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Rethinking Race in the 21st Century, A New Approach for Future World-Making: Looking Back to Move Forward

Dylan Tarleton
Binghamton University, dtarlet1@binghamton.edu

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Cover Page Footnote

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Abstract

Color blindness, the end of race, and white privilege are but a few phrases that begin to capture the messy confusion of a zeitgeist that is 21st century discussions on race. At a time when race is such a necessary topic to delve into, it seems that there is a lack of history injected into the conversation. Race becomes an external motor of history, racism pathological and immovable. An unthinking decision. In other words, race and racism, from the standpoint of an organizer or academic in the 21st century, becomes near impossible to break down and work against. This paper is first and foremost an effort in accordance with scholars like Theodore Allen, Noel Ignatiev, and Barbara Fields, who seek to historicize race and racism in an effort to organize against white supremacy. Such an effort will require an analysis of (1) the system these processes take place in, the Capitalocene, or perhaps the Racial Capitalocene (2) the ways in which whiteness changes over time, enlarging and becoming stratified, and (3) the racialized, contradictory spaces made under the Capitalocene. All to open up ontological fractures that can work against and within/through capitalism and white supremacy. (4) Leading us to engage with the Black Radical Tradition and diasporic studies, movements at the forefront of abolitionist/ontological fractures within/through and beyond capitalism.

Keywords: race, racism, class, white supremacy, racial capitalism, capitalocene, world-ecology

Introduction

The effort of analyzing complex structures of oppression necessitates an examination of the power dynamics these concepts are taking place within. This for us is capitalism, more specifically Jason Moore's understanding of the Capitalocene, as a means of seeing the way capitalism shapes the relations of power and the way in which human and extra human natures interact. It is for this reason that we begin our paper with a look at historical capitalism, as well as a discussion on racial capitalism, to begin to get a sense of the place of race and racism within the Capitalocene, seeing them certainly as *real* abstractions, as something that reflects "the interests of the powerful and license them to organize the world." (Patel & Moore, 2017, pp. 46-47). But seeing them also as cultural fixes and symbolic revolutions, serving as a catalyst for the recreation of an accumulation of profit (Moore, 2015, p. 277). From here we hope to

highlight slavery, colonial Virginia, and the creation of race as we know it, with a focus on the white race and whiteness. It is in this potent example that race and white supremacy in the United States as a cultural fix, symbolic revolution, and real abstraction becomes clear. This will allow a further injection of history into the work, a theme throughout, which then twists in the third section in an effort to move the story forward: through Irish and Italian migration in the 19th and 20th century, not only do we see the way race and racism change to meet historical circumstance in the United States, but also how progressive enlargements/stratifications of whiteness open up possible contradictions for the rate of profit and capital accumulation.

The story would be incomplete without an analysis of space, and this is why the fourth section begins to show how race and racism mingle with space-making in a way that shows the inseparability and inter-mingling of ‘Nature’ and ‘Society’. With this portion complete, we can finally move into our conclusion: the spatial contradictions (the extra-human) and the contradictions of the progressive enlargements of whiteness (the human), signal an opening for a revolutionary “common sense,” in the way that cultural theorist Stuart Hall interprets philosopher Antonio Gramsci’s term. A move which allows us to begin to look at the Black Radical Tradition, and the ways in which it has the ability to create emancipatory common sense beyond capitalism through resistance to it.

The Beginnings of the Capitalocene: Introducing Race and Racism as Real Abstraction, Symbolic Revolution, and World-Ecological Revolution?

We will see through our discussions of the creation of white supremacy, of race and race as a system of social control, as a “cultural fix”, as a means of pitting the working class against

itself and naturalizing the stratified appropriation¹ of unpaid labor (Moore, 2015, pp. 198-199),² exactly why a paper on racial ideology must attempt critical engagement with processes of capital accumulation and its contradictions. Before we start however, it is important to have a paragraph on our use of white supremacy and what we mean by it.

In an interview with Jacobin magazine, historian Barbara Fields speaks on historian C. Vann Woodward's understanding of white supremacy at the end of the nineteenth century, in which he says that "the question was never white supremacy; it was which whites would be supreme" (Jacobin, 2018). This is the crux of what we hope to add to the definition of white supremacy. That while within white supremacy there is a psychological and public wage to whiteness as Du Bois has put it (Du Bois, 1988, pp. 700-701),³ that cuts across class lines, and institutions are built on principles of white supremacy, we must look to who this ideology serves on class lines *at the same time*. It is also economically serving a particular group of white people, just as the construction of the white race was created by that bourgeois class for their benefit,

¹ Throughout this paper, Exploitation refers to the surplus value accrued from wage-labor and within the cash nexus. Appropriation referring to those extra-economic processes that condition the rate of exploitation. Here the meanings are tightly intertwined. Appropriation conditions exploitation and thus the rate of profit. For instance, treating the creation of the housewife and seeing the work done by them as non-work (appropriation), conditions the wage of those working within the waged sphere (exploitation). Thus the appropriation of what is deemed non-work conditions a smaller wage for those within the waged sphere. This goes for the appropriation of the ecological and extra-human forces deemed 'free gifts' as well. To maintain a high level of appropriation, a high level of ecological surplus is necessary. For more on this, see Jason Moore's *Capitalism in the Web of Life*, a piece of work that has deeply affected the direction of this paper.

² Moore and Shapiro discuss this cultural fix, and through it we see the ways in which creations of ideas of nature and gender are a part of "intergenerational reproduction of life and labor-power that capital cannot pay for and must appropriate (lest reproduction cost's rise and accumulation falter)" (Moore, 2015, p. 199). The cultural fix is Moore's means of showing the way the Capitalocene creates the necessary symbolic conditions for the "long wave" appropriations of the Four Cheaps (Moore, 2015). Our discussion of racial ideology will be tracking in part the revolutions of its history in the United States that enables this appropriation of the Four Cheaps.

³ From the same pages cited above in Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction*, those psychological and public wages that go for all white people across class lines include the best schools, open admission to public space, police force as mainly white, courts treating them with leniency as they depended on the white vote, and the same went for public officials. This is but a few examples that would create a wage that was for Du Bois psychological and public, and would allow for the bourgeois class to give a smaller wage to the poor whites, as they would take these other wages. It is this line of reasoning that this paper agrees with.

including the poor whites within this ideology as a means of maintaining the status quo and accumulation. This construction still serves to benefit that capitalist class whose main goal is that of accumulation of capital and profit. That this is largely along racial lines is historical not external to it. These thoughts and their meaning will be made clearer as the paper progresses.

