Whiteness and Morality

Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty

Jennifer Harvey

Praise for Jennifer Harvey's *Whiteness and Morality: Pursuing Racial Justice through Reparations and Sovereignty*

"Weaving together the importance of white identity and justice and the necessity of reparations, Jennifer Harvey offers us the opportunity to look, with clarity and precision, at the ways in which racial justice is trumped by arrogant white supremacy. She neither romanticizes nor overstates. Rather she offers all of us a vibrant hope that in acknowledging our racial and national is-ness with the fullness of our ability to build or devastate, white U.S. Americans can, through grace, begin to build a better society *with* darker skinned Americans and in that process be molded into moral beings who can now step into the fullness of their humanity."—EMILIE M. TOWNES, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of African American Religion and Theology, Yale Divinity School

"That great unspoken among White people—racial justice—has found its voice in Jennifer Harvey. I have learned more from her work about what is due and how to think about it than from any other White American. Above all, the moral crisis of being White and American is probed more profoundly here than elsewhere, and negotiated more fruitfully for what is needed—repentance and repair." —LARRY L. RASMUSSEN, Reinhold Niebuhr Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics, Union Theological Seminary

"This deeply historical inquiry into the moral crises attending white supremacy reminds us that rigor and passion coexist in the most profound studies of race. This a wonderful book to give to someone beginning to think about how race is made and how humanity is unmade. This is also full of insights for experts in the several fields brought together in Harvey's challenging work."—DAVID ROEDIGER, Babcock Professor of History and African American Studies, University of Illinois, author of *Working Toward Whiteness*

"*Whiteness and Morality* is one of the clearest books ever written on how white supremacy is tightly sewn into the social fabric of the United States. She proves that no worthwhile discussion of racial justice can take place unless this fact is presented and understood by those who claim to want honest racial dialogue. Her discussion on the role faith communities play in nurturing racism is nothing short of brilliant and while this may disturb some, it will liberate others into understanding that no true 'racial reconciliation' can take place in these communities unless they see reparations for the TransAtlantic Slave Trade as a precondition for true racial justice. This book is extraordinarily important in understanding the history of racism in the West and what can be done about it. Don't miss it!" —RAY WINBUSH, editor/author of *Should America Pay?*

"In *Whiteness and Morality*, Jennifer Harvey has written a powerful volume tracing the creation of whiteness, and hence White people, as a racial category in North America. Using an incisive historical analysis of the colonial relationships between European colonizers and the aboriginal Natives of the land on one hand, and African and African descendents on the other, Harvey writes a compelling ethical and moral analysis of whiteness in America. Written by a White woman, it deserves a wide reading by thinking White Americans of conscience. As a continuation of critical race theory, and especially in the critical study of whiteness, this book will become a mile-marker. It moves us decidedly down the highway of self-understanding and social transformation. Harvey's concluding argument for reparations is not just a moral statement. Rather, it is essentially a clear and coherent argument for the real healing of the White American soul."—TINK TINKER (Osage, *wazhazhe* Nation), Elders' Council, American Indian Movement of Colorado; Professor of American Indian Cultures and Religious Traditions, Iliff School of Theology

"Drawing on recent interdisciplinary research and ancient moral imperatives, Harvey courageously probes deep truths of U.S. foundations in genocide and slavery. If Christian ethicists are serious about social justice, she avers, they must aggressively generate moral crises for self-named 'whites' who have maintained a nation created in extreme racial oppressions. Such disruptions encompass nation-shaking apologies and massive material reparations—the only ways those racialized as white can become fully human. Harvey thereby suggests tough answers to an ultimate question: Is the United States actually an illegal and morally illegitimate nation?"—JOE R. FEAGIN, Ella C. McFadden Professor of Liberal Arts, Texas A&M University, author of *Systemic Racism*

"Jennifer Harvey not only makes a significant contribution to advancing the discussion of white racism in Christian social ethics, she also contributes a must-read text to several other scholarly conversations ranging from Christian missions to critical race theory. This text offers a brilliant, unflinching analysis of the 'moral crisis of being white' by examining the process of racialization in United States history, specifically in the colonization of Native Americans and the enslavement of African peoples. Harvey provides a sophisticated, nuanced treatment of the development of white racial identity that refuses to offer excuses for the behavior of whites in this history. She insists on creating race theory with an understanding of white people as the problem but also with the capacity to participate in large, macro-level reparations. It's an amazing book!"—TRACI C. WEST, Associate Professor of Ethics and African American Studies, Drew University Theological School, author of *Disruptive Christian Ethics: When Racism and Women's Lives Matter*

Black Religion/Womanist Thought/Social Justice

Series Editors: Dwight N. Hopkins and Linda E. Thomas
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[**] David R. Roediger

Series Editors' Preface

Drawing on ethics, psychology, cultural studies, history, and critical theory, among other insights, Jennifer Harvey has written a major contribution to the debate on reparations and sovereignty. She challenges white citizens to name themselves and their culture. What does it mean to particularize white racial identity? Whatever the answer, it is linked to engaging "whiteness and morality" and racial justice facilitated by a direct dealing with white supremacy. Moreover, the response fundamentally hinges on its connection to reparations for African Americans and national sovereignty for Native peoples. This process enables white sisters and brothers to become fully human, to deepen their own humanity. Such a resolution passes through the perplexing minefield of the moral crisis of being white. The problematic of a white racial particularity, however, is a fruitful invitation to critical moral analysis. Harvey flips the script, turning the conversation from white dominance's impact on people of color to racial discrimination's effect on white people. In a word, racism is a problem for white citizens—the ones who created and who sustain it. She successfully takes the high ground beyond the paralysis of white guilt or cynicism of historical racial amnesia or the futility of finger pointing. Rather, the moral high ground is to pursue reparations and nationhood for oppressed peoples. Thus, this book offers a way forward for white communities to achieve moral agency and justice practice while living in the now of their own racial privileges.

Harvey presents a layered, complex, and compelling argument, which takes us through such notions of citizenship, democracy, and nation building. We enter into a new perspective on capitalism and its implication in trade, labor, and land and their roles in racial and national identity formations. Ultimately, the constitution of a healthy moral white identity accompanies concrete social practice and material reconfigurations of society. The moral crisis of white humanity has hope of transforming into a new white human being enlivened by proactive justice work.

Profusely endorsed by senior scholars from Harvard, Yale, Union Theological Seminary, Duke, Pacific School of Religion, Boston College, and others, Jennifer Harvey's persuasive and inviting exposition embodies the thrust of the Black Religion/Womanist Thought/Social Justice Series. The series publishes both authored and edited manuscripts that have depth, breadth, and theoretical edge and addresses both academic and nonspecialist audiences. It produces works engaging any dimension of black religion or womanist thought as they pertain to social justice. Womanist thought is a new approach in the study of African American women's perspectives. The series includes a variety of African American religious expressions. By this we mean traditions such as Protestant and Catholic Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Humanism, African diasporic practices, religion and gender, religion and black gays/lesbians, ecological justice issues, African American religiosity and its relation to African religions, new black religious movements (e.g., Daddy Grace, Father Divine or the Nation of Islam), or religious dimensions in African American "secular" experiences (e.g., the spiritual aspects of aesthetic efforts such as the Harlem Renaissance and literary giants such as James Baldwin, or the religious fervor of the Black Consciousness movement, or the religion of compassion in the black women's club movement).

DWIGHT N. HOPKINS,
University of Chicago Divinity School

LINDA E. THOMAS,
Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Acknowledgments

Well before this manuscript became a book, it existed as a dissertation. At the defense, which signaled the end of that stage of this work, I stated that the experience of writing the dissertation had aged me, though not in ways necessarily unwelcome. The relentless grind that is the final rite of passage in acquiring a doctoral degree is enough to age anyone. But waking every day, month after month, to face, explore, and live with the violence of white U.S.-American history, and the atrocities and evils committed by my ancestors—legacies bequeathed to me—aged me in more fundamental ways. The experience of this project has rendered me at once more somber and more humble. It has left me more gravely aware of both the urgency and the cost of true justice.

The growth such changes hopefully represent and that they might (even more hopefully) stir in those who read this book would not have come without a community of collaborators who have variously mentored, challenged, guided, encouraged, and accompanied me. To these I have infinitely more gratitude than words could ever express.

First thanks must go to my advisor, teacher, mentor, and friend Dr. Emilie M. Townes. Dr. Townes is one of those rarest of scholars—one who combines brilliance with eloquence and truth-telling with compassion. She cloaks these qualities in two others also found rarely in academia: clarity and relevance. The mere opportunity to study with such a scholar has thus been its own gift. But, in my journey of becoming an ethicist, she has also mentored and made herself available to me above and beyond the call of duty. From our first meeting back at Union Theological Seminary to the present day, she has consistently taken me seriously. More importantly, she has rigorously pushed me to take my work as seriously as she takes her own. I can only hope her formative role in my intellectual development results in my work reflecting even a small measure of her intellectual precision and passion for justice.

Two other scholars have been especially critical in this project. Dr. Larry L. Rasmussen guided my first venture into ethics, when he served as a reader for my master's thesis. I cannot say thank you enough to him for supporting that first attempt to explore these issues, for insisting that the work I was pursuing was important and necessary, and for guiding me through the dissertation process with humor and wisdom. Dr. Andrea Smith brought her incisive mind and relentless quest for justice to my dissertation committee. Thanks to her for providing the voice that echoed in my mind throughout the writing, demanding that I interrogate, over and over again, my integrity, assumptions, and purpose.

I am so thankful to the many members of the incredible faculty at Union Theological Seminary and my peers in the master's and doctoral programs there, who created an intellectual and spiritual environment that I will always think of as an intellectual and spiritual home. Meanwhile, support for my scholarship has been ongoing, thanks to my wonderful colleagues at Drake University. In addition to gratitude for the financial support I received from the Humanities Center at Drake to complete this manuscript, I am grateful for the community of which I am increasingly becoming part in this still relatively new environment of Des Moines, Iowa.

Several people are owed a particular word of thanks for their role in seeing this work through to publication. Dwight Hopkins and Linda Thomas were instrumental at every point; from their gracious willingness to give an initial version of the manuscript a serious reading to their guidance through the revision process. I am humbled to have worked with scholars of their caliber and to be included in this particular series. Amanda Johnson, my editor at Palgrave Macmillan, was attentive and responsive as she guided me through the many steps of the publication process. I am grateful as well to the anonymous reviewer of the manuscript who provided incisive comments and suggestions.

My friends and family have lived with this book nearly as much as I have and to them I owe many thanks. Aana Vigen was the "writing buddy" extraordinaire, whose tri-(or quad-)daily phone calls became as essential as air, water, and ice cream. Lucy Suros, Aaron Agne, and Mohan Sikka were the support network extraordinaire. They all kept me going with regular emails, phone calls, walks in the park (and special thanks to the pooches Billie and Petey!), and sometimes a hearty meal and a place to sleep. Janée Harvey, my amazing sibling, has believed in me probably longer than anyone. She has most definitely walked with me through more journeys, and her support during

this project was as profound as is her place in my heart. Finally, thank you to my beloved partner Chris Patterson, without whom I might have never known the healing power and restfulness of a life filled with laughter; I had never quite understood before how critical deep laughter is as a sojourner in the walk through such a serious, sometimes painful world. Her unexpected and grace-filled presence (and Teton's too) in my life during the final writing stages of this book has given a new meaning and reality to the experience of *home*.

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Introduction

Mapping the Fault Lines

I begin this inquiry into the relationship of white people to racial justice and white supremacy with three vignettes that illuminate fault lines in white racial identity.

Three Vignettes

Vignette #1: Making the Universal Particular

The first vignette is anecdotal. In 2003 and 2004 I served as an anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender violence prevention educator in the New York City public schools. At the end of each workshop, we asked the students to fill out an evaluation. It included a section called "Anonymous Participant Information: *How do you identify?*" A list followed: "African American/African Descent, Caribbean/West Indian, Latina/o, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, White, Multiracial, and Other (please specify)." Students were instructed to check as many as were applicable.[1]

One day, in a sixth-grade class, two students encountered difficulty. A girl called me over. She pointed to this information section and asked, "What does this mean?" I responded, "How do you identify, as in what is your race?" She looked at me confused and said, "You mean, well, like, I'm Italian?" Another student subsequently motioned me over. He too was confused by the list. "What am I supposed to put?" he asked. "Well," I said, "how do you identify? What's your racial identity?" His expression became sheepish. He lowered his voice and whispered, "Well I'm white, I guess." "Okay," I said, "so you can check that."

Not knowing these particular young people, I do not wish to overly speculate on the reasons for their disorientation and seeming discomfort

at being asked to name their racial identities. But something important happened in the moment when two white-appearing teens (whether the descendent of recent or long-ago immigrants from Italy, or a child of no longer identifiable European ancestry) faced a list of racial identities and were asked to select one. An identity that often goes unnamed or poses as simply the norm was revealed to be just as particular as any other. In response, these students encountered difficulties that their classmates—predominantly students of color—apparently did not.

What does it mean when two young people check (or refuse to check) a box that says "White"? What are the implications of affirming white as an identity? There are no simple answers to these questions. Rather, in a post–Civil Rights Movement society that officially touts an ideology of color-blindness, but where white supremacy and its effects remain rampant, and in which identity-based political and cultural resistance movements have had various levels of visibility, these questions emerge directly from persistent fault lines in white identity.

Vignette #2: The Vortex

The second vignette is oriented around activism. At Union Theological Seminary, where I attended graduate school, the student caucus system plays an important role in student life. Caucuses enable community-building among various groups and mobilization on various justice issues. Most form around hubs of race/gender/sexual orientation/national identities: for example, the Latino/a Caucus, the Black Women's Caucus, the Women's Center, the Korean Caucus, the Queer Caucus, to name just a few.

At several points during my tenure at Union caucuses became acutely important. During a faculty hiring process, for example, it became clear that pressure needed to be applied to hold the institution accountable to its stated commitment to diversity. So, students of color organized and strategized, pushing Union to make hiring faculty of color a priority. Within the Union community, damaging racial incidents periodically erupted. These included several occasions on which white students used the N-word in classroom discussions; another involved a violent verbal assault of a Black female student by a white male student in the dorms. Caucuses were critical in the wake of these incidents as well. They were spaces in which students of color could express outrage and grief with one another in the context of an environment that had become radically unsafe.[2] Also, they were vehicles through which students could collectively mobilize their anger to push

for institutional changes that would work against the likelihood of such events taking place in the future.

What role should white students have played in response to such incidents? For white students also concerned about diversity in hiring and/or grieved by such incidents, what was the appropriate form in which a collective response was to be organized? Beyond those particular moments of crisis, how should white students more generally have positioned themselves in a community deeply attuned to the differences race represented, and functioning less as "community" and more as "communities-within-a-community"—communities organized around race and other particularities?

In other words, something of a vortex opens around the question of how students who inhabit dominant social locations, namely, students who are white, male, and/or straight-identified (racial location being the focus here), should mobilize in such a context. As a case in point, one year at Union a Social Action Caucus was formed. Most, if not all, of its members were white. There is something discomfiting about lining up a presumedly universal, but predominantly white, *Social Action* Caucus beside the overtly particular *Black Women's* Caucus. About the same time, other justice-minded students formed white antiracism groups. This mode of formation overtly invoked white racial particularity. Yet, this is somewhat discomfiting as well. It seems to suggest that "antiracist" can be an identity in a manner similar to that by which Latino/a is part of one's identity.[3]

The existence of these two rather different groups illustrates a real dilemma for those of us who are justice seeking and who find our dominant social locations to be a significant aspect of our life experience. For example, how does one fill in the following blank: identity politics is to communities of color or queer folk what — politics is to white folk, men, heterosexual people, and so on?

Vignette #3: White Feminism

In their critiques of white feminism, feminists of color have insisted that no woman lives from a nonracialized place. White feminists may not, therefore, legitimately theorize about nonracialized identities. In response, white feminists increasingly have understood that to fail to specify racial location in our scholarship is to reproduce hegemony. Indeed, more often than not scholars working in feminist traditions are careful to acknowledge the existence of feminisms, careful to make clear there is no one overarching or unifying feminism.

For the most part, however, white feminists have yet to articulate what specifying ourselves as *white* feminists (as opposed to merely feminists) means or should mean for theory. When I name the particularity of myself as a white feminist ethicist, do I claim just another voice in a diverse multicultural mix that includes Native American feminists and Latina feminists? Am I making a confession about my racial status in a white supremacist social order? Am I merely delimiting the breadth of truth claims I might make?

One example of this theoretical dilemma can be demonstrated in the encounter between Womanist and feminist ethicists. Womanists locate themselves in the epistemologies, cultures, and politics of African American life; their work in ethics is done from the particularities of Black women's experiences. Inherent in the very identification "Womanist" is a critique of "feminist," which, at worst, has falsely universalized a "we" (as if there is a nonracialized womanhood all "we" women share) or has somehow made "white" part of the definition of woman. White feminist ethicists who take Womanist critiques seriously cannot continue to identity or do ethics as mere feminists. Anytime an undifferentiated "feminist" is invoked white remains assumed in the category. Still, recognizing white particularity does not make obvious from what ground such feminists should then speak. Should white feminists, for example, ground themselves in the epistemologies, culture, and politics of *white* experience? Obviously not; this suggestion is even more discomfiting than the case of the caucuses explored in vignette #2. So what does particularizing white racial identity mean for white feminist theory?

The Problem of Dominant Identities

Racial identity in and of itself is not my primary concern in this book. My primary concern is racial justice and, specifically, the role of white people in the struggle against white supremacy. Identity and justice are never unrelated, however. The fault lines in white identity, which the earlier mentioned vignettes illuminate, are symptomatic of this truth. More importantly, these vignettes provide initial hints of the existence of what I call the moral crisis of "being white."

This book enters mid-stream a conversation that has been going on for some time. This conversation has to do with differences and their significances, identities and their political implications. It is a political

conversation and a scholarly one; as such it is much more than mere conversation. The participants recognize the extent to which justice and human well-being are bound up in such matters.

"We believe that the most profound and potentially most radical politics come directly out of our own identity . . .," wrote Black feminists of the Combahee River Collective in 1977.[4] Many progressive and radical social change movements recognize that the particularities of social location and identity are significant when it comes to matters of justice and injustice.[5] Such movements organize among socially despised collectivities (peoples of color, queers, women, etc.) in modes that—to varying degrees and in a myriad of forms—valorize marginalized identities, cultures, and communities. Nancy Fraser calls this the "politics of recognition." Modes of organizing that specifically recognize and respond from such identities and cultures are intended to secure justice and socio-politico-economic power for particular collectivities—what Fraser calls the "politics of redistribution."[6]

This political milieu has fed and been fed by scholarship that also emphasizes difference, particularity, and identity as fundamental categories of analysis. "Basing one's politics on one's personal and social identity aims to challenge both the individualistic emphasis and the construction of the 'universal subject' within liberal humanism," write Tat-siong Benny Liew and Vincent L. Wimbush.[7] Such scholarship employs frameworks through which particularity is privileged as a starting point for theory. These frameworks undercut discourses that presume to articulate justice in universal terms and by way of abstract principles. They delegitimate the so-called universal subject who is really the straight, white U.S.-American/European male.

Perspectives that begin with particularity are represented in Christian ethics by liberationist traditions. These traditions insist that the concrete realities of peoples' lives must be the starting point for moral reflection. In *Black Womanist Ethics* (1988), for example, Katie G. Cannon demonstrates that when dominant Protestant ethics espouse "self-reliance, frugality, and industry" as universal virtues, they mask the social truth that in a racially subordinating landscape, no matter how much peoples of color might embody such "virtues," they will never attain economic equity.[8] Moreover, failure to achieve becomes evidence that these communities cannot live up to such ethical ideals. Therefore, traditional ethics, argues Cannon, ultimately imply that the practice of Christian ethics in the Black community is "either immoral or amoral."[9] Her response is to question the integrity or truth of the categories and methods being used. Thus, Cannon constructs a

methodology for ethics that "starts with experience instead of with theories of values or norms."[10]

Like their activist counterparts, this scholarship and these scholarly frameworks have a long history and take vastly different forms. Indeed, what kind of difference differences make or should make is itself a contentious and productive conversation.[11] But, a significant recognition is shared among the theoretical frameworks and political movements described earlier: that is, social realities and human identities (or subjectivities) thoroughly and perpetually shape, inform, and produce one another.

Recognition of the dynamic relationship between social reality and human subjects undergirds the theoretical approach I take in this book. More to the point, however, recognition of this relationship throws the *particular* particularity of dominant identities into sharp relief as deeply problematic. For, on the one hand, valorizing and politicizing marginalized identities is a means to subvert a political economy that seeks to name and control the social categories out of which those identities emerge for the purpose of oppression. Thus, claiming oneself as a Black feminist, for example, reclaims terrain from discourses that have disparaged "blackness" and "femaleness" and challenges the material relations that deeply oppress Black women. But, on the other hand, no parallel or obvious route for subversion exists for a dominant identity. Neither ignoring one's identity as white nor unabashedly claiming oneself as white reclaims terrain from discourses that have falsely idealized "whiteness." Also, neither of the choices challenge the material relations that variously privilege white people at the expense of people of color. If social reality and human identities shape and produce one another, then in the context of a white supremacist social order, a racial identity such as white is intrinsically and unavoidably problematic.

Amid this reality, the fault lines illuminated in the vignettes with which I began make sense.[12] The problems they bring to the surface are indicative of vast and largely uncharted territory in the movement toward making a false universal particular and creating multiracial coalitions, which include white people, for work toward justice. They reveal not simply that there is a problem with white people generally when it comes to issues of race and racial justice. The revelation here is that within a paradigm that assumes racial justice to be a critical pursuit, there exists a problem with the role and even the existence of white people: a problem with white particularity.

This book, therefore, enters the conversation about difference by attempting to take up some of the work that needs to be done on the

problem of white racial particularity. In so doing it explores issues of both epistemology and politics. The assumption I make here is that the fault lines implicit to white identity are pregnant with potential for critical moral analysis. They deeply reflect one facet of the problem of white supremacy; specifically that supremacy is encrypted on our very bodies and in our very beings as white racial subjects. Thus, inquiry into where these fault lines come from and of what they are constituted— namely to enter the fray of the problem of whiteness—has the potential to reveal necessary moral and political responses by people who are white to racial injustice and white supremacy.

The Project

In 1903, W. E. B. Du Bois penned his clairvoyant (and oft-quoted) claim that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line."[13] As he assessed the centrality of race in U.S. society, Du Bois also articulated the peculiar understanding white people manifested in relation to it. He wrote, of his encounters with white folk: "Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question: . . . How does it feel to be a problem?"[14]

Du Bois' depiction invokes the alienating experience of the scrutinizing gaze with which his white peers interrogated him as a Black man—indeed, interrogated African American people as a whole—and reduced his being to the status of "problem." It also indicts a faulty and oppressive perception of race among white folk: the problem question was not only framed by racist assumptions, but it was posed by the very perpetrator(s) of racial injustice themselves.

This book fundamentally inverts the problem question. It takes as its subject the relationship of white people to white supremacy and seeks to scrutinize them (us). For, indeed, in a society in which the machinations of racism are everywhere, white people are *the* problem.[15] Said differently, racism is a *white* problem. People who were white created white supremacy and people who are white sustain it. Our actions, attitudes, and ways of being subvert justice, cross-racial solidarity, and reconciliation. More insidiously, we benefit profusely from the prevalence of racial injustice, even as we are spiritually, psychologically, and morally malformed by it.

None of these contentions are new. Their implications, however, continue to loom large in our communities, churches, educational and other institutions, and in U.S. society as whole. If white people are the problem, then white people are those primarily charged with the

moral responsibility for ending white supremacy. Yet, even the best intentioned among us have proven ourselves woefully unequipped for the task.

I take up this problem from a deeply interested and particular location. As a white Christian social ethicist who understands justice to be the norm at the heart of the work of ethics, I wrestle with the complexity of my racial position. What does it mean when significant aspects of my social self is formed by the very discourses and structures I attempt to challenge? What should it mean for my modes of resistance and the means by which I stand in solidarity with those targeted when I am daily insulated by and unjustly benefit from those very systems I seek to disrupt?

These questions are not uniquely mine. I have heard them reverberate among progressive and liberal white Christians who value racial justice. I have also witnessed the devastating consequences when we have answered them poorly or, worse, failed to ask them at all.

Major Argument and Purpose

From these troubling and important questions, an overarching contention emerges that runs throughout this work and grounds its arguments, foci, and methods. The contention is this: given what it means to be white in the United States, given how white came to be a recognizable identification, given how it is continually reconstituted, to "be white" is to be in a state of acute moral crisis. A further dimension of the contention is that the crisis itself needs to be the starting point for analysis concerned with what to do about white people in the context of racial justice-making . To locate our role in fighting white supremacy and to struggle for justice with integrity and effectiveness requires that those of us who are white interrogate—for the purpose of response and action—who we are as racial subjects.[16]

One of the tasks of Christian social ethics, then, is to engage this crisis directly. So, consistent with this contention, the major purpose of this work is rather simple: to employ critical tools that might enable the moral agency and justice praxis of white people in the context of systemic white supremacy.

In the pages of this book, I employ such tools to argue a specific thesis that can be stated in two parts. First, the disruption of whiteness, as currently constituted, is the only way for people who are racialized as white to become fully human. Second, a pivotal means for this disruption and becoming human is reparations to Native peoples and people of African descent in the United States.[17]

The genesis of race and racial identifications in what became the United States is located in a genocidal history.[18] Whiteness, in particular, was first produced through the same processes by which the United States became a "settler colonial nation, as well as a slaveholding one."[19] These processes included systemic violence, discourses of religion, enforcements of law, capitalist economic relations, and dominative cultural practices and representations.

Such processes have persisted long since the initial thrusts with which European settlers appropriated Native lands and long after slavery was formally abolished. They have manifested differently in different historical periods, of course. But, the trajectories and material consequences of the domination and violence through which these process structured racial and national social relations remain unaltered at a very fundamental level.

Because racial identifications emerge in relation to social realities, the processes just referenced play a formative role in the emergence, content, and meanings implicit to white racial identity. In the context of U.S. history, then, it becomes easy to recognize why being white means existing in a state of moral crisis. And given the *nature* of whiteness, it becomes clear that truly addressing this crisis requires reparative activity—activity that attends precisely and disruptively to the very processes, and the *material effects* of the processes, through which we became and continue to become white.

Because white supremacy is ongoing and multifaceted, reparative activity must necessarily take many forms. Some of the criteria by which Native peoples and people of African descent insist reparative measures must be determined will, therefore, be given attention. Attention will be given, as well, to political struggles currently being waged for sovereignty, self-determination, and reparations by both peoples, including some of the specific demands being made in these struggles.

It is worth stating explicitly, however, that reparations per se— namely, a political proposal for reparations—are not the major focus of this book. Rather, the focus is the building of a moral argument that demonstrates an irrefutable connection between becoming/being white and the requisite modes for and characteristics of true white participation in racial justice-making. In my estimation, the depth of our failure to recognize ourselves as the problem, or to face the inhumanity that is endemic to being white in a nation built on white supremacy, means those of us who are white (even those of us deeply interested in justice) are ill prepared to take up reparations as an "issue" for

discussion or debate. I will resist at every turn, therefore, the tendency often manifest among white people to jump ahead to questions of "how much" or to ask skeptically whether it is not rather unrealistic to waste time or energy on something as politically unlikely as reparations. Deep awareness of the actual nature of our history and our identity, as well as of the moral stakes that exist for us as a result, is a critical orientation to be cultivated among those of us who are white before we can begin to be trusted with an explicit discussion of reparations. So, here I pursue clarity about the grossly unjust material logics (and the violent practices and discourses that created and continue to create them) instantiated in white racial particularity. The chapters are configured in order to *arrive to* an understanding of the urgency of reparations as an entry point for white participation in racial justice.

Methodology and Major Assumptions

This work relies heavily on critical theories that articulate race as a social construction and frameworks that recognize whiteness as a phenomenon by which people categorized as white identify (and, theoretically, might disidentify) with the practices and structures of white supremacy. Constructionist theories make it possible to identify the ever changing ideological and material processes through which race comes to be as a social–political reality. They specifically point to the ways in which white supremacy is enforced through such processes.

The first methodological step in this work is to craft a conceptual lens for understanding race and white racial particularity using constructionist frameworks. To be useful politically, however, constructionist frameworks need to be leveraged to locate the actual and specific practices of this nation and of white U.S.-American communities. Thus, the second methodological step is to read select historical accounts of U.S. history through the conceptual lens crafted in step one. The third step is to bring the ethical assumptions that inform this work as a whole to the fore, and to connect the theoretical analysis with the historical one in order to make a claim for the existence of an imperative of reparations.

This methodology is thoroughly interdisciplinary. As such, I do not confine myself to bodies of work constituting Christian social ethics. At the same time, the entire project is infused with assumptions that come from Christian ethics done from a liberationist perspective. It is, thus, appropriate for me to say more at this point about the orientation and assumptions that inform my use of the language of morality. This is especially important since I am billing as a moral argument a case that could, conceivably, be made in strictly political terms.[20]

I recognize this world to be a deeply broken and beautiful place. The human experience is one of utmost pain and indescribable joy; all of it is imbued with an incomprehensible and intimate presence of divinity. These sensibilities mean that I perceive life-meaning and ultimate reality to be imprinted in the everyday concreteness of daily life in our social world.

It is from these sensibilities, or from this existential orientation, that I recognize the question "How then shall we live?" to emerge—a question to which Christian ethics as a discipline responds. The context for human life just described neither merely impacts *upon* ethical reflection, nor simply generates a list of issues to which ethicists need respond. It is, instead, a starting point for the very interest in and practice of ethical analysis and reflection.[21]

Several assumptions inhabit this orientation, which inform my language of morality and humanity. First, human beings are fundamentally moral creatures. This is not to say human beings cannot be immoral. It is to say that there is nothing about human existence that is amoral. Moreover, the social realities in which human life unfolds are, as well, thoroughly moral. As Christian Smith writes, "there is nowhere a human can go to escape moral order, there is no way to be human except through moral order."[22] Every dimension of social reality has a moral quality; everything about society pertains to moral order.

Second, human beings are fundamentally relational creatures.[23] This is not to say simply that we desire to be in relation. It is a claim that our relationality is actually intrinsic to our humanness. When our lives are lived in the context of relations of subjugation, therefore, our humanity is malformed and marred. To state it more boldly, to the extent that one's well being depends on harm to the well being of another, one becomes *less human*. This is not a unique claim. Many spiritual leaders have made some version of this assertion a central tenet of their struggles for justice. In our own national context, Martin Luther King, Jr. might be the most famous. One dimension of my assumption is represented, for example, in King's incisive vision that today can be seen on bumper stickers that read: "No one is free if any is oppressed."

To claim that relations of subjugation render us less human means that a third assumption also inhabits this conceptual framework. That is, I assume that justice and just relations have a normative status in moral order. That is not to say, of course, that justice always manifests itself in social reality (indeed it too rarely does), but simply that it *should*. Justice is the standard by which we should evaluate the caliber

of our social relations. This assumption is consistent with the existential orientation I bring to my work in ethics, as well as informing more formally the kind of ethical analysis in which I engage.

It is, for example, by claiming that justice should characterize the "thickly webbed moral world of human society" (to use Smith's language) that it becomes possible, indeed necessary, for me to use the language of "moral crisis" to describe being white.[24] For, our humanity and moral nature are malformed at every point at which we are embedded in and formed by mechanisms that harm human life by violating a norm of justice and just relations.

It is also this claim that makes it possible to identify an imperative for justice-making—in this book, reparations. As Smith argues, moral orders are characterized by narratives, beliefs, and normative values within and against which human life is lived.[25] It is through participation in such narratives, for example, that we are able to reflect on the caliber of our individual and communal behaviors, the workings of systems and social institutions, and the many other phenomena that constitute social reality; and to assess these phenomena as good or bad, right or wrong, moral or immoral. Against the backdrop of a claim that justice is normative, then, the *actuality of injustice* in social reality is urgent cause for action to rectify this reality. Such action is, moreover, implicitly and explicitly moral even as it must be pursued through political, economic, and social mechanisms.[26]

In addition to providing the context for the language of morality I employ here, these assumptions inform my methodology more formally in at least two ways. First, ethical inquiry grounded in a recognition of beauty and brokenness, which exist in close relation to the actualities of justice and injustice, has a responsibility to make it more possible to comprehend what causes such brokenness. In other words, if the claimed task is to increase the possibility of justice in the world, it is critical to understand how the world works.

The same systems that create human suffering and oppression simultaneously mask and obscure the mechanisms through which they function. Thus, social analysis, of the sort that the interdisciplinary approach employed here makes possible, is necessary to social ethics and critical for practical moral reasoning.[27] For my purposes, social analysis is a method to keep a norm of justice central in human relations and social reality: it, thus, shapes this book as a project concerned with morality.

Second, as the systems responsible for human oppression obscure their own function, they also render invisible the presence of and

potential for human agency. Thus, enabling agency to participate in activities that can positively contribute to moral formation and re-formation is a next task of ethics. This enabling needs to be pursued, in part, by providing readings and engaging in analyses that render human agency—both as it contributes to actualizing injustice and as it contributes or might contribute to actualizing justice—as visible as possible. Intrinsic to my approach to ethics, then, is the aim to unearth how human agency may be nurtured into the work of making the world *more unbroken* and augmenting the possibility for all to live into beauty and joy.

Additional Categories of Analysis

The processes by which we have become white are tangled, complex nexuses of power relations and hegemonies. White racialization is intrinsically bound with state violence, economics, nation building, institutional access, and many other social realities. The histories of white people in relation to Native peoples and people of African descent cannot be attended to sufficiently without analysis of nation-hood and capitalism being made intrinsic to analysis of race. These two categories are, thus, important in this work.

First, in the United States, race cannot be separated from U.S.-American identity. Dominant notions of national identity are implicated in white supremacy in a number of ways. Concerns about eligibility for citizenship, for example, were a major impetus for early to mid-twentieth-century Supreme Court rulings literally defining who was and was not white.[28] Therefore, national citizenship has been a major mode by which race has been reified and through which racialization has taken place. Moreover, as Robert S. Chang argues, the call for exclusion of "foreigners" in the United States has long been considered an expression of patriotism.[29] This call has always been racialized—long before its virulent manifestations in relation to people of Middle Eastern origin in the terrorism/patriotism discourse and policies of George W. Bush's administration or in the recently re-emergent hysteria over Mexican peoples, the border, and illegal immigration. A related manifestation of white supremacy-becoming-conflated-with-national-identity is the coercion enacted upon non-U.S.-American "others" (particularly those of darker hues) seeking to immigrate to the United States from whom assimilation is mandated.[30]

This discourse also indicts the white supremacist function of the nation-state itself. The apparatus of the nation-state, Chang argues, is what makes race—articulated in terms of exclusion and inclusion

(and inclusion on what terms)—matter at all.[31] The United States was birthed through the imperialism of European expansion. The earliest self-understandings of European colonizers as whites, vis-à-vis their relationships with indigenous peoples, were undergirded with the violence and Christian triumphalism inherent to that expansion. White racial subjects in the United States became white, therefore, as imperialist subjects. As it led to the creation of a nation-state, this imperialism constituted these subjects as white U.S.-Americans. (White) race and (U.S.-American) nation/nationhood are, indeed, irrevocably bound.

The emergence of U.S.-Americanness obviously impacted Native peoples. But it also impacted African peoples and people of African descent. Colonialism, argues Ann Stoler, is always about both incorporation of "others" and the rigid entrenchment of distinctions between conqueror and colonized.[32] Such incorporation and entrenchment is (at least) a two-pronged movement of white supremacy: internal (to the nation) and external/imperial. The legal parameters establishing this nation and its citizenry, and the related cohering of a white U.S.-American identity, excluded *both* peoples whose inclusion it had brutally forced and was voraciously seeking to force. African peoples had been forcibly included within the boundaries of the U.S. national body. But there would be no question of their inclusion in citizenship for centuries. Native peoples were excluded in the sense that land appropriation in the creation of English/colonial boundaries required their removal—action supported by intensely reified distinctions between conqueror/colonized. *And*, internal to U.S. nationhood, both incorporation of Native land and policies of forced assimilation were operative in Native–U.S. relations.

Second, capitalism was a shared hinge on which European–Native–African relations swung. Native Americans and African Americans are at "the center of the economic history of the hemisphere."[33] Historically, this is true not only in the most obvious ways, namely, land and labor, but, from the first contacts between Native and European peoples, trade incentives fueled the activities of both societies. For Europeans, these incentives fueled encroachments on Native land and generated demand for goods from Europe, thus stimulating economies far across the ocean.[34] Similarly, financial gain fueled Europeans' drive to turn African peoples into chattel. According to Winthrop D. Jordan, the initial impetus for English participation in the "slave trade" was not a perceived "need" for slaves, but a recognition of the chance to take part in a lucrative "business opportunity *[sic]*."[35]

Imperial expansion was (and remains) an international financial venture in which the conquest of peoples and expropriation of their land, and the conscripted movements of African peoples into these lands and forced labor therein, were of a piece. Moreover, the increasingly entangled relationships among Native lands, African labor, and European profits, which developed over the 250 years following the Virginia Company's transport of English people to a location they called Jamestown (1607), laid the groundwork for U.S. economic development in the coming centuries. Complicated economic relations developed across class lines *among Europeans* vis-à-vis relations with African and Native peoples through and beyond the Civil War. Capitalism was thus deeply implicated in the white racialization of European settlers, and its impact and effects will be considered in these pages

Limitations and Contributions

As with any human endeavor, and particularly so in an academic work attempting to take on a problem so vast, serious, and seemingly intractable, there are limitations to this project. Identifying such limitations and their significance is important for making clear that the construction of knowledge is always incomplete and partial, and that no theoretical inquiry has (nor does this one perceive itself to have) a corner on truth. The failure to name such limitations, intentionally or otherwise, can obfuscate the partiality of the claims one makes.

The scope of the inquiry is one limit of this work. Manifestations of the materiality of white supremacy globally and in the United States are nearly infinite, always complex, and ever changing. By historicizing whiteness in two historical periods I seek, perhaps, to do too much. I omit important events and give insufficient attention to details and nuances within these histories. Such omissions may not be dismissed as academic flaws or limitations. Flaws in academic analysis themselves have moral weight and impinge on human well-being At its core, this book is concerned with human lives, each sacred and valuable in its own right, so many of which were desecrated and destroyed in the events recounted here.

At the same time, I do not do enough here. Important historical events and the implications of white supremacy on the lives and well-being of communities other than Native American and African American are left uninterrogated.[36] In addition to ignoring histories that merit attention on their own account, this limitation might be taken wrongly to suggest there exists a hierarchy of histories.

If this work stands to make a contribution, my hope is that it does so in the realms of both epistemology and politics. For white scholars committed to a liberationist vision, decrying racial injustice in our theology and ethics is not enough if it does not emerge from the particularities of what it means to be white in the U.S. social order. This recognition calls for more sufficient epistemological starting points for white participation in liberationist theological and ethical scholarship. It also calls for political activity to disrupt white supremacy; activity that takes our status as unjust beneficiaries seriously and binds concrete material notions of repentance and repair to our political participation.

I attempt here to carve out some of the particular ground on which we-who-are-white stand clearly enough that it becomes *theoretically* impossible to avoid the materiality of white supremacy and to identify precise and specific routes by which white people (in the academy, church, and society) may participate in the work of racial justice-making. As a work in Christian ethics from the liberationist tradition, this book brings the materiality of racial injustice and white racial particularity into discourse in which there already exists a theo-ethical norm of justice. Its method imbues theological notions of repentance with imperatives of reparations—a mode that takes seriously what it means to be white, while facilitating moral and political actions that attempt to disrupt what it means to be white. At the same time, it ensures an expansive notion of reparations to include, along with the political implications of reparations, their spiritual, moral, and theological implications. All of these implications are inextricably bound to white peoples' willingness—and our ability—to journey toward becoming more fully human.

Flow of the Project

The overall flow of the project is shaped by the methodology I have deemed necessary to build the argument outlined earlier. Chapter one engages in two major theoretical explorations. It first takes up the widely recognized claim that race is a social construction. It considers the significance of such a claim for Christian social ethics and suggests a conceptual lens for thinking about race, which will be employed throughout the book. Second, it considers the implications of recognizing that social processes and the formation of racial selves, or subjects, are inextricably related. It suggests that the question, "What is race?" is a question about our particular racial subjectivities: "Who *are* we?" A subsequent question, critical for those of us racialized as white in the context of a white supremacist social reality, becomes "Who might

we become, and how?" The main argument of the chapter is that these theoretical frameworks make it possible to recognize that to "be white" is to be in moral crisis and that potential pathways toward racial justice must be pursued through material activities that respond to and disrupt the very processes through which white comes to be.

Historical analyses constitute the work of chapters two and three. These chapters employ the conceptual lens for thinking about what race is, in order to interrogate white racialization in select moments of U.S. history. In other words, they each presume to engage in a reading of "Who *are* we?" Both chapters elucidate why to be white in the United States is to be in moral crisis, what various dimensions of the crisis are, and set the context for demonstrating that given the nature of the crisis, an imperative of reparations exists.

Chapter two considers the histories of Native/African/European relations in seventeenth-century "colonial America" in the region that would come to be Virginia. It provides a historical overview of English/Native and English/African relations and analyzes the religious, legal, imperial, and economic ideologies and activities implicated in the genocide and colonization of Native peoples and the enslavement of African peoples. The main argument of the chapter is that these ideologies and activities not only racialized Native peoples and people of African descent through a white supremacist imperialist lens, but also, by the end of the 1600s, racialized English colonists as white. Brief attention is given, as well, to the continuity between this colonial history and the formation of the United States as a white imperial nation through the Revolutionary War.

Chapter three engages in a slightly different kind of historical analysis. It explores the complex and multifaceted relationship between white U.S.-American violence and white cultural productions of racial "otherness." Specifically, the chapter juxtaposes the horror of the widespread practice of lynching of African Americans and the phenomenon of white blackface minstrelsy. It then considers the symbiotic relationships between white performances of "indianness" and U.S.-imperial violence against Native peoples through the 1800s. The main argument of the chapter is that white U.S.-American identity has been made coherent, and that white U.S.-Americans have forged a group consciousness and made (distorted) claims about themselves through cultural productions of otherness. These cultural productions are themselves acts of violence, but the specific discourses they create are dependent on and share deep resonances with actual enactments of white U.S.-American violence as well. Thus racial subjugation has

been rendered so core to who white U.S.-Americans are that we are left bereft (at our own hands) of our own positive cultural resources—a state that adds a dimension of urgency to the moral crisis of being white.

Chapter four considers the imperative of reparations. Having recognized that disruption of white supremacy must take place through material processes, and having articulated some of the historical processes that constitute white racial particularity in relationship to white supremacy and U.S. imperialism, it becomes possible to see that an imperative of reparations exists in relation to the moral crisis of being white. The chapter first considers the imperative of reparations on its own terms, arguing that the historical realities of colonization, genocide, and enslavement have left the United States morally bankrupt as well as politically illegitimate. It then explores some of the current political struggles being waged by Native peoples for sovereignty and self-determination, and by people of African descent for reparations—struggles aiming to disrupt, redress, and repair these legacies. Participation in and support for such struggles, I suggest, represent routes for white U.S.-Americans' journey into racial justice-making and toward moral re-formation.

I conclude by lifting up some of the theo-ethical dimensions of the imperative of reparations. I return, as well, to the problems of epistemology and politics raised here, as these pertain to the *particular* particularity of dominant identities in the pursuit for racial justice. Specifically, I briefly consider some of the implications that the critical perspectives offered here might have for authentic white participation in and engagement with liberation theologies.

The Moral Crisis of "Being White"

Categories are constructed. Scars and bruises are felt with human bodies, some of which end up in coffins. Death is not a construct.

<div align="right">—Cornel West</div>

Race in U.S.-American life is at once so self-evident and so complex that it is important to be as clear as possible about what it is. In the United States, race is most often recognized (or presumed to be recognizable) by noticing skin "color."[1] We might notice other bodily features or personal characteristics—for example, a name or an accent—that seem to indicate race. From there, we might make assumptions about cultural traditions, geographical origins, economic status, or any number of things. Conversely, awareness of culture, geography, or economics might prompt our recognition of race.

Race is not reducible to any of the infinite varieties of human features I take in when I observe my own or another person's physical being. But, because we can—or, presume we can—recognize race by such visible indications, it is a short, often unconscious step to assume that race simply *is*: that race exists on its own, as an autonomous, self-evident category. Indeed, "common sense" has long held that race is natural.[2] Of course, the particular form common sense takes changes. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries racial common sense rooted naturalness in ontology: God created separate and distinct human races. In the nineteenth century common sense was increasingly informed by pseudo-biologies: race was a scientific category by which groups of people could be distinguished. In the twentieth century notions of innate differences were increasingly transposed onto culture (though,

in truth, biological common sense remains prevalent as well): innate cultural traits exist among different groups.[3]

Biblical typologies have long since been dropped by all but the most right wing Christian groups. Since the 1950s, most scientists acknowledge that no biological similarity will be found between one white person and every other white person greater than that which might be found between that white person and a Latino/a, Chinese or African American person.[4] And, claims about innate cultural differences, too, have been radically contested. Despite the common sense of race, which most of us in the United States have been socialized into and carry with us on a day-to-day basis, race is not something that just *is*.

To say that race is not a natural category is not to say, however, that it is not real. Say that same person a scientist cannot identify as having a biological race walks down the street late one night. If that person has physical features generally recognized as "white," a passing police officer might slow down to make sure that person is not lost. If that same person has features recognized as "Latino/a" or "Black," he might find this same officer slows down and asks him for identification or interrogates her based on the assumption that, out alone at night, she must be engaged in illicit activity.[5]

Race is very real. It is just that the physical characteristics by which we tend to recognize it are not significant in and of themselves. Instead, these characteristics *become* significant as they are given meanings in the social realm. In the earlier example, race is created at the juncture between certain bodily features and the activity of racial profiling— profiling one person for protection, another for harassment. In theoretical terms, it is less the case that particular physical attributes mean one *is* white—a preexisting, essential racial category—and more that repeated and institutionally supported police responses to certain physical attributes invest those attributes with significance and particular meanings.[6] In the dynamic convergence of various systems, corporate and individual activities, beliefs and behaviors—all undergirded with power—white, as a racial category, comes to be.[7]

The contrast I am mapping here is roughly the contrast between essentialist notions of race and notions of race as a social construction. Michael Omi and Howard Winant define essentialism as follows: "Essentialism . . . is understood as belief in real, true human essences, existing outside or impervious to social and historical context."[8] Essentialism would understand race to be something inherent in one's being.

In contrast, a constructionist view would identify race as follows:

> [R]ace [is] an unstable and "decentered" complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle . . . . [R]*ace is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by referring to different types of human bodies*. Although the concept of race invokes biologically based human characteristics (so-called "phenotypes"), selection of these particular human features for purposes of racial signification is always and necessarily a social historical process.[9]

Different constructionist theories define race in slightly different ways, but they share a fundamental emphasis: race is more result than cause.[10] Race is produced at the intersections of social (legal, cultural, economic, political, etc.) processes, legacies of history and human activities. Race is a sociopolitical reality.

To state that race is socially constructed is not a unique or original claim. At this scholarly juncture, across many disciplines, this theoretical perspective is prevalent.[11] As to how we should assess the significance of this claim, however, there is less consensus. (Yet, the stakes for how we do so are very high.) Moreover, the implications of this claim for the concrete and daily realities of human lives is not self-evident. How should a discipline such as Christian social ethics, which *must* be concerned about such realities—and with justice-making—leverage such a seemingly abstract and potentially misleading notion?

The purpose of this chapter is to create a theoretical lens through which it can be recognized that our very coming to be as white racial selves takes place through ideological and material social processes— a "coming to be" that creates what I call the moral crisis of "being white." The same lens will also make it possible to see that addressing this moral crisis, from the particularities of our racial social location, requires engaging in activities that respond to the same processes by which we come to be white in the first place. This lens will frame the subsequent work of the book, in which I engage in analysis that identifies those processes at several historical junctures and claim that there exists an imperative of reparations.

The work of the first half of the chapter, then, is to assess the possibilities opened up by constructionist notions of race. To do so, I will explore in general terms the dangers of racial essentialism, as well as the dangerous conclusions sometimes drawn in response to the notion that race is a social construct. I will then argue that constructionism is

best leveraged to inquire into the historical–material realities that are embedded in and that produce racial categories, as well as to turn our attention to race as a site of human agencies. Leveraging constructionism in this way makes it possible to recognize how deeply white racial identities are bound to white supremacy. In the second half of the chapter, I will identify the manner in which constructionist theories of race throw into sharp relief (and reveal as a real moral challenge) the particular problem inherent in the constitution of white racial identities. I will close the chapter by assessing the ways in which this problem creates roadblocks for antiracist practice by white people. Here, I will give particular attention to scholarship that has sought to address this challenge and identify gaps in such attempts—gaps that, I argue, elucidate being white as a moral crisis.

I do not presume to provide a comprehensive theoretical analysis of what race is; nor do I claim that race can or should be distilled to a few key features or simple ideas. I agree with Paul Gilroy who writes that one advantage to understanding race as an "open political category" (perhaps an emerging and better kind of racial common sense) is that it is able to accommodate various meanings.[12] With good reason scholars have written volumes on the phenomenon, each taking a slightly different approach to articulating how race happens, when it happens, why it happens, and what are the best theoretical frameworks for making sense of it.[13]

The work of theory is always an attempt to describe realities that are more complex, layered, and multivalent than mere scholastic reflection can possibly contain. And, I am clear that I offer here not *the* paradigm but *a* paradigm. My purpose for theory is not to create an impeccable model for capturing reality. It is to identify and secure ground from which moral and political agency can be launched for resistance and disruption of white supremacy. In what follows, the elements I highlight as significant in constructionist race are chosen in order to lay out general parameters within which and by which race-as-construct is best understood for Christian social ethics.

Race: The Concept and the Reality of It

Race as an Essence: The Dangers

Racial essentialism has been one mode by which white supremacy has functioned in the sociopolitical realm. Essentialist projects have been and remain responsible for virulent and damaging manifestations of

white supremacy. This is a primary reason why identifying race as a social construct is important.

In *Race and Manifest Destiny* (1981), for example, Reginald Horsman traces the transmutation of English colonists' notions of being religiously chosen (in their move to the "New World") into notions of being politically chosen (destined and special) as they became U.S.-Americans. From the Revolutionary War forward, he writes, this political chosenness, which always meant being chosen over and against-others was increasingly expressed in racial terms. Horsman writes:

> In the first half of the nineteenth century many in the United States were anxious to justify the enslavement of the blacks and the expulsion and possible extermination of the Indians. The American intellectual community . . . fed European racial appetites with scientific theories stemming from the supposed knowledge and observation of blacks and Indians.[14]

Pseudo-intellectual inquiry documented the "essential" natures of Native Americans and Blacks—natures presumably innate to these distinct "races." Particular, innate characteristics explained and legitimated these peoples being slated for extermination and enslavement.

Such white supremacist racial ideology did not only coalesce in relation to people of African descent or Native Americans. Supposed observation of "others" was accompanied by the emergence of (mythological) notions of white Americans' descent from an ancient and eminent "Anglo-Saxon" political heritage; such presumed descent was one component of the claim for "a distinct 'American' race, composed of the best Caucasian strains."[15] This distinct American (white) "race" was innately and uniquely equipped to rule and lead. It was inevitable, by way of its racial heritage, that this race would expand westward across the North American land-base and be a "civilizing" force not only here but, eventually, in (colonizing) expansions abroad. Here, we have one glimpse into both the logic of racial essentialism and its deadly use.

Essentialism is an intricate mechanism of the apparatus of subjugation. In a sense, it is the ideological grease of white supremacy's wheels; as such it has multivalent effects. Essentialism ascribes certain (superior/inferior) characteristics, behaviors, or qualities to particular racial groups. These become the basis for all kinds of social atrocities. Simultaneously, essentialism obfuscates the political, economic, and social activities responsible for atrocities. It presents the social order that

results from such activities as inevitable, as natural, as simply "the ways things are" or must be. (In Horsman's example, by overtly invoking ontological, historical, and biological notions of racial "destiny.")

