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Africana Annual was established by Peter Ukpokodu and Shawn Leigh Alexander

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Introduction: In the Spirit of FESTAC 77 and E Pluribus Unum

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In a world where big money and material gains seem to matter more than intellectual ideals and principles, the minting of the US penny (1-cent coin) and its circulation will cease to be in 2026. Although it is economically prudent to discontinue the production and circulation of the coin, the lowly penny has historically borne far greater value than its monetary worth. On the reverse side of the current iteration of the Lincoln cent, the Union Shield bears the nation's unofficial motto, "E Pluribus Unum." The solemnity, dignity, and import of that phrase, translated as "Out of many, one" or freely as "Unity in diversity," may have been lost on most Americans who use the penny daily or rarely, or save it in some jar or, as some Generation Z, also known simply as Gen. Z (what a generation!) tend to do, just discard it on sidewalks or parking lots or just roll their eyes, and at other times stare vacant (the so-called "Gen. Z stare") as they ignore the salesclerk at the supermarket, the coffee shop, or the canteen trying to give it to them as change. There are some versions of the five-cent coin and the one-dollar coin that both carry the Latin inscription, but the shield is gone. All the coins do carry the word, "Liberty." In the unmitigated effort to strip Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) of value and meaning, the initial American ideal of "out of many, one," conceptualized by the Great Seal committee of 1776 as the traditional and original motto of the United States, and perceived, until recently, as one of the cornerstones of the making of the great nation that America is, becomes occluded, and, at best, opaque. With the penny on its way out, DEI gone, and the Department of Education dismantled, it is not out of place to be worried about a people's gradual recession and devolution into the dark days of ignorance.

Why this sudden love of the penny that is almost evocative of an ode to it? It is because the heavy motto carried by the little penny and the meaning of FESTAC have a conceptual similarity – that of making one "people" out of many "peoples." The diverse "peoples" of the Black Diaspora, coming "home" as it were from far-flung countries and continents, become united as a people and are recognized as such by FESTAC. The magic of FESTAC molds these "peoples of the world" into "one people." Thus, we begin our

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introduction to this volume by referring readers to a part of the general introduction to the 2024 volume of the *Africana Annual* in which we elucidated the spirit of FESTAC 77 as a guiding principle:

> As a world festival, FESTAC was a periodic homecoming of peoples of African ancestry in its widest sense [...] to celebrate their various artistic, cultural, intellectual, and myriad contributions to the world and world civilization. *Africana Annual* (a journal of African and African Diasporic Studies) aspires to accomplish on a smaller scale what FESTAC and its predecessor have done periodically on a larger scale […]. It is an international, peer-reviewed academic journal […] established to publish once a year some of the intellectual, educational, cultural, artistic, literary, and humanistic accomplishments of, and about, Africa and the African Diaspora, and as part of the global and international community. The journal thus invites articles from all parts of the world (see Volume 1, p.1, for details).

Amal El Haimeur has embraced that FESTAC spirit of intellectual rigor to conduct research that has uncovered a great leader whose accomplishments have been forgotten by African and Arab historians, and who has been perfunctorily dismissed with unflattering nicknames for women by European historians. The research yielded acclaimed results.

We knew that *Africana Annual* was destined to make an important scholarly impact, but we never expected it to come so soon. That impact came from El Haimeur's intellectually arresting article, "Sayyida al-Hurra: A Forgotten North African Queen and Military Leader," (*Africana Annual*, Vol. 1, 2024, pp. 44-60). An intriguing history about "a largely forgotten sixteenth-century" exceptional political and military leader in Morocco at a time of internal political fragmentation and frequent external threats and attacks from the powerful and intimidating Portuguese and Spanish naval forces from the Iberian Peninsula, al-Hurra succeeded in bringing stability to Morocco and warding off the external foes. So impactful has been this article that a publisher approached the author and sought the permission of *Africana Annual* to translate and publish an Arabic version of the article as a monograph in Morocco. It has been so published and distributed in Morocco and available to the Arabic-speaking regions of Africa. The potential of the publication reaching an ever-increasing readership in the whole of the African continent, the Middle East, and Europe via Morocco's northern neighbors of Spain, Portugal, and France exists. After all, al-Hurra fiercely and successfully rebuffed Iberian naval threats and encounters that earned her the pejoratives of "princess of jihad" and "pirate queen."

As in Sayyida al-Hurra, power dynamics in various manifestations play out in the articles of the present volume of *Africana Annual*. Whether it is the German Empire as it

operated in Africa, the collision of powers that led to the formation of Africana Studies, the harmonious working of spiritual/religious and material/secular powers in a religion, the harnessing of the inner powers of the visually impaired in the creation of the Blind Blues form of the genre of Blues music, the #hashtag generation of revolt against power abuse by governments, W.E.B. Du Bois' application of intellectual power to the so-called "Negro Problem," or the incessant demand over the years by the descendants of the enslaved for reparations from governments and institutions who inherited wealth and power in that process, the *Africana Annual* provides an intellectually stimulating forum for unique academic and scholarly views. Thus, **In This volume of *Africana Annual***:

1. **Patrick Hunter Graves**, in "Racial Capitalism and Imperial Germany's African Territories," gives readers a rare insight into the socio-political and economic operations of the Deutsches Kaiserreich (German Empire) in Africa. While it existed, the "boundaries between White and Black, European or Native, in the Schutzgebiete [Protectorates] were constantly in flux to accommodate continued labor needs. Racial categorization and recategorization in the Kaiserreich [Empire] reveal that socio-economic status was fundamental to determining race […]." A few Germanic words and phrases side-by-side the English translations give the paper some added value. The inclusion of a long line of thinkers of the "black radical tradition" such as W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, Oliver C. Cox, and Cedric Robinson gives the article a truly diasporic touch that places Africa, Europe, and America in contiguity.

2. In a skillful manipulation of the oxymoron as a figurative language where spirituality is happily wedded to materialism, and with an opening vignette so dramatically rendered as to stamp it indelibly in the reader's mind, **Rahina Muazu**, in "Sacred Sound, Public Wealth: Female Qur'an Recitation and Capital in Nigeria," leads an exploration of "how public female Qur'an recitation in Nigeria functions as a powerful form of capital that extends beyond spiritual merit into economic, social, and symbolic realms." The article intersects gender, religion, and capital in an examination of Qur'anic competitions in which the female voice becomes both capital and empowerment. Muazu's concept of "vocal nudity" is comfortably couched in Pierre Bourdieu's theories of capital and combines with it to satisfy the intellectual curiosity of scholars of gender, religion, materialism, politics, and sociology in Africa and the Middle East. There are some Arabic, Islamic, and Hausa words and phrases to broaden one's knowledge.

3. In an article that all those engaged in Africana Studies in any capacity should read, **Elise Johnson** takes the reader through the crucible and baptism of fire from which Black Studies in America emerged. The author attempts to gaze through the crystal ball for the future of the Africana discipline during these troubling political times. "On

Strike, Shut it Down: The Past, Present, and Future of Africana Studies" is a vivid account of the "history of Black Studies, which began as a result of student protest movements – spurred on by the student strike at San Francisco State College in 1968 – and spread across the country to hundreds of colleges and universities." Though that history is told through prime examples and experiences of the consortium of liberal arts colleges called the Claremont Colleges (5Cs) of Southern California, the author believes that revealing that history "through various archival documents helps to illustrate a path forward for the discipline, both at the Claremont Colleges and elsewhere." This is a timely article that university authorities and state university governing boards should also read to help inform their actions, decisions, and attitudes towards Africana Studies. The editors of *Africana Annual* interject here that at the University of Kansas, a student, Rick "Tiger" Dowdell, was shot and killed on July 16th, 1970, in the struggle to establish what is now the Department of African & African-American Studies. "A Luta continua," one might say.

4. "The Hidden Transcripts of the Blues: Subaltern Readings of Blues Music and Lyrics," is **Jonathan Lower's** critical analysis of the Blues musical genre, both from historical and meaning-making perspectives. The author delineates the many musical forms within the Blues genre, but it is the songs of Blind Blues musicians that is understandably the central attention as the author finds a common ground between the lyrics of Blind Blues and Disability Studies. In a touching way, Lower informs the reader that "There is no other American popular cultural form with as many blind entertainers than the Country Blues. Nor is there any other genre of music with as many songs about being down-and-out as the Blues. The Blues represents the constant highs and lows of life—the worried mind […]. What many of them have in common, as Langston Hughes once wrote, is 'the kind of humor that laughs to keep from crying.'" Lower's analysis informs us that the "hidden transcript of the Blues takes place [not on the stage at performance] but offstage, outside the intimidating gaze of power and is a dissonant political culture." While the public transcript or meaning of the Blues is, at the surface level, often a formalized and polite exchange between the "dominant and subordinate" where the latter accepts the social class and position allotted him in the hierarchical order of society, one encounters the hidden transcript hitherto veiled during performance, "on the way through the alley to the rear of the theater [where] black patrons often remarked on racist treatment with anger, sadness**,** or satire."

5. "From #Hashtags to the Streets: The Rising Tide of African Protests and the Quest for Leadership Accountability," discusses anti-government protests in Africa organized through social media, with examples drawn from Nigeria and Kenya. **Sampson Adese** argues that the advantage gained from the use of social media networks that "rapidly convert grievance into global visibility" has the negative impact of reducing protests to

"theatrical, instinctive reactions" that are not durable for institutional reform. He proposes an intellectual approach that re-orients and re-educates "culturally entrenched modes of leadership" because "true transformation […] requires a 'Revolution of Thought.'" He contends that when that intellectual approach is absent, "protest movements merely replicate the unfulfilled promises of earlier revolutions, becoming fleeting spectacles rather than catalysts for accountable states."

6. Combining their intellectual power as distinguished historian and philosopher, **Dominic I. Capeci, Jr. and Jack C. Knight** render an interpretive understanding of the formative years of W.E.B. Du Bois as an intellectual and scholar. In their co-authored article, "The Awakening of W.E.B. Du Bois," Capeci, Jr. and Knight acquaint readers with Du Bois' development of thought that recognized the "primacy of African American 'feeling' and its importance in rejuvenating the American personality as well as the regeneration of Africa." The study of sociology in Germany had imbued Du Bois with humanism that he brought to an analytical understanding and appreciation of Africana artistic, cultural, and spiritual values. Adopting an "inside-out" attitude towards scholarship, he approached the solution to the so-called 'Negro Problem' with a personal understanding as "one who lived the strain and stresses afflicting African Americans, sharing their hopes and failures in the search for recognition and respect, thereby introducing an alternative to the traditional definitions of thought and reality" that one found in academic philosophy and sociology. Thus, the authors open a window from which to view the gradual evolution of Du Bois' acclaimed work, *The Souls of Black Folk*. They reveal Du Bois' deep understanding of the strength of the diasporic connection with Africa that becomes obvious in *The Souls of Black Folk*, where Du Bois "pointed to the sorrow songs of African and African American origin as a means of spiritualizing western life. Regarding them as the 'greatest gift of the Negro people,' their integration of hope and struggle stood to rectify the strife increasingly apparent in western civilization."

7. In "A Conversation about Reparations in America with Professor Amilcar Shabazz," **D. Caleb Smith** shares with readers a privileged, exclusive interview of a man who has played, and continues to play, significant roles on the American and Africana stage. Shabazz is "a past president of the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS) [and still serves as a Board Member of the organization] as well as a founding member of the New African People's Organization, the National Coalition for Blacks for Reparations in America, and the African Heritage Reparation Assembly of Amherst, Massachusetts. His advocacy surrounding reparations has been covered by major media outlets such as the *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post*, and *NBC News*." He tirelessly attends numerous meetings and frequently gives lectures related to reparations. But the interview is not only about reparations; questions related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and Black Studies

are also fielded and answered. The interview was conducted at the New Africa House, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

8. Tafannum Karim reviews Christina Sharpe's *Ordinary Notes*. The book is about life – Black Life – in America, written in a series of 248 notes. Published in 2023 by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, the book has won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction, among others.

9. Can anything new be said about Nat Turner? In an intellectually stimulating book review of Anthony E. Kaye and Gregory P. Downs' *Nat Turner, Black Prophet: A Visionary History*, published in 2024 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, **Anthony Zacchino** plays the mind-reader with an answer to that probing question in the opening paragraph that makes reading the book irresistible – that the authors "have produced a compelling new history of Nat's rebellion." Continues Zacchino, "Their work is much more than just another study of the uprising. Rather, Kaye and Downs have restored 'three central aspects of Nat's story: his life as a Methodist, as a prophet, and as a man his followers called General.'" The book, then, "is as much a history of religion as it is a history of slavery or rebellion" that "takes Nat's faith and visions seriously." It gives central recognition to the "personhood of enslaved people while also emphasizing the active role of enslavers." Zacchino also shares with the reader some touching and personal moments and the circumstances that led to the co-authorship of the book. "Kaye was already immersed in the research […] before learning about his sickness. As it became increasingly unlikely that Kaye would be able to finish the work, he recruited Downs to assist him in completing the project. Through long conversations, shared research and notes, and parts or sections of previously written chapters, Downs attempted to produce the history that Kaye planned on telling." Thus, the book is also a validation of enduring and endearing friendships.

Racial Capitalism and Imperial Germany's African Territories

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Abstract. Racial Capitalism — a social theory popularised by Cedric Robinson in his 1984 treatise, *Black Marxism*, but now experiencing a rhetorical resurgence[1] — has already served as a useful frame of historical analysis, mostly in the United States and Great Britain. It has not been applied to German colonial history.[2] This paper uses the theoretical framework of racial capitalism to clarify how the German Empire (1871-1918) integrated the African *Schutzgebiete* (protected territories or protectorates) into capitalist society by imposing a racial and social hierarchy. Through imperial socio-economic engineering, native Africans became menial labourers without property. Furthermore, the boundaries between *Weiß* (white) and *Schwarz* (black) — *Europäern* (European) and *Eingeborene* (Indigene/Native) — in the protectorates were constantly in flux to accommodate continued labour needs. Racial categorisation and re-categorisation in the Kaiserreich (Empire) reveal that socio-economic status was fundamental to determining race, and demonstrates the necessity of including socio-economic status in any historical discussion of the race within the protectorates. The analysis offered here borrows from traditional historical materialism, from Robinson, and from contemporary critics and advocates of historical Marxism in order to broaden racial capitalism's utility as a theoretical framework for socio-economic historical analysis of capitalist societies globally.

Keywords: Racial capitalism, imperialism, Germany, Africa, materialism

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Introduction

Cedric Robinson identified himself as belonging to a long black radical tradition which included thinkers like W.E.B. Du Bois, C.L.R. James, Eric Williams, and Robinson's mentor Oliver C. Cox. The early precepts of racial capitalism can be detected in Cox's landmark work, *Cast, Class, and Race*: "Racial antagonism is part and parcel of [the] class struggle, because it developed within the capitalist system as one of its fundamental traits… moreover, racial feeling developed concomitantly with the development of our modern social system."[3] Joining Du Bois, Williams, and Cox, Robinson analysed race and class from a global perspective. His work was meant as a corrective to classical Marxism, which, he argued, undermined the role of racial stratification in capitalist accumulation.[4] Many of the modern critiques of Robinson claim that he fundamentally misread the work of Marx, and overlooked Marx's discussions of chattel-slavery in the Americas, which, Marx's defenders argue, represents his engagement with racism in capital accumulation.[5] But for Marx, American plantation owners were an exception —"anomalies within a world market based on free labour"[6] — while, for Robinson, they were the rule. Robinson built on an argument first made by Cox, who wrote: "'primitive accumulation' [which includes forms of expropriated labour like slavery and serfdom] is none other than fundamental capitalist accumulation: and to assume that feudal society dissolved before capitalist society began is to over-emphasize the fragility of feudalism and to discount its uses to the development of capitalism."[7] "Primitive accumulation" was inherent to capitalism, Robinson concurred, as demonstrated through the global capitalist system's reliance on coerced labour from its inception. More importantly for Robinson, racism was a feature of primitive accumulation. As proof of pre-capitalist, primitive racial categorisation being attached to labour, Robinson pointed to the proto-racialisation of Irish, Jewish, and Slavic peoples within European feudal society and the emergence of a discourse on "*Herrenvolk*" (master-race) through the 18th and 19th centuries.[8]

Racial Capitalism, as a term, first developed out of South Africa's anti-apartheid movement. Often, the term's creation is credited to Martin Legassick and David Hemson in their 1976 pamphlet, "Foreign Investment and the Reproduction of Racial Capitalism in South Africa," which was distributed in London. Legassick and Hemson rejected pro-apartheid claims that industrialisation and economic growth would diminish racial prejudice (a claim reminiscent of Marx's view on racism) and instead insisted that Capitalism nourished and proliferated racism.[9] Despite credit going to Legassick and Hemson, *racial capitalism* was first deployed four years earlier by Charles Nupen

in his opening address at the 56th National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) Congress:

> We must come to grips with the assertions of the African masses for political rights and economic prosperity and we must seriously investigate what changes there must be to *South Africa's particular brand of racial capitalism* [emphasis added] in order to accommodate the fulfilment of these aspirations. It demands that we explode the myths that seek to explain past privileges in terms of a sophisticated civilisation. It requires that we shed the trappings of our colonial heritage, with its emphasis on wealth, on status and on personal ambition; that we commit our skills to community development in the broadest sense of the term.[10]

Robinson was most likely exposed to the concept through his active involvement with the anti-apartheid movement in London during the 1970s. In 1980, Robinson reviewed a collection on race and politics in South Africa for the journal, *Contemporary Sociology*, and used the term "apartheid capitalism," highlighting his engagement with the theoretical interplay of capitalism and race.[11] Despite this, by prefacing South African capitalism with "apartheid" instead of "racial," Robinson presaged his departure from the anti-apartheid movement's interpretation of the term. As demonstrated in Nupen's initial use of the term above, South African anti-apartheid leftists used racial capitalism to describe a historically unique socio-economic system within South Africa, while Robinson's work expanded the concept to accommodate the global capitalist system. In 1984, Robinson published his seminal work, *Black Marxism*, which continues to be one of the main points of departure for academics theorising on racial capitalism. Although South African scholars continue to produce work on the topic of racial capitalism, their conjunctional interpretation of racial capitalism as a unique historical process must be rejected by this paper, whose fundamental aim is to demonstrate the utility of racial capitalism as a *global* theoretical framework in varied historical contexts.[12]

The necessity of the signifier, *racial*, is a point of contention raised by critics of theoretical racial capitalism.[13] This critique raises two essential questions: 1.) How should *race* and *racism* be understood in this context? 2.) If there is 'racial' capitalism, can't there be other types of capitalism with other signifiers? To begin answering the first question, we can look to Robinson's own understanding of race. As his detractors point out, Robinson himself variably framed racial differences in terms of language, ethnicity, and nationality.[14] Instead of being problematic for the stability of the theory, I propose that an expansive definition of race (and racism) is what he intended and liberates racial capitalism from

only dealing with anti-black racism. Robinson addresses anti-black racism not because it specifically is necessary to capitalist society, but because it is one of the most widespread racisms which has manifested in the modern world with ample historical examples to draw from. To clarify racism's breadth as a category, it is useful to look to Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who theorised that racism is "the state-sanctioned and /or extra-legal production and exploitation of group-differentiated vulnerabilities to premature death, in distinct yet densely interconnected political geographies."[15] This interpretation of racism requires no reference to biological or phenotypical characteristics traditionally interpreted as *race*. Not only are the ethnic and linguistic characteristics referenced by Robinson accommodated, but religious, cultural, sexual, and gendered divisions as well. There is no monolithic racism; there is a multitude of racisms, and therein lies the answer to the second question. Philosopher Nancy Fraser argues that capitalism relies on the expropriation of a dependent labourer class in order to accommodate the exploitation of a free-wage labourer class.[16] Building from that argument, racial capitalism asserts that the social category of *race* is determinant of a person's exposure to expropriation versus exploitation. The prefix, *racial*, is, therefore, both redundant as well as necessary; redundant, because capitalism has always been racist, but necessary to correct traditional analyses that have misinterpreted racism's function in capitalist society.

According to Fraser, "Marxism is enjoying a revival."[17] Capitalism has become fair game for academic critique, especially in the face of rising right-wing, ethno-nationalist, White Supremacy. Increased visibility of anti-racist social-justice movements like Black Lives Matter in the United States have coincided with racial capitalism's return to the social-science lexicon less than a decade ago. At this stage, however, historians' engagement with racial capitalism has been relatively limited, even if recent trends demonstrate that to be changing. At universities around the world, history departments are now offering courses on racial capitalism, calls for papers and conferences are being organised around the topic, collections of essays are being published, and articles on racial capitalism appear in the pages of various academic journals.[18] It seems racial capitalism has ripened as an analytical tool, but why apply it to the German colonial case?

First, the relatively short duration (1884-1918) of Germany's colonial empire proves that racial designations are necessary to capitalist divisions of labour and class and were not something that evolved out of long-term interaction between Americans/Europeans and colonised native peoples. Next, the German colonial case exemplifies why racial capitalism is a necessary intervention into historical materialism.[19] Whereas Marx and Engels suggested that racism —

and, therefore, expropriation — would resolve itself within capitalism as social relations rationalised, the German colonial case demonstrates the inverse. Finally, Germany participated in shaping the global economic order of the late imperial world. Because of its scope in comparison to the size or duration of other European colonial empires — the British or French as examples — historians have downplayed the impact of German imperialism, but, among European countries, Germany had the third largest overseas empire at the turn of the twentieth century, and actively participated in inter-imperial exchanges that led to the racist subjugation and exploitation/expropriation of native populations the world over.[20] Moreover, the socio-economic structures created in the German *Schutzgebiete* (protectorates) did not dissipate when Germany was forced to cede control of its overseas territories to the victors of World War I and German colonialist elites continued to participate in an "international", "white civilizational mission."[21] Without properly depicting Germany's colonial period, the full picture of European imperialism, global capitalist expansion, and their wide-reaching effects are obscured.

The main primary sources referenced to make this argument are the transcripts recorded from the three *Kolonialkongresse* (Colonial Congresses) that took place during the Kaiserreich (Empire) -- in 1902, 1905, and 1910 -- and the weekly editions of the *Deutsche Kolonialzeitung* (*DKZ*; *German Colonial-Newspaper*) produced between 1899-1912. These publications are demonstrative of the changing colonialist perceptions and policies on race and labour.[22] *Die Arbeiterfrage in den Kolonien* (the worker-question in the colonies) was paramount to Germany's colonial project and is one of the main themes explored in these documents. These sources offer insights into colonialists' economic goals in Africa and the strategies employed to achieve them. Moreover, they demonstrate how colonialists continuously deployed racial difference to satisfy labour demand and how racial categorisation shifted to accommodate new strategies of labour recruitment. In the dozen years examined, the "Creation of the Negro" as a social category can be tracked.[23] The *Kolonialkongresse* and the *DKZ* both operated under the umbrella of the Deutsche Kolonialgesellschaft (*DKGS*; German Colonial Society), the largest colonial political organisation in Germany, so it is taken for granted that the opinions there-in are representative of contemporary colonialists' perspectives on labour and race. The information garnered from these two sources is bolstered by a handful of contemporary studies including dissertations on the colonial economy and labour in the colonies, as well as a volume of *Beirträge zur Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialwirtschaft* (*Contributions on Colonial Politics and Economy*) sponsored by the *DKGS*.

This paper is divided into two parts. The first part explores the idea of *Kultur* (culture) and the German civilising mission. When Germany first claimed territories in Africa, racial differences were understood as the expression of different levels of cultural development. Because of this, it was argued by contemporary social scientists that Africans could be 'raised up' through education, labour, and exposure to European culture and morals. Expropriation of native labour — under the guise of *Erziehung zur Arbeit* (education for work) — was foundational to the German civilising mission and the colonial socio-economic structure. As the German colonial period progressed, explanations of racial difference shifted from a focus on cultural to biological traits. These shifts accommodated changing labour needs. Since German colonial policy failed to meet labour demand through wage-labour, racial categories were generated and increasingly relied on to create an expropriated class of landless labourers. In the second part of the paper, German efforts at settling only the 'right whites' in the colonies and the fluidity of such racial categorisation are explored. The socio-economic structure of imperial control in Africa was — from the perspective of colonial bureaucrats — precariously balanced. According to colonialists at the time, allowing poor whites to live within the *Schutzgebiete* threatened the social order by presenting blacks with whites from the underclass and thereby suggesting that class was not inherently linked to phenotypic traits. These *mittellose Weiße* (whites without means) were regarded as racially inferior to other whites, their poverty having degraded their racial status.

Poor whites' supposed racial degradation left them subject to the same types of exploitation and expropriation as black Africans. Together, these two parts demonstrate how racial categorisations within the Kaiserreich's African *Schutzgebiete* were artificially created and maintained in service of a stratified socio-economic order, which was fundamental to the territories' integration into capitalist society. Robinson's theoretical framework is evinced in the historical case of imperial Germany's African territories, thus demonstrating the global and comprehensive nature of racial capitalism, as well as the utility of the theory in application across geographic and temporal locations.

Part I: Culture, Racism, and "Education for Work"

Following philosopher Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel — who juxtaposed Europe's level of high development with Africa, describing the continent as "a part of the world without history" with "no recognisable movement and development there-in, and that which has occurred in its North belongs to the Asian or European world"[24] — German social scientists in the nineteenth century took the "absolute inferiority of the blacks" as a given.[25] This socio-cultural racism

was reaffirmed by the novel scientific field of ethnology. Ethnologists developed a narrative of difference between developed and undeveloped — civilised and wild — through examinations of *Kultur*.[26] These divisions relegated native populations to peoples *ohne Kultur* (without culture) because they lacked certain traits that Europeans deemed necessary for *Kultur*'s development — a written historical record, for instance.[27] *Kultur* manifested racial divisions, but different races were identified by cultural practices instead of biological traits.[28] Cultural differences were used to justify imperialism by insisting that the white European race was active and made to rule, while Africa's indigenous populations were passive and to be ruled over.[29] Colonial policies of exploitation and expropriation were therefore considered natural, the logical progression of Europeans' cultural — and, therefore, racial — superiority.

Central Europeans in the nineteenth century had almost no true exposure to colonised populations; instead, cultural artefacts and photographs portraying natives as "exotic but inferior" shaped their perspectives.[30] Most Germans could have only ever seen an African person in the flesh by visiting *Völkerschauen* (people shows), popular carnival-like attractions which began appearing in mostly metropolitan areas from the mid-1870s and purported to present an authentic depiction of native life in Africa.[31] Exhibitions of *Negerdörfen* (Negro villages) — complete with indigenous peoples plucked from Africa — and other *Völkerschauen* became some of the most popular public attractions in the country.[32] Although the *DKGS* expressly prohibited the transport of natives out of the colonies for the purposes of exhibition in 1901, *Völkerschauen* and the like had already entrenched natives' inferiority into German social perceptions, having provided a steady flow of materials to a curious public and ethnologists alike.[33] The creation of the Negro started in Germany before the colonies were even chartered. In European society across the continent, popular opinion incorporated a hierarchy of being — bolstered by 'scientific' research — which situated Europeans at the top and African populations at the bottom.[34]

As Germany took control of the *Schutzgebiete*, the greatest value of the claimed territory by the Kaiserreich lay in the labour power of the *Eingeborene* and their ability to extract raw materials and to harvest cash crops.[35] *Die Arbeiterfrage in den Kolonien* — how to create a workforce out of male *Eingeborene* — was a matter hotly debated for the duration of the colonial period. To harness the labour power of the native population, certain tribal norms, primarily polygamy, had to be dismantled. According to Mission Inspector, Alexander Merensky, polygamy was "the main reason for (the African male) being left behind; since it grants him labour which is at his disposal through his own idleness."[36] Speaking at the 1902 *Kolonialkongress,* Mission Inspector, Oehlers, echoed Merenksy and

reiterated native perspectives: "Labour is the stuff of women and slaves and therefore not the stuff of a free man… Women and daughters are not only sold but also rented out for years."[37]

The secret to exploiting native male labour, according to many colonialists, lay in consumer culture.[38] Early colonialists, amongst them industrialists and capitalist entrepreneurs, called for establishing a market for European goods in the *Schutzgebiete* in order to create a cyclical machine of labour exploitation and profit: desire would be created in native populations for manufactured goods that required wages to purchase: African males would engage in wage-labour to purchase manufactured goods from Europeans; Europeans would profit from the sale of manufactured goods to African wage-labourers; those profits could then pay Africans in exploitive positions as cheap labourers to produce more raw materials; raw materials derived from indigenous labour would expand European manufacturing capabilities; the manufactured goods would be sold to labourers; and labourers would need to return to work extracting raw materials to fund their next purchase.

Despite great efforts at embedding Africans in a cycle of consumption and exploitation — even German Christian missionaries actively instilled a culture of consumerism to compel labour — many of the indigenous peoples who had come under German colonial rule independently satisfied their needs.[39] Even if the *Eingeborene* were inclined to take up labour under German supervision, they preferred payment in natural goods like fruits, dried-fish, salted meats, and, especially, tobacco, meaning natives lacked capital to recycle back into the economy through buying European manufactured goods.[40] Young male labourers expanded their interests and desires and even engaged with the market, but labour was in such great demand that sustained employment was unnecessary. African labourers took up work to satisfy immediate desires as they arose, meaning they oscillated between idleness and employment based on their wants and needs.[41]

> If the married native has somewhat higher expectations of life, if he wants to buy particularly desirable things, he is sometimes prepared to take on work. With the relatively high wage rates, however, a few months a year are enough to satisfy his needs. If he then receives his payment and has covered his needs for salt, tobacco, brass plates, clothing and the like and still has money left over, he often does not know what to do with it.[42]

Increased consumption of "brandy and similar harmful things" demonstrated that increased market demand might even be deleterious to the *Erziehung zur*

Arbeit.[43] At the turn of the twentieth century, the ability of the market to raise up native populations to the level of wage-labourers was in serious doubt.[44]

Still, at that time, the belief that *uncivilised* populations possessed the ability to achieve a higher cultural level — thus transcending racial differences — was common amongst colonialists. At the *Deutscher Kolonialkongress* of 1902, Missions Inspector, Merensky, gave voice to the dynamic nature of racial difference: "On this question: What are the natives in our colonies? I give the answer: they are human! [...] the so-called primitives are nothing other than less-developed members of the singular, large human family. Furthermore, experience attests that they are humans."[45]

Labour was increasingly presented as the instrument of *Erziehung* (*education/up-bringing*) that could "bridge the gap" between the "wild" and "cultured" peoples.[46] In 1882, Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwing had founded the Wilhelmsdorf workers' colony in Prussia where people voluntarily came to be 'educated for work'. Wilhelmsdorf was the central location of *Erziehung zur Arbeit* before Bodelschwingh expanded his Bethel Mission's work to the African continent. The rhetorical ties between the precariat within Europe and black Africans suggest that the two practices were at least conceptually bound to one another.[47] The 'work-shy' and vagabonds of Europe — those the Bethel Mission was designed to serve — were defined by the same racial-cultural language as black Africans and were referred to colloquially as 'savages'.[48] *Erziehung zur Arbeit* was immediately co-opted in colonial political discourse following German acquisition of its overseas territories in 1884.[49] A year later, the Deutsch Ostafrika Gesellschaft (German East Africa Company) in Berlin held a competition to best answer the question, "What is the best way to raise the Negro up to plantation labour?"[50] The *Arbeiterfrage* (worker question) in the colonies focused solely on native populations — despite the population of *mittellose Weiße* steadily increasing throughout the colonial period — because the ability of Europeans to labour in the colonies was a point of scientific dispute well into the twentieth century.[51] Within a system which assumed that whites could not labour, class and racial categories were synonymous: *Eingeborene* with labourer and *nicht-Eingeborene* (non-Native/non-Indigene) with ruler. Adalbart Bauer, a social scientist during the German colonial period, observed: "The economic enterprise occurs 'with the heads of the white race and the arms of the natives.'"[52] In application, according to a missionary writing in the *DKZ*, "*Erziehung zur Arbeit* has nothing to do with raising up to labour or to a higher culture, it means nothing further than the exploitation of the natives' physical power in the interest of unscrupulous land developers and monopoly corporations."[53]

Schools, both those operated by the government and those by missionary organisations, were naturally the most common sites of *Erziehung* on the African continent. A paucity of teachers in government-run schools made colonial administrators reliant on Missionary schools to promote *Erziehung zur Arbeit* among native populations.[54] The schools run by the colonial administration differed from missionary schools since they produced bureaucrats from subaltern populations — who were subordinate to colonial authorities but participated in the administration of the colonies despite being *Eingeborene* — as opposed to missionary schools, where the focus was mostly on rudimentary theoretical education combined with practical labour. Missionary organisations quickly took up the cause of transforming the *Eingeborene* into productive labourers. Since a preponderance of missionary schools' financial support came from the government, they were compelled to act in the state's interest.[55] From the onset of Germany's colonial project, missionaries emphasised labour as their ultimate goal, even superseding religious instruction. Count von Pfeil at the *Kongress für überseeische Interessen* (*Congress for Overseas Interests*) in 1886, for example, called on the missionaries to redirect their efforts towards *Arbeit* (labour):

> The Missions could become still a greater factor in the *Erziehung der Neger* [education for the Negro] if they could be convinced to pray less… Missionaries should not dedicate so and so many hours weekly to prayer lessons, or reading and writing lessons for their pupils, but rather only teach their people handicrafts which can be supplemented with as much religious education as is digestible for a native.[56]

Conflict between the colonial administration and the metropole often revolved around the type of education offered in schools, as for example, whether or not German language instruction should be offered and whether "the German language would also open the door to revolutionary politics."[57] Colonial authorities in Africa had to balance the need for administrative help in the colonies with fears of a "*farbigen Bildungsproletariat*" (coloured, educated proletariat), so they offered "as little knowledge as possible" to African students.[58]

Erziehung zur Arbeit was fundamentally a mission to introduce exploitative wage-labour relations into the *Schutzgebiete* but, by 1902, the budding market in the colonies could not actually produce enough capital to support the wage labour necessary for cultivation.[59] The *DKZ* published an article detailing the crisis in 1903: "The prices of the products to be considered for plantations — coffee, cotton, etc. — move in a descending direction; thus the wage labour of the Negro will never be worth the yield to be obtained."[60] It may have been the case that wages for natives were high enough that very little work could satisfy their needs for weeks or months at a time, but the availability of paying

positions were lacking and *Eingeborene* were thus prevented from taking up the positions that *Erziehung zur Arbeit* had been designed for. Nevertheless, this did not stop colonial advocates like Walter von St. Paul Illaire from presenting *die Arbeiterfrage* as a matter of awakening "the awareness of the duty to work and an inner drive to find satisfaction — direct or indirect — in work itself." [61] Appealing to the inner character of the natives was the only possible solution to *Erziehung* because, as Illaire acknowledged, "It is not possible to raise the number of workers required through the increase of wages."[62] Since early capitalist development in the *Schutzgebiete* could not support *Lohnarbeit* (wage labour), a debate began on the limitations of *Erziehung zur Arbeit* and the value of using forced labour as a tool to "raise-up" the natives instead.

Despite protestations by some missionaries — like those of Mission Inspector, Merensky, at the same *Kolonialkongress*, where he suggested that fear of the "*Nilpferdpeitsche*" (hippopotamus-whip) or the "*Mausergewehr*" (Mauser-rifle) would not produce "*Ordnung und Sittlichkeit*" (order and morality) — these had little effect on the increased usage of expropriation through forced labour in the Colonies.[63] By the 1905 *Kolonialkongress*, Missions Director, C. Buchner, appeared to acknowledge the inevitability of the trend towards *Zwangsarbeit* (*forced labour*): "Every educator knows that without force there is no education to be had, that any form of raising up requires coercion to an extent."[64]

By the end of the German colonial period, *Erziehung zur Arbeit* had been left behind, making *Zwangsarbeit* the main strategy of labour in Germany's African colonies. Even when policies of *Erziehung* were taken up by missionary organisations in the years that followed, they were rebuffed by the colonial administration. For example, in Togo, 1909, missionaries requested more funding to properly educate the natives, but were rejected by Governor Count von Zech, who "had designated it more important that the great majority of coloureds in the colony be systematically educated for work, as opposed to spreading a general half-education."[65] Instead, investments were made for courses in *Feldarbeit* (fieldwork).[66] The *Kulturmission*'s focus on 'raising' natives up had been subsumed by a pseudo-scientific racial narrative which presupposed that such an *Erziehung* would not even be possible for Africans. Take Dr. Georg Hartmann, speaking in 1912, and giving voice to the perceived limitations of *Erziehung*:

> What does it mean to educate? To raise [the African male] to a moral level so that he, if left to himself, would act of his own accord as we would in this particular case. It is totally wrong to indulge in the illusion that an 'education' in this sense is possible in the native, and all experience speaks against it; even where it is apparently true, it can be shown

> that its duration is not guaranteed. It is, therefore, incorrect to speak of 'education' for labour. The same native who, under the influence of external compulsion, temporarily proves himself industrious, orderly, and punctual on the plantation or in the house of the white master, reverts irretrievably to his original disposition when he returns to his native village, free of this compulsion and left to himself.[67]

Part II. The Right Whites

Part I established how German colonial rule was predicated on establishing a class of elites that had authority over a class of expropriated native workers. The racial status of native Africans was regulated and reclassified by colonial authorities, and then certain duties and circumscribed rights became attached to their 'race'. Part II will now explore the inverse case of whites, and how *Weißsein* (whiteness) was also thoroughly regulated and not immutable. Colonial rule was not possible without the settlement of white Europeans in Africa. While colonialist propaganda might have highlighted certain qualities that would-be settlers should have — rugged individualism, diligence, and tenacity — what really mattered when it came to being the right kind of white for settlement and rule, was property and capital.

According to Felix Ritter von Luschan, a medical doctor and anthropologist with specialty in craniology who invented the Von Luschan Chromatic Scale for skin-color classification, the colonies were tabula rasa, since "in the colonies there was not yet any pauperism, practically no crimes […]" and none of the other "social questions" that plagued the metropole at the time.[68] The question of how to best maintain the absence of a-socials — the work-shy and vagabonds, who were understood to be racially inferior to middle-class, Christian Germans — was a near constant fixture within colonial policy discussions. From the very beginning of the colonial project, colonial administrators and elites worried that the existence of *mittellose Weiße* would disrupt the social hierarchy in the overseas territories and confuse labour relations. *Mittellose Weiße* would be in competition with natives over menial labouring positions in the colonies, disrupting the socio-economic hierarchy which placed Europeans at the top and Africans at the bottom of it.

There was never a lack of enthusiasm from Germans looking to emigrate to the African continent, but many of those expressing interest could not afford the travel from Europe, let alone the cost of establishing themselves as farmers. Prior to 1903, there was no organised settler policy to speak of concerning Deutsch Südwestafrika (*DSWA*; German Southwest Africa]).[69] Initially, the Siedlungssyndikat der *DKGS* (Settlement Syndicate of the *DKGS*) was in charge

of settler recruitment, but their successes were minute. Between 1884 and 1900, although more than one million Germans had emigrated out of Europe, only 3000 had successfully been settled in Africa.[70] There were almost no government subsidies available to potential settlers without means for fears that they would "encourage highly inept colonists" that would only succeed in throwing "state money out the window."[71]

In 1903, Paul Rohrbach was appointed as Commissioner for Settlement for *DSWA*, and after taking a months-long tour of the territory, he submitted a report that steered settler policy in *DSWA* for the rest of Germany's colonial period. Rohrbach estimated that the successful development of small-hold farms of around 5000 hectares (about 12,355 acres) required an initial investment of 8,000-10,000 Mark. This estimate was revised in the years following the Herero-Nama war, and by 1910, the official government guidance was for potential small-hold settlers to have 10,000-15,000 Mark start-up capital. For large-hold farms, the required capital was closer to 25,000 Mark.[72] Rohrbach argued that subsidized settlement of lower-class Germans "would do little to serve the colony and its development," and his settlement policy favoured wealthy Germans capable of purchasing and managing large plots of land.[73] In addition to capital, the ideal candidate was expected to have a healthy, white, German wife. '*Geld, Geist und Gattin*' (money, spirit, and spouse) were the markers of "*Kulturmenschen*" (cultured persons) — members of the *Herrenrasse* (master race) — far from the metropole.[74]

Rohrbach's appointment in 1903 was part of an about-face for the German colonial project. Colonial authorities were concerned that the social problems of the metropole were spreading to the colonies. The population of *prekäre Weiße* (precarious whites) was steadily increasing as the colonies attracted *mittellose Weiße* kicked out of other colonies. Many lower-class whites — pushed from South Africa and Brazil — found themselves headed for German territory in Africa since fare was more affordable than for travel all the way to Europe.[75] The European populations of the colonies did not reflect the ideal settlers imagined by Rohrbach and other colonial elites. Increasingly, whites were falling into lives of alcoholism, prostitution, and vagabondage. These patterns of behaviour from Europeans were considered dangerous as they diminished the prestige of the white race in the eyes of the natives, resulting in a loss of whites' authority and the ability to successfully exploit native labour:

> [...] the educator himself must be a moral character; otherwise, the education will not succeed. Where can the morality of the Negroes come from if they do not see it in the educators? Where is the moral respect for them to come from if they are not moral? What we make of

> the Negroes is what they are. If we make liquor drinkers out of them, they are liquor drinkers, and I have never heard of people becoming good workers by drinking liquor.[76]

Whites of the "under-class" were thought to have racially devolved and acted "as wild, uncivilised opposite of the bourgeois self."[77] Even if they were not transient-alcoholics, whites who simply belonged to the working class were problematic to the social hierarchy of the colonies. Take, for example, an article from the *Deutsche Zeitung* (*German Newspaper*) of January 1906, which reported that ethnic Germans from Russia should be prevented from emigrating to Deutsch Ostafrika (*DOA;* German East Africa) because they "[...] would handle all of the work themselves and would not need the Negro. We would consider then an immediate threat to the prestige of the white race and a sin against the correct Native-Policy, which must be fundamentally based on educating the Negro to labour for the master race."[78] While Russian-Germans and other non-German whites — for example, the Boers of South Africa — did eventually settle in the *Kilimandscharo-Meru Siedlungsgebiet* (Kilimanjaro-Meru Settler's Territory) in *DOA*, colonial elites called for their social segregation from *Reichsdeutsche* (imperial Germans) in order to preserve white-Germans' status. *Die Arbeiterfrage* was considered "increasingly urgent" in areas that attracted white settlers, especially the lower-class white settlers.[79] In places with a white population, natives' labour had to be exploited in order to establish subordination to Europeans' authority. The alternative then, in which whites would be forced into positions as menial labourers if there were not enough natives to satisfy labour needs in a territory, was an unacceptable undermining of the *Herrenrasse*'s (master race's) supposed superiority.

At the turn of the century, the foreign office tasked Theodor Leutwein, then governor of *DSWA*, with drafting a report on the viability of removing undesirable elements — described in racially degrading terms — from Europe to Africa. Leutwein's 1903 report found that such a program required significant funds. The report concluded that the colonial administration would be better served to use their funds to support "the settlement of honest people."[80] This report drastically accelerated the *Deportationsdebatte* (Deportation Debate) which had been a minor topic of discussion among German colonialists since the acquisition of territory in Africa.[81] Despite Leutwein's findings, the *DKGS* continued to consider how to remove elements of Germany's European population to Africa and established a "Deportation Committee" in 1904 to continue research on the matter.

Ultimately, the only deportation to occur in the German colonial context was centrifugal, from the African *Schutzgebiete*. Individuals identified as

"troublesome […] undesirable," or "useless" — including criminals, beggars, vagrants, threats to the state, and those considered dangerous to "public order, social harmony, or vital business interests" — were liable to be deported.[82] Each year, officials in Berlin were made aware of the number of *nicht-Eingeborene* residing in the colonies who were unemployed or were vagabond. Destitute non-Germans (non-citizen, *nicht-Eingeborene*) were expelled with impunity, although the matter of expelling German citizens was less clear. Section 1 of the 1867 *Freizügigkeitsgesetz* (Freedom of Movement Act) prohibited the expulsion by the state of a citizen from within Germany, however, the colonies were not included in Articles One and Two of the constitution which defined the territories covered by the law. In 1891, the *Reichs Justizamt* (Imperial Ministry of Justice) submitted a report to Chancellor Leo von Caprivi affirming the right of colonial authorities to expel German citizens from the overseas territories "given that the protectorates are not internal to the empire."[83] Despite having the legal authority of expulsion, the *Kolonialamt* (Colonial office) recommended that it only be used in drastic circumstances "against those who were either a real threat to public order or alternatively were clearly undermining Germany's colonising efforts."[84]

The *Deportationsdebatte* fundamentally changed after the Herero-Nama war. Colonial Administrators in *DSWA* were already fearful of the growing number of poor whites in the colonies and the problem only worsened as the political situation deteriorated. The number of *mittellose Weiße* grew as settled land was ravaged by the warring parties, leaving a greater number of European settlers dependent on the colonial government.[85] Additionally, a great number of undesirable settlers — many of them from the British Cape Colony to the South — took advantage of the instability within *DSWA* and were able to penetrate the colony's borders.[86] Imperial Edicts had been in place since 1895 which required registration at the nearest *Bezirkshauptmannschaft* (district administrative authority) within two months of an individual's arrival in *DSWA*, but the colonial administration was unable to properly vet and investigate new arrivals. Even if a settler was detained by colonial authorities, escapes from captivity were not uncommon. In 1905, the *Einwanderungsgesetz* (Immigration Act) was adopted to create a higher barrier of entry to the territory and prevent the number of *prekäre Weiße* from swelling even further. The *Einwanderungsgesetz* pre-empted deportation by preventing undesirables from taking root in the first place. The new law empowered colonial administrators to refuse entry to "non-whites, those unable to provide information about themselves, those without enough capital to finance their stay and that of their family members, persons who were mentally ill, persons involved in prostitution, and immigrants whose presence

was adjudged to pose a potential threat to public safety."[87] In 1909, the law was expanded; a person was classified as undesirable if they lacked the ability to write their own name in a European language. Legally speaking, non-whites and impoverished whites were subject to the same regulations.

