

If a Tree Falls in the Wilderness: Reparations, Academic Silences, and Social Justice*

RODNEY D. COATES, *Miami University*

If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the Lord your God has blessed you. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command . . . Do not consider it a hardship to set your servant free, because his service to you these six years has been worth twice as much as that of a hired hand. And the Lord your God will bless you in everything you do. (Deuteronomy 15:12-18)

I am a descendant of slaves. I know this with certainty. My paternal grandfather, as a sharecropper, worked the same land his father and grandfather worked as slaves on the plantation, now a town located in Coatesville, Mississippi, from which we take our name. My maternal great-great-grandmother, raped by her “massa,” lived in shame for the rest of her life. The light skin that my family still possesses bares witness to this event. It is not with shame, however, that we band together, but with the pride that comes with prevailing. No one asked any of my ancestors if they wanted to be kidnapped from their land, enslaved, raped, or if they wanted to be sharecroppers or work till they died from exhaustion. We have never expected, begged, or asked for anything that was not our just due from those who stole our lives and our heritage or who tried to destroy our futures. Although exploited, we have never internalized the victimization, thus we have never been victims. While holding European and American greed responsible, we have never blamed individual whites. While western imperialism is guilty, we, deprived, have never been deprived. We have been and continue to be overcomers and survivors.

It is with this background, which obviously influences my orientation, that I begin this article on reparations. I cannot even imagine approaching this from a value-neutral perspective. Given this bias, I wonder why apologies and atonements, restitution and just remedies, have been so long in coming. We have seen too many unmet promises made in the haste of the guilty moment, too many half-

* *Direct correspondence to Rodney Coates, Department of Sociology, Miami University, Oxford, OH 45056. E-mail: coatesrd@muohio.edu.*

empty glasses placed on the table of despair, and too many dreams deferred as lynch mobs, white citizens leagues, and gangs of thugs snatch our fruit from the vines. We have no faith that the rapists, kidnappers, or murderers and those who have benefitted from their actions will willingly acknowledge their guilt or choose to make restitution. Watching the past through lens distorted with deceit and despair, we fully understand that promises made have all too quickly been forgotten, and that that which has been given has either been not worth the having or quickly taken away. The past, filled with conspiracies and exploitation, does not give me much hope for future restitution in the form of reparations or anything else. We, the descendants of this conspiracy, do not anticipate anything but the little we have always received — unless we present our case for receiving more. It is in the spirit of justice that I write — not for a handout but a paycheck, not for welfare but our fair share, not for crumbs that fall from the massa's table — but for the wealth represented by the houses built by the Africans. No, in the spirit of liberty we make our just demands. We require nothing that we did not create through our own devices. We will make our way, we will take what is only our due for services rendered, lives lost, and hopes deferred. It is our call for justice, and our own labor, that we will therefore secure a future for ourselves and our prosperity. Again, it is not as beggars that we view our past, experience our present, and pursue our future. It is as survivors that we will guarantee our prosperity and social justice, “by any means necessary.” We therefore do not wait for reparations, although just, for our future to unfold. Though we acknowledge the past, we are not dependent upon it to dictate our paths.

Doing the Unthinkable: Profit, It's All about Profit

This also makes a gain of upwards of 30%, or £9 8 s. 5 d. on the sale of each slave; and determines the prime cost on the Coast to be £27 5 s. 10 d.

This calculation will be allowed by all judges of the African trade to be sufficiently near the truth to justify a conclusion that, in the year 1786, the town of Liverpool returned a net profit of £298,462 sterling, and that during eleven years the gains on 303,737 slaves, returned in the summary as sold from 1783 to 1793, both inclusive, was £2,361,455 6 s. 1 d., or on an average, 214,676 pounds, 15 shillings, and one penny per annum.

This great annual return of wealth may be said to pervade the whole town, increasing the fortunes of the principal adventurers, and contributing to the support of the majority of the inhabitants; almost every man in Liverpool is a merchant, and he who cannot send a bale, will send a bandbox, it will therefore create little astonishment that the attractive African meteor has from time to time so dazzled their ideas, that almost every order of people is interested in a Guinea cargo. (Donnan 1969:623-24)

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This “attractive African meteor” did not fall from the sky; it fell from the souls of a people taken from their land in order to satisfy European greed. This greed, not a quest for freedom, led to the imperialistic quest for fortune at the expense of people of color, primarily Africans, an estimated 12-15 million.¹

Two hundred years after European royalty conspired to create a monopoly in the trade of human flesh,² just months after the southern compromise that not only gave constitutional acceptance to slavery but also declared the slave as less than human and Thomas Jefferson “reluctantly” altered the Declaration of Independence to exclude condemnation of King George’s complicity in this same trade,³ General Washington and the Continental Congress agreed to reward voluntary service in the Revolutionary Army with a slave. Thus, from this nation’s official beginning, liberty was nourished with the blood of the African. Throughout this period there were deliberate plans, capricious conspiracies, and determined efforts to ensure that the African would never gain full access to or secure any of the blessings of democracy. Some might indeed find it ludicrous that in this present age there are those descendants of slaves who would dare to seek remedies in the form of reparations. Such remedies would presume that the horrors of rape, kidnap, and murder visited upon an estimated 12-15 million Africans are of little consequence to their descendants, this nation, or Africa. Such remedies, some might say, would also presume that present day institutions, corporate bodies, and individuals no longer are benefiting from these deeds so long lost in the pages of history. Based upon evidence presented immediately below, one would have to conclude that any social or political scientists that dared to give credence to these types of follies would only indicate their insanity, for obviously such conversations indicate a lack of credibility, lack of objectivity, or lack of historical perspective. It is my purpose in this article to demonstrate that such calls, under the rubric of social justice, while totally ignored, do have legitimacy in the professional discourse of sociology and should be aired in a scholarly journal such as *Social Forces*.

Trees in the Wilderness: Arguments of the Esoteric

As discussed in the next section, the esoteric nature of reparations arguments suggests an academic riddle not unlike the freshmen essay regarding trees in the wilderness. Similarly, it is my belief that academic silences on significant issues amounts to little more than conspiracies of complacency, abdication of intellectual responsibilities, or acquiescence to the ideas of the ruling elite. The sheer lack of any significant conversation within the discipline suggests that an examination of the trees falling in the wilderness might be in order. Hence, we shall interrogate the historical record of reparations. As it seems prudent, our historical overview should begin at a source that we can all agree upon as being legitimate. Slavery was, as all must conclude, a legal system supported by the laws of the land.⁴ Any disputes regarding laws are most expeditiously dealt with in the courts. Therefore,

it follows that the courts can be viewed not only as a collective arbiter but as a body that determined which laws were legitimately, constitutionally, enforceable. I trust that any reader will accept the authority of the Supreme Court, as the high court of the land, as being sufficiently authoritative as to provide our initial point of reference.