Essentialism further sustains white supremacy by explaining disparate social realities in terms of natural differences among groups. Disparities in health, economic status, and virtually every other index of social well-being between Native Americans and whites[16] become "Native Americans are not fit for modern society." Or, to use Ian Haney López's example, residential segregation, "create[s] and maintain[s] the poverty and prosperity that society views as *the results of innate racial character* rather than as *predictable consequences of social and specifically legal discrimination*."[17] In other words, the very existence of residential segregation (which is a result of various policies and practices and entrenches uneven distribution of wealth) functions to support whites' sneaking suspicion that poverty among Blacks and Latinos is a result not of the skewed social structures and histories of unequal access, which actually create such segregation, but of the fact that "they don't work as hard," or "they don't value education the way we do."

Ideologies that declare certain people abject enable the process of subjugation and a subjugated state feeds the ideological abjection.[18] Essentialism naturalizes both the concept of race (in a white supremacist key) and the inequities among the groups it helps to racialize.[19]

The claim that race is natural is, thus, no mere theoretical abstraction or ideological ploy. As ideological grease, essentialism plays a key role in the *reification* of race—namely, the process by which the idea of race takes on *material* form.[20] In other words, in addition to naturalizing race and inequity, essentialism takes part in actually making race real and in giving it concrete, material meanings.

Reification occurs in any number of arenas in public life through any number of modes. A nonlinear and thoroughly self-referential process, Haney López breaks down how reification happens vis-à-vis the law—though, again, discourses that give race meaning are at work in infinite social venues.[21] (1) "Normative" (dominative) meanings are attached to race, through legal discourse. (These might include "evaluations of worth, temperament, intellect, culture," etc.[22]) (2) Legal discourse created/creates racial categories, namely, the law indicates which physical attributes "code" as what. "Appearances and origins are not White or non-White in any natural or presocial way," writes Haney López. The law has historically and arbitrarily named certain features as "White," "Black," "Yellow."[23] (3) Racial categories and their ascribed meanings are used to

render legal decisions of profound economic and political importance for various communities. Indeed, the "need" for "rules" that define presumably biological race come as a result of the decisions to *enact* disparate treatment of different groups.[24]

All three of these steps can be seen in the example of citizenship cases that Haney López analyzes. Until as recently as 1965 (1) only white racial groups (because this group presumably had superior innate characteristics) were eligible to become U.S. citizens; thus (2) anthropologists were regularly called to testify before the Supreme Court on whether particular groups of people (often Mexican and South Asian peoples) were white (is a light-skinned Mexican person white or does race lie in some other physical attribute in addition to skin color?); and thus (3) the Court could determine whether certain groups were eligible to become or forbidden from becoming U.S. citizens.

Constructed as it may be, therefore, race is both real and meaningful. Race in the United States has economic, political, social meanings even though the meanings supremacist discourses ascribe to race are false. As a result, "[r]ace is, at present, a rough but adequate proxy for connection to a subordinated community, . . ." *as well as to a subordinating community*.[25]

Race as a Social Construction: The Dangers

Duncan Kennedy's claim that race is a rough but adequate proxy—thus, real—is a good place to step back and assess the potential dangers of claiming race is a social construct. For, it is all too easy for theories debunking essentialism to become abstract. Simply put, it is one thing to claim that race is constructed and another matter entirely to make sense of the reality that people experience, recognize, and live race every day.[26]

Recognizing race-as-construct and essentialism's dangers does not make obvious what to do about white supremacy and concrete realities of racial oppression. When the presumption is made that it does, real problems result.

I want to address, therefore, a few tendencies that sometimes manifest in constructionist theorizing, which need to be avoided. Among those of us who find ourselves morally imperiled by how race comes to be (namely, among those of us who are white), there exists the temptation to say something like this: "Phew, if race is not essence or biology then race is somehow less real."[27] This response assesses the significance of a constructionist paradigm by wrongly concluding that race is more illusion than reality, does not exist or can be wished away.

This response is unacceptable because it evades the challenge of justice. To understand race as socially constructed neither makes white supremacy evaporate, nor causes my white skin to cease having real meaning in my social worlds. Moreover, such a response threatens to erase the agencies of communities of color, which have named and given meaning to racial identity in the activities of political and cultural resistances and creativities.[28]

At the level of scholarship, this tendency has other implications. Some scholarship assesses the significance of constructionist views as primarily indicating the need to get rid of essentialist race. This assessment correctly notes the role essentialism has played in white supremacy. However, to take as the *primary* learning of constructionism that essentialism is to be denounced is to risk making racial essentialism, rather than white supremacy, the main problem. This theoretical slippage results in equating the end of racial essentialism with the end of white supremacy. Such an equation misses the extent to which unjust material realities underlie essentialist ideologies—realities that will not simply disappear if we successfully banish essentialism.

Omi and Winant, for example, offer an otherwise excellent analysis of race in the United States. Yet, they argue the following: "A racial project can be defined as racist if and only if it *creates or reproduces structures of domination based on essentialist categories of race*."[29] The overall thrust of Omi and Winant's analysis, especially their helpful notion of racial formation projects, does not tend in the direction of such a reductive definition of racism. However, on its own, this definition does point toward the conclusion that so-called color-blind approaches to race would be legitimate, as would constructionist approaches that veer into naming race as illusion. Either conclusion would (and does) reproduce white supremacist social realities, just as structures of racial domination can result with no reference being made to race whatsoever. Because Omi and Winant would reject color-blind projects and the naming of race as an illusion, their definition of racism is not only insufficient, but is inconsistent with their own project.[30]

Equating essentialism and white supremacy also risks devolving into fixations on theoretical abstractions that, ultimately, do little to further the concrete project of dismantling racism. Philosopher Naomi Zack states it well: "The social reality of race is often physical in a way that overpowers the lack of biological foundation, which renders the lack of a scientific foundation for the concept of race a mere theoretical truth."[31] In other words, academics can deconstruct and reject essentialism in the most persuasive and passionate prose we can muster. But

the *truth* test is passed or failed in proportion to how our persuasion ultimately affects that person walking down the street late one night who is racially profiled because of the powerful physicality of the social reality of race. The mistake in each of the earlier instances is taking essentialist race as the cause of white supremacy rather than recognizing it as one piece of a supremacist apparatus; fingering essentialism as *the* problem, rather than as symptomatic of the real problem—which is white supremacy.

Another danger of making race-as-constructed a claim that is self-evidently liberating on its own terms exists in a political tendency that emerges when the entire freight of white supremacy is laid onto essentialist race. The tendency is for scholars and political discourses to conclude that any use of race as a category of analysis is inherently problematic.[32] Here, the use of race for the purpose of oppression is conflated with the use of race for amelioration. Such conflation precludes the necessary use of race in disrupting white supremacy and ameliorating the effects of racial injustice—for example, Affirmative Action.[33] It can be used also to dismiss resistance projects among communities of color—for example, the use of race as a the tactic of strategic essentialism in nationalist projects, or to support progressive identity politics.[34] Equating white supremacy with essentialism can lead to a thoroughly regressive politics.[35]

Perhaps what is most viscerally problematic about theoretical fixations on constructed race is a major bias or assumption carried in each of the earlier mentioned theoretical trajectories. Each, unwittingly or not, assumes a perspective in which race is construed exclusively as a negative. This assumption surrenders the definition, content, and use of race to white supremacy. Given its inextricability from white supremacy, caution around race is due. Yet, such flattening of race and white supremacy itself succumbs to a kind of essentialism; hegemony and oppression are rendered essences of *race*—"existing outside of and impervious to social and historical context." Such a position needs to be rejected. It presupposes an insufficient notion of race. It confuses white supremacy with race.[36] It inherently discounts or ignores the significance of racial identities in various communities of color. Moreover, the tendencies named earlier misdirect the pragmatic and ethical implications of recognizing that race is a social construction. They make it difficult to leverage constructionism toward liberative ends. And it is liberation, after all, that is the goal: theorizing race needs to be done in a matter that assists in the creation of communities of subversive resistance.[37]

Historical–Material Meanings and Human Agency

The problem is not race, the problem is white supremacy. The problem is not essentialism *per se*, the problem is essentialism's role in a supremacist history and present. As David R. Roediger writes, race's "biological inconsequence and superficiality" must not be confused "with the deep inequalities it structures."[38] The question with which an ethicist must be concerned is: What are the implications of understanding "race is a social construction" in the context of the pragmatic goal of undermining or disrupting white supremacy?

Despite the dangers signaled in the previous section, claiming that race is socially constructed is important. Not least, it makes it possible to think of race in terms of process, change, power, politics, instability, acting, and being acted upon. Their problematic definition of racism aside, Omi and Winant provide a large-frame theory of race and society, which secures an understanding of race that can be leveraged for political ends. In describing race as "unstable" and "decentered," they emphasize race as an inherently political and social *process* with which individuals and communities interact and by which they are acted upon. The selection of "so-called 'phenotypes' " for "racial signification" is merely one aspect in the work of a "racial formation project." "A racial project," write Omi and Winant, "is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines."[39] These processes and interactions are never random; nor do they take place on neutral terrain. In the United States they have been hegemonic and dominative: oppressing some while privileging others. At the same time, the notion of racial formation also makes it possible to consider projects that do the work of resistance and seek to be counterhegemonic.

De-naturalizing the phenomenon of race, recasting it as social and political project, urges us to think in terms of the following: where race is being invoked, one can be sure a racial formation project and some organization or redistribution of power is lurking about. It is critical, therefore, to recognize and understand not only race, but the formation project of which it is a part.

This framework has major implications. First, once it is recognized that race is a contested and changing sociopolitical reality, it becomes possible to interrogate its historical–material meanings. Second, constructionist theories make it possible to identify the many ideological and material processes—economic, political, religious, legal, cultural—through which race comes to be. Third, such theories reveal race as a

site of dynamic human agency. Fourth, claiming race as a construction creates an insistence that analysis must constantly be attuned to the relational dimensions of race.

The historical–material meanings of race themselves are the appropriate focus for a project in social ethics concerned about racial justice, which may not be permitted the luxury of focusing upon "mere theoretical truth[s]."[40] Zack cites one example of a moment in which race was given meaning: as the importation of slaves into the United States was made illegal, legal proscriptions gave race meaning by designating children of enslaved women "black."[41] Essentialist discourses were certainly at play in this moment in order to justify this legal proscription. Claims about innate inferiority or the "natural" ability of those designated "black" to work in the hot sun were used to justify their forced servitude. But, a constructionist paradigm, rather than being important exclusively or primarily for debunking such discourses (though such debunking is important), is important for enabling race's historical–material meanings to come into view. Namely, the *meaning* of race in this historical moment, if one was socially identified as "black," was inherited lifelong enslavement. If one was socially identified as "white," the meaning was social and political (if not, necessarily, economic) freedom.

Relatedly, in becoming concerned with race's historical–material meanings, a constructionist lens can unmask the ideological and material processes at work in securing such meanings and constituting race in a manner supportive of white supremacy. It becomes possible to understand how race as a social category functions in a white supremacist social order and how white supremacy is structured and sustained by way of the (racialized) bodies we inhabit and the behaviors we enact. This understanding raises moral issues and becomes crucial for concocting effective strategies of resistance.

Zack's example demonstrates perfectly how race *functions* in terms of Omi and Winant's definition of race:

> Race [here, the category "black"] is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts [the relationship between elites and the non-elite masses over whom elites wanted to maintain control (one manifestation of which was the decision to make enslavement a permanent caste in the social strata)] and interests [European colonial landholders' desire to maximize economic profits] by referring to different types of human bodies [those which had dark skin or who could be identified genealogically as being of African descent].[42]

If the historical–material meaning of the racial category "black" in this moment was enslavement, it can also be seen that race as a social category functioned as the meeting point at which legal discourses linked particular social and material realities to particular physical attributes.

For such linkages to be effective required various forms of collusion. Race's successful function in this example depended acutely on the behaviors of bodies called "white" (upon which was conferred the meaning "free"). In terms of strategic thinking, therefore, if physical differences were invoked to secure such concrete meanings, then activities undermining the behaviors that were presumed to follow such physical markers would have had the potential to rupture the linkages. For example, in this case, if people with lighter-skinned bodies (free) could not have been relied upon to return to the so-called owners those people recognized by their darker-skinned bodies as legally "enslaved/able," for instance, when on of those persons may have attempted to escape, the way race was supposed to function would potentially have been derailed. Such strategic thinking begins to elucidate a third point of inquiry made available in constructionist race: agency.

Race's meanings have changed throughout U.S. history, as demonstrated by implications of Zack's example that she does not pursue—that is, the role of human agency in giving race meaning and securing its successful function. The processes by which race is given meaning are never one directional. Supremacist processes do not simply act on human lives; nor do the ideological and material processes that constitute race function without human input. Individual, corporate, and institutional human activities are also *always* at work creating race, altering the manner in which race functions, and participating in giving it meaning.

Human agency is, perhaps, most obvious in considering the activities of communities of color, which have given race meaning in the process of creating unique and rich cultural traditions and forging communities of political resistance. " 'Race' must be retained as an analytic category," writes Paul Gilroy, "because it refers investigation to the power that collective identities acquire by means of their roots in tradition."[43] In *"There Ain't No Black In the Union Jack"* (1991) Gilroy documents agencies of diasporic Black communities and his work demonstrates race to be a site of cultural and political productivity. Gilroy's analysis is useful for mining the paradigm of constructed race I am using here. He describes this productivity as emerging out of human agency interacting with the social structures that create race: "Racial meanings are . . . a salient feature in a general process whereby culture mediates the world of agents and the structures which

are created by their social praxis."[44] Race has been, and remains, an ever changing but always live site of human meaning making and moral, political, cultural agencies.

The designation given to "black" by a white supremacist social order, therefore—as devastating, violent, and subjugating such designation was and is—has never been the sum total of the meaning of Black. As a heuristic strategy we might turn back to Zack's example. If the pragmatic meaning of "black" (as a racial category created for white supremacy's purposes) existed in the historical moment described earlier, so did the meaning-making human agencies that constituted Black (as a resistant racial identity). These might be recognized as emerging in the subversive activities of Harriet Tubman, the composition of the Spirituals, the infinite ways in which peoples of African descent survived and resisted the deadly legal enforcements of a white world. Such activities turned white supremacist notions of "black" in on themselves to forge Black identities, giving race different meanings than a white supremacist world would give it.[45]

Nor was the designation of white as not enslaveable, or as free, the sum total of the meaning of white here. Legal discourse could only declare that white meant free and black enslaved. As noted earlier, various mechanisms were necessary to enforce such a declaration. These mechanisms included formal state violence but also, and perhaps more importantly, complicity of the masses of peoples with "white" skin in sustaining such stratification. Human agency was thus here at work too. (Im)moral and political agency gave "white" (and White!) meaning in the activity of those writing the laws, enslaving human beings, refusing harbor to Blacks who ran away, importing cotton produced by slave labor, and keeping silent in the face of, or being overtly compliant with, such activities.

Finally, recognizing race as a social construct insists that analysis remain focused on the thoroughly relational nature of race. Race is relational both as collectivities occupy certain postures in relationships to economic structures, and by way of the social relations between and among groups. Janet Jakobsen writes that the often-invoked values of "diversity" or "difference" fail in alliance politics and progressive coalition building because they do not "articulate the relations of production which create that diversity."[46] The connections that exist among groups put us in inequitable structural relations with one another—structures that cannot simply be ignored in the jump to celebrating differences. Assessments of the significance of constructed race must keep front and center, therefore, the various relations of

productions through which race has been made historically and socially significant for various collectivities.

Similarly, Roediger has framed nonbiological, non-fixed race as best understood as "produced in social relations over time."[47] Groups of people are defined racially vis-à-vis one another. And, the social relations among groups position them differently in relationship to economic structures and other axes of sociopolitical power. Such production is historical and social. Its relational nature is well described in the previous example—whites were racialized, in part, by way of their behaviors in relationship to people of African descent.

In the United States, amid various racial formation projects, white supremacy has reigned. As Roediger puts it, "the central political implication arising from the insight that race is socially constructed is the specific need to attack *whiteness* as a destructive ideology [and, I would add, as an unjust materiality] rather than to attack the concept of race abstractly."[48] Historical–material meanings, social processes, human agency, and race's relational nature are all important keys to leveraging the significance of race as socially constructed for thinking in ethical terms, especially for thinking about white people and racial justice. They make it clear that in a white supremacist context, *race's meanings are utterly different for different groups*. The processes by which white supremacy is structured anticipate and seek to exact different behaviors and loyalties from different bodies in order to function. And, race represents *qualitatively different expressions of moral and political agencies*. In every case, these differences become the crux of ethical analysis. To answer, in part, the question I posed at the beginning of this section: The implications of constructed race for Christian social ethics is the possibility of making the violent historical, economic, and political *differential* among racialized groups (including the various human agencies at work in that differential), rather than a universal and theoretically abstract rejection of racial essentialism, *the* moral and political problem.

"Connecting Our Faces to Our Souls": Becoming White Racial Subjects

In light of the preceding analysis, an additional analytical focus is beginning to emerge. To speak of a differential is to begin to speak about the importance of racial identities. As Haney López writes: "race must be understood as a *sui generis* social phenomenon in which

contested systems of meaning serve as the connections between physical features, faces, and personal characteristics. In other words, social meanings connect our faces to our souls."[49]

Given my specific concerns here, a focus on a universalized notion of race as a constructed category is less useful than is a focus on how particular peoples are racialized through the interactions between systems and individual/corporate agency, both in relations among groups and to relations of production. For the moment then I want to turn away from race as a category writ large to the particularities of racial identities—to racial differences.

The nature of racial formation projects is such that social processes and the selves who are racialized through interactions with such processes dynamically shape and affect one another. They must, therefore, always be understood in relation to one another. In the perpetual interactions between meanings, processes, agencies, and relations—out of which race as a category comes to be—the social world and the racial subject (or, the racial self) are *co-produced*. It is in this coproduction of social and subject that the ethical rubber hits the road in the question of white folk and racial justice. For, at the site of race, it is possible to query not only how racial subjects are constituted, but more pointedly how dominant racial subjects are constituted. In other words, what becomes available is an epistemology for thinking about particular racial identities. In this epistemology selfhood itself—individual and corporate—is rendered a deeply ethical, moral issue.

To restate what I argued in the first half of this chapter, white supremacist oppressions are enacted through the law, state violences, the machinations of capitalism, geographic expansionism, and more, while bodies, physicalities, and so-called essences are referenced in various discourses. These enactments and references construct, materialize, and reify a social category we call race. Human agency participates in this process in a myriad of ways—sometimes in disruption or subversion of these processes, and sometimes reinforcing and enabling them.

Racial differences become important at this point. As race is constructed, "expressive lines of connection" are drawn between oppressive actions and certain bodies, which make *particular racial identities* socially recognizable.[50] (These lines of connection, from bodies to the sociopolitical, also secure race's historical–material meanings.) Human subjects are, thus, racialized—we become *racial* subjects—through the same ideologies and material processes that make race a social–political reality.

Let me be clear what I mean by racialized. Racialized indicates, here, both the external significations of race as socially recognizable, as well as the varied experiential and internal manifestations of race in individual and communal lives. By experiential and internal, I do not suggest any notion of race that exists a priori, as an internal essence. Rather, I suggest that we are utterly and fundamentally social creatures. The social dimensions of our existence as body-selves means we are thoroughly shaped and formed by social reality—including the racial–social.[51] This is not so in any determinative sense. We might live into and respond to social reality in myriad and infinite ways. But the realities in which our lives are embedded, and through which our selves come to be, remain always pervasive and full of impact.

In her arguments against essentializing sex/gender, Judith Butler writes, "Insofar as power operates successfully by constituting an object domain, a field of intelligibility, as a taken-for-granted ontology, its material effects are taken as material data or primary givens." Butler continues by saying that when material *effects* are taken as *givens*, or as an "epistemological point of departure . . . this is a move of empiricist foundationalism that . . . successfully buries and masks the genealogy of power relations by which [an effect] is constituted."[52] Constructionism, of course, refuses empiricist foundationalism. It provides instead an epistemological framework through which materiality—*concrete reality*—is recognized to be an effect of power. Materiality here denotes not only the material realities that tend to adhere to being part of a particularly sexed, gendered, raced, and classed group. It denotes the very materiality of our bodies as sexed, gendered, raced, classed bodies. Quite literally, Butler argues that our *particular* bodies are materialized by power.

Race and sex/gender do not function in the same way. The "expressive lines of connection" by which particularly raced bodies are materialized are different than those by which particularly sex/gendered bodies are materialized. However, Butler's insight regarding particularity as an effect of power brings to the fore the coproduction of the subject and the social in a manner that holds true for race. It conveys the densely social nature of what racial identities and identifications *are*: our selves, as racial selves, are constituted by the processes and movements immanent in the social realm.[53]

Recognizable race, racial identities and identifications, and the processes by which we become racial subjects—to insist on the most live, dynamic, and dialectically nuanced of the term "identity" (nothing fixed or static here)—are effects of power. They emerge via a genealogy

of power relations that are completely immanent in social reality. According to Michel Foucault, our subjectivity is so thoroughly an effect of the "economy of power relations" that we can actually understand power by asking about ourselves.[54] The most appropriate question to inquire into how power functions becomes: "How are subjects constituted?"[55]

For thinking about how the dominant racial subject is constituted in ethical/moral terms, this is an epistemology that makes seismic ripples. For, when we begin to ask "how is the white racial subject constituted?" we recognize how deeply our racial subjectivities are embedded in white supremacist power relations. Racial injustice and white supremacy begin to register in a fundamentally different key for white people than do invocations of racism as a moral evil to be eschewed (which, of course, it also is).

As racial identities—like race itself—are denaturalized, inquiry can turn to the processes by which our own white racial particularity has come to be and continues to come to be. Social processes have everything to do with "who" we *are*. It is unavoidably the case that the mechanisms of white supremacy that construct race are part of our very constitution as racial beings. Those of us who "are" white, are so as white has become recognizable (and, real) through processes and relations that take place on white supremacist terrain and that create, enact, and sustain white supremacy.

I do not mean here, only or primarily, white as in the arbitrarily selected, legally codified, and presumed physicality of whiteness. I mean being racialized as white in the sense I described earlier: being white indicates a socially recognizable and politically significant racial identity (that does have to do with the materiality of our bodies) that emerges and is made real through the interactions of meanings, processes, agencies, and relations. All of that which signifies racial identity is part of our experiential and internal formation as body-selves. To be white in such a context, therefore, is to exist socially in a state of profound and fundamental moral crisis that goes to the heart of our selfhood.

Why use the language of moral to describe this crisis? Our becoming white racial subjects takes place in the context of a social reality that is thoroughly moral in nature: our existence as relational beings unfolds within a moral order; and thus all the processes of social reality are intrinsic to our *moral* formation as human selves.[56] The fault lines of white identity, which emerged in the three stories I shared in the introduction, exist precisely because the relations of production by which white comes to be are fundamentally immoral.

There are many dimensions to this crisis. Our white bodies are materialized by unjust power with attendant violent social histories. White as a racial identity is inextricably bound with the same processes that enact white supremacy. Historically, white has been identified by, and those of us so categorized have regularly identified with, those processes. White as it indicates a racial "group" is a category of domination because the social and economic relations that produce race in the United States are subjugative relations created largely on white supremacy's terms. White racial subjectivity is, therefore, constituted through hegemonic inscriptions and utterances that are both launched by supremacist matrices and reiterated to sustain those matrices. Each of these meanings are invoked in the statement: being white is a moral crisis.

To "be white" but to denounce and "reject" the relations of production that produce whiteness is, therefore, always and only a partial response to racism and white supremacy.[57] For, the racial self is being continually re-formed and reconstituted by white supremacist processes, even if one attempts to continually denounce such processes.

None of this means one cannot dissent. Nor am I making a totalizing, deterministic (and hopeless) argument. In fact, as we shall see, rather than resulting in a deterministic assessment of reality that makes the possibility of dissent impossible, understanding how the white racial self is constituted actually provides us targets for disrupting supremacist processes; helps us figure out how to dissent most effectively. But, first, there is a moral gravity to who we are as racial beings that we must attempt to absorb. This epistemology makes it difficult to ignore the gravity of our situation.

The moral crisis of being white is a visceral, daily, *real* state of existence. To recognize processes of white supremacy as inherent to our very (white racial) selfhood is to make the need for language of moral crisis crucial. Such language acknowledges the actual relationship of white people to racial justice in the context of a society in which sociopolitical race is real, will continue to be a significant aspect of human experience into the foreseeable future, and in which the overwhelming arc of U.S.' racial projects is one of "racial dictatorships" held in place through coercion and violence by those called white.[58] Moreover, it provides a particular framework for thinking about relationships of white people to racial justice: it names a crisis embedded in our experience and existence as (always racialized) body-selves, which cannot simply be addressed by ideological, cognitive, or even activist postures disavowing the legitimacy of white supremacy.

No abstract postures or denunciations of racism are going to help us here.

Another way of asking Foucault's question "How has the subject been constituted?" is simply to ask "Who *are* we?" I submit that for white people the answer to this question is this: peoples whose humanity and moral self-hood have been deeply and fundamentally marred by whiteness. It is not only that we have been and are racist. It is not only that we are unjustly privileged and insulated by white supremacy, which makes us part of an oppressive system. It is that we are constituted as racial selves by all of this.

The political and moral implications of this question is that potential pathways toward racial justice must necessarily be pursued as complex lines of inquiry into (for the purpose of response to) our racialization as subjects. The question for those seeking justice and political transformation of power relations in Foucauldian terms might be "how might the subject be otherwise constituted?" But we might put it more simply, "who might we become and how?"

Critical Studies of Whiteness: The Psychosocial Crisis, The Political Crisis

To speak of being white as a moral crisis is to bring ethical frameworks into scholarship wrestling with the relationship of white people to race, racism, and white supremacy in the United States. Many such works were published in the last decade or two—works that seek to address the challenge of enabling white people to engage in antiracist practice. Christian social ethics as a field has not, to a significant extent, taken up methodological frameworks of critical studies of whiteness.[59] Yet, it has much to offer and to gain from this work. Thus, I engage two important threads of scholarship: sociological/psychological literature concerned with white racial identity development and historical works that explore whiteness as a phenomenon by which people have identified (and might potentially disidentify) with white as a racial category. I engage these scholarships, first, because each thread articulates dimensions of the moral crisis of being white that are important to establish before moving forward. Second, a theoretical (and social–political!) gap exists between these two important threads. The gap is indicative of the significant problems of coming into white antiracist practice and signifies a point at which a notion of moral crisis may prove helpful. Ultimately, I will argue, bringing these two together in the notion of moral crisis is suggestive for thinking toward appropriate routes of

response to white supremacy by white people. And, here is where work in ethics can be of particular use.

"Positive White Racial Identity"

The first body of work takes up the impact that being socialized into a white racial hierarchy has on individual and communal racial identity development. The works I consider here argue that the socialization of white people renders white individuals and the white community ill-equipped to understand race or participate against racism.[60]

In *"Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?,"* (1997) Beverly Daniel Tatum clarifies the developmental impact of race and racism on children and teenagers. Tatum analyzes challenges that inhere in racial identity development due to being socialized into an ideology of color-blindness while experiencing a reality in which race does matter and in which racism is so pervasive that, as she says, "[it] is like smog in the air."[61] Tatum explicates different tasks for coming into a healthy racial self. She writes, "While the task for people of color is to resist negative societal messages and develop an empowered sense of self . . . the task for Whites is to develop a positive White identity based in reality, not on assumed superiority."[62]

Tatum's concern with "positive White identity" comes from her acknowledgment that some stages of white racial identity development present real impediments to resisting racism. Obviously, the stage in which whites absorb notions of their racial self as superior is an impediment. But, Tatum also demonstrates problems presented by the evasion of the significance of race white people enact at some development stages (when they presume to embrace "color-blindness," e.g.), as well as the "'guilty White liberal' persona" that sometimes manifests when whites do recognize racism.[63]

Tatum articulates the need for a positive White identity not merely for white people's own sake. Rather, she argues persuasively that without such identity relationships across lines of racial difference will remain all but impossible and white people will remain largely unable to think, work, and act against racism. Tatum is clear that only active incorporation of antiracist perspectives into one's notion of self and view of the world—which includes an unwillingness to collude when one encounters racism—can legitimately be called a positive White identity.[64]

This analysis dovetails with that of psychologist Janet Helms. Helms, too, is concerned with dangers white racial identity can present. "For racism to disappear in the United States, White people

must take responsibility for ending it . . .," she writes.[65] But, to come to a place of responsibility whites must work through several debilitating stages of identity. She identifies the "contact" stage, in which one has not yet encountered moral dilemmas caused by racism and expresses "positive feelings" about racial fairness in the United States; "disintegration" where one acknowledges differences in how people are treated according to race and experiences inner dissonance and discomfort as a result; "reintegration" where, in part to relieve such dissonance and discomfort, one accepts beliefs in white superiority and behaves toward people of color with avoidance, exclusion, discrimination, or violence.[66] Each of these stages is obviously antagonistic to antiracist postures.

Two other stages manifest growth toward responsibility, though still impeded. At the "Pseudo-Independent" stage one questions superior/inferior assumptions, recognizes racism as something white people perpetuate, but experiences feelings of isolation as a result of having "rejected negative white identity, but not yet [having] moved into a positive white identity."[67] "Guilt, anger, anxiety" are often present here.[68] It is common for white people never to move beyond and often to regress from this stage. The fifth stage is "Immersion/Emersion." Here, one asks, "who am I racially?" and "who do I want to be?" immersing oneself in the struggles and "positive aspects of whiteness."[69]

Helms is invested in white people developing into "Autonomy." Here, one is "aware of the complexity of racism and other forms of oppression" and experiences the "absence of any need to denigrate or idealize people based on group membership."[70] One becomes grounded in a "non-racist status" such that one has no need for people of color to "validate [one's] 'nonracist' status."[71]

In *Learning to be White* (1999), Thandeka also examines the crippling effects of "learning to be white" in a white supremacist social order.[72] She begins by pondering why white people are reticent to use the word white to describe themselves. In "The Race Game" she challenges white people, for one week, in every verbal reference to themselves and others who are white, to use the descriptor "white" aloud.[73] Virtually everyone she encounters quits the Game within one day.[74] At the heart of this inability to play the Game, Thandeka claims, lies a history in which young children were shamed by their caregivers when they exhibited inclinations to embrace the "other" as readily as they would those who looked like themselves.[75] White people cannot self-describe as white because of the shame they associate with learning

to be white. Thandeka writes,

> the Game succeeds in indicting [white] families and communities because they were not-quite-good-enough to raise a child as human rather than white . . . . [The Game] is shameful because it reveals the differences within the child that it had to deny in order to become congruent with its own caretaking environment.[76]

Thandeka, Helms, and Tatum each argues a version of the notion that racial socialization in the United States leaves white people impaired in our ability to challenge racial hegemony. Their works unpack some of the social–psychological mechanisms that must be addressed in order to expand that ability.

Ruth Frankenberg's work in sociology takes up a set of questions similar to those of these psychologists. She observes that "Among the effects on white people both of their race privilege and of the dominance of whiteness are their seeming normativity, their structured invisibility."[77] Her project is to conduct in-depth interviews with white women with an eye toward bringing whiteness, with all of its particularity, into the room in an overt way.

Frankenberg works within a constructionist framework and defines race in terms substantively similar to those given by Omi and Winant.[78] She suggests three paradigms as operative in public discourse on race in the United States: (1) "essentialist racism" in which racial difference is understood in terms of superior/inferior; (2) "color-blindness" (the most prominent and "accepted" paradigm), which, in a racist society, necessarily results in color- and "power-evasiveness" by those who dominate[79]; and (3) "race cognizance," which recognizes difference and locates inequality in structures, not in racial characteristics (the least prominent, but most justice-producing discourse).[80]

Frankenberg examines individual white women's participation in maintaining whiteness even while they articulate genuine visions of racial equality. This phenomenon takes place because of the paradox of being positioned, by way of the sociopolitical realities of race, in a posture of dominance even while one holds real commitments to racial justice. This paradox leads interviewees toward evading their whiteness (as in paradigm two earlier) or feeling utterly determined by it.[81] Frankenberg finds that either of these self-understandings inhibits women's abilities to enact sustained and substantive antiracist behaviors. More urgent still, she finds "the absence of language with which to analyze in sufficiently complex fashion the relationship between the

white self and racism as a system of domination threaten[s] at times to generate not just confusion, but also anger and backlash."[82]

In many respects Frankenberg encounters the problem explored by Tatum. Many white folks articulate visions of racial equality in the liberal language of color-blindness, while actually experiencing something else by way of their racial social location. But, she also encounters something more complex. Her findings document women caught, in a sense, between paradigms two and three. Many of her subjects, including white women in multiracial families, manifest race cognizance in relation to others. They value, and identify as important, both differences and the cultures of people of color. Yet, as they do so, they cling to color- and power-evasive and/or guilt-laden notions of themselves.

Perhaps it is surprising to encounter scholarship in psychology in a project so thoroughly informed by critical theory and constructionist methods, but these works identify the depth of impact that social structures have upon who we are. Their psychological focus might be dismissed by critical theorists, but their explorations of the malformations involved in becoming white evoke a dimension important to this project and are a corrective to critical theory. Who we are as white racial selves is marred because of what it means to become white in a white supremacist social order. In a real sense, this scholarship articulates psychological dimensions of the moral crisis of being white (or, learning to be white). It assesses the fits and starts some white people go through in the attempt to come to non-superior, non-guilt-ridden, nonevasive notions of ourselves as racial beings (namely, as we recognize the constitution of ourselves as immoral and seek to become something else!).[83] It insists on the imperative of such fits and starts if whites are to become antiracist actors in the social realm, that is, if our selves are not to be, ultimately, determined by the white supremacist "smog" we breathe daily. These scholars argue that racial identity development is crucial for enabling white people "neither to evade the specter of racism nor to become mesmerized by it and thereby frozen into inactivity, but rather to engage systematically in the process of change."[84]

Yet, these works leave off where the most complex problems really begin. Each of these scholars are clear that behavior-changing regard for the realities of racial injustice must take place in order to be a healthy white racial self. But still, can someone who is white really ask, "who am I racially?" and "who do I want to be?" in a non-activist posture?[85] Should those who are and continue to be privileged by, insulated from the negative effects of, and materially enriched through white supremacy and its structures develop a "positive White racial identity"?

The importance of non-superior/inferior beliefs notwithstanding, what could such an identity mean? Race cognizance "signals autonomy of culture, values, aesthetic standards, and so on."[86] But, what would be an autonomy of white culture, white values, white aesthetic standards? Each of these are inherently infused with white supremacy's history.[87]

The very nature of whiteness requires that any *positive* notion of white identity itself, as white, step back from the racial–social reality implicit in our racialization (notice here, "racialization," not "socialization") as white people. Indeed, such stepping back seems evident in Tatum's remarks:

> We must all be able to embrace who we are in terms of our racial and cultural heritage, not in terms of assumed superiority or inferiority, but as an integral part of our daily experience in which we can take pride. But, as we see in these examples, for many White people who at this [guilt-laden] stage have come to understand the everyday reality of racism, Whiteness is still experienced as a source of shame rather than as a source of pride.[88]

To own and take responsibility for our racial heritage and culture? Yes. To recognize that we can choose to not be determined by it? Yes. To take pride in whiteness? No.

The insufficiencies of these paradigms is less the result of the scholarship, and more the result of the fractured and unjust social reality in which we exist.[89] Our constitution is every bit as much social and political as it is psychological. While our social/external constitution deeply impacts our internal selves, we cannot only address it in this one—for example, psychological—dimension.

Instead, the difficult challenge for we who are constituted as racial subjects by white supremacist processes is to reconstitute ourselves racially. This requires that we explicitly and implicitly take up, challenge, and disrupt the same multivalent processes by which we have already been constituted: social, political, psychological, spiritual; the same processes of which the psychological impediments identified here are a result (and then cause). Reconstituting ourselves as white racial subjects requires simultaneously reconstituting the political and social realities in and through which our psychologies are formed. While racial identity development theories give this claim a serious nod when they insist that antiracist postures and actions are necessary for healthy white identity, they do not make the same political and social ground by which we become white implicit to the very terms of their

discourse. They articulate an imperative dimension of the moral crisis of being white. They remain unable, however, to craft a multivalent response to that crisis—an inability revealed in Tatum's misleading language of "Whiteness as a source of pride."

We who are white, indeed, need ground to stand on that is non-guilt-laden (which is different than saying not guilty), nonevasive, and non-superior in order to act. But, no such ground exists at present apart from social and political activities. Rather, crafting such ground is our work. We must craft the ground for this reconstituted self through social and political activity that disturbs that which has constituted whiteness thus far, in ways that allow the possibility of something else coming forth. Such activity has everything to do with the potential for psychological health.[90]

"Treason to Whiteness is Loyalty to Humanity"

A second cluster of scholarship takes up matters of race from critical theory perspectives more akin to those primarily informing this book. Unlike concern with the socialization of white selves and its impact on white identity, these abolitionist-oriented works emphasize white as a fictive concept. They focus on the political and social nature of white-ness as an idea with which people ally themselves and that structures and secures injustice.

In *How the Irish Became White* (1995), Noel Ignatiev begins with the stated assumption that because race-as-biology leads to absurdities, it is best understood as a label. His historical interest is in the "connections between concepts of race and acts of oppression."[91] Ignatiev highlights, for example, the function of the concept of "white race" by tracing the history of Irish immigrants to the United States, peoples oppressed in their home country who became oppressors in the United States. He doc-uments the concrete moments in which the Irish used class, labor, and religion to prevent being permanently identified with Blacks in the U.S. racial order, and through which they gave their allegiance, instead, to the oppressor group, becoming white in the process. Ignatiev's analysis makes visible the complicity with oppression that is often rendered invisible when white as a racial category is viewed as a fixed reality or naturalized. It also leads him to advocate abolition of whiteness.

Theodore Allen works in a similar vein, emphasizing the function of the concept of race as a tool of social control. Suffice it to say here that Allen's historical analysis locates the emergence of white as a racial iden-tification in the move to secure huge economic profits by the ruling class in colonial U.S.-America and the concomitant need for mechanisms of

social control in order to do so. Allen's analysis also indicts whiteness in economic stratification, which seduces "so-called white" lower classes into giving their loyalty to rich, "so-called white" elites.[92]

A third notable work is *The Wages of Whiteness* (1991). Roediger documents the ways in which whiteness was woven into the formation of class identity during U.S. industrialization (1800–1865). Roediger is more careful than Allen or Ignatiev to avoid reducing racism to a tool of economic stratification. His work does not directly counter theirs, however. Rather, engaging Du Bois' "psychological wages of whiteness," he assesses the psychological and ideological mechanisms underlying white working-class racism. He traces identifications with whiteness, through minstrelsy and the rhetorics of union-organizing, for example, as means through which a cohesive identity was forged among members of the white working class.

Each of these scholars reads history to demonstrate not just aspects of what racial oppression looked like in the United States for 150 years, but the complex interplay between socioeconomic oppressions and race. They focus on the social and political nature of whiteness, recognizing the white race as a fictive notion and the decision to be or to become white as a choice to oppress. Because it represents contact points between false notions of race and acts of oppression, whiteness is the political target to be destroyed, and so-called whites need to disidentify with white as a racial category.

The activist result of this perspective is best represented in the motto of *Race Traitor*[93]: "Treason to Whiteness is Loyalty to Humanity." Ignatiev and John Garvey argue that if whiteness is constructed it can be deconstructed. Their polemics hinge so faithfully on racial constructivity that they argue whiteness works like a club. Individuals are given privileges in exchange for complicity. Skin color is the marker by which it is assumed one can be identified as loyal to the club. If enough individuals who look as if they should be loyal were to commit acts treasonous to whiteness, the category "white" would be destabilized to such an extent it would cease to function.[94] Treason needs to be committed at the points of contact between concepts of race and acts of oppression, in moments where loyalty is most expected.[95]

This body of scholarship ascribes to the deep-seated notion that to be white is to be inherently a part of unjust processes. It evokes and articulates the political–social dimension of the moral crisis. And, it is extremely helpful, both for its clarity about how the oppressive activities, behaviors, and beliefs through which one allies oneself with whiteness are at the heart of what it means to be white, as well as for

its clarion call for treason. Moreover, this scholarship is clear that addressing injustice must take place on social and political grounds.

Yet, there are two major insufficiencies in this scholarships (though, for the most part, I exclude Roediger from the following critiques). First, so thorough-going and dogmatic is the notion of whiteness as a fictive concept and social–political phenomenon that considering the ways the constitution of white racial subjects have actually formed those of us who are so-called whites (their language) is unthinkable. They take James Baldwin at his word: "As long as you think you are white, there's no hope for you."[96] They suggest, therefore, that whites must choose, clearly and simply, to disidentify with whiteness; they portray a cognitive and intellectual process belied by the complexities of such disidentification documented by the psychologists considered earlier.

Moreover, this paradigm is so dogmatic that, in its activist configuration, so-called whites are urged to refuse to identify as white in any context. Such identification is said to reify whiteness.[97] Despite its radical political goal, however, this refusal can look eerily like color-/power-evasion.[98] If people with white skin in a white supremacist social order are not white, what are they?

The second point at which insufficiencies emerge is in slippage between advocating treason to whiteness on the one hand and the abolition of race on the other. Ostensibly, the idea is that if enough so-called whites would be treasonous, whiteness would be abolished. Theoretical confusion over whether the construction of race is solely the work of white supremacy, or if it is a process of interaction between agencies and structures that renders whiteness fundamentally different from other forms of racialization, regularly manifests in these texts. This confusion results from use of the language "fictive" to refer to something that is a fictive *concept*, but is also a concrete, historical–material, daily *reality*. These scholars are clear they are not speaking of abolishing the racial identifications of peoples of color. Roediger writes, for example, the political target is whiteness not race and "whiteness is infinitely more false and thus more dangerous than blackness."[99] But whiteness is only false as an ideology, it is not false in reality. (Nor is blackness false.) Nonetheless, Garvey and Ignatiev have increasingly drifted toward a greater focus on the abolition of race than on abolishing whiteness— though they do see such abolition of whiteness as the primary responsibility of treasonous so-called whites.[100]

Each of the insufficiencies creates problems. Because Ignatiev and Garvey articulate whiteness as reducible to a phenomenon of oppression, they refuse to consider whether white, as a racial

identification, could become something else. This leaves them no recourse when queried (which, they frequently are) if whiteness is to be abolished; but if we're not interested in abolishing blackness, for example, what are those people who aren't Black going to be? Will "whites" be human and everyone else have a racial identification? Clearly this is not a viable position

Again, abolition of race starts to appear in the gap that is created as one advocates the abolition of whiteness without giving attention to who (or what) the people who have heretofore been constituted by whiteness might become. Either race has to be abandoned completely, with phenotypes ceasing to signify anything socially meaningful (abolition of race)—an option untenable to many peoples of color—or those peoples constituted by oppressive complicities become raceless whereas others remain particular (also, obviously problematic). A tendency toward romanticizing and appropriating cultures of communities of color necessarily enters here as well. Not only do whites already *not* have a justice-producing sense of identity to draw on (as the psychologists recognize), but in a strictly abolitionist paradigm no room is made for the possibility that those of us who are white might need one. In the gap we become woefully tempted to tack ourselves onto or to flat out appropriate the cultures and identifications of others.

Moreover, socialization is intrinsic to the multivalent political, social constructions of whiteness. If reflection on the socialization of white people is eschewed—for Garvey and Ignatiev consider such reflection to be nothing more than an introspective, reification of whiteness—one cannot be self-critical about what it means to *act* as a white body. White may be a fictive concept, but our bodies signify its social–political meanings, as well as secrete various, marred socio-psychological impacts of it regardless of where our cognitive, intellectual, and political allegiances lie.[101] This becomes especially obvious when white bodies seek to act in concert and solidarity with people of color. We may show the state we are disloyal to white supremacy. But, it is not beyond the realm of imagination that we may do so while being unable to function justly in multiracial communities of solidarity. I would not call this successful antiracist practice.

Being White While Refusing to Be White: The Moral Crisis Revisited

How are we, who are and have been *racialized*—not just socialized or politically allied—as white, to locate ground from which to act against

the same processes and relations of power that have already and are continually reconstituting us? This question is not a mere theoretical problem.

Between these two threads of scholarship concerned with the relationship of white people to race, racism, and white supremacy exists a significant gap. The gap is suggestive of real problems with coming into white antiracist practice. On the one hand, psychological frameworks are aware of the dangers of white people being/feeling so determined by whiteness and white supremacy that we cannot act against it. They argue the need for positive identities in response. In so doing they step back from the ongoing political–social constitutions of white selves, which renders such positivism an oxymoron. On the other hand, abolitionist frameworks do not recognize enough how deeply white people, as *people*, are impacted by whiteness and white supremacy. Seeing whiteness as created by allegiance to the concept of white, they argue the need for social–political disallegiance. They tend to overlook, however, the ongoing and real socio-psychological dimensions of racial constitution, which render a lack of critical self-awareness likely to reproduce white supremacist behaviors, gestures, and postures in the process of trying to act against the social–political category.

The moral crisis of being white is indicated in this gap and also offers one way to navigate it. The crisis is this: we are constituted by the very systems and processes against which we must act. Yet, we must have ground on which to stand—ground on which we recognize our selves as *not* fully determined by such systems—in order to act. These systems and processes make securing such ground implicitly difficult: our racialization as white racial selves is inextricable from such processes. Meanwhile, it is when and only when we act against these systems and processes that we, in fact, can begin to create such ground. We can only begin to step onto anything like a non-superior/evasive/guilt-laden terrain as we embody active resistance to whiteness. Yet, we must do so *only* as white racial selves, refusing to dissociate from the realities of our racial particularity, even with all the injustice this racial particularity signifies and manifests. We must, in other words, find ways to acknowledge that we "are white" while refusing at every turn to be white.

The tension between the political need to reject whiteness while not removing ourselves from white particularity is irresolvable in the current sociohistorical, political context. And, frankly, we should not attempt to resolve it—especially not in abstract terms. Rather, we would do well to consider here Marcia Riggs' mediating ethic. Instead of proclaiming an abstract goal and moving toward it, something both

sociopsychology and abolition do, a mediating ethic fixes attention on the tension-filled process.[102]

"Mediating means *living in tension with* rather than aiming at an end result . . .," writes Riggs.[103] Living with integrity amidst the complexity of sociohistorical realities requires that we not evade these realities but bring them to the table. Doing so is an intrinsically moral process:
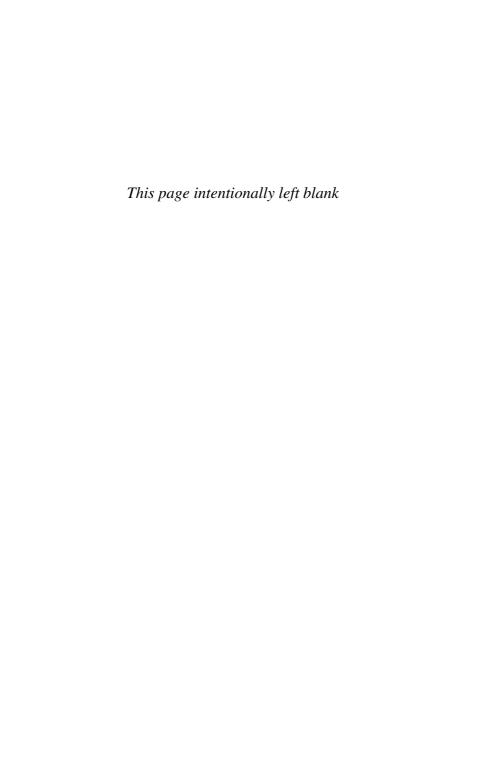
> a mediating ethical process presents opportunities to create moral responses to moral dilemmas. The responses are open-ended and thus enable us to envision our moral life as a process, as the ability to live and act within the tensions of our moral dilemmas.[104]

The mediating ethic, moreover, is sociohistorically and relationally contextual. In addition to refusing to jump to abstract, ultimate solutions—which result in injustice, as tensions are falsely covered up—at the center of a mediating ethic is "sociohistorical relationality." We are members of communities "because of sociohistoric realities," and relationality "stresses the need to assess critically sociohistoric realities as the basis for making strong ethical choices."[105]

In terms of the moral crisis of being white, a mediating ethic allows the paradoxical complexity of the need to be white while we refuse to be white, a complexity that, if resolved in abstract theoretical terms, can only perpetuate injustice (as seen in the dissatisfying conclusions to which both socio-psychological and abolitionist responses come). It does so by centering the sociohistorical realities of who we *are* as white racial selves, and the relationship to history and other racial groups that such being white represents. In the process we are refused options in the abstract and invited, instead, into the tension-filled process of seeking to act from and in our concrete sociohistorical reality and against those very forces by which we are constituted. We do so even as, given our constitution, our attempts will be imperfect and incomplete at best. A mediating ethic allows an ethical mode in which to recognize that we must, in fact, reconstitute ourselves psychologically, spiritually, and emotionally, precisely through reconstituting the social–political order.

These reconstitutions go hand in hand. One will never fully precede nor follow the other. Instead, we must act sociopolitically with the understanding that the process of becoming something new, reconstituting ourselves into transformation, will be gradual. Moral options, in an impossible paradoxical context, will only emerge over time as we live into a messy, complex, and rarely clear cut process. Understanding

being white as being in moral crisis, through Riggs' mediating ethic, navigates the gap present in scholarship on whiteness as it allows and requires all that has created and continues to create the crisis to be put on the table. We recognize that the paradoxes, challenges, and socio-historically particular opportunities are about who we are as white people. These constitute the very terrain from which and into which we must and do live as we seek to become something other than what we are and have been.

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2

A Colonial Settler Nation and A Slaveholding One

Framing indigenous people in the past allows the state to maintain its own legitimacy by disallowing the fact of indigenous peoples' nationhood to intrude upon its own mythology.

—Taiaiake Alfred

Racism rests on the ability to contain blacks in the present, to repress and to deny the past.

—Paul Gilroy

And this is the crime of which I accuse my country and my countrymen, and for which neither I nor time nor history will ever forgive them, that they have destroyed and are destroying hundreds of thousands of lives and do not know it and do not want to know it.

—James Baldwin

The only way to live into the tension of both being and refusing to be white is to take up and respond to the processes and structures by which we have become, and continue to become, white. We must do this if we are to participate in racial justice and against white supremacy from our particular social locations as white people. Responding to racism as a white problem means responding to the moral crisis, and pursuing complex lines of inquiry into what it means in concrete terms to "be white," for the purpose of responsive action.

Before we can act we have to know what those processes and systems are. We must know what the historical–material meanings of race in the United States are and have been. We must understand the processes by which white supremacy uses race to sustain itself. We

must analyze and assess how human agencies—and, in the context of a focus on how white supremacy is reinforced, white agencies especially—have given race meaning. And, we must do so while being acutely attentive to the relational nature of who we are as white racial selves: our racialization has everything to do with our relationships to other human beings and human groups in the United States. Because it is bound up in our very constitution as white racial selves, attention to and understanding of all of this is a prerequisite to being able to imagine/act/disrupt our way into reconstituting ourselves racially in an intensive process of racial justice seeking and moral transformation.

The processes through which race is constructed and through which we become white are multivalent and daily re-created. In order to understand them sufficiently, however, we must understand from whence these processes come. Racial identities carry with them histories and memories. White supremacy does not simply happen today in a moment; it is and has a historical legacy. Thus, it is to history that we now must turn.

The aim of this chapter is to identify some of the earliest formative practices in which race began to emerge and function, and through which white U.S.-Americans were racialized in (what became) this nation. These practices began almost two hundred years before the Revolutionary War, in our national "original sins"[1]: genocide, colonization, and slavery.

