

however, we are left with a sobering conclusion: that the exploitation of human labor is systemic to civilization.

As a field, Classics continues to agonize with its own past and how it forms the basis of the discipline. In this latest contribution to an already impressive canon of work, Lewis offers a forthright, sweeping analysis of the history of slavery in antiquity, bringing light to this fascinating, albeit harrowing, human invention.

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Trouble of the World: Slavery and Empire in the Age of Capital. By Zach Sell. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021. 352 pp. Halftones, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$95.00. ISBN: 978-1-4696-6045-5.

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Reviewed by Ndubueze L. Mbah

In *Trouble of the World*, Zach Sell writes a powerful history of global capitalism as racialized domination. Beyond Marxist eschewal of the centrality of racism and separation of colonialism from capitalism, Sell draws upon Black radical and anticolonial critique (C. L. R. James, Eric Williams, W. E. B. Du Bois) and recent scholarship on critical histories of race, empire, and capitalism to argue that global capitalism took the forms of interconnected colonial violence, and racialized dispossession and labor coercion, which expanded after the capitalist crisis generated by slavery's abolition in the British Empire (1833) and Black emancipation in the United States (1865). Building upon the convergence of U.S. slavery and British imperialism, mid-nineteenth-century global capitalism came to be defined by racial domination and colonial occupation and was achieved through the perpetuation of plantation societies, Indigenous dispossession, and Black removal, to create white settler societies and white ethno-states, and through use of the capitalist

marketplace, to create racialized hierarchies of labor and production. Sell draws a straight line between U.S. slavery expansion (bolstered by British demand for slavery-produced commodities) and British imperial expansion in India, the Caribbean, southern Africa, and Australia (inspired by U.S. slavery capitalism). Sell's is an account of the convergences that made global capitalism: U.S. slaveholders' and British colonial planters' trading of race management practices, the ways that racialized slavery and Black women's reproductive labor in the United States expanded factory work in Britain, and the intercausal and cumulative ways that anticolonial and antislavery uprisings in distant colonies affected industry and labor in metropolises. This capitalism has left us a legacy of "austerity, killer crops, relentless land grabs, and unrelenting projects of enclosure . . . authoritarian populism and new racist regimes . . . police murders of Black people, unemployment, and mass dispossession and displacement" (p. 9).

The book is based on archival research in Australia, Belize, Britain, India, and the United States. It is organized into four sections and ten chapters essaying racial and colonial histories of capitalism in the United States (reduction of Black humanity to real estate, U.S.-British slavery-based free trade policies, plantation exports, and the intersection of Black freedom claims to land with white demands for Black removal), India (Bengal indigo, failed efforts to introduce Carolina rice to India, U.S. overseers' introduction of cotton staples across India), Britain (fears of U.S. "cotton famine" in England amid the American Civil War and their repercussions in India), Australia (efforts to relieve the suffering of unemployed British factory workers by erecting a supremacist white man's country in Queensland, dependent on South Pacific migrant labor), and British Honduras/Belize (successive efforts to exploit emancipated Black labor from the United States, Chinese indentured labor, and relying upon former U.S. slaveholding planters' knowledge to establish plantations).

The analytic lens of racial capitalism enhances our knowledge of historical events. Thus, consider that the United States was a settler empire characterized by the hierarchical differentiation of territory and people through enslavement and Indigenous dispossession, such that the majority of white capital was in enslaved people and plantations, independence from Britain meant unrestrained slave ownership and territorial expansion, British abolition strengthened the real estate basis of U.S. slavery as a means to accumulate capital, and wills and genealogical inheritance practices consolidated the racial hierarchies of wealth distribution. Similarly, through the lens of colonial capitalism, divergences in the global history of colonial raw material production become clear. The

