

Race and climate change: Towards anti-racist ecologies

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Abstract

Global South scholars have long documented and theorised their communities' struggles against the ecological degradation, toxic contamination, and climate change-related extreme weather events which result from the overlapping ills of colonialism, imperialism, and racial capitalism. Building on that existing work, contributors to this collection extend and deepen understandings of the material entanglements of race and ecology in our contemporary conjuncture. Speaking from various scales and locations, including the Caribbean, Brazil, Sri Lanka, and Palestine, the authors reflect on those sites while also collectively recovering and amplifying lineages of thought on ecology from across the South. As the contributions collected here show, the traps set by global structures of race also direct mainstream climate solutions back towards the expropriation, premature death, or prevention of birth of peoples of colour by various means, from militarised conservation to eugenic populationism. Confronting the racial logics of both ecological harm and its supposed solutions is therefore a key task of this collection. As a collective, however, the issue's contributors also carve out paths to reparation and structural change which form the contours of an anti-racist ecology for our times.

Keywords

climate change, ecology, environment, justice, race

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Introducing the issue and cognate works

The European incursion of Abya Yala in the year 1492 marked the beginning of the integration of the world market across the Atlantic, but it also marked two major combined global rifts: one in world ecology and the other in humanity itself in the extension of ‘race’ beyond Europe. As Sylvia Wynter has so consciously detailed, the rift in the human provoked by the dehumanising codes and practices of European colonisation has allowed for the white Western bourgeois ‘ethnaclass’ figure – presently in the ideal form of homo economicus – to become the ‘overrepresented modality of being human’ (Wynter, 2003: 317). Those excluded from the figure of the human by colonial racial projects have, as a result, also been excluded from ethical treatment and subsumed within circuits of extraction, exploitation, contamination, and other processes which multiply their ‘vulnerability to premature death’ (Gilmore, 2007: 28). After centuries of exclusion from the bounty afforded by human status under colonial/racial capitalism, the recent advent of the Anthropocene – the proposed geological epoch noting human agency in planetary ecological crisis¹ – marked the sudden restricted inclusion of Black, brown and Indigenous peoples into the frame of humanity, just as blame for ecological collapse was being apportioned.

Setting aside these now well-rehearsed epoch debates, it has long been clear that ecological harm and environmental injustice are deeply entwined with racialised economic exploitation and injustice in the world capitalist system. Communities of colour have consistently been disproportionately blighted by ecological degradation; the toxic contamination produced by the globalised capitalist mode of production; and climate change-related floods, droughts, wildfires, and other extreme weather events. Rising sea levels are already contaminating agricultural production and salinating the groundwater supplies of Pacific and Caribbean communities, who face submergence if global temperatures exceed 1.5°C (see Sealey-Huggins, 2017; Teaiwa, 2019). And across the Global South, as well as across the North’s districts of racialised poverty, communities feeling the force of storms and heatwaves remain structurally excluded from the economic means to adapt. With these contemporary existential burdens and the long entangled histories of race and ecology weighing heavy on our minds, this special issue confronts the climate crisis as a racist crisis² in all of its many complex dimensions.

Contributors to this collection speak from various scales and locations, including the Caribbean, Rio de Janeiro, Sri Lanka, and Palestine. However, rather than approaching these sites simply as ‘case studies’ (Kangieser and Todd, 2020) on which to apply Western theory, the authors collectively recover and amplify lineages of thought on ecology from across the Global South. Ariadne Collins, for example, builds on Walter Rodney, while Keston Perry draws from Norman Girvan and Sylvia Wynter to analyse the racial ecologies of the Caribbean. Ghada Sasa extends collective Palestinian and Islamic philosophies including *a’wna* (collaboration) and *sumud* (steadfastness) into ecological thought, and Bikrum Gill does the same with the world-making practices of the Caribbean (*Ayiti*) and the Andes (*Huacas of Tawantinsuyu*). Furthermore, the papers collected here do not stop at diagnosis and analysis, instead they also carve out paths to reparation and structural change which form the contours of an anti-racist ecology for our times.