I begin by giving attention to methodological considerations in relationship to these histories. These considerations pertain to this chapter and to chapter three as well. They are important because they address the way historical narratives function in sustaining white supremacy. I then provide a historical overview and critical analysis of Native–English and African–English relations in seventeenth-century colonial Virginia. This historical work is necessarily non-comprehensive. It does not presume to argue a unique historical claim. Rather, it is intended to identify, by employing the conceptual framework established in chapter one, concrete realities implicit to and human agencies formative of white racialization. After setting the general historical context, I engage in critical analysis of the workings of legal and religious discourses, practices of imperialism and enslavement, and rapacious economics in English–African–Native relations. These phenomena were enacted and deployed together in ways that racialized Native peoples, African peoples, people of African descent, and English peoples; they reified categories of "other" and "white." Moreover, these phenomena and the racialization they enacted continued through the early years of nation building, ultimately coalescing as white U.S.-Americanness.

The end of the period emphasized most heavily here preceded the Revolutionary War by nearly one hundred years; events in this period set the stage for U.S. nationhood.

It is from this historical work and the theoretical framework of white as a moral crisis that the imperative of reparations will begin to emerge. It will do so in two ways: first, as an imperative that exists in relation to the vast wealth generated and land accumulated by English-colonists-becoming-white-U.S.-Americans, enrichments still present in the U.S. body politic; second, as an imperative that exists in relation to the need to disrupt those realities that continue to constitute us unjustly as white racial selves.

Whose History? Whose Agency? Why? Issues in Method

It is critical to know the historical roots of white supremacy. In addition to presenting itself deceptively as an extremist ideology of a mere few on the fringe, white supremacy also takes a radically ahistorical face in the United States.

Yet it is not enough to say that historical analysis is needed in order to get the "facts" of such roots. History is not fact-finding and reporting. Rather, historical narratives and historiographical methods themselves are part of the white supremacist enterprise.[2] Particular readings of history are one way white supremacy has been perpetuated. Thus, engaging in other kinds of particular readings is one task in challenging such perpetuation. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury write in their introduction to *A Companion to American Indian History* (2002):

> Politics, power, and the ongoing legacies of conquest will always make the writing of Indian history a problematic endeavor . . . . History, for Indian people and for historians of Indian North America, does not simply revolve around abstract questions of identity, "what happened when" issues, or "objective" assessments of the past. Rather, every historical narrative has the potential to change lives and policies in the contemporary world. All Indian scholarship, whether the author chooses to recognize it or not, exists in relation to this complicated, difficult, and often painful reality.[3]

I have attempted to interrogate the assumptions that I bring to this work as a white U.S.-American, long schooled in an imperialist, colonialist, and white supremacist history. But, my own formation

inevitably will be present here. To say so is not to excuse myself, nor to ask the reader to do work that is rightfully mine. It is, rather, to acknowledge Deloria and Salisbury's claim: to recognize, at every turn, how deeply the legacies of conquest have formed dominant narratives, including those that seek to *not* act as apologies for U.S. history.[4] It is to recognize, as well, that related but distinct issues pertain to how deeply the legacies of the Middle Passage and enslavement of African peoples too have formed dominant U.S. narratives, even those that condemn such atrocities.

Issues in Native–African–European/White History

Vine Deloria, Jr. writes, "To be an Indian in modern American society is in a very real sense to be unreal and ahistorical."[5] Native peoples continue to be placed in a supremacist discourse as part of a narrative of U.S. inevitability—"our ancient past"—and as peoples now vanished and extinct. Deloria identifies here, therefore, one significant and particular way in which historical narratives continue to circumscribe and suppress Native peoples.

To be responsive to this function of history, I have attempted to avoid working within a conquest narrative. A good example of what is at stake in such an attempt can be seen in accounts of U.S.–Indigenous treaty-making. Taiaiake Alfred reminds readers that it was European settlers who gained legitimacy through treaties between the United States and Native peoples: "North American settler states . . . gained legitimacy as legal entities only by the expressed consent through treaty of the original occupiers and governors of North America."[6] This historical reading is radically different from one that sees treaties as something the United States offered Native peoples and then later took away.

Alfred's reminder comes by way of his analysis of how the fiction of U.S. sovereignty, which erases this truth of history, constrains the current exercise of indigenous governments and derives from the myth of conquest.[7] Although I would obviously not take the stance that conquest leads to legitimacy, Alfred's point is pertinent here nonetheless. In addition to planting ideological seeds that legitimate present paradigms of U.S. nationhood, conquest as a metanarrative of European–Native relations weights toward a reading of U.S. inevitability; assumptions of white agency and Native passivity; and erasure of a "weakened but resistant and remembering peoples" who are, in reality, present, active governing agents, still struggling with imperialists occupying the land mass on which this book is being written.[8]

At the same time, treaties represented historical realities beyond those Alfred identifies. Gregory Evans Dowd, for example, emphasizes that even as they signed treaties, Europeans never fully recognized Native sovereignty. "The 'treaties' [Europeans] made with Indians did nothing to admit the fundamental integrity of Indian independence, however the word 'treaty' might, to modern ears, ring of a true deal between independent powers."[9] Moreover, Native peoples' choices to make treaties were often not first, "best" choices, but strategies to deal with Indian–European interdependence, which existed amid continually shifting power balances in specific localities for hundreds of years.[10]

Alfred's and Dowd's readings are both "true." Each scholar chooses his lens for particular reasons.[11] The challenge that can be seen in this example is that of employing a historical method capable of supporting both truths.

Similar challenges are present in relation to the history of African peoples in the Americas. In a statement that resonates with Vine Deloria's invocation of the power of history (or, ahistoricity), Paul Gilroy writes, "Racism rests on the ability to contain blacks in the present, to repress and to deny the past."[12] In the context of a sophisticated analysis of racial essentialism, Gilroy constructs an argument that bears directly on issues of historical method about how scholarship regularly pushes "race" into the realm of the inevitable and natural. Specifically, he claims race is pushed outside of history (thus essentialized in support of white supremacy) through descriptions of Blacks as "problem or victim."

In the analysis that follows, I have attempted to be responsive to this warning—one that is methodological and ideological. Obviously, my perception is of Europeans/white people as the problem. Still Gilroy's charge is important here. For, while my assumption is critical, it can threaten to suggest European/white people are the most important actors or contribute to a "victim reading" not unlike the dangers of a "conquest narrative."

Closely related is another issue that emerges in relation to the history of African peoples in the Americas. The historical record is one overwhelmingly recorded by white people in relation to both Native and African peoples. Moreover, even as the mainstream historiographical body threatens to contain Native peoples in the past, it denies people of African descent a pre-European past at all. Indeed, my own starting point in this chapter is, in a real sense, problematic. To begin with contact between the Powhatan Confederacy and English colonists in "Jamestown" is to be Eurocentric; to the extent that this

is the case in relation to Native peoples, it is even more so in relation to African peoples who are denied any attention preceding their conscripted arrival to the Americas.[13] Moreover, African peoples in the Americas were removed from their societies and subjugated in particular ways by the very nature of the Middle Passage. There is, therefore, an unevenness in the historical narrative here. While Native peoples resisted oppression as part of their communities or collectivities (at least in this period), the mechanisms of subjugation pursued against African peoples rendered them bereft of such collectivity.[14] As a result, the kinds of resistance African peoples lived are less visible in the historical narratives of this period.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to avoid completely the tendency to begin with the present—with one's (limited) recognition of the results of history—and read the past through it. But the consequences of doing so are severe. To do so suggests, if only implicitly, that historical processes could not have taken different routes; that human agents could not have made different choices; and, perhaps most egregious, that people of African descent and Native peoples exist only within the context of a white U.S.-American supremacist historical narrative.

In the accounts that follow, I assume that people of African descent and Native peoples are present, active agents and that they have always been so—thoroughly shaping the course of history in what has become the United States. I assume also that from the earliest moments of contact significant exchanges took place between and among African, Indigenous, and European peoples, such that each people effected and was effected by the others.

The tensions that abound nonetheless, however, require that I be clear about my purpose for the lens I have chosen here. My commitment is to avoid portraying Europeans as the actors and either African or Native peoples as those acted upon. At the same time, I am committed to portraying the real atrocities and the past and present material affects of European ideology and violence in relation to these two peoples. European peoples did commit gross human rights violations against African and Native peoples. They did engage in genocidal practices. They did so willfully and intentionally. And the results of such have made white supremacy normative in this land.

My purpose is to identify the concrete materiality of white racialization in the United States: to locate these atrocities and ideologies implicitly in what becoming white meant and, thus, what "being white" in the United States means as long as such atrocities go unredressed. This purpose requires heavy attention to European behaviors and ideology as

I explore the history. The methodological problems this focus creates are not thereby fully mitigated; still, it is a self-consciously narrow scope of inquiry that determines the parameters of what I explore here.

Methodological Approach

Having identified a few of the particular challenges to which I need to be attuned, let me state positively what it is I intend with this historical analysis. My analysis is intrinsically related to my theoretical goals. The work pursued herein is best understood by being read in close relation to the claims made in chapter one. Namely, I am concerned with the moral crisis of being white in the United States. This moral crisis is recognizable through a lens that is employed to interrogate: (1) historical–material meanings of race (e.g., what race meant in terms of concrete life experiences pertaining to one's racialization in relation to the legal, political, and military enforcements shaping society); (2) how the category of race was used to sustain white supremacy (e.g., the function of various religious, legal, political ideologies); (3) human agency at the site of race's construction (e.g., the practices by which people gave race meaning); (4) relationality (the production of race through social relations over time, including the economic relations these signified). I am concerned with these four sites of interrogation as I explore a period in which whiteness, and soon thereafter U.S.-Americanness, became meaningful, recognizable, and significant identifications.

By keeping these sites together, I am insisting on an inquiry into both ideology and materiality, as these together create the social reality about which I am concerned.[15] The legal, political, and religious rhetoric of European colonists generated structures of white supremacy—structures that, of course, had real material effects on peoples' lives. In this sense such rhetoric was ideological grease for white supremacy's wheels. This was not a cause-and-effect relationship, but a multilayered tapestry in which social reality was woven and human lives experienced therein.

Inquiry into both race and nation building is necessary here, however, because of the inextricable relationship of ideology and materiality. Writing against the separation of culture from economics and of imperialism from American studies, Amy Kaplan argues:

> To foreground cultures is not only to understand how they abet their subjugation of others or foster their resistance, but also to ask how international relations reciprocally shape a dominant imperial culture at home, and how imperial relations are enacted and contested within a nation.[16]

In other words, according to Kaplan, interrogating the formation of national borders is a crucial part of the task of focusing on the internal diversity of a society.[17]

The creation of a nation on the sovereign soil of another was pursued through the English making non-Christian, non-English, non-white others thoroughly abject. The process of doing so had everything to do with how the emerging nation and nationhood was racialized. Moreover, racialization processes as material processes constituted a thoroughgoing formation of a (white U.S.-American) culture of domination and of dominant white U.S. identity.[18] As Kaplan writes, "empire becomes a way of life."[19] I therefore attempt, throughout my historical analysis, to keep my attention on the multidimensional ways and multiple sites at which race and nation were coproduced.

In a related vein, my method of inquiring into ideology and materiality is pursued in order to focus on *what* and the implications of what for *how*. What happened? What was done and what was said? How did the effects of these give content and meaning to white U.S.-Americanness? This focus stands in contrast to analyses concerned about white supremacy, which focus on what in order to ask the question "*why*?"[20] I do not ask, for example, why colonists were so destructive and violent or why their ideologies were so shrill.

I am exploring one trajectory of how racial differences came to be as a means to leverage history for ethics. In undertaking the difficult task of reading history with attention to difference, Myra Jehlen suggests that historical analysis should focus on the "common denominator" between conqueror and colonized. To this, one could add "enslaver and enslaved." Such a focus is necessary, she argues, to avoid either reifying difference or ignoring it. She writes:

> There is a common denominator which is precisely the commonality of their encounter, the common ground they construct, new to both, and on which they are neither the same nor different but only inextricably related; indeed neither the same nor different through their relation.[21]

Taking Jehlen's cue, my method is to focus on the common ground of the encounter between Native peoples, African peoples, and Europeans in order to identify the *effects* of that shared ground—that encounter—and on what those effects indicate about what it means to be white.

In the pages that follow it becomes clear that white people are at the center of the problem of race in the United States. The particular ways in which this manifested in relation to Native peoples and people of

African descent will, hopefully, become clear as well. Vine Deloria writes that, given the history of racial relations with and in the United States, Native peoples must be clear that the conflict between "white" and "red" is not a cultural conflict, but is—and always has been—a conflict in the legal relationship between Native nations and the federal government. Conversely, between white and "black," he writes, the problem is not legal—namely, Civil Rights laws will not sufficiently empower African American communities. Blacks must be clear that the problem is one of "culture and social and economic mobility." "But," Deloria continues, "the understanding of the racial question does not ultimately involve understanding by either blacks or Indians. It involves the white man himself *[sic]*. He must examine his past."[22] To such examination I now turn.

English Colonists: The Quest for Land and Labor

Early English/Native Relations in Colonial Virginia

When the Virginia Company of London provided funding for the establishment of an English settlement to be called "Jamestown," they acted in concert with the English crown. Like other settlements—those at Quebec, New Plymouth, New Amsterdam, and Massachusetts Bay, for example—Jamestown was a European venture of both imperial and financial ambitions: "sovereigns authorized, private enterprise organized" these forays in the so-called new world.[23]

Jamestown was not, of course, the first encounter of indigenous peoples with the English and the English with indigenous peoples. Through much of the sixteenth century England had been as active as Spain and France in exploring the coasts of what became Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia. Like their European counterparts, they had participated in inland raids attempting to capture people for enslavement, and, in the process, had spread disease.[24] Similarly, nations of the Powhatan Confederacy who lived in the Virginia region were familiar with Europeans and their ways. Indeed, John E. Kicza argues that the Powhatans, like other Native societies along the coast, had had sufficient interaction with various Europeans to appreciate differences among them.[25] Specifically, he writes, the Powhatans recognized in the English a propensity greater than that of the Spanish for "seiz[ing] property they coveted, and tr[ying] to have indigenous leaders recognize the English monarch's sovereignty."[26]

Despite the imperialist assumptions and financial jostling among those settling in Jamestown, the reality of life in the first few years of English and Indian coexistence in the region kept some of these impulses in check. The colonists were dependent on the Powhatan Confederacy for food. Their small numbers and initial inability to use the land meant that contests over terrain were minimal, providing less impetus for the outbreaks of war that would later come.[27]

These English aristocrats, moreover, were men of elite status and expectations; they had not come to work. They had come to trade and discover gold.[28] Neither of these ventures was possible without Native knowledges and relatively non-antagonistic relations between the societies.[29] English activity was, thus, kept in check to an extent by self-interest. As part of their charter, for example, the Virginia Company had in effect told the would-be colonists they had better "behave" toward Native peoples: "You cannot carry yourselves so towards them but they will grow discontented with your habitation." Demonstrating some cognizance that their designs for this land may be rebuffed, they instructed the colonists to not reveal their intent to *stay* until after they had bought corn from the Indians.[30]

Native peoples, moreover, made it clear they would not be subjugated by these new arrivals, which also restrained the English. London's instructions to Jamestown had included orders to crown chief Powhatan (Wahunsonacock) a "subject king" of England. So, John Smith invited Powhatan to come to "Father Newport" to receive presents and a crown.

> Powhatan immediately recognized that **acceptance** of presents from a "father" would imply his acceptance of a filial relationship, [in Smith's words:] "whereunto the subtile Salvage thus replied 'If your king have sent me presents, I also am a king, and this my land; 8 daies I will stay to receave them. Your father is to come to me, not I to him, nor yet to your fort, neither will I bite at such a baite.' "[31]

Captain Christopher Newport was, thus, forced to go to Powhatan instead, whereupon the latter refused to kneel during the attempted vassalizing ceremony. "At last by leaning hard on [Powhatan's] shoulders, he a little stooped, and Newport put the Crowne on his head." Only then was the ceremony completed. In response to the crowning and gifts, Powhatan gave Newport "his old shoes and his mantle."[32]

The relative stasis of the first few years was short lived. By 1610, the Jamestown colonists began to manifest in their relations with the Powhatans the same tendencies that had prevailed in the failed

settlement on Roanoake Island twenty years prior: namely, "dispro-portionate responses to supposed affronts."[33] In 1610, Governor Thomas West De la Warr demanded the Confederacy return a few Englishmen who had run away.[34] Not only did Powhatan refuse, but his replies were "prowde and disdaynefull."[35] In response, De la Warr launched a brutal military campaign against the Paspahegs (a nation with a relationship to the Confederacy). The attack culmi-nated in the public murder of an Indian "quene"—after she was forced to watch as Englishmen threw her children to their deaths over the side of an English ship.[36]

From this point, relations between Jamestown and the Powhatans were increasingly strained. Over time, the stress was exacerbated by the Indians having successfully taught the English to cultivate tobacco. Access to this cash crop made food more abundant and the settlers less dependent on the Indians. And, as Francis Jennings puts it, while close neighbors are good if one's intended source of profit is the fur and pelt trade, they are not if it is tobacco, which requires large tracts of land.[37] In addition to increasing English appetite for land, the "success" of tobacco dramatically increased English immigration, which doubled between 1618 and 1622. These factors combined with a decreasing English interest in any kind of relations with the Powhatans as they recognized the Powhatans would not be a labor source in their tobacco pursuits. Displacement and massive war became the preferred options for English involvement with Native peoples.

During these same years, two epidemics devastated the Powhatans, leaving them weakened numerically. With the increase of "germs and numbers"[38] the balance of power between they and the English began to shift. Aware of what these trends might portend for Native societies in the region, the Powhatan Confederacy coordinated a 32-nation, massive military campaign in March 1622, designed to run the English out of the region; one-quarter of the settlers were killed.[39]

After 1622, English anti-Native ideology and activity intensified. The rhetoric of colonial leaders, which had previously vacillated some-what in their descriptions of Native peoples, took on a vicious twist.[40] The colonists "no longer maintained any idea of living alongside the natives. Instead they claimed more and more land, refusing to recog-nize native ownership."[41] English raids on Native communities also became more frequent and led to further displacement.

Battles and massacres between the two peoples continued through the next two decades. In 1644, Opechancanough led the Powhatans in their final major offensive. As in other instances, writes Kicza, "the

Powhatans did not follow up on their successful initial attack, enabling the English to regroup." The English did so; they killed some Native peoples, forced many more to flee, and sold others into slavery.[42] By 1646 the Powhatan empire was gone; Opechancanough's successor signed a treaty stating he held his lands as subject to the English king; and Native people were declared forbidden from entering English-controlled territory without permission.[43]

By the end of the 1600s, the population of the Powhatans had gone from upwards of fourteen thousand to six hundred. The population of the English in Virginia had gone up from one hundred and four to sixty thousand.[44]

The Arc of Expansion

This brief description of Powhatan–Jamestown relations is in no way thorough. And while it may read as a linear set of events, in actuality, of course, it was not. Native–English history is infused with strategizing between and among Native nations and between and among European nations. Complex and varied interests spawned schemes and counter-schemes. Over the next centuries, in different locations and to different ends, multiple and various encounters, relationships, exchanges, and alliances took place.

One example of such scheming can be seen in the Northeast, where a different set of conditions pertained. In contrast to the colonists of Jamestown, to whom the English crown had "given" the land, the Pilgrims of "New Plymouth" (1620) arrived with no charter. Thus, they had no (presumed) "legally sanctioned claim to territory."[45] After 1622, when the English decided they would dispense with the pretense of recognizing Native jurisdiction, the Dutch—who were also in the area—decided that recognizing Native jurisdiction was imperative. In other words, the Dutch "right" to the land (in a region of lower New England, near New Plymouth) could be legitimized by acquiring a deed from the Pequots, who resided in the area. Pequot legitimation created a contestation over the Pilgrims' settlement. The Pilgrims responded by securing a deed from a Native person of another community, who had been previously driven from the region after leading, and losing, a battle against the Pequots.

The bad faith characterizing European recognition of Native sovereignty and jurisdiction here is obvious. As Jennings writes, "Plymouth's men, although strong advocates of the rights of conquest when it suited their purposes, now contended that their client Indian *[sic]* had not lost his true rights through the Pequot conquest and solemnly set

up their own deed against the Dutch deed."[46] In addition to untold accounts of deed fraud, colonists in the Northeast acquired Native land through innumerable other unscrupulous means: for example, they might let their animals roam free on Native farms, destroying crops and fields until a farmer finally gave up in frustration.[47]

Like their Virginia counterparts, the English in the Northeast were not averse to pursuing their goal of land through major bloodshed. The massacre of the Pequots on May 26, 1637, in Mystic, Connecticut, stands as one of the most infamous of English atrocities. Eight hundred men, women, and children were massacred as they slept. The multifarious schemes pursued and false provocations claimed by the English in the months leading up to the massacre—and the subsequent colonial decree that the name "Pequot" be removed from every map—are just further evidence of the genocidal manner in which they pursued their goal: land.[48]

Despite regional differences, the arc of Powhatan–Jamestown relations is a useful plumb line for assessing the arc of English–Native relations in the seventeenth century. Although in the Northeast small farms and kinship-based economics came to characterize the geography and economy while the Virginia economy would be based on large scale plantations, the quest for land reigned in both regions. Given the means by which this was pursued, the results of the quest were similar in both regions as well: intense power and population disparities between the English and Native peoples by the end of the 1600s.[49]

A number of factors had contributed to the balance of power shifting so heavily in support of an increase of English populations and the decimation of the Powhatan peoples. Not least was the impact of disease; colonial powers often exploited such moments of Native vulnerability to gain an upper hand, especially through seizing and occupying more land.[50]

Among these factors was a different "war ethic" among Native and English peoples. Kicza's remark about the Powhatan withdrawal after a successful offensive is a demonstrative example of this. Diverse practices, of course, existed among Native nations throughout the Americas. But, Native peoples (especially in the early years of contact) tended to limit warfare: men might be killed, but women and children were not; A European might be taken prisoner, but then would be "adopted" by a Native community. The English, however, not only massacred Native women and children regularly, they burned, slashed, and destroyed land, villages, and crops. In short, their behavior in war tended to be more brutal and "comprehensive."[51]

David E. Stannard deems other differences in Native and English war ethics significant for the genocidal march of English expansion in the Americas during the 1600s. For example, for Native peoples the intent to war was often declared ahead of time, so that restitution might be made and war averted. Native peoples rarely engaged in warfare for raw economic or political ambition; victors were given symbolic tribute rather than becoming dominators. War was an occasion marked by ritual and form among Native peoples—the "rules" of combat, for example, might be negotiated ahead of time[52]—rather than the "abstract ideological compulsion" it was for the English; and, it more often took place for purposes of honor—to avenge an insult—rather than to claim territory as a possessive inheritance.[53]

Stannard emphasizes that, beginning with Spain, a number of indigenous cultural traits and material achievements "were turned against them once the European invasion began."[54] The choice that Native peoples frequently made, for example, *not* to abandon or exploit Europeans when they were themselves being decimated by starvation or disease, contrasts with the Europeans' use of such moments to their own advantage. Warfare was, thus, merely one area in which differences between these cultures contributed to how events unfolded.

Early English/African Relations in Colonial Virginia

With the success of tobacco, the failure to discover gold, and the decreasing centrality of the fur trade in colonial Virginia, the aristocratic English colonists of Virginia became cognizant that tobacco would be the major source of the wealth they had eagerly anticipated.[55] In addition to requiring vast amounts of land, tobacco production required another key commodity: labor.

The colonists quickly concocted a solution to their need for labor. While Jamestown, with the help of the Powhatans, began to stabilize and grow its own food—and English death rates, thus, to decline—England was struggling with a surplus population of impoverished citizenry. The reasons for this were myriad. They included the disruptive transitions from an agrarian-based feudal economy to an industrial, privatized, commodity-oriented one. The huge growth of the cloth industry in the 1500s, for example, had led to the displacement of massive numbers of peasant farmers, as land was "enclosed" so that more sheep could be raised.[56] Elites in England, thus, recognized in the colonial situation an opportunity to relieve population pressures at home, while addressing the colonial problem of labor.

From approximately 1610 to 1618, therefore, English plantation workers were shipped from England to serve as the primary labor source in Jamestown. Their status upon arrival was typically that of tenant farmers. Historical accounts leave some questions about the exact nature of these arrangements unanswered. It is clear, though, that tenants were to "have possession" of land they were allotted and that they arrived with "future prospects of becoming independent landowners."[57]

Tenantry was not to last, however, for the form of economic expansion being pursued in the Virginia colonies was capitalism and the focus was profit. Even while the Pilgrims arrived amid the heyday of tobacco production, they had been careful not to develop a monoculture. For some time, therefore, the economy in the Northeast remained a small farm economy, kinship-based, nonmarket, and noncapitalist.[58] But in Virginia, economic growth was the goal and this was defined as rapid accumulation of capital. As a result the Virginia economy quickly became export dependent and market driven.[59]

Within the decade, the colony found itself in a crisis of overproduction. In a non-diversified commodity-oriented economy, the more successful the production of tobacco was, the more the tobacco flooded the English markets, and the more the price of tobacco was driven down. Theodore W. Allen writes:

> In the end it was a victory of blind instinct over articulate wisdom. But not instinct in general: Indian society had mastered the uses of tobacco without letting tobacco master Indian society. It was, rather, the victory of the specifically bourgeois class instinct for their annual rate of profit and quick turnover of capital.[60]

Despite attempts to regulate the planting of tobacco, and long-winded appeals deriding dependence on a single crop, the Virginia colony spun deeper and deeper into economic "crisis."[61]

Colonial landholders chose not to solve their overproduction problem by taking seriously the need for regulation of production. They chose to pursue a ruthless course instead: that of lowering labor costs. Tenantry, however, constrained their ability to do so. Farmers either lived on the land and worked for their rent, or collected half the profits from production; their relationship to the land in either case limited how much labor costs could be cut.[62]

Ultimately, in an emerging-capitalist mode of production, intensive pursuit of low labor costs would require a significant "unattached"

labor reserve. Allen writes:

> Capitalism is a system whose normal operation is necessarily predicated upon the continuing presence of a mass of unattached labor-power of sufficient proportions that each capitalist can have access to exploitable labor-power, in season and out, in city or in countryside, and at a minimum labor cost.[63]

There were some attempts to address this issue by moving to a free wage labor situation. This scenario would allow owners the freedom to fire and hire workers as needed, reducing constraints implicit to tenantry. Wages were still higher in the colonies than in England, however. Landowners could not, thus, cut costs as much as they desired. Moreover, living conditions remained such that death rates were high well into the seventeenth century. The accumulation of a pool of wage laborers, of sufficient size to allow landowners to control wages, was simply not a viable option.[64]

Indentured servitude became the answer, Allen argues, to colonial Virginia's lack of such a labor reserve. In 1617, England shipped its first set of prisoners (who were being expelled from England) to the colony, in order to supplement the labor supply. In 1619, the first cases of indenture (non-prisoners) appear in the historical record. The terms of servitude in both of these cases was seven years.[65] In 1622, Captain Thomas Nuce, a colonial leader involved in overseeing these migrations, made a formal proposal, which was endorsed by the Virginia Assembly. Nuce asserted that sending servants rather than tenants to the colonies should become the prevailing practice. As it sent Nuce's proposal for approval in London, the Assembly appealed to the Virginia Company's pocketbook: "Wee conceave that if you would be pleased to Chaunge the Conditione of Tenants into servants for future Supplies, . . . your revenues might be greatly improved."[66]

The year of this appeal is noteworthy—speaking very much to the intricate relationships between Native–African–English social relations in this historical period. The 1622 attack by the Powhatans created circumstances that colonial leaders were quick to exploit. They seized the opportunity created by the sudden decrease in the colonial population, the subsequent chaos over deeds and "ownership," and the scaling back of the colony's borders to a more controllable size to secure their power over the relations of production and to reorganize land tracts.[67]

In the coming years, the colonists' capitalist appeal would be heard. Increasingly, indentured servitude became the normative immigrant

status. In 1637, for example, the *Tristram and Jane* arrived in Virginia. All but two of its seventy-six passengers were indentured servants to be offered for sale.[68] Over the course of the 1600s, the range of experiences of European servitude varied: indenture time increased with the ongoing drive for profit, voluntary emigration gave way to people brought against their will and sold upon arrival, terms of service were unilaterally changed or ignored.[69] In short, indenture was a system of outright exploitation. It was not, however, anything approaching chattel slavery.

It was during this same period, amid increasingly antagonistic Native–English relations that African peoples were brought to the colonies to labor. The year 1619 in which the Powhatans suffered a major epidemic and the first shipment of indentured Europeans arrived is also the year in which there exists the first documentation of African peoples who would be permanent settlers in the colonies.[70] Their arrival was aboard a Dutch ship, predating English involvement in the slave trade.

Little is known about the status of these arrivals, except that it was certainly in servitude of some sort and as the result of forced relocation.[71] The same remains true for the next twenty years in which little is known about the lives, or experiences of labor, among African peoples whose presence in Virginia slowly grew. By 1649, 2 percent of the people in Virginia were African or of African descent; that is, among fifteen thousand English colonists, there resided three hundred African people.[72]

Despite the lack of evidence as to the status of African peoples during these decades, there is evidence that their presence was a topic of discussion as colonial leaders wrestled with the crisis of overproduction and the perceived problem of labor costs.[73] Allen cites a few notes in the legislative and judicial records from the period that give evidence of impulses in the Assembly, during the transition from tenantry to indentured servitude, to add unpaid labor time to the economy by making African servitude in particular lifelong and hereditary.[74] By the mid-1600s, however, these impulses were undeniable and began to take on more institutionalized expression. In 1640, the word "negro" appears in a court document, specifically in order to demarcate, for the first time, the difference in status between a person of African descent and two persons of European descent. Three indentured servants stood accused of the same crime: running away from their owner. As punishments were meted out the Europeans were sentenced to four extra years of servitude. The person of African descent was

made a slave for life. From the ruling:

> The said three servants shall receive the punishment of whipping and to
> have thirty stripes apiece . . . . One called Victor, a Dutchman, the other
> a Scotchman called James Gregory, shall first serve out their times
> according to their indentures, and one whole year apiece after . . . and
> after that . . . to serve the colony for three whole years apiece.
>
>   The third being a negro named John Punch shall serve his said mas-
> ter of his assigns for the time of his natural Life.[75]

There exist no historical records of a European servant ever receiving
such a sentence.[76]

The Arc of Institutionalized Slavery

What I have highlighted here is not the first time physical difference
was formally recognized. Rather, it is the first time there exists clear
evidence that the invocation of such difference was used to assign
African peoples a different status vis-à-vis their European laborer
counterparts. From this point, lifelong enslavement increasingly came
to be the norm for people of African descent and freedom the norm for
people of European descent. This shift took a generation to become
institutionalized , but the steady process by which it moved forward is
terrifying in its relentlessness.[77]

  Historians disagree over the "cause" of this shift. Jordan calls it an
"unthinking" decision that resulted from unconscious, but intense,
ideological tendencies toward white supremacy among the English. He
also picks up Edmund Morgan's analysis of the economic motivations
of such a shift. Allen disagrees, claiming that the short life span of
laborers at this time made the difference between lifelong servitude
and indenture meaningless.[78] Allen argues a "social control" theory.
He claims that the distinction between indenture and lifelong bond
labor was caused by the colonial need for an intermediate class, such
as the yeomanry in England, to serve as a social control buffer between
labor and elites. According to Allen, race was constructed in the
response to this need: to make those who could be recognized by
"color" into a permanent subjugated social class—slaves.

  In an argument on another point, however, Jordan highlights evi-
dence that the price for African laborers in 1640 was significantly
higher than that for white indentures.[79] This undercuts the strength of
Allen's claim that short life spans rendered the actual differences
between such categorizations irrelevant. Historical events are never

linear or mono-causal. Despite their different implications, I do not find these arguments mutually exclusive—though I am troubled by the ease with which Allen seems to dismiss the practical differences between indenture and slavery.

What is clear, however, is that the social significance attributed to bodies, pigmentation, and genealogies became more deeply entrenched as chattel slavery became more institutionalized. In 1641, Massachusetts Bay—home of the "City on the Hill"—became the first colony to pass a statute legalizing lifelong bondage for people of African descent. The moral hypocrisy that permeates the contorted language of the Massachusetts status is excruciating: "There shall never be any bond-slavery, villenage or captivitie amongst us; unless it be lawfull captives taken in just warrs, and such strangers *as willingly sell themselves or are solde to us* . . . [80] Connecticut followed suit in 1650; Virginia in 1661.

The institutionalization of slavery cohered through various kinds of local ordinances. In 1663, for example, Virginia changed the law that conferred onto a child the legal status of its father to confer the status of its mother (the principle known as *partus sequiter ventrem*). In effect, this law made lifelong servitude inheritable.[81] In 1663, Maryland established its *Durante Vita*, "for life" law. For the next 20 years, it developed increasingly precise legal codifications of what "sorts" of persons could be treated as slaves.[82] In 1667, the Virginia General Assembly decreed that baptism into Christianity did not alter one's condition of bondage.[83]

While the struggle to institutionalize an enslaved status for African peoples would continue for several decades, it was fully established by the end of the seventeenth century. Jordan writes:

> By about 1700 the slave ships began spilling forth their black cargoes in greater and greater numbers. By that time racial slavery and the necessary police powers had been written into law. By that time, too, slavery had lost all resemblance to . . . English servitude, . . . In the last quarter of the seventeenth century the trend was to treat Negroes more like property and less like people, to send them to the fields at younger ages, to deny them automatic existence as inherent members of the community, to tighten the bonds on their personal and civil freedom, and correspondingly to loosen the traditional restraints on the master's freedom to deal with his *[sic]* human property as he saw fit.[84]

Virginia gathered together and codified all of these various statutes and practices in 1705, creating the "slave codes."

Despite its remembrance as a southern institution, and despite the different economic systems characterizing North and South—which did create a differential in terms of the number of enslaved African peoples in each region but not in terms of the level of involvement in the slave industry—slavery was fully institutionalized in the Northeast as well. By the 1720s, a full one-fifth of those populating New York City were people of African descent—most of who were enslaved.[85]

Racialization through Christianity, Economics, Imperialism, Enslavement, and Law

For my purposes, the relevant issue here is less *why* the English gained ascendancy in relation to Native peoples and pursued such a devastating system of enslavement of African peoples. It is more on *what* the practices and ideologies were (some of these have already been named) and *how* they are intrinsic to the beginning of racialization into white U.S.-Americanness. Analysis of these practices and ideologies reveal that imperialism, emergent capitalism, legal discourses, and Christianity were all implicit in such racialization.

Economics, Imperialism, and Christianity

Colonist's own words make clear English intent toward Native peoples and their lands. One Virginia leader responded to the 1622 war thus:

> Our hands, which before were tied with gentleness and faire usage, are now set at liberty by the treacherous violence of the Savages so that We may now by right of Warre and law of Nations invade the Country, and destroy them who sought to destroy us . . . . Now their cleared grounds in all their villages, (which are situate in the fruitfullest places of the land) shall be inhabited by us, whereas heretofore the grubbing of woods caused us the greatest labour.[86]

These words ring with glee; an irrepressible excitement that an opportunity long sought has arrived.

Alfred writes that most charters during the era of European settlement referred to a separate political existence and territorial independence of indigenous peoples.[87] English–Native relations took place, and to some extent were recognized at the time as taking place, in the context of international law.[88] This historical truth only makes what actually happened—and the overtly expansionist intentions vocalized earlier by the Virginia leader—more stark.

To whatever extent Native sovereignty was rhetoricized or codified, these were attacks by imperialists. Little to no restraint on the part of the English—beyond that required to maximize self-interest—shapes this historical narrative. European settlement was an imperialist project of expansion from the beginning and rapaciously so.[89] It was an imperialist project also as it was implicitly tied to European exploits on the African continent; this was true even before the English themselves became involved in the slave trade. The African peoples who found themselves shackled on ships, and forced to labor on this landmass, arrived as victims of atrocities committed across international lines and as a direct result of imperialism.[90]

The expansionism of the imperial project that took place on this land base was fueled by financial interests. In arguing against the concept of "settlement" as a description of English goals, Jennings insists there was at no time any benign intention in the English presence here. Settlement, he writes, is a "bland misdirection about the European's intentions, for their common purpose was to exploit rather than to settle." On-site residence was merely a means to make such exploitation more efficient.[91]

More to the point, the financial interests at work were a part of the early trajectories of capitalism. The accumulation of land as a commodity and the push to make the land as productive as possible were major elements in the profit equation colonial leaders were actively working out. Native peoples in this regard were to the English, primarily, obstacles to be overcome in order to balance the capitalist equation. African peoples became, to the English, primarily, tools to be used in order to balance the same equation.

The historical record repeatedly reveals English colonists, for example, manufacturing full (and false) scenarios that might create an excuse for expansive war.[92] Such manufacture was not the result of an English need to morally legitimate for such attacks. It was a strategy that had more to do with justifying themselves to the English crown, which reprimanded the colonists for violence committed against Native peoples on numerous occasions.[93] I point this out not to suggest that the English-in-England were more humanitarian than the English-in-colonial-America. Indeed, the English government's interest in keeping colonial violence in check was not a moral concern, but a financial one: military support in response to outbreaks of violence between the colonists and Native Americans was expensive.[94] The manufacture of scenarios creating cause for war highlights the virulence of the economic project that took place here, the sheer greed that drove it, and the means through which it was accomplished.

Thus, colonial leaders' own rhetoric paints a picture of emerging capitalists chomping at the bit for genocidal war to secure profit. In light of this picture, it is of little surprise that such voracious greed and deadly methods would create an institution as massive, intricate, and brutal as chattel enslavement by the end of the 1600s.

Imperialism and emerging capitalism were deeply connected to Christianity. U.S.-American self-understanding as a divinely ordained nation began long before nationhood was overtly contemplated.[95] This historical reality has not gone unnoticed in scholarship or U.S. popular memory. John Winthrop's perception of establishing a "City on a Hill" is just one of the most recognizable rhetorical expressions of this early colonial visions.

While the self-perception of being part of a divine mandate, destiny, or schema is appropriately connoted with the Pilgrims of New Plymouth or the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay, similar rhetoric was present in Virginia too. The Reverend Samuel Purchas, an eager clerical promoter of English expansion, wrote in the early years of Jamestown:

> "God in wisedome . . . enriched the Savage Countries, that those riches might be attractive for Christian suters, which there may sowe spirituals and reape temporals." . . . Purchas went on to argue that to leave undeveloped a sparsely settled land populated only by a few natives was to oppose the wishes of God who would not have showed Englishmen the way to the New World if he had not intended them to possess it.[96]

It is telling that these words were penned *before* 1622, when the English presumedly had less "reason" to engage in their (illegal, expansionist, and genocidal) chosen behavior. Two aspects of this quote stand out as particularly incredible: first, the claim that *not* to pursue imperial expansion is to go against God's will; second, the unabashed ideology of divine entitlement in which colonists' *compensation* for Christianizing ("spiritual") work will be to reap the land.[97]

Beyond the overtly ideological use of Christianity to fuel expansion, however, Purchas' words open a window onto a far more complex ideological production. Religion, economics, and imperialism were to become bound up in processes of race and racialization in a manner that was complex and multifaceted. These processes are evident in the creation of "otherness"—a category of complete abjection as part of a structure of domination. The "other" category had been activated in the Christian lexicon since as early as the first century C.E., specifically through use of the story of Noah and his three sons (Japhet, Shem, and

Ham) to delineate and explain differences among peoples located in various regions of the world.[98] To some extent, by the end of the Middle Ages the story of Noah was employed to claim the superiority of European Christians and a kind of abjection of non-European "others": Japhet, Shem, and Ham were roughly identified as the fathers of different "races" (peoples located in three distinct geographical regions of the Old World). Ham was the son who was cursed, thus becoming interpreted as the ancestor of others. Such use was not an articulation of race as we know it in the modern era. Rather, by tracing its articulation through the sons of Noah, Benjamin Braude documents how "complex, vague, and variable"—sometimes even contradictory—this category was all the way through the early modern period. But, by the time the modern period was well underway and colonization and enslavement were being vigorously pursued such categories of otherness became "rigid and consistently racializing."[99]

In the colonies, economic drives and imperialism spawned practices of colonization and enslavement that triggered this category of otherness in ways that were outgrowths of ancient and medieval Christian European usages, but that were also new. Moreover, in what became the United States the "other" category would be reified and racialized to name and contain both Native peoples and people of African descent in ways that were similar and distinct.

Racialization: "Heathen–Savage–Others and Christian–English–Whites"

A number of scholars emphasize the linkages between particular English notions about Native peoples and the kinds of brutality in which the English engaged. They note, relatedly, that expected Indian responses to these brutalities further fed English notions.[100] Early in English–Native relations, this cycle, according to Stannard,

> produced and perpetuated a reign of terror because it was bound up with an English lust for power, land, and wealth, and because the specific characteristics that the English found problematic in the Indians were attributes that fit closely with ancient but persistently held ideas about the anti-Christian hallmarks of infidels, witches, and wild men.[101]

In other words, with an ideology of divine entitlement would eventually come a partner ideology. Post-1622, Purchas, along with John Smith, became one of the chief architects of a pernicious rhetoric of "savagery." Smith's contribution to this ideology was to add animal

imagery to a term he had used with frequency earlier: in 1624, " 'peridious and inhuman people' became 'cruell beasts' with 'a more unnaturall brutishness then beasts.' "[102] Purchas contributed heavily to the myth that Native peoples "range[d] rather than inhabit" the land; thus, that they were "wild."[103]

Interestingly enough, Purchas' post-1622 contributions to this ideology of otherness was something of a shift for him; and the shift actually sheds light on how the ideological production being described was nothing less than a process of racialization. Braude notes that in an early text, Purchas wrote that the "tawney Moore, black Negro, duskie Libyan, Ash-coloured Indian, oliue-coloured American, should with the whiter Europeaean become *one sheepe-fold*." Purchas suggested that these various people groups were "seruing one humane nature, . . . [but while] exceedingly varied in accidents, . . . wee also might serue that *one-most God*."[104] Of course, while Purchas here wrote of being one humanity under God, he was not advocating a form of political equality; his other pre-1622 words—describing God's intent for "Christian suters" to "reape temporals"—works against such a claim. But, while his Christian suters words did claim the divine entitlement of the English, they did not do so in overtly racialized terms—a lack of emphasis consistent with his writing on the unity of humanity (also pre-1622). In contrast, a dramatic shift in Purchas' work, visible a mere ten years later, highlights a new kind of racialization. In his next publication, following that in which he suggested all "serve one human nature," he had utterly changed his tune. Here, Purchas took up the story of Noah and argued that Ham, the cursed son of Noah, was the ancestor of the descendents of "Chus." Purchas identified Chus' descendents with enslaved African peoples. He indicated that their "Black colour" was a sign of this cursedness—and a sign of being divinely slated for slavery.[105] This significant switch in rhetoric took place about the time people of African descent began to appear in the colonies and at the point that Purchas began heavily to contribute to the construction of "Ash-coloured Indian[s]" as wild, ranging savages.

Rhetoric of brutish, perfidious, savage beasts is obviously reprehensible simply for the image of Native peoples it presents. Its role, too, in justifying and encouraging English brutality has been named already. But, such racializing rhetoric also had a direct ideological function within colonial legal and religious discourses.

First, the claim that Native peoples "range rather than inhabit" was ideological grease for the legal "doctrine" of "sustained possession" through which the English repeatedly would claim, justify, and enforce

their appropriation of Native land. Those who only range and who do not inhabit the land cannot posses it; those who settle on the land can. Even before arrival (Winthrop penned such justifications while on the ship sailing to the colonized territories), and continuing through the coming decades and centuries, "nonpossession" would be used by both the English and U.S.-Americans to justify land appropriation.[106]

It is noteworthy in and of itself that so-called nonpossession could be used in this way; this is one thread of the fiction of U.S. sovereignty that is tied to peculiarly European notions of property.[107] Such peculiar notions include both the assumption that a certain kind of settlement equates to possession, as well as the notion that land can be privately possessed at all. Even more painfully ironic—and indicative of the intentionality with which such ideology was being deployed—is the reality that the Native societies in the Virginia region were agricultural in nature. Smith and Purchas both knew this, of course. Recall the Virginia leader's excitement that the colonists could now wage war to secure access to land that was already cleared, tilled, and cultivated. Already at work here, then, is the erasure of Native peoples, relegating them as part of the past: nonpossession turned quickly and easily into "nonhabitation" or "*vacuum domicilium*."[108] Besides being white supremacist mythology, this relegation was the foundation for colonizing legal doctrine that presumedly gave colonists right to the land.

Second, the language of savage grew out of ancient European Christian rhetorics of "heathen" and "infidel." Long before exploration of the Americas began, a legal discourse that merged secular and religious interests had been constructed in Europe. To be ascribed a heathen or infidel in this discourse had serious consequences. Robert A. Williams identifies its impact: "Normatively divergent non-Christian peoples could rightfully be conquered and their lands could lawfully be confiscated by Christian Europeans enforcing their peculiar vision of a universally binding natural law."[109] For centuries, being identified as an infidel people was sufficient cause to become a legitimate target for massive crusading war. Infidels existed outside the requirements of international law.[110] Infidels land could be plundered. Infidels could be enslaved. Infidels could be massacred. In 1366, it was further resolved that one's status as an infidel was immutable—a binding condition. Conversion to Christianity did not bring one inside the bounds of international law.[111]

In colonial America, the rhetoric of savagery was a religious and legal discourse that came directly out of this lineage and functioned similarly. As Jennings writes, "To invade and dispossess the people of

an unoffending civilized country would violate morality and transgress the principles of international law, but savages were exceptional."[112] While I have already suggested that I am not heavily swayed by evidence of English moral scruples, Jennings' statement points to the reality of a complex legal, religious, and economic project underway in colonization. It points to the reality that colonization and genocide were, indeed, part of a racial project (to return to Omi and Winant's important concept).[113]

Jennings opens his book by writing that race is not the best category through which to interpret what happened between the English and the Native peoples of America.[114] His view is that race came later in both European and U.S.-American history. Braude echoes this view and does so by way of an important argument. Given Christianity's deep ideological role in supporting subjugation and constructing a racial other, the ambiguity with which the curse of Ham was utilized, prior to its clear use in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to justify the enslavement of people of African descent by linking the curse with blackness, requires a nuanced analysis of the role Christianity played in the apparatus of subjugation and the construction of specifically *racial* otherness.[115] In fact, what is most clear, perhaps, in light of the shift in Christianity's role—in which the institution of slavery triggered a particular use of it that while not alien was nonetheless new— is how much Christianity was formed and informed by surrounding political, cultural developments.[116] What is also clear is that there was a powerful category of otherness at work, which did not depend (yet) on a stable and developed notion of race. But, Stannard disagrees to a significant extent with Jennings and Braude. He argues that making associations between skin color (real or perceived) and (presumed) characteristics was an ancient western practice that predated Columbus by at least one hundred years.

Each of these scholar's arguments has much to offer in understanding the genesis of race in what would become the United States. Though they differ on when it is appropriate to use the category of race to refer to what was taking place in European thinking, I do not find their arguments necessarily mutually exclusive in regard to what took place in the colonies. Still my own assessments lean toward Stannard's. By suggesting that the earliest legal, religious, military, and economic activities of the English were implicit to a racial project, my claim is not that race existed yet in the modern form by which we tend to conceive it now (as in, e.g., "I *have* an identifiable race"), nor that notions of race had yet entrenched in relation to "skin color" or biological essentialism. I do

not suggest, moreover, that "Native American" can or should be equated with a racial category. Neither do I argue that race or racism were created as devices through which dispossession and genocide could be legitimized by notions of Native peoples as savages.

My claim is that a nonlinear, mutually reinforcing interplay between ideologies of religion and law, activities of war and treachery, and economies of greed simultaneously at work in this history is part of the earliest indications of white supremacist constructions of race and of English colonists beginning to become white. First, early contact history was deeply relevant to the eventual origins of modern notions of race. Omi and Winant write, "when European explorers reached the Western Hemisphere, . . . the distinctions and categorizations fundamental to a racialized social structure, and a discourse of race, began to appear."[117] Even Braude's analysis of the myth of Ham supports this claim; although Ham was not being used to create a stable category of race, the story was clearly being used to identify and categorize difference. In addition to drawing distinctions between Christian and infidel, this discourse around recognizable (or mythologized) differences was part of European obsessions with whether or not all peoples were part of "the human family."[118] These obsessions were fundamentally bound up in questions of "the extent to which native peoples could be exploited and enslaved." The ideological result of these deliberations, enmeshed with devastating material manifestations, was the "ferocious division of society into Europeans and 'Others.' "[119]

Second, visible differences—whether in dress, bodily attributes, skin pigmentation, cultural expressions—were ascribed meanings that had significant legal and political implications. As has already been noted, the difference between Christian and savage meant "God ordained beneficiary of this land" on the one hand, and "evil and worthy of genocide" (at worst) or "object for conversion and removal from land" (at best) on the other. The differentiation was intrinsic to political struggle, social conflicts, and interests, and the "selection of [real or imagined] particular human features."[120] These factors render colonization intrinsically a racial formation project.[121]

Moreover, for the English colonists these were not struggles between different but equally sovereign, international bodies, on level—if conflicted—political terrain. They were destructive and subjugation-oriented attacks on a "non-English," "non-Christian," and eventually a "non-white," other group. This group was sometimes considered human, sometimes not. The role of a heavily reified notion of otherness in a hierarchical structure of abjection and subjugation also renders this

history evidence of early racialization in what would become the United States. English–Christian on one side of the dominant/subjugated binary would, with time, slide directly into white U.S.-American.

Third, savagery was an implicitly racial category. This is the case both in that it was defined as an immutable state (therefore, essential and fixed) and because of the extent of the difference Native peoples presumably represented, which other (European) subjugated peoples did not. An important comparison can be made here in relation to the Irish. Many of the English colonial leaders during the early era of colonization had been active participants in the English subjugation of the Irish.[122] Numerous historians note how much their training "prepared" them for the kinds of behaviors and ideologies they employed against Indigenous peoples in the Americas. Stannard, however, emphasizes that in addition to the similarities being significant, the differences in how the English treated the Irish and Native peoples are significant as well. Among the Irish, the English never set up segregated enclaves and while they committed terrible violence, they were "always determined that in time they would assimilate *all* the Irish within English culture and society."[123] Most importantly, Stannard notes that the English distinguished between the Gaelic Irish, and Old English (Irish). While they denounced both peoples, they made some favorable exceptions for the Old English because they were perceived as having "fallen" into "barbarism" from having been around the Gaelic Irish too long: while Anglo-Norman (Old English) Irish were genealogically non-barbaric, non-Anglo-Norman (Gaelic) Irish people were genealogically barbaric.[124] The notion of immutability signifies a different category of *being*. White supremacist ideology was, therefore, at work as Native peoples were ascribed an immutably savage nature and as they were understood to be a savage race—a race of people more abject than other European peoples, even the Irish who experienced horrific violence at the hands of the English.

Finally, early evidence of emerging race does appear in the seventeenth century. The language of white is in rare evidence in the immediate years of contact. Still, recall Purchas' words from 1613 (before the documented presence of any African peoples in colonial America) of the "black Negroe" and the "whiter Europaean."[125] His words are indicative of trends toward which English "othering" would go. Moreover, white would begin to appear within the coming decades. More importantly, the mechanism of othering would increasingly take on the language of color and use color as the signifier to ascribe different peoples different legal statuses.

English subjugation, displacement, and genocide of Native peoples was indeed racial activity, and it did not need to rely on color to the extent that it would do so in the abjection and subjugation of African peoples in order to qualify as such.[126] In the earliest years of English–Indigenous contact distinctions were made. Those distinctions were implicit to particular choices and activities; choices and activities further reified the distinctions by securing differential material effects among different groups, as well as fueling supremacist ideologies. These activities, ideologies, and agencies were of a piece with a white supremacist and imperialist project, which would increasingly be the means for transforming English colonists into white U.S.-Americans.

