



Refiguring the Plantationocene

Racial Capitalism, World-Systems Analysis, and Global Socioecological Transformation

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Abstract

While sympathetic to debates about the utility, accuracy, and significance of the “Anthropocene,” in this brief essay, we are most interested in implicating racialization, colonization, and their ongoing place in the capitalist world-economy and global ecological change. To this end, we point to the potential of thinking with the “Plantationocene,” considering that to invoke the plantation is to simultaneously contend with the intermeshing organization of the colonialist/imperialist, racist, and capitalist dimensions of the world-system as directly related to global environmental transformation since the 15th century.

Keywords: Environmental sociology, world-systems analysis, plantation, Plantationocene



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In January of 2018, during a meeting with several U.S. lawmakers about immigration policy, specifically regarding Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries, President Trump asked, “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here?” Trump welcomed more people from Europe; for instance, Norway, or from certain Asian countries. However, when it came to immigrants from predominantly Black regions of the world, like Haiti, he retorted, “Why do we need more Haitians? Take them out” (Dawsey 2018). Under his administration, the Department of Homeland Security has pressed for the deportation of nearly 400,000 people from Haiti, Honduras, and El Salvador who have been living and working in the United States with Temporary Protected Status (TPS) (Lynch and Gramer 2019), a U.S. Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS) program intended to provide relief for vulnerable populations from countries with ongoing violent conflict or environmental catastrophe (Temporary Protected Status, n.d.). Migrants from Haiti were considered worthy of TPS after the earthquake in 2010, which injured and killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions of people; however, according to the Trump administration conditions in Haiti no longer call for such protections.

Meanwhile, in Haiti, the social and environmental catastrophe is most certainly ongoing. For months, thousands of Haitian citizens have taken to the streets, in protest against President Jovenel Moïse, who stands accused of embezzling millions in public funds, as food and fuel prices rise (Charles 2019). With more than half of Haitians already living on less than \$2 a day (USAID 2017), Haiti is one of the most food insecure countries on earth (Grebmer et al. 2018). In some cases, women and children eat biscuits made from mud, salt, water, and vegetable shortening to fill their bellies and stave off hunger pangs (Channi-Tiwary 2016). Close to 70% of Haitians lack direct access to potable water and only 27% of the country benefits from basic sewerage infrastructures (Varma et al. 2008). Only a quarter of Haitian citizens have access to electricity, while most people rely on charcoal for their daily household needs (USAID 2017). Using charcoal for fuel exposes Haitians, particularly women and children, to harmful smoke and associated air pollutants within the home. At the same time, the widespread use of wood fuel has contributed to the deforestation of Haiti’s national territory, leaving the people vulnerable to floods and landslides during severe weather events like hurricanes. In the context of global climate change, Haitians have already reported experiencing radical changes in climate variability, especially the seasonality of rainfall and the frequency and intensity of hurricanes and tropical storms (Singh and Cohen 2014). Moreover, between 1988 and 2016, Haiti’s primary forest declined from 4.4% to .32%, with 42 of the 50 highest and largest mountains having lost all primary forest, thereby leading to the mass extinction of species, many of which are endemic to Haiti (Hedges et al. 2018). Year after year, Haiti is ranked as one of the poorest performing countries according to the Environmental Performance Index, which takes into account multiple indicators of environmental health and ecological vitality (Wendling et al. 2018). This unfolding socioenvironmental disaster precedes the devastation exacerbated by the earthquake in 2010.

As we increasingly come to recognize how profoundly human society has shaped Earth’s interpenetrating systems, indexed by the geosocial concept of the Anthropocene (Clark and Yusoff 2017; Davis and Todd 2017; Lewis and Maslin 2018), in this brief essay we uphold the importance

of considering how racialization and colonization are implicated in ongoing catastrophe that is the capitalist world-economy and ecology. To this end, we are interested in what thinking with the Plantationocene might contribute, given that to invoke the plantation is to simultaneously contend with racialism, colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism as intermeshing features of the modern world-system. How else can we understand the enduring social and environmental crisis of a place like Haiti, a country founded upon a notoriously overlooked Black revolution of the formerly enslaved (James [1963] 1989; Trouillot [1995] 2015), without implicating the colonial and racial logics that adhere to the plantation and its socioenvironmental dynamics and legacies?