In the wake of the colonial wars, administrators were less hesitant in exercising their authority to expel German citizens who threatened the colonial social order. Many of the deportation cases involved sexual violence, homosexual encounters, and extra-judicial violence against natives. Ultimately it was up to the discretion of a territory's governor to determine what actions were damaging enough to the colonial project to justify expulsion. The right of governors to expel German citizens was challenged by Lieutenant Victor von Alten, who had first come to *DSWA* in 1896 to pacify the colonies as a member of the *Schutztruppe* (protection force), after which he settled down in the territory as a farmer. In 1906, after being convicted twice for homosexual encounters with natives — and imprisoned for two years — von Alten was expelled for eroding the authority of the white man and thereby threatening the stability of the colonial order.[88] The authority of colonial governors was confirmed in 1909 when von Alten sued the German government, arguing that they had violated his right to freedom of movement under the *Freizügigkeitsgesetz* (Freedom of Movement Act), but the judgement reaffirmed the legal distinction between colony and Metropole and the governors' authority.[89]

Among other examples of Germans deported from the colonies was August Wilhelm Heinrich Martin, "a totally neglected boy of 13 years, who live[d] the life of a native. He constantly disappear[ed] from his parent's house for weeks at a time and live[d] at the native shipyard."[90] Martin's imagined degenerative influence on his white classmates was enough reason to have him deported and sent to a reform school in Hamburg in 1910. Alcohol — whether it be alcoholism or the sale of alcohol to *Eingeborene* — was also of particular concern to colonial authorities and resulted in numerous recommendations for expulsions.[91] Deportation was considered both extreme and costly, leading the colonial administration to devise new ways to exclude undesirable settlers from participating in 'white' colonial society. In 1909, for example, the constitution of the *Landesrat* (provincial council) in *DSWA* — disenfranchised Germans without a fixed occupation, those dependent on government subsidies, and persons being observed or prosecuted by colonial authorities.[92]

The social and moral offenses thrown out during the deportations debate were part of broader colonialist fears of *Verkafferung* — the German iteration of the British Imperial colloquialism "going native." *Verkafferung* first appeared in print in the *Kolonialzeitschriften* (*Colonial Journal*) in 1904, and it remained

a feature of colonial discussions until the dissolution of Germany's overseas empire. The supposedly natural superiority — be it cultural or biological — of white Europeans over the *Eingeborene* was not a given, and *Weiß-sein* within the African *Schutzgebiete* was under constant threat. *Verkafferung* was defined in the *Deutschen Koloniallexikon* (*German Colonial Encyclopaedia*) as "the descent of a European to the cultural level of the natives," or "a regrettable degeneration of white settlers."[93] These definitions fail to identify the root causes of *Verkafferung*, perhaps because colonialists put forth such a wide-range of factors causing racial degradation. On one hand, *Verkafferung* could be the result of active social/sexual interaction with natives or the adoption of aspects of native culture, be it food or dress; on the other, it could be passive, a matter of white skin browning under the sun — "the symbolic mark" of "an apparent assimilation with the native population"[94] — or a dependency on alcohol, neither of which required any kind of interaction with natives. The unifying feature of *Verkafferung*'s multi-faceted origins — social interaction with natives, sun-tanned skin, even criminality and alcoholism — is that each was associated by colonialist elites with the working class. In 1904, the same year that the term *Verkafferung* was first used in a German publication, the *DKZ* circulated assertions by racial theorist, Max Robert Gerstenhauer, that "[the Germans] still have too little awareness of their mastery, as members of the more noble, superior white race and do not maintain the distinct social separation from coloureds which is necessary to the security of the state and the purity of the race."[95] According to historian, Horst Gründer, "deep-seated psychological fears of 'racial degeneration'" reflected elites' anxieties over the potential "loss of political and economic dominance."[96] 'Going Native' was just as much a matter of 'going broke,' since racial degeneration was produced from loss of socio-economic status.

Few threats were considered as dire to German imperial socio-economic order — and colonialists continued expropriation of natives — as that from interpersonal relationships between *Eingeborene* and *nicht-Eingeborene* that resulted in children of blended heritage, classified as *Mischlinge* (bi-racial). As colonial observers noted miscegenation between *Eingeborene* and *nicht-Eingeborene* steadily increasing in the early colonial period, it was theorised that white women's scarcity led European men to engage in sexual relationships with native women they otherwise would avoid.[97] It followed that if more suitable women were available, *Verkafferung* would decline or cease to be. Initially, schemes to relocate and settle women in the colonies received little support. An expenditure of 25,000 Mark to facilitate the emigration and settlement of unmarried German women was at first included in the government's draft budget for the fiscal year 1899, but was ultimately removed.[98] The responsibility for the

transport of white women to *DSWA*, the only colony designated specifically for German settlement, was, therefore, solely the domain of the *DKGS*. In the late 1890s, the imperial government appealed to Johann Albrecht — Duke of Mecklenburg and president of the *DKGS* — and his wife to subsidize the settlement of German women, to which they agreed. The first group of women arrived in *DSWA* in early 1898 and immediately displayed their usefulness and relevance because by March 20th of the same year, governor Leutwein reported to the *DKGS* that six of the girls were engaged and one was already married. A total of nineteen girls had their travel to the colony facilitated by the Colonial Society program that first year.[99]

By 1901, the program was faltering, leading Governor Leutwein to plead with the public to demand more government funding for the *DKGS* program. He claimed that two young women without sufficient financial support had recently committed suicide due the poor conditions they were subjected to in *DSWA*.[100] It wasn't until hostilities broke out during the colonial wars that the women's settlement program was truly established. In 1905, the announcement was made that a colonial women's organisation was to be established, and in 1907, under the guidance of the noble Adda von Liliencron, the "Deutschkolonialer Frauenbund" (German Colonial Women's Association) -- in the following year it would merge with the *DKGS* to become the Frauendbund der Deutschkolonialgesellschaft (Women's Association of the German Colonial Society) -- was founded with the stated goals "to awaken interest in the German colonies within women and […] to support German girls who would seek employment in the colonies through subsidising their travel and establishing relevant connections."[101]

White women had been presented as a preventative to *Verkafferung* in the colonies before colonialists had even developed a name to the perceived threat, but their efficacy in defending *Weiß-sein* was dependent on class and status. In order to combat *Verkafferung*, it was not enough that the women selected to emigrate to Africa be white; they had to be members of the upper or middle-class. After all, *Verkafferung* was not only a matter of sexual degradation, but an economic one as well. There was a preponderance of young, single, middle-class women in the metropole — with few marriage prospects and little opportunity to find suitable work — who were targeted by the Frauenbund's emancipatory messaging.[102] The Frauenbund emphasised that emigration would be limited to *gebildete Frauen* (educated women). To be an educated woman in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century almost guaranteed a candidate's status as upper middle-class.[103] In Witzenhausen and Bad Weilbach, *Frauenkolonialschulen* (colonial women's schools) were established to prepare candidates for life in *DSWA* which charged 1400 Mark in tuition, a high enough barrier of entry to

turn away working-class applicants.[104]

At the onset of the German imperial expansion, relationships between *Eingeborene* and *nicht-Eingeborene* were considered beneficial. For example, the Rehoboth "Bastards" — a group descended from Dutch Boers and the Nama people who made their way in the 1860s into the territory that became *DSWA* — were thought to make "*respektable Ehefrauen*" (respectable wives).[105] In 1905, governor Lindequist observed that "many young men inclined to enter into a conjugal relationship with natives, namely, Bastard girls, in the absence of white girls. They are moved by the circumstance that the Bastard girls quite often bring a herd of livestock, an oxen wagon, and not seldom a farm into the marriage."[106] In addition to land and livestock, Europeans expanded their trading opportunities with access to existing networks provided by their relationships to the Rehobothers. Rehobothers economic status took precedence over supposed racial status. Despite the example of the Rehobothers, the majority of sexual relationships between *nicht-Eingeborene* and *Eingeborene* did not lead to marriage. Of those that resulted in marriage, most were presided over by religious officials but had no formal recognition from the colonial administration. The term *Mischehen* (mixed marriages) — first used to reference interfaith marriages in the metropole — entered the colonial lexicon describing racially blended marriages.[107]

As presented in **Part I**, at the start of German imperial control, native women in relationships with white men could potentially rise to the level of *nicht-Eingeborene* if they displayed behaviours and cultural practices associated with *Weiß-sein*. This fundamentally changed in the wake of the colonial wars in *DSWA* and *DOA* where *Mischehenverbote* (mixed-marriage ban) followed in 1905 and 1906 respectively. The marriage bans were enacted by the individual territorial governments, but were bolstered by support from Colonial Secretary Bernard Dernburg, ironically himself the product of a mixed marriage.[108] In 1907, the ban in *DSWA* was expanded to make illegitimate any *Mischehen* conducted before 1905.[109]

According to Hans Tecklenburg, the acting governor who oversaw *DSWA*'s mixed-marriage ban, the impetus for the first marriage ban was not so much to preserve the purity of the white race as it was to maintain class divisions.[110] As he himself well knew, the ban did nothing to prevent extra-marital sexual contact between *nicht-Eingeborene* and *Eingeborene*. A contemporary observer, Pastor Kassiepe, reported to the Missionsausschusses des Zentralkomitees der Katholikenversammlungen Deutschlands (Mission Committee of the Central Committee of the German Catholic Assemblies) that 90% of European men in the *Schutzgebiete* had participated in sexual relations with *Eingeborene* women.[111]

The only legislation introduced during the colonial period to regulate sexual contact between whites and blacks was aimed at preventing white women of the *Unterschichten* (under classes) from prostituting themselves to native men.[112]

What was most important to Tecklenburg was that the progeny of *nicht-Eingeborene/Eingeborene* relationships — termed *Mischlinge* — were no longer identified as *Reichsangehöriger* (imperial citizens) and lost the privileges associated with it. By delegitimising any marriages between male-Germans and female-*Eingeborene*, *Mischlinge* no longer inherited their father's citizenship-status. Prior to the wars, *Mischlinge* had occupied a liminal space between *Eingeborene* and *nicht-Eingeborene*, making them perfectly suited for "such tasks, which were less attractive to the whites, but overwhelmed the natives, because they required certain vocational training and knowledge of the German language."[113] The "fundamental intermediary position" of the *Mischlinge* was similar to the position afforded Arabs in *DOA* in that their higher racial status — by dint of being half-white — opened up educational opportunities and the ability to do white-collar work. With the start of the colonial wars, suddenly, the liminality which benefitted *Mischlinge* became a liability.[114]

Colonialists at large took the stance expressed by Commissioner for Settlement, Paul Rohrbach – that *Mischlinge* represented a 'highly dangerous' political element in the colonies.[115] A report submitted by the *DKGS* to the Reichstag (Parliament) claimed that *Mischlinge* "felt themselves to be the leader of the black race".[116] In the view of the colonial administration, *Mischlinge* would act in class solidarity with the *Eingeborene* against white colonial elites; therefore, they had to be culled from the ranks of German citizens. Otherwise, they would have the power to fundamentally shape not only colonial, but German society writ-large through their power to vote, serve in the military, or hold public office. Compared to the *weiße* (white) population in *DSWA*, the number of *Mischlinge* was increasing exponentially, fuelled in large part by sexual interactions between German soldiers sent to combat the Herero and Nama; therefore, the political threat they represented was also exponentially expanding.[117] The revolutionary and economic potential of *Mischlinge* was thereby circumscribed through diminished access to a European education; put another way, to decreased opportunities for *Erziehung* in general. For example, the Evangelische Kirche-Gemeinde (Protestant Church Congregation) and the Windhoek Schulverein (School Organisation) adopted policies which excluded *Mischlinge*, and many European parents refused to allow their children to attend schools that did not strictly segregate white students from their "biological and cultural inferiors."[118] In 1907, the total exclusion of *Mischlinge* from white society was cemented by a decision of the *Bezirksgericht* (district court) in Windhoek. Ada Maria, a Herero woman, had sought an annulment from her German husband only to have the

court rule that it could not annul a marriage that had never legally existed. In its ruling, the court took the further step of re-defining *Eingeborene*, replacing any cultural considerations with biology:

> Whether a person is a native or a member of the white race is a matter of fact, not a question to be answered at the hands of laws and regulations. In the opinion of the court, the law intends to understand natives as the blood relatives of the semi-cultural or indigenous peoples who have settled in the German protectorates or neighbouring areas... Natives are all blood members of a primitive people, including the descendants of native women who have received them from men of the white race, even if a mixture with white men has taken place over several generations. As long as descent from a member of a primitive people can be proven, the descendant is a native by blood.[119]

Following this decision — comparable to the 'one-drop [of blood] rule' established in the American south — any amount of native ancestry, no matter how far back, resulted in the legal status of *Eingeborene*. Combined with the bans that retroactively delegitimised *Mischehen*, formerly *weiße-Europäern* (white European) became *Eingeborene* through a pen stroke. At its core, their new racial status reflected a change in their socio-economic status within the colonies. From that point on, *Mischlinge* became objects of expropriation who were subject to the same pass and labour laws as other natives and were no longer legally allowed to own land or livestock or inherit property from their family.

Nancy Fraser suggests that in times of crisis, the likelihood of capitalist systems employing expropriation increases.[120] The colonial wars led to the deaths of tens of thousands of natives and drastically decreased the amount of able-bodied native male labourers in the territories. So, in addition to the political crisis inherent to armed rebellion, the colony's economy exhibited the makings of a crisis as well. *Die Arbeiterfrage* — the perennial concern of colonialists — was being exasperated. To help address this crisis, *Mischlinge* expanded the reservoir of native labour expropriation. Furthermore, expropriation was not only limited to labour since the colonial administration used the new racial categorisation to seize properties owned by *Mischlinge* which could be redistributed to white settlers or used for public works.[121]

Exceptions existed to the new classifications of *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen*, but these exceptions almost always relied on class considerations.[122] The *Michehendebatte* (mixed-marriage debate) in the Reichstag in 1912 resulted in a partial reversal of the 1905 and 1907 bans; long-standing relationships between Europeans and natives — as well as the status of their children — could be re-

evaluated. Naturally, the factors considered to determine racial status included "employment, size of land holdings and education," clearly showing socio-economic status as the boundary of social division, not the colour line.[123]

By expanding the frame of reference to the imperial metropole in continental Europe, racial categorisation's dependence on class is further clarified. Racially degraded whites in Germany's urban areas — the same group whose eligibility for deportation to the colonies was debated — were subjected to expropriation in a fashion similar to the African *Eingeborene*. In accordance with Section 361 and Section 362 of the *Reichsstrafgesetzbuch* (*Imperial Penal Code*) of 1871, criminal offenders like vagabonds, beggars, prostitutes, and others represented as a-socials — like alcoholics and gamblers — were all liable to be punished in a workhouse.[124] These social-crimes meted out a jail sentence which, in accordance with German law, could not exceed six weeks but could be followed by *Korrektioneller Nachhaft* (corrective retention) in a workhouse that often lasted much longer. At the Brauweiler workhouse, for example, the average duration of an inmate's sentence was fourteen months.[125] In addition to adults convicted of crimes, after 1900, many states adopted Prussian legislation which allowed them to detain children deemed anti-social in workhouses, as well as abused and neglected children.[126]

In the 1880s, *Arbeiterkolonien* (worker's colonies) — the first of which was established in Wilhelmsdorf by Pastor Friedrich von Bodelschwing, who coined the term '*Erziehung zur Arbeit*' — presented a complimentary avenue for expropriating the labour of *prekäre Weiße* in Germany. Unlike workhouses, workers' colonies were nominally voluntary, but in practice, many of the colonists were driven to the colonies due to hunger or a fear of being arrested for begging/vagrancy. Moreover, many of the workers' colonies functioned as half-way homes of sorts for those recently released from workhouses. Workers' colonies were often established in the direct vicinity of workhouses, so that upon release a (former) inmate could be transferred with ease and continue labouring in a similar fashion. Expropriated labour generated in workhouses and workers' colonies mirrored colonial labour practices; in both instances, labourers were "leased" to private organisations in order to generate a profit. Originally, the justification of workhouses and workers' colonies relied on perceptions of agricultural labour's rehabilitative capacity, but by 1907, more than half of Prussian workhouse inmates had already completed sentences within a workhouse.[127] With recidivism only increasing, efforts at reintroducing inmates to society writ-large were curtailed and the capacity of workhouses and workers' colonies to exclude a-socials was increasingly emphasised. Just as in the colonies, as time progressed, *Erziehung* was subordinated to *Arbeit* (work). The

labour of the white *Unterschichten* (underclass) in Germany's workers' colonies and workhouses had been a means to an end but quickly became an end to itself.

Further confusing racism's supposed reliance on cultural or biological traits, is the treatment of blacks in the metropole at this time. From the start of Germany's colonial project, increasing numbers of native Africans from the *Schutzgebiete* made their way to the imperial capital, Berlin, many of them seeking a European education.[128] In the colonies, almost all sexual contact between *Eingeborene* and *Europäern* (a European) featured a female native and a white man, but in the metropole the inverse was true. Whereas sexual contact between white women and male *Eingeborene* was legally prohibited in Africa, in Europe there were no such deterrents towards such a relationship. The debate over *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* may have raged in the colonies, but in the Metropole — where there certainly was a higher number total of both, although a lower amount when considered as a percentage of the total population — the discussion was essentially non-existent.[129] The President of the *DKGS*, Johann Albrecht von Mecklengburg, explained the dissonance: "The *Mischlinge* that come here to Germany do not do much harm. In a healthy population a *Mischling* [bi-racial person] can be submerged and absorbed; but if he stays in the colonies, and if there he is seen and treated as a [German] citizen, then he causes much harm since he degrades the prestige of the master race."[130] In the colonies, *Mischlinge* and *Mischehen* threatened to upset the socio-economic order, but in the Metropole, a well-to-do Black man was less of a threat than a poor white man.

Racist ire in both the colonies and metropole was not directed by biology or culture, but by socio-economic class. When studying in Germany near the turn of the century, W.E.B. Du Bois himself happily noted he experienced very little anti-Black racism.[131] The refraction of racial categorisation is exemplified in the position of Richard Din, a *Kameruner* (Cameroonian) living in Berlin who was put in charge of a saw-mill. Din's new role was met with some resistance by the white-working-class Germans subordinated to him, but Din defended himself:

> It is not evident why a coloured person cannot take on the role of supervisor, after various members of the white race already proved to be useless and even dispensable. The *'Beschwerde'führer* [complainant] is inclined to the — definitively false — perspective, that I have come directly out of the thickest African jungle. But, for his comfort, I will share that after I graduated from a royal Prussian Gymnasium in Berlin I received a first-class school-leaving certificate, and I only refrained from further education due to special circumstances.[132]

Perhaps more importantly than Din's personal defence is the fact that the

industrial firm employing him rejected any considerations of his 'race' in connection to his continued employment and ironically deployed the racial language of the colonies against the whites of the metropole:

> In conclusion I would note that it is not common in our business to judge people based on their outward appearance, their skin colour, their white-washed politeness or their culture, but rather on their inner-self, their character, and these are better in our coloured *Fürstensohn* [prince] than in many whites with 'black' hearts, evidenced by our dismal experience with 'cultured' whites, which has made me sometimes ponder over a poem — which is probably known to the *herrn Einsender* [sender of the complaint] from his school days — in which it states: 'See, we "savages" are better people after all.'"[133]

The supposedly natural divisions that composed the socio-economic hierarchy of the colonies were absent in the metropole, a point even the *Reichsamt* (government agency) conceded. In 1914, when a racially mixed family was subject to discrimination in *DSWA*, the colonial office suggested they relocate to Germany proper: outside of the colonies, they would have social equality unavailable to them there.[134] Their race — in the classical phenotypical understanding of the term — did not change from one place to another, but in the Metropole, they no longer represented a socio-political class that threatened the stability of the labour regime.

Conclusion

Cedric Robinson's work was meant as a corrective to traditional Marxism, which he contended undervalued the role that expropriation played in capitalist society as well as the interplay between expropriation and racism. Robinson suggested that racial categories evolved out of early capitalist developments in Europe to justify the expropriation of certain populations. This was likewise demonstrated in the German imperial case; colonial administrators increasingly relied on expropriation, and racial categorisation was the tool used to demarcate which individuals were susceptible to expropriation. The exceptions made within colonial society regarding racial categorisation prove race's reliance on class since socio-economic standing allowed transcendence of supposed racial boundaries, both up- and down-ward. While Marx and Engels had argued that social relations would rationalise, Robinson argued the inverse and is proven correct through the example of the *Schutzgebiete* — racial categories there arbitrarily shifted in order to accommodate the colonies' labour needs. The irrational nature of racial categories within capitalist society, as presented within theoretical racial capitalism and demonstrated in Germany's African

Schutzgebiete limits the utility of 'race' as a distinct category of historical analysis separated from class.

Bibliography:

Notes

1. Cedric J. Robinson, Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition (Repr. London: Zed Press, 1984).

2. See for example: D. Jenkins & Leroy, ed., Histories of Racial Capitalism (Columbia University Press, 2021). This book follows much of the literature on racial capitalism by foregrounding the examples of the United States and British Imperialism.

3. Oliver C. Cox, Caste, Class and Race : a Study in Social Dynamics (New York: Doubleday, 1948), xxx.

4. Robinson, Black Marxism, 2.

5. For example: M. Ralph & M. Singhal, "Racial capitalism," Theory and Society, vol. 48 (2019): 851–881 https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-019-09367-z; or: Julian Go, "Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism," Sociological Theory, vol. 39, no. 1 (2021): 38-47. Robinson's rebuttal in Robinson, Black Marxism, 4.

6. John Bellamy Foster, Hannah Holleman, and Brett Clark, "Marx and Slavery," Monthly Review 72, no. 3 (July-August 2020): https://monthlyreview.org/2020/07/01/marx-and-slavery/

7. Cox quoted in: Immanuel Wallerstein, "Oliver C. Cox as World Systems Analyst," Research in Race and Ethnic Relations, vol. 11 (2000): 173–83.

8. Robinson, Black Marxism, 24-28.

9. Arun Kundnani, "What Is Racial Capitalism?" (23 Oct. 2020): www.kundnani.org/what-is-racial-capitalism.

10. Charles Nupen, "Opening Address to the 56th NUSAS Congress, 1972," Digital Innovation South Africa, https://disa.ukzn.ac.za/spe19781127026022000. Destin Jenkins and Justin Leroy, in the introduction for Histories of Racial Capitalism identify the use of the term by American sociologist, Bob Bauner in his book from the same year (1972), Racial Oppression in America. Jenkins, Destin, and Justin Leroy. 2021, "Introduction: The Old History of Capitalism," In Histories of Racial Capitalism, edited by Destin Jenkins, and Justin Leroy, 1–26. New York: Columbia University Press; see also, Robert Blauner, 1972, Racial Oppression in America, New York: Harper and Row.

11. Robinson, Contemporary Sociology 9, no. 3 (1980): 430–32. https://doi.org/10.2307/2064288.

12. "Proponents of the SAT [South African tradition of racial capitalism] argued that the colonial/apartheid state developed and implemented racist policies – including segregation, influx control, political repression, and other forms of racial exclusion – for the benefit of capitalists. This key role of the state, in turn, underscored the historical specificity of racial capitalism. If South African capitalism rested upon racism and racial division throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries, the precise character of this racism – as implemented and secured by the state – shifted over time, typically in response to

the contours of class struggle from above and below. This was not a generalized and transhistorical racism, but rather a conjunctural one." Zachary Levenson and Marcel Paret, "The South African Tradition of Racial Capitalism," Ethnic and Racial Studies 46, no. 16 (2023): 3410; Ethnic and Racial Studies 46, no. 16 (2023) is a special issue on the South African tradition of racial capitalism and is a useful entry point for any reader seeking a greater understanding of the South African use of the term.

13. Julian Go, "Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism," 39; see also: Michael Walzer, "A Note on Racial Capitalism," Dissent Magazine, www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/a-note-on-racial-capitalism.

14. Go, "Three Tensions in the Theory of Racial Capitalism," 40.

15. Ruth Wilson Gilmore, "Race and Globalization," in Geographies of Global Change: Remapping the World, ed. R. J. Johnston, et al. (New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 261.

16. Nancy Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson," Critical Historical Studies, (Spring 2016), 166.

17. Nancy Fraser, "Is Capitalism Necessarily Racist?" Politics/Letters Quarterly, 20 May 2019: quarterly.politicsslashletters.org/is-capitalism-necessarily-racist.

18. For examples of growing interest in racial capitalism by historians, see courses like HISTORY 353C: Histories of Racial Capitalism at Stanford University or Yale University's History Department's colloquium on Racial Capitalism and the Carceral State. See also S. Koshy, L. Cacho, et al. (Eds.), Colonial Racial Capitalism, (Duke University Press, 2022); Catherine Hall, "Racial Capitalism: What's in a Name?," History Workshop Journal, Volume 94 (Autumn 2022): pp. 5–21; M.Z. Phiri, "History of Racial Capitalism in Africa: Violence, Ideology, and Practice," in The Palgrave Handbook of African Political Economy. Palgrave Handbooks in IPE, edited by S.O. Oloruntoba and T. Falola. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2020.

19. For Engels description of historical materialism, see Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific (Introduction - Materialism)," 1880, www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1880/soc-utop/int-mat.htm. For a modernised explanation of historical materialism, see H. Acton & Michael Baur, "Marx on Historical Materialism," (2017), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334446734_Marx_on_Historical_Materialism.

20. Germany, as a major imperial power at the turn of the twentieth century, was necessarily a part of this base of knowledge creation and distribution. It is perhaps helpful to think along the lines of the 'Imperial cloud' suggested in: Christoph Kamissek, and Jonas Kreienbaum, "An Imperial Cloud? Conceptualising Interimperial Connections and Transimperial Knowledge" Journal of Modern European History / Zeitschrift für moderne europäische Geschichte / Revue d'histoire européenne contemporaine, Vol. 14, no. 2, The Imperial Cloud (2016): 164-182.

21. Lora Wildenthal, "Notes on a History of "Imperial Turns" in Modern Germany," In After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation, ed. Antoinette Burton (New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2003), 150. See also Ulrike Lindner, "New

Forms of Knowledge Exchange Between Imperial Powers: The Development of the Institut Colonial International (ICI) Since the End of the Nineteenth Century," In Imperial Cooperation and Transfer, 1870-1930: Empires and Encounters, ed. Volker Barth and Roland Cvetkovski. (London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

22. The first decade and a half of Germany's colonial empire is not under consideration because while the African Schutzgebiete (Protectorates) were German territorial possessions following the Berliner Konferenz (Berlin Conference), (1884), German administrators did not take civil control of the colonies (except Cameroon) until well into the 1890s, meaning that official labour policies were only first being developed and deployed during the timeframe being examined here.

23. A phrase coined in: Robinson, Black Marxism, 4.

24. "kein geschichtler Weltteil" with "keine Bewegung und Entwicklung aufzuweisen, und etwa in ihm, das heißt in seinem Norden geschehen ist, gehört der asiatischen und europäischen Welt zu." Translations by the author — P.H. Graves — will be indicated from this point with (TBA). Quoted in: Ulrike Hamann, Prekäre koloniale Ordnung: Rassistische Konjunkturen im Widerspruch. Deutsches Kolonialregime 1884-1914, (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2015), 107.

25. "absolute Minderwertigkeit der Schwarzen" TBA. Hamann, Prekäre Koloniale Ordnung, 189.

26. A. Zimmerman, "Ethnologie im Kaiserreich: Natur, Kultur, und 'Rasse' in Deutschland und seinen Kolonien," In Das Kaiserreich Transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1814, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 192 & 195.

27. Zimmerman "Ethnologie im Kaiserreich," 195.

28. For example, Indians and Arabs were identified as separate races from other African natives due to their religious practices. Haschemi Yekani, Minu. Koloniale Arbeit: Rassismus, Migration und Herrschaft in Tansania (1885-1914). (Campus Verlag, 2019), 172. See also: Zimmerman "Ethnologie im Kaiserreich," 204.

29. Zimmerman "Ethnologie im Kaiserreich," 197-198.

30. Kamissek and Kreienbaum, "An Imperial Cloud? Conceptualising Interimperial Connections and Transimperial Knowledge," 173.

31. For a detailed account: Alexander Honold, "Ausstellung des Fremden - Menschen - und Völkerschau um 1900. Zwischen Anpassung und Verfremdung: Der Exotic und sein Publikum," in Das Kaiserreich Transnational: Deutschland in der Welt 1871-1814, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Jürgen Osterhammel, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004).

32. For example, the Völkerschauen of the Berlin Zoologischer Garten were "seit den 1840er Jahren…der größte Publikumsmagnet dieser Vergnügungsparks". Hamann, Prekäre Koloniale Ordnung, 76.

33. For the DKGS Ban, see "Zur Eingeborenenfrage", DKZ, 1901, no. 21.

34. See Ulrike Lindner, "New Forms of Knowledge," 57-78.

35. See for example, Gustav Warneck speaking at the Evangelischen Missionskonferenz 1887: "Für die praktische Kolonialpolitik, welche jetzt auch Deutschland treibt, ist

die Arbeiterziehungsfrage geradezu eine Lebensfrage, dem ohne die Arbeit der Eingeborenen sind unsere Kolonien uns wenig wert." Quoted in: Anton Markmiller, "'Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit' : wie die koloniale Pädagogik afrikanische Gesellschaften in die Abhängigkeit führte." (Reimer, 1995), 155.

36. "...der Hauptgrund des Zurückbleibens; denn dadurch gewinnt der Mann Arbeitskräfte, über die er bei eigenem Nichtsthun verfügt."TBA. Quoting Missionsinspektor Merensky in Generalleutnant z.D. Leo, "Die Arbeiterfrage in unseren afrikanischen Kolonien," in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongress 1902, 46.

37. "Die Arbeit ist Sache der Weiber und der Sklaven und deswegen nicht Sache des freien Mannes… Weiber und Töchter werden nicht nur verkauft, sondern auf für Jahre vermietet." TBA. Missionsinspektor Oehlers quoted in P.W. Schmidt, "Die Behandlung der Polygamie in unseren Kolonien," in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongress 1902, 477.

38. For example, see: Leo, "Die Arbeiterfrage in unseren afrikanischen Kolonien," 50.

39. For missionaries and consumer culture, see: C. Buchner, "Die Mithilfe der Mission bei der Erziehung der Eingborenen zur Arbeit von Missionsdirektor C. Buchner," in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongress 1905, 43. For the ability of the native to quickly satisfy their own needs independently, see: Vietor, "Die Arbeiterfrage in den deutschen Kolonien," 53; see also, Markmiller, 'Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit,' 148.

40. "Arbeiterverhältnisse in Kamerun," DKZ, 1907, no. 9.

41. A. Schulte, "Zur Besteuerung der Eingeborenen in Kamerun," DKZ, 1905, no. 39.

42. "Stellt der verheiratete Eingeborenen etwas höhere Ansprüche an das Leben, will er sich besonders wünschenswerte Sachen kaufen, so ist auch er bisweilen bereit, Arbeit anzunehmen. Bei den verhältnismäßig hohen Lohnsätzen genügen aber einige Monate im Jahr vollständig, um auch diese seine Bedürfnisse zu befriedigen. Erhält er dann seine Zahlung, und hat er seinen Bedarf an Salz, Tabak, Messingplatten, Kleidungsstücke und dergleichen gedeckt und noch Geld übrig, so weiß er oft nicht, was er damit machen soll." TBA. A. Schulte, "Zur Besteuerung der Eingeborenen in Kamerun," DKZ, 1905, no. 39.

43. "Branntwein und dergleichen schlimmen Dingen." TBA. P.A. Nachtwey, "Die Mission als Förderin der Kultur und Wissenschaft von P.A. Nachtwey, apostolischer Präfekt in DSWA," in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongress 1905, 560.

44. See, for example, how Major Curt Morgen (after 1904, von Morgen) addressed the issue at the 1902 Kolonialkongress: "Yes, gentlemen, if the Negro, with his innate vanity, is forced to buy luxury articles, we educate ourselves in everything else but a worker/ Ja, meine Herren, wenn man dem Neger bei seiner angeborenen Eitelkeit den Einkauf von Luxusartikeln aufdrängt, so erziehen wir uns alles andere, nur keinen Arbeiter." TBA. Quoted in: Vietor, "Die Arbeiterfrage in den deutschen Kolonien," 538.

45. "Auf diese Frage: 'Was sind die Eingeborenen unserer Kolonien?' gebe ich die Antwort: Sie sind Menschen!... die sogenannten Naturvölker nichts anderes sind als in der Entwicklung zurückgebliebene Glieder der einen großen Menschheitsfamilie. Und

auch die Erfahrung spricht dafür, dass sie Menschen sind!"TBA. A. Merensky, "Die Bedeutung der Christlichen Mission für die Entwickelung unser Kolonien von Missionsinspektor Merensky," in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongress 1902, 426.

46. Sebastian Conrad, "'Education for Work' in Colony and Metropole: The Case of Imperial Germany, c. 1880-1914" in Empires and Boundaries: Race, Class, and Gender in Colonial Settings, ed. by H. Fischer-Tiné and S. Gehrmann. (Routledge, 2008), 28.

47. Take for instance Missionsdirektor Buchner's speech at the 1905 Kolonialkongress. Bodelschwingh's mission was based on the principle of 'work not alms' with a motto of Ora et Labora; Missionsdirektor Buchner mirrored these concepts, stating: "Bei dem rechten Missionar sind Beten und Arbeiten unlösbar miteinander verbunden. " Buchner, "Die Mithilfe der Mission bei der Erziehung der Eingeborenen zur Arbeit von Missionsdirektor C. Buchner," 429-30.

48. Conrad, "'Education for Work' in Colony and Metropole: The Case of Imperial Germany, c. 1880-1914," 28.

49. Markmiller, 'Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit', 25.

50. "Wie erzieht man am besten den Neger zur Plantagen Arbeit?" TBA. Won by future Mission Inspector Merensky as noted in Conrad, "'Education for Work' in Colony and Metropole: The Case of Imperial Germany, c. 1880-1914, 23.

51. Leo, "Die Arbeiterfrage in unseren afrikanischen Kolonien," 31; see also, Hermann, "Plantagen und Eingeborenen-Kulturen in den Kolonien von Freiherr von Hermann," in Verhandlungen des Deutschen Kolonialkongress 1902, 510; see also, Adalbert Bauer, "Der Arbeitszwang in Deutsch-Ostafrika," (Bayer. Julius-Maximilians-Universität Würzburg: 1919), 13.

52. "Der wirtschaftliche Betrieb geschieht 'mit den Köpfen der weißen Rasse und mit den Armen der Eingeborenen.'" TBA. Bauer, "Der Arbeitszwang in Deutsch-Ostafrika," 13.

53. Heranziehung zur Arbeit hat nicht zu tun mit einer Erziehung zur Arbeit und zu einer höheren Kultur, sie bedeutet nichts weiter als die Ausnutzung der physischen Kraft im egoistischen interesse Skrupelloser Land- und Monopolegesellschaften." TBA. "Mission und Neger," DKZ 1906, no. 2.

54. Markmiller, 'Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit', 97.

55. Ibid, 105-106.

56. "Noch ein mächtigerer Faktor find er Erziehung der Neger… könnte der Mission werden, wenn sie es über sich gewinnen könnte, etwas weniger zu predigen… Nicht so und so viele Gebets-Lese- und Schreibestunden sollten die Missionare wöchentlich ihren Zöglingen erteilen, sondern ausschließlich ihren Leuten Handwerk lehren, wobei immer noch so viel Religions unterricht mit unterlaufen könnte, als für Neger verdaulich ist." TBA. Quoted in: Markmiller, 'Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit', 98-99.

57. "...der deutschen Sprache sowohl die Tür zu revolutionärer Politik öffnen." TBA. "Die Bestrebungen der Schule," Usambara-Post 5, no. 44 (8. September 1906), BArch, R 1001/991, Bl. 82, quoted in Yekani Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 168-169.

58. Markmiller, 'Die Erziehung des Negers zur Arbeit' 130-131; "so wenig Wissen wie möglich". TBA. Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 117 & 168-169.

59. Schroeder, "Die Eingeborenenfrage in DSWA und ihre Lösung von R.A. Schroeder, Farmer in Uitdrooi," In Beiträge zur Kolonialpolitik und Kolonialwirtschaft, edited by A. Seidel, 435-440. Berlin: Wilhelm Süsserott Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1902-1903: 438-439.

60. "Die Preise der für Pflanzungen in Betracht kommenden Erzeugnisse, Kaffee, Baumwolle u.s.w., bewegen sich in absteigender Richtung; so wird die Lohnarbeit des Negers niemals den zu erzielenden Ertrag wert sein." TBA. "Die Arbeiterfrage in den Kolonien," DKZ, 1903, no. 16.

61. "das Bewusstsein der Arbeitspflicht und den inneren Trieb, direkte oder indirekte Befriedigung in der Arbeit selbst zu suchen"TBA. "Brauchen Wir Kolonialpolitische Wanderlehrer?" DKZ, 1908, no. 3, quoted in Bauer, "Der Arbeitszwang in Deutsch-Ostafrika," 24.

62. "Es ist nicht möglich, durch Steigerung der Löhne die Zahl der erforderlichen Arbeiter zu steigern." TBA. "Brauchen Wir Kolonialpolitische Wanderlehrer?" DKZ, 1908, no. 3, quoted in Bauer, "Der Arbeitszwang in Deutsch-Ostafrika," 24.

63. Merensky, "Die Bedeutung der Christlichen Mission für die Entwickelung unser Kolonien von Missionsinspektor Merensky," 429.

64. "Jeder Erzieher weiss, dass es eine Erziehung ohne einen gewissen Zwang nicht gibt, dass jede Erziehung bis zu einem gewissen Grade eine Nötigung in sich schließt." TBA. Buchner, "Die Mithilfe der Mission bei der Erziehung der Eingeborenen zur Arbeit von Missionsdirektor C. Buchner," 430-31.

65. "...es als wichtiger bezeichnet hatte, wenn die große Masse der Farbigen der Kolonie zu systematischer Arbeit erzogen würden, als wenn eine allgemeine Halbbildung… verbreitet würde." TBA. "Eingeborenerziehung in Togo," DKZ, 1909, no. 32.

66. "Eingeborenerziehung in Togo," DKZ, 1909, no. 32.

67. "Was heißt denn erziehen? Ihn emporheben auf eine sittliche Stufe sodaß er — wenn sich selbst überlassen — aus sich heraus so handeln würde, wie wir es in diesem gewissem Falle tun würden. Es ist total verkehrt, sich der Illusion hinzugeben, daß eine 'Erziehung' in diesem Sinne beim Eingeborenen möglich sei, und alle Erfahrung spricht dagegen; auch wo sie scheinbar zutrifft, läßt sich erweisen, daß ihre Dauer nimmt verbürgt ist. Es ist also unrichtig, von 'Erziehung' zur Arbeit zu sprechen. Derselbe Eingeborene, der unter der Macht des äußeren Zwanges sich auf der Plantage oder im Hause des weißen Herren vorübergehend fleißig, ordentlich und pünktlich erweist, verfällt rettungslos seiner ursprünglichen Anlage wenn er — dieses Zwanges ledig und sich selbst überlassen — in sein Heimatdorf zurückkehrt." TBA. Tropenpflanzer, 1912, no. 6, Seite 290, quoted in: Bauer, "Der Arbeitszwang in Deutsch-Ostafrika," 24.

68. "...höchst untüchtige Kolonisten ermutigen" who would only throw "Staatgelder… zum Fenster heraus." TBA. Luschan, "Ziele und Wege der Völkerkunde in den deutschen Schutzgebieten von Prof. Dr. von Luschan," 166.

69. Kundrus, Berthe, Moderne Imperialisten: Das Kaiserreich im Spiegel seiner Kolonien (Köln: Böhlau Verlag GmbH & Cie, 2003), 51-2.

70. Ibid, 53.

71. Ibid, 64.

72. Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 36-37. To put these numbers in perspective, consider that a free rural labourer in Germany could expect to earn 1-2 Mark daily according to Simon Constantine, "Correction in the Countryside: Convict Labour in Rural Germany 1871-1914," German History vol. 24, no. 1 (2006), 46.

73. Lerp, "Ruling Classes and Serving Races," 138.

74. Kundrus, Moderne Imperialisten, 71.

75. Kolonialrath, V. Sitzungsperiode no. 2, 25. Oktober 1898, BArch, R 1001/6294, Bl. 41– 45. Quoted in Yekani Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 203.

76. "...der Erzieher selbst muss ein sittlicher Charakter sein; sonst gelingt die Erziehung nicht. Woher soll die Sittlichkeit der Neger kommen, wenn sie sie nicht an den Erziehern sehen? Woher die moralische Achtung vor ihnen, wenn sie nicht moralisch sind? Was wir aus den Negern machen, das sind sie. Machen wir Schnapstrikner aus ihnen, so sind sie Schnapstrinker, und ich habe noch nie gehört, dass die Leute durchs Schnapstrinken gute Arbeiter werden." TBA. Missioninspektor Theodor Oehler, quoted in: Vietor, "Die Arbeiterfrage in den deutschen Kolonien," 543-44; see also, "Alkohol in den Tropen," DKZ, 1907, no. 31.

77. "...als wildes unzivilisiertes Gegenbild des bürgerlichen Selbst." TBA. Yekani Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 223-224.

78. "...selber alle Arbeit besorgen und den Neger nicht brauchen würden. Gerade das würden wir als eine Gefährdung des Prestiges der weißen Rasse und als Versündigung gegen die richtige Eingeborenenpolitik betrachten, die geradezu darauf basieren muß, den Neger zu der Arbeit für die Herrenrasse zu erziehen." TBA. Deutsche Zeitung, 24. Januar, 1906. Quoted in Yekani Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 218.

79. "immer dringendere". TBA.Förster, E, "Zur Arbeiterfrage in Kilimandscharo- und Meru-Siedlungsgebiet von Dr. E Th. Förster, Neu-Temmen, Kr. Templin," DKZ, no. 52, 1907.

80. "die Ansiedlung von ehrlichen Leuten." TBA "Zur Deportationsfrage," DKZ, 190, no. 7.

81. "...die Deportation dann von zahlreichen gesellschaftlichen Akteuren diskutiert: in der Presse, in Fürsorgevereinen, in Strafvollzugsbeamten-, Juristen-, Kolonial-, Kirchen-, Missions-, und Mediziner-kreisen sowie in politischen Zirkeln." Yekani Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 241.

82. "Lästig…unwünschenswert…unbrauchbar" TBA. Fitzpatrick, Purging the Empire: Mass Expulsions in Germany, 1871–1914, 4; Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 57.

83. "The administration of the protectorate...is not limited by legal restrictions in the area of internal government, in particular the security forces. Namely, the Freizügigkeitsgesetz (Freedom of Movement Act) from November 1867 is not valid in the protectorates. It therefore follows that, on the grounds of public security and welfare, the residency of not merely foreigners but also imperial citizens can be withdrawn at any time." Reichs-Justizamt 9 November 1891 to Caprivi, in R100/7547 Ausweisungen aus den deutschen Schutzgebieten. Translated in Fitzpatrick, Purging the Empire: Mass Expulsions in Germany, 1871–1914, 254.

84. Ibid.

85. Yekani Haschemi, Koloniale Arbeit, 210.

86. Ibid, 210.

87. Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 49-50.

88. "Homosexuality was seen as unnatural in an environment where an image of heroic men and pioneers was promoted, where marriages between African women and European men were prohibited, where heterosexuality was a facet of whiteness, and where an image of strong healthy German families was central to utopian visions of the settler society and Deutschtum." Ibid, 54.

89. Fitzpatrick, Purging the Empire: Mass Expulsions in Germany, 1871–1914, 254. See also, Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 52-53.

90. "...ein völlig verwahrloster 13 jähriger Junge, der das Leben eines Eingeborenen führt. Er verschwindet häufig wochenlang aus dem Elternhaus und leb auf der Eingeborenenwerft." TBA. Urteilsausfertigung des Bezirksgericht in Windhuk: In der Strafsache gegen den August Martin zu Winddhuk, Geschaftsnummer 3K 7/10, 21.0ktober 1897, BAB RIOOI 1918, 70 - Quoted in Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 57.

91. An example being Kurt Berner, an alcoholic, who was "recommended for expulsion due to his violent alcohol-fuelled rages which saw him shoot one of his African workers." Fitzpatrick, Purging the Empire: Mass Expulsions in Germany, 1871–1914, 252. See also, Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 54-56, for discussions of expulsion as it related to alcohol.

92. Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 53.

93. "...das Herabsinken eines Europäers auf die Kulturstufe der Eingeborenen," or "eine bedauerliche Entartung weißer Ansiedler." TBA. Axster, "Die Angst vor dem Verkaffern - Politiken der Reinigung im deutschen Kolonialismus," 42.

94. "[...] (d)as symbolhafte Zeichen…" of "...eine offensichtliche Angleichung an die einheimische Bevölkerung." TBA. Grosse, Pascal. 2000. Kolonialismus, Eugenik und bürgerliche Gesellschaft in Deutschland 1850-1918, Frankfurt/M., New York: Campus 84. Quoted in: Hamann, Prekäre Koloniale Ordnung, 180

95. "(die Deutschen) haben noch zu wenig das Herrenbewußtsein als Mitglieder der edleren, überlegenen weißen Rasse und halten nicht die für die Sicherheit des Staates und die Reinheit der Rasse, des deutschen Blutes notwendige scharfe gesellschaftliche Trennung von den Farbigen aufrecht." TBA. Originally published in die Zeitschrift für Kolonialpolitik, Kolonialrecht, und Kolonialwirtschaft, Quoted in Hermann Hesse, "Rassenfrage in den Schutzgebieten von Hermann Hesse," DKZ, 1904. No. 12"

96. "tiefreichende psychologische Ängste vor einer 'rassischen Degeneration'" and "Verlust der politischen und ökonomischen Herrschaft." TBA. Horst Gründer, "... da und dort ein junges Deutschland gründen" : Rassismus, Kolonien und kolonialer Gedanke vom 16. bis zum 20. Jahrhundert. Dt. Taschenbuch-Verl., 1999. 223

97. Paul Rohrbach observed that miscegenation was a natural reaction to the climate, "Der körperliche Zustand spielt unter den Einwirkungen des Klimas in ganz anderem Maße auch innerhalb des gesellschaftlichen und geselligen Lebens eine beherrschende Rolle, als zu Hause," (my translation: "Under the effects of the climate, physical condition plays a dominant role in social and sociable life to a completely different extent than at

home") but also emphasised that white women would have a 'mitigating influence' (my translation) on the male settler population in regards to their sexual pursuits of native women. Paul Rohrbach, Die Kolonie (Rütten & Loening, 1907) 80.