Before the invention of race as we know it in the United States, Columbus came to America as an explorer, but perhaps his impact is felt most as an appraiser. As embodying the ethos of Cheap Nature, as creating the guidelines for what was or was not valuable that would set the stage for the genocide, power, and accumulation that marks the beginning of the modern world (Moore, 2017, p. 181; Patel & Moore, 2017, p. 50). We have here the creation of frontiers through colonization. It was and is occurring in part through revolutions in thought and technologies at the heart of the ensuing scientific revolution and Renaissance period which provide the basis and possibility of military conquest. Just as important as the state-making and militarization accompanying armed commerce, the technology of something like cartography operated through the new logic that came out of the revolution of the senses that was this Renaissance period. Symbolic relations become visual. Space is made measurable, able to be dominated (Moore, 2017; Patel & Moore, 2017). Capital, science, and empire in a holy trinity come together in a co-production of world making.

The rationalism of the period is embodied in the work of Descartes, a philosopher who is emblematic of a broader bourgeois movement of the time in creating the Nature/Society dualism at the heart of the Capitalocene (Moore, 2015, pp. 19-21). Humans become the thinking things, they become Society which must dominate over and control Nature. In this Cartesian outlook,

Humans, that is Society, are the white European male,⁴ while the world of Nature, defined as static and in comparison to Society, is everyone else (and there certainly are various levels of difference that come into play in this area in terms of subjugation and appropriation) (Patel and Moore, 2017, p. 52). This conceptualization of the world would be the logic of capitalism from its beginnings that continues to dominate the current age in a manner that has historical potency. A world of a supposed rationality would be dominated by an ideology that is “utterly irrational” (Moore, 2017, p. 181). Understanding this Nature/Society binary is crucial in its ability for us to see how it underwrites the entirety of the creations of modernity, of the scientific revolution in which there is the production of an external nature that can be mastered and the world is created in an image that is at the expense of nature, women, minorities, and indigenous people (Merchant, 2006, p. 517; McKittrick, 2006, pp. 124-127). The rationalization of everything that the scientific revolution gets credit for in a modern narrative is really the narrowing of everything, to an ideology created as a means of furthering capital accumulation. We forget, for instance, about the way in which a colonized formation of gender creates the conception of the biological sex, we forget the anafemales of Yoruba before colonization and their lack of binary opposition to the anamale (Lugones, 2007). What is then able to be done from this scientific revolution is that everything can be measured and quantified, a system of value can be created that enables a high level of appropriation, a high ecological surplus.⁵ One such iteration of this is that of scientific racism.

⁴ As we will begin to see in this paper, who exactly this subject is changes throughout time and geographically. We are focused here more so on the settler colony of the United States’s experience, but a broader understanding of this can be had in other works such as Cedric Robinson’s *Black Marxism* (2000).

⁵ Ecological surplus here essentially refers to the ability to have spaces ecologically to appropriate labor from. The tendency of the ecological surplus to fall then would refer to the tendency for the ecological spaces for appropriation to diminish.

We can arguably see the beginnings of scientific racism in the 17th century, from statements like that of colonizing philosopher William Petty, who in 1676 said “There seem to be several species even of human beings...I say that the Europeans do not only differ from the aforementioned Africans in colour...but also...in natural manners and in the internal qualities of their minds.” (Linebaugh and Redicker, 2000, p. 271). Around the same time we have the *sistema de castas* in New Spain, a new means of ranking and policing citizens that was done through a sort of mathematical problem, ranking people by blood. For instance, mestizo+india=cholo. This was a means for the colonial state to produce “new categories, new natures, to meet the needs for laborers first for silver specie and then for agricultural production destined for sale and profit in Europe.” (Patel and Moore, 2017, pp. 185-186).

Another example is that of Carl Linnaeus, commonly deemed the ‘father of taxonomy’, observed different kinds of *Homo Sapiens* and found supposedly biological differences. There is the *American*, who paints his face red and is regulated by custom. The *European*, who is governed by laws. The *Asiatic*, governed by opinions. The *African*, governed by caprice, and many more supposed categorizations. This is all allegedly biological, and thus serves to legitimize “colonialism’s civilizing mission.” (Patel & Moore, 2017, pp. 187-188). We see through Linnaeus a very clear representation of hierarchies based in blood and biology that would provide the colonizer’s with all the proof they needed that what they were doing was for the good of the people they were conquering.

If we adopt a world-ecological perspective, we see that white supremacy as a structure in the United States was first, created as a system of bourgeois social control and not pathological. The only way it was able to occur was in part through world-ecological revolutions, that were in

turn created through not only abstract social labor but also abstract social nature.⁶ A regime that can be seen in the various iterations of this scientific revolution enabled by colonialism and imperialism, scientific racism being one such example. We also see it in the creation of new cartographies, new temporalities, surveying, property-making, accounting and more. Regimes which attempt to keep capitalism cheap, they attempt to maintain an ecological surplus that outpaces commodification. Benefits that are always felt as a one and done program, to create further cheapness requires creation of new regimes (Moore, 2015, pp. 193-217).

Thus, race could arguably be seen in part as a world-ecological revolution in the United States. It is the symbolic manifestation of capital, science, and empire coming together to create a “new unity of abstract social labor, abstract social nature, and primitive accumulation.” (Moore, 2015, p. 150). Race as a world-ecological revolution is in turn spurred on by and created through other epochal innovations under capitalism, and of previous historical natures⁷ that have cheapened life and created the Nature/Society dualism. The creation of the binary of free and unfree in Virginian bond-servitude couldn’t continue in colonial America for instance because of both human and extra-human natures, such as rebellion and exhaustion of soil through monoculture, both of which were created out of imperialism and capitalism’s logic,⁸ which had made the current world-historical nature too expensive. Thomas Jefferson, slave owner and

⁶ This regime of abstract social nature conditions the value of abstract social labor. Abstract social nature is the process by which the Nature side of the Nature/Society dualism takes up the place it does, regimes that allow for appropriation rather than exploitation. These terms essentially operate in the same heuristic manner as exploitation and appropriation within the paper. Abstract social nature being appropriation, and abstract social labor being exploitation.

⁷ Historical natures refers to the way in which the ecological was not only seen at the time, but able to be used and appropriated at the time. A variety of factors like technology, imperialism, labor power, and more impact historical natures under capitalism.

⁸ For one of the great accounts that shows the necessity of illustrating the interplay of imperialist forces and ‘the environment’ in the organization of the web of life, see Mike Davis’s *Late Victorian Holocausts* (2017).

founding father of the settler colonial United States, acknowledged the inherent degradation of a system of slavery in saying “We can buy an acre of new land cheaper than we can manure an old one.” (Williams, 1994, p. 7). The imperialist ideology of such a statement seeps through at every corner, as does the necessity of creating frontiers for the capitalist system in place to maintain the rate of profit. For while this need for expansion remained true and possible in one sense (the fact that there was still land to be ‘discovered’ and put to work), the rebellions that arose out of the oppressive living conditions under the monoculture and capitalism in a white supremacist settler colony were making the system as it was impossible to carry on. With this historical nature losing profitability, a new historical nature had to be created, and what won out was the plantation bourgeoisie’s creation of the white race, of white supremacy, and of race as a system of social control, all for the purposes of maintaining the rate of profit.