As the issue’s authors show, extensive work by racialised and colonised scholars/activists and their comrades has carefully detailed the entanglements of ecological harm with racism as a global system of power which organises the distribution of accumulation and expropriation, protection and harm, consumption and contamination in the global

capitalist economy. For example, building on the struggles of fellow Pacific feminists against the British, French, and US nuclear testing which scorched their socioecologies in the mid-20th century, Teresia Teaiwa named the toxic practice of ‘ecological racism’ back in 1994 (Teaiwa, 1994: 87). Engaging closely with the struggles of Black communities in the United States against the overwhelming concentration of life-choking land, air, and water contamination in their neighbourhoods, Robert D. Bullard and others developed the justice-oriented framework of ‘environmental racism’ (see Bullard, 1993; Pulido, 2017). Referencing the planet-charring militarism which intensified in the Western invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, Vandana Shiva identified ‘eco-apartheid’ as the artificial separation of nature from social life (Shiva, 2013; see also Checker, 2008, for a distinct conceptualisation of eco-apartheid). Turning specifically to the differential distribution of the harms of climate change, other scholars have developed the concept of ‘climate apartheid’ to refer to the ‘co-produced system of privilege and precarity – a system [. . .] built upon historical legacies of colonization, racial capitalism, and hetero-patriarchy’ (Rice et al., 2022: 626, for varying iterations see Táiwò, 2020; Tuana, 2019).

Substantial disciplinary work has also pushed for epistemic adjustments to political ecology and environmental studies to incorporate a serious analysis of race in relation to climate change and environmental harm. The framework of ‘racial ecologies’ developed by Nishime and Williams (2018), for example, brings ethnic studies into productive conversation with environmental studies and ‘attends to the multiple ways in which the neglect of certain kinds of communities reproduces racial categories and how the systematic dispossession of targeted groups is reduced to a *naturalized difference*’ (Nishime and Williams, 2018: 5, emphasis in the original). Drawing on struggles in the Americas, Sharlene Mollett (2021) develops a ‘political ecologies of race’ approach in which Black and Indigenous lives and experiences of/within ecology are understood relationally, rather than as analytically separate phenomena. Taking us back again to 1492 and the import of the Spanish *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity) racial system to the Americas, Mollett argues that elements of this system endure in the form of *mestizaje* which celebrates the inheritance of European purity. Illuminating how local and regional systems of race sit within global structures, Mollett extends the analysis to connect race with patterns of extractive violence and the distribution of resources and environmental harm as the core concerns of political ecology.

Further scholarship and struggle shows that, when we turn to dominant proposed climate crisis solutions, we see a landscape of ideas and technologies which are invested with the same racial logics as the systems generating ecological collapse in the first place (Collins et al., 2021; Kashwan et al., 2021; Perry, 2021; Tilley and Ajl, 2022). Environmentalism, with its multiple lineages, influences, and formations, contains the sediments of colonialism, imperialism, and white nationalism, as much as it contains the sediments of liberatory projects. Conservationism, for example, has long been bound up with the violent expropriation and expulsion of Indigenous and other racialised peoples from the lands they steward for the sake of the creation of a fictional pristine ‘wilderness’ as part of colonial projects. This extends to conservation’s deep ecology variants, even as they appropriate, distort, and romanticise the racialised Eastern Other (Guha, 1997 [1989]). Beyond the formal colonial era, global conservation has been militarised into a ‘fortress’ model which still maintains the separation of Global South communities from ‘nature’, even to the point of enacting ‘shoot to kill’ policies against Indigenous locals straying across conservation area boundaries (Mogomotsi and Mogomotsi, 2022). And, instead of recognising the deep and dynamic relations between biodiversity cultivation

and Indigenous peoples, conservation projects continue to enclose, exclude, and persecute along racialised lines, helped along by racist ideas of communities of colour as being incapable of stewardship.