We proceed by turning to the Plantationocene as conceptualized by Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, and colleagues. Ultimately, we find their conceptualization lacking for several reasons. We then turn our attention to world-systems analysis, which in our estimation needs the concept of “racial capitalism” to think properly about the Plantationocene. As Robin D.G. Kelley writes in the foreword to Cedric Robinson’s *Black Marxism*, racism and capitalism “did not break from the old order but rather evolved from it to produce a modern world system of ‘racial capitalism’ dependent on slavery, violence, imperialism, and genocide” (2000: xiii). While there are scholars of world-systems analysis that engage with race, we argue that this work largely fails to engage meaningfully with concept of *racial capitalism*. After an initial attempt to refigure the Plantationocene with world-systems analysis, we conclude by returning to Haiti and then discussing avenues for future research.

Promises and Perils of the Plantationocene Concept

Instead of implicating the whole of humanity in the drastic changes to the earth’s integrated systems (geosphere, atmosphere, biosphere, hydrosphere, etc.), as the concept of “Anthropocene” does, scholars have suggested other designations, such as the Capitalocene (Moore 2015; Malm 2016). Here, however, we run into the problem of centering capital(ism), while neglecting race and colonialism (Robinson [1983] 2000). With the proliferation of alternative nominalizations in addition to the Capitalocene, such as the Racial Capitalocene (Vergès 2017), the Anthrobscene (Parikka 2014; 2015), the Technoscene (Hornborg 2015; Martins 2018), and the Chthulucene (Haraway 2016), we find ourselves most interested in pursuing the promise and perils of the Plantationocene because of the potential it holds for implicating raciality, coloniality, and capitalism in the past, present, and future socioecological changes on planet Earth.

The notion of the “Plantationocene” emerged from a conversation between scholars at a gathering on the Anthropocene hosted by the University of Aarhus in 2014 (see Haraway et al. 2016). As recounted by Donna Haraway (2015), the group collectively generated the term to describe the “devastating transformation of diverse kinds of human-tended farms, pastures, and forests into extractive and enclosed plantations, relying on slave labor and other forms of exploited, alienated, and usually spatially transported labor” (2015: 162). By invoking the Plantationocene, scholars are suggesting that one of the primary ways that humankind is driving planetary transformation is through plantation production (Kenney-Lazar and Ishikawa 2019). As Haraway further elaborates, “the Plantationocene continues with ever-greater ferocity 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” (2015: 162). Overall, it is in implicating the plantation in historical and contemporary socioecological changes on a global scale that we find much promise in the concept of the Plantationocene.

How, then, do scholars deploying the “Plantationocene” conceive of the plantation? In a recent dialogue between Donna Haraway and Anna Tsing, moderated by Gregg Mitman, the interlocutors admit that the plantation is difficult to define. Nevertheless, Haraway suggests that the plantation is a system of multispecies forced labor (Haraway et al. 2019). She posits that there are several common features across the 500-year history of the plantation, including the “radical simplification; substitution of peoples, crops, microbes, and life forms; forced labor; and, crucially, the disordering of times of generation across species, including human beings” (Haraway et al. 2019: 6). Anna Tsing adds that for her, the plantation evokes the history of European invasion of the New World, the capture of Africans for their labor, and the simplification of crops to allow for the enslaved to cultivate them. Tsing argues, “The plantation was precisely the conjuncture between ecological simplifications, the discipline of plants in particular, and the discipline of humans to work on those...The plantation takes us into that discipline-of-people/discipline-of-plants conjuncture” (6).

