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Introduction

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INTRODUCTION: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON
REPARATIONS ISSUES¹

Nicola Frith and Joyce Hope Scott

“I know what the world has done to my brother and how narrowly he has survived it. And I know, which is much worse, and this is the crime of which I accuse my country and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it...” (James Baldwin)²

In 1690, the English philosopher and political theorist, John Locke, stated in his *Second Treatise of Government* that “every man has a property in his own person; this is something that nobody else has any right to. The labour of his body and the work of his hands, we may say, are strictly *his*.”³ Justice therefore requires the protection of individuals’ rights, and that it is the business of the state, which is duty bound to ensure that justice is maintained by protecting citizens’ rights. These rights, states Locke, stem from Natural Law, which gives every person rights to his life, body, talents, and liberty. It is precisely these natural rights — which underpin the European Enlightenment — that were paradoxically denied to those captured and enslaved during the simultaneous period of European colonial expansion.

As is now well-known, it was the trans-Atlantic trafficking in captive Africans that provided the engine which fostered the wealth and development of western capitalist societies.⁴ Captivity and enslavement became a dynamic site for establishing a new

economic system for nation-building in Europe and colonial America. The first enslaved Africans arrived in the US in 1619 and would be continuously trafficked to the colonies until 1860.⁵ According to Waldron H. Giles, enslaved Africans' bodily and productive worth equaled more than 605 billion hours of free labor, providing enough economic sufficiency to launch the Industrial Revolution and fund the fortunes of five hundred large corporations, with the contribution of those enslaved amounting to some 19.7 trillion dollars (estimated in 2006).⁶ Indeed, no sector of American society has been left untainted by the stain of this inhuman institution, from the Catholic church right through to the most prestigious higher education institutions.⁷

The failure to address this most heinous of crimes and its ongoing legacies with even the most basic of reparative justice programs lies at the heart of this special edition of the *Journal of African American History* (JAAH). Following on from the JAAH's Special Issue published in 2012 on "African Americans and the Movements for Reparations," this volume will examine the case for reparations from multiple national and international perspectives. It draws, in part, from a conference that was held at the University of Edinburgh (November 5–7, 2015) entitled "Repairing the Past, Imagining the Future: Reparations and Beyond..." and acts as a necessary response to the recent resurgence in calls for reparations spearheaded by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Reparations Commission (CRC).⁸

As will be explored in this introduction, the struggle for reparations for the enslavement of African, Indian, Malagasy, and other indigenous peoples has a history that is as long as the system of European-led enslavement itself. And yet, it is also a history that has been ignored academically, or worse dismissed out of hand on the basis of oft-cited but

ill-founded arguments that legitimize the refusal of the former enslaving nations to engage with the need for reparative justice. As Sir Hilary Beckles points out, the services of scholars have repeatedly been engaged by state officials “to deny and deflect culpability.”⁹ To that end, this introduction and the ensuing volume seek to address two persistent problems relating to reparations research. First, there is a need to recognize the multidimensional nature of reparations and reparative actions, which have emerged at different times and out of the specific, but interconnected histories of enslavement and colonialism, in order to combat the dismissive treatment of reparations, specifically where slavery is concerned. Second, there is a need to acknowledge, and pay homage to, the depth, breadth and strength of a global struggle for reparations, and to situate this struggle within its properly historical context, in order to contest the repeated distortion of, and ignorance surrounding, the work of grassroots reparations movements and related actions.

The purpose of this volume is to bring the long-established work of US-based social movements into dialogue with those from other countries, particular within the Anglophone Caribbean. At the risk of overlooking the importance and centrality of movements in other areas of the world, notably in Europe, Africa, Latin America and even India, this introduction will seek to position the ensuing case studies within a much broader transnational and international setting. Our intention is not then to provide an exhaustive overview of reparations activism globally, but rather to discuss both the diverse legacies of some of these movements within their specific domestic settings, and the persistent need to develop connections and solidarities across borders to ensure the ongoing vitality of this global movement.¹⁰ As such, this special edition of the JAAH will offer an initial exploration of some of the challenges that have faced different reparations movements,

while also seeking to understand how the concept of reparations functions within and beyond nation-centered frameworks.