The drive to act against climate change in the contemporary ‘market episteme’ (McMichael, 2009) has served to expand the exclusionary conservation model into the base for market-driven offsetting of greenhouse gas emissions. Dynamics of racial exclusion have intensified as proliferating market-based programmes for carbon offsetting, mitigation banking, biodiversity protection, and the like reimagine ‘lands without people’ in which to construct the ‘wilderness’ underside of Global North overconsumption (Kashwan et al., 2021). Through to the present, environmental thinkers across the political spectrum continue to reproduce the dispossessionary concepts central to conservation, causing Ferdinand (2022: 184) to ask, ‘Under which silences can “wilderness” be defended?’ The answer being the silences of those enslaved, expropriated, and exterminated under the entwined racial projects of colonialism and capitalism. ‘In listening to these voices’, Ferdinand (2022: 198) continues, ‘the word that is powerfully cried out is not wilderness but justice’.

Owing to this history and its lineages of oppression, the accessible repertoires of environmentalism lead to ‘solutions’ which reproduce the harms of racial projects, especially in the Global South, while leaving undisturbed the crimes of power and privilege which generate a warming world in the first place. The still unexorcised legacies of white nationalist environmentalists like Garrett Hardin remain accessible in the forms of populationism, ecobordering, and lifeboat ethics (see Shaw and Wilson, 2020; Tilley and Ajl, 2022; Turner and Bailey, 2022). So, while the popular will to fight climate crisis gets stronger, so too do the reproductive injustices, the deadly borders, and the expropriation for offsets, conservation, and transition minerals – all of which reproduce the oppression of peoples of colour in the colonial sacrifice zones of the Global South and Indigenous and racialised domains of the North.

Back in the 1980s, Ramachandra Guha (1997 [1989]: 100) told us that the ‘expansionist character of modern Western man will have to give way to an ethic of renunciation and self-limitation, in which spiritual and communal values play an increasing role in sustaining social life’. However, with so much faith still invested in techno-solutionism in order to maintain overconsumption and economic growth in the face of climate crisis, it seems we are no closer to this ethical shift and the structural change it necessarily implies. And yet, meaningful, alternative projects, especially those of Global South design, have long been at our fingertips. Contributors to this volume, while diagnosing the conjunctions of race and climate change, also signpost such routes to repair and justice – from climate reparations and anti-eugenic commitment, to anti-racist eco-socialism and restorative anti-colonial practices. The paragraphs to follow summarise their rich contributions to our understanding of the crisis, as well as to these anti-racist ecologies of hope.

Race and climate change articles

In ‘A World in Reverse: The Political Ecology of Racial Capitalism’, Bikrum Singh Gill develops a ‘political ecology of racial capitalism’ approach to understanding the structures and relations at the roots of contemporary global ecological crises. Recalling and extending the ‘world in reverse’ formulation of 16th-century Quechuan intellectual Felipe de Guaman Poma, Gill reflects on how colonisation left European survival dependent upon Indigenous world-making and set the world on a path to ecological breakdown. This

theorising coincides with a key, but little noted, move made by Cedric Robinson in Black Marxism captured in the idea of the ‘reversal of dependence’. Gill draws out this contribution and extends the historical structural understanding of the global system developed in Robinson’s racial capitalism to apply it to the formation of our contemporary ecological crises. However, the article diverts from Robinson’s focus on feudal Europe, to centre instead on ‘the socio-ecological space of the contact zone’ as fertile ground for the instigation of racial capitalism, ecological crisis, and race itself.