While we appreciate the attempt to destabilize human/nonhuman and nature/society dichotomizations in thinking about the plantation, we also find that there is a danger here. As Davis and collaborators argue, the “flattened multispecies ontology” underpinning early conceptualizations of the plantation(ocene) obscure the differences among and between forms of life assembled by the plantation (2019: 5). Consider the following instance from the initial conversation about the Plantationocene from 2014:

Noboru (Ishikawa): To me, plantations are just the slavery of plants.

Anna (Tsing): I agree.

Donna (Haraway): And microbes. (Haraway et al. 2016: 556-557)

Though a snippet of a broader conversation, this brief exchange expresses the danger in conceiving of the plantation as a multispecies assemblage without adequate theorization of racial/colonial power. To reiterate Davis et al.’s reading of this situation, “Since the plantation was not a device of undifferentiated socioecological transformation, the lack of an analysis underscoring human embodiment and examining socioecological hierarchies as both causes and consequences of the plantation is a conspicuous absence” (2019: 5).

Thus, the notion of the Plantationocene is promising because of its potential to push against anthropocentrism by focusing on multispecies assemblages and dislocations. At the same time, emphasizing the plantation challenges the Eurocentric narrative that situates fossil fuels, steam engines, and the industrial revolution as the most important elements of global environmental change (Davis et al. 2019). For as Donna Haraway argues:

The plantation system depends on the relocation of the generative units: plants, animals, microbes, people. The systematic practice of relocation for extraction is necessary to the plantation system. This began prior to the mid-eighteenth century

story of the fossil fuels and steam engines and industrial revolution and so on and so forth. All of which is terribly important, God knows! But I think that the fundamental revolutions in wording are consequential—so we need to call it the Plantationocene, forget the Capitalocene! (Haraway et al. 2016: 557)

Thinking along these lines would enable analyses that attend to the colonial, racial, and capitalist dynamics of socioecological transformation on a planetary scale.

However, we find that these early iterations of thinking about the Plantationocene lack adequate attention to the racial dynamics that attend colonial displacements and dispossessions. While Haraway notes the importance of racial differentiation in certain plantation contexts, specifically Hawai'i, racialization is not explicitly conceived of as central to the plantation enterprise more broadly (Haraway et al. 2019: 7). In contrast, we contend that the Plantationocene loses much of its power as a concept if it is delinked from colonial processes of racial differentiation and domination across the planet. Moreover, we find it troubling that whiteness escapes critical attention in these conceptualizations of the Plantationocene. For it was in the fulfillment of European/white needs and desires that the plantation initially spread across the globe to reconfigure the relations of countless species, human and more-than-human, and their life-sustaining environments as means to colonial/imperial/capitalist ends. On a related note, although the scholars just discussed note the importance of the enslavement of Africans to the plantation enterprise, the primary importance of the antiblack social and ecological dynamics emergent from this colonial capitalist activity is overlooked (Du Bois [1947] 2007; Davis et al. 2019).

A second shortcoming we find in Plantationocene thinking is the lack of theoretical attention granted to the plantation in relation to the capitalist world-economy of which it is undoubtedly an important part. This is precisely where we think that world-systems analysis is useful in considerations of the plantation and Plantationocene. However, world-systems analysis often shares in the lack of critical engagement with race, whiteness in particular, and even when race is considered, it is often treated as epiphenomenal to class. What accounts for this relative absence in world-systems analysis and in theorizations of the Plantationocene? Perhaps it is related to how, as Denise Ferreira da Silva writes, “Leftist thinkers of today consistently repeat an insidious pattern of modern thinking which considers the racial a referent of another time and place, an ideological vestige of the colonial past” (da Silva 2016: paragraph 12). According to da Silva, contemporary critics and analysts of capitalism all too often misunderstand “how the colonial and the racial have always been and remain integral to the functioning of global capital, and assumes that the architectures of total and symbolic violence that produce the figure of the Racial/Cultural Other of Europe have no juridical or economic relevance for what unfolds in the global present” (paragraph 12). At any rate, we believe that world-systems analysis has the potential to strengthen engagements with the Plantationocene, especially when brought into conversation with what Cedric Robinson has called *racial capitalism* ([1983] 2000).