Recognizing the Multidimensionality of Reparations and Reparative Actions

The contemporary understanding of reparations hinges upon the framework of the human rights discourse that emerged after the Second World War, when the legal concept of a crime against humanity was first determined. Over the course of the twentieth century, transitional justice became an important touchstone for the global boom in public memories of slavery, notably following the rise of truth and reconciliation commissions that have attempted to address the legacies of more recent crimes against humanity, such as the Apartheid system in South Africa.¹¹ Increasingly, it is within this international and multidirectional setting that activists are operating at national and regional levels in order to justify and assert their claims for recognition using “a global language that seeks to find a shared understanding of what it is to be human in the wake of major human rights abuses.”¹²

But unlike some of the other formally recognized crimes against humanity, the case for reparations for African enslavement has yet to achieve a legal precedent within national and international courts. We must therefore begin by appreciating the variety of alternative approaches and wealth of definitions that have arisen out of this gaping breach in justice. As the 2015 conference in Edinburgh explored, in addition to monetary proposals such as the “superfund” suggested by V.P. Franklin, reparative justice covers a whole swathe of existing strategies: from those linked to litigation, legislation, and other forms of

transitional and social justice, such as affirmative action; to educational and museal initiatives, or cultural projects in literature, art, and music; to psychological and spiritual forms of internal and community repair; to the more official and political frameworks of recognition, such as commemorative ceremonies, memorialization, public apologies, and government-sponsored committees.¹³

Yet for too long, calls for reparations have been reductively and unhelpfully interpreted as demands for individual payments, or simply as a “pay check.” This strictly economic framing of reparations echoes the cold economics that governed the so-called “slave trade” and its plantation economies in the Caribbean and Indian Ocean. It is also a reminder that the abolition of slavery in 1833, 1848 and 1865, to name just a few, did not bring financial reparations to those whose labor had been exploited for economic profit. Rather, the various abolition decrees saw reparations being paid to the former enslavers as compensation for the loss of their so-called “property.”¹⁴ The perversity of this transaction, as Garraway points out, has served to muddy the waters where questions of guilt and justice are concerned, since “the dedication of the indemnity to the colonists has the effect of negating any claim to repair on the part of the slaves, and violates the principle of corrective justice according to which equality must be restored between wrongdoer and victim.”¹⁵ The newly freed population was thus positioned, once more, as a “commodity” to be “exchanged between the colonists and state,” meaning that they not only ceased to hold any “compensatory interest,” but were also “denied the right to determine their own destiny and/or be repatriated following abolition.”¹⁶

It is worth noting that this action ignored certain legal precedents relating to reparations for enslaved persons prior to abolition. For example, in France during the

eighteenth century, it was possible for enslaved persons to claim both emancipation and back-pay thanks to the uneven application of the “freedom principle” — captured by the maxim “there are no slaves in France” (“nul n’est esclave en France”) — meaning that any person who set foot on French soil was automatically considered free.¹⁷ The same was theoretically true in England, but as Peabody notes, if the French courts “consistently ruled in favour of [enslaved] blacks seeking their freedom right up to the Revolution,” the “English courts wavered in their application” of the same principle.¹⁸ The result was that multiple successful court cases were brought against French enslavers to free enslaved persons, which were often accompanied with back wages, or financial reparations.¹⁹

While the British (1833) and the French (1848) ruled in favor of indemnity payments to the enslavers, abolition ought to have taken a different tack in the United States. The 13th amendment led to the establishment of the Freedmen’s Bureau — a U.S. federal government agency set up to aid freedmen and women in the South during the Reconstruction era — through which reparations, or General William T. Sherman’s plans for “40 acres and a mule,” would be administered to the formerly enslaved.²⁰ But as is well known, these promises were not fulfilled and the Bureau failed on numerous fronts, not least of which, as W.E.B. Du Bois notes, was “to carry out to any considerable extent its implied promises to furnish the freedmen with land.”²¹