Through an engagement with three vital examples from the Caribbean (*Ayiti*), the Andes (*Huacas of Tawantinsuyu*), and West Africa, Gill brings to life how Black and Indigenous earth-worlding practices and creations were appropriated by Europeans in colonial contact zones. The analysis shows how, even in critical Capitalocene readings, such creations of Indigenous labour and knowledge are still presented as the raw minerals and nutrients of ‘nature’, rather than credited to the communities cultivating biotic life over the course of generations. Drawing also on Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) and Frantz Fanon (2008 [1952]), the article builds on the concept of ‘the gift’ in Indigenous sovereignties which was vital to the opening up of the colonial contact zone. Black and Indigenous world-making practices correspond to Fanon’s ‘movement of love’, and their appropriation through colonisation forms part of the contrasting ‘movement of aggressiveness’ which founded a global system oriented towards ecological collapse. Overall, this article illustrates how the society–nature distinction was racialised at the point of its separation. Gill connects the subsumption of Indigenous earthworlds and the production of ‘race’ as the human–nonhuman/nature distinction with moments of primitive accumulation which birth racial capitalism. The key contribution here is to show ‘how race underwrites, rather than derives from, the Cartesian society–nature dualism fueling both the excess and exhaustion of capital accumulation’ (Gill, 2021: 2).

In ‘(Un)Just Transitions and Black Dispossession: The Disposability of Caribbean “Refugees” and the Political Economy of Climate Justice’, Keston Perry scrutinises US climate policy and reveals its implications for the Caribbean. Taking a close look at climate initiatives – from those launched under Obama to Biden’s recent climate plan – Perry’s analysis takes us up to the contemporary focus on the ‘climate resilience’ of US military bases and the current casting of decarbonisation as an investment opportunity for US firms. Fusing the racial capitalism framework together with a rich lineage of Caribbean thought, including works by Norman Girvan and Sylvia Wynter, this contribution is framed with important and historically informed analytics of race. Centring on the ‘colonial relationality’ of US and Caribbean communities, the analysis goes on to consider the figure of the ‘white worker’ – who is central to the formulation of ‘just transition’ ideas in the United States – in relation to the Caribbean worker, who is increasingly rendered disposable as calls for Caribbean-centred climate debt repayment and reparations are marginalised.

As Perry illustrates, Caribbean societies have long experienced some of the most extreme effects of climate breakdown in the form of devastating storms and hurricanes which destroy homes, displace communities, and intensify the precarity of life on the islands. Yet Global North responses to devastation and dispossession in the Caribbean remain limited to charitable acts generated and framed as donor generosity, and to the construction of ever harder carceral border regimes to foreclose prospects for refuge for those displaced by climate disasters. The Caribbean worker is therefore reconstructed as alternately a border threat and a charity case, whereas the white worker in the United States becomes the deserving subject of justice in climate transitions. Understanding the

structural context of racial capitalism, in which the United States bears far greater responsibility for cumulative emissions yet forecloses calls for meaningful justice for the disproportionately racialised victims, is vital to understanding the colonial relationality in climate change governance. Overall, Perry makes a powerful case which evidences the global scale structuring conditions of the cause, effect, and governance of climate change as being determined by the sedimented power formations of racial capitalism.

In the article titled 'Racing Climate Change in Guyana and Suriname', Y. Ariadne Collins shifts down from the global to the regional and national scales in a granular analysis of race and climate change in the Caribbean. Providing something of a counterpoint to Perry's analysis, Collins reminds us that localised racial hierarchies are complex, dynamic, and sometimes even contradict the aggregate global historical picture on which broader structural analyses are based. Collins draws on her critical expertise in forest conservation governance in the climate vulnerable area of the Guiana Shield to detail the differential vulnerabilities between groups which might otherwise be flattened into a single category of racialised victimhood in global scale analyses. Collins gives the example of how forest-based maroon communities and coastal Creole communities are affected differently, with the former being subjected to climate change governance interventions while the latter are more at direct risk from coastal flooding. Overall, Collins argues that race 'exacerbates the vulnerability of different groups of people to both the physical and governance related aspects of climate change' but it does so in complex and uneven ways.