On Racial Capitalism and the Capitalocene

Work that has current historical significance and deals directly with our paper in many ways is that of racial capitalism and the black radical tradition, outlined by Cedric Robinson in *Black Marxism* as well as *Black Movements in America* to name just two important sources. Some marxists tend to find a fundamental issue with Robinson’s argument on racial capitalism, that is the interconnection of race and capital from the very beginning of the capitalist world-system, evolving from rather than negating the previous feudal system (Kelley, 2017; Singh, 2017; see Meyerson, 2001 for a fairly comprehensive discussion on this). It is certainly at times a nuanced and worthwhile debate, but overall tends to be unproductive. It is typically staged in simple terms as, is race epiphenomenal (occurring after capitalism), or at its very core. Many marxist arguments like the one I have outlined above would take the former position rather

than the latter. However it is this author's view that despite whiteness taking time to become institutionalized and systematic as a racial category in the United States, race and racialization, as a modality of differentiation that allows for capitalism's violent and genocidal accumulative tendencies (Robinson, 2000, p. 26) have always been there. That this racialization allows for differentiation has existed prior to capitalism as a part of what Robinson would describe as thinking inherent to western civilization (Robinson, 2000, p. 28) fits with our discussion above on Descartes and the Nature/Society dualism, and consequently with the Capitalocene.

The work to connect racial capitalism and the Capitalocene is scarce, however crucial work has been done in two essays by Nikhil Pal Singh (2017) and Françoise Vergès (2017). What their work crucially shows in connecting racial capitalism and world-ecology is the fact that capitalism has always existed via uneven development, in which most peoples of the world's work goes unpaid and deemed unproductive or as non-work, as a means of conditioning capitalist value relations. Not only this, but an overarching body of work within the abstract realm of western civilization conditions the grounds on which these valuations occur. This includes not only our examples of Descartes, Linnaeus, and Petty, but importantly includes Hobbes, Grotius, Locke and others. John Locke, whose description of slavery as the “development of a pre-civil state of war into a relationship between lawful conqueror and captive” (Singh, 2017, p. 55), allows for modern day discussions of freedom and democracy to create an idea that with freedom comes the end of oppression.⁹ It is the process of the power of the slave master over life and death as being given to the state. It is bundles of relations tied to

⁹ For instance, Western notions of ‘democracy’ were exported elsewhere as a means of justifying the ‘protection’ of other places in order to dispossess people, accumulate profit, and appropriate labor (Mitchell, 2011; Boal et al., 2005).

racialization that create heritable liberties and heritable slavery (Singh, 2017, pp. 55-56). Thus, there is an overarching body of work and notion of the western civilization that creates and enables processes of differentiation and racialization (Robinson, 2000). Under capitalism, these processes are inflected with capitalist valuations, what world-ecology deems as being used to enable appropriation, the creation of non-work of women, indigenous people, people of color, to enable a rate of exploitation, i.e. keeping the wage down, to accumulate profit. This is then taking place with the co-production of nature, nature that conditions and is conditioned by racial capitalism and colonialism (Verges, 2017, pp. 76, 80).

We turn now to what we see as the invention of the white race in the United States and a discussion of race in the United States in general. Keeping in mind that such a creation of the white race as a system of social control and world-ecological revolution is within a longer trajectory of racial capitalism and the Capitalocene, a process of genocidal differentiation that sees most people of the world, through process of colonization and imperialism, as less than human, as savage, as a part of Nature in the Nature/Society divide.

Colonial Virginia: Slavery, Bacon's Rebellion, and the Invention of the White Race

When the first Africans were shipped to Virginia in 1619, they were shipped into a "Community of fear" (Bennett, 1975, p. 8), whose fears of the Native American population were rivaled only by their worries about labor scarcity. As Bennett puts it, the colonists needed labor, and the twenty black "immigrants" (Bennett's term) who first came to Virginia represented labor power. It is only historians and others who bring in their current racial ideological frameworks that paint a picture of Jim Crow signs being painted upon the arrival of the first black

“immigrants” (Bennett, 1975, p. 9). With the ‘massacre’ of the tenantry that had already taken place along with the subsequent shift to indentured servitude/chattel bond-labor, it made it easier for the Europeans to create a situation in which they could institutionalize lifelong and hereditary servitude for Africans in Virginia and the colonies (Harvey, 2007, pp. 66-69; Allen, 2012, Vol. 2). Racial slavery, though different qualitatively to be clear, was found as an embryo in the treatment of white servants. Eric Williams, Lerone Bennett Jr., Theodore Allen, and Cedric Robinson (Robinson, 2000, pp. 74-81; Robinson, 2017, p. 7) all point to the ways in which this is the case, and we have begun to do so here. For instance Bristol, a key location in the servant trade, would be the training grounds for the captains and ships of slave traders bound later to Africa. The capital of the servant trade would prop up the ability to finance the slave trade (Williams, 1994, p. 19). The difference would become quantitative in terms of a systematic and incredibly large African slave trade, and qualitative with the shift to a hereditary slavery.

When do our modern conceptions of the white race come into the picture? Allen points out that by the mid 17th century as race in the United States and hereditary slavery are beginning to come into the frame more and more, we are still in the time period in which there is no white race as a means of social organization.¹⁰ Allen then shows the overwhelming amount of solidarity between European-American and African-American bond laborers, compared to fewer exceptions that show otherwise (within such exceptions are bystanders that disapprove of the chauvinism on display) (Allen, 2012b, pp. 472-476). Through this analysis he shows quite clearly that, despite the display by the plantation bourgeois of hoping to inculcate lifetime

¹⁰ This goes with Allen’s provocative statement on the back of the second volume of *The Invention of the White Race* that “there were no white people” in Virginia in 1619, this being based off of his extensive 20 years of research of Virginia’s colonial records, in which he found no reference to the usage of the word white to denote social status until 1691. In Allen’s words: “White identity had to be carefully taught, and it would be only after the passage of some six crucial decades” that the word “would appear as a synonym for European-American.” (Perry, 2010, p. 57).

servitude in the African-American worker, this was not a sentiment shared by the European-American bond-servants *as a whole*, this being the evidence for a lack of conception of a white race as one homogenized social category. This conception, created after and as a result of the forces embodied in the latter half of Bacon's Rebellion, would be necessary to allow the plantation bourgeois desires to manifest in a systematic manner.

We can place Bacon's Rebellion within two stages: the first, beginning in 1675, was a war about land, waged by freedmen and small farmers, themselves a part of the wealthy class and known as the frontier plantation owners, directed this rebellion against all neighboring indigenous groups and the small portion of the colonial ruling class who sought to stop their rebellion (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000, p. 265). This is surely an important piece of history that requires more analysis than a simple paragraph, but in this essay we focus on the latter half of the rebellion, for within it lies the key to our discussion on race.