At first glance, one may be tempted to conclude that the mere absence of any direct statements regarding reparations for slavery would be *prima facie* evidence that there is no legal precedence for such in U.S. law. But this is not the case, for during colonial times the system of indentured servitude provided for what was termed *freedom dues*. The fact that the system of slavery that eventually developed in the U.S. evolved from this system would lead to the conclusion that early freed slaves might have been provided such freedom dues. Such was indeed the case with a slave simply known as “Betsey.” It seems that Betsey, having come of age during Pennsylvania’s gradual abolition of slavery in the 1780s, found her status as a free person challenged. The High Court, in supporting her right to ultimate freedom, also stipulated:

Though the act of Assembly with respect to this question is not so clear as it might have been, [***7] and as I could wish it, and though different gentlemen may reasonably entertain different sentiments concerning it, yet as I must give an opinion, it must be my own. Upon the whole then, I think, that negro Betsey should remain as a servant until she shall arrive to the age of twenty eight years, unless freed sooner by her master; and that she be then intitled to the like *freedom dues* and other privileges, as if she had been borne after passing the act for the gradual abolition of slavery. (*Respublica v. Betsey*)

These freedom dues, identified in the 1780 Pennsylvania Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery:

Provided always, that every negro and mulatto child born within this state after the passing of this act as aforesaid, (who would, in case this act had not been made, have been born a servant for years, or life, or a slave,) shall be deemed to be, and shall be, by virtue of this act, the servant of such persons, or her or his assigns, who would in such case have been entitled to like relief in case he or she shall be evilly treated by his or her master or mistress, and to like *freedom dues*, and other privileges, as servants bound by indenture for four years are or may be entitled; unless the person to whom the service of any such child shall belong, shall abandon his or her claim to the same; in which case the overseers of the poor of the city, township, or district respectively, where such child shall be so abandoned, [***3] shall by indenture bind out every child so abandoned, as an apprentice, for a time not exceeding the age herein before limited for the service of such children. (Cited in *Prigg v. Pennsylvania*)

This passage is particularly insightful for it argues that the freed slave should be treated in the same regard as an indentured servant who had served the customary term of about four years. Freedom dues⁵ “usually included a piece of land and supplies, including a gun” (WGBH 1998). Of interest is the observation that these

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are the only identifiable citations regarding freedom dues to be found associated with slaves. Only one other case is identified during the 1840s regarding a bond servant, but since this was explicitly listed as a bond servant and not a slave, we must conclude that with the gradual replacement of European bond servants with African slaves, this principle was considered applicable only to white, not black, servants (see *Ex parte Breneman* 1842). Any doubt was cleared up with the *Dred Scott* case. In this case the Court determined that U.S. citizenship, with all of its rights and privileges, were not intended to be enjoyed by the African (whether free or slave).

It will be observed that the plea applies only to that class of persons whose ancestors were negroes of the African race, and imported into this country, and sold and held as slaves. . . . The question before us is whether the class of persons described in the plea in abatement compose a portion of this people, and are constituent members of this sovereignty? We think they are not, and that they are not included, and were not intended to be included, under the word “citizens” in the Constitution, and can therefore claim none of the rights and privileges which that instrument provides for and secures to citizens of the U.S. On the contrary, they were at that time considered as a subordinate and inferior class of beings, who had been subjugated by the dominant race, and, whether emancipated or not, yet remained subject to their authority, and had no rights or privileges but such as those who held the power and the Government might choose to grant them (*Scott v. Sanford*).

This clearly lays out the legal, and thus official U.S, position regarding the African. It was only when the rights of whites as property holders were threatened, not the rights of the African as a human, that the court saw fit to order remedies, restitution, or reparations. It was not until the Civil War and Reconstruction that any significant national discussion regarding remedies specific to the African would be entertained.

A Thumbnail Sketch of the History of Reparations⁶

1865: Union Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman declares that a strip of land along the Southeast coast be set aside for freed slaves; families can receive up to 40 acres. The federal government also establishes the Freedmen’s Bureau to provide assistance. But, within the year, President Andrew Johnson undermines Sherman and weakens the bureau.

1890: William R. Vaughan, a white man from Alabama, persuades members of Congress to introduce the first of nine bills mandating federal pensions for former slaves, but none of the bills passes.

1890s: African Methodist Episcopal Church Bishop Henry M. Turner campaigns to secure reparations for black Americans. He estimated blacks were owed \$40 billion dollars for 200 years of unpaid labor.

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1897: The Ex-Slave Mutual Relief, Bounty and Pension Association is founded. Under the leadership of Callie House, it eventually enlists hundreds of thousands of members, but the government later indicts House for mail fraud. After serving time in prison, she helps file a lawsuit demanding African Americans receive \$69 million acquired through cotton taxes.

1962: New York activist Queen Mother Audley Moore submits a petition to the United Nations asking the U.S. government to pay slavery reparations.

1968: Radicals in Detroit form the Republic of New Africa, demanding five Southern states and \$400 billion.

1969: Civil rights activist James Forman marches into a service at the mostly white Riverside Church in New York City and begins reading his "Black Manifesto." Forman charges white churches and synagogues with complicity in slavery and racial oppression and asks them to pay restitution.

1971: The U.S. government agrees to grant \$1 billion and 44 million acres to Native American tribes in Alaska.

1988: Congress allocates \$20,000 for each Japanese American survivor of internment camps. Meanwhile, activists form the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America.

1989: A reparations bill introduced in Massachusetts by state Senator William Owens languishes. And U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr., a Detroit Democrat, calls for a federal study of slavery, racial discrimination, and "appropriate remedies." The bill does not leave the House Judiciary Committee. Conyers reintroduces it every subsequent year, with similar results.

1995: A federal appeals court in California dismisses *Cato v. United States*, which asked for \$100 million in slavery reparations. Judges can find no law allowing the government to be sued for slavery, declaring it an issue for Congress.

1997: U.S. Representative Tony Hall, a white Ohio Democrat, introduces a resolution asking Congress to formally apologize for slavery. Despite provoking intense debate, it is buried in committee.

1999: Acknowledging a pattern of discrimination, the U.S. Department of Agriculture agrees to pay restitution to thousands of black farmers.

2000: Randall Robinson's *The Debt: What America Owes to Blacks*, an argument for reparations, is published, becoming a bestseller and dramatically raising the movement's profile.

2001: Writer and activist David Horowitz places an advertisement in college newspapers around the country, arguing that blacks have benefited from being brought to America. And, after intense lobbying, the final document of the United

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Nations World Conference against Racism in Durban, South Africa, declares that slavery was a crime against humanity.

2002: Deadria Farmer-Paellmann, a New York advocate, files a class-action lawsuit against several major corporations for profiting from slavery and violating human rights laws. By the end of the year, the case is consolidated with eight others and moved to federal court in Chicago. Over the summer, activist Conrad Worrill co-organizes a rally in Washington, D.C., that draws thousands of reparations supporters. And in October, the Chicago City Council passes the Slavery Era Disclosure Ordinance, requiring firms that want contracts with the city to investigate and reveal ties to slavery.

2003: Virginia residents Robert L. Foster and his daughter Crystal are sentenced to prison after filing an income tax return claiming she was owed \$500,000 for reparations.