98. Isidore Loeb, "The German Colonial Fiscal System." Publications of the American Economic Association 1, no. 3 (1900), 66.

99. Richard V Pierard, "The Transportation of White Women to German Southwest Africa, 1898-1914." Race & Class, vol. 12, no. 3, (1971): 318-319.

100. "Deutsche Mädchen in DSWA," DKZ, 190, no. 40.

101. "Deutscher-Kolonialer Frauenbund," DKZ, 1905, no. 15; "...namentlich das Interesse an den deutschen Kolonien auch bei Frauen wecken und will solche deutsche Mädchen, die beabsichtigen, sich in der Kolonie eine Tätigkeit zu suchen, durch Gewährung von freier Reise und Schaffung entsprechender Verbindung unterstützen." TBA. "Deutscher-Kolonialer Frauenbund," DKZ, 1907, no.15 & no.14.

102. For the false promises of emancipation, see: Katharina Walgenbach, "Emanzipation Als Koloniale Fiktion: Zur Sozialen Position Weißer Frauen in den Deutschen Kolonien." Homme (Vienna, Austria) 16, no. 2 (2005): 47–67.

103. See Katharina Walgenbach, 'Die weisse Frau als Trägerin deutscher Kultur' : koloniale Diskurse über Geschlecht, 'Rasse' und Klasse im Kaiserreich (Campus-Verlag, 2005). Lora Wildenthal, "Rasse und Kultur Frauenorganisationen in der deutschen Kolonialbewegung des Kaiserreichs," in Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus, ed. Birthe Kundrus (Campus Verlag, 2003).

104. Wildenthal, "Rasse und Kultur Frauenorganisationen in der deutschen Kolonialbewegung des Kaiserreichs," 214-215.

105. Lindner, Koloniale Begegnungen, 327.

106. Translated in: Fitzpatrick, Purging the Empire: Mass Expulsions in Germany, 1871–1914, 246-247.

107. Julia Moses, "From faith to race? 'Mixed marriage' and the politics of difference in Imperial Germany," The History of the Family, vol. 24, no. 3 (2019).

108. In this case, an interfaith mixed-marriage. Lindner, Koloniale Begegnungen, 332-333.

109. Catholic missionary groups came out in stark opposition to the marriage bans. As stated, most marriages were performed under the auspices of a missionary organisation and not the colonial administration. For Catholics, marriage was a holy sacrament that could not so easily be dissolved. Ibid, 334.

110. Ibid, 331.

111. Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 65.

112. Lindner, Koloniale Begegnungen, 341.

113. "...solche Tätigkeiten, die bei den Weißen als wenig attraktiv galten, die Eingeborenen allerdings schon überforderten, weil sie eine bestimmte Berufsausbildung und Kenntnisse der deutschen Sprache voraussetzten." TBA. Becker, Frank, "Soldatenkinder und Rassenpolitik. Die Folgen des Kolonialkriegs für die "Mischlinge" in Deutsch-Südwestafrika (1904–1913)." Militärgeschichtliche Zeitschrift, 63, no. 1 (2004), 54.

114. "grundsätzlichen Zwischenstellung". TBA. Ibid, 55.

115. Rohrbach translated in: Matthew P. Fitzpatrick, "The Threat of 'woolly-Haired Grandchildren': Race, the Colonial Family and German Nationalism," The History of the Family, vol. 14, no. 4 (2009), 362.

116. "sich als Führer der schwarzen Rasse fühlen". TBA. DKGS report quoted in Axster, "Die Angst vor dem Verkaffern - Politiken der Reinigung im deutschen Kolonialismus," 45.

117. Lindner, Koloniale Begegnungen, 328-331.

118. Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 86.

119. "Ob eine Person Eingeborener oder Angehöriger der weißen Rasse ist, ist eine Tatfrage, keine Frage, die an der Hand von Rechtssätzen zu beantworten wäre. Unter Eingeborenen will das Gesetz nach Ansicht des Gerichts die Blutsangehörigen der in den deutschen Schutzgebieten oder benachbarten Gebieten eingesessener oder sesshaft gewesener Halbkultur- oder Naturvölker verstanden haben… Eingeborene sind sämtliche Blutsangehörigen eines Naturvolkes, auch die Abkömmlinge von eingeborenen Frauen, die sie von Männern der weissen Rasse empfangen haben, selbst wenn mehrere Geschlechter hindurch eine Mischung mit weissen Männer stattgefunden haben sollte. Solange sich die Abstammung von einem Zugehörigen eines Naturvolks nachweisen lässt, ist der Abkömmlinge infolge seines Blutes ein Eingeborener." TBA. Quoted in Zimmerer, Jürgen. "Der Kolonial Musterstaat? Rassentrennung, Arbeitszwang und totale Kontrolle in Deutsch-Südwestafrika". In Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika : der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen, edited by Jürgen Zimmerer, and Joachim Zeller, 26-41. (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2016), 28-29.

120. Nancy Fraser, "Expropriation and Exploitation in Racialized Capitalism: A Reply to Michael Dawson," Critical Historical Studies. (Spring 2016), 168

121. An example being the Witwe (widow) Hill and her Mischlinge children - Lindner, Koloniale Begegnungen, 365.

122. An example of an exception to the Mischehenverbot (mix-marriage prohibition) can be found in the marriage of Carl Becker and his Rehobother wife. See Wildenthal, "Race, Gender, and Citizenship in the German Colonial Empire," in Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World, ed. Frederick Cooper & Ann Laura Stoler, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1997), 268-270. International diplomacy also sometimes led to exceptions in racial categorisation. The British government demanded that the German colonial authorities recognise the status of British citizens, so there are exceptions in Eingeborene (native) designations based on conditions of 'reciprocity' with Great Britain. An example is the marriage between Carl Behmer, a Swakopmund farmer, and Charlotte Dixon, the daughter of an English father and a native mother. See Moses, "From faith to race?"477-78.

123. Aitken, "Exclusion and Inclusion," 98.

124. For the full text of the relevant sections of the Reichstrafgesetzbuch, see §361: Lexetius, accessed 10.03.23, https://lexetius.com/StGB/361:

125. Constantine, "Correction in the Countryside: Convict Labour in Rural Germany 1871-1914," 42.

126. Ibid, 44.

127. Ibid, 49-52.

128. Hamann, Prekäre Koloniale Ordnung, 76.

129. Pascal Grosse, "Zwischen Privatheit und Öffentlichkeit: Kolonialmigration in Deutschland, 1900-1940," in, Phantasiereiche. Zur Kulturgeschichte des deutschen Kolonialismus, ed. Birthe Kundrus (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag), 99-100.

130. "Die Mischlinge, die hier nach Deutschland kommen, schaden ja nicht viel. In einem gesunden Volkskörper geht ein Mischling leicht unter und wird aufgesogen; aber wenn er in der Kolonie bleibt und dort als deutscher Staatsangehöriger angesehen und behandelt wird, so schadet er furchtbar, denn er setzt das Ansehen des Herrenvolkes herab." TBA. Hamburger Nachrichten, 6. Juni, 1912. Quoted in Kundrus, Moderne Imperialisten, 239.

131. Alabama in Africa : Booker T. Washington, the German Empire, and the Globalization of the New South. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010. 107.

132. "Es ist nicht einzusehen, warum nicht auch ein Farbiger diese Stellung als Vorgesetzter bekleiden kann, nachdem sich vorher verschiedene Vertreter der weißen Rasse als unbrauchbar und sogar entbehrlich erwiesen haben. Der 'Beschwerde'führer scheint zu der — allerdings falschen — Ansicht zu neigen, daß ich gerade aus dem dichtesten afrikanischen Urwald komme. Zu seiner Beruhigung aber will ich ihm mitteilen, dass ich nach glatter Absolvierung eines königlich preußischen Gymnasiums zu Berlin das Zeugnis der Reife für prima erlangt habe und nur durch besondere Umstände vom weiteren Studium absehen musste." TBA. "Schwarze als Vorgesetzte Weisser," DKZ, 1912, no. 38.

133. Zum Schluss bemerke ich noch, daß es in unserem Geschäft nicht üblich ist, den Menschen nach seinem Aeußeren, seiner Hautfarbe, nach der 'übertünchten' Höflichkeit und Kultur zu beurteilen, sondern nach seinem Innern, seinem Charakter, und daß dieser bei unserem farbigen Fürstensohn besser ist, als bei manchen Weißen mit sehr 'schwarzem' Herzen, das habe uns die traurigen Erfahrungen wir mit unseren 'kultivierten' Weißen gemacht haben, bewiesen, so daß ich manchmal an das Gedicht — das doch wohl in dem herrn Einsender aus der Schulzeit auch bekannt sein dürfte — gedacht habe, in dem es heißt: "Seht, wir 'Wilden' sind doch bessere Menschen.'" TBA. Ibid.

134. Fitzpatrick, "The Threat of 'woolly-Haired Grandchildren': Race, the Colonial Family and German Nationalism," 365.

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Sacred Sound, Public Wealth: Female Qur'an Recitation and Capital Formation in Nigeria

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Abstract. This paper explores how public female Qur'an recitation in Nigeria functions as a powerful form of capital that extends beyond spiritual merit into economic, social, and symbolic realms. Drawing on over a decade of ethnographic research—including participant observation, interviews, and personal experience as a reciter—the study examines Qur'anic competitions as dynamic arenas where gender, religion, and capital intersect. It shifts focus away from jurisprudential debates on the female voice (*ʿawra*), instead asking: What kinds of empowerment does public recitation afford women? And how can the female voice be theorized as capital?

Through the lens of Pierre Bourdieu's framework on forms of capital, the paper theorizes recitation as embodied cultural capital that women convert into social recognition, material wealth, and elevated public status—manifested in rituals of 'turbaning' and titles such as *Gwana*. It introduces "vocal nudity" as a concept to analyze ongoing controversies over women's sonic presence in Islamic rituals, and introduces *mobility capital*—the ability to move and be heard—as a key mechanism through which women navigate and negotiate patriarchal constraints.

The paper contends that female reciters challenge dominant interpretations of Islamic propriety not only by voicing sacred texts in public but by transforming those acts into public authority, wealth, and political influence. In doing so, they disrupt the binary of *dīn* (the spiritual) and *dunya* (the worldly) by revealing how sacred labor is embedded in worldly economies of prestige. Ultimately, this study illuminates the ways in which Nigerian Muslim women are reshaping religious authority, gender norms, and the value of the Qur'anic voice in contemporary West African Islam.

Keywords: Female Qur'an Recitation, Capital Formation, "Vocal Nudity," Islam and Gender, Public Religious Authority

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On January 16, 2015, after eight days of an intense Qur'an-recitation competition, known as musābaqāt (literally, 'competitions'), Muslims across Nigeria were anticipating a momentous event. It was the closing ceremony of the Dan Fodio National Qur'an Competition, named after the revered 19th-century reformer, Usman Dan Fodio, who established one of the largest Islamic caliphates in West Africa.

In the preceding days, people from diverse regions of the country had journeyed to Auchi, the second-largest city in Edo State, to partake in the occasion. On a bright and sunny day, the people of Auchi warmly welcomed their guests. More than a religious gathering, the Qur'an ceremony was a confluence of faith, politics, and culture.

The arrival of the royal emirs (Sarakuna) was a spectacle of grandeur and tradition. Accompanied by their entourages, the emirs' entrances were heralded by the rhythmic beat of drums, the haunting notes of the algaita (a double-reed trumpet), and the melodic praise by eulogy singers. Dressed in dazzling robes, the emirs wore colorful alkyabba—long, flowing cloaks adorned with intricate embroidery—and turbans that crowned their heads in regal elegance. Their aristocratic staffs signified both their authority and wealth.

The Emir of Zuru, the Otaru of Auchi, and the Shehu of Borno were among the first to arrive. Soon after, the 14th Emir of Kano, Sarki Sanusi Lamido Sanusi II, made a striking entrance. His procession was marked by a group of algaita blowers and drummers, escorting a luxury car that glided slowly through the gathering. Red-and-green-robed courtiers (fadawan Sarki) flanked the vehicle, walking with measured grace. The emir, seated majestically in the rear, held his royal staff, its tip extending beyond the window.

When the vehicle came to a halt, the courtiers stretched their flowing robes wide to shield the emir from the gaze of onlookers, a time-honored tradition that protects a Hausa/Fulani king from the envious eyes of his subjects, known as idon talaka guba ('the eye of the commoner is poison'). Only after emerging from the car beneath the canopy of a royal umbrella did the emir become visible. Holding his staff aloft, he walked majestically to his seat.

Later, the then Governor of Edo State, Adams Oshiomhole, a Christian, addressed the crowd with a call for national unity and security. "Islam is about peace and justice," he proclaimed, urging Nigerians to embrace the values found in both the Qur'an and the Bible. He stressed that genuine and sustainable development in Nigeria would only be possible through adherence to these shared moral principles. In a gesture of goodwill and encouragement, he announced that

the state government would award two Lexus SUVs to the overall winners of the competition. To underscore the importance of gender equality, he emphasized that the same model of car would be awarded to both the male and female champions.

The above vignette that portrays the ceremony in Auchi exemplifies how Qur'an recitation competitions are intricately entwined with Nigeria's political and social dynamics. Over the years, *musābaqāt* ceremonies have become prominent arenas where Muslim and Christian elites and politicians converge to honor Qur'an reciters. These competitions function as hubs for raising and discussing current political issues and serve as platforms where politicians and royalty bestow valuable gifts upon participants. They also operate as spaces where various forms of capital are produced, exchanged, and *traded*.

This paper does not delve into Islamic jurisprudential debates concerning the female voice or the positions held by different Muslim organizations on female Qur'an recitation, topics which I have addressed elsewhere (Muazu 2019). Instead, it focuses on the tangible, worldly benefits that arise from the public visibility of the female voice in Qur'an recitation. In the context of the female voice being regarded as something to be concealed (*ʿawra*), this study poses two critical questions: What kind of empowerment does public recitation afford to women? And how can we understand the female voice of recitation as a form of capital?

The spiritual motivations behind Qur'an recitation, such as receiving divine reward for each recited letter and the honor of being crowned on the Day of Judgment, have long been the focus of Islamic scholarship, particularly within the field of *tajwīd* (the rules governing correct recitation). However, sociological and ethnographic research has yet to fully explore the worldly benefits of public recitation. In a separate article (Muazu 2022), building on other works (Hill 2018, Mack 2004, Mack and Boyd 2000, Boyd and Mack 2013, Callaway and Creevey 1994, Sa'd 2004), I argue that women, through the public use of their voices, are shaping contemporary Islam. In this paper, I contend that public recitation offers female reciters not only spiritual rewards but also tangible, worldly advantages.

To examine this phenomenon, I draw upon the theoretical framework of Pierre Bourdieu, particularly his concept of different forms of capital—cultural, economic, social, and symbolic. In the context of the public perception of the female voice as *ʿawra*, I explore the notion of the female voice as a form of capital (*jari* in Hausa). This framework offers a compelling way to understand the nexus between the female voice, public recitation, income generation, and women's empowerment. While Bourdieu's theory is limited in addressing the

spiritual dimensions of recitation, it remains instrumental for theorizing the worldly benefits that accrue from these contests. Specifically, Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital reveals how culturally marginalized groups can leverage their cultural capital to either bridge or expand social class disparities. This study is grounded in a decade of active participation, participant observation and interviews. As a Qur'an reciter myself, I participated for many years in state and national competitions, representing Plateau State and the Izala-A Muslim group until the latter ceased female public recitations at the state and national levels. Additionally, I have been actively engaged in *tafsīr* (Qur'an interpretation) sessions—delivering them on occasion and attending as part of the audience at other times. Since 2011, I have conducted interviews with female reciters and preachers, particularly in Kano and my home city of Jos, Nigeria.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first two sections discuss recitation as a form of embodied cultural capital, which reciters can transform into symbolic capital by assuming the status of *neo-royals*. This transformation highlights how the embodiment of the Qur'an, as a communal responsibility within the Muslim ummah (community), is rewarded with honor and prestige. The final two sections explore the convertibility of recitation into economic and mobility capital. These sections demonstrate how female reciters not only acquire opportunities for financial prosperity but also gain avenues for physical and vocal mobility. By engaging with these themes, this paper sheds light on the multifaceted benefits that public Qur'an recitation confers upon women, challenging traditional notions of the female voice and offering new insights into the intersections of religion, gender, and social capital in contemporary Nigeria.

Muslim Women's Voices in Nigeria

Over the last three decades, the increasing visibility and audibility of Muslim women in Nigeria within the fields of Qur'an recitation, *ḥalāl* (permissible) music, and female preaching have triggered intense debates concerning the ʿ*awra* (Arabic: a part of the body that must be covered in front of others) of the female voice. These debates on vocal ʿ*awra* illuminate questions of propriety, morality, modes of perception, and the conflict between cultural and religious norms regarding women's public engagement.

The term ʿ*awra*, rooted in Arabic and Islamic tradition, appears in the Qur'an in reference to spaces of vulnerability (Qur'an 33:13), moments of privacy (Qur'an 24:58), and aspects of the human body (Qur'an 24:31). This term applies to men, women, and former enslaved people. When extended to the female voice—often perceived as having seductive properties capable of

tempting male listeners—it becomes a compelling entry point for examining contemporary debates on Islam and gender, especially regarding women's visibility and audibility in public life.

The concept of vocal ʿ*awra*, translated here as "vocal nudity," refers to the perception of the female voice as part of a woman's ʿ*awra*, something that should not be overly exposed due to cultural and religious understandings. In northern Nigeria, two prevailing notions coexist: the female voice as ʿ*awra* and as a marker of dignity, femininity, and suitability for marriage. A chaste woman is expected not to speak loudly in public spaces, such as markets. Simultaneously, a well-mannered girl should speak softly, slowly, and with a lowered, "feminine" voice as she matures into womanhood.

These dynamics, stemming from divergent interpretations of Qur'an 33:32 – which I have explored in detail elsewhere (Muazu 2019; 2022) – drive two opposing trends regarding the female voice. The first trend is the growing prominence of the female voice in religious activities, such as Qur'an recitation and *qaṣīda* (laudatory) songs. The second trend reflects an increasing perception of the female voice as part of a woman's ʿ*awra*. This latter perception has gained momentum in recent decades, particularly with the rise of public Qur'an recitation competitions, stimulating debates on "proper religious practice" and women's roles in society.

This debate reached a critical point when the Izala-A movement – an influential Muslim organization with millions of followers in Nigeria and neighboring countries – banned female members from participating in national Qur'an competitions. While Izala cited multiple reasons for this ban, the dominant argument resonating with ordinary Muslims is that the female voice constitutes ʿ*awra* and should not be publicized. Another contributing factor is the exclusion of women from public Saudi Arabia's international Qur'an recitation competitions, where male Nigerian reciters frequently excel.

Since its inception in 1978, Izala has been instrumental in promoting female education, a role it maintains despite restricting female voices – a restriction accepted by many female adherents. This acceptance contrasts sharply with the resistance some women exhibited when barred from attending Izala schools during the group's establishment in the late 1970s to early 1980s—a conflict that, in some cases, even led to divorce. Nonetheless, Izala's ban has not deterred other Muslim groups, such as Jamāʿat Nasril Islām – a nondenominational umbrella body representing diverse Muslim interests—and various Sufi groups, including the Tijaniya and Qadiriya, from encouraging female participation in competitions. Consequently, while the ban has decreased the number of girls memorizing the Qur'an within Izala, non-Izala groups have witnessed an increase, fostering more female Qur'an reciters proficient in *tajwīd*.

Beyond social mobility and economic advancement, female participation in public Qur'an recitation also highlights how gendered spaces are sonically contested and negotiated in public Islamic socio-religious rituals. By vocalizing the sacred text in competitive settings, female reciters carve out an auditory presence that challenges conventional limitations on women's voices in Islamic spaces. The very act of public recitation transforms these competitions into arenas of negotiation, where the boundaries between private and public spheres are tested and sometimes redefined. While Izala's prohibition reinforces the traditional stance that female voices should not be publicly projected in ritualized settings, the growing visibility of female reciters among non-Izala groups signals a shifting landscape. These recitations do not merely reflect individual piety or mastery of *tajwīd* but also serve as performative claims to religious authority and inclusion in male-dominated sacred soundscapes. Consequently, the Qur'an competitions function as both devotional exercises and contested sonic spaces where gender norms in Islamic practice are continually renegotiated.

The concept of "vocal nudity" is particularly relevant in this context, as it underscores the ways in which female reciters navigate the religious and social perceptions of their voices. While some Islamic traditions equate the female voice with *ʿawra*, many women who participate in public Qur'an recitation challenge this notion by framing their voices as vessels of divine expression rather than as objects of sensuality. For these women, the act of reciting the Qur'an in a public and ritualized setting serves to religiously legitimize their voices – and, by extension, their presence in Islamic public spaces. By grounding their participation in sacred recitation rather than in ordinary speech or song, they carve out an acceptable auditory role that enables them to engage publicly while circumventing accusations of impropriety. This perception has broader implications for women's public engagement in contemporary Islam, where debates over female religious authority and visibility remain deeply contested. Through Qur'an competitions, women not only assert their mastery of sacred knowledge but also subtly challenge restrictive gender norms by reconfiguring what it means for a female voice to be 'naked' or permissible in religious spaces. Thus, their participation represents an ongoing negotiation of religious legitimacy, embodiment, and gendered sonic authority in contemporary Islamic practice.

The exclusion of women from participating in Qur'anic recitation by some Islamic sects, including the Izala-A group, needs to be examined beyond the commonly framed Salafi-Sufi divide or the Nigeria-Saudi Arabia connection. While the broader debate of "Africa is not Islamic enough and Islam is not African enough" is relevant – given that African Islam has often been regarded as syncretic by some anthropologists (see, for instance, Trimingham 1959; Brenner

2000) – this framing alone does not fully explain Izala-A's gender restrictions. It is true that many Muslims view Arab Islam, particularly Saudi Islam, as the purest form of the religion, and that Saudi Arabia itself does not permit women's public Qur'anic recitation. However, while Izala-A is influenced by certain Saudi positions, it does not simply replicate Saudi practices. There are instances where Izala-A has diverged from Saudi rulings, such as in the case of *mahram* (male guardian) requirements for women traveling for Hajj (see page 69 below). While Saudi authorities strictly enforce this condition, Izala-A scholars have found ways to evade it, demonstrating their agency in adapting Islamic rulings to local contexts.

Furthermore, it is important to avoid oversimplifying this issue as a strict Salafi-Sufi divide. While Sufi groups may appear more tolerant of women's public participation – evidenced by their involvement in *qaṣīda* recitations – opponents of female vocal visibility exist within both camps. Some prominent Sufi scholars also maintain that a woman's voice should not be publicized (Interview with Shaykh Haris Sufi, 2016). The gendered restrictions on public Qur'anic recitation, therefore, should not be reduced to a binary of Salafi vs. Sufi or Nigeria vs. Saudi Arabia, but rather analyzed within the complex and often contradictory negotiations of religious authority, gender norms, and localized Islamic interpretations.

The prohibition of women's participation in public Qur'anic recitation reflects not only theological arguments but also cultural baggage reinforcing long-standing patriarchal structures that dictate who should have access to religious authority and who is permitted to shape public expressions of faith. Even when theological justifications are invoked, they often operate within deeply embedded social norms that prioritize male voices and marginalize women's presence. This exclusion mirrors broader patterns across many religious traditions, where male gatekeeping restricts women's access to sacred spaces, religious education, and public authority. While appeals to modesty and gender roles are frequently cited, the practical effect is the continued reinforcement of male dominance in defining religious legitimacy. By restricting women's participation in public Qur'anic recitation, groups like Izala-A contribute to the perpetuation of a patriarchal framework that views women's voices as sites of social anxiety rather than as integral to Islamic learning and spiritual leadership. However, it is also important to acknowledge Izala's significant efforts in promoting women's education, which complicates any straightforward analysis of its stance on the female voice ban.

Through public Qur'an recitations, *qaṣīda* (poetry) performances, preaching, and media engagement, women have entered traditionally male-dominat-

ed spheres, reshaping structures of authority in African Muslim societies and transforming religious practices and sociopolitical dynamics. This increased participation, driven by democratization, media proliferation, and various Islamic and political reforms, has become a hallmark of modern Islam, providing women with opportunities to occupy public spaces, influence Islamic learning, and articulate sociopolitical agendas, thereby asserting a distinct form of female agency. Today, a convergence of social, educational, and technological advancements has further facilitated Muslim women's participation in public religious activities. Greater access to formal Islamic education has empowered women with religious literacy and the confidence to engage in public discourse. Women-led religious spaces – such as female-only mosques, study circles, and digital platforms – have created new avenues for leadership. Additionally, modern interpretations of Islamic texts and jurisprudence increasingly affirm women's rights to public engagement. The forces of globalization, women's advocacy movements, and the visibility of female scholars and preachers have further challenged traditional gender norms, paving the way for broader acceptance of female voices.

In Nigeria, women's contributions to Islamic knowledge parallel those of their counterparts across the globe in major centers of Islam such as Indonesia, Egypt, Turkey, Morocco, and Pakistan, among others. Although Africanist scholars have covered several themes on Muslim women in Africa, and Hausa women in particular, the role of the female voice and *ʿawra* debates remain underexplored, with exceptions like Hill's work. Hill (2019) focuses on Senegalese Sufi Muslim women who occupy important positions of religious authority and use their voices publicly without contestation. His studies reveal that despite resistance in some cases, women's voices remain pervasive. They occupy public spaces and play a central role in shaping contemporary Islam. However, while women assert their voices in the public sphere, the acts of restraint, shyness, and self-disassociation – which Hill describes as 'reserved feminine piety' (221) when discussing the *sikkarkats* (Senegalese women performing Sufi chants to mixed-gender audiences) – should not only be understood as passive piety. Instead, these actions should be interrogated further as possible instances where women strategically balance assertiveness with restraint to mitigate controversy surrounding their visibility and audibility.

Bourdieu's Forms of Capital

In offering a non-Marxist conceptualization of capital and responding to the work of Gary Becker, Pierre Bourdieu argues that "it is, in fact, impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one re-

introduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory."[1] For Bourdieu, *capital* is defined as "accumulated labour in its materialized form," which, when mobilized, enables an individual to "appropriate social energy in the form of ratified or living labour."[2] As "the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world," capital transforms the dynamics of society, making them "other than the simple game of chance offering at every moment the possibility of a miracle."[3]

Bourdieu identifies three primary forms of capital: economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. Economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights.[4] Cultural capital, on the other hand, is convertible under specific conditions into economic capital and can be institutionalized as educational qualifications.[5] Social capital comprises social obligations or connections, defined as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition… or to membership in a group, which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital."[6] In certain contexts, social capital may be converted into economic capital and institutionalized as a title of nobility, a process that Bourdieu refers to as symbolic capital. Symbolic capital represents the resources available to an individual through honor, prestige, or recognition.[7]

Scholars have extensively employed Bourdieu's theory of capital to elucidate the structure and dynamics of the social world, particularly focusing on class inequality, the reproduction of social hierarchies, educational success or failure, habitus, female agency, feminine capital, emotional capital, spiritual and sacred capital, and the intersections of ethnicity and education.[8] In this context, I draw on Bourdieu's framework to analyze the complexities within the domain of Qur'an recitation and the politics surrounding recitation competitions.

Recitation as Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu conceptualizes cultural capital as a set of socially valuable assets, encompassing culturally sanctioned tastes, skills, consumption patterns, attributes, and forms of recognition. These social assets – including education, intellect, manner of speech, and style of dress – facilitate or constrain social mobility within a stratified society. Cultural capital is intimately linked to one's habitus, or embodied disposition, and the social structures in which one operates, known as the field (Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 1984).

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as the process through which individuals "become themselves," developing attitudes and dispositions, and through which they en-

gage in specific practices (Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1977). The elements of cultural capital – skills, manners, and tastes – vary by social class and are internalized by children through their habitus. This internalization can either facilitate or hinder social mobility, ultimately influencing educational success.

Cultural capital also functions within the context of a field, which Bourdieu describes as a "series of institutions, rules, rituals, conventions, categories, designations, and appointments" that create an objective hierarchy and authorize particular forms of discourse and practice (Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 1993). Participation in a field necessitates *cultural literacy* – a nuanced understanding of both the rules and principles governing that field, as well as its *doxa*. The doxa represents fundamental beliefs that form the core doctrine of a field, accepted as self-evident and essential. It shapes one's perception of the social world and their place within it (Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 1990).

In his analysis of the French educational system of the 1960s, Bourdieu used the notion of cultural capital to explain disparities in academic performance among children, highlighting how knowledge acquired outside of school reinforces social stratification. His framework elucidates how dominant groups leverage cultural capital to maintain social hierarchies, while marginalized groups often struggle to access these resources (Bourdieu and Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*, 1977).

However, while Bourdieu's conceptualization emphasizes the dominance of the culturally powerful, the Nigerian context of Qur'an recitation presents a compelling divergence. In Nigeria, the poor and marginalized can acquire cultural capital that is highly esteemed by dominant groups. Unlike Bourdieu's binary model of dominant versus dominated classes, this phenomenon reveals that mastery of Qur'anic recitation by marginalized individuals can lead to wealth, status, and social recognition. The dominant class actively values and rewards this form of cultural capital, evident in tangible gestures such as purchasing cars or financing Hajj pilgrimages for accomplished reciters. This case necessitates a rethinking of Bourdieu's model, demonstrating that cultural capital is not exclusively monopolized by the dominant class (Bourdieu, *Distinction*, 1984).

For many reciters, the acquisition of Qur'anic recitation skills is deeply embedded in their upbringing, facilitated by family traditions or the broader social milieu characterized by a Qur'anic lifestyle. This lifestyle involves early and consistent exposure to the recited Qur'an – whether at home, in neighborhood madrasas (schools), or via mosque broadcasts. Teachers of recitation are readily available, and in recent decades, media platforms like radio, television, smartphones, and social media have amplified access to recitation practices. Unlike

contexts where family economic capital heavily dictates educational outcomes, here, Qur'anic education thrives on minimal economic investment, making it accessible to various socioeconomic groups. Success in this domain is not necessarily measured by competition victories but by a family's achievement in enrolling their children in Islamic education – a pathway that may or may not lead to economic gains. However, beyond its role as a cultural practice, Qur'anic recitation also operates as a form of religious capital, one that can be transformed into social, economic, and even political capital. Women who excel in recitation gain spiritual merit, but they also tap into the symbolic power of religious authority, which, in turn, can grant them access to public recognition and material opportunities.

Through its embodiment, Qur'an recitation serves as a unique form of religious and cultural capital – one that is both personally internalized and institutionally recognized. Institutional recognition comes through titles such as *ḥāfiẓ* (male memorizer of the Qur'an), *ḥāfiẓa* (female memorizer), *Gwani* (male master of the Qur'an), or *Gwana* (female master), and through official certifications from institutions like Usman Dan Fodio University. Accumulating this capital demands significant personal effort, as reciters invest considerable time and energy to master the art of recitation. Once internalized, it becomes an inseparable part of their identity, with the potential to be converted into other forms of capital – social, economic, and symbolic. This dynamic transformation is particularly evident in how women leverage their expertise in Qur'anic recitation to access public platforms, "*halal*" musical performances and spoken-word expressions of devotion, which further expand their social and economic mobility. This intersection of embodiment, effort, and institutional recognition underscores how Qur'an recitation, as a form of both religious and cultural capital, transcends Bourdieu's original framework. The Nigerian context illuminates the fluidity of these interrelated capitals and challenges assumptions about their exclusivity to dominant social classes, highlighting how marginalized women strategically navigate and repurpose religious authority for broader social and economic gains.

The closing ceremony of a Qur'an competition, as described above, brings together a diverse array of influential figures to honor the Qur'an and its reciters. It is a dynamic social field where actors possessing different forms of capital interact and negotiate their status. Royalty, the wealthy, and politicians holding government positions attend the event, offering winners monetary rewards and valuable gifts such as cars, plots of land, houses, furniture, and jewelry. Through a nuanced understanding of the "doxa" of this social field, these actors strategically convert the capital they possess into new forms. The affluent and members

of royal families gain social capital by bestowing generous gifts on the reciters. Politicians, on the other hand, accrue political capital; their presence at these events, coupled with their financial contributions, can influence voters and bolster their electoral prospects. Even though the gifts originate from public funds and are presented on behalf of local, state, or federal governments, the individual holding political office at the time often takes credit for these acts of 'generosity', regardless of their religion or party affiliation.

During the celebration, the winners convert their cultural capital into economic, symbolic, and social capital. Economic capital manifests in the form of cash and material gifts awarded to them. Social capital derives from the public's recognition and trust, as the reciters are seen as individuals who shoulder the sacred responsibility of preserving and reciting the Qur'an. Symbolic capital is achieved through the honor and prestige conferred upon them, symbolized by their immediate transformation into royals, a practice known in Hausa as *nadîn sarauta*.

The concept of symbolic capital draws from Thorstein Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumption, introduced in his seminal work, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899). Veblen describes conspicuous consumption as the purchase of luxurious goods and services to display economic power, signal wealth, or enhance social status (Veblen 1994, 75). Marcel Mauss further expanded this concept, noting that those who rise suddenly from lower to higher economic classes (*nouveau riche*) often engage in ostentatious displays of wealth to signify their entry into elite society (Mauss 2002, 65). These ideas underpin Bourdieu's theory of symbolic capital, which suggests that symbolic capital lies between class and status – it is not merely about possession, but also about the ability to appropriate objects imbued with perceived or actual value (Bourdieu 1984, 291).

Sociologists and anthropologists observe that symbolic capital accumulates when individuals fulfill responsibilities rooted in positions of high regard. This capital can be converted into tangible benefits within one's community, though its value is contingent on the historical and social context in which it is accrued. In Muslim communities, for example, those who memorize and recite the Qur'an (*ḥuffāẓ*) gain significant symbolic capital.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in the Hausa context, where many competitors hail from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (*talakawa ko marasa wadata*). By winning the competition, these individuals gain symbolic capital and are celebrated as royalty. Each year, the top winners are ceremoniously turbaned as Kings and Queens of the Sokoto Emirate. Male winners are adorned in elaborate regalia, including a colorful cloak embroidered with silk, a sleeveless

robe (*Babbar riga*), a long-sleeved inner kaftan (*yarciki*), a cap, a white turban (*rawani*), a brown hand-woven hat (*malafa*), and a ceremonial staff. Female winners receive a similarly ornate mantle (*alkyabbar mata*), beautifully embellished to mark their elevated status.

The *nadîn sarauta* ceremony is a significant moment of symbolic transformation. The titles of *Gwani* (for men) and *Gwana* (for women), which denote mastery in Qur'an recitation and memorization, are conferred upon the winners. These titles signify the winners' fulfillment of a sacred and reputable role within their community.

For example, in the 2015 Auchi competition, the overall winners Khadija Tanimu and Abubakar Adam were summoned to the podium for what is referred to in Nigerian English as the 'turbaning' ceremony. This ritual, akin to both coronation and knighting, saw Gwani Abubakar Adam dressed by the Shehu of Borno, a traditional ruler whose lineage traces back to the early 19th century. Assisted by aides, the Shehu dressed the Gwani in a sequence of garments, starting with the inner kaftan, followed by the robe and cloak. The final touch involved tying a long white turban in an intricate style, with ear-like shapes framing the head. The 14th Emir of Kano, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi II, then presented the ceremonial staff, solidifying the transformation.

Amidst chants of "Allāhu Akbar" (God is great), Gwani Abubakar recited the *Fātiḥa* (Opening Chapter), a choice reflecting gratitude and reverence. Similarly, the female winner, Gwana Khadija Tanimu, was dressed by the Queen of Otaru, who holds the title "Ogbaichi of Auchi" and presides over women's affairs. Her shorter but equally symbolic ceremony culminated in chants of joy from the audience. These ceremonies illustrate how symbolic capital is constructed and conferred, socially elevating the status of Qur'an reciters through deeply embedded cultural and religious practices.

Why are the *Gwana* and *Gwani* honored as royals? How can we understand the public perception of such ceremonial 'turbaning' of Qur'an reciters? Pierre Bourdieu's conception of symbolic capital offers a compelling framework to explain the symbolic power vested in this practice. Bourdieu (1984) argues that symbolic capital accrues primarily through the fulfillment of social obligations that are inherently imbued with potential for prestige. For Qur'an reciters, 'turbaning' symbolizes their social elevation to a status similar to royalty due to their fulfillment of a profound communal duty: the memorization and recitation of the Qur'an.

The Qur'an, as an embodied text, requires human bearers (*ḥamala*) who safeguard it not physically, but through memory. According to Islamic law, the memorization of the Qur'an is a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāya*), meaning

Photo of a turbaned female and male reciters at the national competition in 2021. Picture, Nura Bello Alkali.

that Muslim communities must ensure that at least some members commit it to memory. Those who undertake this task absolve the rest of the community of this duty, thereby earning honor and recognition. Moreover, while the decision to memorize the Qur'an is voluntary, forgetting it is not; reciters must continuously engage with the text throughout their lives.

The symbolic capital derived from this practice is closely tied to its historical and cultural context. The 'turbaning' ceremony's significance is anchored in the historical regalia of northern Nigerian traditional states. The garments worn by the *Gwani* and *Gwana* are emblematic of old kingdoms, states, and caliphates. Although British colonial rule diminished the official power of these traditional states, they continue to exert considerable influence over their subjects and retain traditional, religious, and even political authority. For many, allegiance to these pre-colonial entities remains stronger than to the modern nation-state of Nigeria.

As Dr. Abdullahi Imam, a scholar of Hausa language and culture at Yobe State University, explained during interviews, the garments bestowed upon the *Gwani* resemble those of contemporary Hausa emirs and are visual representations of the Sokoto Caliphate. These garments blend traditional Hausa rega-

lia with Islamic dress. For instance, Hausa kings traditionally wore a two-eared headgear (*hula mai haɓar kada*). Following the establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate, this attire acquired religious significance. When Usman Dan Fodio, the *Amīr al-Muʾminīn* (Commander of the Faithful) and first Caliph, dispatched emirs to over thirty emirates, each *Sarki* (emir) received a turban, a cloak, a staff, and a book of sermons. On Fridays, the *Sarki* would don the royal cloak and the two-eared turban, symbolizing Allah, lean on the staff, and deliver the sermon. These ceremonial items reflect the scholarly legacy of those who introduced Islam to Hausaland, incorporating new elements over time, such as embroidered cloaks and the distinctive turban style.

The process of wrapping the turban follows a deliberate pattern that visually evokes the calligraphic structure of "Allah." The central folds and loops of the fabric correspond to the strokes of the Arabic letters, with the two distinctive "ears" representing the dual vertical elements in the script. The curvature of the draping often mimics the flowing calligraphic style of traditional Islamic writing, reinforcing the sacred association.

This symbolic rendering serves multiple purposes. It transforms the act of wearing the turban into a form of embodied devotion, where the individual becomes a living inscription of divine remembrance. It also underscores the significance of material culture in Islamic spirituality, where garments, adornments, and their configurations become expressions of religious identity and theological meaning. Further exploration of this symbolism can contribute to the broader discourse on Islamic semiotics, visual piety, and the intersection of material culture with sacred text. Understanding how the turban visually encodes "Allah" provides a unique perspective on the interplay between textual and embodied religious expression, enriching both historical and contemporary discussions on Islamic aesthetics and devotional practice.

The *malafa* (a brown hand-woven hat) worn by the *Gwani* predates the Sokoto Caliphate but was imbued with religious significance by Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and his followers. The *malafa* served as protection against the sun during their outdoor preaching sessions. Notably, Shehu's daughter, Nana Asmaʾu, wore the *malafa* during her classes and gave it to female leaders of the *Yan-Taru* movement, who spread education among women in rural areas. Consequently, the *malafa* came to symbolize education, particularly female education.

The practice of 'turbaning' winners of Qur'an competitions dates back to the inaugural national Qur'an competition held in Sokoto in 1986. As the historical seat of the Sokoto Caliphate and the residence of the Sultan of Sokoto, Sokoto holds immense spiritual significance for Nigerian Muslims. At the

closing ceremony, *Sarkin Musulmi* Abubakar Saʿad III proclaimed that winners would be honored with the titles of *Gwani* and *Gwana* and turbaned as "Kings and Queens of the Emirate" (*masarauta*). He affirmed that producing masters of the Qur'an was the emirate's duty, and those who fulfilled this duty deserved the traditional honors and titles of the emirate. This tradition has continued annually, with the garments provided by one of the emirs (*Sarakuna*).

For many Nigerian Muslims, the turbaning of Qur'an reciters resonates deeply with both Hausa and Islamic history. However, none of my interlocutors explicitly linked this practice to a similar event believed to occur in the afterlife: the 'turbaning' in heaven of not only the reciters but also their parents. Several *hadiths* mention that, on the Day of Resurrection, the Qur'an will appear in the form of a pale man who says to its companion: "Do you recognize me? I am the one who made you stay up at night and thirsty during the day." The reciters will then receive dominion in their right hands, eternity in their left, and a crown of dignity upon their heads. Furthermore, the reciters' parents will be adorned with garments surpassing any in this world. When they ask, "Oh Lord, how did we earn this?" the reply will be: "Because you taught your child the Qurʾan" (*Jamiʿ at-Tirmidhi*, 2914).

This "heavenly turbaning" symbolizes the eternal reward for fulfilling the communal obligation of preserving the Qur'an. The responsibility of carrying the Qur'an in their memory ensures reciters a place among the noble and obedient angels in the afterlife. According to *hadith* traditions, they will be invited to "recite and rise," ascending higher in paradise with each verse they recite until they reach the last verse memorized. At this point, a crown of dignity will be placed upon their heads.

In the following section, I will explore how the public honoring of reciters intersects with economic benefits and the empowerment of female reciters.

"I got everything"

In August 2015, Maryam Muhammad, a professional Qur'an reciter from Kano State, invited me to her home. We were joined by three other prominent female public reciters: Amina Garba, Shafa'atu Muhammad, and Khadija Zakariyya. Maryam, a seasoned competitor and former *Gwana* at national Qur'an recitation competitions, is a married mother of six. Her achievements include several national and international Qur'an recitation awards. At the time, she had recently moved to a new house in an affluent, tranquil neighborhood.

Maryam's home reflects her success. The expansive compound contains one of her cars, though she has won a total of six vehicles in different Qur'an competitions. The house features four bedrooms, each stylishly tiled in beige and

cream hues. The kitchen, a modern and minimalist space, is immaculately clean, tiled from floor to ceiling, and equipped with a gas cooker, refrigerator, built-in cabinets, microwave oven, washing machine, and other modern amenities that may not be readily available to ordinary people in the community.

The living room displays comfort and achievement, furnished with two large sofas, two single chairs, and a plush rug. One wall prominently displays large photographs capturing Maryam's award-winning performances. At the center of the room is a home theater system, which includes a large television connected to a satellite receiver offering access to over two hundred Arabic-language and Islamic channels. During my visit, I noticed many unopened packages of household items and electronics – such as a refrigerator, stove, and washing machine – still in their original packaging, neatly placed in a spacious corner adjacent to the living room. Nearly everything in the house appeared to be new, seemingly obtained through competitions.

Curious, I asked Maryam which items in her home were gifts. Smiling, she responded in Hausa, "There is nothing that I have not won – just look around; there are many things in cartons that I have not even unpacked" (*ba kyautar da ban sa mu ba, ki duba ki gani, ga wasu kyaututtuka ma ban bude su ba*). Her prizes include six cars, six Hajj pilgrimage packages (each worth approximately 10 million Naira or about $6,000 USD in 2024), refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, sewing machines, furniture sets, kitchen utensils, books, and substantial amounts of cash. Although she refrained from specifying the exact total, she mentioned winning hundreds of thousands of Naira on multiple occasions: "I have won a million Naira, eight hundred thousand Naira, at another competition five hundred thousand… seven hundred, nine hundred thousand… at some I cannot even remember the amount" (Interview with Maryam Muhammad, Kano, 2015).

This portrayal exemplifies how Qur'an recitation, traditionally regarded as a spiritual practice, can yield significant economic capital. The intersection of spiritual endeavor and financial reward has not been without controversy. Muslim scholars have long debated the propriety of accepting worldly compensation for recitation. This debate is further complicated by issues such as the vocal *ʿawra*, which often casts female Qur'an competitions into contested territory. Central to these discussions is the question of whether receiving economic rewards for Qur'an recitation is permissible. Some scholars argue that such compensation contradicts the practices of the early Muslim community and consider it impermissible. Their stance is supported by certain hadiths, such as one that states: "Whoever recites the Qur'an should petition Allah by it, for there will come a people who will recite the Qur'an and then ask people [for money]" (*Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, 2917).

Nevertheless, some scholars allow for exceptions. For example, accepting payment for teaching the Qur'an, using recitation as part of the *mahr* – the obligatory gift or payment from the groom to the bride in an Islamic marriage contract – or reciting for healing purposes are generally considered permissible (Ibn Qudamah, *al-Mughni*, 5:589). These nuanced positions illustrate the ongoing tension between maintaining the spiritual integrity of Qur'an recitation and acknowledging the material realities faced by contemporary reciters.

Regardless of where one stands on the issue, it is undeniable that Qur'anic recitation can be transformed into economic and other forms of capital. Qur'an competitions, supported by state funding to encourage students to learn the Qur'an, offer significant monetary rewards and valuable gifts to successful reciters, potentially leading to substantial wealth. For some, particularly those with limited access to secular Nigerian institutions, these competitions could provide a rare opportunity to escape poverty. For instance, male contestants who participate in competitions held in Saudi Arabia often receive substantial financial rewards, which, when converted from Saudi riyals, amount to millions of naira. Upon their return, these winnings enable them to accrue even more social and symbolic capital by acquiring property, starting businesses, and marrying first or additional wives. Although female reciters are barred from male-only public Saudi Arabian competitions, they too can achieve considerable success and earn valuable prizes through state and national competitions in Nigeria, as well as international competitions in countries like the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia and Morocco.