The failure to supply land, and the insufficiency of most other attempts to resettle the formerly enslaved populations on their own land, resulted in many desperate Black men and women seeking alternatives to remaining on the land of their former oppressors. For example, in 1879, Benjamin “Pap” Singleton’s migration crusade enticed thousands of Black people out the South to the Oklahoma territory.²² His “Address to the Colored People

of Texas” categorically denounced the failure “to make provision for our race to become an intelligent prosperous people,” the existence of “laws which virtually denied to us many of the rights of free men,” and the “new system of servitude” under which Black people continued to suffer. In response, he stated that:

“WE therefore advise the colored men in every neighborhood and county throughout Texas to organize into colonization clubs, and to use unremitting industry and economy in order that they may be prepared for emigrating when the proper time shall arrive. [...]

We are still in the wilderness that borders slavery, ignorance and poverty on the one hand, [and] liberty, education and prosperity on the other. We will never cease our efforts to at last emerge from this wilderness of doubts, fears and tribulations until we are finally made secure in the enjoyment of our civil rights and liberties in a land where all classes of people unite in maintaining all of the principles that perpetuate a free and just form of government.”²³

Long before this, Thomas Jefferson had been one of the first to suggest making reparations to enslaved Blacks through the provision of land, his thinking having been heavily influenced by Locke’s concept of Natural Rights.²⁴ His proposal (which is, of course, highly questionable) was to confiscate enslaved children from their parents, and put them in school to be educated and taught a trade. Upon reaching adulthood, they were to be shipped to an unspecified colony and given farm animals and tools where they could begin a new life as a “free and independent people.” The point remains that, in 1776, enslaved

Africans were recognized as people and, in fact, a nation that had a right to a “separate and equal station among the powers of the earth.” Reparations for African enslavement has therefore always meant far more than just money, being intimately connected to this need for land, sovereignty, and self-determination. As Delaney says, “every people should be the originators of their own schemes, and creators of the events that lead to their destiny.”²⁵

In recent studies, the definition of reparations for African enslavement has been further expanded to incorporate some of the historical actions undertaken by Black communities in their quest for restitution. Raymond Winbush, for example, argues that “slave rebellions can be considered the earliest and most violent expressions of reparations on the part of Africans because they sought to secure their denied freedom by any means necessary including retaliatory and defensive violence.”²⁶ The Africans who orchestrated these early revolts carried with them a consciousness of their homeland and its legacies, and, as such, “wanted to *repair the damage* done by their kidnapping from West Africa and the restrictions placed on them by laws that incrementally removed their rights as ‘citizens’ and property owners.”²⁷

Likewise, other histories and narratives can be usefully re-envisioned through a reparative lens, resulting in scholars broadening their inquiries into the nature of reparations beyond the legal, political, and economic perspectives which have dominated the discourse around the subject in recent decades. Two examples of areas for further investigation from this perspective are the arts and humanities, and activist/grassroots actions which might be characterized as reparatory. To begin with the arts and humanities, the Black Arts Movement can be reassessed by defining it, as Larry Neale suggests, “as the aesthetic and spiritual sister of the Black Power concept [...] that proposes a radical

reordering of the western cultural aesthetic” and entails the creation of “a separate symbolism, mythology, critique, and iconology.”²⁸ This connects to a major liberatory concern of reparation scholars and activists today relating to the health of the African mind and spirit. In this respect, the Black artist, Neale notes, views his (or indeed her!) “primary duty as one of speaking to the spiritual and cultural needs of Black people.”²⁹ Black art, like the Black power movement, confronts the issues with living in a white supremacist society, thereby advocating the need for “a cultural revolution in arts and ideas.”³⁰