Sociology and the Awkwardness of Social Justice

Today it is once again fashionable to discuss noble disciplinarian goals, as we — apparently worried about our declining numbers, intellectual prestige, and academic legitimacy — embrace the masses with calls for public or liberation sociology. Such calls fly in the face of our long history of corporate sponsorship, governmental apologists, and pamperers of the elite. We must not forget our heritage.

The father of modern sociology, Auguste Comte, with his practical mission of the discipline, encouraged the use of the positivistic science and technology to heal the problems of modern society. The application of this science has more often than not been used to support the power elite. Perhaps this is why, in a search of the on-line document delivery service, JSTOR, of the 412 citations identified in all available editions⁷ of 34 sociological journals, only four articles could be identified that discussed reparations for Africans or African Americans.⁸ The reader should not conclude that this is somehow aberrant, for similar findings can be found by simple searches in any of the related disciplines. For example, if we ran the same search across the 33 political science journals⁹ (in some cases this covers their entire publication history), only 3 of the 1,301 total articles dealing with reparations have discussions regarding Africans or African Americans. This suggests that if one is either a sociologist or a political scientist, he or she would have to be impractical (or perhaps crazy) to even contemplate doing research or perhaps even teaching in the area of reparations. Alternatively, by way of comparison, if one were to do this search in the 21 journals¹⁰ that focus either on Africa or African Americans, they would find a total of 78 articles on reparations. A simple search through the law reviews, made possible by Lexis Nexis, reveals hundreds of articles

for just the past five years all dealing with reparations and slavery. The sheer volume of these articles suggests more than mere absence of malice, but intentionality in the social science community. This observation is but a small leap to the conclusion that a conspiracy of silence exists within the social science disciplines. In my younger days, I would have been tempted to run with this as evidence of a conspiracy of silence. Loaded with Marxian rhetoric, I would have interpreted this silence in the wilderness as further proof that the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling elite. Or reflecting again on the Dred Scott decision, we see that the concerns and interests of the Africans and their descendents are considered to be without merit or substance in a mainstream dominated by the ruling elite. Consequently, while reparations have been discussed by Africans and the Diaspora for more than 200 years, while thousands of discussions can be identified among legal scholars, discussions enough to fell not only trees but whole forests, absent any witnesses from the mainstream they fall into a sociological wasteland, academic silence, or on deaf ears.

Breaking the Silence: The Call for Social Justice

When Thomas Jefferson conceived of the Declaration of Independence, he understood that he could not appeal to the law, for the laws of colonial America were written by, and supportive of, the imperial rule of the British Crown. Jefferson therefore devised an argument that appealed to a higher power, a higher set of principles, and a higher rule of law. These “endowments,” which he referred to, were guaranteed by a Creator to all humans. These endowments, which include the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness — were guaranteed by the social contract that is implicitly part of the fabric that joins us all. Social justice, as we learn from Rawls (1971), requires that this contract is honored for all, particularly those at the lowest ranks of our society. Simply put, if social justice applies only to the Thomas Jeffersons, the George Washingtons, or Ben Franklins, then it is of little consequence. The adequacy of the social contract is to be measured to the extent that social justice is available to the Sally Hemmingses, Harriet Jacobs, and Frederick Douglasses.

The reliance of social justice rather than civil justice is of critical importance. Civil justice, with its explicit links to the rights and privileges of citizenship, does not (as Chief Justice Tanney clearly argued) apply to those outside the pale of societal membership. Civil justice, also reliant upon the laws of the day, is controlled and contrived to protect the powerful, often at the expense of the weak. This is a fact understood even by the Federalists, who argued that there must be an arbitrator between the interest of the weak and the powerful. While the Federalists envisioned the government (to include the judiciary) as this arbitrator, Jefferson, slaves, and their descendants understood that such reliance was not always prudent. Higher powers, courts, and principles have frequently served to invigorate calls for change,

calls for action, and calls for equity. These calls, while often appearing to be in the wilderness, have forever relied upon the principles of social justice to answer them.

Social justice, I would argue, falls in the unique preserve of sociology. This preserve has long been staked out by such figures as Comte, Weber, Durkheim, Marx, Du Bois, Cox, Genovese, Parks, Veblin, Thomas, Drake, and, of late, Wilson, Feagin, and Burawoy, to name but a few. As one considers the brief list presented above, they might, upon reflection, realize that the list consists of radicals and conservatives, revolutionaries and apologists, pragmatists and ideologues. Undergirding these apparent inconsistencies, one may identify the common thread of societal improvement, social change, and progress. Lacking any better term, this common thread may be described as *social justice*. Critical ideological differences between these particular sociologists can be linked to which societal groups their perspectives support. For simplicity sake, and for the purpose of illustration, we can suggest polar extremes representing what Weber might call “ideal types” to capture the essence of these ideological differences. For example, we could describe one group of sociologists as “bourgeois sociologists,” often suggesting a value-free or value-neutral perspective, who often aligned with the state, the corporation, or the elite. Alternatively, at the other extreme, we can identify another group of sociologists who may be described as “public sociologists,” often purposefully pursuing specific values, suggesting a humanist or progressive perspective, who often align with the oppressed, the underclass, or the exploited worker. Consequently, the bourgeois promote vision of political stability, global economic cooperation, and peaceful labor relations. Public sociologists promote vision of egalitarianism, humanism, and redistributive justice. There is no need to repeat these distinctions as they have been made elsewhere, not only by this author (Coates 2004), but others (e.g., Feagin & Vera 2001). The links between the sociological enterprise and social justice may need further clarification.

Perhaps the best place to begin is with the work of Thurston Veblin, for it is his distinction between public issues and personal troubles that the link between social justice and sociology is most succinctly made. Recalling this distinction, it should be noted that he does not rely upon legal, or political, or even economic arguments. He merely insists that if a significant number of the population is experiencing hardships, then it is a public issue or a social problem. Whether or not these problems are a result of the workings of the industrial, political, or other structural conditions operant within society is of little concern. The concern is the magnitude of the problem, the extent of the crises, and hence the need for corrective social action. As Veblin reasons, the larger the population negatively affected the more severe the problem for society. Alternatively, Weber’s “iron law of oligarchy” and Durkheim’s “anomic division of labor,” increasingly predictable given our bureaucratically organized, industrial based, capitalist society, were nevertheless social problems to which society had to respond. These particular problems — one resulting from what may be called the tyranny of the minority, and the other the tyranny of the majority — are described respectively by Weber and Durkheim as

society-wide problems. The distinctions between the problems identified by Veblin and Weber/Durkheim reflect the public vs. bourgeois continuum identified above. In either cases, Veblin, Weber, or Durkheim, the insistence was that these problems required not only our study, but also our deliberate actions in order to avoid social catastrophe. Marx, looking at the overwhelmingly exploitative nature of modern capitalism, held that the only solution for continued social progress rested in a social revolution where capital itself was destroyed. Merton, a devout functionalist, argued that when the value of upward mobility is accepted by members of society whose access to such mobility is thwarted there is an increased likelihood that they will choose deviant paths to achieve mobility. Wilson, after concluding that the “truly disadvantaged” were increasingly left behind “when work disappears,” argued that only through a major reinvestment in our urban cores can we halt the process. Throughout the discipline, we observe calls for solutions, calls for remedies, and calls for action. We observe that regardless of sociological perspective, whether from a bourgeois or from a public stance, these calls reverberate throughout the discipline. The link that joins them all is an implicit call for solutions, a call for remedies, and a call for action. Obviously, all of these calls rest upon the foundation of social justice. Social justice is no where better illustrated then in the case for reparations. It also provides a clarification regarding a practical agenda for the discipline and for the nation as well.