systematic colonization of India had been represented as a certain solution to the global crisis of the Lancashire cotton famine exacerbated by the American Civil War—a calculation of capitalist accumulation that drew the United States and India into relations of raw material production to sustain British global manufacturing dominance. But British failure to replicate the success of American cotton and rice in India reflects how global racial capitalism was reliant on slavery and Black suffering. Because Indian farmers possessed the privilege of “choices” in cultivation, they disrupted British colonial risiculture. Efforts to introduce “American cotton” also failed because Indian farmers behaved too “independently” and cotton production relied disproportionately on the labors of old women and children. Replication of “Carolina rice” and “American cotton” in India would have required slavery. Colonial capitalism meant that Britain transposed much of the cotton famine risk to colonial India, displacing handloom manufacturing and transferring production costs. The “famine relief” intended for dying Indian farmers was redirected to Lancashire’s factory workers, despite failed British colonial efforts to extract from India quantities and quality of cotton comparable to those produced by the American slave states.

In recentering Du Bois and other Black radical critics—and, ipso facto, race and colonialism—Sell transcends the limitations of Marxist analysis of capitalism. In both the consideration of how the “*coolie*” question accompanied conversations about Black emancipation, as well as the responsive rise of “U.S.-style settler white supremacy” (p. 150) in Australia and elsewhere, a historical recognition of capitalism as racialized domination is unassailable. In subordinating South Sea Islanders’ labor in Australia, and Chinese indentured laborers in Belize, British settlers mimicked the United States in innovating post-abolition and post-emancipation societies where white plantation ownership sustained forms of global capitalism. Australia and Belize were part of white racial separatist projects growing out of the United States, where the politics of forced Black removals, as well as efforts to transform freed-peoples into laborers as opposed to landholders after emancipation, provided new models of global white supremacy. Sell’s *Trouble of the World* provides a global platform for situating new histories of empire and labor during and after slavery’s abolition, and in advancing Eric Williams’s seminal *Capitalism and Slavery* (1944) beyond the British Caribbean into the United States, India, and Australia, Sell powerfully revitalizes a Black intellectual thesis of racial capitalism, beyond doubt. The dimensions of argument in *Trouble of the World* can easily be extended to British settler colonialism in southern Africa and the region’s successive apartheid regimes, as well as the role that whitening America played in the African American racialized colonization of Liberia, the subject of

Robert Murray's new *Atlantic Passages: Race, Mobility, and Liberian Colonization*.

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Not Made by Slaves: Ethical Capitalism in the Age of Abolition. *By Bronwen Everill*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020. 328 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, index. Hardcover, \$39.95. ISBN 978-0-674-24098-8.

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Reviewed by Samantha Payne

Reflecting on his time as a history graduate student at Oxford University, the famous Trinidadian scholar Eric Williams once remarked that “British historians [then] wrote almost as if Britain had introduced Negro slavery solely for the satisfaction of abolishing it.” Williams’s dissertation demolished that idea. Published as *Capitalism and Slavery* in 1944, the Williams thesis argued that profits from Caribbean slavery gave rise to industrial capitalism in Great Britain. British capitalists only embraced abolitionism after slavery became an obstacle to further industrial development. According to Williams, abolitionism had material—not moral—roots.

Capitalism and Slavery likely provoked more debate than any other work of British history published in the twentieth century. Two of its most famous critics are worth mentioning here. David Brion Davis developed the first major revision to the Williams thesis in *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution* (1975). He argued that while antislavery ideology did not have material origins, it still gained traction in the late eighteenth century because it served the “needs and interests” of the capitalist class. In a direct challenge to Davis, Thomas Haskell argued ten years later that capitalism gave rise to abolitionism by working a transformation in mankind’s “cognitive style.” In his conception, international markets enabled individuals to perceive causal links between their actions and distant suffering, resulting in unprecedented anxiety about human slavery. (For an overview of this debate, see Thomas Bender, ed., *The Antislavery Debate: Capitalism and Abolitionism as a Problem in Historical Interpretation* [1995]).

Bronwen Everill’s intriguing new book, *Not Made by Slaves: Ethical Capitalism in the Age of Abolition*, reopens this old debate. Armed with fresh insights from the new history of slavery and capitalism, Everill argues that scholars must launch a renewed investigation into the