Racialization: "Negro–Beast–Slaves and English–Christian–Free–Whites"

It is quite clear how direct a relationship exists between the practices and ideologies of the English in relationship to African peoples and the beginning of English racialization into white U.S.-Americanness. This is most obvious because of the high level of coherence between seventeenth-century social stratifications legally codified in relation to color and dominant modern U.S. understandings of race, which tend to turn on perceptions of color. Before saying more about this aspect of racialization, however, I first want to explore a particular manner in which interrogating similarities and differences between the racial formation projects in which the English were involved with Native and African peoples expands understanding of how the mechanisms of white supremacy work. For, while subjugation of African peoples cohered through mechanisms that fixated on color, it did not exclusively begin there.

When Africans were first brought to this land to be enslaved after being wrenched from their homelands, "European" and "Other" were already at work. These were evident in both the ideologies of Europeans and the power relations established between the English and African peoples.[127] It is true and historically significant that people from different geographic regions, with different skin tones, very possibly occupied the same servant category at one time in colonial America—namely, before skin color and blood lines came to be the definitive marker of eligibility for lifelong servitude. One should not conclude, however, that the experience of Africans and Europeans was ever the same. First, and not least important, while there was a brief period in which some English citizens were brought to the colonies

against their will, the *entire* history of African relocation is one of violence and coercion. The Middle Passage simply cannot be compared to the migrations of European indenture.

Second, and relatedly, Jordan makes the case that English obsession with "blackness" even prior to English participation in the slave trade renders the likelihood that Africans and Europeans ever had the same experience very slim.[128] "Negro" a word taken from the Spanish, had been long used by the English to describe their perception of African peoples' appearance. Its use suggests significance being attached to visible differences decades before 1640.

Moreover, as in the case with English perceptions of Native peoples, religious connotations were made implicit to English perceptions of African peoples: "Black," writes Jordan, "was an emotionally partisan color, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion."[129] Undoubtedly, these connotations informed both the colonial self-understanding of a people compelled to live out God's divine project (by whatever means) and the abjection of African peoples.

Early images of African peoples by the English closely coincide with those produced during the early period of contact with Native peoples: "brutish," "savage," and "beastly."[130] Again, such rhetoric was subjugative discourse, and is reprehensible on its own terms. It is easy to see, moreover, how it justified and encouraged the kinds of brutalities in which the English engaged to the extent that they participated in the slave trade and institutionalized chattel slavery. Like the rhetoric crafted in relation to Native American peoples, this rhetoric had a direct ideological function within an imperialist, religious, and legal discourse, which put African peoples on the wrong side of the English–Christian–human divide.

> The slave was treated like a beast. Slavery was inseparable from the evil in men; it was God's punishment upon Ham's prurient disobedience. Enslavement was captivity, the loser's lot in a contest of power. Slaves were infidels or heathens. On every count, Negroes qualified.[131]

According to the English, therefore, African peoples also existed outside the constraints of international law—before the Middle Passage. Those who survived were "justifiably" enslaved after the Middle Passage.

In arguing that forces of European and other were as work in the earliest subjugation of African peoples, I do not suggest that the English already had strongly fixed notions of blackness as ontologically

linked to slavery prior to coming into the colonial period. As with the earlier discussions about the changes in European notions of Native peoples, Braude modulates Jordan's claims a bit in his care to not read modern notions of race and color into the premodern era. Specifically, for example, he argues against using the story of the curse of Ham to see a deeply rooted bias against blackness in the European psyche. His reading of the incredibly varied uses to which the story of Ham was put from ancient to modern times in order to make explanatory claims about the geography of the known world and the distinctions among the peoples found throughout supports this cautious approach. But again, his reading also demonstrates how use of the story of the curse of Ham *changed*: a biblical tale that "unequivocally" described a curse that conferred physical blackness and a designation of an enslaveable race was claimed precisely for the "needs" of this historical moment.[132] This change took place among the English dramatically between 1589 and 1625, because exposure to slavery made such an interpretation more viable.[133] Braude's insistence on documenting the change in this use of the story of Noah's son does not so much counter Jordan's claim that blackness had (negative) religious significance as it does render it more ambiguous.[134] For my purposes, an ambiguity about blackness and the disappearance of such ambiguity is precisely the point. In the changing discourse one can see that indeed a genesis of and meanings being given to race in what would become the United States is taking place. What can be tragically witnessed among the English in the colonies is the structures of what I have here (using Omi and Winant) called a racial formation project being established, which eventually would fully turn on color and thus come to resemble what we in modern times would refer to as race.

A racial formation project was underway before color became the dominant legal issue in relation to the status of African peoples. In 1639, before the ruling in Punch's case, for example, a Maryland statute declared the following about who did and did not have the right to liberty:

> All Inhabitants of this Providence being Christians (Slaves excepted) Shall have and enjoy all such rights liberties immunities privileges and free customs within this Province as any naturall born subject of England.[135]

Note that this binary Christian/Slave is not unlike the Christian/Savage binary. Historically speaking, it is most likely that

the "Slaves" who are being referred to were African peoples. This possibility suggests how much the mechanisms of white supremacy, even as they were taking largely different *forms* given the discrete situations of Native and African peoples in the land, were following a similar English–Christian/Other *logic*. Another historical possibility is that "Slaves" referred to both African and Native peoples. In this case, the statutes reflect even more directly the truth that complex and interrelated subjugative processes were at work in relation to both peoples.

Subjugation of Native peoples was, in a sense, codified in English legal thought through the "wild savage," which took the legal form of nonpossession, or by "vanishing" them altogether, which took the form of non-habitation. An emerging white supremacy made it possible for the English to eviscerate international legal relationships that should have defined the contours of the encounters between the English and Native peoples. In contrast, African peoples' subjugation in colonial America was codified through inscribing (white supremacist images of) them within colonial law itself. In 1671, for example, the Virginia Assembly listed "negroes" in the same list as "sheep, horses, cattle."[136] An emerging white supremacy constituted the (domestic) laws themselves in this case, thus incorporating African peoples into colonial society in a thoroughly stratified manner.

It is here that there is a significant departure between Native and African history in colonial America in relation to English-becoming-whites. The racialization of Native peoples took place most prominently through white, Christian, supremacist imperialism. This was a racial project in that it relied on abjection through the creation of a category of otherness. This category was constructed by reference to distinctions between Native peoples in relation to perceived (and manufactured) differences. It did not, however, rely heavily on color. (Though, in later years, red would increasingly enter the language of colonists who increasingly referred to themselves as white.)

In relation to African peoples, however, color (and what it suggested about genealogy) would become the major attribute on which legally codified differentiations turned. This was clearly demonstrated in the lifelong servitude sentence of John Punch. It was given a powerful ideological home with the use of the story of Noah's sons to claim that Ham's curse made him the ancestor of those with black skin, who were divinely ordained to be a race of slaves.[137] As lifelong, inheritable servitude became the norm for people of African descent in the Americas, the differences between owner and servant, which were

legally defined, became the difference between free and lifelong chattel enslavement. This legal definition came to overtly rely upon and reference bodies.

   "English voyagers placed much less emphasis upon the Indian's color than upon the Negro's, [but] they never permitted the Indian's physiognomy to distract their attention from what they regarded as his essential quality, his savagery."[138] In other words, similar color was not enough to exempt Native peoples from the subjugations of white supremacy. And, similarly, the difference of color was not the only significant issue in African peoples' status: "Englishmen could go a long way toward expressing their sense of being different from Africans merely by calling them 'black.' " Black here *contained* the acriptions of non-Christian/beastly/other. Thus did the English use many words then to describe their differences from Native peoples, while they could use blackness to hold all of the implications of a physically and ideologically deadly imperialism, economics, and Christianity.

   Whether using many words or a few, the racialized, genocidal, debasing, suffocating, constraining, subjugative relations of abjection were at work. And, in either case, it was presumedly the English person who was the human one.[139] It was the English' status as a (presumedly) *non-abject* people that gave them the right to land; the right to force and benefit from the labor of another. Over the course of the 1600s the colonists involved in the early work of creating "a colonial settler nation, as well as a slaveholding one"[140] would come to find a word to describe themselves. According to Jordan, from the initial period of contact until the mid-1600s, the terminology the English colonists most often used to describe themselves was "Christian." From the mid-1600s to 1680 it was "English" and "free." "After about 1680, taking the colonies as a whole, a new term of self-identification appeared—*white*."[141]

Racialization: Becoming Unequivocally "White"

From the end of the seventeenth century forward, white became a coherent self-identification and social signification. A final illustration from the history of African resistance will suggest how much white was not a conceptual, but an utterly *material* reality that emerged out of the exploitations of early U.S. history. As with Native peoples, African peoples resisted enslavement in a myriad of ways. Records of individuals jumping over the sides of slaving ships was one kind of resistance lived out even before arrival in the Americas. Africans in the Americas resisted the increasing institutionalization of chattel slavery

throughout the 1600s. There exist numerous records of Africans peoples attempting to buy out their terms of indenture, going to court to prove that the terms for which they were to serve were limited and not lifelong.[142]

One of the earliest well-documented expressions of African resistance took place only four years before white would become a consistent term of self-reference among English colonists: in Bacon's Rebellion of 1676.[143] Multiple complex events and factors, far too many to recount in full detail here, came together leading to the rebellion. The rebellion began, however, as an "anti-Indian" uprising. Nathaniel Bacon led a military assault against the Pamunkey Indians (who had peaceful relations with the English) in June of 1676. The "reason" for the attack against the Pamunkeys was laborers' furor over a lack of access to land, large tracts of which were held by absentee English landlords in Virginia in this period. Bacon's "rebels" perceived the English colonial elite to be protecting Native land rights for their own economic benefit: keeping nonelite laborers from accessing land in order to ensure peaceable relations good for trade. In response, they attacked the Pamunkeys.[144] The assault turned into colonial civil war quickly thereafter as the issue over land was, in fact, one over internal stratification within the colony of Virginia.[145]

Among the fifteen-thousand-member "rebel" force that Bacon's Rebellion brought together were six thousand European and two thousand African bond-laborers (undoubtedly, given the time period, with the limited versus lifelong inheritable status of their servitude intact). In what ended up becoming the final days of their stand-off with the governor, the elite of the colony, and the British Crown, the bond-laborers began proclaiming themselves "free."

After securing a surprisingly strong position for themselves things looked good for the rebels and not so good for the establishment. The colonial leaders and the British, therefore, began to press for a cease-fire. Leaders of the rebellion responded to their gestures and, in secret, took up negotiations. The mass of rebels was angry about the resulting cease-fire—which had been negotiated without their consent—not only because they did not trust the English Crown, but also because they were aware of the military strength of their position. Significantly, however, one of the terms of the cease-fire was freedom for both the African and English laborers. This became the key to rebel acceptance of the cease-fire. Grantham, one of the men involved in the secret negotiations from the rebel side, described his subsequent meeting with the rebels, during the course of which he

attempted to abet their anger and suspicion:

> I there mett about foure hundred English and Negroes in Armes, who were much dissatisfied at the Surrender of the Point . . . I told them I would willingly surrender myselfe to them, till they were satisfied from his majestie, and did ingage to the Negroes and Servants, that they were all pardoned and freed from their Slavery.[146]

According to Grantham's account, after showing the rebel forces some "Noates" to this effect, from the king and governor, the rebels began to be pacified. However, freedom was not to be. As the rebels held together across English–African lines, continuing to discuss and negotiate their demands, forces on behalf of the governor and king of England came by way of the water and defeated the rebellion. The governor quickly repealed the conditions the rebels had claimed for themselves, and negated the "freedom" terms of the cease-fire.[147]

Bacon's Rebellion terrified colonial elites who recognized how much danger they faced if "freemen with disappointed hopes should make common cause with slaves of desperate hope."[148] A number of historians see the ending of the rebellion as a decisive turning point in the retrenchment of racial stratification and the coalescing of the category of white.

Colonial elites realized they had to work harder to convince impoverished white laborers why the established system was in their interests. So, writes Allen, "The Virginia General Assembly showed how it was to be done; it deliberately stuffed the 'racial' distinction with anomalous privileges to make it look like the real thing, promotion to a higher class."[149] The privileges included laws stating that any so-called owner of a person of African descent could use or abuse that person at will. Further, in 1691, such owners were forbidden from freeing that person. In contrast, by 1705, the Virginia slave codes specified that masters were forbidden to "whip a christian white servant naked" and fines were established should they do so. The code further specified for the first time that indentured servants were to receive "freedom dues" upon completion of their term: "ten bushels of corn, thirty shillings in money, . . . a gun worth at least twenty shillings," and so on. In contrast, in 1692 and reiterated in 1705, enslaved Africans who had been previously allowed to raise livestock of their own found that livestock confiscated by order of the Assembly.[150] These statutes were just the tip of the iceberg.

Morgan traces the retrenchment of racial stratification and emergence of white as a coherent racial category through another response

to the fear raised by Bacon's Rebellion. In 1670, Virginia had declared it illegal to enslave Native peoples for life, even those taken as prisoners of war: non-Christian Native prisoners of war would serve for a maximum of twelve years and children would serve until they were thirty years old. Thus, in the years just preceding Bacon's Rebellion one could not assume that a Native person was a slave, and certainly not one for life. In this way, ambiguity about racial otherness and the meanings of difference continued to exist. In 1679, and more comprehensively in 1682, the Assembly reversed the 1670 decision.[151] Morgan tells the tale of what happened next:

> In 1682 the assembly . . . [made] slaves of all imported non-Christian servants. Since only Indians and Africans fitted this description and since the assembly had already decided in 1667 that conversion to Christianity after arrival did not alter the status of a slave, the act of 1682 set the further development of slavery on squarely racial foundation. Indians and Negroes were henceforth lumped together in Virginia legislation, and white Virginians treated black, red, and intermediate shades of brown as interchangeable. They were both, after all, basically uncivil, unchristian, and, above all, unwhite.[152]

In other words, non-Christian identity functioned to make permanent slaves of Native and African peoples who could be identified by phenotype and genealogy. The immutability of that non-Christian status—conversion could not change it—had already been agreed upon. Meanwhile, Europeans—all (presumedly) Christian—were to be servants at worst and the distinctions between servant and slave were in the process of being codified in the most concrete of terms. White racial identity, which was also signified by phenotype and genealogy, thus became coherent, meaningful, recognizable, and socially significant.

The predominant mechanisms of subjugation employed against Native peoples and people of African descent were different. Moreover, the forms and legal codifications around which such subjugation would be enforced would continue to develop and change in the coming decades. Despite its relatively obvious emergence in this historical moment, who got to count as white and how such determinations were to be made when the categories were blurry would remain an ongoing discussion for more than three hundred years. As I will suggest later, the meaning and use of race would be rearticulated in the moments when the nation-state was being born and a people forged.[153] Beyond this, its significance would be clarified when whiteness was made a criteria for citizenship and its definition fought over again and again as various peoples argued (eventually before the

Supreme Court) whether or not they or others "were" white.[154] Though investigations into these are beyond the scope of this project, many important studies have explored shifting meanings and criteria about what white is and who counts.

Despite its ongoing transitions, however, the fact that the racialization process taking place here was transforming European indentures and elites into whites is indeed unequivocal. My point in making such a claim is not to suggest that the emergence here of white as a racial identification was completely stable nor fully fixed from this historical moment in which distinctions between light-skinned persons of varied economic status and all darker-skinned persons were fully codified legally. Rather, what can be seen here is construction of the basic scaffolding on which the existence of whiteness depends (scaffolding that has yet to be torn down). Thus, my point here is this: whatever the specific thread that is traced throughout the complex history of (becoming) America's earliest years, it is inarguably the case that white came to be through unspeakably horrific and systematically genocidal actions in relation to Native peoples and people of African descent in colonial America.[155]

A New White, Capitalist Nation

Appropriation of land and the institutionalization of enslavement—along with the ideologies and practices these social realities represented—characterized definitively the relationships between English and Native and African peoples through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As multifarious events led over the decades toward a colonial "revolution," these realities would be central to and implicit in the formation of the United States. And, with nationhood would come the most fully articulated sense and reality of colonists having becoming white U.S.-Americans.

The most obvious way in which the arc of Native–English relations was central to U.S. formation pertains to the site of this new nation itself. The United States would be formed on the soil and in a landmass that, fundamentally, belonged to other peoples—peoples who never conceded the right of the United States to come into being. Arguing in regard to salient issues in movements for reparations, Andrea Smith gives the following rationale:

> While we may use a variety of rhetorical and organizing tools, our overall strategy should not be premised on the notion that the U.S. should or will always continue to exist—to do so is fundamentally, to sanction the

continuing genocide of indigenous peoples on which this government
is based.[156]

The United States only came into existence by way of (and, thus, its
ongoing existence depends upon) genocidal activity and unjust and
illegitimate appropriation of land.

In order to justify its very existence, moreover, the United States
government and its white citizenry would have to formally advocate
an ideology of a civilized and destined white people building a nation
out of the wilderness that had been *previously* haunted by "savage"
"red people."

In addition, becoming a nation, despite the language of destiny that
pervaded the day, was far from a utopic, assured culmination of the
imperial project. It was the profit made by white men from the labor
of people of African descent that bought the alliances necessary to
contemplate something so audacious as a revolution and that, ulti-
mately, financed the Revolutionary War. So central was slave labor to
the ability of U.S.-America to come into being that one historian has
called the successful attempt to secure French support for the revolu-
tion "King Tobacco Diplomacy." "To a large degree it may be said
that Americans bought their independence with slave labor," writes
Morgan.[157]

The character of relations between white settlers and Native peoples,
and whites and people of African descent from the 1600s into the
Revolutionary War period were manifest in the founding documents of
the new nation. The Declaration of Independence accused the British of
inciting the "Indian Savages" and never mentioned African peoples at
all.[158] Article One of the Constitution of the United States identified
three groups in the Nation: "free persons," "Indians not taxed," and
"all other persons."[159] Though gestured toward in the category of "all
other[s]," when it came to being named overtly, people of African
descent would be called only three-fifths of a human being each.

By this time, the colony through which I have been exploring
Native–African–English relations, as Morgan puts it, "owned more
than 40 percent of all the slaves in the new nation . . . . And Virginia
furnished the country's most eloquent spokesmen for freedom and
equality."[160] Such a seemingly contradictory juxtaposition begs for
analysis. How could it be the case that the pronounced, even distin-
guishing, commitment to freedom and equality that characterized this
new nation could exist alongside the intense ideological disparage-
ments of non-white others described in this chapter, and the practices

of enslavement and genocide that belied the ideals to which this nation-state committed itself? While there may be several possible responses to this question, I will briefly explore three—each of which shows how deeply white U.S.-American identity fundamentally depended upon domination of African and Native peoples.[161]

First, Thomas Jefferson and George Washington were two of the "eloquent spokesmen." They had the arduous task, suggests Priscilla Wald, of forging "a people" to take the place of bonds with England that were quickly dissolving.[162] The "free persons" identified by the Constitution had nothing "naturally" in common with one another— nothing, that is, beyond the scaffolding that had already been constructed in the colonial years. And so, Washington and Jefferson, with their other elite white colonial colleagues, drew on and furthered the racial rhetoric and ideology already available to them. Race became the way to create a people; of course, there was nothing neutral about this use of race. What it meant to be a U.S.-American people would be to be a white (free) people. Thus, whiteness would become the bond out of which a unified nation-state and a shared national identity would be forged. This identity, like the nation-state it celebrated, depended parasitically upon the existence of non-free, deeply oppressed racial others.

Moreover, forging a people was not just a conceptual task. Given the concrete relations between white people and Native peoples and white people and people of African descent, it was a material pursuit that was already a reality. This materializing of a white U.S.-American people through subjugative relations with others was merely increasingly definitive of U.S. nationhood. Thus, one response to the vexing question of the relationship between freedom and slavery/colonization is that those with the self-appointed arduous task of forging this free people drew on the most noxious of tools (ideological and material) available to them. As a result, the ideological discourses and material practices of white racial supremacy most distinguished and characterized a new (white) U.S.-American identity.

The noxious tools used to engage in the task of forging this people, however, were not uniquely U.S.-American. While I have largely confined my analysis to happenings on this landmass, the roots of racial supremacy lay in Europe. There is, therefore, a second dimension to the question about the relationship between freedom and slavery/ colonization. In his comparative study of the white supremacy of the American South (anti-Black) and Nazi Germany (anti-Jewish), George M. Frederickson argues, "Racism is always nationally specific. It invariably

becomes enmeshed with searches for national identity and cohesion that vary with the historical experience of each country."[163] Frederickson is particularly concerned with the racism of Western Europe and its export to the "New World." He argues that the racism of Western Europe has been "autonomous and conspicuous in world history," *because* (not despite) its ideologies of racial supremacy developed in cultural contexts that "[p]resumed human equality of some kind."[164] In the United States, "[t]he doctrine that 'all men are created equal' and endowed with individual rights" in a society where lifelong chattel slavery was a fully institutionalized reality *created an incentive* for ideologies that would fully dehumanize those being enslaved.[165] The practice of slavery threatens claims that a civic order embodies freedom and equality. However, if those being enslaved can be shown to fall outside the category of "human," then their enslavement does not threaten such embodiment.[166] So, rather than the founding commitments of the United States leading to an end to enslavement and genocide in the Revolutionary period, these commitments called for more insidious and deeply rooted allegiance to the supremacy of white U.S.-Americans and to the utter abjectness of all others.

Orlando Patterson, in his two-volume query into the relationship between freedom and enslavement, provides a third response to the vexing question of freedom and oppression. While Frederickson begins with the problem of slavery and claims that dehumanizing racial ideologies and practices result from a commitment to freedom and equality, Patterson argues in the opposite direction. He starts with and problematizes freedom itself. It is as a result of exposure to the social reality of slavery, writes Patterson, that a commitment to freedom emerges, becomes strong, and therefore can survive the seeming paradox of existing in a social order that sanctions enslavement. He further writes, "freedom was generated from the experience of slavery. People came to value freedom, to construct it as a powerful shared vision of life, as a result of their experience of, and response to, slavery . . . in their roles as masters, slaves, and nonslaves."[167] This analysis accounts for how those eloquent spokesmen of Virginia could speak so while holding nearly 40 percent of the nation's slaves.

Each of these responses has explanatory power that is viable, and—as theory at its best is nothing more than an attempt to make sense of social reality—they are not mutually exclusive What they each suggest is that the relations of subjugation, based on white supremacist ideology and practices, which characterized this new nation, were not exceptions to a developing (white) U.S.-American identity. They were intrinsic to it.

They were constitutive of it. Freedom and equality were not ideals first claimed as definitive of this new nation and people and only subsequently damaged by the realities of enslavement and colonization. In their origins, these ideals had a parasitically dependent relationship with such oppressive practices. In both regards, the juxtaposition of "all men are created equal" with realities of slavery/colonization only further reveals the depth with which white U.S.-Americanness fundamentally emerged from racial domination.

In its early years of existence, the United States continued to follow the same routes for relations with Native and African peoples that had been established and pursued in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In relation to Native peoples, the only major difference would come with the changes effected through the creation of a nation-state. Relations with Native nations would now be systematized and enforced by the powers of an on-site federal government.

Many Native nations had been involved in the Revolutionary War, most on the side of the British. R. David Edmunds notes that because most Native nations had successfully defended their homelands against U.S. troops, they considered themselves victors in the conflict.[168] Meanwhile, the new United States also understood itself to be the victor, which led to a period of great legal and political uncertainty in U.S.-Native relations.

The new nation attempted quickly to coalesce its power and presence on Native lands, seeking continually to expand westward. It pursued a number of different dubitable treaties, which would quickly lead to further outbreaks of war. In 1778, the United States made its first federal treaty and in 1790, it passed a law forbidding individual states from making treaties with Native peoples for ceded lands.[169] In the 1790s, the United States attempted to consolidate its now national relations with Native peoples through the Indian Intercourse Acts, which signaled the beginning of U.S. attempts to develop an internal bureaucracy for dealing with affairs with Native nations.[170]

People of African descent were also active in the Revolutionary War. Thousands of them fought with the British.[171] With the U.S. forces winning, however, slavery was to remain a firmly entrenched institution in a nation loudly proclaiming itself the home of liberty.

By the time of the Revolution, the South and North had already become thoroughly reliant on slavery, the slave trade, and the industries made possible by slave labor.[172] During its early years, however, the new nation would make a conscious decision that economic profit was to be a prevailing value in its formation. As the demand for cotton

fueled increased demands for Native land—especially in Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina—it also fueled the demand for more people to enslave. In many ways, slavery came to define the South, but it came to define New England as well: there was not a single New England merchant of the era uninvolved in the slave trade.[173]

For a variety of reasons, slavery as an institution was more prominent and lasting in the South. By 1800, slavery had been abolished or was on its way to being abolished in most northern states. Because every northern state enacted only gradual emancipation, however, it was a full fifty years after the Revolutionary War before all northern Blacks were free.[174]

The U.S. national economy was built through appropriation of Native land and forced labor of peoples of African descent. While the labor of four million Africans and their descendants generated southern wealth, it fueled the shipping yards and factories of the North. Even after the slave trade was made illegal, slavery remained at the heart of the textile industry of New England: from the raw material (cotton), which was imported from the labor of people of African descent in the South, to the finished product (textiles), which was exported not only to the South, but also into the world market.[175] By the 1830s, cotton textiles constituted two-thirds of the value of large-scale New England manufacturing and by 1860, cotton was the leading industry in the United States.[176] Ronald Bailey writes, "the Industrial Revolution served to fasten even more tightly the dying and anachronistic institution of U.S. slavery to the chariot of fast-paced national progress for the next fifty years."[177]

As African peoples made the land "productive," the resulting cotton boom made shriller the demand for Native land. The levels of imperial violence the United States employed to secure Native land increased through these early decades of the 1800s. Such violence was tri-faceted, pursued through forced assimilation, removal, and extermination. The Indian Intercourse Acts had initiated policies designed to acculturate Native peoples to white ways.[178] Jefferson and others emphasized trade, farming techniques, religious instruction, and education as vehicles for assimilation.[179] Forced assimilation would continue to plague Native experiences with the U.S. government. Colonel Thomas Loraine McKenney, for example—the first head of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) in 1824—pursued federal monies for various assimilation plans, including establishing Christian boarding schools for Native children. By 1830, McKenney claimed more than eighteen hundred Native children had been placed in such schools.[180] The United States remained

simultaneously involved in warfare with Native peoples that relentlessly led to removal. Warfare was regularly shrouded in calls for extermination of Native peoples. The violence would reach one horrific cadence in the forced removal of several nations in the 1830s.

A Moral Crisis and a Reparations Imperative

In 1826, James Madison spoke his infamous words: "Next to the case of the black race within our bosom, that of the red on our borders is the problem most baffling to the policy of our country."[181] Madison was naming what he understood to be a political problem for the United States. We do much better, however, if we recognize here a moral problem, indeed, a moral crisis, for the United States as a nation and for those racialized in relation to those Madison called black and red.

European colonizers and slave holders became white through violent and subjugative relations—undergirded with power, and justified through legal and religious discourses—with Native peoples and people of African descent.[182] James Baldwin put it well:

> America became white—the people who, as they claim, "settled" the country became white—because of the necessity of denying the Black presence and justifying the Black subjugation . . . . White men—from Norway, for example, where they were Norwegians—became white by slaughtering the cattle, poisoning the wells, torching the houses, massacring Native Americans, raping Black women.[183]

Merely having been granted freedom while others were being kept in shackles and merely having stood by while others were displaced and massacred would have been sufficient to render white as a category of which the fundamental constitution was immoral. But becoming white in this racial system meant more than this: it meant directly and concretely benefiting from the enslavement of people of African descent and directly entitling oneself to the land of another, committing genocidal acts in the process. To the extent that the legacies of these histories have not been redressed, then to be white U.S.-American is to be in moral crisis. To state it more boldly, to the extent that these legacies remain unredressed, those of us who are white U.S.-American are rendered morally malformed, and less human.

This statement begins to bring an imperative of reparations into view. It does so, first, in light of the theoretical frameworks articulated in

chapter one: to refuse to be white and to seek moral transformation requires concrete material responses to the mechanisms and processes through which we have become white, responses that compel moral and political agency on the part of those of us who are white. It does so, second, in relation to these histories of U.S. national formation and the emergence of white racial particularity. These specific legacies of genocide, colonization, and enslavement demand our attention as we consider what particular responses are required to address the moral crisis and disrupt white supremacy. Until these devastating histories are given the responsive attention they require, the United States as a whole will be unable to reconstitute racial and national social relations as just relations, and white U.S.-Americans will forestall our journey into being morally transformed and becoming more human.

Becoming Uniquely White "American"

As far as we could determine, white culture, if it existed, depended primarily upon the exploitation of land, people, and life itself.

—Vine Deloria, Jr.

I tried to balance the sufferings of the miserable victim against the moral degradation of Memphis, and the truth flashed over me that in large measure the race question involves the saving of black America's body and white America's soul.

—James Weldon Johnson

In the context of recognizing that race is a social construction, analyses of the formative years of U.S. nation building reveal multiple processes through which such construction took place. Whiteness emerged as a socially meaningful, significant, and recognizable racial category through the ideologies, practices, and material relations intrinsic to and inextricable from the genocide and colonization of Native peoples and the enslavement of African peoples.

Infinite and concrete benefits were acquired by those who became white through these processes. White U.S.-American relations with Native peoples and people of African descent spawned legacies of familial, corporate, and national wealth in the United States. These legacies have variously conferred on white people accumulated benefits in education, health, land, housing, and virtually any other aspect of life in which public and social institutions impact human well-being. Such "unjust enrichment" is what gives currency to calls for reparations for an evil that legally ended nearly 150 years ago.[1] And the colonial relations from which these legacies emerged and on which they

continue to depend see Native peoples still resisting the imperialists who occupy their land and violate their sovereignty.

To the extent that such unjust material realities remain unredressed, legacies of colonization and slavery remain with us in the present. White supremacy is not just attitudes of the mind and heart, it has a solid texture, touch, and feel. It is part of the social landscape in which we all live and the air we all breathe; our lives are embodied in it everyday.

The mass horror of racial and imperial atrocities in U.S. social life can never be undone, but theoretical clarity about what race is, contextualized by the historical realities of how whiteness originated, make clear that attempts at racial justice must take place through material, not abstract processes. These attempts must, at least, intervene in the very relations and processes that created and continue to create whiteness and that structure white supremacist, U.S.-imperialist social realities. In recognizing, therefore, the nature of the genesis of "being white" in the United States "an imperative of reparations" begins to emerge.

Colonization, genocide, and enslavement were not phenomena constrained to a bygone historical era, however. The processes that created, reified, and reproduced whiteness have marched on, well beyond the initial "settling" on Native lands and the formal abolition of slavery. They have manifested differently in different periods, but the domination and violence that were intrinsic to the social relations established in the formative years of U.S. nationhood persist in fundamental ways. The work of this chapter is to highlight such persistence.

Further historical analysis is not necessary to the moral argument I am pursuing. A case can be made that reparative actions are merited merely in response to the activities, effects, and international law violations intrinsic to the establishment of a U.S. nation on Native soil, and/or the more than two hundred years of enslavement of people of African descent.[2]

However, one might leave in place an artificial demarcation between past and present even while granting—with an eye toward reparative action—that massive human rights violations took place and that vestiges of slavery and legacies of colonization exist in the present. In other words, the argument could presume that atrocities were committed *back then* for which redress must be made *now*. Given the breadth of the argument I am pursuing about the particular constitution of white racial selves, I am not content to leave the historical analysis here. Instead, I want to ensure that lines of correlation are drawn that link past and present. By this I mean lines that highlight not only the current

presence of unjust benefits, and vestiges of harm and injury, but also the *ongoingness* of racial and imperial subjugation and violence in the United States. These ongoing manifestations of subjugation are implicit to what it means to be white U.S.-American today.

The historical analysis pursued in this chapter seeks to draw such lines. It considers racial domination and violence in a historical period spanning the late 1700s through the early 1900s. But the focus of the analysis is slightly different than that of the preceding chapter. Rather than tracking the development of U.S. governmental policies in relation to colonization and enslavement, I explore how white U.S.-American identity was constituted through complex relationships between white U.S.-American violence and white cultural productions.

In addition to giving attention to how race and whiteness have manifested differently over time, I want to attend to the complexity, breadth, and pervasiveness of white supremacy. I bring in cultural productions here for two reasons. First, a myriad of mechanisms have structured material relations between groups; materialities that become implicit to the meaning of race and nationhood. Culture is of huge significance as a means of enacting subjugative relations. Exoticized, trivialized, objectified, ridiculed, vanished, and/or caricatured (white-mediated images of) "blacks" and "indians" have been central in white cultural productions. These productions are akin to ideology in the ways they grease the wheels of white supremacy, thereby shaping the consciousness and circumscribing the behaviors of white agents. Thus, they need to be considered.

Second, I want to invite a multifaceted inquiry into the nature of white U.S.-American as an identity. Cultural production makes it possible to get at a dimension of what it means to "be white" in the United States that I have only minimally touched on to this point. Indeed, it is a dimension for which it is more difficult to find appropriate words. Eric Lott, quoting Antonio Gramsci, writes: "the starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, as in 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces without leaving an inventory."[3] Such "self knowing" for white people requires going beyond—without departing from—the (more obvious) traces of the unjust economic benefits and historical atrocities implicit to white-ness, to locating the (less immediately tactile) traces of racial subjugation central to white U.S.-American identity itself. One important place to locate these traces is in the cultural productions through which identity has been made coherent, group/national consciousness

has been forged, and white U.S.-Americans have made claims about themselves.

In the pages that follow I begin by providing an overview of how fixations on and obsessions with race and racial "otherness"—specifically, white supremacist-informed notions of "blackness" and "indianness"—pertain to white U.S.-American identity. This is followed by a historical overview of the widespread practice of lynching of African Americans and that of white blackface minstrelsy and, then, U.S. imperial violence toward Native peoples and the centrality of performances and images of indianness in white culture.

These histories are not parallel and the ways in which white cultural productions and white/U.S. violence constitute white U.S.-American are different. They are interrelated, however. My purpose is not to provide a thorough and straightforward account of the ways in which white supremacist, imperial violence was normative practice and policy in the United States through the 1800s and into the early 1900s. Instead, my purpose is to demonstrate that racial subjugation and obsessions with otherness are core to who white U.S.-Americans are as *a people*. The particular choices I have made for which histories to explore come out of my observation that some manifestations of white obsessions with racial otherness articulated through cultural productions mimic and echo the specific forms of social violence white U.S.-Americans have enacted against these racial "others."

This observation explains the divergence in the particular histories of white U.S.-American violence against people of African descent and Native peoples, respectively. The grotesque fixations on blackness of blackface minstrelsy echoed in the grotesque obsessive violence of lynching; both phenomena were consumed by and participated in by white mobs and masses who were racialized in the process. White productions of indianness on the other hand were an intricate cultural mechanism of an imperialist, nationalizing mythology, a means for popular participation in U.S. political and military violence against Native peoples through the 1800s.

Culture as Ideology and Apparatus in White U.S.-American Identity

Lott begins his exploration of blackface minstrelsy by explaining the paradigm through which he views popular culture. The "popular" in "popular culture," he writes, is a "sphere characterized by cultural

forms of social and political conflict." He continues, "because the popular is always produced, capitalized, it is hardly some unfettered time-out from political pressures, a space of mere 'leisure' . . ."[4] Such a recognition makes the wildly popular white blackfaced minstrelsy, as well as the proliferation of images of Native peoples in white literature or film and the taking on of indianness in other white cultural forms, immensely important. It also provides a context in which to hold the paradox that endless horrific violence against Native and African peoples has existed beside endless white fixations on blackness and indianness.

With a variety of foci, many scholars have written on the centrality of blackness and indianness in white culture.[5] Toni Morrison, for example, argues for the existence of an "Africanist presence" in early-twentieth-century U.S.-American literature.[6] Morrison detects in this literature the constant presence of a "denotative and connotative blackness" on the white mind.[7] Her analysis finds, for example, that in white literature "black people ignite critical moments of discovery or change or emphasis."[8] Others have written in related terms about the centrality of images of Native peoples—white-mediated indianness—in U.S.-American literature. Philip J. Deloria documents the taking on of indianness in political protests, sporting events, and secret white clubs. He traces this phenomenon, which he describes as "playing Indian," from the Boston Tea Party of 1773 to the Society of Indian Dead of the 1990s.[9]

White people have indeed manifested throughout U.S. history an obsession with racial otherness: images and misrepresentations of people of color produced in the interest of white supremacy, and central to and inextricable from white articulations about themselves.[10] Given how foundational the construction of race-as-racial subjugation was to the emergence of whiteness and the formation of the United States as a nation, such obsessions are not surprising. Still, the presence of racial otherness in cultural productions goes beyond the direct work required for subjugative relations; it does more than merely support or sustain legal or political discourse enacting racial oppression.

One of the functions of the Africanist presence according to Morrison, is to make a particular white U.S.-American identity coherent. She writes:

Under the pressures of ideological and imperialistic rationales for subjugation, an American brand of Africanism emerged: strongly urged, thoroughly serviceable, companionably ego-reinforcing , and pervasive.

> For excellent reasons of state—because European sources of cultural hegemony were dispersed but not yet valorized in the new country—the process of organizing American coherence through a distancing Africanism became the operative mode of a new cultural hegemony.[11]

For white people to create caricatures of Black people, or to describe a reality in which blackness is somehow constantly present is, in fact, for white people to talk and make claims about *themselves*.[12] Deloria similarly analyzes the many ways that playing Indian functioned, and still functions, in white U.S.-American culture as a means for whites to create and make claims about their national identities. The meanings of indianness have varied in different historical periods, as have the expressions of it. Still, he writes, "Indianness has, above all, represented identities that are unquestionably American."[13]

Such organizing of white U.S.-American coherence through cultural productions is not far removed from the establishment of white U.S.-America and white U.S.-Americanness through public, national racial violence. My concern, here, is not to inquire into the *why* of white obsessions in relation to Native peoples and African Americans. It is to present the phenomenon of those obsessions and to identify their effects, to locate such obsessions in relation to and as a manifestation of racial subjugation and violence, and to explore their implications for the formation of white U.S.-American identity. Analysis of culture helps to get at this concern with identity, because culture creates and expresses human understanding of world.

I am not advocating, with use of the concept of "identity," a psychoanalytic approach or reading of the white U.S.-American psyche or persona. What I am advocating is that the phenomena of white obsessions with otherness be recognized as constituting public, social, or even political articulations about what it means to be white U.S.-American. "What does it *mean* to be white U.S.-American?" is not a question about the interior selves of individual white people in the United States.[14] It is a question about the formation of a group, the creation of a public consciousness. Identity here is an organizing principle: our sense of "who we are" deeply shapes how we see the world, and how we make sense of our position in and experience of it. These, in turn, inform our behavior.[15]

In this context white cultural productions of otherness should be recognized as functioning like ideology and as part of the apparatus of subjugation. Lott paraphrases Louis Althusser's account of the function of ideology: "to represent (actually to *mis*represent) the subject's

relation to his or her lived conditions of existence."[16] White cultural productions of racial otherness represent through misrepresentation the conditions through which white, Native American, and African American peoples exist in relation to one another, along with the histories by which they have come to be in relation to one another. They misrepresent, as well, Native peoples and African American peoples themselves. In the process of these misrepresentations, they also misrepresent the white racial self.

White activity in the social and political realm—overwhelmingly violent with regard to racial and national formation—is a backdrop against which such misrepresentations are thrown into painfully sharp relief. Notable examples of this are the accusations of rape or "savage" violence that white U.S.-Americans have claimed to be central to the otherness of African Americans and Native Americans; atrocities and behaviors that, in fact, have been central to white U.S.-Americanness.

In the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries, the apparatus of an imperialist white supremacy was generating mass violence and death on a daily basis. To the extent that white cultural productions can be recognized as constituting an identity of "white U.S.-American," these productions must be viewed in the context of the pervasive social violence in which they were created: lynching, for example, enabled poor whites a racial superiority that belied their economic position; blackface invited immigrants to acculturate to whiteness through "playing" with blackness; performing as indians enabled European colonists to claim their identity in contrast to Europe; massive imperial violence was a vehicle for white U.S.-Americans to be a destined national people. In this way, violence against and obsessions with racial others must be together explored as constitutive of white U.S.-American identity.

White Lynchers and Blackfaced Minstrels

As I have already stated, my attempt here is not to provide a detailed, historical account of lynching and blackfaced minstrelsy in the United States. It is, instead, to analyze how white racial selves were constituted. Thus, while lynching and minstrelsy each deserve and have received elsewhere their own detailed and in-depth analysis, I have chosen to hold them in juxtaposition and explore them in more general terms. Significant geographic and cultural differences attend each of these phenomena: most obviously, lynching was more frequent in the South as was minstrelsy in the North. Such differences matter a

great deal for historical understanding. Still, there are a number of sound reasons for considering these seemingly disparate phenomena together.

First, lynching and blackface shared a time span. Blackface minstrelsy did begin and end a period of years before and after the phenomenon of lynching was widespread. By some well-argued accounts, however, it is artificial to remove the main epoch of lynching—often described as 1890 to the mid-1930s, when lynchings declined to single digits per year[17]—from its broader historical context and, thus, from a more extensive time period. According to Philip Dray, the first widespread *public* application of lynch law against people of African descent took place in Mississippi in the summer of 1835.[18] This was a mere fifteen years after the first recorded performance of blackface by a white actor. Both took on a larger national presence through the course of the nineteenth century. Lynching and minstrelsy were both still prevalent at the turn of the twentieth century.

Second, connections between North and South were evident in each phenomenon. Minstrelsy centered around portrayals of southern Blacks, plantation life, and slavery. Moreover, the ease with which northern white minstrels commodified blackness and distorted Black culture grew directly from the exploitative power and economic relations established through southern slavery. From the other direction, lynching was not only a southern phenomenon. Though less frequent, lynchings did occur in the North. Perhaps more important, every lynching saw "the appeal of Southern whites to Northern sympathy and sanction . . ."[19] Meanwhile, antilynching activists railed against the complicity of the northern public and politicians.[20] In this sense, lynching was a public, social, "normal," and visible phenomenon throughout the nation.

Third, the seemingly paradoxical existence of lynching and blackface on the national landscape—each pervasive—itself compels inquiry into their relationship. Too often, cultural history fails to make racial violence implicit to analysis. Ann Douglas' mammoth work, *Terrible Honesty* (1995), for example, documents the intense cross-racial cultural exchange of the 1920s and argues for the centrality of African American cultural forms to what is understood as "American" culture. Douglas manages to celebrate this cross-racial exchange in 606 pages without a word about the prevalence of white racial violence in the 1920s—lynching or in any other form.[21] Yet, consider the year of 1927. That year, *The Jazz Singer* placed the allure of blackface minstrelsy before a national audience and at the center of an emerging

mass popular culture medium—the movies. In the same year, at least twelve lynchings took place and fourteen deaths resulted from riots that ensued in the wake of prevented lynchings. This violence was not only a rural or southern phenomenon. On July 22 and 23, twenty-five hundred African Americans and one hundred and fifty police officers clashed in a riot in Harlem, which was sparked by the arrest of an African American man. On June 29, police intervention was required to prevent a lynching in Queens—just across the river from Manhattan, the so-called hub of cross-racial cultural embrace and exchange.[22]

White minstrels' complex fixation on blackness always took place in a landscape soaked in the blood of thousands upon thousands of African American people. And, lynching violence against African Americans only ever existed on a national scene in which Black cultural forms were continually lifted up, appropriated, and made central in U.S.-American life.

Referring to minstrelsy, Rogin writes of the distinctiveness of white U.S.-American racial and national identity: "American national culture arose, not to free an oppressed folk but *to constitute a national identity from its [the oppressed folks'] subjugation.*"[23] While Rogin is linking slavery and minstrelsy here, lynching was an integral part of such violent subjugation as it continued post-abolition and Reconstruction. Moreover, Orlando Patterson argues powerfully that the practice of slavery created in the South a "honorific culture of violence" key to white Christian Southern identity. In this culture, "the Afro-American had acquired a special role . . . as the 'domestic enemy' who should be feared and watched."[24] Lynching was, thus, a continuation and central feature of the honorific culture of violence. With minstrelsy, it too was linked to slavery. Lynching was a thread in the tapestry of white obsessions, weaving the landscape of U.S.-American and white identity. It is, thus, to drawing out the contours and implications of this abysmal topic that I now turn.

Lynching

The period with which lynching is most readily associated, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, is appropriately understood in the context of the nineteenth century as a whole. Public, punitive violence, in the North and South, against people of African descent existed long before the Civil War. Dray argues that a strong, violent antiauthoritarian sentiment and active vigilantism was a force in U.S. history since at least the Revolutionary War.[25] In the social and political

turmoil of the antebellum years, not only did violent vigilantism increase, but it exploded as racial violence in the North and South.[26]

The dramatic increase of what Dray calls "spectacle lynchings" came, however, in the years following Reconstruction. From 1865 to 1877, writes Dray:

> Black aspirations for economic independence and citizenship were both nurtured and thwarted, white resistance to the strivings of freed blacks began to assert itself and a pattern of deadly violence as a means of repression emerged.[27]

Such repression manifested itself most evidently in the South. The first chapter of the Ku Klux Klan formed, for example, in Pulaski, Tennessee, in June of 1866. The federal government put some energy into protecting African Americans from such repression during Reconstruction.[28] But, as Reconstruction came to an end, so did its investment in Black citizens' safety and well-being.

As the federal government ceased to intervene in escalating violence against and oppression of Black people, the main epoch of lynching began. In 1894, only a few years into this period, sociologist and activist Ida B. Wells wrote:

> Not all nor nearly all of the murders done by white men, during the past thirty years in the South, have come to light, but the statistics as gathered and preserved by white men . . . show that during these years more than ten thousand Negroes have been killed in cold blood . . . .[29]

Between 1882 and 1968, 4,742 known individuals were lynched, 3,445 of whom were Black (73 percent). Between 1899 and 1918, "the heyday of lynching," 3,224 known individuals were lynched, 2,522 of whom were Black (78 percent).[30] No less than two or three lynchings were carried out in a given week between 1905 and 1914.[31] That these numbers indicate only *known* lynchings is significant.

By the 1920s, the number of lynchings per year remained high. Due to people such as Wells, W. E. B. Du Bois, James Weldon Johnson, and Walter White, and their decades of strategizing, building and sustaining an antilynching campaign, and due to the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), twice as many lynchings were prevented as were carried out. At the same time, while prevented lynchings might protect a potential victim from a less tortured death, a prevented lynching in the 1920s was usually

deadly nonetheless. The pressures applied by a thwarted lynch mob, and the refusal of the federal government to protect due process at the state level, typically resulted in a hasty trial and all but guaranteed that the victim would be executed. (Such trials were referred to as "legal lynchings."[32]) In short, the numbers of Black Americans lynched in the United States, by any measure, are astronomical and stomach-turning.

Besides the numbers cited earlier, which indicate the thousands of people actually murdered, lynching was a constant potential that maintained an atmosphere of racial terror. The Commission on the Study of Lynching, created by the Commission on Interracial Cooperation (CIC) in 1930, described the forces that could erupt into a lynch mob as "social pressures."[33] The director of the Commission, Arthur F. Raper, wrote, "The forces that occasionally burst into the aggressive lawlessness of mob violence are always present, though perhaps unrecognized."[34] In *Black Boy* (1966), Richard Wright cites the existence of such pressures. The pervasive threat of lynching, combined with Wright's inability and unwillingness to tiptoe around white supremacy, compelled him to move north.[35] Lynching was, in a sense, omnipresent: an environment in which such outbursts were possible and unpunished created "a poisoned atmosphere, one that permeated life far beyond those counties where a lynching had actually taken place, one that pervaded all the dealings each race had with the other."[36]

The horrors of lynchings themselves can scarcely be uttered. Lynching was not simply murders of vast numbers African American men and fewer, but by no means insignificant, numbers of African American women, because of a perceived crime or infringement of the racial order.[37] It was "calculated terrorism."[38] Lynchings were communal acts of torture and mutilation in which white people would hunt down, terrify, torture, and publicly murder an African American person, or more than one. Records abound of victims being burned or dragged preceding or following their death. Body parts were displayed and bits of bone or burnt flesh were auctioned to the highest bidder.[39] Almost no words can begin to get at the brutality in which white people engaged; evil and depravity are the closest descriptors one dares utter in approaching something so atrocious.

The descriptor "evil" is especially appropriate here, not only because it carries the weight of the heinousness of these crimes but also because of its theological resonances. For lynching was not merely racial violence, it was also religious violence. What Dray calls "spectacle lynchings," Patterson calls "ritual or sacrificial murder." Patterson argues that lynching in the South can best be understood as

"ritualized killings in communal acts of human sacrifice" deeply embedded in a Christian symbolism and theology.[40] Lynchings that fit this category involved at least three major components: torture, mass attendance, and burning.[41] They were frequently attended by the kinds of horrors described earlier: the auctioning of "relics"; the lynching site being carefully chosen and publicized ahead of time and becoming a shrine afterward. They were often presided over by clergy. Subsequent reports of a lynching regularly described a pronounced and startling hush falling over the previously revelrous masses at the moment of the victim's death.[42] The significance of recognizing in lynching a (deeply sadistic) religious ritual will be given attention later. At this point, however, it suffices to observe that each of these specific characteristics is consistently encountered in religious rituals of human sacrifice in many other cultural contexts through the course of human history.[43] Lynching created and sustained an environment of both racial and religious terror.

One might expect that for such atrocities to prevail for more than a century, silence must have pervaded the public arena. The media must have ignored or suppressed lynching (like the Holocaust of World War II). This was not so: "far from suppressing news about lynchings, newspapers embraced them, providing abundant, even graphic coverage of vigilante violence."[44] Accounts of lynchings were in the press with frequency, and often reported in graphic detail. They were regularly announced before they took place and used both to incite white mobs and to increase their size. As late as 1934, for example, more than two decades after sustained agitation by the NAACP, and several years after additional work by the CIC and the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL), Claude Neal was lynched only after several days of public, nationwide reports that he was being sought for precisely this purpose.[45]

Indeed, it was not only the lack of federal or white northern concern and the pandemic of white southern violence that made lynching violence such a pervasive reality in U.S. life.[46] In the decades following Reconstruction, a palpable "impulse toward reunion spread in the land" in which the (white) nation sought to put the divisions of the Civil War behind itself.[47] One of the ways the nation forged reunion was by making a pact to permit white supremacist violence to be normative in U.S. national life. Thus, with the impulse toward reunion came vocal support for lynching by white northerners; a kind of solidarity with their white southern counterparts presumedly struggling with teeming masses of newly freed, and hence "uppity" Black populations. In the

early years of the height of the lynching pandemic, the *New York Herald* wrote: "[T]he difference between bad citizens who believe in lynch law, and good citizens who abhor lynch law, is largely in the fact that the good citizens live where their wives and daughters are perfectly safe."[48] Thus did this northern publication both participate in the myth of the black male rapist and support lynching by attempting to silence any white northerner who might dare raise a voice against it.

For most of its history, lynching was not perceived widely as social deviance. It was of a piece with national, public, white supremacist mythologies about and obsessions with blackness. As was and continues to be the case, moreover, these obsessions were highly sexualized. Historian Jacquelyn Dowd Hall has described the whole event of lynching—from the myths that might set a lynching in motion to its later recall—as "folk pornography." "Rape and rumors of rape became a kind of acceptable folk pornography in the Bible Belt," she writes. They were lurid sexual tales that people told and retold. Hall adds further, "the imagery of lynching—in literature, poetry, music, in the minds of men—was inescapably erotic."[49]

In truth, accusations of rape, according to the CIC's study in the 1930s, constituted only one-sixth of the original charges that resulted in a lynching murder.[50] Indeed, Du Bois conducted his own informal study of lynching and concluded that disputes over work conditions and wages were the most frequent initial cause of the eruption of racial violence.[51] Still, allusions to or outright additions of the charge of rape in explaining why a prospective lynching victim was being sought, or why a person had been lynched, were invariably attached to the rhetoric surrounding a lynching.[52] It was not reality but rather the fantastical obsessions of people with white skin that produced grotesque and distorted images and myths about the black body and black sexuality in particular.[53] Whites then repeatedly engaged in a terrorizing and deadly public spectacle in which grotesque violations of African American bodies were realized.