Social Justice and the Case for Reparations

Western imperialism based its progress, purpose, and future on the three-tiered oppressive structure of race, class, and gender. This structure provided the platform by which wealth was accumulated, riches were realized, and status attained. This structure once institutionalized became the cultural bedrock upon which each succeeding group was not only socialized, but also “racialized” and sexualized, and upon which class was deified. Inherent in this cultural bedrock is the value of whiteness and the devalued status of blackness. Consequently, groups seeking acceptance and enhanced access to the western cultural experience learned early to play the race game. The game, rigged from the start, has increased the players but has also maintained the original racial order. Hence, at the top of the racial order have remained whites (preferably of English descent) and at the bottom, blacks, preferably those which are descendants of the slaves. Of interest in this racial hierarchy is the fact that even those blacks who emigrate from other countries also learn to play the race game. They too do not identify with the indigenous blacks, nor do they experience the same type of racial stigmas as do other groups. It is as if blacks have been the official welcoming mat for all groups. What is even stranger, each generation of scholars produces research that not only identifies but justifies this strange game (Fairlie & Meyer 1996; Fenton 1957; Spencer, Kim & Marshall 1987). And when change is called for, it is only for the briefest of moments that we

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see through the seven veils. Regardless of sight or insight, no significant calls are entertained that even suggest structural transformation, redistributive justice, or significant sociopolitical or economic change. Thus, it is surprising that each generation looks with feigned awe at the outcome of hyperexploitative, excessive victimization, and super-oppression whose primary targets have been blacks and other people of color. I find it all but incredulous that anyone would be surprised at the outcome of each of the viscous generational cycles. The primary laws of slavery made it illegal to teach slaves to read or write. White labor organized itself to eliminate or restrict competition with blacks.

For over 300 years slavery was the law and the reality of America. If, as some would argue, slavery had ended with the Civil War and Reconstruction had been allowed to take its course, this conversation today regarding reparations and the continuing legacy of racial oppression, exploitation, and discrimination would be pointless. But this was not the case. The Civil War and the cessation of Reconstruction gave rise to the reinstatement of slavery under the guise of the colonization of Africa by Europe and the institution of black codes in this country. Apartheid-like structures — denying black access to education, jobs, power and status while ensuring white access to the same — became enforced by law and custom. Thus while *de jure* slavery came to an end, *de facto* slavery continued in both Africa and throughout the Diaspora. *De facto* slavery, in the forms of African colonialism and black codes in this country, thus represents the unbroken river of pain, hyperexploitation, and superoppression experienced by the African and Diaspora which formally did not end until the mid-to late 1960s.

State-sponsored and supported violence, sanctions and rewards created and perpetuated to punish black innovation account for a significant degree of poverty, failure, and frustration that exist within socially contrived black ghettos. Adding to this, public and private institutions were deliberately constructed to prevent blacks from obtaining a lasting foothold in the social, political, and economic soil of America. And, the tune has become part of the melody in the American symphony. With the decline in the most blatant forms of racial exploitation and oppression, we note that the more subtle forms of its tentacles are ever present, hiding under the shroud of class, and determining the life chances of those blacks who have an apparently permanent place among the truly disadvantaged. These blacks, a permanent fixture at the bottom of the economic barrel, in a racialized America, we continue to see the most extremes of the American nightmare. Among this group, the theme has for three decades been benign neglect.

Sociologists are well aware of these conditions. They have reported, documented, and catalogued them for the over 100 years of the discipline's existence. No group, or its situation, I believe, has been more studied or misunderstood, more problematized or stigmatized than the African group. All the remedies, solutions, and policy perspectives have failed to significantly reduce, eliminate, or redefine the problems experienced by people of African descent. When one discusses race, poverty, crime, social problems, pathology, welfare, family dissolution, juvenile

delinquency, drug abuse, etc., — social problems writ large — then the prime example (implicitly or explicitly) often becomes the African. Put another way, for every type of sociological research, the negative beta associated with blacks, regardless of issue, suggests that either blacks are problematical or blacks have been problematized. Research seems to suggest that black people are one of the most irreclaimable and corrupt of all peoples or that the problem is not with black people but with the sociocultural milieu in which they live. Either the *Bell Curve* (Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray), which blames the victim and the culture of poverty, is an adequate description of the black community, or the western experience, hyper-exploitation, and pseudo-scientific mysticism have served to undermine black existence. Further, if we assume good faith efforts ranging from legislation to social policies and programs, from court actions to social actions, have had little to no impact, then we either accept failure and we give up, or we look elsewhere for solutions.

Is it not strange that the only loans that have been typically available to Africa are those for purchasing weapons of mass exploitation and hyper-resource extraction? Is it not strange that, with trillions of dollars that have poured into Africa for these purposes, not a single dime has gone to build an industrial base? (See, e.g., *Economic Report on Africa 2004: Unlocking Africa's Trade Potential in the Global Economy Overview*, <http://www.uneca.org/cfm/2004/overview.htm>.)¹¹ No industrial centers of any magnitude exist on the entire continent of Africa. Nowhere in the entire world is this the case but in Africa. Is it not strange that in the U.S. the only businesses that are encouraged to enter into the disempowerment zones called “inner cities” or “ghettos” are liquor stores, rent-to-own, funeral homes, and fast food places? Is it not strange that the only banking institutions that cross the red line are check-into-cash places, and the only businessmen are those who stand on the corners and sell white powder, green leaves, and brown flakes from little plastic bags? Is it not strange that the most common job training typically offered either on the continent or within the community is domestic service? Is it not strange that frequent answers from both conservatives and liberals are jail, welfare, subservience or super-dependency, resignation or benign neglect? Is it not strange that in the academy, under the rubric of scientific neutrality, silence and value-free rhetoric hides the complicity that comes with aiding and abetting. Is it not strange that every president from George Washington to George Bush have refused to acknowledge the wrong, offer any apology, or suggest any strategy for redress? Is it not strange that American diplomats have walked out of every international discussion, United Nations meetings, and refused to partake in any meaningful dialogue regarding the just complaints of Africa and the Diaspora? Is it not strange that these calls for justice go unanswered, ignored, and unheeded by the Western world? And is it not strange that the African American, heard or not, heeded or ignored, continues to hear this call, as it reverberates in memory, in hearts and in the minds of each generation of African, both on the continent and the Diaspora?