Scholars, like Peter Elsass, have also written about the ways in which oppressed people creatively resist systematic attempts at assimilation and identity removal by providing social, cultural, and psychological resources for community members in alternative ways. In his study of resilience in oppressed communities, Elsass argues for the notion of an “ecological psyche” and claims that groups resist oppression by creating counter-identities by separating themselves from dominant groups and creating their own geographic spaces and anti-imperialist stories.³¹

Central to this notion are the African-American towns that were set up during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to provide “a nurturing environment, shielding residents from the everyday racism of white society and offering [the residents] opportunities not available in more diverse communities.”³² Created largely after the failure of Reconstruction, African-American town promoters established as many as two hundred all-Black towns throughout the US. To-date, these alternative legacies of resistance and reparatory justice remain inadequately mapped and unrecognized in our public discourses, yet are lodged as fixtures in Black communal memory and oratory. The existence of these incorporated communities, with autonomous Black city governments

and commercially-oriented economies, might be seen as providing an early iteration of the Black Nationalist credo. This credo is summarized by Delaney who writes that, since African-Americans are a minority in the US, and since they face often-insurmountable obstacles, “a separate Black Nation is necessary in the march to self-determination.”³³ The all-Black towns can be re-viewed, therefore, as grassroots acts to create independent destiny and self-determination through communal structures that function to resist oppression by offering their own counter-identities. In removing themselves from the dominant system of white supremacy, they represent anti-imperialist stories of survival and are testament to Black resilience and agency. As such, they can be read as the historical traces of people-led self-reparative action to create new social systems that reach far beyond the purely monetary.

Recognizing the Global Struggle for Reparative Justice

The failure to put in place satisfactory socio-economic and cultural systems after enslavement left what Du Bois calls a “legacy of striving” that lies at the roots of early and contemporary African-American struggles for reparations.³⁴ As this Special Issue will highlight, multiple grassroots initiatives have attempted to address the failings of the state, with campaigns that have arguably achieved some of the greatest successes to-date despite hostile opposition and persistent oppression.

In recent years, numerous scholars have been working to recover these histories of resistance. For example, Rodney Coates foregrounds the work of the African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop, Henry M. Turner, who campaigned to secure reparations for

Black Americans during the 1890s, estimating that \$40 billion dollars were owed for 200 years of unpaid labor.³⁵ Conrad W. Worrill goes further back to look at how the movement for reparations dates from Black leaders like Frederick Douglass and has been carried throughout the twentieth century by other leaders and Pan-African movements, notably Martin Luther King Jr., Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), as well as the controversial ideologies of Malcom X.³⁶ Rodney D. Coates has produced a useful list of specific actions relating to reparations, including: Queen Mother Audrey Moore of New York's submission of a petition to the United Nations in 1962; the formation of the Republic of New Africa in Detroit in 1968, along with the demand for five Southern states and \$400 billion dollars; and the public announcement made by the civil rights activist James Forman in his "Black Manifesto," which calls upon white churches and synagogues to pay restitution.³⁷ Key to sustaining this movement has been the establishment of the National Coalition of Black Reparation Activists (N'COBRA) in 1987, whose mission it is "to win full Reparations for Black African Descendants residing in the United States and its territories for the genocidal war against Africans that created the Trans Atlantic Slave 'Trade' Chattel Slavery, Jim Crow and Chattel Slavery's continuing vestiges (the Maafa)."³⁸