Refiguring the Plantationocene: Racial Capitalism, World-Systems Analysis, and Global Socioecological Transformation

Having pointed to the importance of the Plantationocene, as well as its conceptual shortcomings, we now turn to a consideration of what world-systems analysis can contribute to thinking about the Plantationocene. Whether deploying cross-national quantitative techniques (e.g. Roberts et al. 2003; Rice 2007; Prell et al. 2014), in-depth historical case studies (e.g. Bunker 1984; Bunker & Ciccantell 2005), or world-historical investigations (e.g. Chew 2001; Moore 2015), scholars have brought world-systems thinking to bear on important environmental issues. Given its inherent globality, it is our contention that world-systems analysis is already amenable to the ecological questions and concerns that the Plantationocene raises.

However, it is also true that world-systems analysis is far less (explicitly) concerned with matters of race and colonialism. Nearly twenty years ago, Martin (2000) wrote about the future of world-systems analysis and argued that it needed to more seriously incorporate with race (and gender) into its framework (Martin 2000: 256). Writing two decades later, we find this to be just as necessary, especially when it comes to environmental considerations. Take for example, Patel and Moore's (2017) *History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*, which offers an important world-systemic analysis of the devastating ecological conditions that capitalism has created. While these authors attend to the colonial and imperial origins of capitalism, critiquing Anthropocene discourse for its implication that all humans are equally responsible for the state of the planet, it is only in the conclusion, however, that they explicitly name—once—“racialized capitalism” (Patel and Moore 2017: 209).

Also, consider Dunaway and Clelland's recent work in which they assert, “We agree with [William] Robinson (2014: 64) that ‘the principal contradiction on a world scale is one of class’ because the world-system is choreographed by transnationalized capitalists who seek to exploit racial and ethnic minorities to expropriate wealth, not to construct ‘white supremacy’” (2016: 19). Not only do these authors argue that class is far more important than race when thinking about global capitalism, but they further suggest that “race” and “racism” are Western, ethnocentric, orientalist concepts that are not universally applicable. Turning to the economic ascent of semiperipheral nations in Asia, like China, they postulate, “In the western sociology of race, those who are most privileged are white while peoples of color are the exploited. What theory will we use if China becomes the world hegemon and expands its exploitation of the world's racial and ethnic groups?” (Dunaway and Clelland 2016: 20-21).

While we certainly would agree with Dunaway and Clelland (2017) that racial groupings and their relative privileges/disadvantages can and do change across time and space, and we welcome their caution about universalizing ostensibly Western concepts and analytic framings, we must maintain the importance of critically interrogating the world-systemic implications of race. Like Frantz Fanon, we are determined never to forget that “European opulence is literally a scandal for it was built on the backs of slaves, it fed on the blood of slaves, and owes its very existence to the soil and subsoil of the underdeveloped world” ([1963] 2004: 53). For as Boatcă (2017) asserts in contrast, and in response, to Dunaway and Clelland (2017):

[E]ven if not all racists are white, racism in the world-system is premised on colonially enforced whiteness. In this context, whiteness is just as much a geopolitical category as it is a racial designation. The modern/colonial world-system piggybacked on previous forms of xenophobia and discrimination and incorporated them as part of the logic of endless accumulation just as it incorporated older regimes of labor control, such as slavery, serfdom, and tenancy. (Boatcă 2017: 471)

Although there are other scholars of world-systems who have been more attentive to the importance of race and colonialism as operative within the capitalist world-economy (e.g. Grosfoguel 2016; Fenelon 2016; Christian 2019), we think that the idea of racial capitalism offers a way for world-systems analysis to reckon with race in a way that is more in line with Boatcă's (2017) assertion above.