It is crucial to emphasize that many Qur'an reciters come from middle, upper, or even elite families, illustrating that Qur'an recitation is not exclusively the domain of the poor. However, for lower-income families – particularly those in the Almajiri system, whose destitution is rooted in poverty, lack of state support, colonial legacies, modernity, and parental neglect, as thoroughly analyzed by Hannah Hoechner (2018) – Qur'an competitions offer a pathway to elevate their social status, even though these students do not form the majority of competitors. Narratives from Hoechner's interlocutors and my own interviews reveal how Qur'anic education, often the only affordable option for these families, has empowered the Almajirai. While aspirations to become medical or engineering professionals may have been out of reach, these students redirected their efforts into Qur'an recitation. The modest fees for their education – often less than a dollar – were frequently waived by compassionate malamai (teachers). Despite this minimal financial investment, these students have elevated their social status as bearers of the Qur'an.

Nigeria's transition from military rule to democracy incentivized politicians to invest in religious activities to court voters. Additionally, Nigeria's reliance on

Young boys from the Izala *yan agaji* aid group during an Izala Qurʾan recitation competition in Jos South, helping in organizing the event and providing information to audience. Photograph by the author.

oil exports – and the resulting economic boon from rising oil prices – fueled government spending on Qur'an competitions and pilgrimages to Mecca and Jerusalem. Although some religious leaders view these investments with suspicion, they have revitalized the competitions, infusing them with "petro-naira" (money earned from oil exports) and substantial rewards for winners.

A striking example is Malam Ahmad Sulaiman, a renowned reciter who played a pivotal role in President Muhammadu Buhari's 2019 reelection campaign. Sulaiman's distinctive voice and widespread popularity earned him the moniker "campaign warrior," as his recorded Arabic prayers, repurposed with political messages, mobilized voters. His involvement highlights the evolving nexus between religious figures and political power in Nigeria, sparking debates about religion, politics, and corruption. This visibility also made him a target: shortly after the election, armed kidnappers demanded a ransom of 300 million naira for his release.

Notably, investment in Qur'anic recitation extends beyond politicians and royalty. Under the principles of *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf* (enjoining what is right)

and *fī sabīl Allāh* (for the sake of Allah), community members also contribute generously to these events. Even those with limited financial means offer their services by cleaning venues, arranging seats, or managing traffic. This communal spirit underscores the reciprocal relationship between the reciters and their communities: while reciters embody the Qur'an, the community supports and elevates them. In essence, Qur'anic competitions not only transform individual lives but also reflect broader socio-political and economic shifts within Nigeria. They reveal how traditional religious practices adapt to contemporary realities, creating new avenues for social mobility and communal cohesion.

Mobility Capital

Although Pierre Bourdieu did not explicitly address mobility as a form of capital, the context of female Qur'an reciters illustrates how mobility can become a crucial factor in transforming cultural capital into other forms of capital. Mobility, in this paper, extends beyond the physical movement of bodies; it encompasses the movement of voices as well. It is both the capacity to travel and the ability to have one's voice travel with them. Mobility, in its broadest sense, refers to the long-range flow of people, capital, ideas, objects, and technology, as well as the ordinary, localized movement of people and material or nonmaterial things (Kaufmann et al. 2004; Sheller and Urry 2006).

Moret defines mobility capital as the ability that enables individuals to cross borders easily, feel comfortable in different places, engage in various activities, and return with ease. This concept also includes the capacity to be both mobile and immobile, encompassing accumulated past experiences of movement and the potential for future mobility (Moret 2018). To refine this further, Kaufmann et al. propose motility as a theoretical construct that focuses on the interactions between actors, structures, and contexts. Motility captures how entities – whether people, goods, or information – acquire and utilize the capacity for socio-spatial mobility depending on their circumstances (Kaufmann et al. 2004).

Scholars have debated the scope and nature of mobility capital, questioning whether it truly qualifies as a form of capital and, if so, how it relates to other forms of capital. Research exploring the intersection of mobility and migration studies has shown that cross-border mobility practices can yield significant social and economic benefits (Moret 2018; Sheller and Urry 2006). For marginalized refugees, mobility capital involves controlling when and how to move, fostering a sense of comfort in different locales, engaging in activities, and returning home. In modern societies, spatial mobility is closely associated with individual freedom – the ability to travel anywhere, select relationships, and choose places to live and work. This spatial mobility, or motility, is vital for social integration and managing daily life (Kaufmann et al. 2004).

In light of these discussions, I propose vocal mobility as a subset of spatial mobility that can lead to social mobility. This is particularly significant in gendered Islamic spaces where women's physical and vocal freedoms are restricted. How can mobility be analyzed in the context of Nigerian female Qur'an reciters, and to what extent does it constitute a factor of social discrimination? How does having mobility empower women and allow them to transform cultural capital into other forms of capital?

The above-mentioned 1997 Izala-A ban of their female members' participation in state and national competitions cited concerns rooted in the *ʿawra* debate and potential promiscuity associated with girls' mobility. Despite these restrictions, female reciters outside the Izala group continue to travel and perform publicly. Within the Izala-A group, female recitation is confined to restrictive district-level competitions, with strict rules prohibiting travel and overnight stays. As Malam Muhammad Haris, the head of the Izala Council of Scholars in Jos North Local Government, explained during our interview:

> We allow girls to participate only in school and district-level competitions. We do not permit them to compete at state, national, or international levels. District competitions are held within local areas, so the girls can stay with their parents and travel from home to the venue, avoiding the need to stay overnight. Do you understand? Girls should remain at home. Allowing them to compete at the state level would require travel to other parts of the state. For example, if a competition is held in Shandam or Langtan (approximately 80 kilometers from Jos), this distance necessitates travel, accommodation, and overnight stays. This is what Izala opposes. To avoid this, we impose restrictions—we do not want girls to spend nights away from home. Our aim is to keep them secure and separate from men. Therefore, we do not permit participation beyond the district level. Even at district-level competitions, events are held in the morning with only women in the audience. Men are not allowed to attend, except those who are necessary, such as brothers, uncles, and teachers.

Although Izala imposes strict mobility restrictions, the movement has not addressed the structural issues that could genuinely enhance the security it claims to prioritize. Rather than banning travel, Izala could have implemented measures to mitigate the perceived risks associated with the Dan Fodio competition, such as strengthening safety protocols, providing organized security, or fostering community-based protections.

It is also important to note that historical record does not support the notion that unaccompanied travel inherently poses a significant danger. The au-

thor's observations highlight that, historically, rural *Yan Taru* processions traveled without harm, contradicting contemporary justifications for travel restrictions (Mack 2023: 33). Furthermore, while Nigeria is currently facing serious insecurity issues, these challenges affect both men and women. The selective restriction of women's mobility under the guise of safety, while men continue to travel freely despite facing similar risks, raises critical questions about the motives behind Izala's policies.

This debate on women's mobility intersects with the discourse on *safar al-marʾa* (women's travel) with or without a *maḥram* (male guardian). Hadith literature seems to prohibit women from traveling alone, but some scholars interpret this prohibition as contingent on safety conditions (Al-Qaradawi 2003). In their view, it is not the act of travel that is forbidden, but the potential harm that could arise from it. Malam Muhammad Haris did not cite this *maḥram* discourse as a rationale for restricting female mobility. This omission is notable given Izala's tacit acceptance of unaccompanied female travel during the annual Hajj pilgrimage, where women travel under the supervision of Nigerian Pilgrimage Authority officials. Instead, Izala frames its position as adherence to the authority of *ulū al-amr* (those in charge), as prescribed in the Qur'an (4:59). While Izala has facilitated some forms of female mobility – through neighborhood *madrassa* and increased *hijab* usage for public appearances – years of restricting female reciters' physical and vocal mobility have significantly diminished their numbers.

Despite these constraints, some women have leveraged their vocal mobility to transcend traditional gendered and religious boundaries. Women who successfully navigate the restrictions on physical movement by using technology, such as social media, radio, and online Qur'an recitation competitions, have found ways to assert their voices in public religious spheres. The use of digital platforms not only extends the reach of their recitations but also provides them with visibility, recognition, and, in some cases, economic capital. This shift from physical to virtual mobility highlights the adaptability of female reciters in negotiating the socio-religious limitations placed on them.

Moreover, mobility capital in this context is not only about movement but also about the ability to accumulate prestige, religious authority, and public recognition. Female reciters who travel internationally – whether for Qur'an competitions, Islamic conferences, or religious leadership roles – demonstrate how mobility capital operates within the nexus of religion, gender, and politics. The success of Nigerian female reciters such as Fatima Muhammad[9] and Maryam Habibu[10] in gaining international acclaim underscores how mobility (both physical and vocal) functions as a tool for empowerment. By capitalizing on

their Qur'anic skills, these women gain access to platforms traditionally dominated by men, shifting the boundaries of acceptable female public participation in Islamic spaces.

Thus, the case of Nigerian female Qur'an reciters illustrates the broader intersections of religion, politics, and women's (dis)empowerment. While religious authorities may impose limitations on women's travel and visibility, the dynamic ways in which female reciters reclaim their mobility – through strategic navigation of physical space, digital presence, and international engagements – challenge static notions of women's roles in Islam. Their experiences compel us to reconsider how mobility, as both a structural constraint and a form of agency, influences the evolving landscape of gendered religious authority in contemporary Nigeria and beyond.

Conclusion

This paper began with a straightforward inquiry: What forms of worldly empowerment does public recitation bring to women, and how can we understand the public use of the female voice as a form of capital? Rather than delving deeply into the spiritual nature of recitation or the jurisprudential debates surrounding the ʿ*awra* (nudity) of the female voice, this study has demonstrated that even spiritual practices like Qur'an competitions possess a distinct worldly dimension. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's non-Marxist conceptualization of capital, I have theorized the convertibility of non-economic capital and examined how Qur'an recitation – understood here as a form of embodied and institutionalized cultural capital – can be transformed into social, economic, and symbolic capital.

As revealed through my ethnography, Qur'anic competitions serve as a compelling example of the convergence between *dīn* (the spiritual) and *dunya* (the worldly). This intersection is frequently overlooked in studies of Muslim piety and spirituality, which often contrast *dunya* as secular with *dīn* or *ākhira* (the Hereafter). My research shows that within the *dunya* sphere, what were once purely spiritual skills are converted into tangible forms of capital. Women reciters are rewarded not only with financial compensation and property but also with social recognition and prestige.

In examining the position of the Izala movement, it is important to clarify that this paper does not suggest Izala – despite its advocacy for women's education – is uniquely strict or conservative compared to Sufi groups. The notion of the female voice as ʿ*awra* has roots stretching back centuries. Muslim jurists have debated this issue for over a millennium, and societies have adopted various interpretations and implementations. My reference to Nana Asma'u

bint Fodio, an iconic figure in women's education, and her group, the *Yan Taru*, underscores the historical precedent for women's public engagement. Yet, even under the support of the Sokoto Caliphate, there is no historical record of Nana Asma'u or the *Yan Taru* directly addressing male audiences. Thus, both the concept of vocal ʿ*awra* and restrictions on women's mobility are overarching principles within diverse Islamic movements, though applied differently.

In this context, recognizing the significance of public recitation in women's lives is essential. Traditionally, men have held intellectual and spiritual authority, benefiting from broader educational opportunities and freedom of movement. As more women gain religious expertise through Islamic education, perceptions of their voices – and the ongoing discourse surrounding vocal ʿ*awra* – influence the positions they can hold in public spaces. Even as women rise in prominence, they often negotiate patriarchal expectations to preserve respectability and avoid social backlash. These discussions not only define what women can express, to whom, and in what settings, but also impact their ability to earn a livelihood and shape their social status.

Notes

1. Pierre Bourdieu, The Forms of Capital, in Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, ed. John G. Richardson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 241.
2. Ibid., 241.
3. Ibid., 242.
4. Ibid., 243.
5. Ibid., 243.
6. Ibid., 248.
7. Ibid., 247.
8. For studies engaging with these concepts, see Diane Reay, "Feminine Capital and Emotional Capital," The British Journal of Sociology 55, no. 4 (2004): 487–506; and Shirley R. Steinberg, Kinderculture: The Corporate Construction of Childhood (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2011).
9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XVH35hfIXC8.
10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPw6k4yp_eM.

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On Strike, Shut it Down: The Past, Present and Future of Africana Studies

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Abstract. This paper explores the history of Black Studies, which began as a result of student protest movements—spurred on by the student strike at San Francisco State College in 1968—and spread across the country to hundreds of colleges and universities. Black students everywhere sought control over their education, including at the Claremont Colleges (5Cs), a small consortium of liberal arts colleges located in Southern California. The mobilization on behalf of Black students at the Claremont Colleges, and the subsequent administrative attempts to not only block the creation of a Black Studies department, but to delegitimize the department after its founding, tell a compelling, though seldom-known story about the character of Africana Studies. Uncovering this history through various archival documents helps to illustrate a path forward for the discipline, both at the Claremont Colleges and elsewhere. In particular, looking back to the past can help reorient towards a more radical, liberatory future by preparing students to center their academics around community-organizing and Black freedom, just as Black students did in the 1960s.

Keywords: *Black Studies, Africana Studies, student protest, Black liberation, radical pedagogy.*

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How do we who are doing work in black studies tend to, care for, comfort, and defend the dead, the dying, and those living lives consigned, in the aftermath of legal chattel slavery, to death that is always-imminent and immanent?

-Christina Sharpe
"Black Studies: In the Wake," 59-60

In 1968, Black students at San Francisco State College (SF State) waged a pivotal battle in the world of higher education, demanding the creation of a department of Black Studies.[1] That same year, Black students at the Claremont Colleges, also referred to as the 5Cs, (along with hundreds of other institutions throughout the US) mobilized to establish Black Studies on their own campuses. Despite the significance of their organization, and the prominence of the SF State student strike, the Claremont story remains little known. The recent 50th anniversary of the discipline, however, offers a time to reflect on the past, present, and future of Africana Studies – both nationally and at the Claremont Colleges. Reflecting on the Claremont story illustrates the powerful ethos of Africana Studies at its founding and the necessity of an Africana Studies that promotes Black freedom. That this ethos has dwindled in the Africana Studies department at Claremont is indicative of the challenges many Africana Studies departments across the country are facing. Moreover, it is indicative of the need to reorient, bringing the discipline back to its radical roots.

As Christina Sharpe reminds us, Africana Studies *must* "tend to, care for, comfort, and defend" Black life in the wake of slavery (Sharpe, 2014, 59-60). This work requires that students, professors, and scholars of Africana Studies go beyond the academic, and instead, take up the collective fight for Black liberation. While Black communities continue to be subject to unending, unwarranted, systems of violence, those in academia cannot simply remain within the walls of the ivory tower. Because the university limits Africana Studies to a study of "Black stuff," stripping the discipline of its political, community-oriented essence, it is imperative that we go beyond the walls of the ivory tower, and its prescription for what it means to be an academic discipline (Andrews, 2020, 20). It is only by breaking down these confines that we can ensure that Africana Studies is inextricably linked to Black liberation.

Born in a Struggle: the History of Africana Studies

In 1968, students at San Francisco State College (SF State) called for a campus-wide strike, demanding an independent department of Black Studies (T'Shaka, 2012). The strike lasted five months and resulted in the creation of

the first Black Studies department in the nation (T'Shaka, 2012). The movement spread to nearly 200 college campuses across the US as Black students everywhere called for sweeping reforms to curriculum, admissions policies, and general on-campus life (Biondi, 2014). These student protests took the form of strikes, sit-ins, and marches, and the US Student organizers utilized the momentum from broader social movements, such as Black Power and the Civil Rights Movement, to sustain their own movements and put pressure on administrators to comply. Africana Studies was born from the subsequent struggle these students endured – at SF State and nationally.

The Negro Students Association (now the Black Student Union, or BSU) at SF State was formed in 1963 to improve on-campus conditions for Black students facing racism and Eurocentric classes (T'Shaka, 2012). Heavily influenced by the San Francisco Civil Rights Movement, Black students had become increasingly concerned with embracing their identity and using their education to benefit the communities from which they came. Their organizing produced a student-run, highly innovative Black Studies curriculum at the Experimental College, which scholar Martha Biondi calls a "national prototype" for Black Studies, because all the courses were student-designed (Biondi, 2014, 46). Despite the success of these classes, however, there was an increasing desire for autonomy and legitimization – which could only be gained by moving beyond the Experimental College (which was student-run and taught) and into a separate School for Ethnic Studies (Experimental College Summer Catalogue, 1967). Emboldened by the Black Power Movement, in 1966 students formally moved to introduce Black Studies to the rest of SF State (Biondi, 2014). In this way, Black students "turned the 'Black Power' slogan into a grassroots social movement" to change academia as they knew it (Biondi, 2014, 2).

By March of 1967, fed up with the lack of progress made due to administrative inaction, Black students formally introduced a proposal for an autonomous Black Studies Department (Biondi, 2014). The proposal was drafted by James "Jimmy" Garrett[2] and included stipulations that the center have a board of 10 directors (seven of whom were selected by students), be shaped by Black educators, and include a Black majority in each class (Biondi, 2014). There was also a plan to increase admissions for Black students, hire Black full-time professors, as well as a Black staff member to direct the Office of Financial Aid (Biondi, 2014). The BSU also understood the importance of autonomy (in the form of departmental status), which would give them power over hiring, budgeting, and curriculum. Although administrators had appeared to be supportive of Garrett's plan – even going so far as to hire Nathan Hare to set up and direct Black Studies – progress was slow (Biondi, 2014). By 1968, there were only 1.3 Black

Studies hires, and the administration refused to move the existing Black studies courses to a new department or center for fear of "Black separatism and possible indoctrination" (Biondi, 2014, 54).

As a result, on November 6, 1968, students went on strike. The strike was headed by the BSU and the Third World Liberation Front (TWLF), a coalition of cultural / ethnic affinity groups, including Asian-American, Latine, and Middle Eastern students, which came together to "battle the administration together" (Bates and Meraji, 2019, "Organizing for change"). The TWLF students adopted the slogan "on strike, shut it down," in order to mobilize campus members, incite as much disruption as possible, and make their case heard (Biondi, 2014, 57). Though police aggression brought on by administrators originally increased widespread support for the movement, clashes between students and police began to worsen over the course of the strike. In fact, December 3, 1968, earned the nickname "Bloody Tuesday," because SF State President S.I. Hayakawa declared a state of emergency and called in armed guards in full riot gear (Biondi, 2014, 62). The bloody confrontations continued throughout December, which students named the "December Days" (Biondi, 2014, 62). Over 80 students were injured over the course of the strike, and hundreds more were arrested.

As the months went on, it was hard to sustain such a large coalition for an extended period of time, especially in light of such police and administrator violence and swaths of arrests (Biondi, 2014). Fortunately, the administration was also growing weary of the continued demonstrations and on March 20, 1969, agreed to give into the demands of the BSU (Biondi, 2014). Effective in the fall of 1969, all Black Studies courses were to be moved to a new Department of Black Studies (with 11.3 faculty positions),[3] and plans were made to launch a School of Ethnic Studies. This accomplishment was historic for Black students and for higher education, as Black students and faculty began to take control of their education everywhere.

On the East Coast, students at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, staged an armed occupation in April 1969 in order to establish Black Studies on their campus. After President James A. Perkins repeatedly denied requests for a separate, Black-run, Afro-American Studies college, the Black students on campus resolved to escalate matters ("The Agony of Cornell," 1969). According to a *Time Magazine* article written shortly after the occupation, students "smuggled in a small arsenal of rifles, shotguns and knives" during Parents' Weekend, and 120 Black students seized Willard Straight Hall ("The Agony of Cornell," 1969, 1). After 34 hours of occupation, President Perkins, wanting to avoid violence, agreed to grant the Black students amnesty and gave into the demands for a Black Studies program ("The Agony of Cornell," 1969). News of this militan-

cy swept the nation, as many media outlets and administrators criticized both the students for arming themselves, and Cornell for giving into their demands ("The Agony of Cornell," 1969).

In the Midwest, at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, students compelled administrators to implement – among other initiatives aimed at improving the Black experience – Black Studies and affirmative action. Since 1965, Black students at Northwestern had been vocally critical of their treatment on campus (including athletes being told by coaches not to date white women) and created the For Members Only (FMO) and Afro-American Student Union (AASU) groups (Biondi, 2014). After Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, activism began to spike (Biondi 2014, 83). On April 22, 1968, the FMO and AASU heads issued a set of demands, including admitting more Black students, instituting Black Studies courses with Black professors, and fully desegregating Northwestern's real estate holdings (Biondi, 2014). Twelve days later, on May 4, 1968, about 100 Black students took over the Northwestern Bursar's office to force the administration to accept their demands (Biondi, 2014).[4] Although President J. Roscoe Miller was eager to throw the students in jail, other administrators persuaded him to negotiate with students. Thus, after 38 hours of protest, Miller agreed to hire Black students in the admissions office, and to expand Black Studies courses (Biondi, 2014). Despite a mixed response to the action in the media, it was a decisive victory for Black students.

That these waves of student protests took place all over the country, at both private and public institutions, "illustrate[s] the diverse locations and goals of the Black student rebellion" (Biondi, 2014, 79). Moreover, according to Peniel E. Joseph, the "student unrest [on campus] exemplified the exponential growth of black radical consciousness by the late 1960s" (Joseph, 2003, 191). Hence, as Black students gained a sense of Black radicalism from organizations such as the Black Panthers, the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, and the Afro-American Association, they quickly brought that same militancy to their campuses to fight for their education (Joseph, 2003). Students thus took matters into their own hands to institute widespread change in higher education, both as a whole and at their individual colleges and universities – resulting in the birth of Africana Studies.

The Claremont Colleges[5]

Inspired by the ongoing national Black student movement and the calls for Black Power, Black and Brown students at the Claremont Colleges (5Cs) came together to demand that ethnic studies be instituted at the 5Cs. At first, outward displays of support from the administration were sullied by stalling the creation

of the Black Studies Center (BSC). Once the Center was created, however, the administration attempted to undermine Center power and cut its budget, while also showing an overall lack of genuine concern for Black student recruitment and experience. In fact, from its inception, the Black Studies Center constantly risked being dissolved into an academic department, with continuous changes being made to the Center's operating structure and hiring process. Although on the surface these changes seemed to legitimize the Center, in practice they stripped the BSC of power and diminished the radical spirit at the heart of the BSC until it was ultimately disbanded in 1979 – erasing years of meticulous and diligent work by Black students and faculty.

The story of the BSC began in May of 1968, when members of the Black Student Union (BSU) wrote a letter to the presidents of the Claremont Colleges criticizing their failure to enroll minority students (Wilks, 1968). As a remedy to this lack of diversity, the letter contained a list of demands, including recruitment of minority students; hiring of a Black administrator to work with the BSU on recruitment; admission of five minority students selected by the BSU; and introduction of a curriculum relevant to the lived experience of Black students and their ancestors (Wilks, 1968). Though the administration seemed agreeable at first, they held the issue in a holding pattern for the next year: creating a committee, undermining the committee's authority, and creating another committee (Doggett, 1969).

Because of this inaction by administrators, and because of the continued underrepresentation of Black students, professors, and non-academic staff across the Claremont Colleges, the BSU rescinded their list of demands and instead issued a proposal for an autonomous Black Studies Center (BSC). They saw the Center as the only logical solution to the "impotent nature" of committees and the inability of white administrators to understand the Black experience (Doggett, 1969, 1). The BSC was proposed as a permanent and autonomous center, with equal access to classrooms, a new building, a 10-15% stipend from each college, and staff including an executive director, a dean of faculty, a development officer, and a dean of Black students (Doggett, 1969). It was intended to make education relevant to the Black students by not only allowing them to take courses in Black Studies but also allowing them to fight discrimination and learn how to engage effectively with the Black community outside the college.

Although significant student organizing went into the proposal for the BSC, the battle for Black Studies was long from over: the Presidents Council punted the issue of creating a Center to a variety of offices, delaying a decision – much like it had done earlier ("Memo," 1969). The BSU, no doubt drawing from the protests taking place across the country, then called for a mass rally on February

26, 1969. The rally was canceled after the explosion of two bombs on February 25 – one at Scripps College and one at Pomona College ("Two Bomb Blasts," 1969). Although the BSU denied any connection with the bombing, it shocked the administration into cooperation. At a midnight meeting on Saturday, March 8, the BSU finalized negotiations with deans and faculty members to form a committee to implement the Black Studies Center in time for Fall 1969 when the Black Studies Center finally opened with Donald Cheek as the executive director ("BSU, Presidents Finally Agree," 1969).[6]

The first few years of the BSC proved successful, and by fall of 1971, the Center had 597 students enrolled in its 49 courses across a variety of disciplines, including "Corporation: The Ghetto and the Minority Market," "Black Social and Political Thought in the United States," "Social Psychological Aspects of Black Identity" and "Community Organization, Theories and Practice" ("Black Studies Center Guide," 1970). The Center was also chiefly focused working to help students retain Black identity and create a positive self-image, and preparing them to return to their community (Hazlitt, 1971). Notable initiatives included more extensive recruiting efforts, development of an orientation handbook, revising an existing tutoring program, and starting a six-week preparatory course for incoming first-year students (Hazlitt, 1971). The BSC also continued to expand community programs, such as developing a relationship with a local hospital, working with the Pomona Day School (an afterschool program for local Black youth), and supporting peer academic counseling initiatives for high school students (Hazlitt, 1971). Setbacks began, however, when the colleges threatened to withhold funds for the six-week, pre-freshman course, as the program cost $6,200 per week ("Black Freshmen Plan," 1971). This threat foreshadows later attempted cuts to the program, which became an almost annual issue for the BSC. Three courses were also given various no-credit statuses across the colleges because they were seen as lacking rigor, a clear indication that the colleges did not see Black Studies courses as truly worthy of being offered (Covey, 1971).

By the end of the 1972 school year, the majority of the BSC faculty and BSU members had lost confidence in Cheek and mobilized to have him fired from the directorship. (Claremont University Center Public Information Office, 1972). Nearly 100 students marched through Claremont in protest and symbolically buried a casket with Cheek's name on it ("Anti-Cheek Demand Shows," 1972). Although the colleges forestalled his termination by insisting on carrying out a full investigation, it was later believed that Cheek was allegedly hired by the colleges to keep Black students in line and "smother any political activity" in exchange for a substantial salary and fringe benefits ("The Struggle Recounted,"

1975, 5). The conditions of this directorship thus "made it virtually impossible for Cheek to serve both the Council of Presidents and Black students" ("The Struggle Recounted," 1975, 5). Evidently, Cheek chose the Council of Presidents.

In October 1973, James Garrett was selected as the new BSC director. Garrett previously played a key role in the SF State student protests, helping to establish the first Black Studies program. After SF State, Garrett joined the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), and played a role in various Black student protest movements across the country. Interestingly, the colleges either were unaware of his history as an organizer and student-advocate or wanted to hide it, as there is no mention of it in the press release announcing his directorship ("James Garrett to Head BSC," 1973). Garrett's goals were to evolve the curriculum to reflect Black students' lives and build a sense of unity among Black students ("James Garrett to Head BSC," 1973). At this point, however, the BSC was set to take a significant budget cut due to lack of enrollment in BSC classes and disparities in the Chicano Studies Center (CSC) and BSC budgets ("The Struggle Recounted," 1975).

Unfortunately, each class offered by the Center averaged fewer than ten students – about half the size of non-center classes (of any discipline). In order to combat this low enrollment, the centers were allowed to make joint appointments for the first time, giving more legitimacy to the courses in the eyes of students who had previously been hesitant to enroll in them (Hagler, 1974). The option for joint appointments also allowed a path for tenure for faculty, as individual centers were not allowed to offer tenure to faculty. Although this seemed like a good solution on the surface, the joint appointments, along with the budget cuts**,** indicated that the Claremont Colleges had no intention of making the Center completely autonomous. Claremont Colleges administrators also wanted to lower the BSC budget from $225,000 to $195,000 (The Black Studies Center Family, 1974). This decrease would have forced the BSC to cut the tutor-counseling program, part-time positions, the assistant dean of counseling, a secretary, and a faculty member (Garrett, 1975).

Moreover, the pre-freshman programs were again in danger of being cut due to concerns about the cost and effectiveness of the program, and the BSU "Black House" (an on-campus bungalow used by Black students to organize, study, and host events) was taken away on a false accusation of "misuse" when the colleges claimed that the BSU was illegally using it as a dormitory (Roberts, 1974, 6). The colleges had also begun making their own Black Studies courses with white faculty, which were housed at the colleges rather than at the Center, and detracted students from taking Center courses (Garrett, 1975). Although the presidents claimed there was no bad intent in these actions, there was clear-

ly no concern for the retention of Black students or the continuation of Black Studies.

In April of 1974, The BSC Family[7] was, therefore, forced to issue a memo to the Claremont Colleges, signaling the escalation of their struggle, writing that "the Black Studies Center believes itself to be part of a pattern to drive off the campus non-whites and institutions which respond to their needs," allowing the Claremont Colleges to slowly revert back to institutions solely for the white, elite, and privileged (The Black Studies Center Family, 1974, 1). They explained that "if we are to be driven off campus, it will not be without struggle…there will be an escalation and it will be harsh in some cases" (The Black Studies Center Family, 1974, 1). Although it is unclear exactly what occurred as part of the "escalation," it likely took the form of increased organizing, including protests, walkouts, and petitions.[8] As a result, the pre-freshman programs were reinstated, the Black House was placed back under BSC control (along with an apology for the misuse charge), rent was only raised to $2,500 instead of $4,000, and the budget was raised back to $215,000 (Weirick, 1974).

Despite this partial success in 1974, 1975 was once again a tumultuous year for the colleges. First, the directors of the CSC and BSC were notified in January that funds would not be available that summer for the pre-freshman programs (Rand, 1975). They adopted joint protest strategies against the "general racist atmosphere," on campus including by wearing black and brown armbands (Hayward, 1975, 1). Second, administrators and faculty also began sending memos to each other about what to do about BSC faculty status and tenure *without* including seeking input from other BSC faculty, staff, and students, or the BSU. They were generally unconvinced of the necessity of the BSC's services, viewing the Center as an unselective, "random grouping of courses" that no longer reflected the "social and political context out of which the concept of Black Studies arose" (Shelton, 1989, 1). As such, they saw the Center as somewhat irrelevant, particularly because "with perhaps ten times the number of Black Students on campus," compared to the few students enrolled in 1968, the "sense of being alone should not be felt so keenly" (Stewart, 1974, 3). In other words, there was a pervasive belief that Black students no longer required the same support as they had at the founding of Black Studies – despite Black students insisting they did.

Thus**,** in May of 1975, a new plan for faculty appointments and promotions was put forth, forbidding any new "center-only" appointments entirely. Appointments to the college had to be at least the length of the appointment at the Center, and time off was allowed to complete degrees or do other professional development before being considered for tenure (Curtis, 1975). The plan was opposed by those who thought that the Center would lose autonomy, and facul-

ty would soon lose allegiance to the Center. Although the BSC and CSC faculty had wanted options for tenure and status, they did not want it at the expense of their ability to work solely for the Center. This move was described by CSC and BSC members as "murdering" the Centers by "eradicating the director's control over both the faculty and the curriculum" ("A Luta Continua," 1975, para. 2).

CSC and BSC students were thus forced to organize once again, but upped their tactics to the level of nonviolent civil disobedience with a takeover of Pendleton Business Building, the colleges' financial center, on May 6, 1975 ("A Luta Continua," 1975; Morgan, 1975). Though the sit-in was intended to disrupt normal college activities and bring about positive, material change, the presidents refused to negotiate while the siege was occurring and sought to end the takeover as soon as possible (Temkin, 1975). All students were subsequently summarily suspended, and filed for a restraining order (Curtis, 1975). The occupation ended shortly after that, and only three faculty and administrators, including BSC staff member Mimi Browne and BSC director James Garrett, remained in Pendleton (Temkin, 1975).

The provost used this fact against Browne and Garrett, recommending that they be immediately terminated due to obstructive and illegal activities (Savage, 1975). This move was almost certainly intended to silence Garrett after he decided not to be, in the words of *The Collegian* writer Stanley Crouch, "some well-paid running boy" for the colleges ("Trends of Administration," 1975, 2). Despite countless student protests, Garrett and Browne were fired, and the role of BSC faculty and directors remained largely undefined (De Faria, 1975).

In January of 1976, the faculty tenure status at the Centers was once again called into question, representing the third time the tenure and hiring process was changed (Feuer and Kuperberg, 1976). At the time, the Center was operating semi-autonomously (and, therefore**,** distinctly from an academic department), and appointments had to be made as joint appointments between the Center and the colleges ("Ethnic Studies: A History of Tenure," 1976). The proposed 1976 process (Option I) viewed the Centers as merely academic departments with regular appointments made in conjunction with the colleges – thus necessitating a position opening in both the Centers and a college (Feuer and Kuperberg, 1976). This plan functionally stripped the Centers of the last of their autonomy. The BSC faculty, therefore, submitted a counter-option (Option II), in an attempt to salvage their autonomy. Option II preserved the joint-appointment system but gave two methods for center faculty to obtain tenure. First, the colleges could give tenure after convening a committee and recommending a qualified candidate to an intercollegiate Appointments, Promotions, and Tenure committee. This candidate would be evaluated by the center director and

approved by the Claremont University Center president and Board of Fellows (Feuer and Kuperberg, 1976). Second, the colleges could appoint and promote faculty themselves, but only if the director of the center was involved at every level (Feuer and Kuperberg, 1976). In this way, the center director would have played a much more active role in Option II than in Option I. The faculty voted on these options in an executive session, opting to ratify Option I at Pomona, Scripps, and HMC (Feuer and Kuperberg, 1976). Although converting the Centers into academic departments appeared to have provided a level of legitimacy previously unavailable to the Centers, this move once and for all denied true autonomy to the Centers.

Moreover, moving the Center faculty to the colleges planted the seeds for the end of the Centers, and effective July 1, 1979, the BSC was dissolved into the Office of Black Student Affairs (OBSA) and the Intercollegiate Department of Black Studies (IDBS). The latter is now the Intercollegiate Department of Africana Studies (IDAS) ("The Reorganization of Black Studies," 1979). According to a 2004 document from all of the Intercollegiate Ethnic Studies Departments,[9] Pomona College felt that the "academic integrity" of the first tenure-track appointment in Chicanx/Latinx Studies (presumably, the first tenure-track appointment in any of the Ethnic Studies) was obscured by the CSC and BSC's affiliation to the Claremont University Consortium, the coordinating organization for all seven Claremont Colleges of five undergraduate colleges and two graduate schools (Intercollegiate Ethnic Studies Departments 2004). Hence, they sought to move the centers to the colleges, assume administrative responsibility, and turn the centers into Intercollegiate Departments (Intercollegiate Ethnic Studies Departments, 2004, 2). By 1985, IDBS offerings were much slimmer than that of the Center; only 11 courses were offered to students, covering African history and literature. Additionally, there were only 200 Black students across all five colleges, compared to the 375 enrolled in 1972-73 year, and 330 enrolled in 1974-75 year. This sharp decline suggests the colleges seem to have abandoned proportional ethnic distribution goals. The number of Black faculty did not fare much better, as the IDBS only had five faculty: three history professors, one political science professor, and one English professor (Waldman, 1984).[10] The dissolution of the BSC, and the challenges that other Africana Studies departments across the country faced at their founding are indicative of challenges the discipline continues to struggle with today.

State of the Discipline Today

Though Africana Studies has been subject to much scrutiny from those outside the discipline, this specific critique is informed by scholars from within the

field—many of whom I was first introduced to in my Africana Studies classes. Hence, this section is not meant to disparage the field or those inside of it but instead is an attempt to push Africana Studies to evolve and change in the interest of Black Liberation.

Today, many Africana Studies departments function in a way that is far from the radical discipline that many of the original proponents of Black Studies envisioned. First and foremost, the liberatory praxis and community engagement frameworks are notably absent. In the aftermath of the 50th anniversary of Africana Studies, the discipline has struggled to sufficiently empower students and to provide them the means necessary to engage in liberatory work (Jones et al., 2005). Instead, as Kehinde Andrews explains, many Africana Studies programs function as an "academic ghetto" – a space in which Black knowledge is "placed, placated and for the most part ignored" by the rest of the white institution (Andrews, 2020, 20). But as history shows, it is not only this relegation that erodes the power of Africana Studies programs: confining Africana Studies to the walls of the academy can remove its liberatory potential and community ethos, and replace it with a focus on knowledge for knowledge's sake (Andrews, 2020).

Second, Africana Studies programs lack the necessary autonomy to create meaningful change. As Mary Phillips notes in "Black Studies: Challenges and Critical Debates," most Africana Studies programs lack the authority to hire new faculty and grant tenure to existing faculty (Philips, 2020). Control over these areas would allow departments to operate outside of the strict confines of the university, which minimize the liberatory possibilities of Africana Studies by forcing it to imitate white disciplines and departments in order to safeguard its place within the academy. In other words, in order to avoid being pushed out, Africana Studies departments often conform to the same standards as other disciplines and tend to restrict themselves to the intellectual rather than the practical and the liberatory. Africana Studies cannot live up to its radical potential when it is both in the university and *of* it – working within and in service of the institution instead of against it (Andrews, 2020). Hence, Africana Studies requires full autonomy in order to function as "an insurgent presence [in the university,] organically linked to the struggle for Black liberation" (Andrews, 2020, 27). It is only as an insurgent presence, "wholly separate from and in many ways in tension with the inner workings of the Ivory Tower," that Africana Studies can truly serve the Black community the way it was intended to do (Johnson & Soliman, 2023, 6).

At the Claremont Colleges, Africana Studies faces similar challenges. After the Black Studies Center was dissolved into the Intercollegiate Department of

Africana Studies and the Office of Black Student Affairs, the department lost much of the BSC's earlier emphasis on community ethos. This loss has continued into the present, with the absence of a meaningful (i.e. not "charitable") community engagement element to most Africana classes. As a result, students cannot engage with course materials in the context of returning to their communities in the way that the founders of Black Studies envisioned. Instead, they are funneled into careers where the thoughts and ideas pertaining to relationships of power – which have been at the core of the Africana Studies ethos – are no longer connected to community and civic engagement. Moreover, Africana Studies students are not routinely given the chance to learn about what their studies can do to contribute to Black freedom. In this way, the liberatory potential of Africana Studies at the Claremont Colleges is significantly limited.

The Intercollegiate Department of Chicanx/Latinx Studies (IDCLS) at the Claremont Colleges offers a model for more meaningful community engagement. At least one course with a civic engagement or service-learning component is required for all IDCLS majors (Ochoa, 2024, personal interview). Moreover, many professors have a history of local community organizing which they bring to the classroom. For example, the Immigration Community Partnerships course partners with a local immigrant justice organization, where students can assist the organizations with detention cases, advocacy efforts, or with other needs (Ochoa, 2024). This collaboration with local groups helps to keep the colleges open to the communities and preserves the grassroots praxis efforts at the heart of Ethnic Studies (Ochoa, 2024). The Africana Studies Department could offer similar courses with a service-learning component such as hosting events, working with local students and organizations, and doing mutual aid work. Moreover, the department could make a concerted effort to recruit and hire new faculty who are either from the local community, or who have a history of civic engagement which informs their pedagogy and course offerings.

The Black Studies Collaboratory at UC Berkeley offers another path towards community engagement. Led by the African American Studies Department, it seeks to "take Black studies research outside of the classroom and into the local community" (Natividad, 2021, para. 3). They have partnered with many local organizations, including Critical Resistance, the Ella Baker Center, and the Center for Ideas and Society at UC Riverside. These partnerships are "mutually supportive," rather than charity-based or "extractive" (Phillips, 2022). Students and faculty are intended to learn from what has already been created and work together to build "more just futures" (Phillips, 2022). These efforts help to illuminate the understanding that the future of Africana Studies "doesn't just happen in the university," but extends into the community as part of a re-

imagining of what Africana Studies "can be and do" (Phillips, 2022). Hence, whether through a collaborative center or internal departmental initiatives, new community engagement efforts could change the trajectory of Africana Studies at the Claremont Colleges, reinvigorating its focus on Black liberation and collaborating with and learning from the surrounding community.

Additionally, there is a distinct lack of autonomy for the IDAS. For example, the Africana Studies Department cannot set its own budget, nor is it solely in charge of hiring and tenure decisions (because the colleges retain power over those decisions). In fact, even after the ethnic studies departments at the Claremont Colleges came together in 2004 to demand at least two full-time tenure-track professors in each department, Pomona College just hired the third sole-Africana appointment in 2021 (Intercollegiate Ethnic Studies Departments, 2004). Instead, many new hires come in as joint appointments with a more traditional department. The faculty in these joint-appointments must then conform to the standards of their other discipline in order to receive tenure, in a way that may take away from the mission of Africana Studies to distance itself from the Ivory Tower.[11] These issues are only exacerbated by the consortium model at the Claremont Colleges, which has created an inherently separated department: each college individually oversees all new hires and new promotions at their institution. This fracturing of the department – separated by college – creates a department that is only intercollegiate in name when it comes to criteria for tenure. Professors must, therefore, restrict their course content and teaching methods to those of which are acceptable to their respective institution, rather than to what may be aligned with the rest of the Africana Studies faculty and staff, in order to receive job security. That the white, traditional, standards for tenure are in tension with what Africana Studies may value in a professor, is indicative of a larger problem of the university only valuing certain types of scholarship.

Notably, if Africana Studies Departments and programs had true autonomy, they could put forth their own criteria for hiring and promotion that includes a liberatory pedagogy and community orientation. By adopting their standards, universities could better prioritize Black liberation. As such, the work that professors do in their courses and other engagements with students in service of Black liberation would count in their tenure review process. Moreover, Africana Studies could function as one unit, rather than a collection of professors from different governing bodies. The Keck Science Department shared between Pitzer, Scripps, and Claremont McKenna[12] offers a more specific model for intercollegiate autonomy. Keck has its own physical space / building, "cooperative" administration between the colleges, and shared hiring and tenure responsibil-

ities (Keck Science Handbook, 2024; Keck Science Department, n.d.). Hence, by imagining a new Africana Studies Department that operates more similarly to Keck, we can imagine a more autonomous, collaborative, and liberatory program.

Moreover, this vision for a new Africana Studies Department must center the original mission of the discipline, as Black students and faculty continue to experience inadequate institutional support. For example, in November of 2020, the Pitzer BSU wrote a statement condemning Pitzer's failure to appropriately guide and support Black students throughout their undergraduate years. Their letter to then President Melvin L. Oliver included a list of ways that Pitzer can ensure the success of their Black students (Pitzer College Black Student Union, 2020). The list included increased hiring of Black faculty and staff, "aggressive recruitment" of Black students, more robust financial aid, institution of a Black administrator in the Admissions Office and Office of Student Affairs, an implementation of a racial justice module in first-year and transfer student orientation, and direct support and mental health resources for Black students (Pitzer College Black Student Union, 2020, 3). It is critical to note that the Pitzer BSU did not present this list in a vacuum: they included the list of the original demands from BSU in 1968, writing "52 years and yet, our list of demands is almost identical to theirs. This point further shows that the colleges have failed their students with lack [sic] of sustainable policies in regard to admission and recruitment" (Pitzer College Black Student Union, 2020, 1). In this way, the Claremont Colleges have continued to act *against* the best interest of their Black students for over 50 years – alluring students with promises of diversity and community but failing to support them when they arrive on campus.

The Pitzer BSU's recall to the 1968 student demands showcases the importance of relying on an institution's / department's own history in order to re-establish its more radical roots. In other words, studying the local history can illuminate a path forward for Africana Studies. Borrowing from Jafari S. Allen's concept of "archiving the anthological," we are called to "re-member" and "(re) discover" the past together, constantly working towards bringing the archive to life in the present and in the future (Allen, 2021, 220). Moreover, Africana Studies scholar Abdul Alkalimat writes that documenting the local history is one of ten action plans to secure the future of Black Studies and Black life (Alkalimat, 2021). As Alkalimat notes, "each campus has its own story, part of a national movement, yet is unique in what actually happened," particularly in the areas of disruption of campus life, building research practices, and developing theories and administrative organizational structures (Alkalimat, 2021, 4). These unique stories are the key to forward progress in Africana Studies. By searching in the

archives, conducting oral histories and interviews, and scouring newspapers, press releases, and communiqués, we can begin to uncover the local history as a means to move forward towards a more radical future.

In fact, Africana Studies professors have an important role to play in this task: the Pitzer BSU learned about and chose to include the original 1968 demands students were exposed to in the Intro to Africana Studies course. Hence, going forward, Africana Studies professors everywhere ought to ground their syllabi in the local history at their institution and the history of the discipline, in order to inspire and best serve their students. As Africana Studies professor, Joshua Myers, writes in his book, *Of Black Study,* "[A]s we enter the second half-century of Black Studies, let us continue to re-member [sic] the origins of this disciplinary project, its roots in struggle, its promise for another kind of university, its hope for another kind of world" (Myers, 2023, 188). This remembering will push Africana Studies to a place of liberatory scholarship – a place where our "intellectual work" renders "liberation as a collective practice" as *entirely* conceivable (Myers, 2023, 189). The future, therefore, calls on all of us, as Africana Studies students, professors, staff, and scholars to return to and expand upon the existing archive of Black life – including the knowledge left by those individuals and organizations before us.

Crucially, the role of Africana Studies within the university is to be constantly evolving for the sake of responding to the present needs of the Black community – constantly imagining new, radical futures. The discipline, therefore, cannot sit comfortably in the institution; scholars, students, and faculty must continuously examine what it means to fight for Black liberation within the field. In other words, if Africana Studies is to be a part of the academy, it must always be reimagining, reflecting, and reorganizing around the goal of Black freedom. The strength of Africana Studies then becomes its capacity for change: scholars, activists, students, professors, and community members must be in constant communication and collaboration, coming together to bridge theory and praxis in service of Black liberation. It is only through this constant, dynamic transformation that Africana Studies can recapture the radical ethos at the core of its founding.