Some sociologists have tried to examine economic causation, population contours/density, and other social factors to "explain" or understand lynching.[54] This is not the nature of my inquiry here. No explanation can touch the evil and sadistic chasm lynchings glaringly revealed.[55] Instead, my question is how lynching constituted whiteness as a racial identity.

Perhaps lynching's most obvious function was to secure racial subjugation through terror. Lynching was one mechanism used to "preserve white hegemony and maintain the caste boundary."[56] Sometimes

this was made explicit in the act itself, as when white lynchers pinned warning notes to charred bodies and moved corpses for display in African American neighborhoods.[57] Indeed, the intractability of lynching rates through the decades confirmed for many in the African American community that an accomodationist approach to Black well-being in the United States—such as that advocated by Booker T. Washington—was not the right strategy for Black activism. The ferocity with which whites maintained a white supremacist caste boundary through the use of lynching turned on its head the logic that African American communities should focus on self-improvement as a means for political or social equality. For, it was frequently the case that Black success, in business, for example, led to "death at the hands of persons unknown."[58] Self-sufficiency of African Americans in a local community did not appease a white supremacist nation. It often resulted in Blacks being made the prime targets of white hatred and violence.[59]

An inextricable part of lynching's function in the marking and maintaining of racial caste boundaries was its indulgence in the production of a black "other." When southern whites claimed that "unless a Negro is lynched now and then the women on the solitary farms are in danger" they were trafficking in myth-making, *producing* the dangerous sexually predatory black male.[60] This myth was not invoked merely as singular or simple justification for individual lynchings. It was part of a larger, ongoing, comprehensive myth-making enterprise. A national other was produced, for example, in 1928, when a national magazine published as legitimate public debate an article entitled "Is Lynching Ever Defensible?" "Both pro and con contributors cited as extenuating circumstances the feelings aroused by rape atrocity stories . . . ."[61] An other was produced as late as 1935, when Warren A. Candler, senior bishop of the Southern Methodist Church, argued that "*righteous* indignation" was the cause of lynching.[62] The myth-making machinery was alive and well more than three decades after Wells indicted this othering phenomenon when she wrote: "A concession of the right to lynch a man for a certain crime . . . is in a fair way to stamp us a race of rapists and desperadoes."[63] The horrific irony of this discourse, of course, was that the very attributes white people ascribed to racial others were rooted in the depravity of which the oft-times Christian creators of such myths were in fact guilty. Moreover, the production of this (mythical) other and the violence that came with it was central in the process of producing the (actual) "white" self and (actual) white community.

Lynching violence created white selves and/or a white group as it helped to secure race as a line of demarcation between groups; an enforcer of social power and oppression. Social permission to lynch

those with dark skin ensured access to a kind of dominance for those who possessed white skin. This access was available even among impoverished whites for whom skin "color" might be the only significant separation between themselves and impoverished African Americans.[64] Indeed, as was seen in the preceding chapter, whiteness has historically been dangled before the eyes of the working class and stuffed with some benefits to prevent cross-racial class solidarity, and as a distraction from white working-class exploitation at the hands of upper-class whites.

At the same time, lynching must not be reduced to a mere economic buffer. James W. Clarke writes, in "the coming of age of a new, post-slavery generation of blacks and whites . . . political and media climates . . . continually aroused racial anxiety and animosity as a means of unifying a white population starkly divided between rich and poor."[65] More than a simple buffer, lynching was a mechanism to actually unify and maintain a white group. It was made effective through widespread public consumption of media that portrayed such violence as not only permissible, but necessary. While lynching has often been blamed retrospectively on working-class whites, it functioned, in fact, as a cross-class solidarity activity. From one report: "One sheriff conceded that he had to give up his intentions to defend a black about to be lynched because 'the first half-a-dozen men standing there were leading citizens—businessmen, leaders of their church and community—I just couldn't do it.' "[66] As local white citizens from across class lines fomented a lynch mob, local law enforcement regularly stood by and did nothing, while politicians at various legislative and administrative levels feigned ignorance, pled impotence, or, not infrequently, expressed outright sympathy with the lynchers.

In the moment of creating cross-class solidarity among white people, lynching was, thus, absorbed into the center of what white was, what it meant, and how it came to be. From the CIC:

> The *anti-social and inhumane desires* which find expression in lynchings *often serve as socializing forces within the white group* . . . Lynchings tend to minimize social and class distinctions between white plantation owners and white tenants, mill owners, and textile workers, Methodists and Baptists, and so on . . . . This prejudice against the Negro forms a common meeting place for whites . . .[67]

Lynching as a socializing force points to the constitution of whiteness as a social identity: white selves and/or a white group being created out of communal blood violence.

At every turn, lynching violence was not the aberrational violence of a few, but a characteristic element emerging from and in turn shaping white culture—particularly in the South. Even among those whites who found its pervasive practice regrettable, complicity through passivity was the overwhelming response. Moreover, some in the nation bemoaned as a painful contradiction the fact that lynching was most prominent in the most "fervently Christian part of the United States."[68] But, Patterson convincingly and disturbingly argues that neither was lynching an aberration from Christianity, but emerged from and in turn shaped it as well. And, here, Patterson's analysis of lynching as religious ritual merits sustained attention for it reveals permutations of whiteness and Christianity: this communal blood violence was Christian violence.

After identifying criteria that have characterized religious rituals of human sacrifice, Patterson proceeds to analyze the function of such rituals. Among their many variations, rituals of human sacrifice have often served as a means by which to ward off danger when a community's way of life is in peril as a result of some major social transition—transition that has thrown a community's sense of meaning in relation to its culture and history into chaos. The community identifies "enemies" within the community, whose presence within the community is somehow responsible for (or who might stand in as a symbol for that which is causing) the chaos. It attempts to purge the evil within by removing the enemy—sacrificing the enemy to the community's god and in the process consecrating itself. In such rituals a compact is reforged between the community and their god/gods as they ritually cleanse themselves. A bond is remade among the community members as a whole. These bonds restabilize and re-create the community out of chaos.[69]

According to Patterson, "Precisely such a period of acute liminal transition was faced by the Old South after the collapse of its system of slavery and during its forced transition to a new form of society . . ."[70] Blacks had long had a prominent role in the South's honorific culture of violence. They were, indeed, a kind of internal enemy: despised and oppressed, yet at the center of white society. Given human cultures' tendencies to engage in ritualized killing in moments of severe cultural and historical upheaval, Black Americans in the South—after abolition and by way of a grossly negligent federal government—found themselves in a deadly position. Blacks became in the white mind, a highly visible symbol of the very loss white southerners experienced as a result of defeat in the Civil War, the enemy that

needed to be purged in the process of a consecrating sacrifice to the gods (of white supremacy) in order to restabilize and re-create the white community out of chaos.

White supremacy was more than a racial or political ideology in the South. The complex of beliefs, systems of meaning, rituals, explanatory power render white supremacy appropriately described as a religion or theology. It was a "system of belief that would protect its devotees from all that loom[ed] on their horizon . . . a holy path, complete with commandments, priests, theologians, and a plan of salvation."[71] The spectacle lynchings that functioned as prominent rites of this religion post-abolition were not characterized by general ritualistic forms, nor were they only vaguely religious. This supremacist religion as a whole—and the specific horrors that it generated—was embedded in acutely Christian symbols and theology.

In the supremacist religion of the South—what Patterson calls southern civil religion—political symbols had religious meanings and Christian symbols and rituals had politico-cultural meanings. To cite merely the most general of examples of this: the dominance of the white "race" had long been understood as sanctioned by divine fiat, a Christian social order with existential meaning. Thus, the (white) *Christian theology* of the South—not just its political or cultural identity—was thrown into disarray with the overturning of racial hierarchy. Theologians and preachers struggled to explain why God would have abandoned them, and allowed their utter defeat and *the end of their way of life*, at the hands of the Yankees. While theological nuances existed among the various explanations that were given, the possibility that their wrathful God was punishing them for not living righteously enough, that they were a chosen people currently being tested, or that satanic influences were causing such evil and chaos were prominent.[72] As Patterson argues, in each of these explanations, symbols that were already important in the fundamentalist-oriented Christianity of the South reinvigorated southern Christian fixations on sin, Satan, purity, sacrifice, and suffering.[73]

Meanwhile, in the wake of a social order in upheaval, previously "uncomplaining, faithful, humble, childlike, religious, and endearing" enslaved Blacks became dangerous threats (in the white mind). The dangers ran deep: "If the image of the New Negro brought pride to many blacks as a sign of race regeneration, that same image frightened whites into thoughts of racial degeneration, suggesting a Negro who had cast off those endearing and comforting qualities associated with the old Negro."[74] Given white obsessions with blackness, the centrality

of people of African descent in white southern life (by way of slavery), the pervasive atmosphere of southern (Christian) civil religion, Blacks were the very embodiment of this theological and existential upheaval and the social and political disruption that caused it. As argued in the preceding chapter, blackness and African Americans themselves had long been identified by whites with notions of evil, sin, and Satan. But, invigorated concerns about sin and Satan, and the hatred and loathing with which whites responded to the newly freed "uppity" Blacks amidst a social order in chaos (and a divinely sanctioned racial hierarchy turned upside down), raised these stakes. Writes Patterson:

> The fundamentalist emphasis on satanic influences was a symbolic disaster for Afro-Americans, for it was all too easy to identify the hated ex-slaves with the satanic presence. Afro Americans became to the body politic what Satan was to the individual and collective soul of the South. For both, the same metaphor of a "black" malignancy to be excised was employed.[75]

Lynchings, thus, were ritual sacrifices that came directly from a (white supremacist) Christian symbolic. Buttressing these symbols of sin, evil, and Satan were explicit symbols used in lynchings themselves. The Ku Klux Klan concretized such symbols to the hilt. The burning cross, of course, is the most familiar image. But Klan gatherings in general and Klan-led lynch mobs in particular typically included clergy participation (who played a significant role in founding the Klan), an opening prayer and the singing of "Onward Christian soldiers."[76] The use of the tree in most lynchings hearkened to the centrality of the tree (or the cross) in the Christian symbolic.

Christian theology supported the deployment of these symbols. Patterson demonstrates an ancient and ongoing tension between two theological threads in Christianity—what he calls the "bifocal" narrative of sacrifice.[77] In one, Jesus is a servant who is lowly and humble. He is a Christ of the powerless who have been despised and cast out of the community. This is a Jesus who has long appealed to oppressed masses in many different contexts. But, in the other, the "triumphant narrative of sacrifice," the emphasis is on sacrifice as atonement: "victory over the forces of darkness, sin, chaos, and ignorance." Jesus' crucifixion purifies and renews the compact between Israel and God; a sacrificed lamb ("in turn symbolically surrogated in Jesus") becomes the means for triumph over sin and death, and the redemption of humankind.[78] Patterson argues that this triumphant narrative has

typically been the dominant narrative throughout Christian history. Elevation of this theology (as opposed to one that sees Jesus as one whose crucifixion was a tragic result of a life lived in commitment to a particular love and social justice ethic) created a religion that fundamentally organized itself around an imperative of human sacrifice in the pursuit of eradicating sin. In southern civil religion, in which "the very center of its doctrine [was] not just the permanent segregation and subjugation of Afro-Americans but their demonization, terrorization, and humiliation," this imperative manifested as the "human sacrifice of the lynch mob."[79]

Patterson's analysis reveals larger implications for Christian theology than I can consider here—implications that merit greater attention and analysis by theologians. For my purposes, recognizing how lynching functioned of a piece with and as a result of a Christian symbolic and theological worldview further exposes the depth with which racial violence has been constitutive of white U.S.-American identity. This atrocious phenomenon was constitutive of white racial identity, in an acutely Christian key. This is particularly the case in terms of southern white U.S.-Americans. But, as I have repeatedly attempted to emphasize, the public and national nature of lynching as a phenomenon, combined with the exceedingly paltry resistance of non-southern whites to this phenomenon, implicates lynching in the constitution of northern white Christianity as well.

Central in national consciousness, participated in by all classes, deeply embedded in Christianity, lynching created whiteness at a level much deeper than its ability to maintain material benefits, social domination, or white solidarity. Simple murder without the attendant evil spectacle might have achieved such ends. Lynching produced a vilified other through myth-making fixations on racial otherness and in the process created whiteness. Whiteness was reproduced in the real historical experience of terror and torture of people of African descent in the United States and in the images of blackness created and obsessed upon by a depraved white population. In this process lynching rendered obscene and deadly violence a core aspect of national life.

Blackface

There is an immediate connection between blackface and lynching violence. It was not unusual for whites to "black up" and commit crimes for which African Americans were subsequently lynched.[80] David R. Roediger records numerous accounts of blackface-on-Black violence.[81] After 1829, when African Americans in Pennsylvania were barred

from what previously had been interracial gatherings, blackface was the "most common disguise" in which whites arrived to such public celebrations. It was not uncommon for such celebrations to culminate in attacks on Blacks in the area. This was also the case on militia days and artillery election days throughout much of the Northeast.[82] In 1834, "antiabolitionist rioters who attacked the homes of well-to-do blacks, burned black churches, and destroyed racially integrated places of leisure wore black masks and shabby coats."[83] From 1837 to 1848, numerous acts of blackface-on-Black violence are recorded in Christmas attacks.[84]

It seems peculiar, in a nation in which white supremacist violence against African Americans and wanton destruction of Black bodies had always been the most predictable aspect of the racial status quo, that white men would take delight in painting their faces black; would act, dance, sing as if they were Black; and that a white public would eagerly consume such images. It seems peculiar, but they did.

Minstrel acts varied from famous solo shows to full troupes. They were performed, most often, in urban settings in the North before large crowds of white men who came to watch. In 1820, the first recorded performance of blackface by a white actor took place.[85] The first professional white blackface minstrelsy troupe came to New York City in 1842, and in 1844, white blackface minstrels performed in the White house. "For the next half century," writes Rogin, " 'our only original American institution [sic],' as one minstrel called it remained the most popular mass spectacle in the United States."[86]

Even with the entrance of new cultural forms by the turn of the century and into the 1920s, blackface, as popular culture, remained central. It was incorporated into such forms: vaudeville, Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, motion pictures, and radio.[87] To the extent that blackface minstrelsy is recognized as the first mass popular culture in U.S.-America, the phenomenon places African Americans, along with Native Americans, a most derided, exploited, and violently treated group, at the center of U.S. national life and white culture.

Of course, minstrelsy was consistent with the exploitation of African American people at every level of U.S.-American life. It was a form of economic exploitation committed through the stealing, appropriation, and distortion of Black culture. Lott traces the development of minstrelsy, beginning with the presence of slaves in the North:

> It is clear that black culture was frankly on display in the North as well as the South, and that such display adhered to a commodified logic

whose roots inevitably lay in slavery and whose outcome was eventually the minstrel show.[88]

Enslaved Blacks traveling up North with their so-called owners might be tossed a few coins by whites and pressed to entertain them: as white voices described it, to "engage in a jig or break-down, as that was one of their pastimes at home on the barn-floor."[89] It became clear relatively quickly that significant money stood to be made in an exchange that began with commodification of Black cultural forms and developed into commodification of blackness-as-white-obsession.

The economic and cultural exploitation of white blackface minstrelsy went hand in hand with overt white racial domination and Black subjugation. Besides being itself exploitative, the rise of blackface was part of a politics of exclusion and marginalization of artists of African descent. "Blackface literally stepped in as a popular entertainment craze at the very moment that genuinely Black performers and celebrations were driven out."[90] This exclusion would remain constant into the twentieth century, and well into the history of U.S. film, in which African Americans (as with many other racial and ethnic groups) were long played by whites in blackface.[91]

Minstrelsy's success signals its widespread public consumption. The mass nature of such consumption has important implications given the kind of public, social discourse on race in which it engaged. As large audiences took in this spectacle, a race line was (re-)created and entrenched through the nature of the performances and the public politics of the performers. Offstage, white minstrels before the Civil War were infamous for being staunch pro-slavery advocates and vocal in their support of white supremacist politics.[92] On stage, before and after abolition, blackface was a medium through which a multitude of anti-Black politics could be advocated. The image that was produced provided clear justification for such politics, as Blacks were portrayed as bumbling, stupid, and dreamily content with their oppression.[93] In this capacity, blackface was clearly a mechanism employed in the service of white hegemony.

Not unlike lynching, blackface additionally functioned to give the possession of white skin a social meaning and significance, and in the process to create a white group. Through its anti-Black politics, and through ridicule, blackface secured access to a kind of social dominance even for the economically exploited or marginalized white masses. According to Roediger, minstrel popularity increased as economic distinctions between the white and Black working classes decreased.[94]

It, thus, worked to sustain and increase the distinction between a white and Black group. But, it also performed a less obviously material unifying function. Lott puts it this way, "Blackface minstrelsy . . . was founded on this antinomy, re-instituting with ridicule the gap between black and white working class . . ."[95] In this re-institution, a kind of dominance might be granted those whose experience was primarily one of exploitation in an increasingly economically stratified United States. This kind of experience of dominance is what Du Bois called the "public and psychological wage" that came from being white.[96]

Also not unlike lynching, blackface too was a cross-class phenomenon. While the advent of the minstrel show, with its raucous gatherings in large performance halls, was largely a working-class, white/European-immigrant phenomenon, minstrelsy was ultimately attractive across class lines. After becoming highly visible in the 1840s, Rogin claims, "minstrelsy quickly moved beyond its working-class origins to attract white Americans across class lines . . . ."[97] Rogin's claim is substantiated not only by the presence of white blackfaced minstrels in the echelons of the White House, but also by its prominence in a plethora of cultural mediums well into the mid-twentieth century. Thus, in a manner not unlike lynching, whiteness was produced through cross-class solidarity in the myth-making indulgence of and obsessions with racial otherness.

While demarcating a race line explicitly and thus creating a white group, minstrelsy also implicitly created whiteness, or formed a white group. It did so at a level deeper than the hegemony it both reveled in and perpetuated. Performers' gross portrayals of African Americans invited crowds to consume a ridiculed and spectaclized black image. One marked aspect of this spectacle looked strikingly like the myth-making indulgence of lynching. Minstrels' tropes relied on highly sexualized and fetishized images of the Black body: "The body was always grotesquely contorted, even when sitting; stiffness and extension of arms and legs announced themselves as unsuccessful sublimations of sexual desire."[98] In word and performance minstrels produced blackness, which revealed again an obsession with black bodies and sexuality. In laughter, white audiences consumed and participated in such productions. And, the phenomenon as a whole contributed to white myth-making outside the minstrel halls.

Several historians point to the manner in which the earliest announcements of minstrel shows claimed that performers had learned from real slaves and in which minstrel culture revealed an obsession with authenticity. One points out a bizarre tendency in

advertising to announce shows as if performers really were "Negro":

> From the beginning there seems to have been a general forgetting of the fact of white impersonation . . . : "For the sum of one shilling you see Master Frank Diamond [white dancer Francis Lynch], the great negro dancer, Mr. Alden, the unrivalled Ethiopian melodist and banjo player . . ."[99]

Obviously, the question of authentic or not is not a true question. As LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka) characterizes it: "There was room for artistic imprecision in a minstrel show because it wasn't so much the performance that was side-splitting as the very idea of the show itself: 'Watch these Niggers.' "[100] That white people would go so far as to pretend to be black, however—outside the confines of the performance itself—is revelatory of the depth of the obsession being lived out.

As masses of people with white skin consumed such productions, a cohering of a white identity took place. White U.S.-American identity declared itself to exist in contradistinction to this ridiculed, troped other. And, a white group was forged in the public arena as racial distinctions were reified in the most grotesque terms possible.

Both lynching and blackface pertain directly and *implicitly* to what it meant to be distinctly white U.S.-American. Dray writes of lynching:

> Lynching was an undeniable part of daily life, as distinctly American as baseball games and church suppers. Men brought their wives and children along to the events, posed for commemorative photographs, and purchased souvenirs of the occasion as if they had been at a company picnic.[101]

And, the subject of the first ever talking film also made blackface distinctly U.S.-American. In *The Jazz Singer*, a Jewish immigrant family struggles over the fact that their son's (played by Al Jolson) career aspiration is to be a blackfaced minstrel. For Jolson's character, an immigrant Jew—himself an oppressed ethnic other in the U.S.-America of the 1920s—participation in blackface is a pathway to acculturation.[102] Rogin writes, "[Blackface] allows the protagonist to exchange selves rather than fixing him in the one where he began. Blackface is the instrument that transfers identities from immigrant Jew to American."[103]

From economic exploitation to indulgence in white mythology, from a national, public spectacle-making to an obscene consumption of commodified blackness, the effects and expressions of blackface

and the resonance such effects and expression shared with those of lynching put white obsession and violence, and racial subjugations, at the center of white U.S.-American identity. Each produced mythology of a racial other. Each relied on actual subjugations of Black communities. Each ensured that white supremacy remained at the center of U.S. national life. Each brought violence and culture in close proximity to one another. Lynching and minstrelsy together locate obsession and violence at the center of the racialization process of those whose whiteness was ensured and reiterated by way of such horrors.

U.S. National Violence and White "Indians"

White people not only put on blackface throughout the decades, but they also put on "redface." White performances of indianness have not been a phenomenon that might be seen as parallel to blackface minstrelsy. Still (white-mediated) images of Native peoples and performances of indianness have pervaded white cultural productions. Important resonances exist, moreover, between the centrality of blackness in white cultural productions and that of indianness. In fact, Native peoples were referred to in white blackface minstrel shows.[104] T. D. Rice, one of the most popular white blackface minstrels, who began performing in the 1820s, wore an outfit that presented him as both a Yankee and a *frontiersman*, as he performed in blackface.[105] As with the permutation of vaudeville and the first silent and talking films with white images of blackness, such mediums were permutated with indianness as well.[106]

Rogin accounts for the timing of the rise of blackface minstrelsy as pertaining to the surge of Black migration into urban centers in the North and the cross-racial encounters and tensions that characterized urban areas as a result. He compares the rise of blackface in such a context with that of white obsessions with indianness in the context of rampant white U.S. expansion into the "frontier" during this era.[107] Given the political and social realities of U.S.–Native national relations at the time, it is unsurprising to encounter a kind of redface performance.

It is unsurprising, moreover, to encounter in "the white mind" an obsessive fixation with redness or indianness more generally. White fixations with blackness and indianness both pertained to obsessions with racial otherness by a white U.S. public whose citizens were in the active process of violent subjugation and oppression. Thus, even as obsessions with racial otherness emerged in relation to larger social, political, material realities, the particular appearance of indianness

was informed by the colonial/imperial structure that characterized relations between white U.S.-America and Native nations. Amid important shared resonances, therefore, white fixations on indianness looked different than white blackface minstrelsy.

One significant difference was the use of indianness as a vehicle for talking about who U.S.-Americans were. This vehicle was employed to declare and forge a national identity in self-assured contradistinction to Europe. It was also a mechanism to create, define, and expand the boundaries of "America" against Native claims. Obviously, in both of these cases, U.S.-America was a presumptively white nation, and the racial nature of white fixations on indianness should not be minimized. But, being put to work in the interests of the nation-state was an emphasis apart from the work to which white blackface was put. In a sense, blackface *racialized* a citizenry, while indianness *nationalized* a group of imperial immigrants.

A related difference is the kind of images of indianness that were created. Performances and images of indianness had a romanticized and exocitized quality more often than did the obsessions with blackface. That this was so is most certainly the result of the particular ways in which subjugations of African Americans and Native Americans were being pursued. Enslavement, followed by abolition, saw African Americans living in close proximity to white U.S.-Americans. The kind of ideology needed to grease these wheels of white supremacy—to maintain a caste boundary—needed to render as distinct from oneself as possible the person with whom one was actually living in close relation. In this context images of a bumbling, ridiculous other make sense. Native peoples, on the other hand, were experiencing rapacious removal from their lands at the hands of the U.S. government, as well as violent conflicts with white "settlers" (who were supported militarily by the U.S. government). White people who were participating in expanding the western U.S. borders lived in close proximity to Native peoples, but most U.S.-Americans did not.[108] Redness thus occupied a different place in the white mind than did blackness. The ideological grease most needed was not one that othered Native peoples in the most ridiculous terms possible. Instead, it was one that othered Native peoples as a means to legitimate the imperial project, forge public notions of nationhood, and firmly locate white U.S.-Americans *here*.[109] In many guises, images of an exotic, noble people—who white U.S.-Americans were "replacing"—served this purpose.

This is by no means to say that whites did not also traffic heavily in ridiculed, spectaclized, and disparaged images of Native peoples. (Nor

is it to suggest that images of "noble savages" are any less offensive or violent in their own right.) They did. Indeed, romanticized images and performances of indianness were less common during the mid-1800s—when the U.S. government was involved in intensive warfare with the Lakotas, Comanches, Apaches, and Miwaoks who were resisting removal—than they became in the late 1800s and during the turn of the twentieth century when idyllic images of "premodern," natural indians became a way to talk about an essential, authentic U.S.-American spirit.[110]

As with blackface, there is good reason to hold together the violence the United States perpetrated against Native peoples with white cultural obsessions. First, dominant images of indianness shifted dramatically with changing social and political realities. White violence and cultural productions are clearly deeply linked. Second, so many of the origin stories of U.S. nationhood—from the mythologies surrounding celebrations of Thanksgiving to the celebration of the Boston Tea Party—told and retold in the mantras of U.S. historical narratives, continue to hold a central place for celebrations of indianness in U.S. consciousness. U.S. origins were dependent on the genocide and colonization of the very peoples presumedly being celebrated.

What I am most concerned with here is the same concern that fueled inquiry into lynching violence and white blackface minstrelsy. White obsessions with indianness were their own kind of ideology enabling and justifying pervasive U.S. violence against Native peoples. They also constituted white U.S.-American identity itself. While various performances of indianness and different fixations on images of Native peoples have functioned and emerged in a variety of capacities historically, my attempt is not to provide a comprehensive historical analysis. It is, rather, to consider what romanticizing, appropriating, and taking on the presumed culture, rituals, and traits of a people against which one is engaged in genocidal practices "mean" for being U.S.-American.

White "Indians" and Images of "Indianness"

Robert Berkhofer, Jr. explains that white conceptions and stereotypes of indians have created a whole reality in whites' own imaginations that has little or nothing to do with actual Native American peoples who were and are real. He writes: "Since the original inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere neither called themselves by a single term nor understood themselves as a collectivity, the idea and the image of the Indian must be a White conception."[111] Within white ideas and images

there have been several kinds of indianness. These tend to rotate around two axes, however: "dignified nobility" and "inhuman savagery."[112] My analysis will only loosely follow a historical chronology. Its major organization revolves around the axes of nobility and savagery as manifested in three distinct but interrelated white productions of indianness: patriotism, pioneer/cowboy, authentic American spirit.

As with blackface, the earliest accounts of white people performing as indians took place in the context of violence and social unrest. Rather than blackface-on-Black violence, however, this violence was redface-on-English. Before the Revolutionary War white colonial Americans sometimes "played Indian" in order to protest English colonial rulers. Faces painted and bodies garbed "like" indians, acting indian by whooping, and dancing, white colonists would gather whipping themselves into a mob-like frenzy. They threatened, and sometimes committed, violence in protest of colonial leaders' enforcement of unpopular requirements of the British Crown.[113]

Deloria locates these performances in traditions of carnival and "misrule."[114] Misrule, a tradition of political protest in Europe, "had an aggressive, critical quality that could be mustered anytime."[115] It was frequently revelrous and carnivalesque. Indeed, misrule not infrequently erupted during carnival celebrations; in colonial America rambunctious crowds of nonelite white colonists might use the occasion of a holiday— under the cover of the disguises that characterized such celebrations—to "act out" against the social and political establishment.

Such rituals began with the inauguration of King Tammany's Day. King Tammany was a figure the colonists presumedly based on Tamenend, a Delaware nation leader in the area that became Pennsylvania, where these May celebrations first took place. Writes Deloria, "to celebrate the return of spring, revelers sponsored maypoles, dances, vigorous speeches called longtalks, and Indian-costumed parades."[116] Thus did English-becoming-whites demonstrate their first fixation on indianness.

The potential violence and social upheaval shaping such occasions is evident in the intensity with which such occasions were suppressed by British-loyal rulers. Richard Drinnon traces the outlawing of such annual rituals by colonial rulers, who went so far as to exile those who insisted on such frolicking.[117] Both political and religious rationales were made for such suppression. A shift in the use of the figure of King Tammany is further evidence of the political nature of the potential upheaval and violence of such celebrations: after the passage of the reviled Stamp Act of 1765, Tammany was formally

promoted from king to saint and Tammany celebrations became increasingly political.[118]

The most famous culmination of such traditions came, of course, with the Boston Tea Party. After dark on December 1773, in protest of the import tax on tea, members of the Sons of Liberty—colonists heading the opposition to the British Crown—disguised themselves as Mohawk Indians.[119] They proceeded to the city's wharves and dumped three ships worth of tea into the Boston harbor. But, their performances as indians went beyond this single act. In the months before and after the Tea Party, the Sons of Liberty wrote letters to the editor about the various issues at stake in their complaints against the British. And, they did so as if they were themselves Native American. A month after the Tea Party, one of the participants wrote, for example: "[From the] Chief Sachem of the Mohawks . . . To all our liege Subjects—Health. Whereas Tea is an Indian Plant, and of right belongs to the Indians of every land and tribe . . ."[120] He went on to explain, in highly sarcastic terms, what any purchaser of tea (namely, white colonial Americans a.k.a. "the Indians of every land and tribe") should do with it.[121]

For whites to imitate, play, or "be" indian in the public arena suggests that indianness communicated something beyond that which the actual words or political calls alone communicated. To establish themselves as a new nation—the arduous task of what Wald describes as forging *"a people"*[122] —required U.S.-Americans to articulate themselves in distinction from that mother country. Performing as indians as they protested the British was one mechanism by which they did so. Rather than merely acting out their anger at the "motherland" as English citizens, white colonial Americans claimed themselves as something other than English citizens by taking on the presumed otherness of Native peoples.[123] As Deloria writes, "Tammany created *American* patriots out of *British* traitors."[124] So did the Boston Tea Party, and the political leaflets, flyers, and speeches of white indians that pervaded the colonial public arena.[125]

In the first articulations of (soon-to-be) U.S.-Americanness, white/English colonists chose to reference one of the distinguishing "characteristics [sic]" of the land upon which they were "settling": Native peoples. Not unlike the painful significance of widespread participation in blackface as a national popular culture, the centrality of white indianness in one of the most canonized origin stories of U.S. nationhood places Native peoples, a most derided, exploited, and violently treated people, also at the center of U.S. national life. And, white celebrations of white images of indianness, too, were consistent with the subjugation of Native

peoples at every stage of U.S. formation. For, even as white colonial Americans used indianness to articulate a new identity, this identity was implicitly dependent upon—and would increasingly become so—the actual physical displacement and removal of Native peoples.

The same violence that was implicit to colonial articulations of a new national identity through becoming white indians informed another kind of white indianness—that of savage indians being destroyed by pioneers or cowboys. As the need for a political contradistinction from the English subsided, the struggle to define the U.S. nation against Native land claims increased. The affirmation of colonization implicit to white redface in the Revolutionary years became more resounding as violence and warfare between Native nations and the United States persisted through the nineteenth century. By the early 1830s, then, revelrous public expressions of indianness—such as Tammany Day— had ceased.[126] Indianness no longer had a "playful" dimension when it was expressed in the public arena.[127]

Instead, another manifestation of white obsessions emerged; this one looked most like the obviously ideological image produced through blackface minstrelsy. Whites began to produce images of scarcely human indian savages doomed to be subjugated by warfare and of tragic figures who would not survive the pressures of "civilization." Many such images filled the pages of U.S.-American literature. James Fenimore Cooper was by a number of accounts the author most responsible for "establish[ing] the Indian as a significant literary type in world literature."[128] Cooper used the white/Native American conflict to articulate the "epic drama" of the U.S.-American project. His Native American characters were white images bearing little resemblance to actual Native American peoples. He used the tensions between savagery and idyllic images as a literary device, never allowed a Native character to marry a White (no matter how "noble"), and had many more "bad Indians" than "noble ones."[129]

Beyond the world of literature existed the phenomenon of the dime store novel, which portrayed savages and provided graphic descriptions of bloody massacres. These circulated widely, were readily available and widely consumed by the white reading public in the mid-1800s.[130] The pervasive presence of images of indians in white writing, and the ridiculed, demonized, and disparaged images found there functioned as scarcely masked propaganda for the removal and "extermination" policies being carried out by the U.S. government.[131]

Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show was a non-literary example of this devastatingly and deadly white cultural production. It began in 1883, and

by 1886, advertised itself as "America's National Entertainment."[132] One staple of the show was reenactments of scenes of "savage war." Providing interpretive context for such scenes, the program book inculcated viewers with explanations such as the following:

> The bullet is the pioneer of civilization, . . . Deadly as has been its mission in one sense, it has been merciful in another; for without the rifle ball we of America would not be to-day in the possession of a free and united country, and mighty in our strength.[133]

The production purported to be not mere entertainment, but a serious venture in public education. Moreover, William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) was himself a well-known figure for his role in warfare with the Sioux and the Northern Cheyenne in the mid-1870s.[134]

Buffalo Bill's Wild West, argues Richard Slotkin, taught the "moral truth" that "violence and savage war were necessary instruments of American progress."[135] This is most certainly true. In addition to teaching such ideologies, the Wild West, along with the books that recounted and celebrated the battles between savage indians and white U.S.-American pioneers and cowboys, also functioned as ideology formative of U.S.-American identity itself. These cultural forms produced a racial other through an imperialistic lens. White U.S.-Americans consumed such productions as their national story. Beyond those doing the actual "settling," white U.S.-Americans as a people vicariously participated in the inevitable and glorious expansion of a strong, civilized people overcoming the dangerous uncivilized savages who lay beyond the edge of the civilization they were carving out. In the consumption of cultural productions of indian otherness, national identity formation became a group project, manifest destiny a national consciousness.

Deep resonances exist between white U.S.-Americans consuming work that graphically depicted the bloody demise of savage others and white U.S.-Americans participating vicariously in lynchings by consuming graphic accounts in the press. Indeed, Borden notes that even among easterners who expressed concern about the speed with which and means by which Native peoples were being removed and concentrated in the plains, there existed a "popular investment in gory tales from the frontier."[136] Also, the othering in which people participated at a blackface minstrel show—a shared revelry through which a white group was formed and unified—resonates with the way images of savage indians formed and unified U.S.-American people; U.S.-Americans

were courageous pioneers and cowboys defeating an abject people and coming into their destiny as a young nation.[137]

Not unlike blackface and lynching, moreover, white-produced images of savage otherness, in devastating irony, created an image of predation of which the creators were in fact guilty. Rogin writes of racial and imperial subordination in the United States generally: "Thus white predation was inverted and assigned to colored nature, most famously in the attributions to Indians of violence and lack of respect for the property of others, and in the assignment to black men of laziness and sexual desire for white women."[138]

Public white performances and images of indianness through the nineteenth century manifested primarily in terms of productions of a savage *other* who must—and would—be destroyed. But white indianness as means to articulate the U.S.-American *self*—such as that seen in patriotic performances of indianness in the Revolutionary period— never disappeared. When revelrous public performances of indianness ceased in the early 1800s, secret societies of white U.S.-American men carried on the tradition of playing indian. White men gathered as "tribes," conducted secret rituals in war paint and feathered garb, appropriated (in distorted fashion) and enacted stylized Native cultural forms, and claimed to identify with the authentic American spirit embodied by Native peoples. Men who joined were inducted through rituals that transformed them from " 'paleface' to a 'red man,' and then up the hierarchy from a brave to a 'sachem' or 'a keeper of the wampum.' "[139]

One such society—still in existence—was the Improved Order of Red Men (IORM). The IORM claims to trace its origins to the mid-1700s and to patriot groups such as Sons of Liberty, Sons of Tamina, and the Red Men.[140] In 1813, several such groups came together and named themselves the Society of Red Men. In 1847, many "local tribes" formed a national organization called the "Grand Council of the United States." From this organization the IORM came to be.

By 1877, the IORM was located in twenty-one states and had one hundred and fifty thousand members. By 1922, there were tribes in forty-six states, and total membership reached five hundred thousand.[141] The IORM boasts itself to both be the oldest fraternal order of U.S. origin and "Chartered by Congress." They claim to be patterned after "the great Iroquois Indian Nation."[142]

One aspect of the IORM's performance of indianness hearkens back to the use of indianness to express patriotism and articulate a new, unique national identity. Included in their list of beliefs is that of

"Preserving our Nation by defending and upholding the principle of free Government . . ." They close their history by writing, "By belonging to this proud and historic organization you can demonstrate your desire to continue the battle started at Lexington and Concord to promote Freedom and protect the American Way of Life."[143]

The IORM appears in an odd variety of places in public life in the United States, often performing indianness to remember U.S. history and origins. In 1898, for example, the IORM founded the celebration of President's Day in Laredo, Texas.[144] At the first celebration, the City Marshal and the Mayor called together the police force.

> Suddenly from three directions, "Indians all painted and daubled, with tomahawks aloft, bows strung, quivers filled, with savage yells, swarmed upon the plaza and charged with a dare-devil spirit right into the muzzles of the guns that were in readiness to defend the city and its honor . . ."[145]

Rather than the white indians being defeated, however—as they would have been at the Wild West Show—the Mayor of Laredo handed the keys of the city to the "chief," who proceeded to give them to "Pocahontas." That night there was a reenactment of the Boston Tea Party. It was revealed that the chief to whom the British Navy surrendered in the reenactment (the same man who received the city keys earlier that day) was really the leader of the Sons of Liberty—a white colonial patriot.[146]

That a public performance of indianness would not end in brutal slaughter, but instead "celebrate" indianness as U.S.-Americanness was indicative of the political and social realities in 1898.[147] By 1898, the United States had won most of the major U.S.–Native battles, and had cemented its imperial stranglehold on Native peoples through a variety of mechanisms. This was more than ten years after allotment had begun, for example, during which the U.S. government implemented land policies that not only decreased Native landholdings substantially, but also significantly disrupted and undermined (again) communal life among many nations. It was therefore "safe" to be patriots expressing a unique and authentic U.S.-American self through performing indianness in public.

As has already been noted, the same identity celebrated through indianness in these patriotic performances depended upon removal and displacement of actual Native peoples. Such social, political realities were made overt in the white images of indianness as savage,

which characterized dime store novels, and shows such as the Wild West. But, the IORM also trafficked (and continues to traffic) in images of a noble indianness that worked (and still works) symbiotically with the productions and consumption of indian savages.

The last point in their mission statement is the IORM belief in "perpetuating the beautiful legends and traditions of a *vanishing race* and the keeping alive of its customs, ceremonies, and philosophies."[148] Beside the terrifying suggestion here that white men will "keep alive" Native ways of being is the ideology that pervades U.S. colonial narratives: that Native peoples are, or soon will be, extinct.[149]

The image of a vanished, extinct people might be performed through narratives of a savage other dying off through the glorious, superior might and destiny of the U.S. military, or through a noble peoples tragically succumbing to "progress" and civilization, or through causes that go unnamed altogether. Whatever the case, this white-produced image, too, has pervaded white cultural productions. In this way, a vanishing people makes room for white people to replace them and use their images and "memory" to give white U.S.-Americans an authenticity we cannot otherwise have.

Renée L. Bergland, for example, documents this phenomenon in the extensive presence of indian ghosts in white literary texts—from Washington Irving to Stephen King. In the first magazine printed in the United States, she notes that both a copy of the Constitution and a poem entitled "Lines Occasioned by a visit to an old Indian Burying Ground" were published.[150] She writes that when white U.S.-Americans speak of Native Americans,[151]

[t]hey call Indians demons, apparitions, shapes, specters, phantoms, or ghosts. They insist that Indians are able to appear and disappear suddenly and mysteriously, and also that they are ultimately doomed to vanish. Most often, they describe Indians as absent or dead.[152]

Indians are ghosted, obviously, to make way for the United States. But they also "give" the United States an ancient past, they offer blessings (and, sometimes, curses) on the future, and become part of the consciousness of what it means to be white U.S.-Americans. Phantoms, according to Bergland, were (and in numerous cases, remain[153]) the safest form in which white U.S.-Americans could live out their obsessions with the very peoples they were actively seeking to remove.[154]

The ideology of a vanished people exists in other cultural forms as well. Deloria notes a series of plays about Indians that were produced

from 1828 to 1838 and the popularity of "dying Indian figures" such as Metamora, Pocahontas, and Logan. "In their dying moments," he writes, "these Indian figures offered up their lands, their blessings, their traditions, and their republican history to those who were in real life, violent, conquering interlopers."[155] Greg Olson notes the large number of sculptures of Native peoples were erected in public places in the United States during late 1800s and early 1900s. He writes, "Most of these sculptures played upon a widespread nostalgia for the once-proud race that had come to the 'end of the trail.' "[156] As with President's Day in Texas, the IORM—that society announcing itself most unabashedly through word and performance as replacing Native peoples—appears where such forms are being put on display.

Olson provides an account of one sculpture installation, in 1908, at the Oskaloosa courthouse in Iowa.[157] The IORM planned the dedication ceremony in conjunction with a massive induction of new members into the Society.[158] Festivities included fifty boys singing in indian costumes, the performance of the "Indian Sun Dance" (by white indians, of course), and the induction.[159] Twelve thousand local citizens took part. In the proliferation of romantic images of Native peoples in public spaces, Olson concludes:

> Whites were able to satisfy their romantic curiosities while atoning for their sentimental sense of responsibility. These acts, however, had little to do with memorializing Native American culture. Instead, they were memorials to our own [white] cultural achievements and our own pioneer past. Not only had whites spread their civilization [sic] from sea to sea, they had succeeded in domesticating the continent by identifying, categorizing, and exploiting nearly every element of it, Indian culture included.[160]

I would note that "sentimental sense" here should be read as a sense of *tragic but inevitable*.

Ideas, images, and performances of an indianness that lift up Native peoples as "original Americans" while white people take on presumedly Native American attributes or appropriate Native American rituals,[161] jewelry, and art completes a cycle in which the explicit and implicit violence of white indianness through patriotism, pioneer/cowboys, and American spirit deeply interrelate and constitute white U.S.-Americanness at multiple levels.[162] Ultimately, white indianness as an articulation of a unique U.S.-America identity was dependent on displacement and removal. White indianness performed as savage other—justifying extermination—celebrated and mythologized that

displacement and removal. Finally, in the ongoing expression of an authentic U.S.-Americanness that hearkens to a U.S. past—such as the actual taking on of indianness by groups such as the IORM—there exists an enacted replacement of Native peoples, undergirded by an ideological sadness at the "disappearance" of these "wonderful" people.

U.S.-American Violence and Subjugation

At the end of the Revolutionary War, the United States immediately set it sights west—seeking to acquire the Ohio region. In the Land Ordinance of 1785, the U.S. government detailed the process to be followed for the purchase of territory in the "Old Northwest."[163] The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 laid out procedures for statehood and included the following declaration:

> The utmost good faith shall always be observed toward the Indians; their land and property shall never be taken from them without their consent; and in their property, rights and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful wars authorized by Congress but laws founded in justice and humanity shall from time to time be made, for preventing wrongs being done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.[164]

Thus did the United States government's early "official" announcement on its relations with Native nations, which never included any measure of actual "good faith," declare itself in farcical terms of the utmost order.

And, thus, would warfare break out in the Ohio region almost immediately: "the U.S. government disposed of the lands before obtaining ownership from the Shawnee and allied Indians who owned it."[165] The Shawnee and other Native nations in the region successfully repelled the United States for some time. This pushed the United States to enact other legislation, attempting to establish "fair" policy in order to stay the warfare a young government could not afford.[166] But, the United States' will to be fair and to respect Native nations as sovereign entities would not hold. Rather, as John Mohawk writes of the period, "This marked the birth of American imperialism and a series of Indian wars that would last until 1890."[167]

In many ways, coordinated efforts to implement the United States' rapacious imperialism began with the removal policies of Andrew Jackson. But, Jackson merely implemented what had begun several administrations before. During the Louisiana Purchase, for example,

Thomas Jefferson had attempted to secure a Constitutional amendment to authorize the purchase of land from Native peoples. When the amendment failed, he instructed "Indian agents" to persuade the nations in the east of the Mississippi to move. In 1808, the Cherokee nation marched on Washington in protest, but Jefferson made it clear that removal was to be U.S. policy.

Moreover, for all of Jefferson's talk about "assimilation"—its own form of violence and imperialism—he and other presidents before Jackson pursued incessant warfare against Native peoples.[168] And they did so while crafting an ideology of Anglo-Saxon "destiny." U.S.-Americans were increasingly steeped, in this period, in notions of being a "providential people" who would bring liberty and democracy to the globe.[169] In this context, Reginald Horsman writes, "the American Indians became the first test. They occupied the land which Jefferson intended to transform into an *empire for liberty*."[170] Such paradoxical ideology, and the imperialistic activity that went with it, reached a cadence with Jackson's administration (1829–1837).

After the War of 1812, U.S. national clamor for removal increased. A number of Native nations had sided with the British in the war. Many white U.S.-Americans perceived a need to break alliances between Native peoples and the English. Moreover, whites were rapidly infiltrating further west, with violence between white U.S.-American settlers and Native peoples the perpetual result.[171] (This would become a recurrent cycle through the 1800s: Native peoples would be removed, white settlers would encroach, violence would erupt, the U.S. government would intervene, Native peoples would be further removed.[172])

Amid these conflicts, Jackson won the White House in 1829 by running on a pro-removal platform.[173] In contrast to his predecessors, Jackson sanctioned publicly and unapologetically the use of coercion in removal of Native nations from their lands.[174] He successfully saw through Congress the passage of the Removal Act in 1830 and in 1832, began to pursue vigorously the path toward removal that previous presidents had endorsed, but had not implemented systematically.

U.S. forced removal was brutal. Thousands upon thousands of Native people died. This was true among the Choctaw, Chikasaw, and Creek nations, each of which ceded their eastern lands through treaties, in exchange for land west of the Mississippi.[175] The Seminoles undertook armed resistance against the —United States—a war that lasted seven years. Eventually, three thousand Seminole people too were removed.[176] The Cherokee nation was removed in 1838 in atrocious

conditions.[177] Publicity of the horrors of removal, and of a death toll that reached up to ten thousand—nearly half the population of the Cherokee—provoked some distress among liberal white U.S.-Americans in the east.[178] But overall, a sentiment of inevitability remained: white U.S.-Americans concurred that despite the unfortunate excesses under which it was pursued, removal itself had to be affirmed.[179]

The experience of the Cherokee opens up a lens to viewing the internal workings—and the mechanisms that supported it—of an ideology defining U.S.-America as a (legitimately) expanding nation, and forging U.S.-American national identity. One of the strategies by which the Cherokee resisted the U.S. logic of "savage-other-worthy-of-removal-and-genocide" was through carefully building economic self-sufficiency and independent political structures. This included, for example, establishing the Cherokee National Council Assembly, which began passing legislation in 1817. By 1828, the Cherokee nation was operating a republican form of government and had its own constitution.[180]

Meanwhile, despite his willingness to stand on a removal platform, Jackson made some effort both to cast removal in terms of humanitarianism intentions and to legitimate it through reliance on the now centuries-old claims of "nonpossession." He argued to Congress in his first year in office that the southeastern nations, first, "had no right to 'tracts of country on which they have neither dwelt nor made improvements, merely because they have seen them from the mountain or passed them in the chase' "[181]; and, second, that their inability to "adopt white agricultural methods quickly would doom them to 'weakness and decay.' "[182] Removal was for Native peoples' own good.

The point of highlighting Jackson's lies is *not* to suggest that if his claims had been true in regard to the Cherokee, for example, or if the Unites States had been sincerely "humanitarian," removal would have been more legitimate. The United States acted in violation of sovereignty of Native peoples, outside standards of international law, and in a genocidal posture. Rather, the point is to introduce another dimension that needs to be explored—one that supported such disingenuous and fallacious rhetoric: that is, federal legal doctrine.

Another mode by which the Cherokee resisted removal was to take their struggle for sovereignty to the courts. During the period in which removal battles were being fought, a major shift was taking place in U.S. legal and political thought. Specifically, the U.S. government began officially to change its recognition of and rhetoric toward Native nations from that of foreign, independent nations to that of "domestic dependents."[183]

Important rulings in this regard were handed down by the Supreme Court as a result of Cherokee struggles against Georgia's incursion into its territory. In the course of ruling that the federal government, not the state of Georgia, was the U.S. entity in legitimate relation with Native peoples, the Court employed the language of domestic dependents.[184] Supreme Court Justice Marshall essentially argued the following (a paraphrase):

> That American Indian peoples comprised nations domestic to and dependent upon the United States. They occupied a status of "quasi-sovereignty," he asserted, being sovereign enough to engage in treaty-making with the U.S. (for purposes of conveying legal title to their lands), but not sovereign enough to manage their other affairs as fully independent political entities.[185]

This shift came about through unilateral decisions made by the United States and began the process of eviscerating Native sovereignty in U.S. legal thought. (It did not eviscerate sovereignty in reality, of course. As Taiaiake Alfred writes, European hegemonic assertions of sovereignty does not equal its achievement.[186])

The so-called illegitimacy of Native nationhood was foundational to the mechanisms through which U.S.-American nationhood—both the nation established as thirteen original colonies that defeated the British, and the fifty entities today known as the United States—was formed. Having originated with the articulation of "discovery doctrine," which claimed that the "discovering" nation had exclusive rights to secure land from the original inhabitants,[187] U.S. legal discourse shifted over the course of the nineteenth century to this notion of "domestic dependent nations," only to be followed by claims of "plenary power" over Native peoples.[188] Each shift further eroded U.S. recognition of Native sovereignty and simultaneously rested on a presumptive logic of U.S. manifest destiny.

Jimmie Durham asks the question, "Can we assume . . . there is no United States other than in its ideological and expansionist statism?"[189] In the activities that took place in the early decades of the 1800s and the legal discourse that supported them, the incisive power of Durham's question can be seen. Not only did the United States commit massive violence in the course of expanding its borders, it also rendered expansionism, at every level, a fundamental assumption and organizing principle of U.S.-American national life.

By the time the United States began to expand (once again) into Native land into and through the 1840s, the 1850s, and the 1860s,

Manifest Destiny was occupying U.S. political and public life formally. This political ideology, combined with the activities violating Native sovereignty, which began before the ink dried on the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, served (and continue to serve) as the operative logic in white U.S.-Americans' understandings of U.S.–Native relations. This was the case across political perspectives on the issue of U.S.–Native relations

By the 1860s, for example, primary expressions in regard to U.S.–Native relations in the *New York Times* editorial pages were of the need for protection of white frontier settlers, and a belief that the U.S. Department of Interior and the War Department were working at cross-purposes in this regard.[190] Within this concern, before the Civil War, editorials emphasized that the United States had been too "lenient" on "hostile tribes." After the Civil War, they trumpeted the need for "fair" treatment of Native peoples and the U.S. government's responsibility to secure peace on the "frontier."[191]

Both of these arguments are colonizing at best and genocidal at worst. Each reified an essentially sovereign and entitled white U.S.-American people. This is most obviously the case in the claim that the army was too "lenient" against "tribes" who were "hostile." Each of these three descriptors assume the right of the United States, and its status *over and against* Native peoples, as a sovereign nation. It also traffics in the discourse of a savage other, in the process producing a people, white U.S.-Americans, who must (and will) secure victory.

Calls for "fair treatment" were accompanied by the idea of making peace by containing Native peoples on reservations: sometimes advocating the creation of an inviolate "Native region" within the United States, more often viewing this as a means to "prepare" Native peoples for full citizenship by "civilizing" them.[192] In his analysis of these editorials, Robert G. Hays notes that by 1870, this second argument dominated the editorial pages: "sovereignty" did not make sense, and Native peoples should be offered U.S. citizenship contingent upon their "adequate progress toward 'civilization.' "[193] The following excerpt is a good example:

> At some day, not far distant, the quasi-sovereignties of the tribes must terminate, the system of communal land-holding be abolished, and the Indians prepared to take their place among American citizens, or to pass away and be forgotten.[194]

This reflection contains a flickering appearance of the image of "noble Indians": a people who have lived a way of life that cannot but be

erased. It too produces "American citizens," who are the rightful occupiers of this land. Native peoples unprepared to become (white) citizens will vanish.