In *Black Marxism*, Cedric Robinson ([1983] 2000) critiques Marxism for its failure to ascertain the centrality of racialism, or "the legitimation and corroboration of social organization as natural by reference to the 'racial components of its elements,'" to the historical development of capitalism (2). He maintains that the "development, organization, and expansion of capitalist society pursued essentially racial directions," and "as a material force...racialism would inevitably permeate the social structures emergent from capitalism" (2). Furthermore, in Robinson's theorization, there are four distinct phases or moments of European racialism:

1. the racial ordering of European society from its formative period, which extends into the medieval and feudal ages as "blood" and racial beliefs and legends.
2. the Islamic (i.e. Arab, Persian, Turkish, and African) domination of Mediterranean civilization and the consequent retarding of European social and cultural life: the Dark Ages.
3. the incorporation of African, Asian, and peoples of the New World into the world system emerging from late feudalism and merchant capitalism.
4. the dialectic of colonialism, plantocratic slavery, and resistance from the sixteenth century forward, and the formations of industrial labor and labor reserves. ([1983] 2000: 67)

In proposing these distinct phases of European racialism, Robinson challenges us to reconsider the history of racism, which is typically thought of as beginning with the colonial encounter between Europe and its others (e.g. Omi and Winant 2014).

Most importantly, for our purposes, is that Robinson's intervention upholds the centrality of racialism and colonialism to the emergent structure of the capitalist world-economy. While recognizing the importance of Wallerstein's work (1974; 1980) on the origins of the capitalist world-system, Robinson also points out that in his "otherwise quite detailed study," he devotes "a single paragraph on the [racial] and ethnic divisions of sixteenth-century immigrant labor" (Robinson [1983] 2000: 23). By contrast, what Robinson argues in the first part of *Black Marxism*, over the course of three chapters, is that:

The bourgeoisie that led the development of capitalism were drawn from particular ethnic and cultural groups; the European proletariats and the mercenaries of the leading states from others; its peasants from still other cultures; and its slaves from entirely different worlds. The tendency of European civilization through capitalism was thus not to homogenize but to differentiate—to exaggerate regional, subcultural, and dialectical differences into “racial” ones. As the Slavs became the natural slaves, the racially inferior stock for domination and exploitation during the early Middle Ages, as the Tartars came to occupy a similar position in the Italian cities of the late Middle Ages, so at the systemic interlocking of capitalism in the sixteenth century, the peoples of the Third World began to fill the expanding category of a civilization reproduced by capitalism. (2000: 26)

At the same time, his notion of racial capitalism is crucial because it builds upon the work of Black radical social analysts, like Eric Williams ([1944] 2014), Walter Rodney ([1972] 2018), and W.E.B. Du Bois ([1947] 2007), by refusing to treat racialism, colonialism, and imperialism as mere stages in the development of capitalism, and instead apprehends “capitalism as a global colonial system from the start,” in which “capital accumulation is predicated on the continuous racialization of global labor and exploitation of colonial workers” (Itzigsohn and Brown 2020: 70). We maintain, therefore, that recognizing the ever-present racial and colonial character of the capitalist world-economy is critical for the future direction of world-systems analysis, and furthermore, we see this as prerequisite to thinking about the Plantationocene.

Yet, as discussed in the previous section, part of the problem with the Plantationocene is that existing conceptualizations fail to engage with existing work on the plantation within the social sciences. As Dale Tomich (2011) notes, the plantation was an important field of investigation across the social sciences in the mid to late 20th century. In the 1960s and 1970s, for instance, scholars sought to understand the underdevelopment of plantation economies in the Caribbean and Latin America, by drawing upon dependency theory (e.g. Guerra y Sanchez 1964; Best 1968; Beckford [1972] 1999). Within sociology, Edgar Thompson dedicated his entire career to comparative-sociological work on the plantation (Thompson 1975; 1983; [1932] 2010).