Notes

1. For simplicity, I have decided to use the term Africana Studies to refer to the discipline in general, because that is the name of the department at the Claremont Colleges. However, I use "Black Studies" to refer to the discipline at its founding, as the first department in the field was named the Department of Black Studies.

2. James Garrett later became the Director of the Black Studies Center at the Claremont Colleges.

3. 11.3 faculty positions refers to 11.3 full-time equivalents (FTEs), or 452 total hours worked by all employees per week.

4. Biondi seems to suggest this location may have been chosen because of the mainframe computer located inside, which contained financial and admission records of the entire student body.

5. The Claremont Colleges are a consortium of five undergraduate institutions in Southern California: Scripps College, Pomona College, Harvey Mudd College, Pitzer College, and Claremont McKenna College.

6. The BSC opened as part of the new Human Resources Institute, which consisted of the Center for Urban and Regional Studies, the Black Studies Center, and the Center for Mexican American Studies (Merwin 1969b).

7. The BSC Family is composed of BSC faculty, staff, students, and those outside the Center who align with their goals.

8. The lack of clarity about the "escalation" is because I have been unable to find or access any records that the BSC faculty and staff kept, which may include more details.

9. This includes Africana Studies, Chicanx / Latinx Studies, and Asian-American Studies

10. The 1993 student takeover of Alexander Hall at Pomona College also illustrates further student concern for the fate of Black faculty at the Claremont Colleges. Spurred on by a rumor that the Pomona English Department and Intercollegiate Department of Black Studies had failed to agree on any three finalists for a joint position in the two departments, 50 students occupied the building and demanded increased racial diversity among the faculty (1993 | Pomona Timeline).

11. Professors with joint-appointments at other universities may also face all-white tenure committees, which have a history of unjustifiably denying tenure to Black professors (Flaherty 2020).

12. Claremont McKenna has announced plans to withdraw from Keck and create their own science department in the coming years.

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The Hidden Transcripts of the Blues: Subaltern Readings of Blues Music and Lyrics

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Abstract. Blues musicians are social actors whose lyrics have real meaning and consequences. Their lyrics are not confined to regions or musical genres. The Blues is mobile. It follows the same paths that people did, from which the migration narrative emerges as a dominant form of African American cultural production. Through migration narratives, African American artists came to terms with the massive dislocation of black peoples following migration. Without money to relocate, many African Americans were left in the South. Opportunities for them in the workforce were hard to find, and, by the mid-1930s, the effects of the Great Depression and racial segregation drastically limited black employment. For a black, blind musician, music offered a unique job opportunity, as well as a unique social perspective. Besides the few interviews that Blues musicians gave, their lyrics were their only words. It is an oral history of the times. Lyrics then became the primary method of analysis for such musicians. Poor or disabled black men and women were more likely to stay in the South. This article features three popular blind Blues musicians from the southern United States during the early 20th century. The songs of blind Blues singers exist in multiple forms and contexts and this study will, in-part, rely on elements of James Scott's "everyday resistance," and "hidden transcripts," along with Disability Studies' concepts of complex embodiment. Together, a complex reading of blind Blues musicians' life and lyrics offers a way to analyze both protest songs and leisure songs revealing the radical black imagination as a countercultural moment.

Keywords: African American, Blues, Culture, Music, American History, Social Commentary

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Introduction

There is no other American popular cultural form with as many blind entertainers than the Country Blues.[1] Nor is there any other genre of music with as many songs about being down- and-out as the Blues. The Blues represents the constant highs and lows of life - the worried mind. There are as many kinds of Blues songs as there are songs about having the blues: lonesome Blues, broken Blues, racism Blues, hungry Blues, woman Blues, fighting Blues, and the social Blues, to name a few. What many of them have in common, as Langston Hughes once wrote, is "the kind of humor that laughs to keep from crying."[2] The Blues is African American acoustic guitar-driven folk music, while the Classic Blues is popular music with jazz accompaniment, and Ragtime is just piano honky-tonk.[3] Country Blues is less commercial than Classic Blues and Ragtime, and it could be performed solo, unlike the Classic Blues which relies on professional songwriters and jazz accompaniments. The Country Blues is rural, and with male guitarists, as opposed to the more urban, Vaudeville Blues performed by the Blues queens of New Orleans and Memphis that also employs subtle forms of resistance.[4] Some Blues songs represent James Scott's hidden transcripts that take place beyond direct observation of the dominant power, as opposed to the public transcripts of dialogue between subordinates and those who dominate the dialogue.[5] Blues music and lyrics take place off the mainstream stage. Scott believes that there is a divide between the behavior, language, and customs that dominated groups in public, and the language, jokes, and criticisms that structure their lives offstage. Both public transcripts and hidden transcripts have effects on everyday politics. The public transcript is the conventional pattern of speech for the dominated, through which they adopt the forms of deference and respect for the powerful that are needed to avoid conflict with the powerful. The hidden transcript takes place offstage, outside the intimidating gaze of power and is a dissonant political culture. Scott's hidden transcript permits him to communicate to the reader how it works through theories of ideology and hegemony. He argues that the hegemony of dominant ideas is only an uncritical observation of the performance of the public transcript. He suggests that the dominated are capable of their own criticisms. These musicians, while subsisting both inside and outside the labor system, were able to uniquely provide social commentary through their lyrics. Blues music captures elements of African American culture. As Ben Sidran explains, "black music is not only conspicuous within, but *crucial to,* black culture."[6] Shana Redmond goes even further by stating that black music often "functions as a method of rebellion, revolution and future visions that disrupt and challenge the manufactured differences used to dismiss, detain, and destroy communities."[7] She continues, writing that music is

more than sound, but a complex "system of meaning(s)...that mediate our relationships to one another, to space, to our histories and historical moments."[8] So, scholars "need to break away from traditional notions of politics" and question what resistance strategies and movements really look like, Robin D. G. Kelley emphatically states, while investing in the validity of oral history of the country blues.[9]

The Country Blues made its home in the American South during the early 20th century, but it was soon adopted throughout the states as a fresh, new sound by 1926, with Blind Lemon Jefferson leading the way. There are many different categories, or sub-genres, of Country Blues music styles. The Delta Blues, the Texas Blues, the Piedmont Blues, and the Classic Blues which inspired St. Louis Blues, are among the most recognized. The earliest sub-genres are the Country Blues or the Texas Blues, blowing off the dry, flat land of Eastern Texas and Arkansas, while the Delta Blues sprouted from the dark, rich soil of the Mississippi alluvial plain. The Country Blues is from a land of corn, peanuts, lumber, and soybeans. The Delta Blues, on the other hand, is centered on cotton. After much of the swamps had been drained, the land became a sultry, primordial twilight zone. It runs along Highway 61 from New Orleans, through Vicksburg, and all the way to Beale Street in Memphis. The land of the Country Blues, on the other hand, is flat, often dry and sunny, perfect for hitchhiking on highway 49 in Clarksdale to the Dallas suburbs. Country Blues is usually accompanied by a harmonica. Verses were "formulaic" in the sense that they were shifted at will within a given tune, and a gifted musician had a large repertory of verses formulas. This formulaic verse and guitar accompaniment dominated the Country Blues style. The Country Blues were set in a rural context during the 1910s and popularized in the Mississippi Delta region in the 1920s. While this was true in its beginnings, Country Blues also became popular urban music from across the country. Ferris is correct in describing the Delta Blues as "Characterized by use of heavy gravelly voice and the bottleneck style of playing," but he neglects to mention that by the 1930s, the Country Blues was just as popular in the urban north as the rural south.[10] Lizbeth Cohen writes that mass culture offered African Americans "the ingredients from which to construct a new, urban black culture" through commercial consumption.[11] Musicians like Lemon Henry Jefferson, Willie McTell, and Rev. Gary Davis capture how the Blues sprang from the rural, southern countryside, and moved into the busy northern cities. There were many exceptions as itinerant musicians traveled from place to place picking up new styles and leaving some behind for other musicians. The differences in musical context essentially end there. The styles of the Blues are so similar that it is not surprising that Blind Willie McTell, out of Georgia, played

with Blind Lemon, from Texas, and Rev. Gary Davis, from South Carolina, ended up living in downtown New York City. Blues musicians traveled across the country constantly, from Texas to Mississippi, to Chicago and New York City, following the various migrations of African Americans. During the 1920s, Country Blues musicians traveled these routes north to Chicago, and then back down south. They played with one another, they listened to one another, and they had one thing in common: they were from the south, and their sound had never been heard anywhere else before. Together, they captured the era of the Country Blues.

Blind Blues musicians represent an even more subaltern, or hidden group. They were social actors. Their lyrics had real consequences and reflected society in the early 20th century. George Lipsitz states that the "relationship between popular music and place offers a way of starting to understand the social world."[12] Anxieties aired through music to capture important aspects of cultural conflict. Likewise, Blues culture and lyrics should not be simply taken as just music, but rather a composite of the African American milieu, for Blues artists' awareness and innovative position place them as a spokesperson for many aspects of American culture. Unfortunately, publications on blind musicians are inundated by the three major stereotypes of the blind in American culture: the blind beggar, the blind genius, and the superstition of sensory compensation.[13] The two most dominant stereotypes, the blind beggar and the blind genius, fail to account for the agency that blind Blues musicians held.

Examining the lives and lyrics of blind African American musicians not only offers an interdisciplinary look at subaltern groups, but captures the history and setting of the Blues, along with the era of popular Race Records. Lemon Henry Jefferson was the first to achieve national success as a Blues artist. Willie McTell captures the popularity of Blues' race records during the heyday of the 1930s. Lastly, Gary Davis' career shows the legacy of Blues music in American society. The image of a blind Blues player sitting in a train depot with a steel guitar on his lap singing songs about the rough life on the road is a staple of Blues iconography, but more so, it was a paying job, and it was just as rewarding as playing in local juke joints, to the point that Jefferson may have played along the street or the train tracks more than he did indoors. For us, Jefferson's use of his various environments allowed him a modicum of financial success, rare for Americans oppressed by both their race and physical impairments. These three artists represent a lifetime of Country Blues as a resistance to the dominant narrative of race and disability in America.[14]

Disability Studies takes an interdisciplinary approach to the intersections of the humanities and the social sciences. This critical analysis distinguishes itself

from the vast array of literature *about* disability instead of the subjective experience of people with impairment. Chris Bell's *Blackness and Disability* connects race and disability in a social lens, and, recently, Terry Rowden, Joseph Witek, and Luigi Monge have begun to probe the intersections of blindness, race, and music. Monge states that the "role of blind performers has unfortunately not been explored fully."[15] One way to analyze blind Blues singers and their music is by viewing it as a rhetorical trope of "otherness." Witek writes that "sightlessness thus becomes a version of black powerlessness," and that blindness in the Blues is not only a trope but a cultural metaphor.[16] Social constructions among power, race, and disability reveal connections between oppression and disability through rhetorical devices of passing and masquerade. Blind Blues musicians may have looked powerless, but they had a unique perspective of society, and an artistic way of critiquing it. The role of blind performers in Blues music has yet to be explored.[17]

The Blues also shows the exploitative side of disability. Black and blind bodies were oppressed, but while blind musicians tended to be treated as savants, these musicians turned disability into an advantage. It gave them a catchy stage-name and viable career. They forged alliances with nondisabled people in their lives. Their musical career also gave them control over their lives, and their resistance came from self-preservation. Some blind musicians were so good, and their blind monikers were so memorable, that several musicians who had no visual impairment, such as Eddie Lang and Ben Covington, took up the "blind" label, too. This is an example of the complex embodiment of blind musicians. Disability creates theories of embodiment more complex than the ideology of ability. These many embodiments are each crucial to the understanding of humanity and its variations, whether physical, mental, social, or historical. Complex embodiments are both social and physical, and while identities are social constructions, they are also complexly embodied.[18]

The Musicians and their Lyrics

One of the earliest Blues founders was Blind Lemon Jefferson. He was the blues personified. He played the Blues. He traveled like a bluesman, and he was blind, a stereotypical signifier of a Blues musician. But more than any of those things, Jefferson played the slide-guitar with a tenderness that matched the sad, strained voice that made him an American music icon. Jefferson first recorded in 1925, but Country Blues records did not appear in large quantities until the following year. Mamie Smith and Her Jazz Hounds' 1920 hit, "Crazy Blues," was the catalyst for the popularity of Jazz and Blues music in the United States. By 1923, Bessie Smith's contract with Columbia Records, and Ma Rainey's title as

"Mother of the Blues" signified the financial impact of the "blues," whether the acoustic guitar-Country Blues or the jazzy Classic Blues of Mamie Smith and Bessie Smith. Record companies soon noticed the demand for African American Blues records – specifically for Black consumers – and created the genre of ethnic music, otherwise known as Race Records, to rival the commercial success of African American women vaudeville singers. Gramophone owners and emerging record executives recognized the potential of reproducing Black music for a mass audience. The female-dominated Classic Blues needed a rival, and they found it in the male acoustic-driven Country Blues.

The second example is one of the complex embodiments. Blind Willie McTell represents locations and forms of embodiment from which the dominant ideologies of society become visible and open to criticism. A complex embodiment contributes to intersectionality, and the idea that analysis of social oppression takes into account overlapping identities based on race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability. Oppression is driven by social ideologies that are embodied, and because ideologies are embodied, their effects are readable, and must be read, in the construction and history of societies.[19] While McTell's blindness was a disadvantage on occasion, he also used it as part of his schtick. His blindness became a marketing tool. It was part of his advertisement, as well as a form of self-preservation. He used it to make a life and career for himself, gaining respectability where society had deemed him a lesser human being both racially and physically. The hidden transcripts of Blues musicians reveal free spaces where African Americans could take their culture back and reinforce their sense of community.

Reverend Gary Davis represents the last case study of early blind Blues musicians. Davis, dubbed as "a likely successor to the great folk singer, guitarist Lead Belly," captures the complex life, and moreover, the complex embodiment of a blind, black, male Blues musician. By the time of the memorial concert in 1950, Davis had given up writing Blues songs and instead committed himself to the church. But like itinerant musicians, independent preachers relied on their ability to perform for donations. Davis had gone from having the potential of being Lead Belly's successor to street singing and storefront preaching, surviving on donations in New York City. Likewise, Davis' name change captures the thin line Blues musicians walked between secular and religious. Both genres, secular or spiritual, use tactical lyrics to describe black life, blindness and American society in general. Davis' life and career illuminates the relationship between physical impairment and the political, social, and cultural environment of the United States at the beginning of the 20th century by edifying the often-contentious marriage of religion and the Blues and capturing how both offered a legitimate source of employment to disadvantaged African Americans.

Together with Scott's notions of hidden transcripts, a complex reading of blind Blues singers' life and lyrics offers a way to analyze both protest songs and leisure songs in tandem, revealing the "radical black imagination as a social movement."[20] Yet, it is more intricate than that. Blues musicians sang about a variety of social aspects, often because of discrimination and not songs specifically *about* discrimination. The blurring of so-called protest songs reveals that discrimination was often a part of every aspect of black life. For example, songs of escape - travel/leaving/journey - may not have been overt protests, yet they still capture the consequences of a segregated society. Other songs, such as songs of leisure, reveal how African Americans survived and thrived in such a society. Finally, some songs are only slightly veiled criticisms of American society. The hidden transcripts of Blues songs become masks that allow the musicians to say publicly what they cannot say directly to the face of the dominant power structure.

The Blues as a Hidden Transcript

The early 20th century is the historical moment in which Blues musicians found themselves. The Blues hey-day was the post-World War I era of the Great Migration, the Great Depression, and Jim Crow segregation. Blues lyrics are texts to be studied because they documented these events from the frontlines. Blues are historical artifacts and analyzing the social and political language of lyrics captures power relationships and further reveals American society as a whole. Each musician displays the intersectionality of race and disability by capturing themes of space and mobility. The impact of the Harlem Renaissance thought was national just as the routes of black musicians mattered more than the roots of black music. Blues music followed migrants north into the cities. They carried the musical form along with their suitcases. This was not only a connection to their past life, but it became popular music in the north as well.

These musicians expose the complex concept of embodiment in masquerade by claiming disability as a marketing tool. Tobin Siebers states that the notion of masquerade is an opportunity to rethink "passing from the point of view of disability studies because it claims disability as a version of itself rather than simply concealing it from view."[21] Blind Blues musicians did more than just claim their disability; but made it into an image of commercial success. All of these concepts illuminate the hidden transcripts of race and disability in Blues music and American society.

"Where there is power there is resistance," Michel Foucault wrote.[22] Resistance comes in a variety of forms. James Scott points to the political significance of language in power relationships and the resulting resistance to the dominant

narrative. Society's dominant narrative can be called the public transcript. The other side of this, the hidden transcript, is the result of oppressive policies and harsh penalties for disobedience and open criticism, but the subaltern is careful in their speech around those in power so their "repressed speech" or hidden transcript is redirected to others. Political actions often take forms that are designed to obscure their intentions or cover up their apparent meanings.[23] It is this redirected speech that contains politically charged dialogue. And while subordinates rarely embark on open rebellions, they do resist domination through other forms, such as music and lyrics. This is reminiscent of the "blues matrix." A "complex, reflective enterprise" with an "enabling script in which Afro-American cultural discourse is inscribed."[24] We may refer to this as the metadata of resistance; the thoughts, sounds, beliefs, and tactics that collectively help create a social movement. Scott explains that while the resistance found in hidden transcripts does not constitute organized resistance, it is "the stubborn bedrock upon which other forms of resistance may grow."[25] Some Blues songs represent countercultural movements and can be read through hidden transcripts.

Many of these songs are, in fact, political according to John Greenway's definition of protest songs. "These are the struggle songs of the people...they are songs of unity." Greenway goes on to state that protest music is "class conscious... for economic protest is often synonymous with social protest."[26] The Blues, Lawson writes, "were conceived, inherited, and reshaped by aspiring professional musicians who saw music as a countercultural escape."[27] African American musicians did not sit idly by as a vassal of white control but used their music to define themselves and disseminate their struggles. Gary Davis suggests that all humans will one day be morally judged by God in his song "There's A Destruction In This Land":

Oh Death, he keeps on riding,
And he's knocking at every door.
He's calling for the rich,
Just as well as for the poor.
Can't you see, can't you see,
Men and women passing into judgement,
Everyday.

Some black performers saw themselves as messengers of a counterculture that threatened the dominant white power structure. They expressed their political identity through their music.[28] The Blues began as underground music, sung in homes and house parties. Jazz and the Classic Blues were much more

mainstream and often relied on white funding and popularity. Even Handy's song about finding the creator of the Blues in a southern train depot contains the revealing lyrics:

Money dont [sic] exactly grow on trees,
On cotton stalks it grows with ease.
Every poor kitchen there's a cabaret.
Down there the boll weevil works,
while the darkies play.

The inability to exist as a black person without entering the white system of society as social commentary was obvious, but at the same time black musicians masked their lyrics in order to employ what W. E. B. Du Bois labeled double-consciousness. "One ever feels his two-ness, – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings."[29] African American musicians used both sides of the color line to achieve success, which also showcased opposing identities. Their double-consciousness allowed for a black consciousness that was socially charged. Lawson suggests that interpreting the Blues as counterculture allows modern evaluators "to understand that blues musicians were necessarily accepting of prevailing Jim Crow social norms while at the same time hoping to evade or subvert them."[30] Some Blues songs were countercultural tropes that illuminate dominant power structures and resistance to Jim Crow. These were communicated through veiled and coded language masks. Paul Gilroy agrees, writing that musicians derived "their special power from a doubleness, their unsteady location simultaneously inside and outside the conventions, assumptions, and aesthetic rules which periodize modernity."[31] The Blues musician was confined to racial stigmata, but many of their lyrics countered traditional African American stereotypes, revealing a black consciousness of protest rather than the primitive, subservient representation constructed by folklorists and the record industry. Because the Country Blues was a part of these structures, they were able to comment on these representations. This is their double consciousness.

Historian Tyina Steptoe's *Houston Bound* captures this notion of space and its importance to marginalized groups by showing how people of African or Mexican descent "faced exclusion from certain spaces, but they also forged social spaces that allowed them to solidify their racial subjectivity in a new place." Black musicians understood this as well. While Steptoe does not use Scott's term of hidden transcripts, she similarly states that "forms of popular culture like music can help us uncover 'hidden histories' that go untold in official narratives.[32]

Blues lyrics captured their history when no one else was. Likewise, their critique of society is unique to the Blues' music form. Few sources were documenting the lives of black southerners, so the Blues became both an outlet for frustration, along with a social history of their existence.

Leadbelly's song, "Bourgeois Blues," often covered by Jefferson, comes traveling the country performing for folk music societies and recording race records. It is a more obvious critique of social inequality in the country.

Me and my wife went all over town
Everywhere we go, the people would turn us down
Lord, in the bourgeois town
Yee it's a bourgeois town
I got the bourgeois blues
Gonna spread the news all around

These lyrics, besides the obvious complaints regarding racism, also exclaims that they are going to share this with their friends and neighbors.

Me and Martha, we were standing upstairs
I heard a white man sayin' "I don't want no niggers up there"
Lord, he's a bourgeois man
Yee, it's a bourgeois town
I got the bourgeois blues
Gonna spread the news all around

Here, we have the subjects' bemoaning racism in the housing market. Jefferson himself would come across this not only in segregated housing developments but sun-down towns where an African American traveling may be arrested or worse traveling through such towns and villages across Texas.

Them white folks in Washington they know how
To call a colored man a nigga just to see him bow
Lord, it's a bourgeois town
Ooh, the bourgeois town
I got the bourgeois blues
I'm gonna spread the news all around

Finally, this song follows the thread of societal racism to Washington D.C., and the lawmakers of the country, proclaiming they are going to expose them to the world.

Other songs were not so obvious as social critiques, such as "Bad Luck Blues" by Lead Belly's traveling partner, Blind Lemon Jefferson. Bad luck songs stood for social injustices, like poverty, poor education, limited civil rights, incarceration and political exclusion, and were more veiled commentary of the reality of being black. Lawson agrees that the Blues music form was "conceived, inherited, and reshaped by aspiring professional musicians who saw music as a countercultural escape from economic and social subservience."[33] The Blues is the key to understanding these hidden transcripts, forms of resistance kept out of sight from the dominant power, that must be viewed as countercultural escape. This is the daily struggle of oppressed groups, and the mask that musicians wore by design. They were behind-the-scenes discourses; their invisibility was a tactical choice. It is the hidden part of the Blues transcript.[34]

"Bad Luck Blues" captures the necessity of travel to find work and the lack of suitable clothing but also reveals racism and the preponderance of segregated rail cars with the lyrics "Sugar, you catch the Katy, I'll catch the Sante Fe. Doggone my bad luck soul, kicked off the traveling train."

I wanna go home and I ain't got sufficient clothes
Doggone my bad luck
Wanna go home and I ain't got sufficient clothes
I mean sufficient, talking about clothes
Well, I wanna go home, but I ain't got sufficient clothes.
Sugar, you catch the Katy, I'll catch that Santa Fe
Doggone my bad luck soul
Kicked off the travelin' train.
I mean the Santy, speakin' about Fe
When you get to Denver, pretty mama, look around for me.

Blind musicians represent an even more subaltern group, and their messages were also hidden transcripts to the power structure of normality, which also dominated public discourse on disability. Lennard Davis wrote that while scholars have acknowledged aspects of racism, sexism, and class bias, their "very practices of reading and writing, seeing, thinking, and moving are themselves laden with assumptions about hearing, deafness, blindness, normalcy, paraplegia, and ability and disability in general."[35] The critique of the social definition of normalcy and ability are also hidden transcripts. Just as the "conceptualization

of race, class, and gender shape the lives of those who are not," we can read about the social construction of disability in the early 20th century.[36] For example, Rev. Gary Davis' song, "Lord, I Wish I Could See," captures being both blind and black, using visual cues, along with the line "someone like me" that may be taken as someone blind, poor, black, or otherwise oppressed.

It was a time when I went blind,
Was the darkest day that I ever saw,
was the time when I went blind
Lord nobody knows like me,
the trouble I do see.
I'm away in the dark. got to feel my way,
Lord there nobody cares for someone like me.

This song can be read in a number of contexts. "Lord, I Wish I Could See" can be taken as social, political, or personal commentary on life in general. The hidden transcripts of Blues music are not entirely political or apolitical. Resistance can be political or apolitical, or both, or neither. This is what makes a hidden transcript covert or masked, yet overt enough for audiences to understand and possibly relate. Resistance comes in such a variety of forms. The binary between protest and leisure songs does not exist, just as songs about pleasure, profit, and pain may contain a variety of topical material.

The occupation of a Blues performer relies on this critique because Blues musicians coexist on record and anonymous clubs, outside the immediate control of the dominant class where "they are likely to create and defend a social space in which offstage dissent to the official transcript of power relations may be voiced." Scott points out specific forms of this offstage dissent in his work – linguistic disguises, ritual codes, taverns, fairs, and the "hush-arbors" of slave religion.[37] This is exactly how Blues singers communicated critique, through linguistic disguises and codes. Blues singers also performed these songs in the taverns and fairs of the American south. Their taverns were juke-joints, and the fairs resembled the train platforms and sidewalks occupied by the masses of people in southern towns. Yet, while there are certain similarities between the subjects Scott elucidates and Blues singers, the Blues singers performed in social spaces unique to southern black culture during an era when African Americans were second-class citizens, and their plight ignored by white civic leaders.

The oppressed, aware of their condition, manage their behavior and discourse to their own advantage. Their discontent, or weapon of the weak, "displays itself in patterns of resistance, pilferage, foot dragging, sabotage, etc.,

which never boil over and which are expressed verbally in metaphor."[38] Blues musicians exemplify these expressive verbal metaphors. Davis' "There's A Destruction In This Land" also contains visual cues, as he asks his audience, "Can't you see?" There is destruction in this land. The metaphors in their song lyrics are often aimed directly at the dominant narratives in attempts to critique, explain, bemoan, or otherwise lambast the dominant power structures.[39] The song exemplifies this by imploring listeners to acknowledge the "sins" of the country and their effects on both the rich and poor. He insinuates that these sins affect everyone in the country, and all will be held accountable, regardless of their race or class.

There's a destruction in this land
Can't you see[?]
Now you see how God is riding
Through this old sinful land
So it pays you to be ready
Have your ticket in your hand
For my God is still-a-riding
And he's taking on every hand
There's a destruction in this land
Can't you see[?]

There's a destruction in this land
Can't you see[?]
There's something I want to tell you
And I want you to know
Oh Death, he keeps on riding
And he's knocking at every door
He's calling for the rich
Just as well as for the poor
There's a destruction in this land
Can't you see[?]

While songs like these serve as a release-valve for anger, it is more importantly a form of self-preservation and livelihood. First, their position as a musician is a career. For blind Blues musicians performing was both their labor and their livelihood. Second, employment as a musician does not fit comfortably in the norms of American careers. This career placement situates the musician *within* society, as a contributing member of society, yet the musician also exists *without* society as the function of a traveling performer is not a typical, or normal, career. Similarly, being a musician with visual impairment rests outside

the physical characteristics of an average musician. Lastly, the blind Blues musician exists on a plane that neither the typical American worker nor the seeing musician can perceive. The blind musician exists then, both as a part of society and apart from society. Take the two sides of a coin, for example. If the typical American worker exists on the head side of the coin, and the transient musician exists on the tails side of the coin, then the blind musician exists on the third side of the coin, the edge, resting precariously in between the common laborer and the seeing performer. This allows the blind musician to comment on society in ways neither the everyday employee nor the seeing musician can. It also allows for a much more diverse critique of society than either of the others may achieve because blind Blues musicians hold a unique advantage to comment on social events.

When resistance occurs in public, that is, in front of the powerful, scholars fail to note such transcripts because of the subtle, evasive speech genres in which they are expressed. One such form of hidden transcripts failed to be explored by historians is African American Blues songs, specifically the songs of blind Blues musicians. The placement of blind Blues musicians offers an even richer plethora of social comments because of their ability to exist between the musician and the worker. "Identity is not merely that which is given to an individual or group, but is also a way of inhabiting, interpreting, and working through, both collectively and individually, an objective social location and group history," Linda Martin Alcoff writes.[40] This is an example of a complex embodiment as blind Blues musicians represent locations and forms of embodiment from which the dominant ideologies of society become visible and open to criticism.

Gary Davis may have felt the effects of similar racist treatment when he wrote "You Got to Go Down," revealing hidden transcripts through his lyrics.

You better learn how to treat everybody,
For you got to go down. You got to go down.
You better learn how to treat everybody,
You got to go down. You got to go down.
Ashes to ashes and dust to dust,
The life you're living won't do to trust
You better learn how to treat everybody,
For you got to go down.

This song represents the day when "everybody" must stand in front of the heavenly gates and face judgment. This song is not an overt protest, nor is it explicitly denouncing racism, but Davis certainly experienced racism while per-

forming in the black cultural center of Durham, North Carolina, in the 1920s. It was the subtleness of songs like this that allowed musicians to criticize society without being overtly political and, therefore, eliminating the risk of retaliation. It was also a technique used by performers through the malleability of the lyrics. This could just as easily be a song about a deceitful friend or an unfaithful lover depending on the interpretation of its listeners.

Yet, Davis' use of the lines "you better learn how to treat *everybody"* suggests the entire society must be prepared for judgment day. Critiquing society behind the veil of a mask is the nature of hidden transcripts. Most likely though, an open-ended song such as "You Got to Go Down" allows the performer or listener a release-valve to their anger or sadness -- their blues sharpening the ability to control emotions and anger and furthermore protecting them from retribution. A comparison of both the hidden and public transcripts of each group offers a fresh way to understand resistance to dominance. Blind Davis' *You Got to Go Down* is first a religious song about facing your sins on judgment day but secondly serves to alleviate the sins of segregation and the hope that such white sinners will repent before the end of their life.

Such songs present an African American's agency, and the struggle for respect which Black repression and resistance are inextricably linked. The songs merge oral history with lyrical artifacts. Through music, lyrics, recordings, and interviews conducted with Davis and McTell, along with Lemon Jefferson, we can understand the relationship between physical impairment and the political, social and cultural environment by tracing both the public and hidden transcripts of Blind Blues musicians.

The theory of complex embodiment allows race and disability to be read in tandem. It allows for intersectionality and the idea that the analysis of social oppression takes account of overlapping identities based on race, gender, sexuality, class, and disability. Oppression is driven by embodied social ideologies. Such embodied ideologies and "their effects are readable, and must be read," in the construction of society.[41] Some bodies are excluded by dominant social ideologies. This means that these "bodies display the workings of ideology and expose it to critique and the demand for political change."[42] There is not a universal definition of disability because it is a lived experience. Therefore, the lived experience of Blind Blues musicians can be a sociopolitical text to be read.

Blues Music as a Unique Career

There was a time when a steady source of employment for African Americans was difficult to find. Careers for blind African Americans were even more difficult to secure. Performing the blues was a career choice and a form of re-

sistance to oppression. Blues music, whether male or female, able or disabled, served then as both a successful occupation and a way to express dissatisfaction at their predicament, while simultaneously bemoaning their low status in society. The male-driven Country Blues often tackled more volatile forms of racism and classism because they were less popular, and, therefore, less noticeable than Classic Blues lyrics. Although female Blues singers like Bessie Smith addressed social issues like sexism, their music was often censored by white music executives and publishers. Scholars like Danette Marie Pugh-Patton have explored the "representations of racism, sexism, and classism" as "subthemes" in their music and lyrics.[43] So, the Blues were not simply songs "created by men," or women, "at leisure, with the time and opportunity to play an instrumental accompaniment to their verses," as Oliver believed in his early book on blues music culture.[44] Black musicians may have been near the bottom of the U.S. social hierarchy, but that did not mean they were powerless. The need for self-preservation was also the economy of the musician. Likewise, Blind Blues musicians used music performance as self-preservation. Put simply, it was a way out of pauperism or low wage, often laborious employment. Music pays. The dominant source of income for rural, southern African Americans was sharecropping, and it did not pay.

Davis, Jefferson, and McTell's parents were all sharecroppers at one time. Sharecropping was a rigged economic system that kept workers in perpetual servitude. "The country is rich," Du Bois once wrote, "but the people are poor." Du Bois placed the blame on the persistence of debt.[45] Litwack goes so far as to call the sharecropping system unfree labor, or "a new slavery" resulting in the "condition of peonage."[46] Beginning immediately after the Civil War, sharecropping, or tenant-farming, was organized to maintain the southern plantation economy by taking advantage of African Americans' vulnerable economic position. This was bolstered by Jim Crow laws that effectively limited black ownership of land. Sharecropping allowed blacks to work a section of land owned by a white businessman and in turn they were forced to deduct a portion of their crop yields for the use of the land, as well as for the credit of food, shelter, and clothing. After their seasonal lease, sharecropping farmers almost always found themselves inundated with debt.

Music was a way out of the sharecropping lifestyle. Music was also an outlet for frustration. The resistance of Blind Blues musicians comes directly from this self-preservation and their subaltern status in American society. This dual position allowed blind musicians to deny the dominant narrative that their impairment dictated. Finding gainful employment as a disabled member of society, is first a form of self-preservation. Along with sharecropping, disabled African Americans were relegated to unskilled labor during the Progressive Era as race

management and labor were intertwined.[47] Secondly, public performance sets the stage for critiques of society. As Colin Gordon rebuked Foucault, "the binary division between resistance and non-resistance is an unreal one" that "resist[s] any simple division into the political and the apolitical."[48] Thus, the need for studying non-confrontational protest must be connected to other cultural forms: in this case, Blues music. Lyrics allow the performer, as well as the audience, to participate and to enact their personal desires, frustrations, and hopes. Forms of resistance must be re-examined, and Blues lyrics must serve as texts to be analyzed.

So, how do we analyze these texts as hidden transcripts of the Blues, and furthermore, the preponderance of blind bluesmen? Kelley offers a panacea, suggesting we revise working-class politics by working from the bottom up, "starting way, way below."[49] And if we learn to listen closely, we may find that seemingly powerless people have various ways of explaining their world.[50] First, we must locate the public transcript of a society. Both the dominant and subordinate enact public transcripts when in dialogue with one another. The public transcript is the relationship between the dominant and subordinate that represents the encounter of the public transcript of the dominant with the *public* transcript of the subordinate. One example of an exchange of public transcripts may be a front entrance to a movie theater declaring "whites only" and the subsequent response of an African American's decision to enter the rear of the building. The public transcript is most often a formal dialogue between the "dominant and subordinate in which the subordinate acknowledges his place" in the social hierarchy.[51] Yet, on the way through the alley to the rear of the theater, black patrons often remarked on such racist treatment with anger, sadness, or satire. Here is where you encounter the hidden transcript.

Notes

1. I will use the term Blues or Country Blues to designate the acoustic musical form from the amplified, Electric Blues, as well as the more jazz-assembled classic or Vaudeville Blues. The Classic Blues is dominated by female singers with jazz accompaniment. The Country Blues was performed by nearly all males, save for some exceptions of dirty, or barrelhouse blues musicians like Lucille Bogan. The Country Blues, or Blues, was acoustic and often consisted of traditional black folk songs earning the title Downhome Blues. The Electric Blues came after the Second World War. Going electric presented the ability for musicians to manipulate music like never before. Whereas the Country Blues is an acoustic performance, usually with a stringed instrument, guitar or harmonica, and a singer. The latter of these may change, but the Country Blues has always been acoustic. Geographically, the Country Blues does not mean music from the deep south, but simply

music from rural cultures. These forms of music are also often individual, guitar-driven and acoustic. Therefore, my use of the Blues represents acoustic, rural music with guitar accompaniment, rather than the female vocal based blues exemplified by Bessie Smith.

2. Langston Hughes. The Best of Simple (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), viii.

3. Jeff Todd Titan, Early Downhome Blues: A Musical and Cultural Analysis (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), xvi-xvii.

4. Women in the Classic Blues form also employed subtle forms of resistance. In Tera Hunter's To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), she states that the "social space created by African-American women became a domain where they could wield power in their own right," 85. Also refer to Hazel Carby, "It Jus Be's Dat Way Sometime: The Sexual Politics of Women's Blues." Radical America. Vol. 20, No., 4, (1986), and Angela Davis. Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude 'Ma' Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday (New York: Vintage, 1999), that charts a history of classic blues women and protest. Daphne Duval Harrison, Black Pearls: Blues Queens of the 1920s (New Brunswick, N. J., Rutgers University Press, 1988), and Danette Marie Pugh-Patton, "Images and Lyrics: Representations of African American Women in Blues Lyrics Written by Black Women." PhD diss. California State University, San Bernardino, (2007), have used a textual analysis to their lyrics, which may also be read as hidden transcripts.

5. James C. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) and Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

6. Ben Sidran. Black Talk (New York: Da Capo, 1971), xvii.

7. Shana Redmond. Anthem: Social Movements and the Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 1.

8. Redmond presents ideas of interdisciplinary and tools of ethnomusicology, textual analysis commonplace within cultural studies, the literature of diaspora, and social movement theory. She offers a book that centers music "because it creates collective engagement in performance and contributes to a dense black performance history that continually configures black citizenship through shared ambitions," ibid.

9. Robin D. G. Kelley, Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class (New York: Free Press, 1996), 4

10. William Ferris, "Blues Roots and Development." The Black Perspective in Music, Vol. 2, No. 2 (1974). 124.

11. Lizabeth Cohen, Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919 – 1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 147 – 148.

12. George Lipsitz, Dangerous Crossroads: Popular Music, Postmodernism and the Poetics of Place (New York: Verso, 1994), 3.

13. Rowden, The Songs of Blind Folk, 11.

14. The first texts that addressed Blues music in a social context were Samuel Charters' Country Blues, Paul Oliver's Blues Fell this Morning, Lawrence Levine's Black Culture and Black Consciousness, and R. A. Lawson's Jim Crow's Counterculture. Seminal books on the Blues by Oliver and Charters offer fascinating narratives, but only

touch on themes of race and disability, while focusing on the history of the genre and its musicians. Levine, though, perceived the Blues as a confluence of commercial and folk, religious and secular music, with African American thoughts and values. More recently, Lawson argues for the idea of Blues music as a form of protest and counterculture.

15. Luigi Monge. "The Language of Blind Lemon: The Covert Theme of Blindness," Black Music Research Journal, Vol. 20, No., 1, (Spring 2000), 74.

16. Joseph Witek, "Blindness as a Rhetorical Trope in Blues Discourse," Black Music Research Journal, Vol. 8, No., 2, (Autumn 1988), 39.

17. Witek, "Blindness as a Rhetorical Trope," is an early look at the theme of blindness in the Blues and notes the rhetorical trope of "otherness" that can be applied to Luigi Monge's "The Language of Blind Lemon: The Covert Theme of Blindness," Black Music Research Journal, Vol. 20, No., 1 (Spring 2000) expansive analysis of blindness and blackness. Monge also considers the role of lyrics and visual references in Blind Blues musicians. Chris Bell, "Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal," The Disability Studies Reader. 2nd Edition. Ed. Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2006) and Blackness and Disability: Critical Examinations and Cultural Interventions, Ed. Christopher Bell (East Lansing: University of Michigan State University Press, 2011), asserts "normality" as whiteness and merges blackness with disability as a "triple consciousness," and argues for a race and disability analysis," 379. Finally, Dea Boster. African American Slavery and Disability: Bodies, Property, and Power in the Antebellum South, 1800 - 1860 (New York: Routledge, 2013), and Terry Rowden, The Songs of Blind Folk: African American Musicians and the Cultures of Blindness (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2009), charts the history of both blindness and blackness in U.S. society up to the Country Blues music era noting stereotypes of disability and blackness, and the response of some dissident groups. Boster believes that some slaves used disability, and their social constructs to their advantage, either to get out of work, resist violence, or "feign" their impairment, 298. Rowden "the stories of blind and visually impaired African American musicians have mirrored the changes in America's image of African American and the social possibilities of the black community," 1. Rowden charts the three major stereotypes of the blind "bard," the blind beggar, the blind genius, and sensory compensation, and acknowledges no role has been more strongly linked to blindness as music, 11.

18. Tobin Siebers, "Disability and the Theory of Complex Embodiment - For Identity Politics in a New Register," The Disability Studies Reader, Edited by Lennard J. Davis (New York: Routledge, 2010). Siebers argues that by claiming disability as a positive identity, individuals who identify positively with their disability status lead more productive and happier lives. This is similar to minority identity politics. If we think of disability as ability, or complex embodiments, it changes the meaning and usage of ability itself. Disability is not a physical or pathological condition, but a social location complexly modified. Identities, narratives, and experiences based on disability have the status of theory because they represent locations and forms of embodiment from which the dominant ideologies of society become visible and open to criticism. "Identity is not merely that which is given to an individual or group, but is also a way of inhabiting,

interpreting, and working through, both collectively and individually, an objective social location and group history," 272-273. History shows us that those in power have the ability, or authority, to manipulate the same oppressive structures depending upon the same prejudicial representations, for the exclusion of different groups. This can be seen most predominantly in segregation and Jim Crow. Minority identity and complex embodiment allowed people in marginal social positions to theorize and criticize society differently from those in dominant social locations.

19. Tobin Siebers, "Disability and the Theory of Complex Embodiment - For Identity Politics in a New Register," The Disability Studies Reader, Edited by Lennard J. Davis. New York: Routledge, 2010, 321, 323-333.

20. Robin D. G. Kelley, Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination (Boston: Beacon Press, 2003), x.

21. Siebers, "Disability as Masquerade," 5.

22. Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction (New York: Vintage, 1990), 95-96.

23. Scott, Domination and the Arts of Resistance, 136.

24. Houston A. Baker, Jr. Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature: A Vernacular Theory (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 3 - 4.

25. Scott, Weapons of the Weak, 273.

26. John Greenway, American Folksongs of Protest (New York: Octagon Books, 1971), 10, 240.

27. Lawson, Jim Crow's Counterculture: The Blues and Black Southerners (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), xi.

28. Ibid, 198.

29. William Edward Burghardt Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (New York: Dover, 1994), 2.

30. Lawson, Jim Crow's Counterculture, 17.

31. Paul Gilroy, The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 73.

32. Tyina L. Steptoe, Houston Bound: Culture and Color in a Jim Crow City (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 10 - 11.

33. Lawson. Jim Crow's Counterculture, xi.

34. Scott, Domination and the Arts, 183.

35. Lennard J. Davis. Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body (New York: Verso, 1995), 4-5.

36. Ibid, 2.

37. Scott, Domination and the Arts, xi.

38. Scott, Weapons of the Weak, 29.

39. Ibid, 350.

40. Linda Martin Alcoff, Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 42.

41. Siebers. "Disability and the Theory of Complex Embodiment - For Identity Politics in a New Register." 1.

42. Ibid.

43. Danette Marie Pugh-Patton, "Images and Lyrics: Representations of African American Women in Blues Lyrics Written by Black Women." PhD diss. California State University, San Bernardino, 2007.

44. Oliver, Blues Fell This Morning, 5.

45. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk, 84.

46. Litwack, Trouble in Mind, 140, 165. For a more nuanced explanation of black "peonage" refer to Pete Daniel, The Shadow of Slavery: Peonage in the South, 1901-1969 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1972).

47. Paul R. D. Lawrie, Forging a Laboring Race: The African American Worker in the Progressive Imagination (New York: New York University Press, 2016), charts how race management and how race and labor informed the political economy of fit and unfit bodies. Thus, the black body became both a category of analysis and policy makers turned to Taylorism to define the difference between fit and unfit bodies, and skilled and unskilled labor.

48. Colin Gordon, quoted in Scott, Weapons of the Weak, epigraph.

49. Kelley, Race Rebels, 4.

50. Lipsitz, Dangerous Crossroads, 181.

51. Scott, Domination and the Arts, 13.

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From #Hashtags to the Streets: The Rising Tide of African Protests and the Quest for Leadership Accountability

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Abstract. Hashtag-driven protests, such as Nigeria's #EndBadGovernance, Kenya's #EndFinanceBill, and Uganda's #UgandaParliamentExhibition, signal a renewed continent-wide surge of civic activism. Youth formations, exemplified by Y'en a Marre, Balai Citoyen, and La Lucha, appear to herald an "African Spring," yet mass action in Africa is not novel. Between 1989 and 1994, thirty-five African states moved away from one-party system of politics and governance amid strikes against dictatorship and austerity. What distinguishes the current wave of protests is its viral amplification in which social-media networks rapidly convert grievance into global visibility while reducing engagement to theatrical, instinctive reactions. Drawing on recent Nigerian and Kenyan movements, this article contends that the celebrated "collective consciousness" is largely ephemeral, and that despite initial victories, hashtag uprisings rarely translate into durable institutional reform because they do not fundamentally re-educate culturally entrenched modes of leadership. True transformation, therefore, requires a "Revolution of Thought" that generates an uncompromising interrogation of the cultural transmission of bad governance that extends beyond coloniality discourses to challenge inherited political imaginaries. Without such an intellectual groundwork, protest movements merely replicate the unfulfilled promises of earlier revolutions, becoming fleeting spectacles rather than catalysts for accountable states. Therefore, while commendable for raising awareness, these protests are ultimately insufficient for fostering meaningful structural change unless they consciously re-educate instinctive emotional responses towards a more profound and strategic action.

Keywords: Revolution of thought, pseudo technique of humility, spaces of engagement, superficiality of engagement, cultural transmission

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Introduction

Recent protests in Nigeria under the hashtag, #EndBadGovernance, along with the #EndFinanceBill movement in Kenya and #UgandaParliamentExhibition in Uganda, all highlight what has been summed up as the increasing collective consciousness among citizens across Africa (Honwana, 2014; Chiamogu et al. 2021). This surge in popular protest movements is not isolated; it reflects a broader trend visible in countries such as Zimbabwe, Sudan, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Egypt, and Tunisia (Kiwuwa, 2019). A significant aspect of these protests is the central role played by youth movements, including Y'en a Marre (Fed Up) in Senegal, Balai Citoyen (The Civic Broom) in Burkina Faso, and La Lucha (The Struggle) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, among others (Toure, 2023). Over the past decade, these mass nonviolent uprisings in Africa have often resulted in the overthrow of dictatorships (Marks, 2019). Notably, Africa has seen the emergence of twenty-five new nonviolent mass movements, nearly twice the number in Asia, which has witnessed sixteen such movements (Marks, 2019).

