase from Paul Gilroy—that exists at the very heart of modernity. Liberal democracy is not an antidote for such racial terror; rather it is constituted through it.

This symposium, and the broader project of collaboration that it embodies, is important to me for many reasons. An especially important reason is this: how the study of racial capitalism allows us to speak back, as scholars and teachers, to our disciplines. My discipline is urban studies. Its radical version is beholden to Marxian thought. It sees the world as a geography of variegated capitalism. It traces the global circulations of neoliberal ideology. It talks about accumulation by dispossession. But my discipline is colorblind. My discipline is Eurocentric. Colorblindness and Eurocentrism go hand in hand. Together they ensure that historical difference is misread as variegated capitalism. Together they ensure that the dispossession of personhood is misread as gentrification and displacement. Together they ensure that spaces of racialized oppression, from ghetto to colony, are misread as particularisms. I speak back to my discipline with Alyosha Goldstein’s conceptualization of the colonial logics of private property. I speak back to my discipline from Keisha-Khan Perry’s insistence that we center the figure of the black woman in struggles against land grabs.

The idea of a symposium such as this at UCLA came out of conversations between Michael Dawson and Robin D.G. Kelley. While Robin was not able to join us today, “freedom dreams” animated this day of conversation. It is inspiring to think about the land question as the unfinished work of black reconstruction. It is vitally important to consider the racialized project that is social democracy, the policies and programs that have enabled what George Lipsitz has called a

possessive investment in whiteness, and to imagine new futures of entitlement and distribution. It is encouraging to trace transnational networks of mobilization and revolution as we map global frontiers of pacification and accumulation. But the symposium also foregrounded some dilemmas in relation to freedom. In his much-acclaimed recent album, 4:44, Jay-Z crafts a narrative of legacy. In the song by that title, he argues that legacy is “generational wealth,” it is “black excellency,” a “society within a society,” built through Roc Nation, his entertainment company. The song ends with the promise, “someday we’ll all be free.” It is tempting to dismiss Jay-Z’s freedom dreams as neoliberal entrepreneurialism. I see it as an uneasy articulation of self-determination and self-responsibility, one that is the register of so many postcolonial plans for freedom.

Our shared and ongoing work is thus meant to be attentive to the many ways in which we are, each and all, enlisted in racial capitalism. The project of critique can disrupt and transform, but it is launched from within the global university, an institution that quite effectively reproduces racial hierarchy. It is here, at the heart of imperialism, that we hold out hope for a new politics of knowledge.

# Information

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# Proceedings

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Diasporas of Racial Capitalism, anchored by Nathan Connolly

Moderator: Robert Chao Romero

Discussants: Aisha Finch, Megan Ming Francis, Tianna Paschel, Jemima Pierre

The Land Question, anchored by Keisha-Khan Y. Perry

Moderator: Ananya Roy

Discussants: Eric Avila, Ashleigh Campi, Marcus Hunter, Jovan Scott Lewis

Imperialism and its Limits, anchored by Allan E. S. Lumba

Moderator: Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda

Discussants: César Ayala, Kimberly Kay Hoang, Vinay Lal, Michael Ralph

Race, Capitalism, and Settler-Colonialism, anchored by Alyosha Goldstein

Moderator: Shannon Speed

Discussants: Adom Getachew, Katsuya Hirano, Saree Makdisi, Kyle T. Mays

Closing Remarks by Kelly Lytle Hernandez and Ananya Roy



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race



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capitalism