In short, whether advocating a sympathetic or tough stance toward Native peoples, questions about U.S. legitimacy need never be defended in white U.S.-American discourse. The notion that international protocol might apply to U.S.–Native American relations was never whispered. Indeed, the United States, and its citizenry with it, seems to be almost *ontologically* sovereign. It is worth noting, moreover, that the *New York Times* probably represented the most liberal of mainstream perspectives nationally. In other public discourse, especially those produced further west, there was no compunction, into the late 1800s, in calling for outright "extermination" of Native peoples.[195]

Even while "legal" declarations that Native nations were not independent, sovereign nations undergirded the kind of debates just described, they also supported an unmasked imperialism lived out in white U.S.-American violence. In the same decade, the United States was declaring itself to be a "ward" to Native peoples, for example, the U.S. Army was handing out blankets infected with smallpox at Fort Clarke, which led to an epidemic in which one hundred and twenty-five thousand Plains Indians died.[196]

Manifest Destiny carried imperial terror westward across the plains through the mid-1800s. Abrogating treaties signed by nations that had been removed—treaties that promised Native peoples the new regions *in perpetuum*—the United States, by the 1840s, was already breaking up the "permanent Indian frontier."[197] To attempt to suppress the violence that would be an inevitable result of such activity, the United States built a system of forts across the region. The Army regularly conducted punitive raids against Native peoples.[198] Literally hundreds of massacres took place.[199] A number of states, in gruesome celebration of the U.S. imperial project, placed official bounties on Native American scalps.[200] Both policy makers and military commanders were "stating—openly, frequently and in plain English—that their objective was no less than 'complete extermination' of any native people who resisted being dispossessed of their lands, subordinated to federal authority, and assimilated into the colonizing culture."[201]

The U.S.-American people being celebrated and touted in dime store novels as vanquishing a "savage other" and consumed by a reading public was being constituted in reality through these atrocities.

Borden writes that the same years,

> which saw the image of the Indian in the white mind take on characteristics of unmitigated savagery, were also years of tremendous confidence, optimism, individualism, and expansion in American life. The negative image of the Indian was dramatized against the background of a stridently nationalistic and expansive white culture.[202]

White U.S.-Americans were created out of imperialist violence.[203] Horsman uncovers what I find to be one of the most revealing remarks with regard to the centrality of such violence as to who white U.S.-Americans are as a national people. In 1849, the author of an article in the *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* wrote that the "Anglo-Saxon, Caucasian" would not mix

> his proud blood, in stable wedlock with another race. There seems to be a natural antipathy to such unions with the black, or even the red, or yellow races of men—an antipathy almost peculiar to this remarkable tribe, *the exterminator of other races*.[204]

Outbreaks of war between the United States and Native peoples continued to nearly the end of the century. The U.S. government declared the "Indian Wars" officially over in 1890.[205] By this time, the United States had implemented other measures to maintain its deathly grip on Native nations. It had officially declared the era of treaty-making over in 1871. Though notions of Native sovereignty in U.S. articulations were seriously flawed and long since compromised, the act of treaty-making had at least recognized implicitly that the United States was negotiating with another entity, a people.[206] With the end of such recognition, U.S. colonizing power was further entrenched.

In the 1880s, movement toward dissolving Native peoples' communal landholdings, within a logic of white assimilation—such as that seen in the *Times* editorial quoted earlier—gathered momentum formally in U.S. legal and legislative practice. The Dawes Severalty Act of 1887 was one of most systematic moves to implement this assimilation through legislation.

The Dawes Severalty Act legislated the individualization of all Native landholdings. Reservations and communal landholdings were carved into parcels, and Native people were allotted individual holdings. "Remaining" land was then opened up for purchase or settlement by white people. Numerous nations resisted allotment.[207] But, between 1888 and 1934, allotment proceeded, ultimately impacting nearly every

Native society; 118 out of 213 reservations were allotted by the time the Severalty Act was rescinded.

In the process it would not only be the loss of land that was devastating. Allotment undermined the most basic element of Native sovereignty, writes Donald L. Fixico, because the self is interconnected with community and the environment. Allotment was designed intentionally to destroy this communal orientation of Native societies.[208] In addition, it was a devastating economic equation—forced assimilation into U.S. capitalism led to severe poverty and undermined Native self-sufficiency (already significantly compromised by this time). As Fixico writes, "Forced to become part of the larger colonized cultures of the mainstream, Indians were victimized in numerous ways, as with land to sell and lease, they were forced into a capitalist economic system."[209] Finally, the loss of land too was staggering. Native landholdings were reduced from 138,000,000 to 48,000,000 acres. In other words, nearly two-thirds of the (already staggeringly reduced) lands of Native people were appropriated by the U.S. government, and sold to white U.S.-American citizens—many of whom continue to reside on them today.

At the close of the century, in 1894, the U.S. Bureau of Census acknowledged that individual white U.S.-Americans killed at least 8,500 Native people between 1775 and 1884. It acknowledged that in the course of the wars instigated and pursued by the U.S. government during the 1800s, at least 30,000 Native peoples were killed. Lenore S. Stiffarm writes that it is safe to estimate that another 50 percent above this would come closer to representing the actual deaths of Native peoples at the hands of white U.S.-Americans. He writes that, at minimum, 56,750 Native peoples were killed by whites between 1775 and 1875.[210] (This does not include, of course, the people who died as a result of epidemics and living conditions into which Native peoples were removed and concentrated.) And, he continues, once the U.S. government declared the "Indian Wars" officially over, life under martial law was so bad that another 12,000 Native American lives were taken between 1890 and 1900.[211]

From assumptions of entitlement to Native lands to any measure of horrific violence to secure rights to such land, from national, public declarations of near ontological sovereignty to ideologies of the inevitable march of "progress": the constitution of U.S.-America was utterly dependent on the devastation and colonization of indigenous peoples. White U.S.-Americans not only celebrated, but internalized, these devastations through cultural productions in which they became, destroyed, and disappeared indians as a means to articulate who they

were. U.S. imperial violence and white indianness each produced mythology of a racial other.[212] Both phenomena relied on actual imperial subjugations of Native peoples. Each ensured that a white supremacist imperialism would remain at the center of U.S. national life and brought violence and culture in close proximity to one another. U.S. imperial violence and "playing Indian" together locate obsession and violence at the center of the racial and national identity of those whose "Americanness" was ensured and reiterated by way of such horrors.

A Fundamental Reconstitution of Selves/Community

"There is something unique about the U.S.," writes Durham, "It was the first settler colony to establish itself against and through denial of its original inhabitants."[213] It is precisely establishment-through-denial that seems to me the crucible that brings together white obsessions with indianness and violence against Native people. Bergland helpfully describes an obsession as the affect of an ambivalent impulse.[214] She argues that there exists, in white U.S.-American identity, an ambivalence created by the conflict between fundamental notions of ourselves as having originated in revolt against colonialism, while having thoroughly internalized colonization.[215] In part, then, Bergland claims that white U.S.-Americans are obsessed with images of Native peoples, as a result of ongoing attempts to repress the colonial structure implicit to U.S. existence and U.S.-American as a people. The attempt is, of course, to repress or deny that colonial structure without actually having to give up colonialism itself.[216]

A related manifestation might be seen in white obsessions with blackness. Fundamental to white U.S.-American notions of ourselves is the belief that we are a free, liberty-loving people committed to "justice for all." This notion is claimed in obvious contradiction to the reality of racial relationships within the United States, and amid intractable and centuries old resistance to giving up the subjugations of people of African descent. The conflict this creates—Bergland's "ambivalence"—was described by Ralph Ellison as a "dilemma":

> Hence, whatever else the Negro stereotype might be as a social instrumentality, it is also a key figure in a magic rite by which the white American seeks to resolve the dilemma arising between his democratic beliefs and certain antidemocratic practices, between his *[sic]* acceptance

of the sacred democratic belief that all men are created equal and his treatment of every tenth man as though he were not.[217]

White-mediated images of Black people—white obsessions with blackness—might be seen, at least in part, as the need to repress the inherently antidemocratic realities of U.S. history and white practices, in order to continue articulating ourselves as a democratic people.

Violent subjugation of African American and Native American peoples and obsessive productions of and engagements with white-mediated images of blackness and indianness are deeply related in giving meaning to what it means to be white and what it means to be U.S.-American in this nation. In order to take racial justice seriously, from a posture of repentance and pursuit of reparative activity, white U.S.-American people will need to internalize this devastating reality as deeply as our predecessors (and, sometimes, those in our midst) internalized subjugation and obsession.

This interrogation needs to go to a level much deeper than mere recognition of our colonial and slaveholding histories as a nation. It requires a depth of interrogation—a search to "know[. . .] thyself" —that seeks to uncover the "infinity of traces" through which we have been constituted as selves. [218] For, both phenomena of white obsessions with indianness and white obsessions with blackness continue in U.S.-American society and in white racial communities. White appropriations of African American cultures run rampant in popular culture, even while white-mediated images of people of African descent in the public sphere continue to perpetuate racist images of the most reprehensible sort.[219] "New Age Native Americans"[220] and progressive white Christians alike explore and appropriate Native religious traditions and dangle Native American jewelry from our ears. Meanwhile, many of us continue to believe that Native peoples existed only in a bygone era.

These practices are, obviously, deeply problematic given the subjugations in which they are complicit and the histories out of which they emerge. They are more than this, however, because they raise a more existential dimension of the moral crisis of being white. In locating domination and violence at the center of who we are by committing atrocities against other human beings and, then, by *further compacting the violence by appropriating and producing white images of indianness and blackness in order to "fill the gap" between who we are and who we claim to be*, white U.S.-Americans have committed nothing less than a cultural and spiritual devastation against ourselves.

Having constituted ourselves so thoroughly through evisceration of other human beings, white U.S.-Americans have few to no cultural resources or traditions to draw on that are positive, life-giving, and creative to articulate who we are and to fuel our agency in the world.[221] Laura Donaldson sees in the ongoing appropriations, indeed "fetishizations" by white U.S.-Americans, of not only Native cultures and religious traditions, but cultures of peoples throughout the world "usually attempt[s] to counteract [their] own psychic alienation or spiritual ennui."[222] Such a reality does not in any way justify white obsessions and appropriations. Instead, knowing that there exists a kind of cultural and spiritual vacuum at the center of who we are sheds light on some of the work we must do.

The cultural and spiritual resources so needed for sustenance, vision, and creativity—characteristics that are necessary to participate in struggles for justice—cannot be pulled out of thin air. They are resources we will find only rarely in our histories as white U.S.-Americans.[223] Instead, the work of creating such resources is intrinsic to the work of justice-making. Active participation in racial justice is not only a process of reconstituting ourselves morally by engaging material and economic repair of the realities that continue to constitute white racial particularity. It is necessary activity for generating a greater wholeness and reconstitution of who we are as selves.

Not unlike mediating the tension of being white while refusing to be white, the challenge that white U.S.-Americans face can only be met by looking fully into the lacuna that is white U.S.-American identity in order that we might be provoked to a grief and rage at the incomprehensible losses such a lacuna represents. Such grief and rage, I suspect, is necessary to compel us to live out new ways of being in the world. In the process of their being lived out, such ways of being might *become* resources and sustenance—not only mitigating our need for violence to fill the gap between who we are and who we say we are, not only furthering our ability to refuse to appropriate further that which belongs to other communities of people, but utterly reconstituting ourselves as human beings as we reconstitute our relations with others.

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The Imperative of Reparations

Morality must begin where immorality began.

—Vine Deloria, Jr.

The racial category of "white" was developed and persons with light skin were ascribed to this category through the processes that constitute the devastating histories explored in the two preceding chapters. The formation of a nation—U.S.-America—went with it: also inextricable from legacies of injustice and violence. Participation in such atrocities, which included cultural productions that enacted, celebrated, and identified with these atrocities, gave white U.S.-American identity content and meaning. The work of chapters two and three has been, therefore, a partial exploration of the question I posed in chapter one. That is, who *are* we as white racial subjects? One answer is that we are people whose humanity and moral self-hood was and has continued to be eviscerated as we became, and have continued to become, white. As Tim Wise puts it, the story of white supremacy is, in part,

> a story of how those who profited so handsomely from . . . pain, in relative terms, lost something far more valuable in the process. It is a story about the loss not only of one's innocence, but also a healthy portion of one's humanity. Some relinquished it voluntarily; others did so on pain of rebuke and marginalization. But all paid for their privileges with the better part of their souls.[1]

As selves who are racialized, we are deeply and fundamentally marred by whiteness and white supremacy. A corollary of this claim is that disruption of whiteness—at least, as currently constituted—is the

only way for people who are racialized as white to become fully human. This corollary invites inquiry into the second question I posed in chapter one: Who might we who are white become, and how?

The theoretical frameworks and historical analysis I have articulated to this point suggest the appropriateness, and the moral and political legitimacy of Native struggles for self-determination and sovereignty, as well as movements for reparations for the enslavement of people of African descent. Such is the case, even aside from a more explicit argument pertaining to white racial particularity and white responsibility. But, the theory and historical analysis here pulls in a particular way on those of us who are white in this national landscape. The theoretical clarity afforded in exploring "what race is" makes clear that racial justice must be pursued through material processes. These pursuits must intervene in the very processes that create whiteness. In theoretical terms, white U.S.-Americans are constituted as such by concrete materialities and social practices. Disruptive responses to white supremacy must, therefore, also be pursued in the form of concrete materialities and social practices. In historical terms, white people lost our humanity as we were racialized and nationalized through genocide, colonization, enslavement, imperialism, and lynching; this inhumanity has been sustained and perpetuated by ongoing legacies of these activities. In ethical terms, realities of unredressed racial justice—and their ongoing effects in the present—have resounding moral implications that go to the core of who we are as white racial selves. The meaning of race in the United States implicates the atrocities of racial oppression into our very beings as white people, individually and communally.

It is in this crucible of theory, history, and ethics that it becomes possible for me to claim there exists an imperative of reparations in relation to the moral crisis of "being white." For it is only to the extent that we live out concrete responses to the materialities of oppression that we truly engage the question "Who might we become and how?" And, to this question, one response becomes that reparations to Native peoples and people of African descent represent pivotal means for disrupting the processes through which we become white (the *how*), as activity through which we might become more human (the *who might we become*).

Reparations are an imperative, first, for justice: to address the ongoing legacies of colonization in relation to Native peoples, to ameliorate the vestiges of slavery that remain at work in the lives of African American communities and to engage in a process of accountability for the massive human rights violations that were (and continue

to be) committed against both peoples. Reparations are an imperative, second, for transformation: to beckon white people to live agency in ways that might alter the present meanings of white in economic–material and moral–spiritual terms. Reparations are an imperative, third, for authentic pursuits of cross-racial and cross-national reconciliation and the solidarity about which many white theologians and ethicists in the liberationist tradition, white feminists in particular, express concern.[2] "Restitution, . . ." writes Haunani-Kay Trask, "must be a precondition for reconciliation."[3]

In the context of these three claims, the purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, it is to explore the imperative of reparations itself. Specifically, I will articulate the contours of the imperative—an outstanding moral and ethical obligation with significant political implications. Second, I will consider select manifestations of existing political struggles being waged by Native American and African American communities to compel reparative activity on the part of the United States and white U.S.-Americans. Such struggles are attempts to secure justice given the realities of U.S. obligations to both peoples. As such, they represent possibilities for white participation in justice-making and moral transformation.

Imperative of Reparations: A Moral Obligation and Political Paradox

In order to explore more fully the imperative of reparations, I must begin by clarifying why I choose to use such a phrase. In the pages that follow I provide a definition of the terminology of "reparations" and explain my purpose in referring to such as "an imperative." After articulating the assumptions I am making in recognizing the existence of an imperative of reparations, I offer analyses of the implications of such an imperative in relation to both Native peoples and people of African descent. I argue that the imperative not only exists, but that justice requires it to be acknowledged and explored in its full implications, regardless of whether such recognition has challenging, perhaps even seemingly impossible, political ramifications.

The Imperative of Reparations

In their most common form reparations are what one nation pays another nation(s) upon its defeat in war, a consequence of losing. This is obviously not what is being considered here. (Notably, the power

dynamics in such a paradigm are opposite to those explored here: namely, the collectivity with lesser power paying reparations versus a collectivity with more power owing reparations.) Moreover, the term reparations is being employed in a broad sense. My use is consistent with the description given by J. Angelo Corlett, who quotes from *Black's Law Dictionary*: "payment for an injury; redress for a wrong done." Corlett continues:

> Reparations involve restitution, which is the "act of restoring . . . anything to its rightful owner; the act of making good or giving equivalent for any loss, damage or injury; and indemnification . . . . A person who has been unjustly enriched at the expense of another is required to make restitution to the other." . . . Often the evils perpetrated are such that there is no "just" or genuinely sufficient manner by which to rectify matters between the wrongdoers (or her descendants) and the party wronged (or her descendants).[4]

Reparations, in this sense, is the appropriate term for the issues being considered here.

Clearly, white U.S.-American people and the United States as a nation have been and continue to be unjustly enriched at the expense of Native peoples and people of African descent. Native peoples' lives and the lives of people of African descent have been injured and damaged, and both peoples have experienced devastating loss at the hands of white U.S.-Americans and the United States as a nation.[5] Reparations are thus required. My assumption here is that reparations intended to make restitution must involve economic, social, and political activities that respond—in level and form—to the *actual kinds of harm done*.

At the same time, it is obviously the case that the atrocities committed have been such that there is no genuinely just or sufficient manner by which they might be rectified. The sheer reality of genocide, the devastations to Native peoples' and African peoples' cultural formations, the rending from their homelands of African peoples and the removal from their homelands of Native peoples, and subsequent environmental degradations committed against Native land are fundamentally irreparable realities. One can only look in the face of such vast and irreparable death and destruction with horror and grief.

Such evil and irreparability raise another dimension of reparations important in my use of the term: that of repentance and atonement. At the political level, when human injustice is recognized and redress mandated, such redress might be construed in either of two categories: reparations or settlements.[6] These are rendered distinct by the element

of remorse. According to Roy L. Brooks, reparations are a response in which there is a sense of atonement for the commission of an injustice. In addition to material forms of repair, reparations might include an apology, an admission of guilt, and/or some expression of remorse on the part of the perpetrator(s).[7] Settlements, on the other hand, lack a sense of atonement. They may "settle" a claim by a plaintiff for harm done, with the wrongdoer paying out a sum of money or engaging in some other kind of compensatory action. There is no formal concession of wrongdoing, however.[8]

Given the nature of the atrocities committed in relation to Native American and African American peoples and the ethical and moral dimensions implicit to justice, appropriate and "sufficient" activity and behaviors must include, explicitly and implicitly, atonement and remorse. In using the terminology of reparations, therefore, it is my intention to keep at the forefront the notion of atonement.

In the pages that follow I privilege the use of the terms reparations, and "reparative activity." Both of these are intended to convey the multifaceted dimensions just described. "Restitution" or "redress" are in some ways synonymous with reparations in that they represent response for harm done. Some of the activists and scholars I engage here use such terms in this way. In my use, however, these terms are best understood as included within or covered by the term reparations—the atonement dimension of which is critical.

I use the phrase "imperative of reparations" in order to direct the focus of this project to an outstanding ethical and moral obligation. This obligation implicitly exists in white–Native–African American relations and in white racial particularity as an immoral and unjust subjectivity. And, it exists regardless of the potential shape or sufficiency of any political program or policy of reparations that might ultimately be secured or might be deemed impossible to secure. In other words, real and important questions may be invoked in relation to reparations—for example, "But, how likely is it that reparations will be achieved?" or "What form might reparations take that would secure justice without creating bigger problems?" These questions are important as they signal real political challenges to reparations. But, they do not in any way mitigate the full force of the imperative itself. The imperative of reparations stands on its own morally insistent ground. It does so even if no sufficient solution to such political challenges could ever be found.

This issue is critical. Reparations obviously are always political in cases in which they invoke activities and responsibilities of groups,

nations, or peoples. And, political attempts at redress, reparations, or restitution are always complex. The nature of politics, moreover, suggests that actual repair of the harm done—to the extent such would be possible to secure under ideal political conditions—will be elusive. (As has already been stated, but which cannot be overstated, actual repair of the mass atrocities considered here is impossible.) Brooks writes, "The *success* of any organized attempt to seek redress for human injustices is inextricably linked to politics, *not justice or logic*."[9] While Brooks is correct, it is precisely the justice or logic that I am deeply invested in here; that justice or logic is akin to that which I am calling an imperative.

My overarching concern is that an active acknowledgment of and concrete engagement with this imperative itself is the point at which white people must begin a journey toward justice and moral transformation. I am insisting on the responsibility of white U.S.-Americans to take a full "unmitigated-by-pragmatic-political-concerns" look into our real histories of massive and ongoing human rights violations and to come to grips with the scale of the concrete and material responses these histories compel. Truly just responses can emerge only from first stalwartly turning to the face the painful and horrifying past of white U.S.-American communal formation. What they might look like can emerge only by an ongoing reckoning with our past and present, as a means to inform our attempts to participate in creating a future capable of manifesting *just* cross-racial relations—relations far more robust than "multiculturalism," diversity, or inclusion allow.

The imperative of reparations is, therefore, a necessary entry point for the pursuit of justice by white people. It is a call to a step into a process: to participate in teleological movement from the brutal inhumanity inherent to an existence dependent on the subjugation of others, toward a fundamental reconstitution of who we are as selves as we re-form our relationships—material and otherwise—to others and to history. The end result of such a process and movement cannot be foreseen. It is out of a concern for making *this* case that I choose, at least initially, to turn aside analysis of the political possibilities of reparations and to insist instead on the existence of the imperative itself and a description of its contours.

In separating out the political possibilities—or a "pragmatic" view—of reparations to give attention to the implications of a full recognition of the imperative of reparations, I am not advocating an abstract moral principle that stands outside of history. On the contrary, the claim that such an imperative exists is an irrefutably historical

claim. Specifically, it emerges from and can only be considered in the context of the historical realities described in the preceding chapters. Advocating white engagement in a process that might facilitate white moral transformation, moreover, presumes an engagement with history and real socio-political processes. Corlett writes that reparations "truly respect the actions (inactions or attempted actions, as the case may be) of history in the sense that they try to correct significant imbalances of power or fortune that result from undue force or intrusion, fraud, or other gross forms of wrongdoing."[10] To say that an imperative of reparations exists, therefore, is to acknowledge and honor the particularities of the history of the United States.

In addition, my choice of language and emphasis on an imperative of reparations is heavily informed by my lens—specifically my focus on the moral crisis of being white. My emphasis and language would be different if my foci or starting point was issues in Native American societies or African American communities, or even reparations themselves. Still, even within my narrow foci, I am concerned neither to flatten or collapse justice in relation to Native American and African American history into one concept, nor to impose a program for either peoples. Indeed, just as the recognition of an imperative of reparations is a recognition of history, the discrete histories of white–Indigenous and white–African relations in the United States makes delineating appropriate forms of restitution and redress critical. My assumption, that the forms of reparations must both respond to the forms of harm done and interrupt the mechanisms by which subjugations persist, continues to inform my analysis.

For example, in relation Native peoples human rights violations took place across international lines. Sovereignty and self-determination, which were violated through U.S. white supremacist imperialism, remain pressing for Native peoples. These raise complex legal and legislative issues across and within Native and U.S. governments. For people of African descent, human rights violations began, too, across international lines, and then continued to be institutionalized internal to the United-States-as-a-nation. In the formal political sense, then, reparations is not the term or concept used most frequently by Native peoples, whereas self-determination and sovereignty are. Moreover, to the extent that reparations seem to signify a one-time compensatory action for a *past* history, rather than also a disruption and fundamental re-deployment of power relations in current economic, social, and political arenas, they are to be eschewed. To understand reparations as remediation for actions strictly in the past would enable rather than

disrupt the ongoing march of white supremacist, U.S. imperialist structures.[11] This would be true in relation to either Native peoples or people of African descent and must inform the way the imperative of reparations is considered.

With these important assumptions in place, I remain insistent that an imperative of reparations compels acknowledgment on its own terms. I do not want to mitigate the full moral force of the reality of the imperative of reparations nor "solve" too quickly—and, thus, falsely—the moral crisis of being white, by offering reparations as a programmatic solution to white supremacy. Rather, I remain clear that full acknowledgment by white people of the gravity of the situation created by genocide, colonization, enslavement, and persistent racial and imperial violence is a pressing moral priority. In this way, attention to the political responses *truly just* reparative actions would require are important. Even if these responses seem outlandish or impossible, articulating them as fully as possible makes such gravity clear.

A Political Paradox: The United States and the Imperative of Reparations

The existence of an imperative of reparations and the claim that it exists as an outstanding obligation to which the United States and/or white U.S.-Americans must respond, presents a political paradox. The very activities and atrocities that have called the imperative of reparations into being, the very activities and atrocities that create a compelling moral obligation to be responded to by the United States and white U.S.-Americans are activities and atrocities that simultaneously call into question the very existence and legitimacy of the United States. This paradox speaks to the nature and gravity of the imperative itself.

Politically, the United States cannot tolerate the invocation of an imperative of reparations in relation to Native American and African American peoples. The intolerability of such reparations claims has to do with what the United States claims itself to be. Trask argues that the official, national ideology of the United States is that it is an immigrant–settler nation. In this context, "[t]he historical and contemporary realities of both African Americans and native peoples, then, undercut the official ideology that the United States is a nation of immigrants." For Trask, such ideology is a partial explanation of how the United States might justify redress to Japanese Americans, for example, while persistently denying even the formation of a governmental commission to explore the historical impact of slavery. Redress to Japanese Americans[12]—however insufficiently enacted—could be

justified because it rehabilitated a (false) ideology of a democratic republic and compensated immigrant–settlers whose rights were violated.[13]

Native peoples, however, constitute the indigenous, First Nations of this land base who were both decimated and repeatedly removed in order for the United States to lay claim to and expand upon this land base. African peoples were forcibly brought to this land, in shackles and through rivers of blood. Reparations or reparative activity to either African Americans or Native peoples would recognize the substantial nonimmigrant–settler composition of the United States as a nation and geographical region. Reparations are, then, in a sense, impossible, for they invoke a paradox of the most politically intolerable kind.[14] Indeed, recognition of the imperative of reparations throws the U.S. nation-state into nothing less than existential crisis.

The shrill intolerance with which the majority of white U.S.-Americans greet an invocation of even the *possibility* that an imperative of reparations *might* exist is a related point that reveals this problematic at another level. Based on the arguments I have offered about the constitution of white U.S.-American identity, the vehemence with which white people often respond to mere mention of reparations is no surprise.[15] For here too, reparations raises a challenge that goes to the heart of who we are as white U.S.-Americans. Reparations invoke the crisis implicit to being white. This is not a psychological claim: namely, I do not suggest that white people cannot stand to hear about reparations because of an encroaching sense of guilt, for example.[16] It is a claim consistent, instead, with stark recognition of how and of what white racial particularity is constituted: the realities of what it means to be white, how one comes to be white, the historical truths about whiteness. Reparations are like a lightning rod that threaten to reveal all the immoral fragments out of which white people construct a coherent notion of self and community in the United States.

Still, even as reparations raise an inherent and almost impossible paradox, I have argued that the moral and ethical imperatives exist outside of and precede the possibilities of reparations as a program or policy. Thus, first, before considering movements in which Native nations and people of African descent are struggling for reparative actions, I follow the "logic" or, better, explore what the demands of true justice are. That is, I consider the political demands of the imperative that create the paradox. In a way, I return to the conceptual framework of Marcia Y. Riggs whose mediating ethic was so important in chapter one. While the invocation of reparations begs the question of

the existence of the entity responsible for paying out reparations, such a paradox is not to be avoided nor should one begin with a pragmatic solution or compromise in the face of such a paradox.[17] Rather, mediating means *not* resolving the inherent tension of such a situation, but putting the tension-filled realities on the table nonetheless. The hope is that moral options might emerge from so doing that could not have been imagined prior to having engaged in such a process.

Pursuing the Paradox: Native American Reparations

More than just undermining U.S.-America's ideology, the history of Native peoples' relations with European settlers and a U.S. nation reveals the illegality of the United States itself. In advocating a human rights lens for thinking about reparations—both in relation to people of African descent and in relation to Native peoples—Andrea Smith writes:

> To rely solely on such a framework [of "constitutional protections"] does not question the legitimacy of the U.S. government, which is fundamentally founded on gross human rights violations of people of color . . . our overall strategy should not be premised on the notion that the U.S. should or will always continue to exist—to do so is, fundamentally, to sanction the continuing genocide of indigenous peoples on which this government is based.[18]

The political illegality of the United States as an entity that came to exist in violation of international law also calls into question U.S. moral legitimacy. As Corlett writes in terms of moral philosophy: "For the moral legitimacy of a country, it is assumed, is contingent on at least the extent to which that country acquires justly the land on which it and its citizens reside."[19] In the United States, each and every resident resides upon or "owns" land that was once the land of Native peoples and thus is in violation of the "principle of morally just acquisitions and transfers."[20]

It is a daunting task for many of us who think of ourselves as U.S.-American (or, more often as simply "American") to regard the United States as an implicitly illegal and morally illegitimate nation. But, the near incomprehensibility of such a thought does not change its veracity. Recognizing an imperative of reparations includes a serious and stalwart recognition of *what actually happened*. And, what actually happened is that Europeans arrived to this land and committed untold

acts of genocide. What actually happened is that these Europeans eventually formed a nation through treaty-making with Native peoples; while treaties were recognized as agreements between sovereign peoples,[21] they were typically made only after the Europeans and, later, the United States created coercive conditions and under increasingly imbalanced power relations; often they were secured through outright fraud.[22] What actually happened is that the United States repeatedly broke the treaties it made and forcibly removed Native nations, under inhumane conditions, further and further from their original homelands; and settled and occupied land it had acquired through means that were neither legal nor just.

The United States is guilty of genocide against Native peoples. In the four hundred years from the first arrival of Europeans to this land base, European-immigrants-becoming-white-U.S.-Americans contributed directly to deaths so massive that peoples whose numbers reached twelve million were reduced to two hundred and thirty-seven thousand; and, in the process, these new arrivals expropriated 97.5 percent of the land.[23] As David E. Stannard puts it, the most appropriate symbol of European settlement of the Americas would be "a pyramid of skulls."[24]

Genocide is not only murder on a mass scale. It includes numerous forms of destroying a people or collective. It is officially defined by the United Nations as specific "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."[25]

In truth, the United States has pursued genocide of Native peoples in multiple forms. U.S. removal policies and allotment, for example, are appropriately implicated under the definition of genocide. Of course, thousands died as a direct result of the brutality of removal. In addition, however, given the relationship between Native peoples and land, removal was an attack on indigenous identity, religiosity, culture; an attack on peoplehood itself. Allotment not only secured more land for white U.S.-Americans, but was intended to hasten assimilation of Native peoples into white culture and capitalist economic structures.[26] It was a violation of the communal structure implicit to much of Native life and worldviews. Forced assimilation was enacted, too, in the persistent and widespread practices of removing Native children from their homes and placing them in white boarding schools.[27] This practice involved the collusion of the state with Christian denominations who were given federal money to run the schools: "The stated rationale of the policy was to 'save the child; kill the Indian.' "[28] In addition to "forcibly transferring children of the group," overt

attempts to destroy Native peoples have included "measures intended to prevent births within the group."[29] During the 1970s, for example, the U.S. government supported a program in which 42 percent of Native women of childbearing age were sterilized without consent.[30]

These practices are just the tip of the iceberg. It is important to note, moreover, that in identifying these trajectories of genocide, I am using an overly general template to sketch U.S. activity in relation to Native peoples. The danger in so doing is that I collapse the particular experiences of hundreds of nations, each of which experienced—and many of which continue to experience—its own particular attacks by the United States. Still, amid the specificities of particular treaties made and broken, forms of fraudulent activity and U.S. governmental lies, or time and place of full frontal warfare, U.S. behavior has manifested patterns. It has always left death and stolen land in its wake, and has consistently pursued forced incursions into Native political, economic, religious, and cultural structures through a variety of mechanisms.

Crimes against humanity[31] and the commission of genocide have no statute of limitations. Moreover, Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide states clearly that genocide "shall be punishable."[32] All of the ways in which the United States has engaged and in which it continues to engage with Native peoples, therefore, remain open for scrutiny. They are pressing matters in which international law and human rights have been violated and should compel sanctions against the United States and reparations to Native peoples.

The scale of these atrocities is mind-blowing. More to the heart of the "political paradox" the imperative of reparations creates, the depth and breadth of reparative activity that is thus required is all the more so. Perhaps on no matter is this more clear than on that of land rights. Besides the fact that the United States in many cases forced or coerced the ceding of land, in the act of treaty-making, it was Native peoples who gave it rights to the land *and not the other way around*.[33] Vine Deloria, Jr. writes, "the Indian tribe gave the United States land in consideration for having Indian title to the remaining land confirmed."[34] Despite the United States pledging "over and over again that it would guarantee to the tribes the peaceful enjoyment of their lands," the United States violated this pledge over and over—both in practice and in ideology.[35] Thus, in each and every act of treaty-breaking the United States forfeited its rights to the land.

It is, of course, impossible to separate the United States from the land that it currently occupies. The daunting political reality in terms

of the treaty violations implicated in U.S. occupation of the land is, indeed, the illegality of the United States—not only as an imperial nation from 1776 through the end of the "Indian Wars," but in its ongoing existence.

Working from a position he calls "strict justice," Corlett argues for a mode of reparations that responds to the breadth and depth of restitution required in the face of this reality. The moral logic behind this mode is akin to the analysis I am pursuing here. Namely, political plausibility (in Corlett's philosophical terms, "utilitarianism") is not given moral–ethical weight in relation to the imperative of reparations.[36] "Complete Restitution of Lands and Compensation for Personal Injuries/Loss of Personal Property" would require the United States (as well as, at least, the British, Dutch, Spanish French, and Canadian governments) to compensate Native nations at a level of trillions of dollars. It would require, as well, complete restoration to Native peoples all lands the United States currently occupies, along with payments to redress the environmental degradation and harm it has committed against the land.[37]

Such a policy would bankrupt the United States. It would also radically shift global power relations between indigenous first nations peoples and colonial nation-states. Writes Corlett, "This mode of reparations would most likely dissolve the United States as we know it." But, such a drastic political outcome does not invalidate the moral legitimacy of the policy, nor does Corlett, echoing Smith, believe such an outcome necessarily should be viewed negatively.[38] Indeed, he writes:

> But perhaps the United States, insofar as it was founded on the clear, repeated, and intentional violations of the content of the principle of morally just acquisitions and transfers, deserves to be dissolved in favor of taking much more seriously (than it currently does) morality and justice.[39]

Elsewhere in his analysis, Corlett argues that such reparations would not necessarily lead to a disbanding of the current citizens of the United States. Native peoples might, for example, be willing to opt for full recognition of their sovereignty rights and then lease the land to the remaining inhabitants.[40] Even if Native peoples did not so opt, however, the moral and ethical imperative, in terms of just reckoning with the realities of U.S. history and its constitution, stands.

In moral–ethical terms I concur with Corlett and Smith: if recuperating U.S. moral legitimacy requires political dismantling of the nation

itself, then so be it. Non-native U.S.-Americans as a "people" must come to terms with the reality that there is no origin of our peoplehood nor, at present, any constitution of our U.S.-American citizenship apart from the genocide and ongoing parasitical relationship that exists between the United States and Native peoples and their lands.

To the extent that Corlett's notion of reparations seems to be framed in terms of atrocities and violations of international law that took place in the past, his analysis is not explicit enough about the *ongoing* violations of Native sovereignty *implicit* to U.S. existence and the forms through which these take place in the present. In addition to revealing the scale of reparative activity and the audacious political implications of true justice in relation to what has been done, the issue of land makes it possible to recognize and name the fundamental and ongoing issue in U.S.-Native relations: that is, U.S. violations of Native sovereignty.

U.S.–Native relations are embroiled in complex legal and legislative histories and policies. Since 1608, violations of sovereignty have been the foundation of U.S. programs, policies, and activities. Centuries of U.S. wrangling within its judicial structures to (re-)interpret, challenge, and change the nature of treaties and the status of Native peoples does nothing to affect the implicit sovereignty of native peoples, which was never handed over to the United States. U.S. occupation of the land continues, therefore, in violation of Native sovereignty as do the myriad of activities that federal policy allows, supports, and encourages. In their divergent forms, virtually every attack the United States has made on the political, economic, culture life of Native peoples can be tied into the violation of sovereignty. And, it is on this foundation that *what actually continues to happen* is that the United States engages in genocidal activity in relation to Native peoples.

The numerous histories constituting particular nations' experiences with U.S. violations cannot be detailed here. The ongoingness of violations of Native sovereignty overwhelmingly manifest in relation to land rights and the consumptive drive of capitalist economic structures, however. Merely one example (neither unique nor the first) will have to suffice for demonstrating what this can look like. In 1938, the U.S. Congress passed the Indian mineral leasing act, which "gave" the secretary of the interior authority to negotiate leases for natural resources on Native lands.[41] In violation of Native sovereignty, the United States essentially sent an invitation to corporations to invade reservations, yet another move to incorporate Native lands into a capitalist economy. Even while the United States increasingly adopted the formal language of "self-determination" through the twentieth century, it has been a

struggle for Native nations to get corporations off their land or acquire control over their relationships with such institutions.[42]

Corporations and the U.S. military industry have been responsible for intense levels of environmental degradation on the lands on which Native peoples now reside: degradation that harms the land and Native bodies. In the Mohawk nation, for example, the breast milk of many women is saturated with polycholorinated biphenyls (PCBs) because of corporate activity.[43] Winona LaDuke writes, "GM has tainted the land, water, and ultimately the bodies of the Mohawk people, their babies included."[44] Seventy percent of the world's uranium is mined on Native lands. In Navajo territory alone, 1,000 abandoned uranium mines emanate deadly radioactive toxicity.[45] On the land of the Western Shoshone people, the United States and Great Britain exploded 1,054 nuclear devices above and below between 1951 and 1992.[46] Exposure to radiation has led to high concentrations of cancer among the Western Shoshone. In the context of the political debate surrounding the U.S. invasion of Iraq and dependence on oil in the Middle East, these issues are particularly poignant. Smith writes, "the vast majority of energy resources in the U.S. are on indigenous lands . . . . So *whenever we hear the rhetoric of developing U.S. domestic energy resources, what we are hearing is a veiled attack against Native sovereignty.*"[47]

Stannard argues that remembering "what happened" to Native peoples at the hands of Europeans-becoming-white-U.S.-Americans is important not because of the question of whether it could happen again. It is important, rather, because of the question of "whether it can be stopped."[48] It is at this point that recognizing an imperative of reparations comes down to recognizing Smith's admonition that reparations strategies must not presume that the United States can or should continue to exist. The very existence of the United States is inseparable from and inextricably bound with *ongoing* violations of Native peoples' sovereignty. The forms that such violations of sovereignty take are often genocidal. Thus, recognition of the full implications of the imperative of reparations compels recognition that dismantling the United States as a nation-state is very likely a political necessity.[49] Very little of the United States remains besides its constitution as an imperial force on this land base. It is not possible to move forward as U.S.-American citizens without participating in the genocide and other human rights violations being committed against Native peoples through the business-as-usual existence of the United States, a business incompatible with Native sovereignty.

African American Reparations

A similar pursuit of the full moral–ethical imperative that exists in relation to people of African descent can and should be conducted as well. As in the case of U.S.–Native American relations, a reckoning with *what actually happened* precedes any attempt—especially on the part of the perpetrators or beneficiaries of African American subjugations— to delve into the challenges or limits that enacting reparations might present politically.

If the focus is only on the United States, the history of relations between the United States and people of African descent is less complicated in legal terms than that of U.S.–Native relations. The imperative of reparations here does not implicitly call into question the very existence of the United States in quite the same way (even as its recognition does undermine the ideology of immigrant–settler constitution of the nation). Still, the imperative of reparations in relation to people of African descent is fundamentally destabilizing to U.S. existence. For, the economic, political, and social fabric of the United States is thoroughly constituted through slavery and its legacies.

The realities of *what actually happened* were, and continue to be, such that a deeply parasitical relationship exists between people of African descent and the United States and its white citizens. Even aside from the ongoing accrual of unjust enrichment, this is clear from a simple return to U.S. origins. As noted previously, for example, the Revolutionary War was financed by wealth acquired from the uncompensated, brutally forced labor of enslaved African peoples. Thus did the United States subsidize its birth through proceeds secured in crimes against humanity.[50] The industrial revolution and U.S. development into a global economic power was fueled both by participation in the slave trade and by productions secured through slavery itself. Moreover, the United States institutionalized in its founding documents a description of African peoples that named them as less than human; even the three-fifths of a human they were "granted" was given as a political boon to certain white entities within the young nation. The atrocities of enslavement and systemic violence committed against people of African descent, thus, saturated both U.S. economy and ideology. They enveloped the United States and its white citizenry.

The imperative of reparations exists, first and foremost, because the United States has never accounted, apologized, nor made redress for this history of enslavement. The Civil Rights Acts passed after the Civil War were written to "recognize the equality of all men before the law," and to legislate criminal penalties for violations of the law.[51]

Such provisions, however, merely (and feebly) attempted to ensure equality; they were in no sense reparative. The Freedman's Bureau Acts attempted to provide land and education for newly freed African Americans.[52] To the extent that they gave specific recognition to the condition of African American peoples, and sought to provide extra economic, social, and political support in light of this recognition, they might be seen as a kind of reparative activity.[53] The first year, however, Congress made no budgetary appropriations for the Freedman's Bureau and President Johnson's quick move to pardon ex-Confederates made the land provision of the Bureau effectively meaningless. Land of Confederates was to have both funded the Bureau and been made available for purchase by African Americans. Moreover, the Bureau was not created as an expression of national atonement, remorse, or repentance.[54]

Oppression of people of African descent, beginning with enslavement and proceeding through Jim Crow segregation, the violence of lynching, redlining in various social and economic programs, and a myriad of other enactments of white supremacy has been "systematic, unrelenting, authorized at the highest governmental levels, and practiced by large segments of the population."[55] Consequently, argues Robert Westley, the "only possibility for adequate remedy is group redress."[56]

On the one hand, then, it is possible to argue coherently that the imperative of reparations can be recognized within U.S. domestic law.[57] The imperative of reparations might be politically intolerable to the United States because it undercuts its immigrant–settler ideology, but the United States ultimately did declare enslavement of people of African descent illegal and institutionalized this illegality in the Constitution.[58] At least one imperative of reparations might be recognized, therefore, similar to that which was recognized in the case of Japanese American citizens: namely, African American civil rights have been violated by the U.S. government. Even though enslavement of people of African descent was "legal" at the time, there is precedent within U.S. domestic law for making restitution for violations that were committed despite their being considered constitutional at the time. Arguing in relation to the system of Jim Crow segregation, for example, Boris I. Bittker made a persuasive case in 1973 that when *Brown v. Board of Education* declared that segregation was unconstitutional, redress for injuries experienced under Jim Crow became permissible.[59]

The recognition of an imperative of reparations within U.S. domestic legal frameworks has multiple implications. It compels payment for

the uncompensated labor of people of African descent. It compels U.S. governmental response to and restitution for the civil rights violations committed against people of African descent through enslavement. It compels reparative activity by way of the principle of unjust enrichment. Much like the reality that all U.S.-American citizens reside on Native land, white citizens and the U.S. body politic exist in and live from a violation of a similar moral principle. As Corlett writes, "For whatever is acquired or transferred by morally just means is itself morally just, and whatever is acquired or transferred by morally unjust means is itself morally unjust."[60]

John M. Van Dyke writes that in determining levels of reparative compensation, unjust enrichment must be the benchmark for the total amount. This would include not only centuries of uncompensated wages, but serious redress in the various arenas through which the subjugation of people of African descent were implicit to unjust enrichment of white communities.[61] Reparations would need to include, therefore, a market share of all major U.S. industries and deal with issues of education, home equity, and health care, to name only a few.[62] Corlett argues that, at minimum, reparations would have to include calculations for uncompensated labor, which included compounded interest, penalties for previous nonpayment, inflation, and punitive damages.[63] He insists that by strict moral principle reparations would still be due even if no unjust enrichment had occurred at all.

Full consideration of the moral and ethical realities leads to the conclusion that in addition to the sheer reality of billions of dollars of uncompensated labor that must be repaid, vast amounts of wealth must be redistributed in recognition of the inextricable relationship between the labor of enslaved peoples and the U.S. economic infrastructure. Reparations as measures to atone, beyond the fiscal "harm done," for the crimes against humanity perpetrated against people of African descent in the United States would raise this level.

It is at this point that a larger reality in relation to U.S.–African American relations must be invoked, however. That is, the imperative of reparations does not exist only, nor even primarily, I would argue, as a domestic recognition. The United States is guilty of crimes against humanity, against people of African descent. Jewel Crawford, Wade W. Nobles, and Joy DeGruy Leary write: "*Black Africa sacrificed 40 to 100 million souls to the slave trade; 15 to 25 million survived. . . .*"[64] In

participating in the "slave trade," European-immigrants-becoming-white-U.S.-Americans on this land base (ultimately coalescing themselves as a nation-state) participated directly in crimes against humanity, the immensity of which are difficult to conceive.

Conditions under which African peoples were captured to be enslaved were such that 50 percent (in other words, millions of people) died before leaving the coast of Africa.[65] Another 20–80 percent of those who were captured died en route through the Middle Passage. So brutal were the conditions under which enslaved African peoples were kept that another 30–50 percent of African peoples would die in the first three years—the "breaking in period"—in the Americas.[66] These figures, astronomical as they are, are the tip of the iceberg in terms of the crimes committed. They are related, too, to the ravaging of the African continent by Europe,[67] to the horrific conditions through which enslaved people of African descent lived their lives as they survived enslavement, to the ongoing violations of African American human rights in the United States through share-cropping, peonage, massive lynching, and Jim Crow segregation.[68]

As stated earlier, in the context of international law there are no statutes of limitations on crimes against humanity, nor are amnesties deemed permissible.[69] Participation in the slave trade, the institutionalization of slavery, the vestiges of slavery that continued, and continue, in U.S. political, legal, and economic policies and relations with African American communities are all pressing matters in which international law and human rights have been violated and should compel sanctions against the United States and reparations to people of African descent.

While the scale of atrocities against people of African descent through the U.S. institution of chattel slavery are hard to comprehend merely within the borders of the United States, they are even more so in the context of slavery as a global, imperialist venture. And, thus, nearly incomprehensible is the depth and breadth of reparative activity that is required. The African World Reparations and Repatriation Truth Commission in 1993 calculated that enslavement, colonization, land appropriation, and extraction of raw materials on the African continent by Europeans have cost upward of $777 trillion.[70] If reparations on this scale were enacted in forms that included disruption of the neocolonial relations,[71] global power relations between the African continent and the Caribbean and colonial nation-states would shift radically.

Given the United States' status as a leading global economic power, a role made possible through colonization and slavery, it is responsible for a lion's share of reparations in the international arena. U.S. responsibility to people of African descent in the United States—still through the paradigm of international law violations—is such that levels of the redress required would fundamentally alter internal economic and political relations.

Molefi Kete Asante writes, "The only remedy for such an immense deprivation of life and liberty is an enormous restitution."[72] While logic or true justice do not implicitly require the United States to be dismantled, the level of restitution required might have the result nonetheless. Such a possibility is not to be avoided. Corlett writes similarly in relation to reparations to African Americans as he does in relation to Native Americans: "If . . . suffering due to the cost of paying reparations spells the demise of the United States as we know it, then perhaps the cost would serve as a reminder to the rest of the world as to how *not* to build a society."[73]

It is clear at any rate that full consideration of the imperative of reparations in relation to the moral crisis of being white would render continuation of the United States impossible economically. For, such consideration must include at every turn recognition of both Native peoples and people of African descent.

Consideration of the full moral and ethical realities that inhere in the imperative of reparations compels recognition of the massive participation in crimes against humanity and human rights violations; of the reality that participation in this crime resulted in wealth for white U.S.-Americans and the nation as a political entity; that ongoing abuses and human rights violations against people of African descent continue in a myriad of forms; and that these abuses require redress in their own right, as well as in regard to the further enrichments of white communities these secured. Very little of the entity known as the United States exists outside of its ongoing immoral status as an entity responsible for massive crimes against humanity, and as an entity whose very existence has depended upon and continues to depend on the immense profit from these crimes. Nothing about its economic constitution can be considered moral or legal. And, it is not possible to move forward as white people without participating in the ongoing legacies of enslavement and other human rights violations that have been committed against people of African descent through activity considered to be business-as-usual in the United States, business incompatible with justice for people of African descent.

Political Struggles for Self-Determination, Sovereignty, and Reparations

I am admittedly unsure about how one proceeds to action on the basis of the preceding arguments. I admit to resisting—even in my own clarity about their moral insistence—the implications of the imperative of reparations. Indeed, it feels somehow irresponsible to arrive to a stance that advocates the dismantling of the United States—whether this stance is taken because the United States exists in ongoing violation of Native sovereignty or merely because it cannot sustain itself once appropriate levels and forms of reparations are paid out to Native American and African American communities.

My resistance must undoubtedly be in part a result of the pervasive way in which I, as a white U.S.-American citizen, have been steeped in U.S.-American ideology. The fiction of U.S. sovereignty, as Taiaiakake Alfred calls it, is thick, deep, and insidious.[74] I am also resistant to the argumentation of the preceding sections because of how overwhelming such audacious political claims are and, therefore, how daunting the attendant political tasks are as well. It seems nearly impossible to imagine how one would participate in realizing such a revolutionary reconstitution of global realities. And, in the face of vast challenges, one very common response—especially manifested by those who are privileged or insulated in some way by evils that need to be eradicated—is paralysis.[75] Thus, the primary source of my resistance to the preceding arguments: I am committed to enabling justice-seeking white moral agency and concerned not to disable it further.

The remedy to such potential paralysis is *not* to mute the imperative of reparations by instead proposing more feasible political possibilities that might approximate justice on a smaller scale. Indeed, I am struck instead by Joe R. Feagin's argument that instability *is necessary* for social change to occur: "What complexity theory calls 'cascading bifurcations' can mean great societal instability and possibly a new social order."[76] Ideas are not actions, but there is something disorientating, at least ideologically, about recognizing that full consideration of justice, in fact, should mean the end of the United States. In this way my insistence on the full force of the imperative of reparations emerges from my desire that white U.S.-Americans internalize reality in a fundamentally different key. My hope is that by so deeply touching the reality that we and the United States as an entity are *implicitly* constituted by genocide, colonization, and enslavement, we will be shaken to the very fibers of our being in a manner that compels us to orient ourselves differently to existence itself.

Still, outlets for action in the face of a need for such reorientation are critical (and, indeed, action is essential to facilitate such reorientation). Moreover, attention to the actual struggles of Native peoples and people of African descent is itself imperative. Thus, I turn now to a brief identification of select manifestations of struggles currently being waged by Native American peoples and people of African descent. These struggles should be recognized as critical in light of the imperative of reparations, and should be supported by white U.S.-Americans committed to justice-making and moral transformation.