These protests have led some analysts to describe the situation as an emerging "African Spring" (Lawal, 2024). However, the notion that the protests are indicative of an African Spring seems far-fetched. While there has been a noticeable spike in protests recently, Africa has a long history of mass street protests (Arnould & Vervaeke, 2016). Since gaining independence, political protests and economic strikes have been regular occurrences, often driven by discontent over one-party governance, dictatorships, worsening economic conditions, and the harsh austerity measures associated with structural adjustment programs (SAP) often imposed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on most African countries as a condition to grant them loans. While I do not, in any stretch of the imagination, attribute the democratic shifts across the continent to protest movements, the importance of their presence cannot go unacknowledged since they occurred frequently during the late 1980s and 1990s. It is noteworthy that during that period, between 1989 and 1994, thirty-five countries transitioned from one-party rule to multi-party elections, resulting in leadership changes in eighteen countries—an impressive feat that could be credited to protest movements, though I do not – compared to the absence of such changes prior to 1990, with the exceptions of South Africa and Mauritius (Arnould & Vervaeke, 2016).

Nevertheless, the recent protest movements, bolstered by social media, present a complex mix of hope – both positive and negative. They raise questions about the potential outcomes and implications for real change, particularly given Africa's long history of protest movements. Indeed, it is crucial to explore what these contemporary movements can achieve that previous protests could not, especially in terms of shifting the attitudes of African ruling elites who have

been delinquent in their governance. It is reasonable to question whether what is perceived as a conscious awakening is actually driven by the sheer number of individuals tweeting and blogging about these issues, thereby creating a theatricalized media presence that fuels rolling news coverage. Suffice it to say that while each perception and action can provoke significant responses from protest movements, these responses typically occur instinctively and rapidly, without conscious awareness.

To harness the full potential of these movements, it is essential to educate our instincts, emotions, and desires to act in ways that are genuinely valuable. The challenge lies in recognizing that our instinctive emotional responses were shaped by evolutionary processes suited to the circumstances of hunting and gathering – a stark contrast to the complexities of contemporary life. These protest movements must re-educate these instinctive responses to ensure they are appropriate and constructive in the context of demanding change in African leadership in the 21st century.

Thus, while these protests are commendable, I argue that they are ultimately insufficient for fostering meaningful change in Africa, in the sense that the protests can amount to instinctual reactions that fail to leverage the extensive intelligence and wisdom necessary for addressing deeper, systemic issues. Although the protests can mobilize significant public attention and create a sense of urgency, they potentially suffer from the "superficiality of engagement." Therefore, while they address specific, immediate concerns, they frequently lack a deeper understanding of, or sustained commitment to, the underlying causes (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

For real change to occur in Africa, genuine transformation is required—a revolution that goes beyond mere government's superficial reactions to encompass a fundamental Revolution of Thought. This revolution must interrogate the very foundations of existence, challenging individuals' perceptions of themselves and their societies, as well as the cultural, political, and economic structures that shape prevailing structures. Such a transformation is essential to provoke accountability[1] among leaders, akin to at least, the respectable strata of Enlightenment thought, which the historian, Jonathan Israel, refers to as the "Radical Enlightenment." There is no doubt that critical scholars have long advocated for the revitalization of consciousness but often than not, they do so from the perspective of coloniality. However, the challenges confronting African societies, and their governance today, exceed beyond the mere malaise discourse of coloniality (Wa Thiong'o, 1998; Mignolo, 2007). Leadership in Africa does not exist in a cultural vacuum; it is deeply intertwined with the cultural foundations of its society. It is deeply rooted in prevailing modes of thought, which are culturally transmitted from one ineffective leader to another.

Consequently, Africa stands in need of a revolution in thought—one that is distinct yet outside the discourse of the decoloniality of the mind. However, I must emphasize that I do not seek to romanticize the notion of revolution, nor do I advocate for revolutions that lead to chaos and upheaval. However, I contend that a revolution is a necessary catalyst for political and economic changes. It is crucial for these protests to evolve beyond mere ephemeral events; they must be recognized as significant occurrences that deserve more than a fleeting mention in history. Without this transformation, we risk relegating these movements to the status of minor footnotes, rather than acknowledging their potential to shape the future.

In the following discussion, I examine the notion of the so-called growing consciousness, specifically in the context of protest movements in Nigeria and Kenya, and assess the extent to which this development enables protests within the broader struggle for systemic change. In doing so, I argue that this form of consciousness is often more ephemeral than substantive, ultimately failing to sustain the identity and momentum of protest waves over time. To illustrate this argument, I draw on recent hashtag-driven movements, such as #EndBadGovernance in Nigeria and #EndFinanceBill in Kenya, demonstrating how these protests, despite their digital reach and initial impact, struggle to translate into long-term structural transformation. I then expand the discussion by engaging with the theoretical concept of a revolution in thought, highlighting the urgent need to confront the entrenched structural problem of bad governance – a culture that has been historically inherited and perpetuated through successive administrations.

At this critical juncture, it is essential to address the cultural transmission of governance failures, which have been passed from one government to another, making it increasingly difficult for protest movements to achieve genuine transformation or exert meaningful influence on state power in both countries. Without a deeper intellectual and strategic foundation, protests risk remaining transient expressions of dissent rather than catalysts for lasting change. In addition, I will juxtapose the current situation of protests across Africa with the weaknesses and failures of past revolutions, such as those observed in France, as described by Marx (Marx, 1907). By drawing these comparisons, I aim to highlight the complexities and challenges that contemporary movements face in their quest for substantial change.

The Case of Kenya: The #EndFinanceBill Protests

Nigeria and Kenya are two nations that, apart from their shared experience of European colonial violence, differ significantly in political, historical, and

geographical contexts. But in recent times, both countries have exhibited striking similarities, particularly in their democratic structures – despite Nigeria operating as a presidential democracy and Kenya as a parliamentary democracy. They also share political landscapes marked by entrenched power structures, a legacy of corruption, and fragile institutional oversight. In addition, the protest movements in these countries are strikingly similar in composition, largely dominated by young people unified by both material and immaterial concerns.

Their grievances revolve around state repression, manifested through police brutality and, in some cases, military violence. Additionally, they demand accountable governance and an end to corruption while protesting economic hardship. These factors have triggered repeated waves of civic mobilization, where citizens strive to hold their leaders accountable. Consequently, recent waves of protests in Nigeria and Kenya serve as compelling case studies for re-evaluating the prevailing paradigm of protest movements across African states, particularly their effectiveness in achieving systemic change.

Kenya, in particular, has a long-standing history of political protest, dating back to the era of one-party rule and beyond (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024). More recently, Kenya's Constitution has bolstered the right-to-protest movement, framing it as an inalienable right. Article 37 states, "Every person has the right, peaceably and unarmed, to assemble, to demonstrate, to picket, and to present petitions to public authorities" (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024). However, this legal provision does not guaranteed freedom from repression. Successive governments have frequently criminalized demonstrations, deploying security forces – at times using live ammunition—to suppress dissent (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024). However, because protests are constitutionally protected, they do act as a persistent thorn in the side of a government that refuses to heed popular demands and increasingly resorts to authoritarian tactics.

This dynamic was vividly illustrated during the 2024 protests against Kenya's controversial Finance Bill. Initially aimed at increasing government revenue and reducing external borrowing, the bill was widely perceived as exacerbating economic inequality and corruption, since it imposed taxes on essential goods such as bread, diapers, and smartphones (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data, 2024; henceforth, ACLED). What began as opposition to the bill quickly evolved into a broader movement under the hashtag #EndFinanceBill (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024), culminating in mass demonstrations across Nairobi and other regions. A pivotal moment occurred on 25 June 2024, when demonstrators stormed the Parliament Building, forcing lawmakers into hiding and setting parts of the structure ablaze (Lawal, 2024).

The protests were organic and decentralized, which made them difficult to suppress but also rendered violence almost inevitable. Social media played a crucial role in mobilizing participants, with "Generation Z" leading the movement (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024). The nonpartisan nature of the protests further broadened their appeal (ACLED, 2024), as demonstrators united against the government's proposed tax hikes (ACLED, 2024). President William Ruto responded by dismissing nearly his entire cabinet and announcing that he would not sign the Finance Bill (Lawal, 2024). He also initiated consultations to form a "broad-based government" and pledged to cut public spending and eliminate redundant state enterprises (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024). However, these concessions failed to quell the protests. Demonstrators continued to demand Ruto's resignation, linking him to the broader issue of systemic corruption.

Thus, the #EndFinanceBill protests did not arise in a vacuum, but rather the byproduct of the culmination of long-standing public frustration and alienation. While the movement momentarily forced the government to respond, it ultimately reflects a broader pattern of resistance shaped by government policies yet achieving only limited change. Ultimately, these protests underscore a recurring challenge in African political movements – they lack the catalyst for lasting reform and remain cyclical reactions to elite bargains, perpetuating the very structures they seek to dismantle. While the movement provoked immediate reactions, prompting President Ruto to implement certain changes, it also exposed contradictions in Ruto's leadership. As a presidential candidate, Ruto had positioned himself as a reformist, seemingly more receptive to dialogue with civil society than his predecessor. However, his failure to fulfil promises of reform led to anti-government contestation.

A clear example of this contradiction also was Ruto's campaign pledge to end police brutality and strengthen oversight. Yet, since assuming office in late 2022, and despite efforts by Kenyan prosecutors to address such issues (Blanchard, 2024), police abuses and extrajudicial killings (EJKs) have persisted. His inability to dismantle systemic police violence reflects a deeper structural issue. Ruto's administration not only sanctioned the use of excessive force against citizens but also defended police actions when confronted with accusations of atrocities, dismissing protesting youth as criminals guilty of treason (Blanchard, 2024). Further reinforcing this trend, Ruto deployed the Kenyan military into the streets of Nairobi, Kenya's capital, and across the country to suppress the anti-tax protest movement under the guise of restoring law and order (Shilaho & Monyae, 2024).

The #EndFinanceBill protest garnered significant attention due to its scale and symbolic weight, yet it fits within a broader trend of increasing demonstra-

tions across Kenya. From January 1st to September 15th, 2023, ACLED (2023) recorded over 840 demonstrations nationwide, with security forces intervening in 26% of cases – compared to only 15% in 2022. More alarmingly, police intervention has become increasingly lethal, as evidenced by opposition-led demonstrations organized by the Azimio la Umoja (Resolution for Unity) One Kenya Coalition Party, led by former Prime Minister and opposition leader, Raila Odinga. These protests resulted in at least 35 deaths (ACLED, 2023). The U.S. State Department's 2023 human rights report identifies security force abuses – including torture, unlawful killings, and enforced disappearances – as among Kenya's most pressing human rights violations. It highlights "numerous reports that the government or its agents committed arbitrary or unlawful killings... particularly of anti-government demonstrators in protests that took place between March and July" (Blanchard, 2024, p. 8).

Of course, highlighting all these does not necessarily mean that protest movements' shortcomings do not generate impacts in certain ways. As Edalina Sanches (2022) argues, even when movements fail to achieve their immediate goals, they can generate significant transformations – particularly by reshaping participants' perceptions of their political role and agency. This shift in consciousness is particularly relevant in autocratic settings, where non-material sources of change can influence broader political dynamics. However, such victories are largely symbolic, as was the case with Kenya's #EndFinanceBill protest, and they rarely translate into substantive structural change.

The Kenyan government's response to the #EndFinanceBill protests exemplifies this pattern. Any concessions gained from the Ruto administration were short-lived, as evidenced by renewed protests in December 2024. Groups of young demonstrators marched through downtown Nairobi, staging sit-ins and holding placards denouncing abductions and illegal detentions – only to be met with police on horseback and clouds of tear gas (Lawal, 2024). The cyclical nature of protest movements in Kenya is not unique. Nigeria presents a similar case, with movements struggling to achieve sustained impact. Two prominent examples illustrate this dynamic: the #EndSARS movement against police brutality and the #EndBadGovernance protests. Though distinct, both reflect deep-seated public frustration and the persistent failure of movements to produce meaningful change.

Nigeria: The #EndBadGovernance and #EndSARS Movements

Similar to Kenya, Nigeria has witnessed persistent protest movements that reflect deep-seated public frustration. The #EndBadGovernance protests, which took place from 1–10 August 2024 (Uthman, 2024), were driven by widespread

economic hardship. Key grievances included drastic economic policies such as the removal of fuel subsidies, the devaluation of the local currency through unpegging, hyperinflation, and rising unemployment (Hassan et al., 2024; Ewang, 2024). Protesters united under the banner of #EndBadGovernance, blaming the government for their deteriorating economic conditions.

The movement united citizens across Nigeria, spanning multiple states and engaging various civil society organizations. It brought together a diverse coalition of activist groups and everyday Nigerians, including the Take It Back Movement, Nigerians Against Hunger, Initiative for Change, Human Rights Co-Advocacy for Change, Students for Change, and Youths Against Tyranny (Amnesty International, 2024, p. 8). At its core, the movement was driven by a shared sense of purposive action towards a common goal: addressing the severe material hardship that many blamed on the Nigerian President Bola Tinubu. Since assuming office in 2023, President Tinubu's administration had implemented a series of economic policies that led to widespread suffering, pushing millions to the brink of starvation.

A post by Olumide Adesina on X (formerly Twitter), one of the protest's participants, encapsulated the widespread sentiment behind the movement: "Hunger, not politics, mainly brought people out. High food inflation is no r especter of tribe, culture, or religion" (2024; Ihuoma, 2025, p. 94). Beyond immediate grievances over economic hardship, #EndBadGovernance also called for systemic reforms and greater government accountability (Hassan, Abalaka, and Ajiteru, 2024; Ihuoma, 2025). Despite government assurances to mitigate the crisis, the reality for most Nigerians remained dire (Amnesty International, 2024). Even when the government distributed food provisions, referred to as palliatives, corruption and mismanagement at different levels of governance – from federal to state, local government chairpersons, and councilors – meant that aid often failed to reach those who needed it most (Amnesty International, 2024).

Faced with worsening conditions, thousands, particularly unemployed youths who felt disenfranchised, mobilized both online and offline to amplify their demands for reform (Tella, 2024). However, as with past movements, the state swiftly deployed various tactics to suppress dissent. Traditional and religious leaders were co-opted, directly and indirectly, to discourage participation. Authorities also obtained several ex parte court orders to restrict access to protest venues, particularly in key urban centers such as Lagos and Abuja (Amnesty International, 2024). Although the protests proceeded, the state responded with severe repercussions.

Security agencies were pre-emptively deployed, roadblocks were erected, and protestors faced violence (Uthman, 2024). Despite warnings, many defied

the state's directives, both physically and through social media, only to be met with brutal crackdowns (Ihuoma, 2025). Protestors, and even bystanders, fell victim to arbitrary arrests by the police and operatives of the Department of State Services (DSS), Nigeria's secret police (Amnesty International, 2024). The violence peaked during which indiscriminate live ammunition was fired by security forces that led to approximately 30 fatalities nationwide (Uthman, 2024). These casualties, entirely preventable, underscored the government's heavy-handed approach to suppressing dissent.

Ultimately, the protests lost momentum, failing to achieve real policy changes or address the fundamental issues of economic hardship (Tella, 2024). The pattern repeated itself: initial enthusiasm, digital uproar, mass mobilization, and eventual dissipation, leaving underlying grievances unresolved. While a heightened sense of community consciousness emerged, as Ihuoma (2025) notes, social media activism primarily galvanized public awareness without securing tangible change. X functioned as a virtual town hall, where Nigerians at home and in the diaspora voiced their frustrations and coordinated offline protests under the banner of #EndBadGovernance. Yet, in the end, it amounted to a collective political motionlessness that failed to produce meaningful reform.

In some ways, the outcome aligns with Ake's observation that if one were to interpret such movements from his perspective, the commotion itself becomes the endpoint, and the failure to effect tangible change is secondary. However, I disagree with this view. While political consciousness and imagination were undeniably fostered (Branch and Mampilly, 2015, pp. 3–4), the effectiveness of protest movements must be judged by their capacity to produce lasting change. Without such impact, these movements become cyclical and paradoxical efforts of dialogues of frustration that ultimately lead to public apathy.

Though #EndBadGovernance attracted significant international and diaspora attention, which momentarily pressured the Nigerian government, it failed to secure policy changes that could alleviate economic suffering. As with previous protest movements, initial enthusiasm gave way to state suppression, and the protests lost momentum without achieving meaningful policy change (Tella, 2024). What emerged were transient concessions from the government, designed to placate protesters while arrests and casualties mounted in the background. The protest movement and the state's response followed a familiar script, one that continues to play out repeatedly in Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

In fact, the #EndBadGovernance follows as familiar pattern embodied in the #EndSARS movement which galvanized similar traction. Emerging in 2017, #EndSARS gained widespread attention in October 2020 after a viral video depicting police brutality circulated online. It quickly became a power-

ful platform for young Nigerians to voice their grievances against the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a police unit notorious for extrajudicial activities involving extortion, harassment, torture, unlawful arrests, and other human rights abuses (Ogundipe, 2017; Efenji, 2018). In response, the Nigerian government announced SARS's dissolution on 11 October 2020 and launched inquiries into police misconduct (Ayitogo, 2020; Eniayejuni, 2023). However, this action proved largely symbolic. Reports indicate that extrajudicial killings and police abuses persist, revealing the state's inability – or unwillingness – to implement real reform. The entrenched political culture of impunity ensures that structural issues remain unaddressed, exemplifying this deep-seated culture of impunity and lack of accountability.

At best, what is often shown as contrition in the face of the protest movement is nothing more than a demonstration of a "pseudo technique of humility." By "pseudo technique of humility" I mean the strategic display of contrived modesty and apparent responsiveness by the political leaders, designed to appease and disarm protest movements without enacting substantive systemic change. This is a technique that often involves rhetorical concessions, symbolic gestures, and performative acts of contrition that create the illusion of engagement while leaving the entrenched power structures and policies intact. It is an artifice aimed at neutralizing dissent rather than genuinely addressing the root causes of social and political grievances.

As is the case in Nigeria and Kenya, many African governments have perfected the use of this pseudo-technique of humility as a political survival mechanism. When faced with mass protests, strikes, or civil unrest, they often resort to tactics that feign concern, project a willingness to listen, and promise reforms that seldom materialize. This technique serves double duty: it dissipates immediate public anger while maintaining the status quo.

One of the main ways this technique is implemented is through rhetorical agreements that provide for the appointment of committees, task forces, and commissions of inquiry, exemplified by the Ruto government's "broad-based government" consultations and Nigeria's #EndSars, which often function as instruments of delay rather than vehicles of justice. These bodies provide the illusion of accountability, buy time and gradually sap the momentum of protest movements. The reports of these commissions are often shelved and their recommendations ignored or selectively implemented so as not to disrupt existing power dynamics.

A repeated cycle of events then manifests itself leading to the persistence of misconduct, such as those discussed in these cases from Kenya and Nigeria, which also illustrates and highlights the broader pattern of ineffective protest

movements across Africa. As explored by Sanches (2022) in Popular Protest, Political Opportunities, and Change in Africa and Onodera (2025) in Citizenship Utopias in the Global South, many movements provoke temporary governmental reactions rather than enduring reform. A recurring cycle emerges in which mass demonstrations lead to ephemeral governmental pseudo-humility responses and followed by a return to the status quo. This pattern raises serious concerns about the efficacy of mass mobilization as a catalyst for structural change in these countries and why there is need for a paradigm shift. Therefore, the limitations of protest movements and governmental pseudo-reforms highlight the need for a Revolution of Thought as a means to achieve substantive governance transformation.

Theoretical Lens: Revolution of Thought and the Radical Enlightenment

The concept of a Revolution in Thought, as it is used in this context, refers to a fundamental and transformative shift in intellectual paradigms—one that not only challenges but also reconfigures deeply-entrenched socio-political frameworks. Such revolutions go beyond mere ideological evolution; they represent reconfiguration of modes of thinking, questioning, dismantling, and replacing the old with new perspectives that reshape governance, societal structures, and cultural norms. Hence, unlike incremental reforms that operate within existing governance structures, a revolution in thought necessitates a fundamental re-evaluation of inherited institutional models, power dynamics, and ideological assumptions. Such revolutions transcend mere policy changes and instead alter the foundational principles underpinning governance, societal institutions, and public engagement. This kind of transformation is not a reactionary measure but a proactive intellectual and cultural shift that redefines governance and societal values at their core.

In post-colonial African states such as Nigeria and Kenya, governance remains deeply entrenched in colonial legacies that prioritize hierarchical administration, centralised power, and political patronage over participatory democracy and public accountability (Mamdani, 1996). These inherited structures have facilitated corruption, clientelism, and economic disparities, reinforcing a governance model that privileges elite consolidation of power while marginalizing ordinary citizens. The endurance of such governance patterns has rendered protest movements a necessary but insufficient tool for systemic transformation. Despite widespread mass mobilization efforts such as #EndBadGovernance in Nigeria and #EndFinanceBill in Kenya, these movements have struggled to achieve long-term structural reform due to state repression, strategic co-optation, and the absence of a comprehensive ideological reconfiguration of gover-

nance (Branch & Cheeseman, 2010). Without an intellectual paradigm shift, protest movements remain reactive rather than revolutionary.

The Enlightenment, particularly the current usage here that Jonathan Israel refers to as the Radical Enlightenment, provides a useful framework for analyzing the need for intellectual revolutions in governance. The Radical Enlightenment promoted concepts of secularism, democracy, freedom of thought, and the rejection of hierarchical and arbitrary authority. Unlike the moderate thinkers of the historical Age of Enlightenment who sought gradual reforms, radicals such as Baruch Spinoza and Denis Diderot advocated radical transformations in politics and governance, challenging the power structures embedded at their core (Israel, 2001).

Radical Enlightenment thinkers proposed that governance should be rooted in reason and universal principles of equality and justice, rather than inherited power structures that serve entrenched elites. Spinoza, for example, rejected the divine right of kings and advocated democratic governance that prioritizes individual freedom and rational decision-making (Nadler, 2011). This reflects governance problems in Nigeria and Kenya, where power remains concentrated in postcolonial political structures that prioritize elite interests over democratic accountability. Similarly, Diderot emphasized the role of knowledge and education in dismantling authoritarian regimes, a crucial idea for African nations where civic enlightenment and political education remain underdeveloped (Darnton, 1979). Without a well-informed citizenry, movements against corruption and bad governance struggle to transcend temporary protests and achieve sustainable systemic reform.

In applying the Radical Enlightenment to Nigeria and Kenya, the Revolution in Thought must fundamentally rethink governance structures by dismantling post-colonial systems that prioritize elite consolidation of power, clientelism, and rent-seeking behaviors. Such mode of thoughts stands in stark contrast to the inherited colonial governance frameworks in Nigeria and Kenya, where state institutions continue to operate within hierarchical and opaque structures. The post-colonial state, rather than dismantling these inherited power dynamics, has largely maintained them, reinforcing exclusionary political economies (Mamdani, 1996). The challenge, therefore, is not merely advocating for reform within existing systems but rather reimagining governance through a transformation of thought—one that aligns with the principles of intellectual emancipation of culture, society, and government institutions trapped in the cycles of inherited negative processes.

Arguably, it is the case that the system that produces leaders, for example in Nigeria and Kenya (of which the same could be said of many other African

states), has been soiled inherited governance frameworks designed to serve colonial administrators, structures that have since been appropriated by domestic elites to sustain economic and political dominance (Mamdani, 1996). This is evident in the bureaucratic inefficiencies, endemic corruption, and state violence that characterize both Nigeria and Kenya's governance models. The Revolutionary Thought model suggests that, rather than reforming these flawed systems from within, it is necessary to reimagine governance through an entirely new intellectual framework that prioritizes public interest over elite preservation.

A compelling example of how a revolution in thought can lead to substantive transformation is evident in the way the technological revolution—particularly the rise of social media—has fundamentally revolutionized protest movements. The viral nature of hashtags and the ability to transcend geographical barriers have revolutionized activism, enabling movements to coordinate with unprecedented speed and efficiency. This has significantly reduced the lag between the occurrence of events and public awareness, allowing protests to gain traction in real-time. This digital revolution has given rise to a new era of activism, facilitating the coordination of protest movements across vast distances.

Under the new climate of protest movement, the substantive transformation brought about by this revolution lies in its ability to reshape the nature of protest itself. While I allude to the revolutionization of digital activism by technology, this discussion does not necessarily address its effectiveness in driving institutional reform or altering government behavior, which is a separate issue. What is important is the profound impact of digital activism in redefining the landscape of resistance, organization, and public discourse.

From a theoretical standpoint, this development aligns with Michel Foucault's (1980) notion of power and resistance. Traditional forms of power – whether autocratic or democratic – are sustained through discourse and institutional mechanisms, which define what is deemed acceptable governance. However, the digital activism revolution, much like the Radical Enlightenment, disrupts these entrenched structures by creating alternative spaces where knowledge and power can be contested. In the case of #EndBadGovernance and #EndFinanceBill, digital platforms function as counter-public spheres that challenge the state's monopolization of discourse, offering a decentralized and democratic mode of engagement where authority can be scrutinized in real time (Habermas, 1989).

In this context, I advocate for a new framework of revolutionary thought, much like the way the revolutionization of digital activism has transformed protest movements. Just as digital activism has expanded the scope of resistance, a deeper intellectual shift is necessary to achieve substantive change – one that

transcends mere street protests, which, while powerful, remain incapable of dismantling entrenched ruling elites. Even within pseudo-democratic governance structures, where leaders remain unaccountable to their citizens, meaningful transformation demands a more sustained and strategic approach.

The future of governance reform in Nigeria and Kenya, therefore, hinges on the ability of these movements to maintain intellectual and political pressure beyond the immediate cycles of resistance. The revolution in thought – akin to the Radical Enlightenment – represents a crucial step towards transformative change. Societies must reject inherited power structures as immutable and instead cultivate a consciousness that challenges their legitimacy. Movements, such as #EndSARS in Nigeria and #EndFinanceBill in Kenya, have undoubtedly mobilized thousands against injustice. However, they have been systematically undermined by entrenched governance structures that resist substantive reform. These movements exemplify the paradox of protest movements in many post-colonial African states: they generate widespread activism, yet transient political consciousness, and, therefore, struggle to translate mobilization into structural change.

In addition, the fragmentation of protest movements makes it impossible to retain their cohesion beyond immediate grievances. For instance, as discussed above in the Nigeria's protest movements of #EndSARS and Kenya's #EndFinanceBill, while they successfully unified diverse segments of society, they lacked the means (and are unable) to develop a structured ideological foundation for long-term governance change. In fact, the absence of clear leadership and divergent interests among activists does mean that these movements inevitably end in fragmentation. As such, unlike historical revolutions that produced structured political alternatives (e.g., the French and American Revolutions), contemporary African protests frequently dissolve without creating enduring political organizations capable of institutionalizing change (Skocpol, 1979).

Numerous cases of protest movements as in Nigeria, for instance, tend to be around issues of specific injustices without articulating a radical vision for governance transformation. In which case, without an intellectual shift – akin to the Radical Enlightenment – the underlying governance structures remain unchallenged. The movements lack an embedded political education framework that can produce a sustained ideological challenge to the state. Consequently, they are vulnerable to co-optation, repression, or gradual dissipation. Effective governance transformation requires, not just mass mobilization, but a comprehensive epistemological rethinking of power, governance, and democracy (Mamdani, 1996).

These limitations observed of protest movements underscore the need for a Revolution in Thought, one that transcends episodic activism and instils a

systemic reconfiguration of governance principles. Without an intellectual revolution, movements will continue to risk being neutralized by the pseudo technique of humility of their governments to placate dissent without enacting meaningful reforms. To this end, a radical shift in governance thought is essential to converting civic unrest into substantive institutional transformation.

The Broader Context: Protest Movements and Structural Weaknesses

Tilly (1986, p. 392) is correct in stating that social movements challenge the state through public demonstrations and strikes, with the aim of forcing negotiations with authorities on behalf of constituents. However, this is only half the truth because the success of such efforts depends largely on the cultural context. In societies where governance is characterized by transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership, protests may align with societal expectations and achieve some degree of success. As the platform, FreeBalance (2020), aptly states, "culture plays an important role in the governance of an organization," highlighting the influence of governance culture on state behavior and the potential impact of protest movements.

Nigeria and Kenya, however, have inherited dominant colonial governance structures that inhibit effective participatory political cultures. Unlike the West, where democratic norms are deeply embedded, these inherited systems struggle to facilitate meaningful citizen engagement as a mechanism for change through protest. As a result, cultural change may be a more significant precursor to political transformation than protest movements alone. Indeed, the weaker a nation's institutional capacity to achieve modern political action, the greater the role of evolving societal values in legitimizing protest participation (Lee, 1992, p. 240).

Decades ago, Harry Eckstein analyzed how culture shapes state institutions and governance practices. He argued that a lack of congruence between political culture and institutional structures contributes to instability and democratic breakdown (Eckstein, 1961). In Nigeria and Kenya, this incongruence between present political culture and protest movements fosters cynicism, reinforcing conditions that fail to challenge elite political predispositions. Without addressing these cultural and structural impediments, protest movements risk remaining transient expressions of public discontent rather than vehicles for fundamental change.

Addressing systemic institutions requires more than merely mobilizing against entrenched power structures; it necessitates a fundamental shift in societal thought that redefines political relations between elites and citizens. Such a transformation demands a revolution in perspective to dismantle the deeply rooted systems that perpetuate inequality and exclusion. Rather than relying solely on episodic demonstrations, a deeper intellectual transformation – one

informed by historical experiences of both failed and successful movements – is essential. Insights from Karl Marx's critique of revolutionary failures and the European Enlightenment's cultural and political evolution illustrate how sustainable change often emerges from ideological shifts rather than sporadic uprisings.

In addition, a radical evolution in thought is necessary to reshape social values and alter political orientations fundamentally. Transitional societies such as Nigeria and Kenya, entangled in dominant colonial systems and Western cultural influences, cannot expect seamless political systems that enable effective citizen participation and systemic reform without radically transforming the system. The challenges facing protest movements in these nations stem, in part, from the persistence of dominant colonial structures, which hinder the emergence of a political culture conducive to transformation. As Aie-Rie Lee (1992) argues, political orientations and behavior are embedded within broader social systems. Thus, societal values play a pivotal role in shaping both political engagement and institutional structures (Lee, 1992, p. 251).

A compelling case study that underscores the importance of cultural transformation is Lee's (1992, p. 251) analysis of South Korea's participatory political orientation. During the period of study, South Korea's entrenched Confucian cultural background, which prioritized hierarchy over individualism, posed significant obstacles to developing a participatory political system. Because cultural traditions reinforced authoritarian values, they inhibited the emergence of a more inclusive political culture. This historical parallel illustrates how, until value change occurs, the persistence of a negative cultural framework – such as the dominant colonial systems in Nigeria and Kenya – will continue to obstruct mass political mobilization and the attainment of modern, effective political action. Value transformation must precede and legitimize protest participation, providing individuals with a compelling rationale for their political engagement.

This discussion underscores the necessity of a paradigm shift – a revolution in thought – drawing lessons from past movements, both unsuccessful, as analyzed by Marx, and transformative, such as the European Enlightenment, which redefined cultural politics. For contemporary protest movements to achieve meaningful change, the concept of a revolution in thought – or Radical Enlightenment – becomes imperative, provoking new modes of critical reflection, or as Baron-Cohen (1989) describes, "thinking about thinking."

Until then, protest movements will likely continue to operate within structural constraints shaped not only by political institutions but also by dominant political discourses and cultural narratives (Lindekilde, 2014, p. 209; Sanches, 2022). The cultural context not only influences the visibility and resonance of

social issues but also determines the "legitimacy of certain actors, identities, and claims" (Giugni, 2011, p. 275; Sanches, 2022, p.9). In this context, echoing the point of view of Sheila Jasanoff in her contribution to Stilgoe et al. (2014), it is now more urgent than ever to revisit ideas about the public. Jasanoff's notion of public, although emerging from a different context, is particularly relevant to understanding institutional structures in Nigeria and Kenya.

This is important to the point that the concept of the public itself is a critical but separate matter—one that, though beyond the immediate scope of this discussion, remains central to the broader discourse on fostering a revolution of thought. The public is often understood as a governed population, categorized through bureaucratic, legal, and statistical measures (Miller, 2005). The state constructs its notion of the public through mechanisms such as census data, policy frameworks, and electoral systems, aiming to manage society through expertise, law, and institutional control. This reflects a top-down epistemology, where knowledge is produced by governmental authorities and experts to define public needs and interests (Jasanoff, 2005).

However, the notion of the public should not be mistaken for a pre-existing, homogeneous entity but rather understood as a fluid and constructed space shaped by "civic epistemologies" (Jasanoff, 2005). In other words, rather than perceiving the public as a static or homogeneous entity, it is imperative to critically evaluate its dynamic nature, shaped by cultural, political and epistemological factors. Jasanoff (2005) defines civic epistemologies as the culturally embedded processes through which societies evaluate and legitimize knowledge. These processes shape public perceptions, inform policymaking, and influence broader discussions on transformative change. In the context of a revolution of thought, recognizing civic epistemologies, therefore, is essential, as different publics validate knowledge in ways shaped by their unique historical, political, and social contexts.

Contemporary scholarship suggests that the public is, in fact, a construct that dynamically evolves in response to sociotechnical controversies and emergent knowledge systems (Callon, Lascoumes, & Barthe, 2009). The public sphere in Kenya and Nigeria, of course, may not align with Western conceptualizations, yet it remains a dynamic and contested space shaped by the interaction between state governance and civic epistemologies. Understanding these culturally specific modes of knowledge production and validation is crucial to producing meaningful sociopolitical change. More so because, genuine political transformation in Nigeria and Kenya requires more than protest movements reacting to systemic oppression. It demands a reconfiguration of societal values and a deep-rooted intellectual shift capable of challenging entrenched struc-

tures. Without such an ideological and cultural revolution, protest movements will continue to be ephemeral events, failing to translate mobilization into enduring political change.

The Need for a Revolution of Thought in African Leadership

Several hypotheses can be proposed to explain why protest movements in Nigeria and Kenya (and more broadly in African nations) frequently mobilize against their governments. These hypotheses have become deeply embedded in the political and social fabric of these nations. The dual-pathway model developed by Van Zomeren et al. (2004) has received considerable scholarly attention, positing that individuals participate in protests for two primary reasons: (i) emotion pathway (or affective pathway) is driven by group-based anger over collective injustices or moral outrage. This pathway highlights how perceptions of injustice fuel protest participation. In addition, (ii) efficacy pathway (instrumental pathway) which is based on perceived group efficacy, meaning individuals engage in collective action when they believe their group can effect change.

In this sense, the role of anger in protest participation has been extensively documented (Goodwin et al., 2001; Van Troost et al., 2018; Sabucedo et al., 2014; Bray et al., 2019). Arguably, other negative emotions – such as fear, disgust, and sadness – also influence mobilization (Ahmed et al., 2020; Benski, 2010; Landmann & Rohmann, 2020; Sanches & Lopes, 2022). Despite these emotional drivers, the pathway hypotheses are insufficient to addressing underlying structural and cultural problems in Nigeria and Kenya that perpetuate cycles of protest and discontent.

To accurately analyze these cultural factors, it is crucial to distinguish between different interpretations of culture to avoid misrepresentation. While movement-framing and cultural resonance play a vital role in the effectiveness of protests (Benford & Snow, 2000; Sanches, 2022), the cultural issue at hand extends beyond symbolic significance. Protest movements strategically employ cultural resources for legitimacy and mobilization, as seen in cultural approaches to framing (Benford, 1993; Gamson, 2004). However, the deeper issue pertains to the culture that shapes societal and political structures, influencing the behavior of the ruling elite.

A pertinent example of this can be drawn from above discussion of Lee's study of South Korea. In the case of Nigeria and Kenya, the focus on protest movements tends to center on expressions of group-based anger and collective grievances, while cultural influences on leadership and governance are often overlooked. As a result, culture is merely treated as a resource for resonance rather than a fundamental determinant of political behavior.

A critical re-evaluation of culture is necessary to address the leadership crisis in Nigeria, Kenya, and many other African nations. Revolution of thought offers a lens through which to reimagine cultural transformation. This shift is imperative because the post-colonial political landscape remains deeply shaped by inherited dominant colonial structures. These structures continue to define civic epistemologies and governance paradigms, perpetuating unaccountable leadership and weak institutions.

Addressing this accountability crisis requires more than superficial gestures or mere rhetoric attempts at reform. A deeply ingrained cultural problem cannot be resolved simply by protest movements alone, as institutional change requires more than performative demands for humility. In addition, the persistence of inherited colonial frameworks necessitates a profound cultural shift. The demands for cultural shifts in both countries under discussion are not merely calls for accountability; they also represent a recognition of, and a deliberate effort to dismantle, the historical forces that have shaped these nations' governance cultures. These shifts go beyond holding institutions and individuals responsible – they seek to challenge and transform the deeply embedded legacies, norms, and power structures that have historically influenced governance, thereby paving the way for more just and transparent political systems.

That said, these challenges cannot be understood in a cultural vacuum. A cultural vacuum, in this context, does not indicate the absence of cultural norms but rather the persistence of a governance culture that is detached from democratic accountability. The ruling elite in Nigeria and Kenya are not disconnected from cultural traditions; rather, they operate within inherited frameworks that sustain violence, corruption, and unresponsiveness to the public.

Hence, to reiterate, a Revolution of Thought is necessary – not merely a rhetorical decolonization of the mind, but a fundamental transformation of the cultural forces that sustain bad governance. This revolution must refine cultural values and reshape civic engagement with the state to create new avenues for political and social accountability. Addressing negative cultural transmission – the process by which detrimental beliefs, values, and norms are perpetuated across generations – is critical to dismantling entrenched colonial power structures.

Such negative cultural transmission occurs through socialization, education, and communication, shaping both individual identities and collective behaviors. While it fosters social cohesion, it can also entrench authoritarianism and inhibit critical thinking. For example, cultures that prioritize unquestioning loyalty to authority often produce leaders who value allegiance over accountability (Foucault, 1980). Sanches' (2022) examination of Eswatini's monarchical culture illustrates this phenomenon: where the monarchy is revered as a sacred

institution and perceived as a unifying force among the Swati people. Consequently, the King is never held accountable for missteps, while blame is deflected onto advisors (Sanches, 2022). This exemplifies a negative cultural framework since no figure, in the proposed concept of a revolution of thought, should be deemed beyond reproach.

Similarly, Nigeria and Kenya continue to function within inherited frameworks of negative cultural transmission. The persistent calls for change – often articulated through widespread protests across African nations – highlight the urgent need for a revolutionary shift towards fostering a new mindset that prioritizes government accountability and civic engagement. This transformation requires not only a commitment to change from the ruling elite but also active citizen participation in demanding and shaping governance that genuinely reflects public interests and aspirations. Ultimately, a revolution of thought is paramount in facilitating the emergence of accountable leadership. Without such a shift, the structural and cultural constraints that impede progress will persist, rendering protest movements ineffective in achieving a substantive, systemic change.

Conclusion

Evaluating protest movements in Nigeria and Kenya reveals their inherent limitations in driving substantive transformation or effecting a meaningful change. While these movements serve as powerful expressions of public dissent, they often struggle to achieve long-term structural reforms. It is, therefore, crucial to prioritize the cultural and intellectual foundations of societal change over protests that, in their focus on immediate demands, frequently neglect their deeper impact.

A compelling argument can be made that protest movements have become proceduralized, reducing their effectiveness in addressing the very issues they seek to challenge. As I argue in this paper, while protests can be commendable, Sanches (2022, p. 3) has described protest as an "open-ended conception of political change and transformation," one that has, paradoxically, turned into just another procedural process akin to democracy and globalization, as if further mechanisms were needed. I agree with Sanches (2022, p. 3) that protests are both products and catalysts of change, as they occasionally trigger micro-level changes. However, this is the extent to which I acknowledge their potential. In fact, many of these micro changes are short-lived, as governing elites often deploy techniques of pseudo-humility to neutralize such movements, preventing them from fundamentally transforming social and political structures.

Recent protest movements in Nigeria and Kenya, exemplified by trending hashtags and viral campaigns, illustrate this limitation. More often than not, protests are instinctual reactions rather than well-calibrated strategies rooted in sustained intellectual engagement. While they mobilize public attention and generate urgency, they frequently suffer from what Bennett & Segerberg (2013) call the "superficiality of engagement." These movements may address immediate concerns, but they often lack the depth and sustained commitment necessary to dismantle systemic injustices.

For genuine transformation to occur, a revolution in thought is required – one that transcends mere government reactions or performative humility. Such a revolution must interrogate the very foundations of existence, challenging individuals' perceptions of themselves and their societies while critically re-evaluating the cultural, political, and economic structures that sustain oppressive systems. True accountability demands more than momentary acts of resistance; it requires a fundamental shift in consciousness akin to the "Radical Enlightenment" framework described by the historian, Jonathan Israel.

Meaningful engagement must, therefore, center on the cultural conditions that fuel these protests. It is crucial to recognize that elites do not emerge in isolation; they are products of entrenched socio-political and historical legacies, including colonial continuities. Too often, when instances of democratic transition occur, they are hastily credited to protest movements while their deeper postcolonial and imperial contexts are overlooked. Consequently, such transformations remain reflexive rather than revolutionary, devoid of genuine agency.

Furthermore, the institutionalization of protest movements as mechanisms for change invites new considerations. The perpetual cycle of protests is not only costly – exposing participants to state violence – but also politically precarious. Expectations surrounding protest outcomes can be misguided, leading to increasing disenchantment when substantive reforms fail to materialize. As public dialogue becomes institutionalized, critical academics, policymakers, and practitioners engage in these discussions, yet their focus often prioritizes procedural efficiency over meaningful reflexivity and transformative change.

The protest movements examined in Nigeria and Kenya thus appear to yield limited results despite their prevalence. This is not to suggest that protests do not generate spaces of dissension or momentary disruption. However, these spaces can be easily co-opted by ruling elites, reducing their long-term impact. Any social intelligence generated through protest movements tends to be relevant only to the institutions that engage with them, rather than driving broad societal transformation. There is, therefore, an urgent need for a framework to assess and evaluate the spillover effects of protests, including their unintended consequences.

As Mati (2020) suggests in a different context, postcolonial African reform struggles are marked by a dialectic of resistance and containment. When governments initiate dialogue, it is often a technique of elicitation—creating managed spaces of engagement that preclude more radical, uninvited publics from expanding the discourse. Wynne (2011) highlights how such orchestrated engagements limit the potential for true reflexivity, a point reinforced by Sheila Jasanoff's critique of institutional responses that "hit the notes but miss the music" (Wynne, 2006; Stilgoe et al., 2014, p. 8).

Ultimately, sustainable change necessitates a revolution in thought —one that does not merely replicate past patterns but actively breaks from historical inefficiencies that continue to hinder progress. Transformative possibilities must extend beyond protest grievances, demanding a comprehensive reimagining of leadership, governance, and civic engagement. The absence of such a fundamental shift ensures that protest movements remain fleeting expressions of discontent—capable of highlighting urgent socio-political issues but ultimately falling short in effecting substantive, lasting change.

Note

1. Within the framework of its conceptual use, and drawing on Sheila Jasanoff's (2005) perspective, accountability can be broadly understood as the recognition and acceptance of responsibility for actions, outputs, decisions, and policies. Ensuring precise articulation, accountability encompasses not only the obligation to assume responsibility but also the expectation of justification and explanation. In this context, governance is intrinsically linked to the principles of answerability, culpability, and liability, reinforcing the notion that individuals or institutions must transparently justify their conduct and decision-making processes.

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The Awakening of W.E.B. Du Bois

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Abstract. This is an interpretive article that concentrates on the early W.E.B. Du Bois who shaped the wider world's understanding of the Black experience in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Under the intellectual compression of learning and scholarship at the highest level, an awakening Du Bois developed ideas evolved in his youth and early maturity about the primacy of African American "feeling" and its importance in rejuvenating the American personality as well as the regeneration of Africa. Influenced by William James's pragmatism and interest in the paranormal as well as the *verstehen* method of sociology learned in Germany, Du Bois sought a humanistic perspective by extending the frontiers of art, culture and spiritual values to fulfill a vision of the Africana great-souled person. As prelude to *The Souls of Black People,* Du Bois undertook his scholarship from the inside-out. Instead of positing the so-called "Negro Problem" as a problem to be solved in the style of academic Philosophy or statistical Sociology, Du Bois took the point of view of one who lived the strain and stresses afflicting African Americans, sharing their hopes and failures in the search for recognition and respect thereby introducing an alternative to traditional definitions of thought and reality.

Keywords: primacy of Black feeling, verstehen sociology, double consciousness, race

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The paradox of race is nothing new to African Americans. As a problem, it has preoccupied philosophers and strategists alike, most notably, W.E.B. Du Bois, the race's leading academic during the first half of the twentieth century. His presentation on the "Conservation of Races" given at the inaugural meeting of the American Negro Academy in 1897 is considered the nation's seminal statement on the concept of race. In a tour de force of logic, Du Bois confronted the confusion over racial identity head-on, proposing that African Americans embrace the double aspect of race as a determinant of history. Recommending that the African and Anglo-Saxon components of America's race scene be preserved as complements of each other, he sought to achieve conciliation between two of the world's great peoples. The upshot was conceived as juxtapositions to support racial diversity as an answer to the question of the nation's one and many, which is cogently captured in the US motto, "e pluribus unum."[1]

Philosophers of race recognize in this innovation the doctrine of "double consciousness" and its corollary, the dilemma of personal and group identity. Customarily treated as the "problem of race" because of the difficulty of equilibrating oppositions of race in self and society, African Americans conditioned by western individualism have puzzled over how to retain race solidarity in a world still dominated by the color line. In that respect, Du Bois' conception of race has come under fire for being out-of-date if not wrong-headed. For instance, Cornel West has faulted Du Bois for what he labels his petit bourgeois "claims about Afro-American superiority" embedded in the outlook of the American Negro Academy. As a self-described humanist, he also depreciates the "assimilationist tradition" for taking part in racial "self-hatred, shame and fear," a criticism secondary to Du Bois but which falls not far from his early philosophy of race. Although others, including Adolph Reed, Anthony Appiah, and David Levering Lewis, have been less harsh in their assessments, the effect has been much the same – to invalidate Du Bois' bifurcation model. Reed strips Du Bois of the idea of double consciousness altogether, claiming that duality was not a "definitive element [or] a key organizing principle of [Du Bois'] thought." Not dissimilarly, Appiah argues for a new way of thinking about race – one based on pluralism, softer than Du Bois' equipollence, what he calls "cosmopolitanism." Lewis dismisses Du Bois' parallelism as a category mistake. In the balance are questions of self-definition, and duties to race as well as the worthwhileness of promoting historical memory and racial pride, among a new generation of Black people.[2]

Although Du Bois' overall philosophy of race is incomplete because of its evolving nature, it is neither superior-assuming nor irrelevant to current struggles over cultural integration and national identity. It supports his legacy as a pivotal thinker in the nation's race history. Indeed, those who wish to go beyond

Du Bois' philosophy must first come to terms with what Du Bois claimed. That requires placing his ideas in historical context.

