



The Co-dependency of White Supremacy Culture and Capitalism

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HONORS THESIS 2020



Land Acknowledgement



Trigger Warnings

- Racism, anti-blackness, police brutality, slavery, genocide, medical violence against Black and brown people, land displacement, white supremacy culture, white supremacists, violence from capitalism, exploitation of Black and brown people, and intersections of racism with classism, sexism, queerphobia, and transphobia, as well as the climate crises.



Disclaimers

- Research biases
- Type of research used and why
- Who has repeatedly been saying this?

Brief History

- Capitalism in England in the 16th century
 - Ingrained behaviors and mentalities
- Transference of capitalist thought and practice into colonial rule and white colonization
- How did white supremacy culture get intertwined with capitalism?
- Racial capitalism and the plantation

Audrey & Brian Smedley, 2012
Matthew Desmond, 2019

What is white supremacy culture?

Pillars and characteristics of white supremacy culture, and therefore capitalism:

- Perfectionism
- Sense of urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity over quality
- Worship of the written word
- Only one right way
- Paternalism
- Either/or thinking
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- I'm the only one
- Progress is bigger, more
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort
- Politeness

Tema Okun & Kenneth Jones, 2001



What is capitalism?

- As an economic system
- As a mentality + behavior traits

Audrey & Brian Smedley, 2012

Western Science & Colonization

- A tool for racial capitalism
 - Used to justify white superiority
 - Used to exploit Black and Indigenous people of color for profit or “science”
 - Rationalization of western science at the assumed irrationality of other cultures
- Colonization and genocide
 - Exploitation of knowledge for the profit of higher ed and corporate institutions

Harriet A. Washington, 2007
Gandhi & Wolff, 2017
Audrey & Brian Smedley, 2012



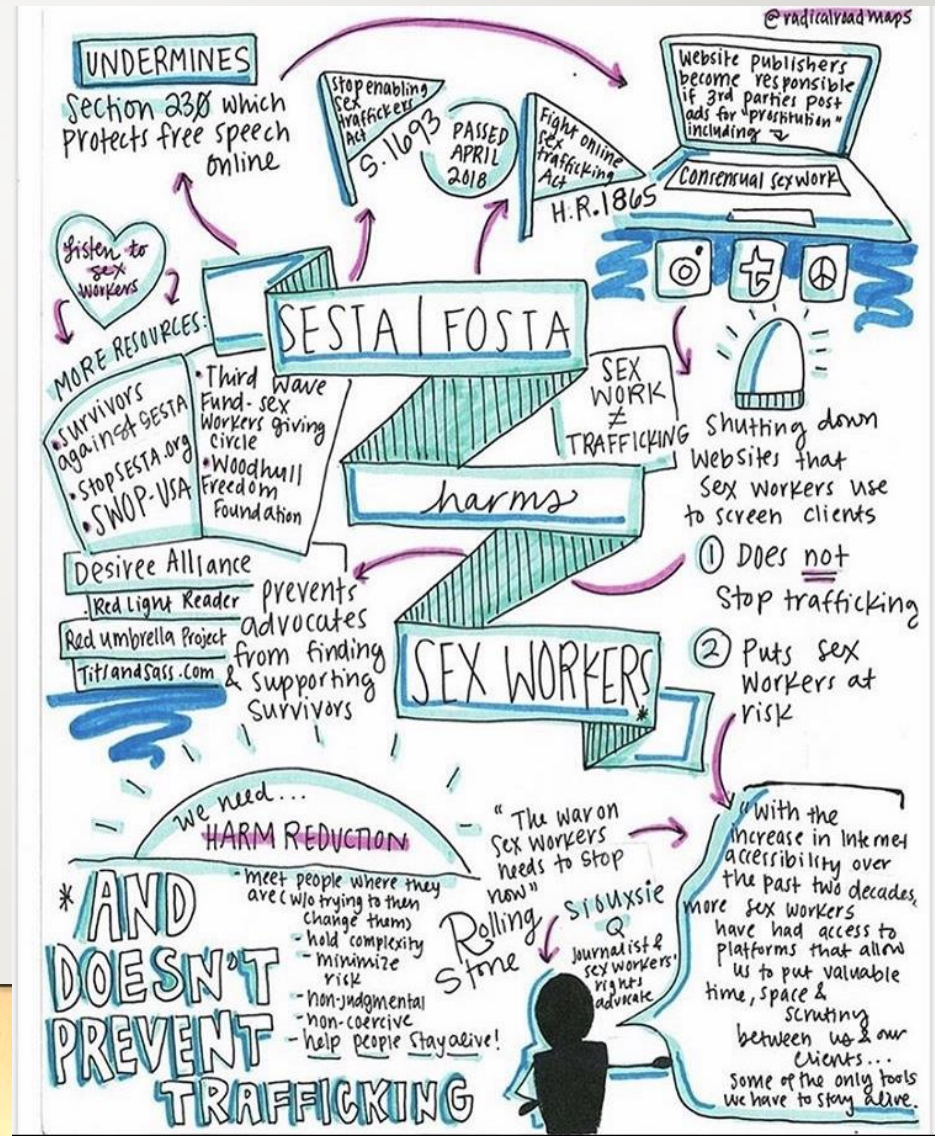
Sexism & Feminism Under Racial Capitalism