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Justice, delayed or denied, will not wither away with time, silence, or complacency. Justice, proscribed or contrived, planted deep within the human psyche will breach the voids, will roll down the mountain like a might river till we are all washed in its wake.

If smoking causes smoker's cough, then cough suppressants do little but hide the symptoms. If racial exploitation and oppression causes the problems experienced by blacks, then programs, policies, and actions that merely suppress the symptoms provide little remedy. Racial exploitation and oppression primarily serve to deny access to upward mobility, wealth accumulation through restrictions placed upon education and career development, economic investment opportunities, and political power. The only remedies to racial exploitation and oppression must therefore be in enhancing access to upward mobility, wealth accumulation, education, career development, economic investment, and political power.

There will be those that will point out that even affluent blacks fail to accomplish as much as their white counterparts. The so-called "bell curve" fails to take into consideration the historical legacy of racism and classism. To clarify, what surely needs no clarification today, the chief function, purpose, results of racism are pernicious, enduring, and infectious failure, frustration, poverty, and nihilism.¹² We are just now coming to grips with the reality of post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSS) with reference to the Viet Nam veterans. We observe that many of these tormented souls carry the scares, relive the nightmares, and are still being victimized by the war which officially ended almost 40 years ago. Given the fact that their tours of duty rarely lasted more than 12 months, the effects of this tragedy are still observable. Now, with reference to the American African, whose history of racial exploitation, victimization, and oppression extends some 500 years — how long will this legacy of abuses remain, how many generations will experience the ripple effects of this great 'meteor' hitting earth. I ask my students to imagine a boulder being catapulted into the air some 500 miles, then remind them that the distance to earth is that same 500 miles. The tragic journey experienced by America's African population endures along paths worn by racial rains, colored by racial pains, and distorted by racial agonies.

As some point to the few Bills, Everetts, or the Jennifers that have made it, others see the multitudes of nameless victims who have yet to find their way from the bottom of the well. Many of these victimized people have adopted either alternative (ghetto-specific) strategies to acquire the American dream, or have given up. For those about to take me out to lunch, I am not talking about a culture of poverty, but a poverty of opportunities. I am not talking about ghetto-specific behaviors but gangster mentalities made prevalent in a cultural experience that devalues all but whiteness. I am not talking about remedies that transform or reform the victim, but those that transform or reform the culture. It is like the smoker's cough, which I often got when I smoked cigarettes. For years, I treated the symptoms. I took cough syrup which suppressed the cough and gave me the illusion of a cure. It was

not, however, until I stopped smoking that my lunges actually began to heal. We in America, for over 100 years, have been treating the symptoms of a culture of racial hostility, exploitation, and oppression. We have placed Band-Aids upon hemorrhaging wounds — such Band-Aids as the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth amendments to the U.S. constitution, such things as the first, second, and third civil rights acts, the voting rights act, the antilynching bills, busing to achieve integration, affirmative action, empowerment zones, etc. These Band-Aids, many of which aimed to quiet an enraged black populace and a guilt-ridden white one, have done little more than frustrate the condition, aggravate the wounds, and accelerate the progression of cancer running rampant in America.

The extreme frustration, negativity and sense of hopelessness, lovelessness, and wanton abandonment of motivation is not associated with the weakening of the family, church and friendship networks as stipulated by West, but the accumulation of hopes dashed, dreams deferred, and lives lost — generation, after generation, after generation. As Wilson clearly discusses — when work disappears, so also does hope, love, and motivation. All too often the only systems our society allows to fill these voids are drugs, violence, and death. The few who escape this system of victimization are not to be marveled, for even systems of randomization allow for such. But the system, even under slavery, recognized that the pressure valve needed to be released, some had to be allowed freedom, in order to keep the others from reaching total collapse.

Now, in our advanced industrial society, capital can truly allow for a lumpen proletariat to exist. For now, the globalization of labor allows cheap European, Asian, African, and Latin American labor to continuously supplant the indigenous African. This system, long in the making, has never been sufficiently complete to exhaust all possibilities for indigenous populations. It has becoming increasingly more proficient and sophisticated at pitting one group of labor against another. And the most successful means of division, one learned in colonial America, was that of race. Hence, immigrating Europeans, Asians, and Africans, often willing to start at lower salaries, often displace those already at the bottom. Today, this is no more evident than in the domestic, construction, and service industry.

West argues that current market forces have so penetrated the black community that important institutional ties, which in past generations served as buffers, have been severed or weakened. These weakened institutional ties, reflected in the family, the church, and friendship networks — leaves the victim more exposed and hence more vulnerable. While West is partially correct in that the market forces are more pernicious today than in the past, I believe he confuses the symptoms with the causes. True, today's urban youth appear to be more hopeless and angry, but these are symptoms of much more pervasive, more complex structures. And while West does correctly recognize the need for redistributive measures, he nevertheless concludes by blaming the victim. For, according to West, it is the victimized who must overcome race, must accomplish a psychic conversion, learn to love

themselves, and reinvent their communal institutions. Then, with a philosophical wave of his hand, all the problems will magically disappear.

Mr. West, daydreams continue to produce nightmares, frustration begets hopelessness, and the victimized continue to spiral down the path to increased poverty. Freedom absent choice produces anxiety, and choice absent power produces frustration, and power absent responsibility anarchy. The slaves were told they were free, but as pointed out by Frederick Douglass and W.E.B. Du Bois, all they were free to do was starve, sleep in the cold, and eek out a meager existence. The proposed reconstruction made promises of choice but failed to deliver the sustained power to alleviate over 300 years of racial oppression, exploitation, and repression. But ever so brief, the light in the darkness shined, but the darkness comprehended it not. For power never willingly concedes anything, and power was once again snatched from the African, and the regime of the South was re-installed in power. Black codes, chain gangs, and the violence and lynching of the KKK reined hell throughout the south and much of America for the next hundred years. Again the dawn of the 1960s brought new hope and power. As this power, black and unshakeable, threatened to drench urban America in the wake of their sorrow, and fearing anarchy — the voices of appeasement, complacency, and the conservative promised change with all deliberate speed. As the long hot summers filled more and more of our realities, other band aids were proposed — culminating in Johnson's promises of a new reconstruction — the Great Society, etc. Today, as we watch these promises erode and the last relics of our collective guilt, affirmative action, slowly dismantled, a more significant, lasting, and permanent remedy must be achieved. I see no other remedy, no other measure that would provide for justice, of what West called redistributive justice but that of reparations.

Anything short of full remediation, full restoration, and full reparations will continue the process of applying Band-Aids to hemorrhaging wounds. Any program, policy, executive decision, or concerted efforts, history being our guide, will punish the victim with the stigma of a handout, the perception that blacks are getting something underserved, or the jealousy of whites that this benefit is “reverse discrimination.” Such practices ultimately become excuses for system failure, societal inadequacies, and political weakness. Such practices, during times of economic necessity or political complacency, quickly are reversed, reduced, or reconsidered as the failures, inadequacies, and weaknesses are transferred upon the backs of the victims. As a new generation, now politically astute and correct, learn how to “talk nasty” about blacks politely, we self-righteously turn our backs on the plight of the poor, urban underclass.