In contrast to Thompson, Tomich (2011) rethinks the plantation by placing it in the context of the capitalist world-economy, rather than treating the plantation as a generalized ideal-type. According to Tomich’s world-systems perspective:

[T]he plantation is an institution of the capitalist world-economy. It extends and deepens the world economic division of labor by geographically integrating new regions, producing new (staple) commodities, and mobilizing labor on an expanding scale. It is at once formed by and formative of the world-economy. Both the plantation and the world-economy are continuously remade in relation to one another through processes of expansion and reproduction of the world-economy (accumulation). From this perspective the world market and division of labor encompasses the plantation, and the plantation is a constituent element of the world market and division of labor. The world market and the plantation are necessarily interrelated, interdependent, and mutually constitutive. Neither exists without the other. Rather than treating each as a separate entity, each entails the other. (2011: 32)

Tomich's rethinking of the plantation allows us to place the institution within the broader matrix of the capitalist world-economy, whereby we can differentiate particular plantation regimes from one another by treating each as a distinctive configuration of land, labor, and capital under specific ecological conditions. Ultimately, this is crucial for it allows us to "spatially and temporally differentiate processes of world-economic development" (Tomich 2011: 37).

Though an important advancement in conceptualizing the plantation, Tomich (2011) allows an important feature of Edgar Thompson's thinking on the plantation to fall out of the analysis. For in Thompson's work, the plantation is at once a colonial, racial, industrial-capitalist institution focused on producing commodities for the world market. In an essay titled, "The Plantation: The Physical Basis of Traditional Race Relations," Thompson argues that the plantation "differentiates rank and social classes and defines the relations between them. Always and everywhere it appears to be based upon differences of race, and the races involved are not always white and a colored race" (1939: 184). Understanding this point enables an understanding of the racialized world-economic division of labor, of which the plantation is an integral part. For as Thompson further writes:

As the star of the European manorial system sank, that of the plantation system, likewise involving large landed estates, arose in colonial areas overseas where some agricultural staples might profitably be grown for the world market. Adventurers seeking profitable investments for their capital marched out with captains and missionaries, and the colored and so-called primitive peoples of the world became one by one integral parts of the white man's economic order. (1939: 184)

Thompson's thinking resonates with that of W.E.B. Du Bois in considering how racial-colonial capitalism incorporates the "dark and vast sea of human labor" beyond Europe to produce "the world's raw material and luxury – cotton, wool, coffee, tea, cocoa, palm oil, fibers, spices, rubber, silks, lumber, copper, gold, diamonds, leather, [etc.]" ([1935] 1998: 15).

In sum, as an institution formed by and formative of the modern world-system, predicated upon the racial and colonial dislocation and domination of multi-species assemblages, the plantation directs our attention to global socioecological inequality, or "the ways in which humans, nonhumans, and ecosystems intersect to produce hierarchies—privileges and disadvantages—within and across species and space that ultimately place each at great risk" (Pellow 2014: 7). When we trace the trajectory of the plantation across time and space, it becomes apparent that the so-called "raw materials" that plantations cultivate from vegetal (and animal) life is always conjoined with the racial-colonial labor of Europe's others. From the sugar plantations of the Canary, Madeira, Cape Verde, and São Tomé and Príncipe Islands in the 15th century to the palm oil plantations of West Papua, Indonesia, and Malaysia today, differentially racialized and colonized peoples from Africa (i.e. Black or African-descended), Asia and the Pacific (e.g. Indian, Tamil, Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Filipino, Malaysian, and South Sea Islanders or Kanakas), and South and Central America (e.g. Indigenous and Latinx) have been variously dislocated and/or conscripted to labor with plants in Earth's tropical and subtropical zones. Moreover, always and everywhere, the plantation generates monocultural staples for the world market at the expense of

Earth's assorted ecosystems – causing soil erosion and exhaustion, pollution from milling effluents and agrochemicals such as pesticides, fungicides, herbicides and inorganic fertilizers, and biodiversity loss (Hartemink 2005; Robbins et al. 2015; Kenney-Lazar and Ishikawa 2019). Ultimately, what is at stake here is whether we are able and willing to apprehend the ecological changes wrought by nearly 500 years of the plantation as *not* just a matter of global capitalist expansion and integration (Moore 2000; 2003), but also racial and colonial assimilation into a world-economic order that institutes a global hierarchy of human and more-than-human life with direct consequence to the Earth system.