- Historical feminist movements
 - Suffrage movement
 - Reproductive rights
- The necessity for the interrogation of how oppression is fought
 - White feminism, disregard for intersectionality
- Equality vs. Equity

Angela Davis, 1981
bell hooks

Anti-Black Racism Explaining Fatphobia and Whorephobia

- Insidiousness of racial capitalism into our daily lives
- Exploitation through Eurocentric beauty standards
- Objectification and dehumanization



Ericka Hart
@radicalroadmaps

Classism and Power Hoarding of the Elite

- The power of whiteness and transient oppressions
- Police and policing protecting capitalism
- Late capitalism and:
 - The wealth gap
 - Inherited wealth

Audrey & Brian Smedley, 2012

Angela Davis, 1981

The Unequal Opportunity Race, 2010

Queerphobia and Transphobia: Defenders of White Supremacy Culture and Capitalism

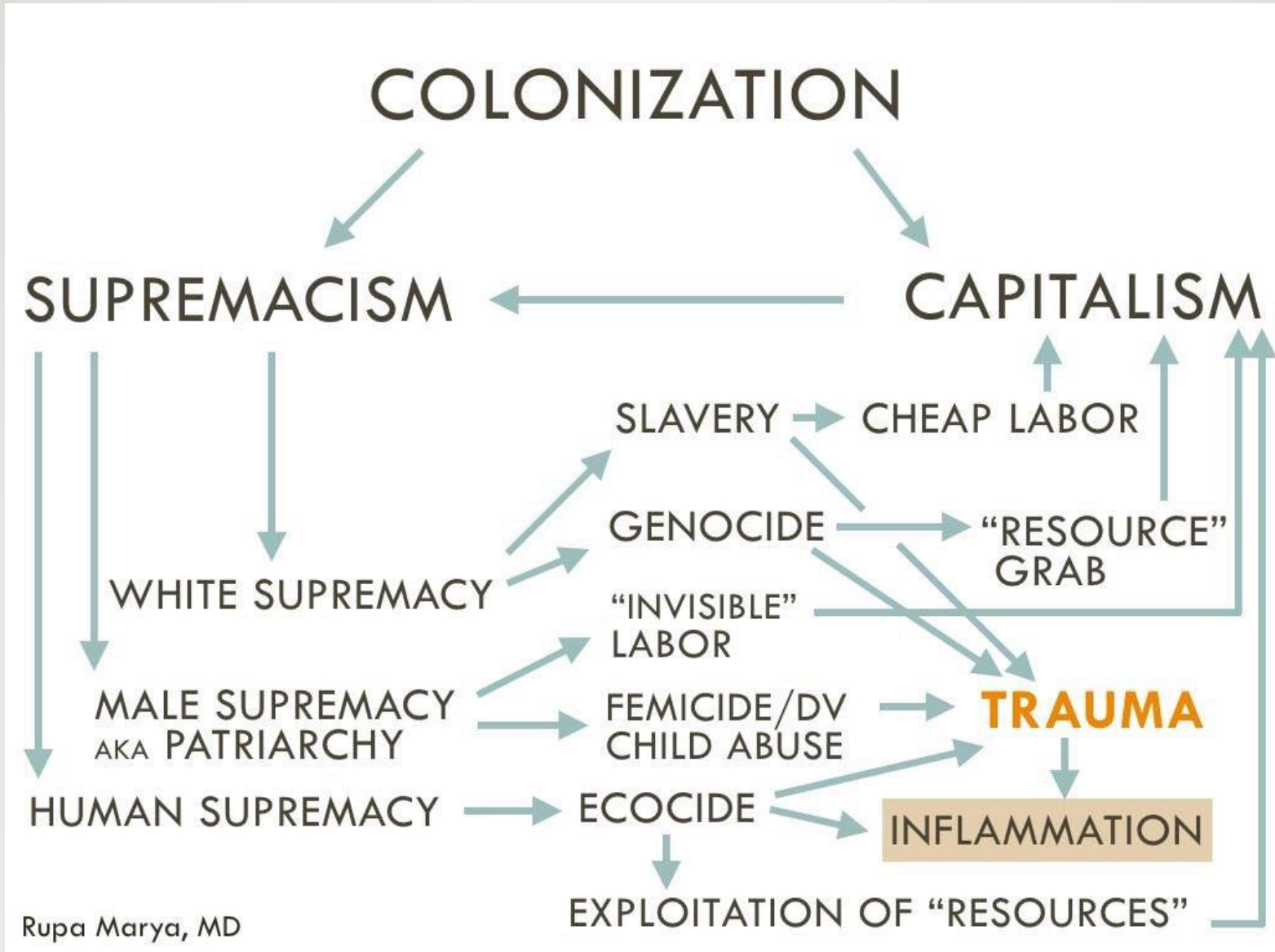
- The gender binary and colonization
- Queerness as survival
- Continual colonization and genocide through anti-queerness and transphobia
- Movement-work and the centering of Black queer and trans folk