Complementing these grassroots initiatives, the 1990s saw the emergence of a series of litigation strategies, with mixed results, but leading nonetheless to some landmark events. In 1995, the federal appeals court in California dismissed the *Cato v. United States* case, which was calling for \$100 million in slavery reparations, because the judges claimed that they could find no law allowing the government to be sued for slavery, and declared it an issue for Congress. Since then, the growth in supportive evidence and public awareness

about the reparation debate, especially in the case of reparation to African-American descendants, has resulted in a series of subsequent litigation battles.³⁹ One successful attempt occurred in 1999 (*Pigford v. Glickman*), when the US Department of Agriculture acknowledged a pattern of racial discrimination and agreed to pay \$1 billion US dollars in restitution to over thirteen thousand black farmers, which represents the largest civil rights settlement to-date.⁴⁰ The first class-action lawsuit to seek compensation from US insurance companies for profiting from the slave trade — *Deadria Farmer-Paellmann v. FleetBoston Financial Corporation, Aetna Inc., CSX* (2002) — did not prevail, but still led to reparative action being undertaken through the provision of university scholarship programs.⁴¹ Moreover, this action was based on important legislative changes at state level, including the “Slavery Era Insurance Policies” act passed in California in 2001 requiring “insurers to provide information to the Department regarding slaveholder insurance policies together with any names of slaves and slaveholders in their possession,” which has since seen similar acts being passed in other US states, including Illinois, Iowa and Maryland.⁴²

Efforts to achieve reparations have therefore found some limited political support at a state level. At a congressional level, Congressman John Conyers Jr.’s now infamous H.R. 40 bill to establish a “Commission to Study Reparations Proposals for African Americans Act” has become a symbol of the consistency of the reparations claim, having been submitted to Congress each year since 1989.⁴³ Although this bill has yet to be passed, Congressman Tony P. Hall’s “Resolution Apologizing for Slavery,” first introduced on 18 June 1997, has now led to a formal apology from Congress (in 2008) for both slavery and the so-called “Jim Crow” period.⁴⁴ Support has also been found in certain sectors of the academic community with the publication of seminal works, such as Randall Robinson’s

The Debt: What America owes to Blacks and Charles Ogletree's work on the legal and legislative cases for reparations.⁴⁵ As Ogletree notes, these cases "raise complementary and, in some cases, conflicting issues" since they refer not just to "injuries inflicted during and through the institution of slavery," but also "address injuries inflicted during the Jim Crow era."⁴⁶

The devastating absence of adequate systems of social, political, and economic advancement, captured by the Apartheid policies of the "Jim Crow" era, is both specific to the US, and emblematic of a history of oppression that was experienced in every European-ruled colony, as state-sanctioned enslavement gave way to connected forms of labor exploitation and human rights abuse.⁴⁷ Just as there were movements in the US to contest this situation, so the beginning of the twentieth century saw shared grievances among colonized peoples resulting in the creation of the first transnational efforts to unite pan-Africanists through a series of Pan-African Conferences held between 1900 and 1945. These important events brought together political activists and future independence leaders, such as Kwame Nkrumah, as well as key spokespersons for black rights activism, like W.E.B Du Bois.⁴⁸ As such, they lie at the roots of the pan-Africanist movement, which runs parallel to, and convergences with, longstanding efforts to obtain forms of economic justice in the post-abolitionist period, as well as the rising tide of anti-colonialist sentiment and civil rights activism.

However, it was not until the post-Second World War period and the Nuremberg Trials, followed by the emergence of truth and reconciliation commissions that have marked the period after South African Apartheid, that the language of reparations as a form of social justice began to find its more contemporary formulation.⁴⁹ The 1993 Abuja

Proclamation, sponsored by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), represents a key moment within this history as the first transnational effort to call “upon the international community to recognize that there is a unique and unprecedented moral debt owed to the Afrikan peoples which has yet to be paid.”⁵⁰ This was followed up by the “Truth Commission Conference” (1999), “Second African Reparations Conference” (2000), and the “Create the Future! Transformation, Reparations, Repatriation, and Reconciliation” conference (2006), all held in Accra.⁵¹ This work has been further consolidated through the preparatory meetings (1998–2001) held prior to the UN World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (UNWCAR), such as the reports issued by the Regional Conference for Africa and the Africa and African Descendants Caucus that called for reparations.⁵² As a result, the final Durban Declaration acknowledges, somewhat ambiguously (as Beckles notes), that “slavery and the slave trade are a crime against humanity and should always have been so,” and that “victims of human rights violations [...have] the right to seek just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered.”⁵³