Conclusion

We conclude this essay on world-systems analysis and the Plantationocene where we started, with Haiti. In the introduction, we noted various aspects of what we called the social and ecological crisis in Haiti. Again, we ask, how do we understand Haiti's situation without resorting to racist cultural critique or merely explaining the problems away by pointing to state failure and instability? How do we explain the social and ecological plight of Haiti, like so many other regions of the planet, without implicating the plantation and how it positions Haiti within the world-system?

As Leslie Mullin writes, citing former President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, "The role of slaves was to harvest coconuts, and the role of colonists was to eat the coconuts" (Mullin N.d.: paragraph 1). The same is true of the other plantation commodities that enslaved Africans and their descendants produced for European markets in Saint Domingue, the so-called "pearl of the Antilles," which by the end of the 18th century was home to 800 sugar, 3,000 coffee, 800 cotton, and nearly 3,000, indigo plantations (Haggerty 1989). Even after a successful revolution, making Haiti the first Black republic in the Western Hemisphere, Haitians continued to produce these same cash crops for the global market for centuries to come (Ibid). Today, however, the former star of the European racial-colonial capitalist enterprise imports far more than it exports. In 2018, Haiti imported 2.9 million tons of biophysical resources, nearly half of which were in the form of agricultural staples produced in the United States (Chatham House 2018). Whereas, in the same year, Haiti exported 76.3 thousand tons of materials, mostly metals and minerals (Chatham House 2018). When situated in the broader historical trajectory of the plantation, and the siphoning of biophysical resources and racial-colonial labor that it was designed to accommodate for Europe, Haiti's position in the extreme periphery of the world-system, points to the necessity of implicating the afterlife of slavery in shaping the country's dire socioecological conditions.

In this essay, we have admittedly only scratched the surface of what becomes possible when world-systems analysis attends to the global socioecological dynamics and consequences of the plantation. Therefore, to conclude, we want to suggest several directions that future work utilizing a world-systems approach to the Plantationocene might take. First, and most broadly, we see great potential for world-historical analysis that charts the trajectory of plantation production over the *longue durée*, along with the socioecological transformations that accompany it as it extends across time and space. Second, and related to existing work on ecologically unequal exchange (e.g.

Roberts and Parks 2007; Hornborg 2009; Jorgenson and Rice 2012; Frey et al. 2019), scholars might also give sustained attention to the plantation's role in "the unequal material exchange relations and consequent ecological interdependencies within the world economy, all of which are fundamentally tied to wide disparities in socio-economic development and power embedded within the global system" (Jorgenson 2016: 6). Third, we envision future research that might take the form of in-depth historical and ethnographic case studies of socioecological transformation in regions of the planet that have been visited by the plantation. Though focused on specific cases, this research would of course situate each case within the context of the global capitalist political economy.

Building upon work that focuses on a single commodity, such as coffee (Paige 1998), sugar (Mintz 1986; Moore 2000; Korzeniewicz and Payne 2019), or rubber (Weinstein 1983; Bunker 1985; Ishikawa 2010), a fourth area of for future study might focus on meats, tea, forest trees, rice, oil seeds, sisal, fruits, cotton, oil palms, cocoa, and cannabis/hemp to further elucidate the socioecological ramifications of plantation commodities and their production. Relatedly, this work should further consider how plantation staples are intertwined with corporate globalization, or the "new enclosures of the commons; enclosures which imply exclusions and are based on violence" (Shiva 2006: 2). As Kenney-Lazar and Ishikawa (2019) discuss regarding Southeast Asia's mega-plantations – defined as plantations developed rapidly and drastically to alter existing landscapes via the displacement and replacement of human and nonhuman communities – these megaprojects (Gellert and Lynch 2003) are reliant upon transnational capital and corporate organization.

Fifth, to avoid erasing the agency of human and nonhuman subalterns, scholars should certainly attend to the various modes of resistance to plantation power, in both the past and present. How do people along with their more-than-human counterparts challenge the socioecological hierarchy that the plantation imposes? Finally, we want to suggest a sixth area of research is needed, one that would speculate about the future of the plantation as the tropics expand along with global climate change (Staten et al. 2018).

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