Du Bois first conceived of the benefit of hyphenated race during his undergraduate years at Fisk and Harvard Universities. Steeped in the Scottish Enlightenment, the Fisk ideal assumed a common brotherhood among the world's races, emphasized race pride and service, and worked toward the goal of progressive assimilation, ideas that Du Bois seemed fully committed to. Important to his development, it also provided an atmosphere in which the children of Emancipation discussed the vital questions of social and political rights in full confidence of an integrationist "law of development." He used the experience to plot a course – even if vaguely –for implementing a special mission for the college-educated. Pleading in exceptionally good German for the recognition of a black Fatherland, he pressed for a new idealism that incorporated Hegelian assumptions of minority progress. Standing pat in the belief that the much-discussed questions of "social equality [and] amalgamation" would sort themselves out according to the "inexorable laws of nature [which] regulate and control such movements," he only hinted at the problem of double consciousness in his editorials written for the *Fisk Herald*. Even so, he was far more cautious than a classmate who "traced the history of the Anglo-Saxon race from its inception to its final supremacy," declaring that "it is destined to predominate throughout the world." Instead, he offered Prince Otto Bismarck of the German Empire as a flawed but successful leader who built a nation out of a "handful of petty quarrelling principalities." His offering underscored a conviction that the race was headed for important things but only if it acted according to "one idea" of purpose.[3]

At Harvard, this preoccupation with the historic role of Afro-America received unanticipated support from the philosophy faculty. Although William James was at first critical of Du Bois' penchant for reading Hegelian purpose into western developments of ethics and science, he praised the writing style, "original thesis," and "independent thought" of his work. It was not until he studied American History under Albert Bushnell Hart that his "idea of applying philosophy to an historical interpretation of race relations" was finally reached. Nevertheless, James' openness to a scientific study of extraordinary phenomena made a significant impact on Du Bois' thought. In 1892, two years after Du Bois had finished his philosophy curriculum, James invited him to attend an interview with Helen Keller. For his part, James was intrigued with the question of how learning occurs in the absence of sight and hearing. It was Helen Keller's "blind[ness] to color differences," however, as well as her specialized capacity for learning by touch that made the most lasting impression on Du Bois. The

latter gave him the insight that the feeling, rhythm, and spiritual striving unique to African Americans did add dimension to America's self-knowledge. Indeed, through his poetry, books and essays and theatrical productions, he worked to refurbish the Cartesian, arguably imperious, "I think, therefore, I am," with the more, seemingly humane and African-like, "I feel, therefore, I am."[4]

More tellingly, Du Bois owed to James a scientific basis for believing in the philosophical worth of the divided self. As a student of psychology, Du Bois first learned of the phenomenon of secondary consciousness during his first year at Harvard. Discussed under the titles, "'Unconsciousness' in Hysterics," and, then again, in an 1890 publication, "The Hidden Self," James reported on the research of Pierre Janet on patients suffering from extreme anesthesia, a neurological disorder characterized by a lack of sensory function or sensitivity to normal stimuli. Janet discovered that under hypnosis, a "secondary consciousness" emerged in such persons, a self "entirely cut off from the primary or normal [self], but susceptible of being tapped and made to testify to its existence." Moreover, this second self could be consulted in determining the underlying cause of the primary person's trauma. Otherwise, the second self, enjoyed an autonomous existence unknown to the primary person. Far more sanguine than Janet about the pathology of such cases, James proposed that the emergence of secondary consciousness revealed a "susceptib[ility] to a certain substratum of the Zeitgeist [trend or spirit of the time]" from which "inspiration" is derived.

Moreover, he noted that even though double consciousness caused organized systems of development to be "thrown out of gear with others," if the "brain acted normally, and the dissociated systems came together again, we should get a new affection of consciousness in the form of a third 'Self' different from the other two, but knowing their objects together, as the result." For James, these findings verified his opinion that the "wild facts" of science are worth studying. But for Du Bois, the discovery of a hidden self with "second sight" gave evidence that the African-American struggle represented a resurgence of the nation's idealism "thrown out of gear" by the competitiveness of the industrial era. More grandiosely, it provided an empirical metaphor for race inclusion as a primal force for curing the dysfunctional American personality and for imparting a "special message" to the world. The significance was to incorporate the history of Afro-America, its sufferings, and spiritual adjustments, into a "science of mind" prefigured for racial change.[5]

Fortified by James' conclusion that "To no one type of mind is it given to discern the totality of Truth," Du Bois used his opportunity to address Harvard's 1890 graduating class to announce the emergence of an African American "third self." Taking the elite of Cambridge by surprise, he chose "Jefferson Davis

as a Representative of Civilization" as his subject. Counting on the throw-weight of history's failings, Du Bois gave Jefferson Davis his due as an American hero – a "Strong Man" representative of Teutonic valor – even while criticizing the Confederate for his neglect of core values. The idea was not to lambaste Davis but to argue the need for a new national consensus revolving around the "Submissive Man" – the African American – who stood ready to supplement the country's masculine past with an openness and vitality befitting a new humanitarian century.[6]

The oration revealed the extent to which Du Bois and other likeminded African American intellectuals read Hegel into the epochal changes of nineteenth-century race history. Emancipation and the subsequent increase of the Black people were taken as the unfolding of historic cause. In that respect, the purpose of forming the American Negro Academy in 1897 was to hold position in Hegel's triad of progress during a time of backlash and white complaint. To Du Bois, lynch law, disfranchisement, accommodation, and the pseudo-science of the period predicting race extinction, signaled a critical juncture in race relations in which Black people either moved forward in solidarity or backward in collapsed individuality. Yet, while "Conservation of Races" offered little new in race theory – it relegated color prejudice to the friction of adaptation in the way tectonic plates adjust to oppositional forces, cited Darwin for the doctrine of "Human Brotherhood," and rode piggy-back on existing theories of assimilation – it injected into the race question a new "spirit," a sense of world mission similar in function to Hegel's overriding Geist. Indeed, as a harbinger of the "battle of humanity… [that] is about to fall upon the shoulders of a Black nation," Du Bois pronounced the end of black individualism: "the organization itself has a life." Yet, even as Hegelian assumptions refreshed his work, Du Bois placed his own special gloss on the dialectical sequence of conflict, resolution and synthesis. Holding sway as the nation's railway switch operator, he sought nothing less than to alter "the tracks along which action [had] been pushed by the dynamic" of America's multicultural past. "Here, then, is the dilemma…," he presaged for the world's minorities. "What, after all, am I? Am I an American or am I a Negro? Can I be both? Or is it my duty to cease to be a Negro as soon as possible and be an American?"[7] Accepting the mantle as a "world historical" person challenged by the reinvention of race, Du Bois was undeterred by James' earlier criticism that a "science" of ethics was "impossible." In truth, his difference with James on the role of science in human action was complicated by his ambition to develop a philosophy of race. Unlike his mentor, Du Bois was committed to a theory of progress in which purposes were imprinted in the social and psychological determinants

of racial groups. Such approach to questions of fact and value was reinforced by the natural law sociology he adopted while in Berlin during a two-year stint beginning in 1892. Under the guidance of Gustav Schmoller, Germany's leading economic sociologist at the time, the "science of society" sought to discover the uniformities manifest in history and social interaction. Also influenced by William Dilthey's method of understanding social phenomena by linking subjective understanding with group custom (*verstehen*), Du Bois personalized the inner life of African Americans in his early writings. The trope running through the pages of *The Souls of Black Folk* expressed the trials, dilemmas, failures, and half-maturity of Black America, as well as its folklore, religion, aesthetics and morality with the aim of uncovering an inductive influence on the forward movement of race; importantly, from the point of view of one who lived the "Negro problem."[8]

Indeed, his recommendation to the American Negro Academy that it should adopt policies which squared with the "constitution of the world," revealed the extent of his natural law bias by 1900. Motivated by the need for an exact science to overcome the long odds faced by African Americans, he nevertheless sidestepped the question of how science and idealism come together to form self-willed moral action. Bringing to bear the perspective of his heritage, Du Bois was too easily drawn to a romantic version of history in which events are thought to record their meaning through trial-and-error adjustment. As a person of color born during Reconstruction, he personally felt the cause and effect of Emancipation. To him it set up a momentum of progress exactly because it established freedom as its prime mover. Indeed, history was to Du Bois a narrative of person and place, good and bad, courage and cowardice, with reason on the side of right. As such, it needed a scientific measurement of human initiative in pursuit of ideals, including the results of self-conscious pride, racial strategies, and the will to believe.

The key for Du Bois in establishing the race's credentials for inclusion was to translate its travails and small showings into patterns of broad humanity. Needing a science to support the positive value of racial diversity, he was drawn to the evolutionary theory of Herbert Spencer, the father of British sociology. Spencer declared that "nature is constantly departing from the simple to the complex; starting off in new lines from the homogeneous to the heterogeneous." Finding permission in this doctrine to treat racial differences as a developmental effect and racial traits as sociobiological virtues, Du Bois posited a program of "social equilibrium" with white America. Du Bois' request of the American Negro Academy to set aside the "smaller questions of separate schools and cars, wage-discrimination and lynch law" in order to plot the race's future, reflected

Spencer's optimism regarding the short life of "aggressive egoism" in human advancement.[9] Nonetheless, Du Bois harbored misgivings about Spencer's failure to apply the first principles of sociology to the concrete world of Afro-America. Du Bois also was not supportive of Spencer's rejection of idealistic cause or his over reliance on the use of analogy to solve social problems. More troubling still, he found Spencer's predictions of cross-cultural sympathy idiosyncratic considering America's cruelty toward African Americans. Yet, more than any other scientist, Spencer helped erect the form-walls of Du Bois' early conception of race. However, with Black Americans set adrift among the vague generalizations of detached sociology, Du Bois turned to the race's elite to provide a natural law adjustment to the imitative void caused by racist neglect.

As conceived by Du Bois, the Negro Academy was to serve as a template for an improvisational class of teachers, preachers, writers, and artists, but also grocers, technicians, and landlords, to furnish the black masses with models of racial success as well as hands-on training in work and ownership. Moreover, such missionary task was to be grounded in race consciousness, a duty new to sociology. Indeed, very deliberately, Du Bois offered the Talented Tenth of the race as a twentieth-century correction of Spencer's opinion that primitive people cooperated in common cause only under the "discipline of command." Importantly, they were to provide empirical evidence to a doubting world that African styled transformation relied on spirituality and an American sense of purpose.[10]

As significantly, Du Bois was conflicted by the standard science of his day governing race and cultural amalgamation. Based on Gilbert Tarde's *The Laws of Imitation,* released in 1890, the problem of race contact confronting expansionist Europe was conceived by the need to bring the "multiple divisions [of colonial rule] into a single peaceful human family." This was to occur according to a rule of absorption in which the selective traits of the dominant and privileged group were to be imprinted upon the customs and mindsets of national minorities, immigrants, colonized races, and captives. Ideally this should happen under conditions of reflex paternalism in which the superior class acts as a "social 'water tower' whence a continuous waterfall of imitation may descend." According to Tarde, however, the "American Negro" provided a notable exception to the rule. Because of the striking dissimilarity between African Americans and the more advanced Anglo-Saxon culture of their surroundings, progress by imitation was improbable.[11] Significantly, Du Bois was drawn to the idea by half. Setting aside the obvious, that Tarde's work was less scientific for ignoring caste racism and barely disguised the imperialistic bias of the era, Du Bois seemed to embrace Tarde's

theme of the eventual "unification" of divergent states.[12] Certainly, he lodged no special objection to the concept of imitation as a student at Harvard when he was first introduced to the concept in a course on applied ethics.[13] Moreover, by 1895, he was aware of its currency in American sociology and recognized its influence on Josiah Royce's Hegelian analysis of child development, from which he patterned his own childhood narrative published in *Souls* in 1903.[14] In addition, the theory coincided with Du Bois' experiences and misgivings. While a student at Fisk University he saw firsthand the damaging effects of forced separatism on Black communities in eastern Tennessee where he taught school in the summers of 1886 and 1887, as well as in the streets of Nashville's divided city. As a race in development, African Americans needed to be able to model their behavior after caring and competent judges who provided examples of nobility as well as verification of progress.

In truth, the "hesitant and doubtful striving" Du Bois saw in his people, was a special corollary to imitation referred to by Princeton sociologist James Mark Baldwin as learning in context. Using his younger daughter as illustration, Baldwin described the frustration she experienced in learning a parlor game played by her older siblings. The object of the contest was for the players to walk hurriedly in contrary directions around the oval-shaped dining room table, end up on opposite sides, and shake hands with their facing partner. "So impressed with shaking hands," the younger girl followed her older sister [around the table] instead of passing on alone to the chair across." Criticized by the older girl, she "turned and started off alone in a hesitating and uncertain way and never seemed quite confident until she saw her sister coming around the table to meet her again." Baldwin concluded that the hesitation and embarrassment of his daughter was a "true indication of deliberation." The point was not lost on Du Bois. Racism not only isolated African Americans from normal socialization, but it also dictated the need for Talented Tenth validation.[15]

Yet he took Tarde's exception to African American assimilation seriously. Rather than reject the theory outright, his reply was to explain why the laws of imitation had failed to apply to the Black race. The answer was in the crazy-quilt patterns of work, housing, and commerce that had come to define race relations in the urban north and rural south since Emancipation. Indeed, what he discovered from fieldwork done during 1896 and 1897 in Philadelphia and Virginia was an almost perfect disconnect between black and white societies. Because of segregation, untutored blacks were simply not around cultured whites except as underlings, and because of discrimination were not likely to earn white respect in any case. Moreover, the emerging black middle class was isolated from the professional white classes as well as the black masses. The up-

shot was to leave African Americans without the opportunity to train across racial boundaries. Adding to the complication was the "centrifugal" effect of "class revulsion" he observed among the black elite of Philadelphia. Not wanting to be identified with the "veiled insult and depreciation which the masses suffered," they refused "to head any race movement on the plea that they [would] draw the very color line against which they protest[ed]." By contrast, the black community of Farmville, Virginia, responded to equally rigid segregation by creating a "whole group life" of black interdependence. Following more exactly Tarde's laws of imitation, the upper class of "farmers, teachers, grocers and artisans" set a moral standard for their struggling fellows. Church membership was open to all citizens, benevolent societies were formed to support rich and poor, and business capital was organized for the benefit of the community. For Du Bois, the answer to Tarde's verdict of race antipathy was to recruit a committed group of black leaders to prove the capacity of race and provide a typology for African Americans cut off from higher culture.[16] Thus, in making his case for the "Conservation of Races," Du Bois emphasized that black Americans were part of the larger Negro race and shared a common bond with the "Egyptians, Bantus and Bushmen of Africa." More important than bloodline or ancestry were psychical and historical similarities formatted for the transmission of culture.[17] More to the point, Du Bois sought to forge a conscious bond between the mostly mulatto elite he addressed that day and the eight million black masses which represented every shade of black and brown inherent to America's race problem. In the absence of twinning models that applied to persons of mixed ancestry, their duty was to provide the "advance guard" of the world's darker peoples. In this respect, Du Bois went beyond the ideas of Africanists Edward Blyden and Alexander Crummell, the two leading spiritualist figures of the black nineteenth century. While they recognized two-ness as a fact, they did not conceive of it in philosophical terms. Taking their cues from Plato's emanation of the Good, to them learning "white" and serving "black" was a moral duty of the fortunate Tenth, not a study in dual consciousness. As prophets of race, they counted on rectilinear progress based on redemption and race destiny. Accordingly, they had no taste for personal dilemma or social contradiction. Du Bois, on the other hand, sought a combination of black and white under conditions of true reciprocity, a conceptual breakthrough in race relations. Thus, he welcomed a pluralist solution to race differences but not in terms of simulation, forced amalgamation, or artificial desegregation, but through earned respect and cultural adaptation. Accordingly, "obliteration" of the race's distinctiveness was not the answer to questions of self-definition, nor was "servile imitation" or "absorption" the solution to America's race problem. The re-

maining problem was how to transform the African American "double-self into a better and truer [third] self."[18]

Ultimately, the question of pluralism in Du Bois' philosophy rests on the intelligibility of the merger he sought. Certainly, Du Bois had in mind an integration which retained African spirituality but was in other respects adaptable to American society. Yet, the term, "merger," carries the connotation of "consolidation," or "fusion of parts," which was not his true meaning. He offered, instead, a conception of self which melded African and American traits into a singular construction of experience. Breaking ranks with nineteenth century race theory, Du Bois pointed to a new interpretation of race assimilation brokered to solidify racial gains and reinvigorate race pride. The fact that he saw African American "two-ness" as both asset and problem, complicated the exact nature of the coming-together he sought. Nonetheless, he was bolstered by Hegel's sequential dialectic in which double consciousness represented a next-to-final phase in the history of consciousness; yet he struggled to translate the race's hesitant record as progress in the months following the "Conservation" speech. In a piece written for *Atlantic Monthly*, he offered more inspiration than explication for how to overcome the shakiness of the African American contested self. His one idea was to establish "self-conscious manhood" as the focal point for a new social identity.[19]

Trained to think autobiographically, Du Bois internalized the problem of double consciousness personally and philosophically. Following Hegel, it resulted from contradictions inherent to the "life and death" struggle of a "dependent" class seeking recognition as an aspiring people. From the condescending stare of the unconsciously prejudiced to the "downright meanness and incivility" of the openly racist, African Americans were forced to shift intermittently between split worlds of experience and self-perception. Indeed, actions perceived as "shiftless" by Southern whites, were interpreted as "good natured honesty" among rural blacks who lacked the incentive "to make the white man's land better, or to fatten his mule, or save his corn." Urban blacks, "thrown into relentless competition with the workingmen of the world," found themselves "handicapped by a training the very opposite to that of the modern self-reliant democratic laborer." The message was clear: deprived of a coherent standard of assessment, African Americans were left to judge racial progress through the indifferent "revelation of others." However, according to Tarde, African Americans seemed uniquely excluded from the world's progress. The effect was to distort the way African Americans thought of themselves, as neither black nor white, but a bad rendition of each. For Du Bois, the race idea was designed to solve the problem of self by concentrating the seeming chaos of retrogression, abuse, and false leads into an ordered narrative of purpose.[20]

Du Bois also saw in the duality of African and American, the difficulty imposed on artisans, professionals, and savants who underwent the judgment of their training while serving the black masses. Based partly on his study of the black aristocracy of Philadelphia as well as his own experience of class bias, Du Bois understood the alienation that came from straddling the color line because of education and outlook. He explored the theme in "Of the Coming of John," one of the fugitive essays he published in *Souls*. Caught between the expectations of the black community and the duties of his new assignment as a college-bred teacher, John was denied the acceptance of his people as well as the acknowledgement of white counterparts for his efforts to "livenin' things up at the darky school," resulting in a tragic end.[21]

Convinced that the color line had left African Americans without "true self-consciousness," Du Bois looked for a unifying "form of a possible experience" in "manhood" consciousness, indicating the primacy of self-identity to Du Bois' early philosophy of race. His indebtedness to the philosophy of knowledge was to show how the internal grid regulating self-perception was open to revision through strength of will as well as external recognition. Alone among sociologists, he contended that the science of experience has a teleological order. His summons to abolitionist self-determination in "Conservation of Races" ["The Negro Academy should stand and proclaim...with Garrison: *I will not equivocate, I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard.*"] was designed to define "African American" for a new era. In the bargain, the African American was allowed to "be himself and not another" – a dark creation new to the world – as neither a hybrid nor a double, but a single self-retaining aspects of both "Negro blood" and western achievement.

However, Du Bois' ambition to elaborate the merger he envisioned was derailed by personal tentativeness as well as problems of conceptualizing a new paradigm of self and the lack of white cooperation in solving the problems of the color line. Certainly, Du Bois' ambivalence toward activism during his formative period forced an unsure interpretation on the meaning of "manhood consciousness." He intended, at the very least, to emphasize citizenship rights, particularly the right to vote, which he saw as indispensable to racial defense and self-respect. Yet, he was not ready to push an abolitionist agenda except in name only. "A little more dogged work and manly striving would do us more credit and benefit than a thousand Force or Civil Rights bills," he declared in "Conservation of Races." Intriguing were the two memorials he wrote in 1895 to commemorate the death of Frederick Douglass. The one he sanitized for presentation to an audience gathered at Wilberforce University, praised Douglass for his world-historical contributions. The other, never delivered, was written

in the style of an Old Testament jeremiad. It called upon Douglass' hate of "unrighted Wrong" for inspiration, sounded the death "knell" of white oppressors, and beckoned "Africa [to] awake," but stopped short of advocating direct action.

Moreover, by 1897, he was clearly uncomfortable with his earlier endorsement of the "Submissive Man"—an idea which he took from the writings of Blyden. Caught up in the categories of Johann Herder's theory of race traits which headlined Africa's "sensual disposition" as one of culture's greatest achievements, Blyden found support in Herder's defense of Africans as a people "unpardonably sinned" against for Christianizing the African personality and featuring obedience as a black virtue. Unprepared to depart from Blyden's analysis altogether at the time of his Commencement Address, Du Bois suppressed the need to harmonize the dominant – and divergent – black positions of the nineteenth century: the one, representing American equality (Douglass), and the other, African civilization (Blyden and Crummell). Moreover, as a mode of historical progress, he was sidetracked by his over-commitment to Hegelian technique which required opposing Confederate arrogance with African spirituality. He was, nonetheless, bothered by the effeminate connotation of the "suffering servant" image, made evident in the pride he felt upon reading that a "Negro mob raised to capture a stuffed ballot-box...desist[ed] only after four or five of the white stuffers had been sent into eternity." Nor did it make any great difference to his argument that he contrasted the "dogged patience" of manhood pride with the subordination of "cowardice, laziness [and] stupidity." Lacking a more aggressive strategy in 1897, he seemed condemned to "await the action of time and common sense" to catch up to the control of events. The result of Du Bois' vacillation was to put on hold a clearer definition of the racial parity he proposed.[22]

As to the self, Du Bois was on his own in explicating the effects of racial bifurcation on self-perception and human action. Even though John Locke had observed the problem of "irreconcilable contradictions" in the social self, and William James explored the problem of "discordant splitting" in his studies of consciousness, neither analysis approached the radical division faced by Du Bois. Their findings were limited to dilemmas of conscience, differences of social role, and conflicts of privacy. Moreover, even though James located the "source of effort and attention" in the subjective "Spiritual Self" and emphasized its importance in social psychology, he was unprepared to think of manhood as a unifying theme of consciousness.[23]

Having explored double consciousness analytically, Du Bois turned to the intuitive method of German romanticism to depict the resolution he envisioned. In *Souls*, Du Bois pointed to the sorrow songs of African and African American

origin as a means for spiritualizing western life. Regarding them as the "greatest gift of the Negro people," their integration of hope and struggle stood to rectify the strife increasingly apparent in western civilization. To showcase the point, Du Bois prefaced each chapter of *Souls* with lyrics of world poetry laid over sorrow song music. The effect was to blend thought and melody of American, British, German, Hebrew, Persian, and Negro lyricists with the African psyche, revealing their common humanity while retaining the reality of differences. The device not only brought to the attention of the white world that blacks held an important key to solving the problems of modernity but depicted the goal of race development: a world united in its separate parts as rhythm and verse harmonize to make "one music." Du Bois bequeathed the problem of putting these components together to the reader, though it is just as likely that he completed *Souls* without having achieved the unity he interpreted for others as a philosopher of race. His statement of hope was, nonetheless, undeniable. The two races were to provide the soundtrack for America's future, not as diverse plurals nor as an identical fusion, but as concordant parts.[24]

Yet**,** even as Du Bois pondered the question of two-ness, he was outflanked by the vast prejudice he encountered during his Southern sojourn from 1897 to 1910, causing him to morph the problems of "master and slave" into a reexamination of public protest. Du Bois walked a fine line between Hegelian method and sociological law. Indeed, when Du Bois confessed to double consciousness in 1897, he assumed that reason, morality, and religion still counted for something in America. On the one hand, he saw the race question in terms of dialectical constraints, while, on the other hand, he stressed the uniformities of social progress. Du Bois was not metaphysical by temperament and did not push the other-worldly aspects of the Zeitgeist. He was, first and foremost, an empirical sociologist who regarded the "struggle of races and social groups" as the measure of primary fact. Also, he remained committed to a scientific breakthrough based on the reciprocity of earned respect. But his adoption of natural law sociology did not quiet his misgivings about America's willingness to tolerate a multicultural future. In that respect, the zig and the zag action of Hegel's movement seemed more depictive of African American experience than the straight-line continuum advocated by British sociology. Even as an article of faith, the peaceable equilibrium Herbert Spencer promised was observed more in the breach than in fact. What he discovered by 1904 was that the nation was not interested in understanding the inner souls of black people or in the development of the African American race. In particular, he did not anticipate the misuse of his strategy to feature racial differences as a means of rationalizing popular prejudice.

His call for a Niagara Movement in 1905 to defend political and civil rights, was a redesign of "manhood consciousness" necessitated by new realities calling for more pragmatic solutions. Setting aside the abstractions of philosophy and sociology, he approached questions of definition experimentally. In truth, his turn to agitation to defend the race at home and abroad, the promotion of a race-based art and culture to focus black consciousness, and advocacy of socialist reform to prove the race's credentials as a just and spiritual people, were more than tactics for moving the race forward. They were the creative means by which Du Bois hoped to reclaim a synthetic relationship with white America through the conditioning of group action.

That this strategy bolstered the importance he placed on human action indicates the special place of choice and change in his philosophy. For Du Bois, truth was recruited for both an objective and subjective purpose. On the one hand, it observed the laws of logic and consistency to protect the race against chance and predict a course of development, yet, on the other hand, it relied on the influence of human will. The effect of this double perspective was to intertwine science with morality: just as sociology requires voluntary action, moral effort requires a rational plan. It is because progress responds to the outlook of culture and race as well as the evidence of law-like regularity that Du Bois could speak of the laws of human *action*. Although it would play a more prominent role in Du Bois' philosophy following his Atlanta failures, his lasting debt to James was instruction in the pragmatic theory of truth. The premise –that the "workable logic" of an idea confirmed its truth – liberated Du Bois from the limitations of traditional philosophy, and led him, eventually, to incorporate propaganda into a race science.

Also relevant to his outlook, pragmatism allowed Du Bois to believe in advancement without embracing its metaphysical trappings. In that respect, Du Bois' Hegelianism predicted for progress as a pragmatic hypothesis rather than as an abstract assumption or finding of fact. In 1897, the American Negro Academy was one such agent of change. Faced with intractable racism, Du Bois could not wait on Hegel's Zeitgeist or the confirmation of scientific law to solve America's color line. Nor were James' paranormal findings ultimately helpful. Ironically, the very year he published his summary finding that a "cosmic environment of other consciousness" could penetrate the everyday world with "supernormal knowledge" found Du Bois grappling with the violence of the Atlanta Riot. James' "instinctive sense of the dramatic probabilities of nature" nonetheless resonated with Du Bois. It informed his pragmatist inclinations and kept his hope alive that events would eventually break in favor of race recognition.[25]

In any case, Du Bois' preoccupation with the "ability and future of black

folk" during the 1890s left him vulnerable to scientific error. Indeed, the point of James' cautionary that a science of ethics is not possible was to remind Du Bois that the significance of events, their meaning and direction, are neither bracketed facts nor causal findings but interpretations of the field. In his haste to convert James' pragmatism into a causal science, he was guilty of overlooking the imprecision of his early sociology. As a philosopher of race, Du Bois preceded on the postulate that the storm and stress efforts of black Americans to survive the effects of racism itself delineated progress, and, in that respect, revealed the limits of chance events on forward movement. Accordingly, he maintained that the concept of Afro-America be preserved. For that purpose, the elite of race were bound by the categorical imperative to elevate black masses. Moreover, because the color of skin still marked a person's opportunity in America and in the face of race war was indifferently targeted by crazed mobs, there was no salvation as a lone black American. Simply put, African Americans had no alternative than to embrace the race concept. All the same, an analysis of race consciousness as stated in "Conservation of Races," leads full circle to the paradox of race that his philosophy was thought to solve: "If I strive as a Negro," he mused, "am I not perpetuating the very cleft that threatens and separates Black and White America?"[26]

Nevertheless, Du Bois' early philosophy looked to the future in which the contradictions of black and white were not so much solved as dissolved; a time when the worth of race would be established by science and social experience, and problems formerly signified by race would be better served under headings of social equality and personal rights. To accommodate such a future, Du Bois saw race, not as an ontological category or fact of genetics, but as a venue of history shaped by circumstance to liberate the world's marginalized peoples.[27]

If the race question can be divided between cultural pluralists who maintain race as a steady-state category, moderates who promote race as a contingent necessity, and contemporaries who advocate color blindness, then Du Bois' early philosophy more nearly sides with the moderates. Yet, as the historical evolution of his ideas has shown, Du Bois' concept of race was wrapped in assumptions dating to the late nineteenth century, which complicates an overall evaluation of his position. For instance, few theorists today believe in a dialectical theory of progress, and although imitation remains a basic theme in character education, it fails to account for the real-world effects of colonization, human choice, class economics, tyranny, and religious animosity on the transmission of culture. All the same, even as Du Bois' concept of race underwent revision beginning in the 1930's to feature Marxist categories, he remained committed to a racial definition of common suffering and striving.[28] Moreover, his controversial call for race

separation during the Depression to champion economic cooperation and black education was patterned after laws of imitation. And finally, his acceptance of Kwame Nkrumah's invitation in 1960 to supervise the writing of an Encyclopedia Africana to further African nationalism was patterned after "Conservation" unity. To his credit, Du Bois defended the ideal of race to the end of his life, albeit under new associations with the world's poor and neglected. Understandably, the experiences of Southern violence and western laissez-faire greed caused him to modify his optimism about America's destiny. Even as the categories of race identity gave way to the related problematic of reconciling colored poverty with white affluence by 1940, racial purpose remained his primary focus. Still in search of the world's "truer self," Du Bois continued to beckon African Americans to lead the spiritual revolution he envisaged in 1897.[29] In the bargain, he extended the concept of race to include the brown and yellow of Gandhi's India and Mao's China, as well as the colorations of Irish republicans and Slavic revolutionaries. The consequence of dropping white as a racial category was also the loss of blackness as an individuating trait. In that way, Du Bois passed on to Martin Luther King, Jr., a dream that in "one far off Divine event," the oppressed peoples of the world could be "judged [not] by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."[30]

Notes

1. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races," in Nathan Huggins, ed., *Writings* (New York, 1968), 815-26. The pluralism proposed in "Conservation" recognized that in matters of political ideals, language, and religion, African Americans interfaced with white America, but in matters of culture and spiritual make-up, black America should preserve Africanity until such time as African Americans had learned to run with the world. The "Conservation" approach bore the idealism of Edward Blyden and Alexander Crummell who emphasized race destiny as a providential right. See James Mark Baldwin, *Mental Development in the Child and Race: Methods and Processes* (New York, 1894), 67-68, 71, 74-75, for the concept of developmental history.

2. Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Louisville, 2002), 69-91; Adolph L. Reed, Jr., *W.E.B. Du Bois and American Political Thought: Fabianism and the Color Line* (New York, 1997), 124; Kwame Anthony Appiah, *The Ethics of Identity* (Princeton, 2005), 109-10, 213-72; David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York, 1993), 173-74, 529. See Aldon D. Morris, *The Scholar Denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Birth of Modern Sociology* (Oakland, Calif, 2015), 29-45, for a more comprehensive review of the Du Boisian criticism.

3. *Fisk Herald*, April 1885, for "law of development;" June 1888, for "Anglo-Saxon" speech; Du Bois, "Das Neue Vaterland" and "Bismarck: Commencement Speech," June 1888, in *The Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Amherst, Mass. Microfilm ed.,1981), 87:138-46; 80: 1-9, for "principalities" and "one" idea.

4. Du Bois, "The Renaissance of Ethics: A Critical Comparison of Scholastic and Modern Ethics," in *The Collected Papers of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Amherst, Mass.), Box 365, Folder 5, 1890; Du Bois, *The Autobiography of W.E.B. Du Bois* (New York, 1968), 148, for philosophy quote. William James, "Laura Bridgman," in *Collected Essays and Reviews* (New York, 1969), 453-58. Du Bois, "Helen Keller," in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Writings by W.E.B. Du Bois in Non-periodical Literature Edited by Others* (Millwood, N.Y, 1982), 164. Du Bois, "Steps Toward a Science of How Men Act," in *Du Bois Papers* 83:359-63, for primacy of feeling.

5. William James, *Principles of Psychology,* I (Gloucester, Mass.,1962), 202-29, 394, 399, for quotes; James, "The Hidden Self," in *Scribner's Magazine,* 7 (March 1890), for 'Unconsciousness' in Hysterics. See the former for "secondary consciousness;" the latter for "wild facts." Du Bois took James' year-long course in Psychology during his freshman year at Harvard. It was "The Hidden Self" he quoted in his Harvard Commencement Address. Du Bois, "Strivings of the Negro People," *Atlantic Monthly*, 80 (1897), 194-98, for "second sight" and "message;" James, "The Confidences of a 'Psychical Researcher," *American Magazine* (1906), 580-89, for "Zeitgeist." For a review of Janet's findings, see Alfred Binet, *On Double Consciousness: Experimental Psychological Studies* (Chicago, 1890).

6. Du Bois, "Jefferson Davis as a Representative of Civilization," in David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Reader* (New York, 1995), 17-19, for quotes.

7. Du Bois, "The Spirit of Modern Europe," in Herbert Aptheker, ed., *Against Racism* (Amherst, Mass., 1985), 50-64; Harry Elmer Barnes, "Lester Frank Ward: The Reconstruction of Society by Social Science," in Barnes, ed., *An Introduction to the History of Sociology* (Chicago, 1948), 173-90, for struggle of races; Kieran Allen, *Max Weber: A Critical Introduction* (London, 2004), 123, for switchman quote; Du Bois, "Conservation of Races."

8. Shamoon Zamir, *Dark Voices: W.E.B. Du Bois and American Thought, 1888-1903* (Chicago, 1995), 78-81 for Schmoller; Matthew W. Hughey and Devon R. Gross, "With Whom No White Scholar Can Compare," *The American Sociologist* 49, no. 2 (June 2018), 181-217, for verstehen method; Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, (New York, 1989).

9. Herbert Spencer, *Principles of Sociology*, I (New York, 1897), 100.

10. James G. Kennedy, *Herbert Spencer* (Boston, 1978), 99.

11. Gabriel de Tarde, *The Laws of Imitation* (Gloucester, Mass.,1962), xxiv, for "single peaceful human family;" 221, for "water tower;" 316, for "American Negro" exception.

12. Ibid., 388-89, for "unification." See also, Josiah Royce, "Race Questions and Prejudices" in *Race Questions, Provincialism and Other American Problems* (Freeport, N.Y., 1967), 3-53, for criticism that Tarde-like assertions of a race's inability to assimilate have "never been so fairly [tested] by the civilized nations of men [to]...give us any exact results."

13. The course was "The Ethics of Social Reform" taught by Francis Peabody.

14. See Baldwin, 367, 381-85, 477-78, for the influence of imitation theory in early American sociology. Josiah Royce, "Preliminary Report on Imitation," *Psychological Review* 2 (May, 1895): 217-35.

15. See Baldwin, 383-84, for game.

16. Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study* (New York, 1967), 316-18, 322-26, 392-93, 177-78; Du Bois, "The Negroes of Farmville, Virginia," in Lewis, ed., 231-36.

17. Anthony Appiah argues that Du Bois' attempt in "Conservation of Races" to provide a normative basis for racial identity based on common ancestry and mission is ultimately unsuccessful as a definition. For African Americans many generations removed from chattel slavery and institutional segregation, Du Bois' definition of race lacks the clarity needed to unite African Americans in common cause. Appiah, "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race," in *'Race,' Writing, and Difference*, ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Chicago, 1986), 21-37. Finding a suitable alternative remains a primary focus of scholars seeking a basis for race unity. See Tommie Shelby, *We Who Are Dark: The Philosophical Foundations of Black Solidarity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), for explication of problem.

18. Du Bois, "Strivings," for "better self."

19. *Ibid.*, for "merger" and "two-ness." See Alexander Crummell, "Sermon," in James L. Golden and Richard D. Rieke, eds., *The Rhetoric of Black Americans* (Columbus, 1971), 288-98; Crummell, "Civilization, The Primal Need of the Race," in Wilson Jeremiah Moses, ed. *Destiny and Race: Selected Writings, 1840-1898* (Amherst, Mass., 1992), 284-88, for assimilation. In fact, Du Bois did not associate the "assimilationist tendency" of his mentor Alexander Crummell with race inferiority. Forced into nineteenth century contrasts of the masculine and feminine, Du Bois wavered between militant and non-violent strategies of race advancement until late in his life when he traded the dilemma of self and society for the monism of African citizenship.

20. G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller (Oxford, 1977), 111-19, for "master and slave;" Du Bois, *Philadelphia Negro*, 386-87, 396-97, for "unconscious prejudice;" Du Bois, *Souls*, 126-27, 137, for "shiftless" and "handicap."

21. Du Bois, "Of the Coming of John," *Souls*, ch.13, for the isolation of the black middle class.

22. Herbert Aptheker, "Du Bois on Douglass: 1895," *The Journal of Negro History* 49 (October 1964): 264-68; Du Bois, "The Passing of Douglass;" and "Did the United States Government Act Wisely in Conferring the Right of Suffrage upon Negroes?" *Du Bois Papers*, 88: 1471-79; 87: 177-196; Edward Blyden, *Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race*, (London, 1887), 139, 128, for content; Blyden, "Study and Race," in Hollis R. Lynch, ed., *Black Spokesman: Selected Published Writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden* (London, 1971), 195- 204, for African personality; Johann Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (New York, 1966), 151, 149, for "sensual disposition" and "sinned" against. Du Bois, "The Spirit of Modern Europe," for vacillation.

23. James, *Principles*, 292-98; John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, I (London, 1961), 301.

24. Du Bois, "The Sorrow Songs," *Souls*, ch.14, for the "rhythmic cry of the slave … the most beautiful expression of human experience born this side of the seas." See also

Sterling Stuckey, "W.E.B. Du Bois: Black Cultural Reality and the Meaning of Freedom," *Slave Culture*, ch.5 (New York, 1987), for the meaning and significance of the sorrow songs.

25. James, "Confidences of a Psychical Researcher."

26. Du Bois, "A Negro Student at Harvard at the End of the 19th Century," *The Massachusetts Review* (1960): 439-54, for "ability."

27. This paragraph is informed by Paul Gilroy's characterization of Bob Marley's cosmopolitan career, in which the "power of identity [was] based, not on some cheap, pre-given sameness, but on will, inclination, mood, and affinity." Gilroy, *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture beyond the Color Line* (Cambridge, Mass., 2000), 133.

28. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept*, (New York, 1968), 98.

29. *Ibid*., 171-72.

30. Du Bois, "Conservation of Races" for "one far off divine event;" King, "I have a Dream" delivered on August 28, 1963, at the March on Washington.

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A Conversation about Reparations in America with Professor Amilcar Shabazz

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Introduction

A champion of social justice and a distinguished scholar-activist, Amilcar Shabazz has dedicated his life and career to the discipline of Black Studies and community engagement. As a native of Beaumont, Texas, he completed his bachelor's degree in economics at the University of Texas-Austin (1982) before obtaining his master's degree in history from Lamar University (1990) and PhD in history from the University of Houston (1996). Shabazz has taught at multiple higher education institutions such as the University of Alabama, Oklahoma State University, and the University of Oklahoma. He currently serves as a full professor of history and Africana Studies in the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Over the course of his career, Shabazz has accumulated an extensive publication record. He is the author of *Advancing Democracy: African Americans and the Struggle for Access and Equity in Higher Education in Texas* (2004). He is co-editor of *The Forty Acres Documents: What Did the United States Really Promise the People Freed from Slavery?* (1994) and *Women and Others: Perspectives on Gender, Race, and Empire* (2007). His journal articles and short essays appear in the *Journal of African American History*, *The Houston Review*, *The Human Tradition in Texas*, *ArtLies: Texas Art Journal*, and the *Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*. In addition to his written scholarship, Shabazz's leadership is evident in multiple academic and civic organizations. He is a past president of the National Council for Black Studies as well as a founding member of the New African People's Organization, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, and the African Heritage Reparations Assembly of Amherst, Massachusetts. His advocacy surrounding reparations has been covered by major media outlets such as the *Boston Globe*, *Washington Post* and *NBC*

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News. In the following interview, Dr. Shabazz discusses the roots of his activism, his journey to professorship, the state of Black Studies in the academy, and the current push for reparations. This conversation took place at the New Africa House on the campus of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

Smith: First, thank you for setting aside time for this interview, Prof. Shabazz. I look forward to learning more about your scholarship and activism today. Before we go into that, can you speak about your upbringing as a youth? Are there any events or moments during your childhood that sparked your interest in activism and Black Studies?

Shabazz: Thank you. I'm glad to be a part of this interview, brother Caleb. My youth is located in a place called the Golden Triangle of Southeast Texas. The triangle included Beaumont, which was my hometown, Port Arthur, and Orange. That was an oil petrochemical, refining region. A lot of jobs started pouring in during the early 1900s. In fact, my family came from Louisiana because of the jobs that were opening up at the oil refineries. I was born in 1960 and grew up during the struggle to end racial domination. But where I was in Texas, there was not a lot of the mass movement. There were some things at a more elite middle-class level. However, my mother and father were part of breaking the color line at the state university there in Beaumont called Lamar State College of Technology in 1956. I had activism going on in my family but as far as mass movement or mass organizing, not so much.

There is another thing that I would like to add, Caleb. We see the FEPC or Fair Employment Practice Commission created during the World War II era. This was done to create equal access to jobs that were emerging due to wartime production. In Beaumont, not only was there the oil refining, but then there were also these large shipyards that played a role in the military effort. A lot of whites began coming in from all over east Texas. These were backwards white people though. They had the idea that Black people should be back in slavery. You know, that type of mentality. As they came in, they began to see generations of Black people that had started to gain some wealth from the early 1900s to 1943 or so by having jobs in the oil industry.

And Black people had their own little kind of Black Wall Street around Irving Street near downtown. So, these white people are seeing Blacks with businesses, dressing sharp and nice cars. So, shortly after the whites began to come in, there had been a scare of a white woman being raped. That turned out to be false. But then, another rumor began spreading about the rape of another white woman. White people in the shipyard just threw down their tools, left the

shipyard and started marching downtown to the courthouse to find the Black person. They wanted to see if the sheriff had arrested somebody for the rape or who they were investigating for the rape. They planned to take them out of the jailhouse and lynch them right there on the spot. This was around the summer of 1943. The police had already made moves to get the accused guy out of town because they knew what could happen. The white mob then started just going through the Black area of downtown Beaumont and burning it up. Law enforcement did not try to stop them. It was very similar to what happened to the Tulsa Black community. My family suffered direct damage. My grandmother and her brothers owned a butcher shop, a barber shop, and a dry-cleaning business downtown. All of this was burned down.

All of this type of stuff is what I grew up with. My grandfather, besides working at the mobile oil refinery, had a sideline business making burial vaults for the Black mortuaries. There were white people making the tombstones and the burial vaults. However, if you gave them the name and dates and everything you wanted on the tombstone and they made a misspelling, you couldn't go back to them and demand that they correct it. They would laugh at you and threaten your life if you came and told them to redo something because they did it wrong. So, Black people were much happier to work with my grandfather, who is Black and in the community. They knew that if there was a mistake, they could get the thing redone or whatever. My grandfather was enjoying so much great business that whites got wind of it and came and threatened him. That's when I learned the term, "white capping," from my grandmother. My grandmother said, "Yeah, they white-capped your grandfather." I looked the term up years later and I found out that was really a term that referred to when white supremacists, Klansmen, would come and threaten Black people to either leave the area or to stop doing something. My grandfather didn't stop doing the business. He just moved the business out of town where he would mix his vaults and then had people smuggle them into Black funeral homes. He still kept the business going for a while until he and his business partner kind of had problems and fell out. But again, this is all part of the background that I grew up with and knowing how our people were being oppressed.

Smith: Okay. Thank you for the background information. Are there any significant Black political figures, scholars, or activists that have motivated you to join the social-justice fight?

Shabazz: Absolutely. Back there in Beaumont, I got engaged in early seventies. The city was widening the streets in our neighborhood. We had paved

blacktop roads with ditches and open drainage on the side. I grew up on Fourth Street. Because Fourth Street connected to a new interstate, the city planners saw that it could be a main artery from the highway into the center of town. They wanted to develop the street and close in the ditches. The problem was that there was a similar project on the white part of town, the west end. There the city planned to incorporate sidewalks, but the Black neighborhood did not have sidewalks in our street plan. The white neighborhood wasn't going to have very much pedestrian traffic, but we were going to have a lot. So, we protested – me, my uncle, and my cousin. I must have been in middle school. So, at 11 or 12 years old is when I sort of cut my teeth and started getting involved in mass action within my community. We began fighting and demanding for the sidewalk to come which we did not win. The town council was all white.