“The non-slavery of white labor was the indispensable condition for the slavery of black labor. This is no mere conjecture; it is a fact that the events of Bacon's Rebellion, and of the whole turbulent quarter-century following 1660, made unmistakably clear.” (Allen, 2006, p. 15). This statement as a starting point provides us with reason enough to explicate on the importance of the civil war stage of Bacon's Rebellion. Once Bacon involved the free poor and bond-servants, both black and white, the rebellion became a true threat for the elites of the time (Allen, 2006, p. 16). Not just the elites on Berkeley's side, as we see that once Bacon shifted his methods to that of enlisting the working class in exchange for their freedom, his base changed drastically as well, with many of the masters leaving his cause during this phase (Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000, pp. 265-266). This was one of the fundamental differences that signaled a turn

towards the civil war phase. As to why their voices were heard, this wasn't simply due to the benevolence of Bacon, but rather the people forced their case. For the common poor person, even if free, moving to the frontiers and acquiring land simply wasn't an option available to them. As a result, their concern wasn't with an anti-Indian policy, but instead with a change in Virginia's land policy (Allen, 2012 Vol. 2, p. 602). Therefore, if Bacon wanted to bring them to his side, his anti-Indian policy strategy wouldn't work. And he did need to bring them to his side, for they began to be upset by not only Berkeley's faction but Bacon's as well.

Bacon himself had almost exclusive rights to the fur trade with the indigenous populations, much of the poor freedmen and tithable bond-labor having not a chance of achieving such a privilege. Bacon, the challenger, was now himself being challenged. And it was in this challenge and the actions of this faction that would follow that we are able to see the laborer as not simply a category at the whims of whatever the ruling class supposes, but rather as a mover of history (Allen, 2012 Vol. 2, pp. 605-610). There would then be approximately fifteen thousand people taking part in this rebellion, six thousand European-American and two thousand African-American bond laborers comprising the majority. So widespread was the discontent, rebellion, and solidarity, that the government lamented at failing to muster up even a thousand soldiers to stand against them (Allen, 2006, p. 12). This group was able to continue freeing laborers both black and white and forcing the masters to pay them their wages. They burned Jamestown and continued their rebellion, posing a fundamental challenge and possible revolution against the oligarchic monoculture bond-labor system in place, showing alternative ways of living (particularly a diversified smallholder economy). As Philip Ludwell would say, at this

point, it was not the Indians on the borders but the servants at home who posed the greatest challenge to the colony's way of life (Allen, 2012 Vol. 2, pp. 610-618).

On November 21st, 1676, with the approximately fifteen thousand people taking part in this rebellion¹¹ upending the very fabric of plantation bourgeoisie monoculture bond-labor normalcy, would one of the most important actors in this rebellion, Thomas Grantham, enter the picture. Grantham, having been called forth by Berkeley himself, created a strategy that rested in creating the surrender of the main force of eight hundred men around West Point. They succeeded in persuading three hundred of the rebels, but the other approximately five hundred kept their resolve, thus setting the stage for words uttered by Grantham that would become some of the most important testament to the solidarity of laborers during this civil war stage. That Grantham cites “about foure hundred English and Negroes in Armes, who were much dissatisfied at the Surrender of the Point, saying I had betray'd them, and thereupon some were for shooting mee, and others were for cutting mee in peeces”, is for us and for Allen, some of the most important evidence of white and black labor fighting for the abolition of their conditions that displays the lack of a coherent formation of what would be known as the white race (Allen, 2012b, pp. 618-622).

Right around the time of this series of rebellions,¹² history would have it that it was becoming profitable for the colonies to import African labor for life (Fields, 2012, p. 127). Here

¹¹ Six thousand European-American and two thousand African-American bond laborers comprising the majority (Allen, 2006, p. 12).

¹² Starting with the 1663 attempted revolt in Gloucester County and ending in the tobacco riots of 1682, there were at least ten popular revolts at this time, displaying varying levels of labor solidarity between African-American and European-American workers, Bacon's Rebellion being the height of this (Perry, 2010: 60-61; Linebaugh and Rediker, 2000: 263; Allen, 2012 Vol. 2: 635-636). The tobacco riots would not become the next Bacon's Rebellion, as they were less about changing government, and more about taking direct economic action in the farmer's immediate locale with a particular type of tobacco.

it is important to highlight the establishment of the Royal African Company in 1672, which occurred at the same time of a rise in demand for labor and corresponding wage increase in England. The Royal African Company made England the key suppliers of African bond-labor to the colonies. For the first time, they enabled lifetime hereditary bond-servitude of African labor to be more profitable than that of European bond-servitude, coinciding with this rise in demand for labor in England, which restricted the flow of bond-labor from England to the colonies. The process started by laws of the previous decade could now be seen to be truly viable, at least economically. But how could they increase the rate of African labor without creating further (or perhaps too much?) possibility for rebellion (Allen, 2012b, pp. 502-506)? For profitability is never the answer alone, as it reduces the agency of those being seen as objects and profit. The answer lay in the creation of the white race as a form of social control. In other words, they must necessarily inculcate a divide between European-American and African-American labor. In America, it takes on the form it does for the reason that there were too many poor whites to be included within the bourgeois class, as opposed to somewhere like the West Indies where there were too few to operate as a successful petite bourgeoisie (Perry, 2010, p. 66).

We can see this process almost immediately after Bacon's Rebellion. In 1680, the Virginia government repealed all penalties for white servants who took part in Bacon's Rebellion, the law explicitly not including African-American labor, whether they were bond-servants who took part or freedmen. We see as well the fact that "Negroes were forbidden to carry arms, defensive or offensive...any Negro who raised his or her hand against any Christian white would be liable to receive thirty lashes, well laid on...it was made legal to kill a fugitive Negro bond-servant if he or she resisted recapture" (Allen, 2006, p. 20). 1705 then saw

the passing of a law forbidding African-American freedmen to own any white servants. This law made clear as well the African-American as slave and the form of property “that would constitute the basis of production in Virginia.” (Allen, 2006, p. 19; Linebaugh and Redicker, 2000, p. 269).

A 1723 voting law is important not only for its content but for its rationalization years later by William Gooch, governor of Virginia. The law made it so that free African-Americans, having always previously been able to vote just as free whites, had their vote taken away. Gooch’s writing years later in 1735 as to why the Virginia Assembly had chosen to take away this franchise is powerful and important to discuss here. Gooch and the assembly saw it necessary “to fix a perpetual Brand upon Free Negroes & Mulattos,”...“a distinction ought to be made between their offspring and the descendants of an Englishman” (Perry, 2010, p. 64; Allen, 2006, p. 19).