These international efforts have both inspired, and been inspired by, the proliferation of reparations campaigns that traverse the different locations marked by the histories of enslavement and colonialism. The Abuja proclamation led to the foundation of the Africa Reparations Movement UK in Birmingham in December 1993 under the late Labour MP Bernie Grant and the issuing of the “Birmingham Declaration.”⁵⁴ This movement has since been sustained by the Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE), which was founded in 2001. In the Caribbean, the UNWCAR led to a follow-up conference in 2002 in Barbados, which resulted in the “The Bridgetown Protocol”

(2003), as well as the establishment of the Global Afrikan Congress (GAC), an international umbrella organization created for and by Africans and people of African descent.⁵⁵ The same year also saw the emergence of other grassroots initiatives in the UK, such as the Black Quest for Justice Campaign, while in Haïti, the president of the Republic, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, called upon France to repay the “independence debt” that France had imposed on Haïti in exchange for its hard-won freedom, a “debt” which arguably continues to cripple its economy.⁵⁶

Indeed, the new millennium saw numerous efforts coming out of the Caribbean, which would eventually lead to the formation of the Caribbean Reparations Commission (CRC). These include, a coalition of Rastafari groups who, in 2004, claimed that European countries should pay 72.5 billion pounds to resettle 500,000 Jamaican Rastafarians in Africa. In 2005, the Martinique-based *Mouvement International pour les Réparations* brought a case before the Regional Court in Fort-de-France, calling upon France to recognize the ongoing consequences of enslavement, while in 2007, the Guyanese president, Bharrat Jagdeo, issued calls for the European nations to recognize the existence of the African Holocaust and to engage in reparations, to no avail. The year 2007 also marks the date that the Member of Parliament for Central Clarendon, Mike Henry, called upon the Jamaican parliament to develop a common position on the impact of slavery and the matter of reparation. These same calls were echoed in 2011, when Baldwin Spencer, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, called upon the UN General Assembly to acknowledge the need for reparations. More recently, the CARICOM nations have conjoined their efforts through the CRC, which has not only led to the establishment of different national reparations committees throughout the region, but in

2013 resulted in the issuing of a call for European governments to participate in the “CARICOM Reparatory Justice Programme” and its “Ten Point Plan.”⁵⁷

While there have doubtless been different waves of activity to advance the quest for reparations, we are clearly witnessing a period in which there are increasing efforts to coordinate across regions and nations. As a result, calls for reparations for African enslavement and its consequences are gaining currency and credibility throughout the world. Some of the most recent initiatives include the harmonization of scholarly and activist work, for example through the recent inauguration of the first Centre for Reparation Research at the University of the West Indies, with a remit to implement the “CARICOM Reparatory Justice Programme,” as well as the launching of the International Network of Scholars and Activists for Afrikan Reparations (INOSAAR) in Brixton, London, UK that was born out of the 2015 Edinburgh conference.⁵⁸

The scholars whose works are included in this volume of the JAAH address these points, and many more besides, as they reconsider the question of reparations. Verene Shepherd’s magisterial introduction to this volume firmly anchors what follows in the history and legacies of human suffering, and the longstanding acts of resistance of those who were enslaved, focusing in particularly on the Morant Bay uprising and massacre in Jamaica in 1865. With reference to the Edinburgh conference, she highlights the importance of psychological repairs and rehabilitation, before looking closely at the “CARICOM Reparatory Justice Programme” and some of the challenges that it is facing in terms of acceptance, distortion, and political hostility. Following on from Shepherd’s article, Julian Kunnie’s intervention traces the root of the CARICOM call to the slavery-based economies that created middle- and upper-class wealth, while leading to the

impoverishment of indigenous peoples, Native Americans, and Africans. Claudia Rauhut likewise focuses on the CRC's agenda, but in this case, considers the central role played by Jamaican activists in the struggle for reparations, arguing that the Caribbean initiative is acting as a catalyst to revitalize global reparations issues.