Reparations are not about placing guilt at the feet of whites, nor is it about claiming victim status for blacks. Blacks have experienced America as victims. Whites have benefited from their whiteness, and they have experienced American guilt. Reparations, however, are not about blacks feeling better about their blackness, or whites wincing with the weight of 500 years of collective guilt. Guilt and

victimhood politics, practices, and solutions rarely lead to anything but embarrassed reluctance on the part of the guilty and frustration and anxiety on the part of the victim. The guilty, attempting to seek absolution, are encouraged to make some gesture of atonement. Such gestures, rarely anything but tokens of attrition and contrition, always delivered with great fanfare, encourage the victim to believe that finally their remedies are forthcoming. Alas, as the guilt subsides, typically with the passage of time or the press of economic realities, resolve is weakened, programs are reduced or eliminated, and another cycle of unmet promises is recorded. Each cycle of guilt and victim identification, with its resultant policies and practices of appeasements producing even more anxieties and frustrations, culminates in another generation on both sides who lose faith in the capacity of the other to appropriately respond. These cycles, being repeated several times over the course of the American experience, have produced waves of guilt, victim identification, and frustration. This cyclic process has produced, within the white community, what Kozel has described as compassion fatigue, and, within the black community, what West describes (but mistakenly explains) as nihilism. The guilt cycle, producing at both extreme compassion fatigue and nihilism, can only be broken by a complete solution, a real attempt to restore people of African descent to their proper place in our global universe. We must repair the damage, we must remedy the harm, and we must reclaim that which was stolen. Put simply, social justice calls for reparations.

Social justice, in the form of reparations, is a social solution, not an individual one. Reparations are not a handout, but the just compensation for damages resulting from 500 years of forced enslavement, kidnapping, rape, segregation, discrimination, hyperexploitation, superoppression, and a system designed to continue the cycle of victimization for blacks. Reparations would be a social response to a social problem created by a social system. This response, in the form of a class action, would provide the resources for educational and health institutional upgrades, housing, and community development, business start-up funds and economic planning. Western imperialism, with its global dependency upon Africa and the African, for over 500 years (to include the formal slave, colonial and post colonial periods), must provide a global reparations response. African debt must be forgiven, European (lead by the English, French, Italians, and Germans), and U.S. governments and economic institutions must formally apologize and proceed to invest what I estimate should be 12–15 trillion dollars¹³ into the aforementioned African and black institutions, industrial bases, and economic markets. To continue the policy of handouts, welfare, foreign aid, IMF loans, is to continue the rape, exploitation, oppression, and victimization. Africa and Africans, the world over deserve the same type of investment strategies which rebuilt both Japan and Europe after the world wars. In both cases, we did more than provide loans, but we actively encouraged the development of modern, industrial based economies. Surely the 500 year debt owing to the African “meteors” should provide nothing less. Social justice is the only response, reparations the only cure. Absent such a commitment,

the cycles of guilt and frustration will continue till we are engulfed in the sea of nihilism, anger, and bitterness. Poverty, hopelessness, anger and bitterness produce volatile mixtures the world can ill afford to ignore. Repairing the damage, the just response to centuries of abuse, encourages the climate of forgiveness and sanity.

Reparations for Whom?

Is it not strange that the conversations regarding reparations have pitted those who have been victimized against those who have perpetuated the victimization? Is it not strange that the victimized have been placed in a situation where the legitimacy of their claims has been left to the determination of the perpetrators of the victimization? It is much like if the Jews of the Holocaust were to rely upon the Nazis and their descendents to provide them justice. Such a process, by definition, would be patently unfair, hence the need to bypass the civil, legal, and national judicial, legislative, and executive decision making bodies and appeal to the higher court of international public opinion where social justice reigns.

Much of Western history (political, social, economic and psychological) for the past 500 years has been “racialized” in an imperialist effort to maximize profits at the expense of hyperexploited groups pitted against each other in a strange game of divide and conquer. When confronted with the atrocities of this past, when forced to change its ways, when required to alter its plans, new and more insidious modes of exploitation and oppression have typically been developed. The goals of social justice reparations processes would be to deracialized the discourse, repair the damage, and restore the dignity to those whose heritages have been soiled by this system of oppression. In order to accomplish these goals it must be recognized that the primary purposes of slavery, racism, and racial exploitation was to ensure profits for a racialized group of elites at the expense of many other racialized non-elites. As we consider where we should go from here, we must avoid the racially divisive game whereby blame and victim status are the net results of our actions. These, sophisticated versions of “playing the dozens,” produce little more than psychic band-aids. What we need to identify are specifics that have guaranteed outcomes, realizable within one generation. As discussed above, what we have had in the past are nebulous promises that produce little more than frustration, angst, mistrust, and continued exploitation.

In order to go past the promises and to actually identify solutions requires us to recognize the multiple levels of exploitation, multiple forms of oppression, and hence multiple parameters of redress that must be accomplished. Simply put, we must resist the easy fixes, transcend the racial riff, and embrace a future where all share both responsibility and benefits in the processes of reparations. I envision three specific processes associated with any form of reparations. I will leave it to the economists to fix a price tag, for I am concerned with social and not economic justice.¹⁴

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The three processes, interrelated, would function on the African continent, within the various diasporic communities world wide, and within the wider communities of victims or related racially exploitative systems. What follows, due to space and time limitations, is an outline of these three processes.

MARSHALL TYPE PLAN FOR AFRICA

1. Forgiveness of all African debt.
2. Immediate investment into business, industrial development throughout Africa
 - a. not just extraction but manufacturing, refining, and production
 - b. markets development (internal and external), shipping capabilities
 - c. Financial stability through the development of an Afro-dollar, currency and trading center — an African stock exchange.
 - d. Immediate investment and development of technical (computer, engineering, etc.) and higher educational (medical, legal, etc.) university structure — facilitated by graduate scholarships to American, Western, and other institutions of higher educational and technical development.

DIASPORIC COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FUND

1. Forgiveness of all educational and business debts of African descendants in the Americas, Europe, etc. for those who have successfully completed their course of study and those whose businesses have been successfully engaged for a 10-15 year period of time.
2. Forgiveness of all educational and business debts of all non-African descendants who can show that they (or their families) were disparately harmed as a result of slavery, racism, racialism, etc. for any continuous 30-year period.

CREATION OF REPARATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND BUSINESS INNOVATION FUND

1. This fund would be open to all individuals regardless of race, creed, color, sexual orientation, and gender to fund higher educational pursuits, technical training, and business development. These loans would be repaid by either of the following two ways. (1) Recipients will agree to work, do business, or hire from specific communities for a stipulated number of years. Years would be determined by number of years of training financed, or level of business loan. Or (2) recipients agree to pay taxes at the 50% rate for a stipulated number of years, with the marginal difference in taxes going to repay the reparations fund. Years determined by number of years of training financed, or level of business loan. Note: This fund is intended to be a perpetual fund operant in all countries and regions of the world where slavery has left its scar. At the very least this fund should last the 300-400 years that

slavery, colonialism, racism, and racist oppression has been a part of our collective nightmares.