We are seeing the thinking decision of the bourgeois inculcating a set of ‘privileges’ for the white working class that were always being created in contrast to African-Americans removal of rights. It is through this process that things which had been rights for any man in England at birth became privileges for the European-American as a means of rendering the African slave as the basis of the mode of capitalist production (Perry, 2010, p. 63; Allen, 2006, p. 18). One of the great magic tricks of the bourgeois in America, that of the changing of rights into privileges through utilizing the tool of racial oppression, enabled the creation of an intermediate social control stratum of poor whites that would be suitable to meet the two conditions Allen laid out, that of increased exploitation and thus increased profit, and a substantial social control mechanism to enforce the first point.

What follows is an examination of a more recent history of immigration through the Irish and the Italian as a means of seeing how racial ideology, and correspondingly systems of race, racism, and white supremacy, change over time to fit into historical circumstance. Highlighting further the malleability of the symbolic, cultural, and world-ecological revolution that is racial ideology.

Whiteness in the 19th and 20th Century: the Irish, the Italian, the Anglo-Saxon, and the Shaping of White Supremacy

While the various naturalization acts created at the turn of the 19th century allowed groups like the Irish, Italians, Finns, Jews, and more to be white through naturalization laws upon arrival to the United States, they were still deemed less racially in comparison to the Anglo-Saxons who had “laid proprietary claim to the nation's founding documents and hence to its stewardship.” (Jacobson, 1998, pp. 3-4). This complicates our understanding of whiteness as a category. However when we see it as a system of social control, our analysis becomes quite clear. What our history shows is that the experience of the Irish immigrant and of the Italian immigrant varied greatly, and thus to homogenize them in a category and simply say they are “white on arrival” (Clarke and Garner, 2010, p. 32) would do more harm than good.

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the living conditions for the Catholic Irish were arguably the worst of anywhere in Western Europe, and by the time of their great migration to the United States, they certainly hadn't improved. It is for this reason that Catholic Irish-Americans were in desperate need of allies, coming into a new area with little support financially, and being the first large wave of catholic immigrants, no support from family or anything of the like would come.

The American Catholic church along with the Democratic party would be more than happy to provide the needed support, as they would gain in their constituency the largest immigrant group of the period (Roediger, 2007, pp. 137-141).¹³ The church, with its conservative history, was led by John Hughes, a leader who saw it necessary to give to the plantation bourgeoisie interest of the time and was thus invested in the idea of the white race, and a merging of the Irish-Catholic into this white supremacist structure. At best the catholic church in America had soft critiques of the anti-abolition movement, and not even on an institutional level. At its worst we see various Irish Catholic newspapers undermining the abolitionist cause along with Hughes inciting an intensification of anti-abolitionist sentiment and hatred for African-American workers, seen through his view of the conscription acts during the civil war as a means of making the African-American equal to that of the Catholic Irish-American (Allen, 2012a, pp. 535-601).

The Jacksonian democracy at this point as well began to form the second thrust of the push for the Irish to come into the white race system of social control. The white character of this regime can be seen from a few angles. The first being the lack of support by African-Americans of the party. It was remarked by an English observer that he “never knew a man of color that was not an anti-Jackson man” (Sakai, 1983, p. 28). There is also the character of the spoils system that Jackson put in place, that of a “white-race” spoils system (Allen, 2012a, p. 562), which from the beginning put in place the manhood suffrage laws in the 1820’s that ended the property qualification for voting. This being another instance of deepening the white race as a system of social control for the purpose of broadening the voting base, particularly in the north, for the

¹³ From 1820 to 1855, approximately 45 percent of migrants to the United States were coming from Ireland (McCaffrey, 1997).

plantation bourgeoisie hoping to maintain their grip on the government. At the same time the disenfranchisement of African-American voters through an 1821 New York State Constitutional Convention was taking place, the resistance to such a law in this period would be constantly overwhelmed by Tammany Hall, perhaps the clearest place to view the effects of the Jacksonian Democracy's preservation and creation of the white race as a system of social control, and the Catholic Irishman's place in it. Tammany Hall would go on to expedite the naturalization of Irish immigrants, grant early or temporary release from prison for the Irish population, or even monetary benefits, all of this being sped up during election time. And all under the name of "white-men's" rights, not Irishmen rights (Allen, 2012a, pp. 558-568).

Italian Migration to the United States: More of the Same? Or a different beast all together?

Even if the Italians could be seen as white, they were qualitatively different than the Anglo-Saxon whites, their lack of privileges reflecting such a difference, as well as the plethora of slurs thrown at them. Such words including "wops" "dagoes" (a word whose meaning at the time was seen as similar to that of "white nigger" (Jacobson, 1998, p. 57)) and "guineas" (Painter, 2010, p. 766), meant to hurt but also meant to reinforce their place within the structure of the United States, as less than those who were deeply embedded and invested in the white race structure. But this is not to say that there were no examples of Italians attempting to invest in their whiteness prior to World War II. Such evidence is seen in places like the west coast of the United States in 1890, where Italians would take over large portions of the fishing industry from the Chinese through burning ships and villages (Sakai, 1983, p. 36).

Key to the perceptions of the savagery and criminality of the Italians here was their refusal to 'act white'. This was seen firstly through their acceptance of "economic niches" which

were typically for African-American labor such as that of farm labor and tenancy. In addition, they lived not only near African-Americans but fraternized with them regularly, this fraternization and solidarity became unbearable for the white supremacist institutions of the time when it manifested itself in the majority voting for Republican and Populist candidates. This type of behavior would result in the lynching of Italians for “alleged crimes”.

A particularly relevant case comes from the lynching of eleven Italians being held for the murder trial of Irish police chief Hennessy, a member of the race that had assimilated into the white structures in New Orleans. The Italians here posed a major problem to the white supremacist structures in place, occupying here a middle ground both socially and physically; being a major challenge to the binary produced by the racial ideology of the time. Such quotes from the *New York Times* made this clear saying “if Italians failed to fall in behind other “decent” American citizens and to applaud the mob's success in doing away with the “criminals” (even while deploring the lawlessness of the lynching), then Americans would draw the conclusion that all Italians were lawless ruffians with Mafia ties.” (Jacobson, 1998, pp. 57-58). Also a more characteristically visceral reaction was had by a merchant of the time who described this area of New Orleans as an “Italian Colony” who posed a threat to American civilization, just one of these Italians in his opinion was worse than a thousand “Chinamen” (Jacobson, 1998, p. 58).

Here we have Italians that had the white skin privilege and an ability to be admitted into the white supremacist structures, but repudiated their whiteness and saw their solidarity with the African-American population in New Orleans. This was such a threat as it undermined the very notion of the white race that had been very carefully created and maintained throughout the years

of the United States, and thus it became a challenge by ‘savages’ to the notion of ‘civilization’. Such rhetoric would seek to normalize the murders of Italians and make clear the lesserness and criminality of this group. It was a precise and necessary devaluation from the eyes of the Anglo-Saxon civilization. To simply have white skin clearly wasn’t enough.