The remaining articles look at different historical and contemporary reparations movements across the US and the Caribbean. Mary Frances Berry investigates the activities of the movement organized by African-Americans in a bid to gain pensions from the federal government as compensation for their long years of enslavement and impoverishment after abolition, focusing particularly on the tireless work of Callie House.⁵⁹ Jessica Gordon Nembhard explores the Black cooperatives movement in the US and highlights the different instances of sabotage that co-ops have suffered at the hands of white supremacists over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, while also considering the ways in which cooperatives could be used as models for future reparative action. Finally, Astrid Nonbo Andersen explores the different strands of thinking embedded within the reparations movement in the US Virgin Islands (with reference to the work of the African-Caribbean Reparations and Resettlement Alliance: ACRRA), while also unpacking the complexities of USVI's political status as a US colony.

In the conclusion to this volume, Sir Hilary Beckles offers an extensive discussion on the future direction of Pan-Africanism. This valuable contribution traces its historical roots as a political movement located in a mission for liberation, and therefore as a finite project that has since been betrayed by "neo-colonial idealisms that invite the cultural and political re-colonisation of the continent." In its place, Beckles asserts the need for a "Global Africa" to overcome the fractures that have arisen between Africans and the so-

called African “Diaspora” (a term that he rejects) in order to fight against the “conceptual imprisonment of ‘slave trade’ epistemies.” Whereas these fractures previously resulted in a failure to demonstrate African solidarity, notably during the UNWCAR and the contentious debates over reparations, Beckles posits the CRC’s demands as a new opportunity to mobilize collectively under the umbrella of global Africanism.

Conclusions

We cannot hope, in this brief introduction, to do justice to the complexity and intellectual depth of grassroots reparations activism and the ever-shifting definition of reparative work, but we can perhaps conclude by recognizing this history as a dynamic global social movement. The UK-based Pan-Afrikan Reparations Coalition in Europe (PARCOE) terms this the “International Social Movement for Afrikan Reparations” (ISMAR), which it defines as “a broad alliance of social forces within Afrikan heritage communities all over the world [...] acting with some degree of organisation and continuity to obtain redress for historical atrocities and injustices which have contemporary consequences.”⁶⁰ A similar definition has more recently been offered by the CRC, which points to the global nature of a struggle for justice that has “ebbed and flowed over the decades of the 19th and 20th centuries but has always been consistent in the demands for restitution and recompense for the crimes of chattel slavery in the Western Hemisphere.”⁶¹ Recognizing the transnationalism of this social movement, as many of the articles within this volume do, allows us to anchor the work of reparations activism within “the wider Afrikan Liberation Movement.”⁶² Reparative work is, therefore, an intrinsic part of widespread and

longstanding efforts to address western-centric models of society and wealth accumulation, all of which have led to the ingrained socio-economic disparities and inequalities adversely affecting peoples of African descent, and remains driven by a strong, grassroots desire for community, cultural, and spiritual self-healing and uplift.