Drawing on Caribbean intellectuals, including the Guyanese scholar Walter Rodney, Collins considers how what are now presented as 'the natural environment, as discursively powerful and neutral whiteness, and as base, impure and exploitable blackness [. . .] were all abstracted and co-constituted in small part through the creation of the climate vulnerable coastland'. The article considers how racial formations were constructed through colonial projects and in the service of hierarchical labour orders, but which have since shifted in relation to postcolonial dynamics. Decolonisation in Guyana and Suriname brought transformative changes to racial orders, with the governance of Suriname becoming increasingly 'creolised' and with Guyana alternating between Afro and Indo governments. Invoking the work of Anibal Quijano on the coloniality of labour, Collins ultimately calls for 'tripartite' understanding of race which centres 'enviro-historical formations' in an analysis which also accounts for the dynamism of race in relation to climate change harms and the governance structures enacted in response.

Revisiting the spectre of population in environmentalism, Lisa Tilley and Max Ajl work through a materialist analysis of populationism and situate this within colonial and white supremacist capitalist lineages. Their article, 'Eco-socialism will be anti-eugenic or it will be nothing: Towards equal exchange and the end of population', begins by tracing the entanglements between liberal and fascist forms of populationism in environmental thought. White nationalists including Garrett Hardin laundered their priorities into Environmental Studies during the 20th century, and still today, liberal thinkers take seriously the same racist concerns around the reproductive lives of racialised women as a burden on the planet. Such populationist agendas provide the groundwork for reproductive injustices against women of colour and distract from meaningful action against ecological harm.

Tilley and Ajl take this analysis further by centring ecologically unequal exchange (EUE) as the basis of ecological crisis. This global system of unequal exchange has also been bound up with the colonial and postcolonial management of population in relation to extraction to the imperial North. The differential governance of Third World

communities, either as labour power to be reproduced, or as resource and land users to be restricted or exterminated, has been vital to the establishment of EUE on a world scale. Still with us in the present are those colonial ideas and technologies of population control to maintain the racial balance of power while maximising labour power and minimising competition for resource use. Such tools are redeployed in the name of ecology in contemporary environmental movements. Against this backdrop, the authors appeal for ‘an honest reckoning with the root problem of ecologically unequal exchange (EUE) as the system of global extraction which enacts both environmental harm and reproductive injustice’. They end on a call to stem the flows of cheap resources from the South and to build in the teachings of reproductive justice to expel any creeping eugenicism from eco-socialist movements.

The contribution of Palestinian scholar Ghada Sasa to this issue traces the long history of Western ‘green colonialism’ through to one of its more contemporary manifestations in the settler colonisation of Palestine. Sasa’s article, ‘Oppressive Pines: Uprooting Israeli Green Colonialism and Implanting Palestinian A’wna’, details how the Zionist settler colonial project has engaged the language and technologies of Western environmentalism from its inception. In the name of environmentalism, and through the establishment of ‘protected areas’, Israel has attempted to erase Indigenous socioecologies in occupied Palestine. According to the Jewish National Fund (JNF), trees are ‘the best Guards of the land’ (cited in Sasa, 2022), and Sasa argues that the planting of these ‘oppressive pines’ serves as justification for colonisation and helps to inhibit Palestinians’ right of return to their land. Ultimately, the non-native species of evergreens planted by the JNF have acidified the local ecology, making it toxic to Palestinian farmers’ grazing animals, and increased the risk of wildfires due to the highly flammable properties of the trees. To make way for these evergreen ‘deserts’, Sasa notes, Israel has uprooted hundreds of thousands of native olive and carob trees, destroying the complex biodiversity which had long been maintained in the Palestinian landscape and sustained its people. JNF ‘environmentalism’ then, echoing colonial histories of European ‘conservation’, has been central to the settler colonial project, served to erase Palestinian villages, attempted to eliminate place-based histories, and resulted in ‘protected areas’ from which Palestinians are differentially excluded.