The case of the Italians shows that their story is different in terms of population and amount of resistance in some areas such as New Orleans, however it is similar to the Irish in the sense that eventually the Italians were brought into the next enlargement of whiteness, seen after the second world war through increasing educational opportunities along with increased economic mobility which conditioned a certain amount of political clout (Painter, 2010, p. 766). We see all the various contestations and enlargements of this class of whiteness, always stratified as a means of maintaining an amount of exploitation, and conditioned through various class struggles. This stratification is certainly class based, for it is an Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie that enables the enlargements of whiteness in the name of profit, thus it is in their interest to have people invest in whiteness, but a variegated whiteness, one that reveals to us the capitalist nature of the project.

This aristocratic order, in our case the Anglo-Saxon order whose power climaxed around 1850 in the United States (Horsman, 1981), wants to put in place as much as possible a static order, whose borders are near impossible to penetrate. For them their place within the nation as governing it and protecting it is willed by God, seen to be natural. The scientific racism of the time among other forces would see to this fact. For the Irish, and later the Italians, there would be the possibility to accumulate whiteness, to be a part of this white nation and its white supremacist structures. However the fundamental difference is that for these groups not within

the aristocratic order, they must work towards accumulating this whiteness (Hage, 2000, pp. 55-67). This is a useful device for the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie who can say that, yes you are white, but not like us. Therefore you do not have the capacity to rule, to govern the nation. But the issue becomes that the Irish first and Italians later on would come into these positions of governing. The Anglo-Saxon order would lose an important degree of power and have to enlarge itself along with the field of whiteness in all its stratification. Are we seeing the accumulation of whiteness being held accountable to the same laws of accumulation under capitalism, that of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall? And are we seeing as well that it is possibly conditioned through the tendency of the ecological surplus to fall?

Here lies the potency and emancipatory possibilities of Painter's question, "Is this the end of race in America?" (Painter, 2010, pp. 815-816). This of course is happening at the same time as the supposedly natural frontiers are running out as capitalism is failing to extend the ecological surplus through its imperial logic. Does this *conjuncture* then of racial ideological and cultural fixes running out along with the contradictions of spatial fixes and the ecological surplus falling alongside the rate of profit offer a fruitful base for organizing life after the epochal crisis occurring under the Capitalocene, that we see through our analysis at the same time spells out its demise?

Processes of Accumulation, and the Racialized Contradictory Spaces Made Under Capitalism

The plantation was the place where the rationalization of primitive accumulation of African-American labor would play out, the becoming of an exchange value, a commodity, taking place in these grounds of degradation. One could find here all at once a main house,

stables, buildings for crop preparation like mills or refineries, garden areas, carriage houses. The town itself linked to various methods of transport that would allow for the shipping of commodities like crops and slaves (McKittrick, 2013). Clyde Woods describes it as the plantation being “town, home, workplace, recreational area, religious grounds, prison, and cemetery.” (Woods, 2017, p. 164).

We can begin to see the connections between the north and south as well through the plantation, in fact without the south and their cotton, New York City’s textile industry would not have been able to survive (Allen, 2012a). And just as New York relied on the Mississippi Delta, so too did Manchester (Moore, 2015). We also begin to have a more global understanding of the ways in which the plantation and the relations within it are fundamental to an understanding of the Capitalocene’s logic of accumulation. Within the locale of the United States, the Plantation as a geospatial manifestation of relations under capitalism, of a racialized imperialism that would devalue life in a manner that would seek to justify its cheapening and appropriation.

However the plantation’s logic is just one geospatial manifestation of the Capitalocene. The industrial town composed in the 19th and 20th century that would in many ways replace the plantation became a place that would be able to geospatially dole out value. The workers lived in not only hazardous conditions, but also near the hazardous work environment, the bourgeoisie residing in their ornamental mansions on the outskirts of town (Fracchia & Brighton, 2015, pp. 131-144). Industrialization too as a process would reinforce the racialization that occurred under capitalism as a means of appropriating large swaths of labor. One look at the south in the 1960’s shows this story. The industrial redlining that occurred during this green revolution period would make stronger the ethnic divides already in place. It wasn’t just the land that became toxic during

the green revolution, but the people living on the land, largely people of color, specifically black people, becoming toxic as well. “Cancer Alley”, the name for the industrial corridor of plants from the Mississippi River, traveling from New Orleans to Baton Rouge, that would create one of the largest cancer clusters in the world, shows the logic of capital devaluing labor and land all at once as a means of maintaining profit (Woods, 2017; Moore et al., 2019). Suburbanization that begins after World War II becomes another form of redlining, of creating new use values for the absorption of surplus capital, and of separating the working class to avoid dissent. All along racial lines.¹⁴

The extension of the plantation’s logic beyond the formal plantation of the 19th century can be understood through the Capitalocene and the spatial fixes and cultural fixes that occur within it. It is the constant expansion of the built environment as a means of absorbing surplus capital and of reducing political dissent through enclosures and dispossession, a logic justified through various cultural fixes conditioned through the logic of the Capitalocene that devalues life in a manner justifying the cheapening and appropriation of life. This can be seen through other supposed works of civilization such as prison’s and the Prison Industrial Complex, along with the structures built around them like the police and education. Suburbanization and gentrification, for one a decentralizing of the city and the other a centralizing of the city, in a globalized neoliberal world in which the urbanization of the countryside, through processes like the green revolution, furthers the heightening of the organic composition of capital and conditions migration flows towards those cities in the global north (O’Connor, 1998; Smith,

¹⁴ The underbelly of the process of suburbanization is racialized high density low quality urban housing and urban redlining (Kruse, 2005; Harvey, 2008; Institute on Race and Poverty, 2002; Woods, 2017). Gentrification too is a piece of this urbanization-suburbanization geospatial transformation, that goes from isolated event to “global urban strategy” (Smith, 2008, p. 263; Brenner, 2017).

2008; Brenner, 2017). The racialization in this process is quite clear, the green revolution and the exporting of the Capitalocene's logic to other places in the world like the coffee plantations of the Americas or in "globalized factory meat production, monocrop agribusiness, and immense substitutions of crops like oil palm for multispecies forests and their products that sustain human and nonhuman critters alike." (Serrano Jr., 2015; Haraway, 2015, p. 162) show the ways in which processes and bundles of relations, of capital, science, and empire that created the dispossession in Mississippi leading to 'Cancer Alley' were transported to other places.

As Rosa Luxemburg showed long ago, the contradictions in capitalism's imperialism lie in its reliance on non-capitalist economies while simultaneously industrializing and internalizing those places, this being capital's homogenizing thrust (Luxemburg, 1963). This goes with geographer David Harvey's discussion on the contradictions inherent in the built environment, that capitalism searches for spatial equilibrium through the annihilation of space by time, which then creates a relatively spatially immobile built environment that is then a barrier to accumulation (Harvey, 1985, p. 25).