At age 17, I left to go to college at the University of Texas at Austin. You know, I hear a lot of people talk about predominantly white institutions and that they didn't have any role models. I had an abundance of Black faculty members that gave me a lot of attention. I took classes with them. They had the greatest impact on me as a scholar activist. At UT Austin, a man named John Warfield had the greatest impact on me. He was the head of African and African American Studies at the UT Austin. He was a scholar-activist. He organized the first Black themed radio station in Austin. I was one of his first program hosts. I had an eclectic world music beat kind of show on the radio called "It's a new African Day." One of my other faculty members that was very stimulating for me intellectually, was a man named William Doherty, Jr. He came to UT Austin from MIT. He and Prof. Sam Meyers came from MIT and their first tenure-track job was at UT in the Economics Department. I was the only Black undergrad major in that department. They showered me with attention. I also remember Rose Brewer, who is now up at the University of Minnesota. She was in the Sociology Department at UT Austin. I took gender and sexuality classes with her. So, I had a lot of Black professors as role models. Of them all, I'd say John Warfield was the one who had the most impact on me.

Smith: Definitely good insights. I would like to ask you about your name. Have you always gone by Amilcar Shabazz?

Shabazz: No, I was born Eric Frank. That name never resonated very much with me. The name Eric, as I understood from my mother, was the name of a character in a movie she saw when she was pregnant with me. She thought it sounded cute [laugh]. So, that's how Eric came about. Just right out of pop cul-

ture. Frank is the family name. That was my father's family name. But my father and mother split when I was about five. Due to the lack of my father's involvement in my life, I had no strong attachment to my former last name. I wasn't sure if it was a slave name or not, but, either way, it definitely wasn't a name that spoke to my African culture. At UT Austin, I became open to the idea of a free name, an African name. The name Shabazz came to me one night as I was cutting through a cemetery from the UT Austin campus to where I was living in East Austin, the Black part of town. I won't go too long into this, but I had an encounter with the spirit of Malcolm X, with El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz. And he welcomed me to be a son and to take his name. That's how the Shabazz [name] came into play for me.

Smith: That's powerful. What prompted you to gain a PhD and become a professor? What disciplines are you formally trained in?

Shabazz: My undergrad degree was in economics. One of my mentors wanted me to stay in economics and get the PhD in that field, but I was under the influence of the world African struggle. Particularly, the mantra coming out of South Africa was, "revolution now, degrees later." Because of my mother's influence, I went ahead and finished undergrad, but I was in no way interested in going on for yet another degree. For what? It was time to change the world. That was my mindset. So, I left Texas after finishing undergrad. I had met someone in New York City. He had come down to UT-Austin before. We had brought him down to speak about the revolutionary changes going on in Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia. His name was Ahmed Obafemi. This brother came because he had been over in Zimbabwe during the transition. He was out there with the guerrilla movements and with the leaders. He and two others had been over in Zimbabwe. So, we wanted to hear a report on how the transition was going and what was happening. So, he came and spoke. After speaking on all of that, he had some newspapers that he shared with me. It was called *The New African*. It was the newspaper of the provisional government of the Republic of New Africa.

And Ahmed was a leader in the provisional government of the Republic of New Africa. So, he said, "Let's keep in touch on this too. This is our struggle here. We are for the struggle in Zimbabwe too, but we also have a struggle here inside the belly of the beast." So, I said "Yeah, I definitely want to know more." So, we kept in correspondence. He introduced me to comrades that were in New Orleans, particularly his wife. So, I would catch the bus from Austin and go to New Orleans. There I studied and I took my oath of independence with the pro-

visional government of the Republic of New Africa. That's where I got involved. It was around 1980 or 1981. By 1982, I finished up the degree and headed to New York. Ahmed invited me to come up. It was only supposed to be about six months at the most that I would work, train, and study to be part of cadre development. Then, the plan was to go back to the South a little bit stronger, wiser, and better equipped to organize, but six months turned into six years.

A lot of times, the thought came up of me jumping into school at Columbia. I had friends there saying, "Come on to Columbia." Also, people brought up NYU, City College and Hunter College for grad school, but I knew me and I wasn't up there for school. My mind wasn't going to be divided like that. I would be trying to basically be this full-time professional revolutionary in the independence movement, and then trying to be a grad student. So, I said, "No, no, no. Revolution now, degrees later." That was my mindset. After this and going into the late eighties, we began to say, "You know, the main areas where we are organized have cadre and community-based organizations are all outside of the national territory. We stated the national territory [Republic of New Afrika] to be Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, and South Carolina. That's where the Black folks were that we wanted to organize and to become independent. Yet, we were all in Detroit, in New York City, and California. When are we ever going to be in the territory we wanted to liberate?" So, I was ready to go. I'm like, "Well, I'll be one of the first to go South." So, myself and Chokwe [Lumumba] were the first to move South – Jackson, Mississippi. There, I was working with Chokwe out of his home in Jackson and keeping the newspaper going. That was my role.

Eventually, I started commuting from Jackson to my hometown, Beaumont, Texas. Then, I decided to consider school again. I applied for a master's program in my hometown at Lamar University, the school that my mother and father desegregated in 1956. I decided to do my master's thesis on the desegregation of Lamar University. I wrote the story that my family was a part of, but there was nothing previously in the record about this. I wrote the study and finished that in 1990. From there, I was encouraged to do the PhD. I chose the University of Houston. There, I thought, "Why not do a study of desegregation in the complete state?" Then came the dissertation, "The Opening of the Southern Mind: The Desegregation of Higher Education in Texas, 1865 to 1965." After I finished it, I got my first tenure-track job at the University of Alabama, which, of course, was kind of historic to the whole desegregation process. There I started to work on changing the dissertation into a monograph. That's the story behind *Advancing Democracy*.

Smith: How long have you been here at UMass Amherst and what positions have you held here?

Shabazz: Since 2007. But, like I said, my first tenure-track job was at the University of Alabama. I got tenured and became an Associate Professor of American Studies. I had been given some dispensation to build up African American Studies as a minor. However, my tenure was actually in American Studies. I left there and went to Oklahoma State University. There, I was the head of American Studies. My tenure was in the History Department though. I was charged with developing all of the different ethnic programs within the United States. Programs such as Indigenous Studies, African American Studies, Latinx Studies, and Asian American Studies. Although I was only in Oklahoma for two years, I did some things with Black Studies that still continue today. For example, I helped establish the Center for Africana Studies. Then, I came here to UMass in 2007 to be the seventh chair of the department.

Smith: Okay, great. Can you talk about the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies and its growth since you have arrived?

Shabazz: Well, we have not and may never get back to the level that the Department grew to. This Department in the New Africa House was approved by the Board of Trustees in April of 1970. It was approved as a full degree-granting, tenure-conferring, and stand-alone department with its own tenure lines. We are one of the first in the nation to do this. Everywhere else, administration was playing games about departmental status. They were playing games about how many lines they could have or whether professors would teach half in Black Studies and half in another discipline. But here, it was straight out the box – we're going to try to do this the way we would do it if we were doing Irish Studies, Italian Studies, or Classics.

This department grew to 20 faculty members in its early years. It was predicated on a humanities and fine arts model. We had some historians, some literature people, but it also had people in music and dance. We had faculty in visual arts and fine arts. In 1972, we became the first Black Studies department with a full-time Jazz Studies professor. Our faculty members were a hundred percent obligated to this department. There were no splits. Our department was impacting people like Fred Tillis, the Black Chancellor. That's another thing about UMass in the seventies that you got to realize. We were one of the first predominantly white institutions to have a Black chancellor. We definitely had the first Black chancellor of New England.[1]

Tillis supporting our Black Studies Department was a very promising moment. I learned from the department's early pioneers like my colleague John Bracey and others. They were the strength of Black Studies here, but the prestige did not all come from traditional academics, historians, and social scientists. It was the artist we had and the curriculums in music and dance. That's where the buzz came from. By the time I got here in 2007, the Department was in a moment of transition. A lot of those founding people from the seventies were looking at retirement. They just wanted their vision to be sustained.

Smith: I would like to go back a bit. You mentioned John Bracey. Can you speak about him, his impact and his passing?

Shabazz: He [John Bracey] touched a lot of lives. He was a big factor in all of our lives, of the people in the Department. I had known of his work during my undergrad days. He was co-editor of a book called, *Black Nationalism in America* (MacMillan Publishing Company, 1970). I checked it out of the Austin Public Library and never brought it back in. But at any rate, this book came out in 1970. I found this book around 1979 or 1980. This is where I started learning about the history of our people and self-determination. And particularly in this latter part of the book, a lot of these documents such as "revolutionary activism," "General Baker," and "My Fight for Freedom" are in here because of Bracey. He is in many of the organizations mentioned in the book. He was a member of the Revolutionary Action Movement. Bracey hid Max Stanford out in Chicago during the seventies, when the FBI had him on the Most Wanted List, trying to capture him. Stanford was staying with John [Bracey] in a safe house. So, you know, I started to learn from Bracey's work. This is where I learned about the concepts of Black Power. So, he had a great impact on me.

When I got in here to UMass, I started to tell him about how I read and admired his work. He signed a copy of the book [*Black Nationalism in America*] and said, "Brother Amilcar, welcome aboard." Bracey passing the baton to me was just really profound. I still haven't been at a point emotionally to write on the significance of John's passing. John and I had many arguments. People would hear us all down the hall arguing. However, there was also care and mutual respect for each other's opinion, but when we clashed, we clashed. But John meant everything to me regardless of the bitter fights we had with each other. He meant a lot to me as a friend, as a comrade, and colleague. It's almost ineffable to describe the impact of his passing. Our alumni base definitely felt his going. Thank you for that question. It's definitely something we are still rebounding from.

Smith: I appreciate that information. From your perspective, what is the state of Black Studies in the academy? Where do you see progress and milestones? What is the future of Black Studies?

Shabazz: Well, the National Council for Black Studies (NCBS), which I am former president of, formed in 1975 to give guidance and direction to the discipline of Black Studies. People don't realize it, but some of our people [UMass-Amherst] were foundational to that. John Bracey himself, but also Chet Davis, the fourth person to be chair of this Department. The second major NCBS conference was held here on the campus of UMass Amherst. John Bracey was chair then.

So, we have been intimately and integrally involved in the shaping of the Black Studies discipline. Where is it right now? Well, the theme of the NCBS meeting that we just came back from in San Jose is "Our Afrofuture in the Crosshairs." Now, we see Black Studies as in an existential crisis. The rise of white nationalism and the whole MAGA and Trump stuff have made it no secret that they are wanting to eliminate us and our scholarship. If you look at the books being banned, it's mostly Black Studies scholars. If you look the so-called assault on Critical Race Theory, white nationalists haven't foregrounded it as an attack on Black Studies as much anymore. That's because we beat all the attacks in the past. These things come in waves. In the 1980s, under Reagan administration, Black Studies was demonized. In the eighties, white nationalist claimed that Black Studies was about indoctrination and not education. They portrayed Black Studies as a pro-fascist type field. We beat all of that mess back from the eighties, but this existential crisis that we are in now is another wave of it. We will fight and beat this wave of suppression as well.

Smith: How will the recent nationwide assault on DEI affect Black Studies?

Shabazz: Well, it's part of the whole attack on Critical Race Theory, banning books, and trying to delete African American Studies from high schools and AP courses. It's all integrated with the assault on DEI. The right wing is attempting to turn our universities into conservative citadels of conservative dogma. The conservatives are the underdogs because liberals and leftists run the college campuses. White supremacists just want to eliminate us. They want to get in charge so they can then shut down DEI offices, shut down Black Studies, and

shut down Gender and Sexuality Studies. The attack is on any of the studies that feature the left, not just Black Studies.

Smith: Considering the activism of the Third World Liberation Front and the birth of Black Studies on the West Coast in 1968, do you see another opportunity for a coalition to rise again and combat the conservative threat against minority studies?

Shabazz: One of the books that I'm currently working on comprises 50 years of experience of observing and participating in mass movements for change. From what I've learned about social movement theory and practice, it is going to be a challenge. The book project that I'm working on centers on the theory of solidarity. What is solidarity? I think that there is the potential for solidarity among different identity groups and among communities interested in environmental and gender justice. The question is: Can these communities of interest really come together? But, yes, I think that you are right. The sixties served as a catalyst to galvanize and inspire folks in a variety of communities. The movement inspired folks of different identities. The Third World Liberation Front was a model and pattern for the collective fight. However, forging solidarity was not magical.

You know, one of the things we look at with Africana Women's Studies is the way in which Black women had to fight within the Women's Movement to protect the interest of Black people. To pull that movement to be in solidarity, you're fighting for reproductive rights, breaking the glass ceiling for women in terms of pay equity and all of those kinds of issues within the broader women's movement. We also need to look at the struggle of Black people and see how we have a community of interest that should be in solidarity. It took work then, and it's going to take work today for all of us to come together. So, if you look at the campus as kind of a microcosm or a lab in a way for analyzing some of this right now, we don't have the kind of solidarity that we should. In the case of my own campus, we have a long-standing solidarity with Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, but it's in a little bit of a receding mode. We have to strengthen that. We ought to be doing things together, working together, and understanding our common ground and problems. Likewise, with folks in other parts of academia, the same way in the broader movement as well.

I think the technology and the technical relations of production in some ways give us the opportunity through social networks, social media, and through the proliferation of this digital age. There are ways in which we ought to be able to find and to create those spaces of commonality and solidarity. I don't know

that we've quite caught up with the technology and harnessing the technology to really doing that. It can happen on some spontaneous levels in the case of the modern Black movements from Trayvon Martin, to Mike Brown, the Ferguson uprising, George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. Those cases have now begun to bring us into moments of great solidarity. Intersectionality as a concept is rising in this time as well. We are going to keep working at solidarity, building it and making it stronger.

Smith: I know you have numerous published works. How is your activist tradition present in your research and publications?

Shabazz: Almost a hundred percent really. There is very little that I do just for the sake of studying. I own the fact that the things that I write about are things that I care about. I try to make sure that the care that I have for the subjects compel me to be honest and critical. I avoid propaganda and cherry-picking. For me, the care that I have about my people and our liberation does not allow me to be deceptive. I have to look at data and research objectively. I was once told that "the purpose of criticism and self-criticism, is to sharpen practice." If I want us to win, I'm committed to our people being victorious in our struggle for freedom, but I want them to be sharp. I want them to be strong. I want them to be critical. I want them to see the world as it is and what the problems are and how to fix the problem.

I don't want my people to be under some kind of indoctrinated mind control. I need them to see flaws anywhere they see it, and be able to call out the flaws in the thinking. I want people to be able to see the deficiencies, problems, and contradictions within the Black world that we study. I think it's absolutely essential that we be critical in our studies and objective. I don't think you have to be detached to be objective.

Smith: Okay. Let's move to discussing your classroom instruction. What courses do you traditionally teach at UMass Amherst?

Shabazz: Well, I teach the history of the Civil Rights Movement. It's a large class that satisfies the general education requirement that our undergrads have for diversity. It is usually open to 200 to 300 students and I have three teaching assistants who work with me. That's one of my classes this coming fall. Another course that I teach is the Education of Black People. This course is compli-

mented by another course called Urban Education which deals with things from about 1965 to the present.

Then, we have a doctoral program here. I contribute certain seminars each semester. One is a seminar in Black Studies called History, Theory and Practice, which I frequently offer. Another course that comes to mind is called Race and Caste. We organized a major conference some years ago around the course theme. My teaching connects to my research and writing. A final big area of instruction for me and the department is the concept of Global Black Studies. We must situate Black Studies in a global nature. We learn better by looking at the presence of Black people around the world and exploring the connections and experiences between them. We aim to examine the Black experience in Japan, China, Europe, the Pacific and all of the Americas. I do a class here called Introduction to Global Black Studies.

Smith: Is the reparations movement a part of your curriculum?

Shabazz: Yes, I have a class on reparations. It is a split undergraduate and graduate level course. We look at the ways in which the idea of reparations for African people has emerged historically. We historicize the struggle and look at contemporary practices around reparation. Students examine current debates and development in communities from Columbia, Haiti, and the United States. I cover all of that in the class.

Smith: Can you give a brief history of the movement for reparations in the United States? How long have African Americans been pushing for reparations?

Shabazz: Well, you know, Ta-Nehisi Coates' wonderful and compelling essay, ["The Case for Reparations"], brings out one of the early cases dealing with a woman named Belinda who was enslaved by the Royall family in Massachusetts. Her enslaver took her out of Africa, had her in the Caribbean, and then brought her to Massachusetts. That family was among the loyalists when the American Revolution breaks out. They were loyal to the king and not breaking up with the king. Of course, that side loses. So, as things kind of go south, the family leaves the enslaved property here in Massachusetts. So, what happens to the property? Well, after 1780s, the view is not to keep the people enslaved or to sell them somewhere else. So, Belinda Royall becomes free. Likewise, the property was divvied up. Harvard University got the biggest share. Harvard Law School benefits from the Royall estate. But I come to the point to say this, Coates points

out she had these petitions where she was asking for help. She's now old. She can't work anymore and you're telling her it isn't now? Where is the back pay from Mr. Royall? She has nothing. She is in her seventies and got a child with special needs. From her petition, there is a little bit of assistance given to her by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Truth be told, there are a number of legal efforts being waged, both to be liberated from slavery, but also demanding some kind of redemption, some kind of compensation, some kind of reparations. You know, the Mum Bett case of Elizabeth Freeman and other cases. There're so many cases just in Massachusetts in the late 1700s. These cases pressed question of their rights. Questions around the right to be free and if so, what about the years of enslavement? What is owed? What is due? What is due? Some of this has roots back to the Revolution or the War for Independence. We definitely can trace it with the very rise of the United States of America itself. There has been a cry for, in not only ending slavery, but reparations. So, it goes from there.

Smith: Can you define what reparations mean for Black people in the 21st century?

Shabazz: I think it means this is the pathway to rebuilding ourselves individually and collectively. Reparations are needed if we wish to rebuild ourselves from the place of harm and the place of the wrongful taking of labor power of our ancestors. Slavery was the death of us as beings in society, as social beings. We were commodity. We were property. We weren't part of the social world; we were socially dead. So how do we have a rebirth? How do we become socially alive in this country? Reparations are the theory and the practice of that move from being a person or community that was deemed socially dead and had no place in society to now having a place in the world and in society. Reparations are the way to building that space of freedom and social presence.

Smith: How long have you been involved in the movement for reparations? Can you offer any insights to the National African American Reparations Commission?

Shabazz: I attended the first Black political meeting of the National Black Political Assembly in New Orleans in August of 1980. I attended as a student delegate from Texas. There were two keynote speakers at the Assembly. The Saturday keynote speaker was Louis Farrakhan. He talked about rebuilding the

nation. The Friday keynote speaker was Queen Mother Moore, originally born and from New Iberia, Louisiana. My grandfather was born there. Queen Mother Moore told the story of seeing lynchings in New Iberia. She spoke about leaving to go to New Orleans and then getting involved with the Garvey movement. From there, she went to Harlem. She called for two things. She called for an independent Black political party which would establish a Black agenda for our vote. Secondly, she called for liberation through reparations.

Remember this was August of 1980, right. All of this is what's going on in my head. At the time, I am also reading Bracey's collection of essays, *Black Nationalism*. By 1981, I moved on to do work in New York City. There, I was a founding member of the New African Peoples Organization. In that organization, I went on to work with brothers from the Republic of New Africa to help found the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America or COBRA in 1988. But I'll be honest with you, Caleb. At that time and for many of us, the demand for reparations was legitimate under self-determination, but we saw it as an organizing vehicle to get into the community, to organize and unite our people. That was our strategy. We wanted to use the reparations push as a way to get in the door in the Black community. There, we aimed to meet with people and talk about self-determination, to talk about what we are owed, and to talk about how our labor and land had been stolen from us. We have a right to back-pay. Okay, we'll work out with the Native Americans, whatever we got to work out, but we owe land here, not just land over there.

Again, reparations were more of an organizing mechanism to get at that broader question of land and independence. We absolutely believed in it, but we didn't believe that we would ever get a critical mass of white people to support. When it does begin to happen in 2020 and a little bit before then, we start seeing this, that the reparations talk is no longer this fringe kind of idea out of the Black pro-independence community but now a plausible idea for social change. That moment has come. Now, where do we go? The legislation in Congress is of course, stalled, because Congress can't even pass a budget for itself, let alone a budget for reparations. So, it's dysfunctional. How are we going to get Congress to appropriate the budget necessary for reparations? So that's not happening immediately. We still believe we can get a commission established to study the harm, the damage, and what is owed from slavery. So, let's at least get the commission established by federal executive order and funding. Then, we understand it's still a political question of when we'll be at a place where we could possibly expect the Congress to approve the money necessary for the reparations. But we got to take it one step at a time.

Smith: What about the National African American Reparations Commission? Have you been involved with them? How do they situate themselves in the Reparations Movement?

Shabazz: Previously, I mentioned New Orleans and the National Black Political Assembly. One of the key organizers of that meeting in New Orleans is a man named Dr. Ron Daniels. He is the principal theorist and figure behind the establishment of NARC (National African American Reparations Commission). NARC grows out of his political organization that he calls IBW 21st Century or Institute of the Black World, 21st century. But again, as this thing is starting to pick up some interest, he will go right ahead to establish NARC and invite different commissioners to come on board. They've gotten big grant money that helped to facilitate their growth. They actually moved around the world. It's not all just U.S. centered. So, Dr. Ron Daniels has a long, extensive history around the Reparations Movement. He and NARC took the lead organizing role at the Black assembly that I attended in 1980 as a student. That's the trajectory that gets us to NARC. They are very knowledgeable of the legal theory and the global human rights dynamics that all stand behind reparations. Dr. Daniels has been a very significant leader around what reparations ought to look like.

Smith: Good. Can you speak first about the push for reparations locally? When did the Amherst Heritage Reparations Assembly evolve? What is your involvement in the organization?

Shabazz: It was born during the Covid pandemic, but began to develop actually even right before the pandemic. A white man approached me about wanting to talk about reparations and how to make things better and what white people can do to help. So, we started having discussions. This man later introduced me to someone he was building with and talking about these ideas with also. After we started meeting to discuss ideas, I got them to do a podcast piece with me. I can send you the link. Because of the pandemic, we did a lot of interacting through Zoom until about Juneteenth of 2020.

Shortly after we came out of social distancing, Juneteenth was made a state holiday. I received a declaration from the Senate, a declaration from the general court that acknowledged my contribution to helping establish Juneteenth as a state holiday. So, after meeting the groups of white people that wanted to help, they told me that they wanted to do an apology and get the town government to make an official apology for their involvement in slavery as this place became a

municipality. When this place [Amherst, Massachusetts] become a municipality around 1759 or 1760, slavery was going on. People were enslaved here. So, asking for an apology is fine, but what else have you gotten for me? Because, that alone didn't really float in my boat. And they said, "Well, no, we want to, to study the harm and talking about repairing things and reparations." Then we did a petition drive and got a lot of signatures. Mind you, the town population is majority white, but we got the town council unanimously approve this resolution that was a call to fight against structural racism, to end structural racism, and to engage in reparations.

That then became the leg that we could stand on and say that we need to establish some kind of local commission. I gave it the name the African Heritage Reparations Assembly. We started meeting and we met for over two years under the charge given to us by the town council and through the town manager to produce a municipal plan for reparations. We studied Evanston [Illinois] a lot. They were the one and only other municipality that had gone that whole arc from acknowledgement, apology, to talking about restitution and to developing a plan for some type of restitution and closure – to do the whole arc. We studied Evanston and we started traveling up there. They were having summits of local groups working on reparations. We are regarded as the second municipality to complete a plan for reparations. So, our plan was put before the council in November of last year. Now we are working for the implementation phase to begin. We wanted to implement some of the things our plan recommended.

Smith: You mentioned Evanston, Illinois. Can you give other examples or testimonies surrounding the push for reparations in other cities and states that are playing a major role in the movement?

Shabazz: So, we just came back in December from the third annual summit of local reparations groups. We were there from the first summit in Evanston. Here we are back again for the third one. Our co-chair of the African Heritage Reparations Assembly, Michelle Miller, was given an award for her work over that period from the first summit to the third one. We are regarded as the second municipality to establish a commission to study and to produce a plan for reparations second only to Evanston. Now at this third summit, there are over 70 active municipalities that had people at the summit. Over 100 municipalities across the nation are in some phase of the process. They are either at the phase of putting together an acknowledgement, apology, or acknowledgement resolution in their town for slavery and the impact of slavery and racism on Black people.

Commissions are being set up to analyze the harm, find out the intergenerational effects of those harms, and what is the due owed today. I want to add this also. We are advocating for the town to embrace reparations at the federal level.

So, when people say that this path is a detour or that this means we are not fighting for the big change at the federal level, we say absolutely not. Part of this local effort to look at harm is a part of organizing people to acknowledge and to support work at the federal level. This local level work is for federal legislation where there are funds available to make meaningful welfare transfer, wealth transfer, and to meaningfully address the wealth gap. The five areas of reparations include the health gap, the wealth gap, the education, criminal justice disparities, and finally the dignity gap. The last gap, dignity, refers to our peoplehood. Slavery and the transatlantic slave trade robs us of a sense of peoplehood. These five areas formed the Amherst plan. We draw these areas right out of national discourse and international human rights discourse around reparations. So, our recommendations all come out of that.

Smith: That was definitely more than enough. Last year, Boston created a task force to study reparations. Do you know of any developments or progress taking place there?

Shabazz: It's in progress. Boston's mayor has given strong support. When you're talking about big municipalities like that, you actually need some staff time. You need people who can really dig deep into the research and get access to different departments to get the data. All of that takes time and money. You have to dig deeply and to see where Black land rights have been denied, where redlining has occurred, where health disparities are running rampant. There are a lot of efforts, public and private, going on to try and systematically analyze these things. For example, look at Prof. Kendi at Boston University. At Boston University, Kendi got a lot of funds to build a digital dashboard that can compile all of the data around different racial disparities – the real hardcore unimpeachable kind of data. I am talking data around land loss, maternal health and criminal justice stats. I pray that the database can be a resource for all of our local areas to tap into. These things take time, but they're very committed to it in Boston.

So, progress is happening. You have to assess these harms, document them and show it in a detailed study to municipal governments. Then, you build on them by asking – "How do we repair the wrongs done? What kind of resources are needed? How should those resources be paid out? Another initiative around

reparations deals with colleges. They, too, have played a role in suppressing Blacks from participating in higher education. Like I said earlier, my folks were among the first to get into Lamar University. They had to fight to get in, but generations before them had been barred, even while that institution was getting state taxpayer dollars. So, we are owed. So, we have to continue to pull data together and make an assessment of the magnitude of the harm done and what it would take to ameliorate them.

Smith: Have you received any pushback or white backlash surrounding your advocacy of reparations?

Shabazz: It's kind of interesting because I see other colleagues at other places getting all kind of hate mail. I don't know if mine is just automatically going to the spam or what. I just don't even see it. I look at few criticisms here and there, but not a lot. I don't pay too much attention to the negative, but people have attacked me in other ways. People have tried to steer resources away from me that I could have been selected for. The pushback isn't so much individual as it is collective. When you put forward the work and you don't start the next step of action, I consider that to be pushback. We haven't gotten action at the state level quite yet. Senator Miranda has a bill, but I need that bill out now. I needed that to happen like yesterday. Even though we dropped off a report in November of last year on the Amherst plan, I'm not seeing the necessary steps taken yet toward fulfilling the plan we laid out.

Smith: Okay. Are there any myths or misunderstandings about the current push of reparations that you would like to address?

Shabazz: One thing that comes up is the phrase that "reparations take from people who never did anything wrong to help people who were never the victims of any wrong." However, I think we've chipped away at a lot of people to better understand that this is an incorrect way of thinking, but I think there's still a lot of people who don't quite understand. For example, I'll tell you one group that has gotten it just by contrast. Our Jewish congregation of Amherst organizes with different groups that make up the life of the community. One of the groups that formed wanted to then look at reparations with us and study some of the things we thought were important to study. Out of it, they have developed a curriculum that they have used here in Amherst with different people interested in learning about Black reparations. And they have even had this

curriculum shared. And other groups are now having study groups around that same curriculum just in the community and not exclusively Jewish communities – other groups in general, utilizing that curriculum.

Some of my pieces are in that curriculum. Ta-Nehisi Coates' essay is in it. The curriculum offers five weeks of reading and discussion. The one that I participated in was Zoom-based. The reading groups are about 40 people, not too large so that people can have an opportunity to discuss the materials. Lively discussions take place. The misnomer is that today's white people are not the beneficiaries of any wrongful taking and are not culpable of any wrongful taking. So, why should they be taxed or be asked to take taxpayer dollars to support reparations? And that's where we challenge. Have you really not benefited? Have you been required to do something anti-racist to outweigh the racism of the system? That's where we are trying to continue to make that point. Yeah, you never owned a slave. We get that. I, personally, have never been the property of another human. That's all true enough, but what we argue is that a wrong that happened to an ancestor of ours and that benefited an ancestor of yours is not a wrong in terms of human rights law that has a statute of limitations. We are still owed. Until what is owed is paid, we are still due [to receive it]. That's just the truth of it.

Smith: How can reparations aid racial reconciliation in America?

Shabazz: That was a part of our local study as well – the idea of truth and reconciliation initiatives needed in our town. We found in our research that there were restrictions in deeds dating back to the 1950s. Many of the deeds stated that a person could never sell the house or rent to Black people. This idea of keeping Amherst predominantly white and making it a place for the very wealthy is something that the town really has to grapple with and confront. This town has to figure out what it is prepared to do to make it equitable to all. For me, the local push for reparations is a microcosm of the macrocosm. First, we have to acknowledge the harm and wrong that was done and take steps to listen to Black people and listen to our pain about what has been done. That begins the reconciliation process. So, how do we reconcile? We can reconcile when there's no more stop and frisk, when there's no more driving while Black, when there's no more unarmed Black deaths at the hands of police. We can reconcile when there is no more nine minutes of the police [kneeling] on somebody's neck. When we begin to eliminate these evils and bring closure, that's when we can have full reconciliation. But America likes to hurry up and act like it's all over. You know, we saw it with the election of Barack Obama. We've seen it at

other times. For example, Dr. King's assassination. We need to get off of this act of letting everything cool down and play like no wrong is being done. We need America to deal with the truth and hear our truth as a people. The reconciliation will come from how America responds to our truth.

I shared my truth when opening this interview. I had to grow up knowing my grandparents and parents went through a race riot in their lifetime. And there's nothing in Beaumont that has ever been done to make that right. Much less even a decent acknowledgement of the wrong. Same thing with Tulsa, where I lived for two years. Same thing there. They have two living people who carry that memory of the 1921 massacre. They are still alive and over a hundred years old, but we're about to lose them. Then, what will we say? Forget about it and say, "Nobody was ever harmed, nobody from it is alive, so, we can't do anything about it?" America has to stop this, Caleb. We really got to stop this, but there is hope. Now people are talking about reparations in conversation with the presidential election campaigns. Biden has had to talk about it. I am glad it is at least in conversation. And you got some municipalities doing some things. State governments like California created a commission. Now they are trying at the phase of figuring out how can we actually do some compensation in these spaces. Let's do more. We got to keep pushing.

Smith: Who is eligible for reparations?

Shabazz: In California, it was straight up those who had, and can prove, ancestry in the United States to someone who has been enslaved. That's the position they took in California. In Evanston, initially it was defined from the very specific targeted reparations program that was approved. This was a housing voucher based upon direct fact that you had lived in Evanston at a time in which redlining was practiced. The pay was $25,000 to individuals that qualified. There are people who have got that benefit thus far. Eligibility in Amherst has this model of concentric circles. At the core, at the heart, at the center, is really to look at the Black community with ancestry through to the period of enslavement that lived here and were born here. We do have people who trace their ancestry to the time in which slavery was practiced in the United States. We got people here whose ancestors fought in the Civil War from this area. They are owed reparations from that.

Widening out from there are those whose ancestors, not necessarily in Amherst or Massachusetts, but somewhere in the United States, that had ancestors who were enslaved. That's where I come in for eligibility. I'm in that next ring

of concentric circles. And, at the widest level, anyone of African descent living in Amherst is eligible to be a part of on some level of the reparative justice program. You might be thinking, why do we widen it out to that level? Because they are African and all Africans were hurt and harmed by the institution of slavery, the slave trade and all of the white supremacist oppression that manifest from that down through time. I'm talking from Jim Crow, down through redlining, down through all the rest, and any other period where those of African heritage were victims of white supremacy. For example, if somebody that migrates over here from Haiti in the seventies and they move to Amherst, I am not going to tell those people that they are not eligible for reparations. Of course, they're eligible. Their ancestors were enslaved in Haiti. Their ancestors were brought over from Africa, just like mine. In Haiti, they rose up and liberated. After liberation, they had to pay reparations back to the French for freeing themselves.

They are definitely owed reparations. They are owed by the world and by France. So, they should participate, but they may not participate depending on the particular harm or initiative we're trying to address. Because first of all, reparations at the local level are not about everybody getting an equal check, like at the federal level with the Japanese. This is because we don't have the money for that. We asked the town [Amherst] to set aside two million dollars. They made a promise to do that, but two million for the 1,400 Blacks that are year-round residents here is really not very significant. What is that going to do – 1,400 with 2 million [to share]? Maybe, you can go out and get a bucket of Popeye's. I mean, come on. So, we're talking about other kinds of benefits as well. There are ways that we can mitigate the impact of structural racism, such as the DEI office that we asked them to create and has been created. Now there's a struggle to make the DEI office be more effective. We want them to do more than this limited stuff such as assessing and trainings. All that is good, but we need more within the town. We see more robust work for DEI to do. Particularly, they need to work to administer the reparations that we are looking at.

In our local reparations plan, we call for the people to be assembled once or twice a year. We are urging every person of African heritage coming to the town meeting. Anybody that is a resident will have two minutes to put before the town some type of initiative. We see these meetings as a way to bring Black people together, to talk about the problems we are seeing and then make recommendations from that body. That then goes up to the council to be paid out of the reparations fund if it can be taken care of. That's the way we see it. And within the eligibility piece are these concentric circles. At the widest level, everybody is included. I don't care if it's a brother from Cape Verde that just moved to the states 10 years ago or a Black brother that just moved to Amherst five years

ago. They have as much standing in the meeting as me because they are African like me. But it's to all Africans, not only to one subset. However, we do see a core group being those with enslaved ancestors here in Amherst and Massachusetts, those who have ancestors anywhere in the United States and to those whose ancestors were hurt by slavery and the slave trade from anywhere in the world. It moves out like that.

Smith: We've mentioned the report from the Amherst Heritage Reparations Assembly several times. Is there anything else you want to add or speak about? What was the impact of the report within the area?

Shabazz: Well, it has served as a good template here and beyond. We helped to inspire Northampton. They have a reparations commission now with many people on it. One of them is an alum of this Department [W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies], Ousmane Power Green. They are in the phase of doing research and getting their priorities and strategies together. They've looked a lot at our report for their work and informing their work. So, there is progress being made. Another thing I haven't emphasized so far is the concept of land and territory. Land is the basis of all freedom, justice, and equality. Land is the basis of independence. So, I do believe that the endowing of Black people with land and property is absolutely essential for freedom. You know, at the turn of the 1900s, Black people per capita had more owned more land than we own now. Land is so essential. I want to see some of the town's land and Amherst College land go to the rebuilding of Black spaces.

Smith: What about any advice or suggestions for the next generation of social justice warriors and those pushing for reparations?

Shabazz: I say to the young people coming up – love yourselves and love your culture. Love the shoulders of the people you stand on. And, those that built the bridge that got you over to the side that you're on. We need new world-making. I want the young people to dream big. Go back and fetch in the Sankofa principle. Go back and fetch what you can from the past that can be meaningful to building a more loving and caring communities. I say to them – invent new ideas and new forms of enrichment for the culture.

Note

1. Randolph "Bill" Bromery was the "Black" chancellor of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass). He was appointed chancellor in 1971. Fred Tillis joined the faculty of the Music Department at UMass in 1970. He was later named the director of the Fine Arts Center and was appointed, among other positions, Associate Chancellor of Equal Opportunity and Diversity. Like Chancellor Bromery, Dr. Tillis was a strong supporter of UMass Afro-American Studies during his time at the University.

Book Review
Ordinary Notes by Christina Sharpe
Published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023

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Ordinary Notes is a non-fiction book written by Christina Sharpe. First published in the US in April 2023, by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, the book deals with various aspects of Black life such as memory, trauma, and racial violence. It is written in the form of 248 notes which are divided into eight chapters. Along with the notes, the work also contains photographs, paintings, posters, newspaper clips, letters, among others. The length of each note ranges from one-line to a few pages; and many of these notes are intertextual in nature. Since the language is easy to read, the notes convey a similarity to diary entries. Through the book, the author primarily explores her memories and experiences around racism, makes some solid arguments about Memory Studies, and explores the mother-daughter relation she shared with her mother.

As an acclaimed scholar of the Black community, Sharpe shares many memories throughout the book, which makes it an excellent addition to Black Memory Studies. I think that the biggest argument she makes is on the function of museums and memorials. While many may insist on the necessity of these sites of memory, the author argues that memorial narratives fail to provide 'reconciliation and healing.' According to her, "Every memorial and museum to atrocity already contains its failure" (Sharpe 38). When visiting the Nazi Documentation Centre and Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg, she discovered that the memorialization focuses on the perpetrators rather than the victims. During her Whitney Plantation visit, Sharpe is disappointed to notice that there are no representations of Black adults; only sculptures of Black children who do not nearly look the way they did during slavery. At the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Sharpe is frustrated to observe that museums and memorials mostly cater to the white supremacist demands, in-

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stead of elaborating on the pain of the oppressed. The author acknowledges that for many, these sites of memory might seem like a therapy against violence, but "To look into other people's faces for your therapy," she argues, "is a dangerous proposition" (Sharpe 45).

Another important argument she makes is that white supremacists manipulate language in order to produce a narrative that depicts them as innocent. The mishandling of language indicates that 'memory' is also manipulated, and so, instances of racism are often made to seem trivial and inconsequential. As a result, discrimination never ends. This manipulation takes place not only in the news and the media, but also in educational institutions, and books. While revealing some unpleasant situations in her graduate school experience, Sharpe recalls a question that the Director of Graduate Studies once asked her: "Why are you so unhappy? Why are the Black students so unhappy here?" (Sharpe 279). Instead of finding out how to make Black students feel comfortable, the Director's misuse of language made it a narrative about herself only. When reading a novel by Kazuo Ishiguro (the Japanese-born British novelist and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2017), Sharpe cannot help but notice his awful description of the Black characters in the story. Likewise, newspapers and media outlets regularly use language to take part in racial discrimination by depicting white supremacists as guiltless, even when they are clearly at fault.

Through *Ordinary Notes*, the author also contributes to the field of Generational Memory. She says that she "wanted to write about *silences* and *terror* and acts that hover over generations, over centuries [which she] began by writing about [her] mother and grandmother" (Sharpe 26). Marianne Hirsch's concept of "Postmemory" can be traced to the photographs of these two maternal figures in Sharpe's life. Despite the author never meeting her grandmother, she still feels that she knows her because of the photographs and all the stories she hears from her mom. These photographs are not only a place of wonder for her, but also a place through which she inherits the wounds of the older generations. This is also closely related to Astrid Erll's concept of Genealogy, where the older generation's stories and memories are passed down to the younger ones.

Motherhood is also a dominant topic that Sharpe explores in this book. "This is a love letter to my mother" (Sharpe 351). She profusely talks of her mother and the pure dynamics that they shared. Despite having a traumatic childhood experience due to racial discrimination and abuse, the positive mother-daughter relation allowed her to delve into works of literature, particularly the ones written by Black writers. This, in turn, helped her to relate and be vocal towards Black suffering. "What these books share is that they produced in

me the feeling that I needed" (Sharpe 295). Despite being a well-read woman, her mother did not want to be known by others; she even instructed the author not to write about her. But she did not hold Sharpe back; rather she parented her in such a way for her daughter to make a safe space for herself in the world. Sunday teas and singing with her mother – these are some of the fond memories of Sharpe's childhood. The fact that she deeply cared for her mother is also reflected in how she describes her life as being devoid of 'gravity' after her mother's passing.

Ordinary Notes is a great book which I thoroughly enjoyed reading. It might seem like a very simple read because the notes are short in length, but it should be read with attention. The book is for the reader who wants to get ideas on Memory Studies expressed in quite simpler but effective words. I would highly recommend Ordinary Notes to those who want to get an introductory notion on Black memory studies.

Book Review
Anthony E. Kaye with Gregory P. Downs. *Nat Turner, Black Prophet: A Visionary History.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux Press, 2024. 321 pp $30 (hardcover), ISBN 9780809024377.

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Between the limited source base and the amount of past attention that Nat Turner has received from scholars, it is difficult to imagine anything new remaining to be said about the 1831 Southampton slave insurrection. Yet, the late Anthony Kaye, along with Greg Downs, have produced a compelling new history of Nat's rebellion. Their work is much more than just another study of the uprising. Rather, Kaye and Downs have restored "three central aspects of Nat's story: his life as a Methodist, as a prophet, and as a man his followers called General" (xiv). Arguing that previous scholars underplayed Nat's religious beliefs in an attempt to make him more relatable to a modern secular world, the final product is as much a history of religion as it is a history of slavery or rebellion. It takes Nat's faith and vision seriously. Despite its title, the work follows newer trends within the literature on Nat Turner, referring to Nat only by his first name, rather than by the name of his enslaver. Recognizing the power of language, Kaye and Downs re-center the personhood of enslaved people while also emphasizing the active role of enslavers throughout.

A major theme of the work looks to place Nat into both the larger context of nineteenth-century religious prophets as well as into the various "types" found within the Bible that Nat would have learned from, been inspired by, and potentially taken solace with. As the authors make clear, Nat was born into a world "crowded with prophets": he shared a timeline with other prophets including Joseph Smith, Robert Matthews as well as lesser-known figures like the Black female, Zilpha Elaw (62). Kaye and Downs skillfully juxtapose Nat's religiosity to these other prophets, demonstrating where Nat was unique and where he conformed with the actions of others claiming to be mouth pieces for God. Kaye and Downs also delve deep into the *King James' Bible* to reveal the religious context for many of Nat's more militant decisions, particularly his choice to kill

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women and children. Through the lens of how Black Methodists understood the Exodus, many of Nat's decisions become more comprehensible to modern readers.

The work also demonstrates that Nat's rebellion grew specifically out of nineteenth-century Methodism's complicated history with chattel slavery. While early Methodism raised concerns over the concept of property in man, Nat came of age at the same moment that proslavery Methodists throughout the South led bitter and prolonged battles to protect slavery from within the church. Having won control, proslavery white Methodists closed the door on manumissions and religiously motivated antislavery activity. Kaye and Downs hypothesize that Nat, and perhaps his family, once believed Nat would be emancipated by the Turner family, as several relatives had manumitted the people they held enslaved. They go so far as to speculate that Nat's grandmother and mother might have even attempted to negotiate with the Turner family to secure Nat's eventual freedom. However, if Benjamin Turner ever contemplated manumitting Nat, it went unrecorded. Their inability to secure Nat's freedom would likely have left Nat and his family with a deep sense of injustice.

The two scholars also emphasize the history of Black resistance and rebellion, particularly stories of Black Virginian soldiers during the American Revolution and the War of 1812. Noting that Nat was almost certainly aware of this tradition of Black military service, Kaye and Downs also convincingly speculate about what Nat might have known about other insurrections, including Haiti and Denmark Vessy's conspiracy. One clear lesson Nat derived from previous struggles was his insistence on keeping his plans secret to avoid the fate of other attempted rebellions like Vessy's, ensuring the attack was a surprise. Kaye and Downs speculate that by keeping their plans so secure, Nat's uprising caused havoc not only within the white community but also caught local enslaved and free African Americans unaware, ultimately hampering the insurrection's ability to rally additional troops to their cause. Kaye and Downs argue that when put into this larger context of a Black military tradition; Nat's actions are not just part of a struggle against slavery, but part of a larger, literal war against the peculiar institution. This helps justify the belief of many African Americans who eventually began to view the fifty-five dead white bodies left in Nat's wake as the first blow of the Civil War.

Readers familiar with Kaye's pioneering first book, *Joining Places* (2009), will not be surprised to see Nat's rebellion considered within the context of local neighborhoods. One particularly illuminating aspect of this is how white conceptions of neighborhoods are mapped differently from that of the enslaved. The further Nat and his co-conspirators were from home, the more doubt crept into

their decision-making. Kaye and Downs also demonstrate the limited support that Nat received the further away he was from his enslaver's plantation. This suggests the limited sphere of influence an enslaved field hand could have outside of their immediate surroundings. Compare this to the extended networks enjoyed by white Virginians. "Among the many advantages white Southsiders possessed," write Kaye and Downs, "these networks of communication and affiliation, imperfect though they could be, were perhaps the most significant" in rallying support to effectively end the uprising (186). Kaye and Downs demonstrate that most of the white men who responded to the call to arms came from outside Southampton. Men had to be near enough to care but far enough to feel able to leave their families safely at home.

A note about the authorship is also worth mentioning. According to the introduction and postscript by Downs, Kaye was already immersed in the research for this work before learning about his sickness. As it became increasingly unlikely that Kaye would be able to finish the work, he recruited Downs to assist him in completing the project. Through long conversations, shared research and notes, and parts or sections of previously written chapters, Downs attempted to produce the history that Kaye planned on telling. He writes that the "book remains Tony's work, even though I have written or rewritten almost every word of it" (xxiii). In a revealing and touching postscript, Downs steps out of Kaye's research and shares some of the struggles and doubts he faced. While we will never know how the finished work compares with Kaye's original vision, together Kaye and Downs produced an exemplary monograph worth serious attention from both scholars and a more general audience.

The book will remain a testament not only to their shared understanding of the events that took place in Southampton County almost two hundred years ago, but also to their lasting friendship, which more than anything, illuminates these pages.