Democracy and Empire

*Democracy and Empire* theorizes the material bases of popular sovereignty via the Black radical tradition. Popular sovereignty contains an affective attachment to wealth, secured through collective agreements to dominate others, that is, self-and-other-determination. Inés Valdez expands on racial capitalism by theorizing its Anglo-European-based popular politics, which authorize capital accumulation enabled by empire and legitimated by racial ideologies. Such accumulation stunts political projects in the Global South. Valdez masterfully outlines how racialized others who sacrifice families and communities provide social reproduction, and how political alienation from nature in wealthy polities is mediated by technology and enabled by a joint devaluation of nature and racialized manual labor. The book also theorizes anti-imperial popular sovereignty, also drawing on Indigenous political thought’s accounts of nature-encompassing political relations. This title is part of the Flip it Open Programme and may also be available Open Access. Check our website Cambridge Core for details.

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For my parents, Patricia Tappatá and Gilberto Valdez Herrera
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2.1 Artist Unknown. Poster produced by the Liberal Party for the 1906 General Election campaign: “Ten years of Toryism.” LSE Libraries COLL MISC 0519/98.  page 75

2.2 N.H. Hawkins’ cartoon in the Saturday Sunset, August 24, 1907: “The same act which excludes orientals should open the portals of British Columbia to white immigration.” Vancouver Public Library, Special Collections, VPL 39046. 82
I started writing Democracy and Empire: Labor, Nature, and the Reproduction of Capitalism in the summer of 2018 and developed and completed it during an itinerant period of my life, split between the United States, Germany, and Argentina. In each of these sites I was welcomed by a nurturing community of scholars, friends, and family that supported my writing and kept me grounded, for which I am infinitely grateful. In Columbus, the Migration, Mobility, and Immobility Project, the Global Arts and Humanities Society of Fellows, the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, and the Political Science Department (all at Ohio State) supported the archival research and writing of most of the book. I completed the last revisions of the manuscript in Baltimore, Maryland, where new and old interlocutors and friends welcomed me into Johns Hopkins’s interdisciplinary racial capitalism group, its political theory community, and the Political Science Department. I could not have completed the book in a better place, one infused with the energy of a new and exciting chapter in my career.

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