Thus, capitalism needs to have uneven development and appropriate from regions on the outskirts of the circuit of capital and beyond, but is also always continuously capitalizing and developing such regions. It is in this homogenization that one of the main contradictions of capital comes to the fore. This annihilation of space by time enables the global hegemony of value relations as well as "peak appropriation" which ushered in an unprecedented chasm between paid and unpaid work (Moore, 2015, p. 137). But to have these world-ecological revolutions, new eras of primitive accumulation need to occur, which in turn are enabled by abstract social nature, by "agronomic, botanical, and cartographic knowledge [which, among

other things,] appropriate to the new geographies of appropriation and capitalization.” (Moore, 2015, p. 152). Thus we see here the centrality of a cheap nature to the capitalist project of necessitating a higher level of appropriation than capitalization through raising the ecological surplus. The issue, for capitalism, is that what was once cheap and beyond the circuits of capitalization is now within. The ability to appropriate becoming less and less possible due not only to this homogenizing tendency of capital but also due to negative values, things like super weeds, increased toxification, and human rebellion, all resulting in a cumulative and global ecological blowback against capitalism’s utterly irrational system of valuation (Moore, 2015; Street, 2016). Is there a coming together of forces with race as a world ecological revolution and method of social control that spell out its doom before racial ideology can contort itself into some other form to raise the rate of profit? This coming at a time of epochal crisis and a running out of frontiers for capitalism, with contradictions both spatial and ideological?

“Common Sense” and Moving Forward

Cultural fixes and racial ideology have the ability to continue to change according to historical circumstance. However, the mounting material pressures of a capitalism running out of frontiers and being forced to pay for its cost and finding them to be too expensive runs against this. Can capitalism recreate racial ideologies, or other cultural fixes and symbolic revolutions for that matter, conducive to its own accumulation (i.e. allow a maintenance of the rate of profit)? Perhaps it can keep creating fake privileges through its magic of reworking rights into privileges, but as the rate of profit continues to fall along with the ecological surplus, revolutions have more and more of an opportunity to mobilize people through a mutual deteriorating circumstance. The purchase of rhetorical flourishes and creation of false benefits (whose

psychological short term wages are felt surely) through inventions such as the white race will continue to lose its ability to succeed as it has, through the two pronged fact that, real life circumstances will continue to deteriorate for a large population of those within this white race, and successive enlargements of whiteness continue to undermine the very purpose of the invention in the first place, that is maintaining an intermediate social control stratum. A structure of miserablism that leads the working class whites to believe that the life of misery (again, with psychological and public wages surely) they live is the only possible way of organizing life (Roediger, 2019), a reinforcement of the exploitative status quo. This miserabilism being an idea that gains a particular power since the age of neoliberalism where people like Paul Volcker, former Federal Reserve chair, invoke this idea of austerity in a manner that has it assume the only possible reality (McNally, 2011, p. 25), which substantively leads to a doubling down on the poison bait that is whiteness and the white skin privilege (Ignatin).¹⁵ This miserablism will cease to be able to function as it has historically without further cultural fixes, opening the door to a revival of imagination and future world-making.

Stuart Hall describes racism and racial ideology through the Gramscian notion of “common sense”. It is in the “common sense” of racism, in all its supposed naturalness, that people’s conceptions of race and racism are formed and take shape. The most important piece, for us, from Hall, is the fact that the “common sense” of the day is the current ground on which any new conceptions of the world must contend if they intend to “shape the conceptions of the world masses” in a historically effective way (Hall, 1986, p. 20). Through our work we

¹⁵ For more on the idea of the white skin privilege for the white worker as poison bait, see Ignatiev’s (under his pseudonym Ignatin) “You Don’t Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows”, date not provided.

historicize this common sense of race and racism throughout its capitalist and settler colonialist United States history in order to create an analytical base to begin a fight to shape the perspective of the world masses in a historically effective way, one that can balance among other things the realities of race and class, and one that can seize upon the contradictions of capitalism today described above to overcome the miserablism that the white working class has accepted.

Below we will attempt to discuss the restructuring of a new common sense, at the level of the human (relations between people), and the extra-human (geographical and ecological interactions), both spheres of activity of course overlapping and conditioning one another. We have discussed in general the need for a new common sense among the white working class, through documenting whiteness historically in different forms in the United States, and the fact that a declining rate of profit and a late stage capitalism that is running out of frontiers, including an enlarging whiteness that is systematically failing. With this, however, we have documented the wages of whiteness that are both public and psychological. These wages, these ‘privileges’, for the white worker are real and have historically been shown to be able to adjust themselves.

Leaving the paper on this note would ultimately leave too much unsaid. It is for this reason that we turn now to a discussion on common sense through racial capitalism and the Black Radical Tradition, as this disparate, dynamic, and diasporic tradition has in the United States and beyond consistently been at the forefront of world making and abolition, which is what this paper is ultimately about.

Common Sense and the Human

In attempting to write about a new emancipatory and abolitionist common sense, there is a necessary looking backwards to move forwards. A tradition that has done just this and is currently doing this work could loosely be described as Cedric Robinson has done: the Black Radical Tradition (Robinson, 2000, pp. 167-171). Through Robinson and others that have interpreted this idea, we can attempt to summarize at least in part the Black Radical Tradition as a collective consciousness that at its epistemic core is ideological and metaphysical; from here influencing the physical. It is a radical revolutionary consciousness that is cultivated and created by a diasporic Black proletariat sensibility, one constantly recreated according to not only historical reality but the world that those revolutionaries hope to create (Lipsitz, 2017, p. 111; Robinson, 2000, pp. 167-171). Not simply an essentialist project of nationalism as some critics have misperceived (Kelley, 2000, p. xx; Meyerson, 2001), it is a “constantly evolving accumulation of structures of feeling whose individual and collective narrative arcs persistently tend toward freedom.” (Gilmore, 2017, p. 237). It is in many ways similar to Gilroy’s notion of Black Atlantic culture as the “counterculture of modernity” (Gilroy, 1993), agreeing more than they disagree around the fact that a Black Atlantic culture (as well as a Black Mediterranean culture for Robinson) not only created modernity as we know it, but form the most important and vocal resistance to a capitalist and imperialist modernity. Black Radical intellectuals like C.L.R. James, DuBois, and Eric Williams, all of whom influenced this paper tremendously, are key examples of this culture that has come out of and through western bourgeois culture necessarily to be able to critique it so strongly. For they realized the limits of the culture and turned to the Black liberation struggle to overcome it, with their genius, as Robinson says, being derivative of the revolutionary people’s struggles that they wrote about (Kelley, 2000, p. xix; Robinson, 2000,

pp. 181-184). What these people Robinson writes of brought with them on their forced migration and dispossession through transatlantic slavery was an “ontological totality” created through struggles that would historically inform a collective consciousness (Robinson, 2000, p. 171; Glissant, 1999, pp. 65-67). These were not only informed by their lives in Africa but through their time in bondage and their resistance to it. It was this ontological totality that would enable these revolutionaries to create the places and worlds they wanted, occurring through capitalism as a means to go beyond it (Gilmore, 2017, p. 231). This is an ontological totality and tradition that is constantly creating revolutionary common senses by working against and through enlightenment bourgeois ideals, whether this be through performance art, Afrofuturism, or the Blues, to name a few overlapping examples, as a means of creating ontological fractures with Capitalism and an oppressive western metaphysic embedded within it (Lipsitz, 2017, pp. 111-114; Gilroy, 1993, pp. 72-110; Woods, 2007, pp. 46-81). It is because of this importance of space and place that we turn now to common sense and the extra-human/geographic, to spaces within the Black Radical Tradition that have and can create spaces of ontological fracturing with capitalism’s hegemony.