Overall, Sasa’s contribution provides broader lessons for a critical understanding of colonial measures enacted in the name of environmentalism, or climate change mitigation more specifically, especially in the form of tree-planting projects on Indigenous lands. The rest of Sasa’s article recovers key organising ideas from Palestinian and Islamic ontologies which provide grounds for an alternative ‘anti-oppressive and scientific environmentalism’. These are summarised as *a’wna* or collaboration, *sumud* meaning steadfastness, *a’wda* or return, and *tawhid* meaning unity. Elaborating on this alternative frame for environmentalism, Sasa argues that ‘Palestinian stewardship is scientific because it tackles the repressive roots of climate change and the society/nature binary. After all, the dichotomy ruptures ecological interdependence, namely the Earth’s constitution of humans and vice-versa, leading to its ruin’. This contribution reminds us that what is enacted in the name of the environment can be toxic and oppressive for socioecologies, but alternative projects provide hope for both ecological repair and social justice. As Sasa words it, ‘From the strength and creativity of its inhabitants to the tenaciousness of its olive trees, Palestinian liberation is on the horizon’.

In ‘Rage against the Port City: Southern Theologies mobilising for Climate Justice’, Anupama Ranawana discusses how faith-based actors are mobilising against the projects

that cause environmental destruction, and how these mobilisations draw explicit links between such projects and the ways in which the Global South is ‘condemned to death’. The particular focus here is drawn from ethnographic work the researcher has done with faith-based groups – particularly habited Roman Catholic nuns – resisting the building of a Port City in Sri Lanka. These actors criticise the Port City project as part of a global economy that normalises and makes moral the marginalisation and oppression of the poor of the Global South. Within their discourse, they include the air, earth, soil, and water as also part of their idea of the collective ‘poor’. These mobilisations are part of ‘rainbow alliances’ that bring together faith actors with the urban poor, fishing communities, and also day-to-day vendors in a struggle for a dignified life.

Drawing on the work of political geographers like Kanchana Ruwanpura (see Ruwanpura et al., 2020) and Vijay Nagaraj (2016), and scholar activists like Iromi Perera (2016), the article also notes how these large development projects have been intimately connected not only to the destruction of livelihoods and ecologies on the coastlines but also to slum clearances. These scholars, as well as the faith actors foregrounded in the article, link this to Amitav Ghosh’s (2016) reflection of the connection between the colonial vision of the mastery of land and water for power and security. In order to ensure mastery for both the funder and the national government, the Port City dispossesses and destroys water, land, and the human. It is this easy disposability of all forms of life that raises the charges of immorality and sinfulness from the faith activists. Ranawana layers on to this case the link between these faith-based mobilisations and the inspiration they take from the anti-imperialist theologies developed in the post-Bandung years, specifically those that aimed at constructing a ‘Third World Theology’. These theologies were deeply invested in the idea of an anti-imperialist Third World with its vision of development that was radically opposed to the continuation of the European colonialist project. Ranawana argues for rage as a unifying concept that brings these anti-imperialist theologies and mobilisations together with other environmental justice movements. The core question the author leaves us with is this: How do we build alliances on this rage to combat the twin imperialisms of racial and climate injustice?

Following insights from decolonial feminism, Black geographies, and critical race theory, Mariana Reyes-Carranza’s ‘Racial geographies of the Anthropocene: Memory and erasure in Rio de Janeiro’ investigates the ostensibly ‘new human epoch’ as always already embedded within the European colonisation of the Americas. Drawing from 6 months of ethnographic research within Rio’s Museum of Tomorrow – ‘an eye-catching and futuristic landmark’ near Rio’s harbour, whose ‘main theme is the environment, specifically climate change and the discussion of global environmental degradation’ – Reyes-Carranza centres cultural, political, and epistemological orders that are reproduced within a space outside the Global North.

After unfolding the complex histories of the African slave trade in Rio’s harbour and the concomitant genocide of Brazil’s Indigenous peoples, Reyes-Carranza turns to examine the Museum of Tomorrow’s Anthropocene gallery and finds that it ‘fails to critically interrogate racism as one of the most profound social relations shaping the current ecological crises’. For instance, Reyes-Carranza demonstrates that while the museum’s gallery foregrounds the Anthropocene as a human-induced phenomenon, its efforts at diversifying and including all races and ethnicities in its gallery elides the uneven racial power relations that exist between climate change producers and victims. She therefore exhorts the Museum of Tomorrow to recognise how the slave trade contributes to the

Anthropocene irreducibly, while including voices and epistemologies from Afro-descendant and Indigenous groups within its geographic area.