Conclusion: From Reparations to Social Justice

All heretofore programs, attempts, and policies to heal the racial rift created by the hyper exploitation associated with slavery, colonialism, racism, and racist oppression have provided little lasting remedies. These programs at best were misguided and at worst ill-conceived. Those which were misguided provided temporary relief but no lasting cures. Those which were ill conceived proved to increase the racial divide, aggravate the racist oppression or replace slavery and colonialism with segregated, dual labor markets. Many of the most successful programs, with their promises of equity, rarely achieved their intended goals. Alternatively, those which were successful merely served to muffle the negatives of differential access to education, training, economic and political resources. I would argue that at the heart of such “equity” programs, policies, and remedies is a basic flaw. Put simply — equity is only a goal for the dispossessed, the deprived, and the excluded, all others strive for freedom. Equality for the former becomes the ceiling of opportunity, whereas for the latter it becomes the floor.

Affirmative action, the most recent, attempt at equity provides a clear example of this basic flaw. Affirmative action, with its goal of providing equal access to such things as jobs, educational, and business opportunities — at the very best translates to some type of quota, percent, or portion of what is available. The goal then becomes to get one’s share of the affirmative action pie. While this provide limited progress during the aftermath of the 1960s, it was never intended to be anything more than an initial step toward the process of racial healing. Unfortunately, 40 years after its initiation, it is all that is on the table for far too many needs that go unmet. These unmet needs, experienced by the poor, the displaced, and the underserved majority of blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, whites, and women who do not fit into the affirmative action slots are left out of the picture. Thus while a new, albeit shrinking, black, Hispanic, Asian, female, Native American middle class owes its very existence to affirmative action, the overwhelming majority of those trapped in poverty of these same groups find little relief. What is needed is not affirmative action but affirmative opportunity. Hence, the Social Justice Reparations program would provide opportunities — where freedom not equality is the goal.

Thus, an equal playing field is the beginning point for all — not some racialized elite or nonelite. This equal playing field, guaranteeing access to education, training, business loans, and development, allows unbridled freedom to take flight.

Notes

1. This is the figure arrived at by Du Bois in *Dusk of Dawn*, Genovese in *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World that Slaves Built* comes to similar estimates. Some 5 million Africans died in the middle passage, while 5 million actually survived the journey. Of that 5 million, it is logical to assume 5 million direct offspring.
2. Regarding the European royalty the reader might find this of interests from the notes of “the Company of Royal Adventures to the King” as it was called:

Humbly represent that the trade of Africa is so necessary to England that the very being of the Plantations depends upon the supply of negro servants for their works. This trade was at the time of his Majesty’s restoration managed by particular adventurers, who were so far from any possible design of having forts or asserting the honour of the nation that they were a constant prey to the Hollanders and were quite tired out of the trade by their great and frequent losses, of which they brought in clear proofs to the Court of Admiralty; so if his Majesty had not established a company the nation had probably by this time been quite driven out of it. The Company under the special management of the Duke of York sent out this last year above 160,000 . . . furnished all the Plantations with negro servants . . . employed above 40 ships, and doubt not they shall import very considerable quantities of gold and silver, as they have already begun. They have built forts and factories in Africa and repaired others, and have no European rivals but the Hollanders; but as to them, experience of the past gives just cause to apprehend what is intended for the future. For as the annexed extracts of letters prove, the Dutch have endeavoured to drive the English Company from the coast, have followed their ships from port to port, and hindered them coming nigh the shore to trade . . . have seized their boats and goods, violently taken possession of Cape Coast, and shot at his Majesty’s Royal flag. To complete the former indignities, one Valckenburgh, Director-General of the West India Company in Africa, has sent a protest to their factors, in which he challenges the whole trade of Guinea as their propriety, by right of conquest from the Portuguese; of which having sought remedy by means of Sir George Downing the Company have received no satisfaction. In a word, notwithstanding a stock so considerable, and the many good ships of force and the land forces they have sent, had it not been for the countenance of some of his Majesty’s ships, to give the Company a respect in the eyes of the natives and preserve their forts, the Company had ere this been stripped of their possessions and interest in Africa; Cormantin Castle itself being in extreme danger when the *Marmaduke* and *Speedwell* arrived there. The Dutch have sent a second protest, in which they say they will force the English from their forts if they do not quit them.” (Donnan, E. 1965, 164-65)

3. Thomas Jefferson goes from the position of declaring that George III had:

waged cruel war against human nature itself, violating its most sacred rights of life and liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, captivating and carrying them into slavery. (Jefferson 1776:1964)

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to one where he justifies slavery in that:

they are inferior in the faculties of reason and imagination . . . (and) unfortunate difference of colour, and perhaps of faculty, is a powerful obstacle to the emancipation of these people. (Jefferson 1997:1829)

4. The legal record is replete with examples of this, but no clearer statement of the relationship between law, the government and slavery can be found than the 1804 opinion offered by Attorney General Levi Lincoln. In it he argues:

The slave was the property of his mistress, had no *will* of his own; was incapable of disposing of his time for a moment, of creating a right, or binding himself by any contract which he could make. If so, the whole matter of engagement must be considered as void; and the negro was so far from being the *hired servant for a month*, that he was, from his condition in society, incapable of becoming one at will. The service of a slave is secured by the government to his owner. He may be considered as in custody of the law, in the custody of his owner. This master, by law, has the same right to restrain, *reclaim*, and maintain the possession of him, that an officer has in reference to his prisoner; considered as property, as the goods and chattels of the owner, the reasoning is still stronger. (Lincoln 1801)

5. Freedom dues were variously defined in each state for example Maryland in 1715 required:

every man servant shall, at such time of expiration of his servitude as aforesaid, have allowed and given him one new hat, a good suit; that is to say, coat and breeches, either of kersey or broad cloth, one new shirt of white linen, one new pair of French fall shoes, and stockings, two hoes and one axe, and one gun of twenty shillings price. . . . Women servants received petticoats, aprons, caps, and, instead of a gun, "three barrels of Indian corn." For servants who did not receive their freedom dues or were subject to ill treatment, the statutes assured judicial redress. (Cited by Bilder 1996)

6. Source: Dumke 2003. There are several sources the reader may look to for further details regarding this. I suggest Randall Robinson 2000.