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, 2017
Charlene Carruthers, 2019
@mpjinstitute


The Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice

- Public view of environmental movements and the forced removal of Black and Indigenous people from land and natural spaces
- Capitalism as a system of endless growth and exploitation against the natural land
- Environmental justice movements and elitism, inaccessibility, and propaganda
- Environmental racism in the political sphere

Murray Bookchin, 1989
@subversivethread, 2019
@carrotquinn, 2018
@lilnativeboy, 2020



Rupa Marya, MD



Know the ways of the ones who take care of you, so that you may take care of them.

Introduce yourself. Be accountable as the one who comes asking for life. Ask permission before taking.

Abide by the answer.

Never take the first. Never take the last. Take only what you need. Take only that which is given. Never take more than half. Leave some for others. Harvest in a way that minimizes harm.

Use it respectfully. Never waste what you have taken. Share. Give thanks for what you have been given. Gift a gift, in reciprocity for what you have taken. Sustain the ones who sustain you and the earth will last forever.”

Braiding Sweetgrass, Robin Wall Kimmerer



Rest and Relaxation as Resistance

- Productivity and self-worth
- Self-care + interrogation
- The place of self-care in movement work for longevity and sustainability

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies
Resmaa Menakem, 2017

Where are we now? COVID-19 and the Real Pandemic

- Late to respond to the pandemic, but quick to re-open the economy
- Late to respond to the pandemic, but quick to flood Black Lives Matter protests with riot gear police and the national guard
- Propaganda and exploitation
- White institutions seeking to further enrich their own interests at the expense and death of Black and brown people and communities
- Demand Radical Change!

Naomi Klein, 2020
Angela Davis, 2020



Violence, Destruction, and Compost

- Violence having a place in movement-work
- Destruction of racist and capitalist institutions
- Rooting activism back to nature: compost as a comparison
- Valuing Black joy, creativity, and sustainable rest over profit and expansion

Nikki Silvestri, 2020
Leah Penniman
Naima Penniman

Conclusion (not really though)

- This work is not done
- Be interrogative of how you view yourself and how you view others
- Listen to Black Indigenous people of color, pass the mic, and center their voices

"All that you touch, you change.

All that you change, changes you.

The only lasting truth is change.

God is change."

- Octavia E. Butler



Acknowledgements