Lydia Ayame Hiraide's article focuses on the implications of terminology and bears the title 'Climate refugees: A useful concept? Towards an alternative vocabulary of ecological displacement'. Revisiting the extensive debate over the merits of the concept of 'climate refugee' (see Baldwin, 2022; Gonzalez, 2020), Hiraide argues that the term is too tainted by its pejorative political use, especially within Europe, where a febrile racist politics has been particularly resurgent in recent years. What is at stake in a name, Hiraide (2022: 2) argues, is demonstrated by the ways in which 'both structural domination and bottom-up resistance to oppression also take place on the terrain of language'. In a second line of argument, Hiraide makes the case that reference to 'climate' in 'climate refugee' is too narrow to accommodate the range of environmental conditions, combined with political conditions, which instigate displacement in the first place. As such, the adoption of the term 'climate refugee' as a legal category of protection would risk excluding communities impacted by a range of complex ecological harms which are not fully captured within the frame of climate change.

The author largely agrees with the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) proposal for the adoption of 'environmentally displaced person' as a category of protection. This category would cover both internally displaced persons and those who find themselves compelled to cross political borders due to environmental harm, possibly in combination with other factors. Similarly, Hiraide proposes the concept of ecological displacement which might contribute to flattening the terrain between, for example, those displaced by floods in Europe and those displaced by ecological conditions in the Global South. Hiraide argues that expanding the category to ecologically displaced persons 'as opposed to that of climate refugees, may also contribute to a de-racialisation of the notion of climate-related displacement' (Hiraide, 2022: 10). Overall, the author draws attention to the potency of language in influencing material conditions of differential governance and exclusion, especially in the colonial domain of Europe and in the political context of far-right resurgence and ecological breakdown.

Taken together, these contributions build on existing literatures which expose the racial core of the climate crisis and broader forms of environmental harm. They do so largely by drawing on rich traditions of thought from outside of the imagination of Europe and white settler colonial societies. Collectively, they also extend and deepen our understanding of the material aspects of race and ecology in this contemporary conjuncture, as much as they illuminate the ways in which the histories of colonialism and racial capitalism structure the present. Covering key sites of vulnerability and contention – from flooded coasts to contested forests and socioecologies marked for offsetting – this collection confronts how both environmental harms and supposed solutions for climate change are experienced by racialised communities of the South. Some contributors reach for the very roots of planetary crisis, taking us back to the contact zone of colonisation to show how race 'underwrites' the nature–culture divide (Gill, 2021; Sasa, 2022). Other authors expose the pitfalls of climate action in the contemporary market episteme, questioning who this action serves (Collins, 2021; Perry, 2021). And some analyse the narratives around climate crisis and migration, illuminating the colonial silences and reproductions of race in various discursive fields (Hiraide, 2022; Reyes-Carranza, 2021). Finally, contributors also hold space for liberatory projects fusing climate action with anti-colonial and anti-imperial visions of better worlds (Ranawana, 2022; Tilley and Ajl, 2022).

As we have witnessed here, the traps set by global structures of race often direct mainstream climate solutions back towards the expropriation, premature death, or prevention of birth of peoples of colour by means of populationism, dispossession for market-based solutions, and the production of wilderness, among other methods. However, the lessons of this collection and the struggles it references are that anti-racist approaches to ecology are growing in strength, despite the power of these racial structures. Following these paths towards meaningful repair and structural change will be vital in the years to come because we are, as Berta Cáceres (2015) said ‘out of time’. To end with Berta’s enduring words which capture the spirit of this collection, ‘We must shake our conscience free of the rapacious capitalism, racism and patriarchy that will only assure our own self-destruction’.

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Notes

1. On which, see Gunaratnam and Clark (2012); Verges (2017); Davis and Todd (2017); Whyte (2017); Yusoff (2018); Last (2017); Sultana (2022).
2. See Leon Sealey-Huggins (2018).

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