Common Sense and the Extra-Human/Geographic

As it has been throughout this essay, through adopting a world-ecological perspective, we begin to understand the necessity of analyzing not simply ‘human’ action, but rather the ways in which the human and the extra-human, the geographic, the ecological, mix together and condition each other in creating worlds. This being the reason for showing the racialization of space in the United States above, as this necessarily conditions the grounds of the possible and

possibility. Here we hope to highlight further the importance of space and place, particularly through a discussion of what geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore calls ‘Abolition Geographies’.

For Gilmore, Abolition Geographies are the “antagonistic contradiction” (Gilmore, 2017, p. 231) of Carceral Geographies, the latter created in part as a result of the prison fix, that is land, people, money, and state-capacity being repurposed for the emergent prison industrial complex as a means of maintaining the rate of profit. But ultimately these geographies are a representation of the new turn of the large inactivity and monitorization of a racialized population, within the community as well as the prison system, as creating a profit. A racialized population is extracted from the living, from the Human (or Society), and in turn capitalism extracts from them life, that is time (Gilmore, 2007; 2010; 2017). This is but one representation of a racialized capitalist geography that bears the marks of imperialism on the landscape itself, others have been drawn out in prior sections.

Focused upon here however is the nature of Abolition Geography. Abolition for the reason that it is concerned with freedom, with the undoing of bondage, done through recognition of contradictions and “regimes of dispossession” (Gilmore, 2017, p. 227) within capitalism, *at the same time* as radical consciousness gained through action. Both allow for liberation (Gilmore, 2017, pp. 227-228). And it is fiercely geographical for the reason that place-making is at the heart of humanity, as is being made by place. It is for this reason that abolition necessitates a change of both place and space. Gilmore writes: “to destroy the geography of slavery by mixing their (slaves) labor with the external world to change the world and thereby themselves--as it were, habitation as nature--even if geometrically speaking they hadn’t moved at all.” (Gilmore, 2017, p. 231). Gilmore writes of decolonized education led by Amilcar Cabral in

the Guinea-Bissau liberation wars, to the attempts at a postcolonial geography during the first intifada protests in Palestine, projects for the creation of health clinics, schools, shops, food growing, and more became part of the fight for liberation, work within spaces focused on not simply the everyday maintenance of, but the ways in which such activities could push for an abolition geography that could change the space and time of capitalism (Gilmore, 2017, pp. 232-233).

For slaves forcefully captured and brought to the New World, the plantation, as I have described above, was a place of social death, of becoming an exchange value, used for profit. However the plantation is also the site of resistance, resistance that grows precisely out of these conditions. Plantation owners allowed for slaves to grow food for the idea that it would maximize their profits. But it was these slave gardens that became a key act of resistance (McKittrick, 2013). Not simply able to be contained to cash crops and profits as the slave owners would have hoped, slave gardens became spheres of independent production for a variety of African crops, brought over as well, in acts of resistance, as seeds of rice in a woman's hair for instance (White, 2019, p. 12). These spheres of independent production not only at times helped in the immediately important sphere of buying freedom, but fostered a degree of social autonomy and social relations between slaves. It is partially as a result of processes like this that all black communities of resistance could form around farming in places like "Strike Town" or "Freedom Town" in Mississippi in the 1960's, and earlier than this of course various black communities and cooperatives arose as resistance to the plantation system in the United States, itself born out of capitalism (White, 2019, pp. 11-14; Woods, 2017). These are but a few examples of geographies of a racial capitalism, geographies created as a result of dispossessions.

Dispossession of land, of identity, of place and space; thrown into bourgeois enlightenment principles of oppression. Dispossessions whose resistance to the rendering of a people as Natural, as inhuman (Wynter, 1995), results in the creation of identities that are not only impossible for a for a capitalist white supremacist cartography to map, but stand in antagonistic opposition to it. An abolition geography whose spatialization beyond capitalism's common sense into places of radical consciousness and autonomy charts a revolutionary possibility (McKittrick, 2007, p. 104). An ontological fracture with the Capitalocene.

Uneasy Solidarity¹⁶

Quoted at the beginning of Roediger's essay "Making Solidarity Uneasy" is a piece by Chandra Talpade Mohanty, author of *Feminism Without Borders*, that reads: "Solidarity is always an active achievement, the result of active struggle to construct the universal on the basis of particulars/differences." (Roediger, 2019, p. 157). This paper has attempted to paint in broad strokes some of the fundamental issues regarding whiteness in the United States, as well as possible methods of organizing against it. It is fundamentally a paper about the necessity of abolitionist critiques of a white supremacist capitalism in the United States. One that recognizes it as the Capitalocene, as an ecology that sees both the human and extra-human conditioning each other at the same time. A tradition that has continuously been able to create and exploit ontological fractures within and beyond the Capitalocene is the Black Radical Tradition as we have discussed it, both the intelligentsia in recognizing and problematizing the system, and the actual people on the ground working against it. We learn from this tradition that abolition comes

¹⁶ Title influenced by Roediger's essay "Making Solidarity Uneasy: Cautions on a Keyword from Black Lives Matter to the Past" in *Class, Race, and Marxism* (2019).

from not only recognizing systems and academically working through them and against them, but through practice, through organizing and the gaining of radical consciousness through the creation of worlds both psychological and physical beyond capitalism. A common sense, an ontological fracture, that is within the human, the extra-human, and the interrelation of the two.

Again, the contradictions of an enlarging whiteness are clear today in late stage capitalism. For the white working class to slough off the public and psychological wages of whiteness, an abolitionist critique will need to occur at the levels described above. Most importantly by engaging in radical activities with and within communities. As is stated in the quote above, this sort of solidarity doesn't mean a homogenization of struggle or empty universals. Rather it means the championing of a heterogenous struggle for a world beyond capitalism. This means seeking solidarity in an uneasy manner, listening before acting, and working with not for. It is only through radical action, through multiracial rebellion that the contradictions of an enlarging whiteness can be exploited. That is multiracial, not a colorblind crede or flattening out of the different populations involved in struggle. It is coalition building, working where needed, and acknowledging the historically potent, relevant, and important diasporic imaginings that have come from the Black Radical Tradition against a racial capitalism, a racial Capitalocene.

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