Sovereignty and Self-Determination

Because so many of the injustices that Native peoples resist are implicitly related to violations of Native sovereignty and self-determination, First Nations peoples have made advocacy in the international arena and articulation of indigenous issues through a human rights perspective a primary mode of struggle. As should be clear by this point, even for First Nations peoples whose homelands are in the geographical area occupied by the United States, U.S. constitutional and civil rights frameworks are insufficient. The U.S. Constitution is, according to Trask, "an imposed colonial structure."[77]

In the 1980s, therefore, after lobbying the United Nations to create a Working Group on Indigenous Populations under the Human Rights Commissions, indigenous peoples worked for nearly a decade to draft a Universal Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.[78] The document includes explicit rights in regard to land; restitution for lands that have been "confiscated, occupied, used or damaged"; rights to cultural identity, language, religion, and education (which include rights of private access to religious cultural sites, use and control of ceremonial objects, and repatriation of human remains). The document also includes the rights to self-government, autonomy, and self-determination in accordance with international law.[79]

Work at this level is critical political struggle for Native peoples. By developing a platform of indigenous human rights, a forum is being created in which particular claims of particular nations can be pressed in the international arena, recognized through the framework of self-determination. The struggles Native peoples are waging are myriad. In the context of international law, writes Trask, "indigenous peoples have claims to self-government, . . . because we are the first nations of the land."[80] She argues that from struggles for self-government, Native struggles move on to issues of land and water rights, repatriation of native artifacts, and compensatory education, health, and other programs.[81]

Still, the struggle for and best articulation of self-determination or self-government itself is complicated. This is, in part, because of the reality of power relations and the political constitution of the international arena. As Trask argues, realization of the rights articulated by the Declaration depends on nation-states. These same states have debated and resisted what it means for First Nation peoples to practice self-determination. For example, recognition of sovereignty at present does not include recognition of the right of secession by First Nations.[82] Native political struggles are not, thus, being waged in ideal political conditions and must carve out strategies that do not compromise sovereignty, while negotiating actual political realities.

Such complexity can be seen in struggles between Native nations and the United States. Alongside her claim that reparations struggles should not be waged on the premise that the United States will or should continue to exist, Smith makes another point that informs Native struggles in relationship to the United States. In the context of demanding sovereignty, writes Smith,

> indigenous nations often do not go so far as demanding political independence from the U.S. . . . because indigenous peoples know that without a solid economic infrastructure . . . such political independence in and of itself could contribute to further economic devastation. Thus, a successful struggle for sovereignty must incorporate a struggle for reparations.[83]

Sovereignty is the primary struggle. In the context of this struggle, reparations are necessary, and in forms that do not simply "pay out" for harms done. They must enable the building of economic infrastructures and otherwise transform U.S.–Native relations by facilitating Native nations' abilities to thrive independently and autonomously from the United States. From the other direction, recognition of sovereignty without transformation of material relations and massive transfers of resources would be meaningless at best, and at worst would cause further harm to Native sovereignty and rights.

The importance of this issue can be seen by locating Smith's claim in the context of the history of U.S.–Native relations. Several scholars argue that U.S. policies have vacillated between extremes of claiming plenary power over Native peoples and termination of relations altogether.[84] Both are their own version of attempts to assimilate Native peoples. U.S. exertions of plenary power put a stranglehold on Native nations through a paternalism that is racist and destructive,

and that impedes Native self-determination. At the same time, eviscerating the formal relationship between the United States and Native nations in the current context stands to leave Native nations bereft of necessary support and resources. In fact, termination of U.S.–Native relations, which the United States unilaterally implemented from 1953 to 1958, plunged many nations into economic and social crises.[85]

Native peoples continue to be engaged in struggles, therefore, to secure self-determination while being clear that the United States has particular obligations to First Nations peoples that must be honored. While attempting to disrupt the neocolonial relations—including their economic manifestations—that inflict Native American dealings with the United States, for example, Native struggles insist the United States has a responsibility to play a Native-American-directed role in securing indigenous land, water, hunting and fishing, and other rights from corporations and states.[86]

Within the geographical region occupied by the United States Native peoples are waging the kinds of struggles that Trask identified as following upon the heels of the struggle for self-government. These are implicit to the struggle for self-government. They pertain directly to both the U.S. obligations to Native peoples, as well as to reparative measures the United States continues to owe Native nations.

Struggles over land claims and U.S. efforts to "settle" such claims are a case in point. The Lakota people, for example, continue to fight for the return of the Black Hills as a result of the U.S. abrogation of a treaty signed in 1868.[87] In a series of rulings through the 1970s and 1980s, the Indian Claims Commission (ICC) declared that, indeed, the United States did confiscate Lakota territory illegally beginning in 1877.[88] But, the ICC—a body operating within U.S. domestic law—ruled as well that the United States must compensate the Lakota monetarily only. The Sioux appealed and sued the United States for return of the land itself, along with $11 billion in compensatory damages. Though a rejection of their appeal and a final ICC ruling allocated monetary damages alone, the Sioux continue to refuse this settlement. They demand, still, the return of the Black Hills.[89]

Further incursions into Lakota sovereignty have included the invasion by at least twenty-six multinational corporations. During the years that the Sioux were struggling through the ICC, the state gave these entities leases to explore for fossil fuels on more than one million acres of the Black Hills.[90] In addition to fighting for the return of their land itself, the Sioux are also reckoning with the implications of this corporate presence on their territory.

To refuse to accept fiscal compensation for what was a grievance in theft of land is to advocate sovereignty and recognition of Native peoplehood. Struggling against harm being done to the land itself is also a struggle for sovereignty. And, land struggles are sovereignty struggles in another dimension, as well. Besides awarding money rather than land, ICC "compensation" is such that monies are to be distributed to individuals and not to the nation as a collective, inhibiting their use for economic development.[91] U.S. attempts at settlement thus threaten to further colonial relations.[92] This is true not only for the Lakota, but also for other nations struggling over land rights.[93] One member of the Lakota explained the rejection of a financial settlement: "Money is like snow; it melts away."[94] The refusal to settle, demanding the return of the land instead, and insisting on collective reparations are all aspects of a political struggle in line with dimensions of the imperative of reparations outlined earlier.

In many localities in the United States, Native peoples are engaged in political struggles to live out self-determination and sovereignty intrinsic to their human rights, waging campaigns on issues of land, culture, health, economics, religion. Such struggles look like the battle for fishing and hunting rights by a number of nations in the Northwest regions of the United States and by the Chippewa in Wisconsin. Fishing and hunting rights not only invoke land rights, but issues of preservation and restoration of Native economies.[95] In the Southwestern region of the United States, struggles continue by the Pueblo people to force state and federal recognition and enforcement of Pueblo water rights.[96] In a number of regions, Native struggles look like those being waged by nations of the Iroquois Confederacy and Algonquin peoples in New York State: organizing to resist state legislatures' attempts to tax Indian businesses.[97] Battles for repatriation of Native American remains persist in response to the desecration of Native religious and cultural practices by museums—desecrations that also constitute a nonrecognition of Native peoplehood.[98] And, struggles against genocidal environmental devastations are some of the most urgent battles Native nations are currently waging; environmental struggles take place at the intersection of sovereignty, communal health, land, religious traditions, and economics.[99]

This treatment of Native struggles for sovereignty and self-determination cannot begin to do justice to the variety, forms, complexities, and the long tenure of political struggles being waged against the United States by First Nations peoples. My point here, however, is to recognize in these struggles, political advocacy by Native peoples

that are clearly called for in light of the imperative of reparations. More importantly, these are the kinds of struggles that people who are white must support.

The Movement for Reparations

Between 1890 and 1917, six hundred thousand people of African descent who had been enslaved in the United States lobbied the U.S. government for pensions they were owed because of their uncompensated labor.[100] In 1963, Queen Mother Audley E. Moore submitted a petition to President John F. Kennedy that called for reparations. It had over one million signatures.[101] Every year since 1989, Representative John Conyers (D-MI) has introduced House Bill HR-40, which calls for Congressional hearings on the nature and impact of slavery and post-slavery discrimination. Local legislative bodies in some cities, as a result of the work of individual legislators and organizing by grassroots activists, have passed resolutions calling upon the federal government to pass Conyers' bill. And, presently, organizations such as the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'Cobra) and the National Reparations Convention Committee (NRCC) are pursuing litigation and legislation to put reparations on the national and international radar screen.

The political struggle for reparations has been waged by people of African descent for a long time. At present, however, it is achieving an increased visibility in the U.S. public arena. The struggle is being waged through a variety of tactics, a strategy intended to build a multifaceted movement more likely to sustain visibility and, ultimately, to secure reparations.

As with Native struggles, though perhaps given less emphasis in the reparations movement, the international arena is a significant site of political struggle being carved out by African American communities.[102] In recent years, these efforts have been made primarily through articulating the issue of enslavement through an international human rights framework in the context of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

In 1989, for example, a coalition of organizations called the December 12th Movement, a group that has remained one of the leaders in the international political struggle for reparations first became involved formally with the United Nations.[103] Through the 1990s, the December 12th Movement pursued a strategy that included two major foci. First, it worked with the African Group within the UN to make explicit the connections between the transatlantic slave trade, slavery,

colonialism, and the underdevelopment of Africa.[104] Second, it struggled to articulate and secure recognition of U.S. involvement in the slave trade and chattel slavery as crimes against humanity. Making these connections and raising slavery as a human rights issue are both critical for people of African descent in the political struggle for reparations. This is true in terms of garnering the strength needed for such a struggle through coalition-building with African nations, as well as for creating an international forum in which reparations claims might be more sufficiently and successfully pressed.

The United Nations World Conference Against Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 was one result of the political struggle to make slavery and reparations visible in the international arena.[105] Those from African American communities involved in pressing for the conference, including the December 12th Movement, had three issues they wanted on the WCAR agenda: (1) Declaration of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery as a Crime Against Humanity; (2) Reparations for African people on the Continent and in the Diaspora; and (3) The Economic Base of Racism.[106] Prior to WCAR, the United States and Western European nations employed a variety of tactics to keep these particular issues, especially reparations, off the agenda. The December 12th Movement sent hundreds of delegates from the United States, a group that came to be called the Durban 400. These delegates along with various African NGOs and members of the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus lobbied intensely on the three issues.[107] The United States walked out of WCAR after only three days. Ultimately, despite ongoing resistance from the Western European and Others (WEO) Group, the strength of the coalition, in alliance with member nations of the African group, partially prevailed: language was included in the Durban Final Declaration and Programme of Action that recognized the Transatlantic Slave Trade and slavery as crimes against humanity.[108]

In addition to work on the international level, a number of domestic struggles are being waged by people of African descent for reparations for enslavement. One facet of the struggle being explored by legal experts is how to build a reparations case against the United States. These efforts build on prior attempts such as a 1915 suit brought against the Treasury Department for $68 million in remuneration for labor performed under slavery (dismissed based on sovereign immunity[109]) and a reparations suit dismissed in 1995 that sought $100 million in reparations and an apology (the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals

declared in *Cato V. United States* that the legislature, rather than the judiciary, was the appropriate forum for such claims[110]).

Attempting to learn from litigation efforts that have not been successful, those strategizing for a suit against the United States are considering whether a successful legal theory might be built based on breach of contract (from the promises made by the United States at the end of the Civil War) or under constitutional law.[111] There exists a widespread recognition within the reparations movement, however, that reparations through the courts are highly unlikely to succeed. Rather, the oft-stated goal of such suits is to build pressure such that the U.S. legislature must act. As Alexander J. Pires, Jr. states: "I don't think the legislature's going to help until the lawsuit goes forward. You have to file that suit, and you have to go forward yourself."[112]

A similar strategy exists among those pursuing litigation against private corporations for reparations for slavery and participation in the slavery industry.[113] The first ever class-action lawsuit filed against a corporation for profit in from slavery and the slave trade was by Deadria C. Farmer-Paellmann on March 26, 2002. The suit named Aetna Incorporated, CSX Railroad, and Fleet Boston Financial Corporation.[114] The demands include: (1) "Creation and funding of independent historical commission to report on US industries' profiteering from slave trade" and (2) "Creation of interim humanitarian fund."[115] Meanwhile, a steady stream of cases continue to be filed across the nation.[116] These lawsuits are serious efforts to secure reparative measures from corporations whose current holdings undoubtedly can be categorized as unjust enrichment. They are also part of a broader strategy to move the issues of reparations for slavery politically.[117]

Political efforts to further the struggle for reparations are being pursued at multiple levels as well: in city councils, state legislatures, and in the U.S. Congress. In 2000, for example, the Chicago City Council passed an ordinance calling on the federal government, in support of HR-40, to establish a federal commission to study the legacies of slavery in African American communities and reparations. This made Chicago the fifth city to do so.

Political efforts also involve multiple strategies. In 2002, for example, the Chicago Council passed further legislation that requires all corporations doing business with the city of Chicago to research and disclose information on involvement of their predecessor companies in the slave industry.[118] Failure to do so results in being denied city contracts.

Reparations are about money, but not necessarily about "cash." Asante writes, "Reparations will cost, but it will not have to be the

giving out of billions of dollars of cash to individuals, although it will cost billions of dollars."[119] The reparations movement as a whole is clear that the levels of reparations required are significant. There is not strict consensus, however, as to the forms reparations should take and how they might be administered. Still, many people of African descent involved in the reparations movement advocate group compensation in order that issues of economic development, self-sufficiency, and education, as well as other systemic issues can be redressed. Asante argues, "Any reparations remedy should deal with long-term issues in the African American community rather than be a onetime cash payout."[120] N'Cobra argues similarly, advocating reparations,

> in as many forms as necessary to equitably (fairly) address the many forms of injury sustained from chattel slavery, and its continuing vestiges. The material forms of reparations include cash payments, land *[sic]*, economic development, and repatriation . . . funds for scholarships and community development; creation of multi-media depictions of the history of Black people of African descent . . . The forms of reparations received should improve the lives of African descendants in the United States for future generations to come; foster complete economic, social and political parity; and allow for full rights of self-determination.[121]

Whether a fund should be created that would be administered by select African American leaders, grants should be made to institutions already existing in African American communities, or some other mechanism should be created remains the subject of much discussion within the political movement for reparations.

As can be seen in the various strategies being employed in the struggle for reparations, to the question of from whom reparations should come, there are many answers. A consistent one, however—both advocated by reparations activists and irrefutably supported by the realities of history—is that it should be the U.S. government on behalf of the nation.[122] Reparations must be paid at levels and in forms that fundamentally disrupt and transform the mechanisms through which legacies of enslavement continue to constrain and negatively affect African American communities in the United States.

The struggle for reparations invokes complicated legal issues on the domestic front and vast issues at the international level—momentum around which is, in many ways, still being built. But my point here is to recognize in this struggle, amid its myriad forms and strategies, critical political attempts that are clearly called for in light of the imperative

of reparations. More importantly, this is a struggle that people who are white must support.

Participation and Action for Justice and Transformation

White U.S.-Americans and the U.S. government regularly perceive movements for self-determination, sovereignty, and reparations as a threat. In fact, however, white U.S.-Americans are fortunate that movements for reparations and self-determination continue to exist and that they are becoming increasingly visible, vocal, and strong, nationally and internationally. These provide unearned but critical opportunities for white U.S.-Americans to engage in much needed, honest, and painful processes of conversation and conversion. They create avenues for white U.S.-American repentance and—if we have the will—repair. Such struggles offer those of us who are white a response other than the paralysis and guilt that often accompany the recognition that we are white U.S.-Americans in an implicitly imperialist, white supremacist nation.

There is much work to be done. In light of the preceding analyses, I close this chapter by making two observations about white U.S.-American responsibility in relation to the moral crisis of being white and the imperative of reparations.

First, those of us who are white and who seek to participate in justice-making activity have a pressing moral and political responsibility both to educate ourselves further about the realities of U.S. history and to take seriously education among white communities. By so saying I make no claim that white supremacy is primarily a problem of "ignorance" and can, thereby, be solved by enlightenment or awareness. Still, there is a paucity of historical knowledge and remembrance in the United States that perpetuates the ability of white U.S.-Americans to deny, evade, and wrongly cast who we are as a people. My own learning in the process of writing this book has been stark in this regard; I have been astounded at how little U.S.-American history I have been taught and have retained, and am aware that I have only scratched the surface here.

Related to this responsibility is the work demanded of white people to inquire into, talk about, and raise issues of Native struggles for sovereignty and African American struggles for reparations in and among white communities at every turn. One of N'Cobra's stated

goals as part of its reparations struggle is to "Make reparations a household word. Learn to spell, define, and defend it."[123] This is a critical need among white communities as well. At present, to invoke reparations or indict the United States as an imperial nation—not across the waters, but right here on this landmass—is to send shockwaves through a room. One task is to come to grips, deeply, with how much reparative action to Native nations and people of African descent is inextricable from white humanity and moral formation. For it is only through rupturing the silences, refusing the disavowals, and engaging the denial among ourselves that we can begin *to recognize ourselves*.[124]

Second, those of us who are white have a responsibility to find ways in which we can support and take action in current and ongoing political struggles by Native peoples and people of African descent. Despite the overwhelming tasks invoked when the imperative of reparations is recognized, the struggles given only brief attention herein are making inroads into intransigent, unjust realities embodied by the United States. Struggles by Native peoples and peoples of African descent are being waged in multiple locations, moreover. This means that there exist numerous localities at which white peoples might use our bodies to give active support to sovereignty, self-determination, and reparations.

For example, land struggles are being waged at present by member nations of the Iroquois confederation in the region of New York State. These struggles seek redress for the illegal seizure of land by the state of New York in the late 1700s and early 1800s.[125] Brooklyn City Council member Charles Barron recently has begun advocacy on issues of reparations in the New York City Council. One resolution, introduced in 2002, would establish a commission in the City Council to explore issues of reparations.[126] These are political struggles being waged that I have encountered in my own locality, merely during the course of research and writing this book.

It cannot be stated strongly enough that finding ways to participate actively in support of movements for sovereignty, self-determination, and reparations is not a solution to or quick fix of the moral crisis of being white. Moreover, given many of the effects that socialization in the context of white supremacist social order has on many of us who are white,[127] attempts to ally ourselves with such struggles will create their own challenges and mishaps, and we will bring to such efforts significant limitations. Still, it is my wholehearted belief that to attune our ears to the challenges being made by those peoples with whom our memories and identities are ineffably bound, to turn our minds to

history, to put our feet to the pavement, and to be otherwise attentive to the many ways in which the imperative of reparations is tugging on our souls is to have begun the long work that is required of us. It is my belief, too, that we cannot begin to imagine from where we stand now the wholeness and freedom that might await us on the other side of having earnestly begun such work.

Conclusion

Toward Becoming More Human

On May 4, 1969, James Forman interrupted worship at the Riverside Church in New York and presented *The Black Manifesto*, at the center of which was a demand for reparations.[1] Some white denominations attempted to respond to *The Manifesto* by addressing racial disparities in some way through a variety of programs. They did so, however, while insisting vehemently that their responses not be called reparations. Amid this fracas, William Stringfellow, a white layperson in the Episcopal Church, wrote of the predominant white responses to Forman:

> Meanwhile, it does not take a psychiatrist to discern that the denial of inherited, corporate guilt is a symptom of it. That, of course, points further still to the fact that corporate guilt is a pathological state, a condition of profound disorientation, and even a kind of moral insanity.[2]

Stringfellow's haunting words touch the deeply moral and spiritual call to white folks embodied by the imperative of reparations. Any and all benefits that have come and continue to come to us through racial, imperial history, and through current practices have led to white U.S.-American dehumanization and moral malformation. The moral and spiritual implications of the genesis of whiteness and meanings of U.S.-Americanness will continue to bear down on the lives of those of us who are white U.S.-Americans until we make a choice to turn and face our history. By casting the issue of reparations in deeply theological terms—discerning corporate guilt—Stringfellow summons the necessity and the *possibility* of repentance.

Struggles for sovereignty, self-determination, and reparations represent for white U.S.-Americans a call that is hope-giving. As we come to

understand what race is, how it is given meaning, and what its meaning has been, we can recognize that we actually have *choices* about whether and for how long we will allow the histories that have heretofore defined the meaning of race and citizenship in our lives to continue to do so. Choices imply the opportunity to live moral and political agency. And, Native peoples and people of African descent are carving out, through struggle, concrete paths through which white U.S.-Americans may make such choices for justice and transformation.

The hope offered, moreover, includes the possibility that we might experience a transformation that goes beyond simply meeting the criteria of strict political justice and deeply into who we are as human beings. This is not a hope available in the abstract. It is a hope that might be experienced *only* as we take steps in what must be a long and hard, truth-requiring, material-relations-altering journey. Indeed, these political struggles are invitations to a journey of costly grace.[3]

The journey that is required of white U.S.-Americans is both concrete and particular. In their responses to Forman, white Protestant Christians affirmed values of justice and equality, but they refused particularity. They created programs intended to contribute to the economic well-being of African American communities, for example. But, by refusing repentance and reparations, they did not respond from their location–and the realities implicit to that location–of "being white." And, in evading white racial particularity, they missed the only available route for true reconciliation and solidarity. As put to Vine Deloria, Jr. in an interview in 1975: "Would it be fair to say reconciliation is what Christians must be about, not reconciling souls to Christ but reconciling themselves to the land?"[4] It is only through restoration of land and wealth, in a process of reparations in which white atonement is explicit—not through a general affirmation of justice and equality—that white U.S.-Americans may seek reconciliation to our Native American and African American sisters and brothers.

Theo-Ethical Dimensions and the Liberation Project

In addition to being critical to white U.S.-American moral transformation, concreteness and particularity are critical requirements more formally for white participation in the project of theology and ethics from a liberationist perspective. By way of conclusion, I wish to locate, therefore, theo-ethical dimensions of the imperative of reparations.

Given the role of white Christianity and white Christian church bodies in legacies of genocide, colonization, enslavement, and other oppressive activity, such location is pressing. My analysis in this regard only points to possible implications—further in-depth explorations of which merit future inquiries. Still, I would like to close this work with the suggestion that the theoretical frameworks through which the imperative of reparations emerge represent one method through which participation in theo-ethical dialogue, from the locatedness of white particularity, with Black and Native American particularities is possible. This in a manner that enables white scholars' responsiveness to—rather than "affirmation" of, or mere attitudinal support for—Black liberation and Native American theologies and religiosity.

Amid the diversity of liberation theologies, two main tenets, which are of critical importance, exist. One is that theological and ethical reflections neither begin with abstractions nor categories, but from the actual particularities of human lives and experiences. (Thus, the reason that social locations and identities are so important.) A second is that oppression and justice each have ontological significance; while supporting particular assertions by the oppressed, this tenet also makes claims on the oppressor.

Obviously, the bulk of white scholarly responses to liberation theologies ignore or disavow them. Progressive white scholarship, however, is often tempted to affirm them. Both responses are insufficient. Decrying racial injustice in our theology and ethics is simply not enough if it does not emerge from the *particularities* of what it means to be white in the U.S. social order. And, our disavowals of white supremacy and its structures are insufficient if they are not explicitly bound to *concrete* material notions of repentance and repair.

In the context of a liberationist perspective there exists an explicit link between, on the one hand, such particularity and ontology and, on the other, repentance and repair. Reparations, or reparative activity, by white U.S.-American people to Native peoples and people of African descent is one site at which this link is highly visible. As such, the imperative of reparations, and reparations themselves, have overtly theo-ethical dimensions.

In this way, too, the imperative of reparations suggests epistemological ground for dealing with the problem of dominant, oppressor identities or social locations (in this case white U.S.-Americanness), which I raised in Introduction. Recognition of the imperative of reparations allows a posture of repentance and disruption (of white supremacy) to be claimed, even as we refuse to deny or evade the particular ground on

which we stand as white U.S.-Americans. It makes it possible to acknowledge the ground on which white U.S.-Americans stand: the particular ground from which we must act as we seek justice. The imperative of reparations, as it leads to moral and political action, is activity through which we can acknowledge that we, indeed, "are white" as we live out attempts to "refuse to be white."

The theoretical analysis of this book has rendered racism and racial justice fundamental questions of moral agency and identity, while bringing the particular ground on which white folks stand into view as the place from which we do and must speak and act. Many implications for theological reflection flow from such work. Neither the purpose of this project nor space allow for a thorough exploration of such implications. But, I will suggest two implications that hint at possibilities with which the concreteness and particularity of reparations are ripe. My goal in so doing is less to do theological reflection in a formal way, and more to gesture toward the epistemological possibilities (and requirements) the imperative of reparations opens for theological reflection by white scholars.

First, Native American theological reflections are inseparable from issues of sovereignty. Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George E. "Tink" Tinker write:

> Any attempt to explicate an American Indian theology is an assertion of tribal sovereignty, the doctrine that Indian nations are sovereign entities with powers of self-government deriving from their original occupation of their lands before European contact.[5]

Sovereignty and land are inseparable from cultural and religious integrity for Native peoples. This is the case for Native peoples, generally, to whatever extents they identify with Christian traditions or traditional Native religiosity.[6]

Land invokes another theological dimension, moreover. Native cultures tend to be oriented spatially and to cycles, while white–European cultures tend to be oriented to time in a linear sense.[7] Relatedly, Native religio-cultural worldviews are imbued with and shaped by a sense of the sacredness of place and attachment to geography. In contrast, there exists an "American metaphysic" in white cultures that is, according to Deloria, imbued with the notion of an actor God moving in a linear way through history, *over and against* geography.[8]

The only way in which white theologians can engage and respond legitimately to Native American theology, therefore, is to begin by

recognizing sovereignty and land. The imperative of reparations—understood as recognition and action in support of Native struggles for sovereignty—becomes, thereby, a necessary *theological* starting point in white theo-ethical analysis. As such it also enables white U.S.-Americans to engage and respond to Native American theology in an epistemological key that takes white particularity—rather than a vague commitment to justice—seriously.

Such a response would be a far cry from the myriad manifestations of white people appropriating Native cultures and religious practices—a problem that exists among New Age religionists and progressive white Christian communities alike.[9] It is even a distance removed from affirmation of Native American cultures as exemplifying relationships with the earth and environmental stewardship that should be imitated. Instead, it makes the activity of repentance—activity that is both moral and political—intrinsic to white theological reflection. It recognizes, moreover, a critical dimension of human relations. The concrete materiality implicit in this paradigm makes clear that it is at the site of Native sovereignty and the land that white U.S.-Americans actually exist in relationship to Native peoples.[10] Thus, it is only through sovereignty and land that just relations can be created.

Such a starting point would invite more formal theological analyses, moreover. The American metaphysic identified by Deloria has had and continues to have pervasive theological manifestations: for example, it has been and continues to be an actor God moving in, through and (pre-)determining the outcomes of a linear history. This theological formulation stands indicted in the European attempt to conquer and colonize the Americas.[11] In contrast, taking white locatedness seriously—not only in terms of social location, but in terms of geographical location—is a critical theological task.

To say so is not to advocate appropriating Native American cultures or religiosity by creating a white theology out of the importance of place that mimics that of Native religiosity. Instead, it is to acknowledge what Deloria calls the "immorality of reality," over and against abstract philosophical principles or doctrines. It is also a way to insist on bringing historicity into all white theological analysis. Indeed, Deloria argues that there exists a theological need for white Christians to grapple with our history. He calls for the "emergence of a white theology, which would be derived not from European tradition but from an American tradition,' a sense of identity 'steeped in American history.' "[12]

It is my sense that the analyses I have offered here might contribute in some way to beginning to cultivate such a sense: who we are is

inseparable from what we do. For white U.S.-Americans this claim requires a thoroughly historical, economic, and political reckoning with the immorality of our reality, and also an invitation to do such that we might become more human. In terms of formal theology, this kind of formulation represents a potentially significant shift in the theological project engaged by white people in a stance of liberation.

Second, Womanist and Black Liberation theologies have made, perhaps, the strongest case among liberation theologies for recognizing the ontological significance of oppression and justice. In the theological formulations of James H. Cone, the character of God as portrayed through biblical revelation is, essentially, liberation:

> Revelation is God's self-disclosure to humankind in the context of liberation. To know God is to know God's work of liberation in behalf of the oppressed. God's revelation means liberation, an emancipation from death-dealing political, economic, and social structures of society.[13]

God as a God of liberation and God as self-revealing in the context of history together mean, in the context of white supremacist U.S.-America, God is Black.

A number of theological claims can be made as a result of this formulation. Included among them is the ontological truth that whiteness, as constituted by white supremacy, *is* sin.[14] To participate, therefore, in struggles for racial justice—through active political, economic, and social means—is to participate in the movement of a liberating God in history.

Womanist theologies, which begin with the experience of African American women, do not emphasize the liberator God as much as do Black liberation theologies. For Delores S. Williams, for example, survival and quality of life are categories as central to theological reflections as is liberation for Cone.[15] Womanist theologies have a related sociopolitical definition of sin, however. Delores S. Williams writes that sin has to do with the social sources that feed African American women's experiences of unworthiness: including the elevation of white womanhood and the indifference of the U.S. legal system to the violence against Black women's bodies.[16] Specifically, Williams writes, defilement of Black women's bodies "constitute the gravest kind of social sin of which American patriarchal and demonarchal society is guilty."[17]

If white scholars recognize God as a God of liberation or God who is present in the struggle for survival, the only way in which we can

engage and respond legitimately to Womanist and Black Liberation theologies is to recognize the reality of sin in our very social located-ness and racial identities. The imperative of reparations thus becomes a necessary theological starting point in white theo-ethical analysis. As such it enables white U.S.-Americans to engage with and respond to African American liberation theologies in an epistemological key that takes white racial particularity seriously.

Rather than articulating God as a God of liberation, for example, white people are turned back to our social locations and identities to engage in particular sociopolitical work. More to the point, white scholars must take white racial particularity as seriously as Black liberation theology takes Black particularity. Doing so means that our participation in the struggle for racial justice must be constituted by explicit attempts to undermine and disrupt our whiteness.

In a fundamental way, white scholars cannot begin theological reflection with the invocation of God as a God of liberation. If we do so, we evade white particularity. For, such celebrations evade the reality that it is white agency in the United States that has forestalled and impeded the realization of justice and liberation, impeded divine activity, and contributed negatively to the struggle for survival and quality of life. The only point at which white theology may claim a liberator God is through acknowledging, in the same theological moment, that we are in manifestly broken relationship with this God. Our first theological focus, instead, is who we are and the problematic of what it is that we do.

There exist great differences between Native American theologies and African American liberation theologies.[18] But, in the context of white theological reflection that authentically engages and responds to theo-logical reflections of Womanist and Black liberation theologies, a similar reference point as that found in relation to Native theologies exists: who we are is inseparable from what we do. For white U.S.-Americans this claim requires an ongoing material and spiritual reckoning with the forces of white supremacy in our lives and the context of white supremacy in which we live our lives.

Repentance and Repair: Toward Becoming More Human

What does it mean when significant aspects of one's social self are formed by the very discourses and structures one is attempting to

challenge? When daily one is insulated by, and unjustly benefits from, the very systems one seeks to disrupt, what should this mean for one's mode of resistance and means for standing in solidarity with those targeted? These are questions for which white U.S.-Americans who are committed to racial justice—those who identify as Christian and those who do not—will never have complete answers as long as white supremacy remains normative in social reality. They are, however, questions with which we must perpetually and boldly wrestle. Because they emerge from the deep connection between the actuality of injustice and our white racial selves, a commitment to authentic and ongoing engagement of these questions can lead to "opportunities to create moral responses to moral dilemmas."[19]

Cone writes, "The sin of whites is the definition of their existence in terms of whiteness."[20] Being white in the United States is, indeed, a moral dilemma of horrific proportions. The engagements with critical theoretical frameworks that articulate "what race is" and the historical accounts of the formation and constitution of whiteness and U.S. nationhood that I have offered in these pages demonstrate the power of Cone's claim. Whiteness is an immoral reality, a violation of the normative status of justice in the moral order. Being racialized as white not only implicates a moral crisis deeply in one's socially raced being, it makes those of us so racialized less human.

Cone's words invoke a truth that pertains to the ontological state of our humanity in the current social order. White U.S.-Americans presently reside in a state of fundamental brokenness. Our lives are dependent, through the legacies of our history and in the ongoingness of white supremacy, on violations of the well-being and humanity of other human beings. But, Cone's words do not implicate whiteness itself as an ontological state. Indeed, he continues, "What we need is the destruction of whiteness, which is the source of human misery in the world."[21]

What has been constructed can be destroyed. In this way, grappling seriously with the political, economic, imperial, and religious activities that have constituted an unjust social reality and created the moral crisis of being white makes it possible to see some of the work that must be done to pursue justice. I have attempted to explore aspects that are necessary (though not sufficient) to disrupt whiteness.

In relation to the theoretical and historical analyses undertaken in these pages, the imperative of reparations emerged in two ways. First, justice-making activity must be pursued through material activities that intervene in and disrupt the myriad of processes through which

injustice is actualized. For white U.S.-Americans this means living out a resistant and disruptive moral and political agency against the very processes through which white has come to be and continues to come to be. Second, histories of genocide, colonization, and enslavement are embedded deeply in the racialization of selves and communities; this is true for all peoples living in or in relation to the United States. For white U.S.-Americans, our racial and national particularity began here. And, ongoing participation in, identifications with, or denial of these legacies—accompanied by the economic and material accrual of unjust enrichments—through the decades and up to the present day have further constituted our socially raced selves. Reparative activity in regard to these specific legacies is one critical starting point for justice-making.

Movements for self-determination, sovereignty, and reparations are human. They will be, therefore, limited and imperfect. Still, if those of us who are white U.S.-American choose to participate in and support such movements, possibilities presently unimaginable for social, national, and racial transformation might unfold.

I do not underestimate the power and pervasiveness of white supremacist imperialist forces in this land and in our globe. But, I insist that, like all human beings, white U.S.-Americans have choices—difficult and life-giving choices—about who we want to be, what kind of relationships we want to have, and what kind of world we want to live in. Perhaps the strongest argument I have made in these pages—at least, the argument about which I am most passionate—is this: by acknowledging our racial and national particularity, with a gravity appropriate to the irreparable devastation of human life it represents, those of us who are white U.S.-American are offered an undeserved and grace-filled opportunity to engage in work that might fundamentally reconstitute our moral being. We only stand to be made more fully human as we repent, repair, and reconstitute our relations to others and to history.

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Notes

Introduction   Mapping the Fault Lines

1. The form was created by the Youth Enrichment Services (YES) program of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community Center of New York.

2. This is not to suggest that the environment had been safe prior to the incidents. The fact that they took place reveals how unsafe it really was. Still, after such incidents the environment took on a particularly acute kind of danger for people of color in the community. This was not only because of the sheer ugliness of the incidents themselves, but also because of the too often paltry responses that came from many white members of the Union community in reaction to them.

3. Scholar and activist Irene Monroe says there is no "anti-racist" option for white people in the current social context. The best that white folks can do, she says, is to attempt to be "racially responsible."

4. Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, ed. Barbara Smith (New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1983), 275.

5. I purposely sidestep here a number of debates over "identity politics" and their utility and dangers, and refer to such movements in their best sense. For example, as Angela Davis says, "In my opinion, the most exciting potential of women of color formations resides in the possibility of politicizing this identity—basing the identity on politics rather than the politics on identity." Interview with Lisa Lowe, "Angela Davis: Reflections on Race, Class and Gender in the USA," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997), 318. For examples of movements in which complex coalitions are being attempted, even while identities of race and class are given significance, see John Anner, ed., *Beyond Identity Politics: Emerging Social Justice Movements in Communities of Color* (Boston: South End Press, 1996).

6. Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (New York & London: Routledge, 1997), 23.

7. Tat-siong Benny Liew and Vincent L. Wimbush, "Contact Zones and Zoning Contexts: From the Los Angeles 'Riot' to a New York Symposium," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 24.

8. She also points out that such so-called virtues are, in fact, behaviors compelled by capitalism. Katie G. Cannon, *Black Womanist Ethics* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 2.
9. Ibid., 2.
10. Ibid., 5.
11. Consideration of difference is not sufficient in its own terms, e.g. Thus, Celina Romany writes that one of the failures of postmodernism is that while it allows for a meeting of discourses, it does not provide the means for an encounter at the concrete level of differential power and privilege. Celina Romany, "Ain't I a Feminist?" in *Critical Race Feminism: A Reader*, ed. Adrien Katherine Wing (New York & London: New York University Press, 1997), 22. Philip J. Deloria, exploring historiographical issues, writes that postcolonial perspectives may be preferred in Native American scholarship over postmodernism. While both give attention to the ways particular individuals and communities constitute and identify themselves, postcolonial frameworks compel "a confrontation with history" that the postmodern embrace of the individual subject can too easily attenuate. Philip J. Deloria, "Historiography," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden & Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 20.
12. In vignette #1, the possibility exists that the young people encountered trouble because they had never thought of themselves as white. But, in the context of the racial diversity of New York City's public schools and the awareness of difference that affirmations of multiculturalism brings, their trouble more likely came from uncertainty about what it means to identify as white while simultaneously having some cognizance of racism. Perhaps there was also a fear that claiming such might be to affirm supremacy or a desire to avoid being identified with the historical legacies attending such racialization. In vignette #2, the Social Action Caucus ignored the demand for particularity. The white antiracism group embraced it, while modifying white by denoting themselves antiracist. The vortex opens because one must struggle from a place of locatedness, yet white is overly identified with the historical legacies and social realities of white supremacy and antiracist is not a recognizable social location. Finally, in vignette #3 (as is true for all three examples), white is *not* a simple parallel to other identifications. Thus, when white feminists identify as such, they are not just another voice in a multicultural mix. And, invocation of white particularity falls short because political struggles and epistemological frameworks that undermine or disrupt the linkage between white and white supremacy are, as of yet, insufficiently realized.
13. W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1994), 9.
14. Ibid., 1.
15. I do not suggest this to be an original inversion. Indeed, in 1860, Brooklyn schoolteacher William J. Wilson wrote a piece entitled "What Shall We Do with the White People?" See David R. Roediger, *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2002), 21. Obviously, people of color have always known white people are the problem. Moreover, many intellectuals have made this presumption

a specific lens for their work. Along with Du Bois, a select few include Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison. Recently emergent "critical studies of whiteness" at their best are heir to this scholarship.

16. It may be ironic but this contention is grounded in my sense that an ongoing reckoning with *what it means to be the problem* can offer liberation options for moral and political agency, in contrast to the (privilege reifying) paralysis of guilt or the crippling cynicism of despair and resignation. This is not to reject completely the phenomenon of guilt. Indeed, guilt can signal being convicted of transgression. Mary Hobgood writes, helpfully, "White people are tempted to guilt and/or hopelessness when we learn about the enormity of the racialized system and how it privileges and disables us as it disadvantages and oppresses others. Being embarrassed and feeling shame may be good insofar as they maintain our moral bearings and prompt us to develop a positive agenda for change." Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege: An Ethics of Accountability* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2000), 41.

17. The claim of part one could lead to a number of different foci for part two, as there are many imperatives in the project of disrupting whiteness. For example, one might focus on the role of the prison industrial complex as a necessary site for disruption of whiteness. I choose reparations because of the manner in which Native genocide and chattel slavery were both the context for the origins of race in what became the United States as well as United States' "original sins." See Larry L. Rasmussen, "Scrupulous Memory," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 85. Moreover, one of the ways white supremacy is sustained is through a radical ahistoricity. Thus, to locate the present realities of racial injustice in some of their earliest historical emergences in what became the United States is important.

18. James Baldwin's words echo here: "White man, hear me! History, . . . does not refer merely, or even principally, to the past. On the contrary, the great force of history comes from that fact that we carry it within us, are unconsciously controlled by it in many ways, and history is literally *present* in all that we do." James Baldwin, "White Man's Guilt," in *The Price of the Ticket* (New York: St. Martin's/Marek, 1985), 409.

19. Roediger, *Colored White*, 22.

20. I credit Larry L. Rasmussen for pushing me to recognize the importance of making the framework undergirding my overt use of the language of morality.

21. This is not to say that it is the only starting point for me. Embedded in this starting point is the belief that the divine also resides in, is broken by, and yet transcends the social realities in which human life and, consequently, ethical practice take place.

22. Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 8.

23. Feminists of every color are among those particularly responsible for the development of theological anthropology in this regard in Christian ethics. For example, Hobgood writes that humans have a "fundamentally communal nature." As a result, human beings have a "need for self-awareness, affection, respect, sexual fulfillment, and self-management over one's activities, especially one's work." Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege*, 8.

24. Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals*, 14.
25. See ibid., especially chapter two.
26. Smith writes, e.g., "social institutions are always morally animated enterprises. All social institutions are embedded within and give expression to moral orders that generate, define, and govern them." Ibid., 22. In the context of recognizing human society as moral order, a case could be made that even without the theo-ethical assumptions inherent in this project as a work in Christian ethics, being white can be recognized as a moral crisis because of the way the constitution of whiteness violates the formal public rhetoric of the U.S. body politic. Namely, in the United States, narratives of justice, equality, and, increasingly, valuations of diversity and multiculturalism abound in the public sphere.
27. Beverly Wildung Harrison made this case throughout the corpus of her teaching and writing. For just one example, see Beverly Wildung Harrison, "The Role of Social Theory in Religious Social Ethics: Reconsidering the Case for Marxian Political Economy," in *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Carol S. Robb (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985), 54–80. Hobgood makes this claim explicit, as well, when she argues that the power relations that structure race, class, gender, "deeply condition the morality of our lives-in-relation." Social analysis, therefore, is critical to making a moral evaluation of how power relations shape and misshape our lives and our relations with others. She argues further, that Christian liberationist perspectives "affirm that ethical questions deal centrally with power-in-relationship." Hobgood, *Dismantling Privilege*, 9, 38.
28. See Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1996). These rulings were made especially in relation to Mexican and Asian peoples.
29. Robert S. Chang, *Disoriented: Asian Americans, Law, and the Nation-State* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1999), 20.
30. For example, "English only" initiatives.
31. Chang, *Disoriented*, 12.
32. Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995), 47.
33. Theodore W. Allen notes that this is the case in terms of sheer demographics alone. In addition to the obvious centrality of Native peoples, given the land base upon which imperial Europe set up, he writes, "It is certain that more Africans than Europeans came to the Americas between 1500 and 1800." Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America, Vol. 2* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), 9.
34. Francis Jennings writes, "The swift penetration of the North American continent profoundly modified the history of Europe and Euramericans as well as that of Indians. Europe sought trade with Indians because Europe needed what the Indians had to offer. Indian commodities became an important factor in the European commercial system, Indian demands stimulated particular European industries, and the meshing of the Indian trade into the world market modified to a degree the function of that market and the relationships of

its national components." Jennings continues by detailing a number of the specific ways in which European economies were impacted. Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 97, 99, and 100.

35. Winthrop D. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 33.

36. The experience of Chinese rail workers, e.g., and the United States' imperial war with Mexico, both in the mid-1800s are each interrelated with my subject here, but will not be given attention.

1   The Moral Crisis of "Being White"

1. Though this is a deceptive and dangerous indicator, as shall be seen in the case of Native Americans, for whom one of white supremacy's manifestations has been forced assimilation. And, when phenotypes do not signify what social meanings suggest they should—as in the case of light-skinned African Americans, e.g.—other dimensions of racial oppression are experienced. See Toi Derricotte, *The Black Notebooks: An Interior Journey* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1999).

2. "Common sense" is the language of Michael Omi and Howard Winant. They write, "In each epoch of U.S. history, a certain school of racial theory has been dominant, serving as the racial 'common sense' of its age." Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 4.

3. Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race: Race, History and Culture in Western Society* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 7.

4. After World War II, in which the horrific consequences of biological racism were manifest, the same international cooperation that brought the United Nations into being brought the international scientific community together "to disprove the claims of racial science. Social scientists and biologists met on four occasions (1949, 1951, 1964 and 1967) to pool available knowledge on the idea of race. They concluded: 'For all practical purposes "race" is not so much a biological phenomenon as a social myth. The myth of "race" has created an enormous amount of human and social damage.' " Ibid., 15.

5. Latino/a is also an ethnic category, and the distinctions and overlap between ethnicity and race are important, but mapping them is beyond my purpose. Similarly there are different ethnicities and nationalities among those who might identify or be identified as black, e.g., Afro-Caribbean, Haitian American, Black Latino/a, and so on.

6. In terms of the experience of being profiled or protected, this theoretical difference is not necessarily important. It will, however, be crucial in terms of assessing what routes to disrupting white supremacy are incumbent upon and might be available to white people.

7. These elements include everything from a police department's training on racial difference to the decisions by neighborhoods to rely actively on law enforcement for "safety."

8. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 187, n. 57.
9. Emphasis in the original. Ibid., 55.
10. I say "more" because this process is not linear and race, which comes to be as a result, can also then "cause" things.
11. For examples from various fields, see the following: in legal theory, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, Neil Gotanda, Gary Peller, and Kendall Thomas, ed., *Critical Race Theory: Key Writings That Formed the Movement* (New York: The New Press, 1995), Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* (New York & London: New York University, 2001), Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, ed., *Critical White Studies: Looking Behind the Mirror* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997); in cultural studies, Robyn Wiegman, *American Anatomies: Theorizing Race and Gender* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995), Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2000); in history, sociology, and political science, Malik, *The Meaning of Race*, Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class, rev. ed.* (New York: Verso, 1991).
12. Paul Gilroy, "*There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack*" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 38.
13. Some scholars, e.g., might begin with and ascribe to "culture," what I begin with and here ascribe to "race," namely, phenomena such as agency, economics, nationalism, and meaning making. Gilroy uses a cultural definition of race, which he sees as a "teleological hinge" on the door from agency to structures. Ibid., 17. Lisa Lowe writes of culture as "terrain in which politics, culture, and the economic form an inseparable dynamic," and considers race and gender within this terrain. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, "Introduction," in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, ed. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997), 1.
14. Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 3.
15. Ibid., 4.
16. Winona La Duke, public lecture, "The Scholar & Feminist Conference," Barnard College, New York, February 22, 2003.
17. Emphasis mine. Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1996), 132.
18. "The abjection is everything that the subject seeks to expunge in order to become social; it is also a symptom of the failure of this ambition. As a compromise between 'condemnation and yearning,' abjection marks the borders of the self; at the same time, it threatens the self with perpetual danger." This notion of the abject, as used by Anne McClintock, is very useful for marking how deeply the racialization of a particular collectivity is bound up with intense repudiations and hyper-fixations upon "other" collectivities. This phenomenon will be particularly evident in chapter three of this book. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial*

Contest (New York & London: Routledge, 1995), 71; also see George E. "Tink" Tinker, "Abjection, Violence, Missions, and American Indians," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 3–4 (2002): 106–20.

19. Berel Lang writes that racism functions through essentialism in three directions: "The first is that human identity and activity are the function first of a group and only then of an individual—that is, the group is prior to the individual . . . The second principle is that human group identities (and then the identities of individuals within the groups) vary not only accidentally (as in customs of dress), but essentially—in their access to or grasp of reality, moral and/or epistemic. In other words, group identities differ in respect to intrinsic moral and cognitive capacity, in their person-hood . . . . And finally, the third principle holds that the group identities so realized are 'naturally ordered hierarchically and evaluatively—with the various capacities corresponding to differentiated and essential values." Berel Lang, "Metaphysical Racism (or: Biological Warfare by Other Means)," in *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*, ed. Naomi Zack (New York: Routledge, 1997), 24.

20. Haney López, *White by Law*, 130.

21. "Racial categories are in one sense a series of abstractions, but their constant legal usage makes these abstractions concrete and material," writes Haney López. Ibid., 17.

22. Ibid., 16.

23. Ibid. Kenan Malik calls this "signification," the process by which certain traits are selected as conveying meaning. Malik, *The Meaning of Race*, 15.

24. For example, Luther Wright, Jr. writes that in the period of national formation, "the need for the adoption of rules defining race grew out of two phenomena: (1) the decision to deny blacks and Indians the same treatment as whites under the law; and (2) the birth of children who had only one white parent or who had ancestors who were not white." Luther Wright, Jr., "Who's Black, Who's White, and Who Cares," in *Critical White Studies*, 164.

25. Duncan Kennedy, "A Cultural Pluralist Case for Affirmative Action in Legal Academia," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, 162.

26. I attribute this line of thought and the questions that come with it to a conversation with Emilie M. Townes, March 19, 2001. She pointed out that crucial ethical questions unanswered in such abstractions include: What happens when you are worried about *real* communities? Does such theorizing help communities become subversive communities of resistance?

27. This tendency is observed in the poorly articulated intersections of queer theory with critical race theory in which queer theorists will often take a notion such as "performativity" and transpose it onto race in a way that does not recognize the process by which race and white supremacy are constructed and sustained.

28. As bell hooks writes in her critique of white feminist Diana Fuss's work on essentialism, "a totalizing critique of 'subjectivity, essence, identity' can seem very threatening to marginalized groups, for whom it has been an active gesture of political resistance to name one's identity as part of a struggle to challenge domination." bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York & London: Routledge, 1994), 78.

29. Emphasis in the original. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 71.

30. J. Angelo Corlett, e.g., writes that "primitive race theories," which are bound up in genetic arguments, are inadequate because the traits selected as signifying race are "arbitrary," "incomplete," and "insignificant." Corlett proceeds, from this inarguably true observation, to conclude that "race" (and "sex") should be abandoned for notions of "ethnicity" (and "gender") because these are less fraught with essentialism. But this analysis misses the point that race remains real and significant because of the actual meanings ascribed to those significations that lead to *particular and real* human experiences, and that a change in terminology cannot alter it, nor is such an academic recommendation likely to be persuasive. (In his later work on reparations, however, Corlett brings this theoretical argument into the realm of political implications in a manner that is promising. I will engage this work more fully in chapter four of this volume, though I remain ambivalent about whether the language of ethnicity can contribute as much as he hopes.) See J. Angelo Corlett, "Parallels of Ethnicity and Gender," in *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*, 83–93. Similarly, Anthony Appiah argues that biological race is so meaningless that culture should be the category used. Appiah, however, reduces race to a concept used merely to ascribe innate characteristics—an overly limited recognition of how the concept of race is used. Meanwhile, his desire to replace race with culture comes, in part, from the desire for a category that recognizes agency and constructedness. As Jayne Chong-Soon Lee argues in response to Appiah, however, moving to culture "underestimate[s] the degree to which traditional notions of race have shaped, and continue to shape the societies in which we live." Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, "Navigating the Topology of Race," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement*, 442, 443.

31. Naomi Zack, "Introduction: Aim, Questions, and Overview," in *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference, and Interplay*, 2.

32. See Victor Anderson, *Beyond Ontological Blackness: An Essay on African American Religious and Cultural Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1999), for an example of this kind of rejection of the use of race in a work in theology.

33. In Michael Lind's review of Randall Kennedy's most recent book it is to precisely this conclusion that Kennedy is understood to arrive, and for which Lind commends him. Apparently, Kennedy goes so far as to claim that because race is a legal construction and not an essence, and because such legal categories came from notions of natural race, any governmental documentation of race is illegitimate. In response to government-supported programs that attempt to match adoptive children of a particular racial group with parents from that same group, Kennedy is quoted as writing, "If dismantling [racial] affirmative action must be part of the price of effectively doing away with race matching, it is no more than I, for one, am willing to pay." I find this a distressing statement as it conflates the use of race for the purpose of oppression with the use of race for amelioration. While Kennedy's concern (in which he is not alone) about the dangers of reifying race may be legitimate in an abstract sense, such

conflation suggests that merely ceasing to recognize race formally in the political and legal spheres will somehow eradicate the problem of white supremacy. In a society where race has concrete material meanings (regardless of whether or not public officials invoke the category overtly) that deeply stratify the social order, it is naïve at best to think that jumping to non-recognition will eradicate the effects of white supremacy. At worst, such claims are co-opted for social projects that conserve a white-dominated status quo. Michael Lind, review of *Interracial Intimacies: Sex, Marriage, Identity, and Adoption* by Randall Kennedy, *The Nation*, June 16, 2003, 14–18.

34. An example of this can be seen in Omi and Winant's definition of the discourse of Louis Farrakhan as racist—though they are careful to insist that his "racial project" is less "menacing" than that of a group such as the White Aryan Resistance. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 73.

35. "The triumph of such ideas regarding race [namely, that it is not biological], although it has been achieved by starts and fits and continues to encounter resistance, is one grand achievement of twentieth-century science and of the century's freedom movements. At the same time, however, that very triumph sets the stage for the conservative and neoliberal arguments . . . which miss the tragic gravity of [Frantz] Fanon's remarks on the epidermalization of race and indeed seek to forget race by confusing its biological inconsequence and superficiality with the deep inequalities it structures." David R. Roediger, *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2002), 16.

36. Perhaps the most significant evidence of the limitations of constructionist theory is indicated by the varying reactions such a claim sometimes evokes among people of color. In a course I tutored at Union Theological Seminary in spring 2003, e.g., as students encountered the notion that race was constructed, white students tended to express relief while students of color tended to express suspicion and, in some cases, anger.