7. The 34 identified Sociological publications were:

(1) *Academy of Management Journal* 1963–98; (2) *Journal of the Academy of Management* 1958–1962; (3) *Academy of Management Review*, 1976–98; (4) *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1956–2000; (5) *American Journal of Sociology*, 1895–2000; (6) *American Sociological Review*, 1936–2001; (7) *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1890–1998; (8) *Annual Review of Sociology*, 1975–98; (9) *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 1952–98; (10) *British Journal of Sociology*, 1950–98; (11) *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 1958–98; (12) *Contemporary Sociology*, 1972–2001; (13) *European Sociological Review*, 1985–98; (14) *Family Relations* 1980–99; *Family Life Coordinator* 1968–1979 *Family Life Coordinator* 1959–67 *Coordinator*, 1952–59; (15) *Gender and Society*, 1987–2000; (16) *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 1947–98; (17) *Journal of Black Studies*, 1970–2000; (18) *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*,

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1967–2001 *Journal of Health and Human Behavior*, 1960–1966 *Journal of Human Resources*, 1966–2001; (19) *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 1964–1999 *Marriage and Family Living*, 1941–63 *Living* 1939–1940; (20) *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 1963–98; (21) *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1971–99; (22) *Law and Society Review*, 1966–2000; (23) Middle East Report, 1988–1998 MERIP Middle East Report, 1986–88 MERIP Reports 1971–85; (24) *Political Behavior* 1979–98; (25) *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1937–99; (26) *Social Forces*, 1925–2000 (plus links to recent content 2001–2003) *Social Forces*, 1922–25; (27) *Social Problems*, 1953–99; (28) *Social Psychology Quarterly* 1979–2001 *Social Psychology*, 1978 *Sociometry*, 1937–77; (29) *Social Science History*, 1976–99; (30) *Sociological Forum*, 1986–98; (31) *Sociological Methodology*, 1969–2001; (32) *Sociological Theory*, 1983–2001; (33) *Sociology of Education* 1963–2001 *Journal of Educational Sociology* 1927–63 and (34) *Theory and Society* 1974–98. JSTOR search conducted on July 9, 2004.

8. This number would be 3 if we excluded the *Journal of Black Studies*, but what the heck, whose counting.

9. The political science journals and the years covered were:

(1) *American Journal of Comparative Law* 1952–2000; (2) *American Journal of International Law* 1907–2003; (3) *American Journal of Political Science* 1973–2002 *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 1957–1972; (4) *American Political Science Review* 1906–2000; (5) *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 1890–1998; (6) *Asian Survey* 1961–1999 *Far Eastern Survey* 1935–1961 *Memorandum (Institute of Pacific Relations, American Council)* 1932–1934; (7) *British Journal of Political Science* 1971–98; (8) *Comparative Politics* 1968–1998; (9) *Foreign Policy* 1970–2000; (10) *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944–)* 1944–98 *International Affairs Review Supplement* 1940–43 *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1931–39)* 1931–1939 *Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* 1926–30 *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, 1922–26; (11) *International Organization* 1947–98; (12) *International Security*, 1976–1999; (13) *International Studies Quarterly*, 1967–98 *Background*, 1962–1966 *Background on World Politics*, 1957–62; (14) *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 1957–2000 *Conflict Resolution* 1957; (15) *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1971–99; (16) *Journal of Peace Research*, 1964–2000; (17) *Journal of Politics* 1939–2000; (18) *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, 1991–98; (19) *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1974–2000; (20) *Law and Society Review* 1966–2000; (21) *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 1976–98; (22) *Mershon International Studies Review* 1994–1998; (23) *Middle East Report* 1988–98 *MERIP Middle East Report* 1986–88 *MERIP Reports* 1971–85; (24) *Modern Law Review* 1937–98; (25) *Political Behavior* 1979–98; (26) *Political Research Quarterly* 1993–2000 *Western Political Quarterly* 1948–92; (27) *Political Science Quarterly* 1886–1999; (28) *Political Theory* 1973–2000; (29) *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* 1904–13; (30) *PS: Political Science and Politics* 1988–2000 *PS* 1968–87; (31) *Public Opinion Quarterly* 1937–99; (32) *Social Science History* 1976–99; (33) *World Politics* 1948–95 (plus links to recent content 1995–2003). Search conducted on JSTOR on July 9, 2004.

10 The African American or African Studies Journals and the years the collection cover were:

African American Studies — 8 journals

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(1) *African American Review* 1992-2000 *Black American Literature Forum* 1976-91 *Negro American Literature Forum* 1967-76; (2) *Callaloo* 1976-94 (plus links to recent content 1995-2003) (3) *Journal of Black Studies* 1970-2000; (4) *Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* 1993-2001; (5) *Journal of Negro Education* 1932-98; (6) *Journal of Negro History* 1916-2000 (7) *Phylon* (1960-) 1960-87 *Phylon Quarterly* 1957-59 *Phylon* (1940-56) 1940-56; (8) *Transition* 1961-99 (plus links to recent content 2000-2001).

African Studies — 13 journals

(1) *African Affairs* 1944-98 *Journal of the Royal African Society* 1901-44; (2) *African Languages and Cultures*. Supplement 1992-96; (3) *African Studies Review* 1970-2000 *African Studies Bulletin* 1958-69; (4) *ASA Review of Books* 1975-80; (5) *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London 1940-98 *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, University of London 1917-40; (6) *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 1967-98 *Bulletin of African Studies in Canada* 1963-66; (7) *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 1972-2000 *African Historical Studies* 1968-71; (8) *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 1998-2000 *African Languages and Cultures* 1988-97; (9) *Journal of African History* 1960-98; (10) *Journal of African Law* 1957-98; (11) *Journal of Modern African Studies* 1963-98; (12) *Journal of Southern African Studies* 1974-2000; (13) *Transition* 1961-99 (plus links to recent content 2000-2001. Search conducted on JSTOR on July 10, 2004.

11. Note that the classic account of this is located at <<http://holmes.lib.muohio.edu/search/aRodney%2C+Walter/arodney+walter/-2,-1,0,B/browse>> See Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1974), Howard University Press.

12. I take objection to the specific use of this term by West in *Race Matters*. See my argument later in this section.

13. My estimate is a simple calculation based upon the 12-15 million original slaves and their immediate descendants. This estimate is a simple function of multiplying this sum by 100,000 x 12-15 million. At this point, some may even argue, given today's standards if a human life is worth this. But, I am also suggesting pain and suffering, gross and criminal negligence, conspiracy, unjustified imprisonment, loss of wages, defamation of character, genocide, rape, and false imprisonment (to name but a few). In the scheme of things numbers are just that numbers, they are meaningless until the principle of reparations as social justice is accepted. I, not being a lawyer or an economists, pick this as a convenient way of conceptualizing the magnitude of both the tragedy (past) and ongoing tragedies (present) that these funds would be utilized to (re)address. Since the recent United Nations conference on reparations, and other leading scholars come to similar results, I do not believe that my estimates are that out of line. Again, right now, for the sake of this essay, the figure is irrelevant (it could conceivably be put at \$1, although doing such would trivialize what western imperialism has already sought to minimize to nonexistence.). What is relevant is the legitimacy of the claim for justice.

14. Is it not strange, when we want to do something damn the cost, full speed ahead. But when we want to avoid doing something, we get bogged down with the cost. If you needed a heart transplant, in order to live, what price would you pay? Reparations are much like a social heart transplant, without which the social organism may just collapse.

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