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- ¹ This work was supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Network Grant AH/P007074/1.
- ² James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York, 1991), 5.
- ³ John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, ed. Jonathan Bennett, accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/locke1689a.pdf>, 11.
- ⁴ See, for example, Eric Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1994).
- ⁵ Waldron H. Giles, "Slavery and the American Economy," *ChickenBones: A Journal for Literary and Artistic African American Themes*, accessed August 15, 2015, <http://www.nathanielturner.com/slaveryandtheamericaneconomy.htm>.
- ⁶ Giles, "Slavery and the American Economy."
- ⁷ Editorial Board, "Georgetown and the Sin of Slavery," *New York Times Sunday Review*, April 23, 2016, accessed November 26, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/24/opinion/sunday/georgetown-and-the-sin-of-slavery.html>.
- ⁸ For more information on the Edinburgh conference, see "Repairing the Past, Imagining the Future: Reparations and Beyond...", accessed November 27, 2017, <http://conferences.hss.ed.ac.uk/reparations/>.
- ⁹ See, for example, Hilary Beckles, *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide* (Jamaica, 2013), 12–13.
- ¹⁰ For a more exhaustive exploration, see Ana-Lucia Araujo, *Reparations for Slavery and the Slave Trade: A Transnational and Comparative History* (London and New York, 2017).
- ¹¹ Douglas Hamilton, Kate Hodgson, and Joel Quirk, "Introduction: Slavery, Memory and Identity: National Representations and Global Legacies," in *Slavery, Memory and Identity: National Representations and Global Legacies* (London, 2012), 3. Ana Lucia Araujo, ed., *Politics of Memory: Making Slavery Visible in the Public Sphere* (New York and London, 2012), 2.
- ¹² Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson, eds., *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World*, (Liverpool, 2015), 11.
- ¹³ See also V.P. Franklin, "Introduction—African Americans and Movements for Reparations: From Ex-Slave Pensions to the Reparations Superfund," *Journal of African American History* 97 (2012), 1–12.
- ¹⁴ Echoing the 1833 abolition act in Britain, the 1848 abolition decree in France made provisions to compensate the slave owners through the "Loi de l'indemnisation", April 30, 1849; "Décret du 27 avril 1848," accessed August 23, 2017, http://www2.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/evenements/2016/abolition-de-l-esclavage-1794-et-1848/1848-l-abolition-definitive#node_32613. The Legacies of British Slave-ownership project established by University College London (UCL) traces the extent of this compensation through their remarkable online database: "Legacies of British Slave-ownership," accessed September 23, 2017, <https://ucl.ac.uk/lbs/>.
- ¹⁵ Doris L. Garraway, "Memory as Reparation? The Politics of Remembering Slavery in France from Abolition to the Loi Taubira (2001)," *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 11 (2008), 371. The concept of reparative justice as a way of restoring equality between injured parties and perpetrators can be traced back to the earliest acephalous societies where it was used as a way to avoid blood feuds between different clans. Weitekamp writes that it involved a series of agreed compromises that would lead towards the resumption of normal relations between the offended and the offender, and their respective communities; Elmar Weitekamp, "Reparative Justice: Towards a Victim-Oriented System," *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 1 (1992), 70.
- ¹⁶ Garraway, "Memory as Reparation?", 371.
- ¹⁷ See in particular Sue Peabody, *"There Are No Slaves in France": The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (Oxford, 1996).
- ¹⁸ Peabody, *"There Are No Slaves in France"*, 5.
- ¹⁹ See for example the case of Boucaux vs. Verdeline, where the slave master Verdeline was ordered to pay Boucaux "4,200 livres for nine and a half years of wages, including interest and damages plus court costs"; Peabody, *"There Are No Slaves in France"*, 36.
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- ²¹ W.E.B. du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, 1994), 22.
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- ²³ Kete and Zama, *Encyclopedia of Black Studies*, 132.

- ²⁴ Constitutional Rights Foundation, “Declaration of Independence and Natural Rights,” accessed November 28, 2017, <http://www.crf-usa.org/foundations-of-our-constitution/natural-rights.html>.
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- ²⁶ Raymond Winbush, *Belinda’s Petition: A Concise History of Reparations for the TransAtlantic Slave Trade* (Bloomington, IN, 2009), 18.
- ²⁷ Winbush, *Belinda’s Petition*, 19.
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- ³⁴ Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, 24.
- ³⁵ Rodney D. Coates, “A Thumbnail Sketch of the History of Reparations Through 2003,” *Social Forces* 83 (2004), 855.
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- ³⁸ National Coalition of Black Reparation Activists (N’COBRA), accessed 29 November 2017, <http://www.ncobraonline.org/about-ncobra/>.
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