37. Conversation with Townes, March 19, 2001.

38. Roediger, *Colored White*, 16.

39. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 56.

40. Zack, "Introduction," 2.

41. Zack calls this the "pragmatic meanings" of race. Naomi Zack, "Race and Philosophic Meaning," in *Race/Sex: Their Sameness, Difference and Interplay*, 39.

42. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 55.

43. Gilroy, *'There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack'*, 5.

44. Ibid., 17.

45. I am pulling this complexity apart in order to scrutinize the elements at work in race as a live, dynamic process; race is forged by oppression but is never reducible to it. I am not suggesting that Black and black, as used above are separable, discrete realities.

46. Janet R. Jakobsen, *Working Alliances and the Politics of Difference: Diversity and Feminist Ethics* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998), 5.

47. Roediger, *Colored White*, 15.

48. David R. Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness* (London & New York: Verso Books, 1994), 3.

49. Ian Haney López, "The Social Construction of Race," in *Critical Race Theory: The Cutting Edge, 2nd ed.*, ed. Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 165.

50. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York & London: Routledge, 1990), 23.

51. Being social creatures includes our actual physical and biological constitution. We are, fundamentally, creatures dependent on this earth, who cannot survive if our basic physical needs—food, water, air—go unmet; creatures whose physical needs are best met in our communality. Moreover, we are biological creatures, each with our individual genes and subject to the transformations of evolution. As Larry L. Rasmussen reminds me, "we *are* body-selves." Personal conversation, spring 2003.

52. Effectively, we have returned to the dangers of essentialism here. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 34, 35.

53. My description here should make it clear that my use of the concept of identity does not invoke essences.

54. Michel Foucault, "Afterword," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics 2nd ed.*, ed. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 210.

55. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power (Interviewers: Alessandro Fontana, Pasquale Pasquino)," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon, Leo Marshall, John Mepham, and Kate Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 97.

56. See Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

57. What "reject" even looks like is an important discussion. Often it is articulated in terms of questions such as: Can white people give up power, privilege, and so on? What does/could such look like? Should the goal be to use privilege and access in particular ways? I find these questions unsatisfactory when unaccompanied by broader and deeper understanding of how "being white" works in the context of white supremacy.

58. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 65, 66.

59. Roediger writes that naming this field is important as it is not (supposed to be) a field focusing on white people in an expression of narcissism. It is, rather, an overtly political project and scholarly perspective seeking ways to undo and disrupt white supremacy. (He also views the condensing of such a lens into a "discipline" or "field" to be institutionalized as a negative development; on this I would concur.) Roediger, *Colored White*, 21.

60. The different word choice here, of "socialization" as opposed to " 'racialization," is important, which should become clear in my assessment of this body of scholarship later.

61. Beverly Daniel Tatum, *"Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?": And Other Conversations About Race* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 6. Tatum has received national acclaim for a number of reasons,

including her brilliant analysis of why cross-racial dialogue pursued for multicultural understanding so often breaks down. She articulates the various ways dialogue is difficult, depending on the different stages of racial identity development embodied by differently raced participants in such dialogue. She also gives attention to the different kinds of issues that attend racial identity development among various communities of color depending on the particular manifestations of white supremacy in relation to particular ethnic/racial/immigrant locations.

62. Ibid., 94.

63. Ibid., 106.

64. Tatum notes the incredible pressures to collude when one becomes more aware of racism, as such awareness makes other whites uncomfortable when one starts to point it out. She also is clear that, given the social location of white people in this racial hierarchy (insulated and privileged), silence tends to pervade white families on issues of race. This makes white racial identity development toward an antiracist identity anything but an automatic process. Ibid., 101, 94.

65. Janet E. Helms, *A Race is a Nice Thing to Have: A Guide to Being a White Person or Understanding the White Persons in Your Life* (Topeka: Content Communications), i.

66. Mary Foulke, "White Racial Identity Development Chart," based upon Janet E. Helms, ed., *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research and Practice* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1994).

67. Ibid.

68. Helms, *Race is a Nice Thing*, 74.

69. Foulke, "White Racial Identity Development Chart."

70. Ibid.

71. Helms, *Race is a Nice Thing*, 88. None of this is ever presumed to be a linear process for either Tatum or Helms.

72. Thandeka, *Learning to be White: Money, Race, and God in America* (New York & London: Continuum, 1999). These psychological works focus on issues of the psychological self as affected by social realities. This is why I have used the term "socialized" here rather than "racialized," which is inherently political. Racialized would be, in fact, more in keeping with Thandeka's notion of this process, as her sense of race as constructed is strongly articulated, in contrast to Tatum or Helms. However, I do not want socialized and racialized to become conflated, and thus have chosen to use the term socialized even for describing Thandeka's project.

73. Ibid., 3.

74. Ibid., 4.

75. Unlike Tatum, who locates incoherence in white identity in the incongruency of messages of color blindness accompanied by experiences of unjust privilege and racist structures, Thandeka locates it more overtly in racist teachings young white children receive.

76. Ibid., 19.

77. Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 6.

78. "I have found most useful those analyses that view race as a socially constructed rather than inherently meaningful category, one linked to relations of power and process of struggle, and one whose meaning changes over time . . . . [Yet] in asserting that race and racial difference are socially constructed, I do not minimize their social and political reality, but rather insist that their reality is, precisely, social and political rather than inherent or static." Ibid., 11.

79. I would argue that to a significant extent (though varying with their particular manifestation) multicultural and diversity discourses fall under this paradigm. While invoking differences as something to be celebrated, most do so while emphasizing that we are all human beings underneath our differences.

80. Ibid., 14, 15.

81. She encountered the second of these when white women, as they talked about their identity, would "assert a complicity with racial domination that was totally encompassing, totally definitive of whiteness and of individual white selves." Ibid., 171.

82. Ibid., 169.

83. These works pay some attention to gender and the impact of capitalism and class, but in general the psychological development they chart is not, I would argue, sufficiently attentive to different manifestations of development along lines of class, gender, or sexual orientation.

84. Ibid., 187.

85. This is a different question than the Foucauldian, "How is the subject constituted?" or my "Who *are* we?" These two questions are framed to inquire explicitly into the economy of power relations through which we become white. Helms' question, on the other hand, is posed more in the realm of introspection and self-reflection. It is not political in quite the same way.

86. Ibid., 15. I am not suggesting that Frankenberg advocates race cognizance in terms of valuing "white" by any of these measures.

87. What I find fascinating is that despite the fact that this is psychological literature, this issue also comes up in critical theory, which suggests that there is a real chasm in critical studies of whiteness. Barbara Flagg, e.g., a legal scholar and critical race theorist, devotes a section of her book on white race consciousness and the law to problems with white racial identity and the need for a positive white identity. Barbara J. Flagg, *Was Blind, but Now I See: White Race Consciousness and the Law* (New York & London: New York University Press, 1998), 19–38. Haney López comments on this problem, rejecting Flagg's conclusion in terms with which I agree: namely, that a positive white identity in the context of white supremacy is a dangerous prospect. In response he offers a theoretically sound, but excruciatingly abstract, alternative: the need for a "self-deconstructive White race-consciousness." Haney López, *White by Law*, 31.

88. Tatum, *"Why Are All the Blacks Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?"* 107.

89. This is also a problem that comes from a mono-disciplinary response to a complex, multivalent reality.

90. Thandeka's work, I would argue, veers most closely to the danger signaled by Christine Sleeter when she writes, "What is troubling about the process of

interrogating whiteness . . . or any position of strength and dominance, is how easy it is to subvert this process and create a new class of victims." Christine E. Sleeter, "White Silence, White Solidarity," in *Race Traitor*, ed. Noel Ignative and John Garvey (New York & London: Routledge, 1996), 260. I do not doubt that many white people are shamed as part of their "learning to be white." (Though, I suspect this was a more clearly articulated teaching/learning a few decades ago than it is among youth growing now in a "color blind" world and likely varies in geographic regions of the country.) However, to my mind, Thandeka mislocates from whence the shame or reticence in ascribing oneself as "white" comes. In coming into teenage and adulthood years, the awareness that to be white is to be unjustly advantaged, and experience of one's overt and covert complicity with racism (an experience with which no white person in this society can be unfamiliar, even while we may deny it) is more likely the source of the shame. I believe, therefore, that when we have to call attention to our privilege in any sort of self-critical way, it is here that our reticence emerges. On the other hand, when it is time to cash in on that privilege, if there is little chance we might be called to account for so doing, few of us genuinely resist.

91. Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1.

92. Allen, Garvey, and Ignatiev each use "so-called" to signal that "white" is a fiction.

93. *Race Traitor* began as a journal, is the title of an edited book, and is also a fledgling social movement.

94. They use the metaphor of currency: if 10 percent is counterfeit the entire economy becomes destabilized.

95. So, e.g., if a person with white skin can count on protection rather than harassment by police—in exchange for silently walking on by when people of color are harassed—the action of pulling out a video camera to tape police activity is a way to make police less able to assume such consent based on phenotype.

96. James Baldwin, *The Price of the Ticket: Collected Nonfiction, 1948–1985* (New York: St. Martin's, 1985).

97. My awareness of this is partly anecdotal and comes by way of personal acquaintance with two of these scholar–activists. For example, in a diversity or antiracism workshop setting or other seminar in which people are broken into various identity groups as part of the pedagogy, they refuse to sit in the white group. This refusal is not only disruptive to the purpose and goals behind such separations, it also signifies an evasion of being white, which is problematic.

98. Interestingly enough, Thandeka, whose work with shame would be scoffed at by abolitionists (and, I have been present in a forum in which Thandeka and Ignatiev became engaged in a loud and contentious disagreement), comes closer to an abolitionist position than do any of the psychologists I mentioned. She virtually refuses to talk about a thing like "white privilege" because it reifies the notion that race is real.

99. Roediger, *Towards the Abolition of Whiteness*, 13.

100. For evidence of this shift, see racetraitor.org/newsociety.html.

101. The image of "secreting" is taken from Cornel West, who writes: "I shall argue that the initial structure of modern discourse in the West 'secretes' the idea of white supremacy. I call this 'secretion' the underside of modern discourse—a particular logical consequence of the quest for truth and knowledge in the modern West." Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 48.

102. Riggs crafts the mediating ethic out of her analysis of the Black women's club movement. She addresses mediating tensions between separation and integration for Black communities, class stratification within Black communities, as well as interracial relationships in which boundaries of difference should not be dissolved and in which "we may cooperate in common endeavors toward racial justice, but without some ultimate reconciliation in view." Marcia Y. Riggs, *Awake, Arise, and Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1994), 96.

103. Ibid. Emphasis in the original.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., 83, 84.

2   A Colonial Settler Nation and A Slaveholding One

1. Larry L. Rasmussen, "Scrupulous Memory," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 85.

2. Philip J. Deloria describes four general periods of "Indian history writing": frontier, racial/developmental hierarchy, modernist, postmodern/colonial. See Philip J. Deloria, "Historiography," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden & Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 6–24.

3. "Introduction," in ibid., 4.

4. At "Costly Grace: Race and Reparations" held at Union Theological Seminary in October 2002, Andrea Smith provoked a laugh among attendees when she suggested that no reparations strategy should be based on the assumption that the U.S. government should or would continue to exist at all. (Her statement is quoted later in this chapter.) The laugh came, in part, I believe, because of the audacity of such a statement. Yet, it was also telling in regard to how incomprehensible it can be for those of us who presume ourselves to be U.S. citizens to imagine our nation as fundamentally illegitimate.

5. Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 2.

6. Taiaiake Alfred, "Sovereignty," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 461.

7. The myth of conquest, he says, continues to be the "foundation of mainstream perspectives on indigenous–white relations in North America." He continues, "From the indigenous perspective, there was no conquest and there is no

moral justification for state sovereignty, only the gradual triumph of germs and numbers." Ibid., 469.

8. Ibid., 460.

9. Dowd goes on to recount how treaties regularly functioned for Europeans more as a buttressing of their claims against other Europeans, rather than as some acknowledgment of Native rights. See Gregory Evans Dowd, "Wag the Imperial Dog: Indians and Overseas Empires in North America, 1650–1776," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 47– 49.

   Dowd's assessment does not alter the historical truth of Native rights. Rather, it identifies a truth about European motives and strategies, which is also important to analyze. Still, while Alfred would no doubt agree with Dowd's assessment of European motives, he would likely emphasize that the salient point to be made in a historical reading is that: (1) documentation of European assertions of hegemony do not indicate proof of its achievement, and (2) claims to European sovereignty asserted European rights legally and politically in relation to other European nations, and did not affect the rights or status of Indigenous nations. Alfred, "Sovereignty," 461.

10. Moreover, treaty protocol was of Indian manufacture. According to Francis Jennings, it was Englishmen who were forced to adapt, not always willingly, to a device that made coexistence possible between two organized societies, interdependent and "ambidependent." Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 118, 119, and 123.

11. Alfred's purpose is to make a case about potential dangers of Native peoples basing their claims on notions of sovereignty. Dowd's purpose is to emphasize how Native activity shaped intra-European relations.

12. Paul Gilroy, "*There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack*" (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 12.

13. Native Americans are also denied a pre-European past. This is true both as it relates to their own histories and thriving worlds centuries before contact between them and Europeans, and in terms of attention to the deep impact contact had already made on Native societies well before Jamestown was established. On another point, there is a way in which the forms of Native subjugation, which have included genocidal practices that devastated Native peoples in terms of population size, have made Native American history more invisible in white U.S.-American narratives than are people of African descent who constituted such large population *within* U.S. society.

14. This point is made not to say one situation was "worse" than another. It is to note clearly that distinct forms of atrocities and specific forms of resistance exist in these histories. These distinctions affect the nature of the historical narrative.

15. When I describe ideology and materiality forming social reality, I suggest something like Donald Pease's definition of culture. He provides a definition of culture in the broad sense as: "ways of life, symbolic action and representations, contradictory forms of common sense, social practices, and networks of social institutions." Donald E. Pease, "New Perspectives on U.S. Culture and Imperialism," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1993), 26.

16. Amy Kaplan, " 'Left Alone with America': The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture," in ibid., 14. I am not equating culture with ideology. But, I recognize ideological discourses to be deeply related to cultural production. Generally, what Kaplan describes as cultures is what I understand as the interplay between ideology and materiality.

17. Kaplan's work manifests a concern for complex intersectional analyses in American studies, similar to that articulated by some in postcolonial studies: namely, that capitalism, race, gender, sexuality, imperialism, and culture need to be considered together. See e.g., Ann Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's* History of Sexuality *and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995); Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd, ed., *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997); Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York & London: Routledge, 1995).

18. This becomes even more clear in chapter three where I focus on white U.S.-Americans engaging in cultural productions in which people of African descent and Native peoples were exoticized, trivialized, objectified, ridiculed, vanished, and/or caricatured through white-mediated images of "blackness" and "indianness." These productions, I argue, were partly mechanisms through which white U.S.-Americans made claims about themselves, and thus constituted a white U.S.-American identity.

19. Kaplan, " 'Left Alone with America,' " 14.

20. There are countless books that do so, many of which in the process explore the inner psyche of white people. They postulate that white people, e.g., were "afraid" they might become wild and so had to differentiate themselves so starkly. Richard Drinnon's account assumes this throughout. Even David R. Roediger, in his otherwise excellent historical analysis, builds an argument based on this logic to explain "why" white working-class men in the industrial north performed blackface. Stoler offers an important critique of a fixation on interiority, with which I agree. She queries why that interiority (which many scholars assume to have fueled obsessions with "others") should itself go unquestioned and should not be recognized too as a construct and product of culture. See Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire*, chapter one, 1–18; Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980); David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class, rev. ed.* (New York: Verso, 1991).

21. Myra Jehlen, "Why Did the Europeans Cross the Ocean? A Seventeenth-Century Riddle," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1993), 54. Jehlen notes that "difference" has been "the anti-colonialism response to the imperial history of otherness" and a way to ensure that agency is honored. She argues that, methodologically, difference can create its own set of problems, however. Difference was a "creature of the conquest," she writes, and when it becomes the lens for reading history it inadvertently provides an "explanation" for colonization. Jehlen goes on to write, "The moment Columbus landed in San Salvador, as soon as the home of the Arawaks became San Salvador, the

reason that Europeans crossed the ocean became inextricable from what he found when he got to the other side." Ibid., 43, 55.

22. Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 174.

23. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 35.

24. David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 101. Making the case that European devastation of indigenous societies was neither inadvertant nor inevitable, David E. Stannard writes, "From almost the instant of first human contact between Europe and the Americas firestorms of microbial pestilence and purposeful genocide began laying waste the American natives." Ibid., xii.

25. John E. Kicza, "First Contacts," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 36.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 36, 37.

28. Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: The Origin of Racial Oppression in Anglo-America, Vol. 2* (London & New York: Verso, 1997), 30.

29. Gary B. Nash, "Red, White, and Black: The Origins of Racism in Colonial America," in *The Great Fear: Race in the Mind of America*, ed. Gary B. Nash and Richard Weiss (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), 2.

30. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 76.

31. Ibid., 116.

32. Ibid., 117.

33. In 1585, Roanoke became the first English attempt at permanent settlement. At one point a Native person was accused by an English person of stealing a cup and the English launched in response a full-force attack—burning an entire village and its cornfields. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 105. When relief ships arrived in 1590 to bring supplies they found the colony empty. See Kicza, "First Contacts."

34. By 1612, running away to live among Native peoples would become a crime punishable by death; indicating this happened with sufficient frequency to merit such regulation. Rarely, however, did Native peoples choose to live among the English. One hundred and fifty years after the English had begun to settle in North America, Benjamin Franklin lamented: "When an Indian child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our Customs, yet if he goes to see his relations . . . there is no perswading him ever to return. [But] when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoners young by the Indians, and lived a while among them, tho' ransomed by their Friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a Short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, . . . and take the first good Opportunity of escaping again into the Woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them." Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 104, 105.

35. Ibid., 105.

36. Stannard quotes first hand the testimony of the brutal and grotesque murders, the order by the governor that the "quene" be burned to death, and the "merciful" choice by George Percy (De la Warr's second in command) to stab her to death instead. See ibid., 105, 106.

37. Jennings notes that during the course of the decade in which tobacco became lucrative, large "grants" of land came into English hands; how this took place is not clear based on the historical record. Despite claims by the English that they bought the land, there exist no records indicating such. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 78.

38. Alfred, "Sovereignty," 469.

39. "They killed a fourth of the colonists and then withdrew in traditional native style, figuring that the survivors would see that they had been defeated and would withdraw from the region. But instead the English counterattacked and burned down Powhatan settlements and storehouses, killing indiscriminately." Kicza, "First Contacts," 37.

40. See Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 79. Through the avalanche of discourse about Native peoples that began once Columbus set sail, the English had been told of both "savage, hostile creatures" more animal than human and of "godless, but gentle 'tractable' " people with the "potential for good government." Nash, "Red, White, and Black," 2.

41. Kicza, "First Contacts," 37.

42. Ibid. Allen writes that in the half century after Carolina was "settled" there were tens of thousands of Native peoples enslaved. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 37.

43. Kicza, "First Contacts," 37.

44. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 107.

45. They pursued, therefore, a "mutual assistance pact" with the Wampanoag Indians, to whom they gave support against the Narragansetts and from whom they gained support for their land use. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 131.

46. Ibid., 134. Massachusetts Bay on the one hand never showed much interest, even rhetorically, in recognizing Native sovereignty and rights to the land. Indeed, John Winthrop had been one of the leaders who had pushed the discourse of "vacancy" to its maximum. At the same time, when vacancy meant that other collectivities besides Massachusetts Bay might assert a "right" to land, they moved to secure from nations in the region, by way of "purchase," deeds to some of "their" land as a back up to their own claim. They also passed legislation forbidding any individual colonist from acquiring—through whatever means—land from any individual Native person. See Ibid., 135–45.

47. Ibid., 144.

48. These included, e.g., declaring the hostilities as revenge for the death of an Englishman upon whom the Pilgrims themselves had placed death warrant for his adulterous behavior; bad-faith treaty making with representatives of the Pequots during which the English made extortion-like demands at the last minute, thus, circumventing the negotiations; and, not least, the demand for compensation from the Pequots when it was the Niantics who were presumed responsible for the death of the Englishman. See chapter thirteen, " 'We Must Burn Them' " in Ibid., 227.

49. See Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 237.

50. This was also true in the Northeast, where a smallpox epidemic swept the region in 1633. Kicza estimates that by the time the Pilgrims arrived, Native

communities of the Northeast had suffered a decrease in population of 75–90 percent. With the smallpox epidemic, more land became open, a situation of which the Puritans of Massachusetts Bay quickly took advantage. Kicza, "First Contacts," 40.

51. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 110.

52. A particularly painful account of such attempts exists in the confusing string of events leading up to the massacre of the Pequot peoples in 1637. These include Native leaders calling out to the Puritans before hostilities began, "Do you kill women and children?" as well as the interception of one band of warring Puritans by Native leaders who engaged them in long and intensive argumentation in an attempt to slow them down and negotiate with them. See chapter thirteen of Jennings, *The Invasion of America*.

53. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 110.

54. Ibid., 53.

55. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 53.

56. Ibid., 11. The excess population, and attempts to maintain order, led to "vagabond laws" in which any person found not working was sentenced to two years of forced labor. In this system private owners (not the state) were the ones to benefit, as the person who informed on the "vagabond" was the one to take him or her as laborer. Some of the practices that took place in this system, including, e.g., "enclosure," were precisely the kinds of practices colonial Americans used against Native peoples.

57. Ibid., 54. At every turn, now, it is crucial to bear in mind that the land being discussed is Native, and that as the growth of tobacco is taking place, treacherous activities of dispossession and genocide are simultaneously underway.

58. Ibid., 70, 173.

59. For a helpful analysis of some of the assumptions made in such an economic ideology, see Carol Johnston, *The Wealth or Health of Nations: Transforming Capitalism from Within* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1998), chapter one.

60. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 63.

61. Ibid., 62. From 1619 to 1624 the Virginia Company pursued various attempts to stay the crisis—from promoting a more general economy base (and setting minimum limits for planting food) to shifting from tenantry to wage labor. None of these attempts worked. See ibid., 60.

62. Ibid., 58, 59.

63. Ibid., 97.

64. Ibid., 71–73.

65. Ibid., 65.

66. Quoted in Ibid., 74.

67. Allen notes that a number of people benefited during this period by profiteering corn, as the attack caused a famine crisis as well. See Ibid., 93, 101.

68. Ibid., 108.

69. Ibid., 125, 126

70. Charles Johnson and Patricia Smith, *Africans in America: America's Journey Through Slavery* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1998), 36, 37.

71. Winthrop Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 26, 27.

72. Ibid., 40.
73. It is here that the unevenness in the historical records is notable, caused in part by the mechanisms of oppression that were employed. The population of African peoples in the region was still relatively low at this point, yet the silence created in the absence of voices of African peoples in the narratives of this period is deafening.
74. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 123. This demonstrates early impulses to make Africans into slaves and suggests that the first Africans in the colonies were most likely existing in some form of indenture.
75. Emphasis in the original Johnson and Smith, *Africans in America*, 41.
76. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 42.
77. Charles Johnson and Patricia Smith give a good account of what it might have been like to be a person of African descent and to have watched this transition take place around you. They write, "in the relentless march that is history, some changes are instantaneous, lightning swift, extreme enough to change a cultural or physical landscape almost overnight. But the colonies' gradual acceptance of slavery as a race-based economic solution spanned a generation, all the more chilling because there was no one moment to point to and say, 'That is where it began.'" See Johnson and Smith, *Africans in America*, 42, 43.
78. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 123.
79. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 43.
80. Emphasis mine. Quoted in ibid., 38.
81. During this same period, Virginia passed other statutes designed to debase and stratify people of African descent as a whole, beyond those that were specific to enslavement. For example, between 1643 and 1660 Virginia passed several laws in which all adult male field hands were deemed taxable, as well as "Negro women": "This official discrimination between black women and other women was made by white men who were accustomed to thinking of field work as being ordinarily the work of men exclusively." In 1668, another statute declared that even upon being freed "negro women, though permitted to enjoy their Freedome yet ought not in all respects to be admitted to a full fruition of the exemptions and impunities of the English, and are still lyable to payment of taxes." Statutes disallowing people of African descent from bearing arms, and forbidding marital or sexual relations of "any christian . . . with a negro man or woman" were also implemented in these years. See ibid., 43, 44.
82. Ibid., 45.
83. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 197.
84. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 46.
85. Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America: Roots Current Realities, and Future Reparations* (New York & London: Routledge, 2000), 44.
86. Quoted in Nash, "Red, White, and Black," 6.
87. He writes "self-serving histories of discovery, conquest, and settlement . . . wipe out any reference to the original relations between . . ." See Alfred, "Sovereignty," 461.
88. Donald Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 380.

89. Vine Deloria helpfully captures the reality of Native–English war when he argues that wars between Native peoples and English colonists are best understood as the first foreign wars in the creation of a U.S. empire. His is an apt description that resonates with the preceding colonist testimony. Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins*, 51.

90. See Herbert Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) for some of this history.

91. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 32.

92. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 105.

93. In fact, war with the Powhatans in the 1620s eventually led the English Crown to revoke the Virginia Company's charter. In the process of inquiring into the behavior of the company that was provoking such bloodshed, as well as massive deaths ensuing due to starvation and disease among colonists, the Crown found a scandal in which the Company had raised funds through donations for an "Indian college" that it never built. See Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 47–56.

94. This issue would be one culminating factor in the Revolutionary War; the taxation by England was justified, in part, by the cost of the colonies to the British Crown because the colonies needed military protection from First Peoples. Dowd, "Wag the Imperial Dog," 62. A similar set of issues would be at work in relation to early U.S. leaders and U.S.-American citizens, and between the federal and state governments, as the federal government sought to mitigate costs associated with sending in the military to protect "frontier settlers" from the indigenous populations they had made angry.

95. These self-understandings have remained operative in U.S.-America to the present and have expanded with a vengeance in Bush's post-9/11 sense of having found his presidential calling, and through his war on Iraq.

96. And, Purchas was clear that if the English did not expand solidly into North America, then the Spanish would—and the Indians would "fall victim to Catholicism." Nash, "Red, White, and Black," 3, 4.

97. The Virginia Company, in fact, never transported a single missionary to the colony. While their early charters used the language of "heathen" to describe the encounters the colonists could expect, they did not contain any mention of conversion efforts. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 55.

98. Benjamin Braude writes that the assumption that the three sons of Noah could be linked to three regions of the world was first made by the Jewish scholar Flavius Josephus. However, Josephus was careful to not make a simple linkage between each son and a specific region. Christian commentators followed his lead and over time drew specific connections that would ultimately connect Ham with Africa. Benjamin Braude, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods," in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (January 1997), 111.

99. Ibid., 120. Braude argues that modern scholarship has anachronistically read ancient and medieval uses of the story of Noah's sons as depictions of race, which equate Ham (the cursed son) with Blackness and Africa. He documents multiple instances in which Ham is associated, instead, with Asia; several points at which, even when Ham is associated with Africa, the descendents are

not conceived as "Black"; and sometimes that the curse causes Ham not to be destined to spawn a race of slaves, but to be a cruel domineering race with significant imperial power. See ibid., 103–42.

100. Nash writes, e.g., that the English set up a "self-fulfilling" situation, in which the only possible Native response might be violence, which the English then used to define Native peoples as inherently violence. This tautology justified English violence and expansion. Nash, "Red, White, and Black," 5. Also, see Drinnon, *Facing West*; Jennings, *The Invasion of America*; Stannard, *American Holocaust*.

101. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 230.

102. Jennings notes that previously Smith had used the language of "savage" in a sense parallel to his use of the word to describe the "Turk or Spaniard." In other words, it was never a positive word, but it took on an added virulent dimension here. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 78.

103. Ibid., 80.

104. Emphasis in the original. Samuel Purchas, *Purchas His Pilgrimage* (London, 1613), 545–46, quoted in Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 136.

105. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 137, 138.

106. His manuscript written aboard the ship considers the imperative of carrying the gospel and the notion that while Native peoples might have a *natural* right to the land, they did not have a *civic* one; they had not "subdued," "possessed," or "improved" the land. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 235.

107. Richard Drinnon writes that race has been a "cornerstone of European property-based politics." Drinnon, *Facing West*, xvii.

108. In the Northeast, during approximately the same time period, this kind of rhetoric (namely, "range, rather than inhabit" and "wildness") would turn into the myth "non-habitation." Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 82.

109. Robert A. Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought: The Discourse of Conquest* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 13.

110. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 60.

111. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 208.

112. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, 60.

113. Stannard identifies numerous examples in medieval and renaissance European in which so-called physical features were named as significant, declared immutable, and, thus, used to ascribe a people into a category: making them a "race." One such instance, e.g., was the notion of *limpieza de sangre* in Spain, the ideology about blood that was employed against the Jews in Spain and that rendered Jewishness an immutable, essential characteristic. In the context of this obsession "even the most humble peasant of 'pure' Christian ancestry now could proudly regard himself as superior to the wealthiest *marrano*. It was all just a matter of blood."

Stannard also ties this development to evolving racial and ethnic discriminations during the 1500s through which was born the idea that the peoples "of the Indies" "might be a separate distinct and naturally subordinate race." He notes, e.g., the debates between Las Casas and Sepulveda, which had led to the conclusion that Indians were "divinely created beasts of burden for

their conquerors." All of these ascriptions always had legal, political, economic, and military implications. See Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 207–12.

114. Jennings, *The Invasion of America*, vi.

115. And, though Braude does not give significant attention to the use of the story of Noah in relation to Native peoples, one would expect to find similar patterns here as well. The example of Purchas' changing views from human unity to justifying subjugation, even as he was deeply involved in changing Native–English relations, surely hints at this.

116. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 103–42.

117. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 61. It is safe to locate this obsession in the genealogy of white supremacy, which has fixated on difference and employed particular kinds of categories of aesthetics, rationality, objectivism, and epistemology. See e.g., Cornel West, *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Louisville & London: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982); Marimba Ani, *Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton & Asmara: Africa World Press, Inc., 1994).

118. These obsessions were not only a pastime in Europe but, Drinnon argues, early on the Puritans participated in debates over whether or not Native peoples "had souls" as they struggled with a tension between killing or converting them. Drinnon, *Facing West*, 48, 49.

119. Omi and Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 62.

120. Ibid., 187.

121. Omi and Winant write, "The conquest, therefore, was the first—and given the dramatic nature of the case, perhaps the greatest—racial formation project." Ibid., 62.

122. Drinnon writes, "The planters were colonizers. They were the cutting edge of a colonial empire that was currently subjugating Ireland and moving to apply that experience to North America." Drinnon, *Facing West*, 12.

123. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 225. In later years, attempts to forcibly assimilate Native peoples into white U.S.-American culture would take place. At this point, however, genocide and massacres were the operative assumptions and prevalent activities employed against Native peoples.

124. Ibid., 224.

125. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 136. See also Feagin, *Racist America*, 74.

126. I am in agreement here with Stannard, who writes that "neither skin color distinctions nor pseudoscientific ideas of biological determinism are necessary criteria for the categorization and degradation of people under the rubric of race." Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 278.

127. See Jordan's exhaustive treatment of English attitudes toward blackness in chapter one, "First Impressions: Initial English Confrontation with Africans." Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 3–25.

128. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 41.

129. Ibid., 6.

130. Nash, "Red, White, and Black," 12.

131. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 33.
132. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 130, 131.
133. Ibid., 138.
134. To my mind, Braude's emphasis on the story of Ham as a way to undermine modern scholarship's tendency to charge medieval Europeans with anti-Black bias, which informed notions of slavery, is important. However, this story is only one ideological route taken in the path to the enslavement of African peoples and a religious defense/justification for such. There were other meanings claimed to be attached to differences, as numerous scholars (Stannard among them) have persuasively demonstrated.
135. A partner to this statute, passed the same year, also said that "all persons being Christians (Slaves excepted)" who arrived in the colony without indenture status had to serve four years. Jordan argues that such a statute could not make sense unless "slave" meant African and, perhaps, Native. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 42.
136. Feagin, *Racist America*, 40.
137. Braude, "The Sons of Noah," 103–142.
138. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 14.
139. Ibid., 14.
140. David R. Roediger, *Colored White: Transcending the Racial Past* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 2002), 122.
141. Emphasis in the original. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 52.
142. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 188.
143. See Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York & London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 250–70.
144. See Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 205–10.
145. This is not to downplay the anti-Native violence of Bacon's Rebellion. Indeed, the fact that it took this form is indicative of how much the notion of "right to land" permeated English assumptions. Throughout the 1800s attempts by disenfranchised whites to remedy the economic disempowerment would come regularly through right-to-settle movements—thus anti-Native hostility. Similar dynamics are present in the intensity with which popular sentiment in the North insisted that new states be non-slavery states in the mid-1800s: working-class whites were not usually abolitionists for morality's sake and political rhetoric around these national struggles are filled with overtly racist and white supremacist sentiment. Working-class whites did not want to compete with enslaved labor and saw slavery as a luxury of upper-class whites. For an excellent historical analysis of these complex interests and politics in the antebellum period, see Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (London, Oxford, & New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).
146. Quoted in Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 214.
147. See ibid., 210–20.
148. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 328.
149. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Vol. 2*, 249.

150. Ibid., 250.

151. Morgan notes that in 1679, Virginia made a formal and public decision to enslave Native peoples—specifically reenacting a license they had already given Bacon in June 1676 to enslave any Native person captured in "war." Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 328, 329.

152. Ibid., 329.

153. See later, where I highlight Priscilla Wald's argument that whiteness became the means to forge a *people* in the Revolutionary period. Priscilla Wald, "Terms of Assimilation: Legislating Subjectivity in the Emerging Nation," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1993), 59–84.

154. See Ian Haney López, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996) for an excellent analysis of how the law constructed whiteness over and over again.

155. Jordan writes, "Indians and Africans rapidly came to serve as two fixed points from which English settlers could triangulate their own position in America; the separate meanings of *Indian* and *Negro* helped define the meaning of living in America." Emphasis in the original. Jordan, *The White Man's Burden*, 49.

156. Andrea Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 176.

157. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 11.

158. Drinnon, *Facing West*, 98 Between them, the men who drafted the Declaration of Independence owned more than two hundred slaves. Johnson and Smith, *Africans in America*, 169.

159. Feagin, *Racist America*, 15.

160. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 6.

161. I credit this portion of my analysis to the anonymous reviewer of the pre-publication manuscript who helpfully suggested I consider more fully the sociological relationship between freedom and enslavement in order to strengthen my claim that white racial identity is intrinsically dependent upon racial domination.

162. Priscilla Wald, "Terms of Assimilation: Legislating Subjectivity in the Emerging Nation," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1993), 60.

163. George M. Frederickson, *Racism; A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 75. For example, it is significant that European enslavement of Europeans was coming to an end at approximately the same period in which enslavement of African peoples was becoming more possible. This historical phenomenon lies at the root of white supremacy. Ibid., 29, 30.

164. He writes that in a system such as the caste system in India the cultural premise that inequality indeed exists ontologically and legitimately provides no incentive to utterly deny that those who are subjugated are fully human. George M. Frederickson, *Racism; A Short History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 11.

165. Ibid., 64.
166. Frederickson writes, "the age of democratic revolution that dawned in the last quarter of the eighteenth century brought serious challenges both to the institution of black slavery and to the legalized pariah status of European Jews. The doctrine that 'all men are created equal' and endowed with individual rights derived through nature or reason was difficult to reconcile with lifetime servitude and forced ghettoization, unless blacks and Jews were to be considered less than human." Ibid., 64.
167. Orlando Patterson, *Freedom in the Making of Western Culture, Vol 1* (New York: Basic Books, 1991), xiii.
168. R. David Edmunds, "Native Americans and the United States, Canada, and Mexico," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 397, 398.
169. Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," 381.
170. See Edmunds, "Native Americans," 397–400. More of this history will be explored in chapter three.
171. About one hundred thousand enslaved men and women escaped at the end of the Revolution, about twenty thousand of whom left with the British military at the close of the war. Johnson and Smith, *Africans in America*, 197.
172. Feagin, *Racist America*, 45.
173. Ibid., 53–55.
174. Robert L. Hall, "The Meaning of Slavery in the North: An Introduction," in *The Meaning of Slavery in the North*, ed. David Roediger and Martin H. Blatt (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), xvii.
175. Ronald Bailey, " 'Those Valuable People, the Africans': The Economic Impact of the Slave(ry) Trade on Textile Industrialization in New England," in *The Meaning of Slavery in the North*, 20, 21.
176. Ibid., 13, 18.
177. Beginning in approximately 1810. Ibid., 3.
178. Edmunds, "Native Americans," 398.
179. Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," 381.
180. Drinnon, *Facing West*, 172, 173.
181. Quoted in ibid., 99.
182. For an excellent analysis of the legal discourse and how it functioned in order to justify and support conquest and imperialism, see Williams, Jr., *The American Indian in Western Legal Thought*.
183. James Baldwin, "On Being White . . . and Other Lies," in *Cultural and Literary Critiques of the Concepts of "Race,"* ed. E. Nathaniel Gates (New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1997), 2–5.

3   Becoming Uniquely White "American"

1. The Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863.
2. Reparations may not be the best word to use to describe each of these realities—an issue that will be explored directly in chapter four—thus, my use of "reparative activity" in this description. In addition, unlike legalized slavery, which has a more clearly marked ending point, U.S.–Native relations

and the sovereignty violations implicit in the history of these relations cannot be demarcated, which complicates this notion in important ways.

3. Quoted in Eric Lott, *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 11.

4. Ibid., 17.

5. In speaking about "blackness" and "indianness," I am talking about images and identities mediated through and constructed by a dominant white racial group. I want to exercise caution here from a number of directions. First, I want to be clear that these images and identities are *white* images and identities—white productions. Thus, I am careful not to capitalize either blackness or indianness in this discussion. At the same time, I do not want to underemphasize or render invisible the reality that Native peoples and people of African descent not only suffer(ed) and experience(d) real effects of violence and domination by way of these white productions, but in many cases the cultural productions were made possible by, or were grossly distorted appropriations of, the cultures of Native American and African American peoples. It is, therefore, tricky terrain on which I tread, terrain on which there exists real human lives, histories, and cultures that need to be treated with care.

6. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 6.

7. Ibid., viii.

8. Ibid.

9. The Society of Indian Dead could be found at Grateful Dead concerts, where they marked their opposition to U.S. drug policy, e.g., by posing as indian resisters who would rather "starve than submit." See Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1998), 181, 182.

10. Such productions are not far removed—merely registered in a different key—than the obsessions with blackness that Winthrop Jordan documents in relation to the English, or the rhetorical fixations upon "savagery" found among colonial America. See Winthrop Jordan, *The White Man's Burden: Historical Origins of Racism in the United States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974).

11. Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, 8.

12. In the process, such productions are full of meaning. The use of black images and people signify something that the author need not explain—what Morrison describes as "shorthand, the taken-for-granted assumptions that lie in their usage." Ibid., x.

13. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 183.

14. Many analyses that engage similar concerns do slip into psychoanalysis. For example, Freud emerges regularly in the most unexpected places as scholars consider, e.g., why whites were so obsessed with Native peoples. The explanation becomes that European colonists were repressed and Native peoples represented a kind of freedom. See, e.g., Richard Drinnon, *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980). In relation to blackface, even a scholar as inclined to constructionism as a critical political intervention as David R. Roediger makes claims that the industrial workers of the mid-1800s were grieving the

loss of their former lives as part of the industrial machine, and blackface became a way to vicariously remember those lives and reconnect themselves—by their grotesque portrayal of revelry—to reject those parts of themselves. See David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class, rev. ed.* (New York: Verso, 1991). While I am not inclined to reject such argumentation out of hand, I am wary of such speculations, and deeply suspicious about the line of questioning that they assume. For example, implicit to a claim such as Drinnon's is that Native peoples did represent such freedom. And, while it may be true that colonists recognized a way of life among Native peoples that they envied in comparison to that which they lived (thus the high rates of runaways noted in chapter two), I still want to exercise more caution than liberty to pursue such considerations. I remain focused on the effects and implications of human behaviors and activities, rather than inquiry into internal motivations that might have caused such activities.

15. The notion of identity as an organizing principle and the observation that the implications of it inform human behavior is an idea that was shared with me by Michelle C. Billies. It represents a field theoretical analysis that is part of her interpretation of Gestalt Therapy theory.

16. Footnote 45, Lott, *Love and Theft*, 255.

17. Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), 457.

18. In this lynching, a white man who had been caught "stealing slaves" by luring them to him with the promise of freedom and then selling them back to their so-called owners instigated hysteria among whites who feared there was a slave revolt in the works. (The hysteria was later called a "most extraordinary and lamentable hallucination.") Dozens of peoples of African descent were hanged on the spot as a result. This event, argues Dray, emerged in the context of the advocacy of vigilance committees by Charles Lynch, a justice of the peace in Virginia who advocated "instant" justice. See ibid., 22–24.

19. Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horrors. Lynch Law in All Its Phases* (1892; reprint *On Lynchings*, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 13.

20. As early as 1892, Ida B. Wells was clear that the whites in the North were key players in lynching and developed a strategy for addressing this complicity. Describing Wells' activities following the lynching of three men in Memphis, Tennessee, on March 9, 1982 (one of whom was a good friend of Wells), Emilie M. Townes writes, "Wells was aware that her message was not reaching the white newspapers. This was anathema for her. She believed that ruling class whites were the key to social change . . . . Wells' appeals focused on the powerful groups outside of the South, which she believed had moral and economic authority, but who were not listening. Her dilemma was how to reach those key leaders. Non-southern whites, both in this country and in England, were the key Wells saw to halt lynching." Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 142.

21. See Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1995).

22. Michael Newton and Judy Ann Newton, *Racial and Religious Violence in America: A Chronology* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991), 391–92.

23. Emphasis mine. Michael Rogin, "Black Masks, White Skin: Consciousness of Class and American National Culture," *Radical History Review* 54 (fall 1992): 142.

24. Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (Washington, D.C.: Civitas Counterpoint, 1998), 191.

25. Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*, 19, 20.

26. This is not to say the racial aspect of such violence was new, merely that it increased exponentially. Dray quotes Abraham Lincoln expressing concern in 1837 about the "mobocratic spirit" in the United States, and details the increase of racial violence in the antebellum years in the South and North. See ibid., 25–30.

27. Ibid., 32.

28. In 1871, e.g., the federal government responded to the establishment of the Ku Klux Klan by declaring the KKK a rebellion against the federal government. See ibid., 39–47.

29. Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record* (1894; reprint *On Lynchings*, New York: Arno Press, 1969), 8.

30. Richard M. Perloff, "The Press and Lynchings of African Americans," *Journal of Black Studies* 30 (January 2000): 315. The population of the United States, in 1900, was approximately seventy-six million. In 1910, it was approximately ninety-two million. See online: www.bradley.edu.

31. Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 133.

32. Legal lynchings were also targeted by antilynching activists beginning in the late 1800s. See ibid. and Dray, *At the Hands of Persons*.

33. The CIC was formed in 1919 by Will W. Alexander and Willis D. Weatherford, both politically moderate churchmen. Not unlike the Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching (ASWPL), the CIC was an antilynching group that took a more moderate approach to lynching than did many of the African American activists and organizers. It also emphasized, in its rhetoric and strategies, its southern roots. For example, the CIC chose to emphasize to monied interests in the South that lynching was "bad for business." The CIC never supported the Dyer bill (first proposed in 1911 and ultimately filibustered to death in 1922), an NAACP-backed effort to enact federal antilynching legislation. The bill would have provided a legal definition of lynching (a murder of a U.S. citizen by three or more people) and held a sheriff or state officer responsible if he failed to demonstrate that he had made every reasonable effort to prevent a prisoner from being lynched. In its early days, the CIC segregated its members, and no African American person ever worked in its headquarters. Dray writes, "some Southern black leaders never entirely got over their suspicion that the CIC was at heart a white man's program to orchestrate mild appeasements to blacks in order to keep cheap labor from leaving the South." The ASWPL was formed in 1930, and it too resisted federal antilynching legislation (failing to support the Wagner–Costigan Bill, a second

federal antilynching measure pursued in the 1930s), refusing "to accept . . . the need for outside intervention." (By this time, the CIC had changed its stance on the need for federal intervention and did back the Wagner–Costigan Bill.) Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*, 258–70, 282, 355. Such organizations were late on the scene and functioned from a radically different moral and political perspective than activists such as Wells. By the time CIC and ASWPL emerged, Wells had been risking her life for decades by publishing reports and details of lynching, attempting to generate northern and British outrage against lynching, and refusing to mitigate her language and rhetoric about the truth of interracial sex and the myths of the virginal southern white woman and the black male rapist. See Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, chapter six. Incidentally, in 1937, yet a third attempt to enact a federal antilynching bill was stymied by the U.S. Congress.

34. Arthur F. Raper, *Mass Violence in America: The Tragedy of Lynching* (1933; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1968), 48.

35. See Richard Wright, *Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

36. Stewart E. Tolnay, Glenn Deane, and E. M. Beck, "Vicarious Violence: Spatial Effects on Southern Lynchings, 1890–1919," *American Journal of Sociology* 102 (November 1996): 790.

37. Townes cites records from *The Chicago Tribune*, Tuskegee Institute, *The Crisis*, and the NAACP that document fifty African American women as having been murdered by lynching between 1889 and 1918, in comparison to eleven white women. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, 137, 138. Orlando Patterson cites statistics of seventy-four African American women and five white women being lynched between 1882 and 1930. Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, 179.

38. Tolnay, Deane, and Beck, "Vicarious Violence," 812.

39. The following descriptions are examples of these horrors: "James Irwin . . . was jabbed in his mouth with a sharp pole. His toes were cut off joint by joint. His fingers were similarly removed, and his teeth extracted with wire pliers. After further unmentionable mutilations, the Negro's still living body was saturated with gasoline and a lighted match was applied. As the flames leaped up, hundreds of shots were fired into the dying victim. During the day, thousands of people from miles around rode out to see the sight." Raper, *Mass Violence in America*, 7. "The negro's heart was cut into several pieces, as was also his liver. Those unable to obtain the ghastly relics paid their more fortunate possessors extravagant sums for them. Small pieces of bones went for 25 cents, and a bit of the liver crisply cooked sold for 10 cents. As soon as the negro was seen to be dead there was a tremendous struggle among the crowd, which had witnessed his tragic end, to secure the souvenirs. (Ginzburg, 1962, p. 12)." Perloff, "The Press and Lynchings of African Americans," 319.

40. Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, 172, 208.

41. Patterson writes that a significant minority of lynchings fit this description; approximately 34 percent in Georgia and 40 percent in Virginia. Ibid., 179.

42. Ibid., 173, 194, 196.

43. Patterson engages the anthropological work of Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss whose work identifies the highly ritualized nature of the act of sacrifice (including a well-documented quiet at the moment of death), the performance of the sacrifice at a sacred place or place consecrated before hand, the victim usually being consumed by flames, and special trees often used as the site of sacrifice. He also considers one specific comparative example taken from the pre-Columbian Tupinambe in Brazil. Numerous characteristics attending the practice of human sacrifice among this hunger-gathering people are present in lynchings in the U.S. South. Ibid., 182–88.

44. Perloff, "The Press and Lynchings of African Americans," 319.

45. The ASWPL was formed by Jessie Daniel Ames, who had been a director of the CIC Women's Division, and who grew tired of what she perceived as CIC's overly studious approach to the antilynching struggle. Ames aimed specifically to undermine the way that protection of white women was brought in at every level of debates and discussions about lynching. See Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*, 328–30, 344–50.

46. Consider Frederick Douglass' words from 1892: " [T]he sin against the Negro is both sectional and national, and until the North is heard in emphatic condemnation, it will remain equally involved with the South in this common crime." Quoted in ibid., 67.

47. Ibid., 51.

48. Quoted in Ibid., 73.

49. Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry*, 150.

50. Raper, *Mass Violence in America*, 36.

51. Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*, 7.

52. In part, this point is significant because of how volatile rhetoric about of interracial sex, rape, and the sanctity of women made the (white) public debate over lynching. The southern invoked need to "protect white women" was made the crux of the matter to such an extent that northerners and the federal government were particularly unwilling to step in lest they be charged with supporting the defilement of white southern women. The intense intersection of race and gender—as the cult of true womanhood functioned to render invisible and suppress African American women—should be noted. See Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, chapter four.

53. Hall is not the only one to write of lynching in this way. As Dray writes, "Turn-of-the-century news accounts . . . made for welcome, titillating reading. Stories of sexual assault, insatiable black rapists, tender white virgins, and manhunts led by 'determined men' that culminated in lynchings were the bodice rippers of their day . . ." Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*, 4.

54. Some argue, e.g., that "lynching increased when the economic conditions worsened," while others claims that no study has confirmed "consistent or convincing explanation of lynching," including the effects of economic downturn. See, respectively, Sarah A. Soule, "Populism and Black Lynching in Georgia, 1890–1900," *Social Forces* 71 (December 1992): 435; and James W. Clarke, "Without Fear or Shame: Lynching, Capital Punishment and the Subculture of Violence in the American South," *British Journal of Political Science* 28 (April 1998): 272.

55. Any explanation other than one that documented an *essential* white depravity, brutality, and viciousness is too likely to carry seeds of justification within it.
56. Tolnay, Deane, and Beck, "Vicarious Violence," 789, 790.
57. Ibid., 793.
58. Dray chooses this title for his text, because it was the official language used over and over when an investigation into a lynching was closed with none of the perpetrators brought to justice. Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown.*
59. The sad irony of this truth was made clear in the near lynching of Booker T. Washington himself. Despite his having been, in many ways, embraced by white advocates of social separation and accomodationist strategies for equality, Washington was severely beaten and nearly lynched in New York City in 1911. Police intervention was all that stopped what would assuredly have been his murder. See ibid., 188.
60. Raper, *Mass Violence in America*, 8.
61. Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry*, 147.
62. Emphasis mine. Ibid., 137.
63. Wells, *Southern Horrors*, 15.
64. "They may have been called by various names, 'cracker,' 'rednecks,' 'hillbillies,' 'po' white trash,' and 'po' buckra,' but at least they were whites." James R. McGovern, *Anatomy of a Lynching: The Killing of Claude Neal* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 4.
65. Clarke, "Without Fear or Shame," 277.
66. Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry*, 139.
67. Emphasis mine. Raper, *Mass Violence in America*, 47.
68. Patterson cites an editorial from a northern newspaper writing of it as follows: "What horrified the editorialist almost as much as the sadism of the mob was the fact that these monstrosities were taking place in what was the most fervently Christian part of the United States." Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, 188.
69. Ibid., 184–85. Patterson also notes how, in a variety of cultural contexts, slaves have often been those specifically targeted for sacrifice.
70. Ibid., 185.
71. James Sellers, *The South and Christian Ethics* (New York: Association Press, 1962), 118–19, quoted in ibid., 207.
72. Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, 212–15.
73. Ibid., 215.
74. Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southernerns in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 197–98, quoted in ibid., 214.
75. Patterson, *Rituals of Blood*, 215.
76. The first documented use of the burning cross was in a lynching on October 16, 1915, on top of Stone Mountain in Georgia. See ibid., 217.
77. This bifocal narrative has both made Christianity resilient, but has also created a tension within the religion that creates real problems and allows it to be put to horrific use. See ibid., 220–23.
78. Ibid., 220.
79. Patterson's powerful analysis is more complex than the dimensions I have presented here. However, I note that he documents not merely the dominance of the triumph narrative (which he associates with the religion of Paul, as

opposed to that of Jesus), but its co-mingling with the aversion narrative that enabled even more liberal whites to tolerate the ritual of lynching. Both narratives were in fact present in lynching: "The brutally sacrificed Negro was the ultimate Christ-figure of the narrative of aversion—Christ the scapegoat— spat upon, mocked, spiked, tortured, and accursed. In expelling 'the Negro,' all that was most evil and sinful and black and iniquitous and transgressing would be sent away: for 'the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited' (Leviticus 16:21)." Ibid., 222.

80. Wells made this claim in the late 1800s. See Wells, *Southern Horrors*, 24. Raper quotes from a 1931 pamphlet entitled "Burnt Cork and Crime" "numerous cases are on record of white criminals who have blackened their faces to disguise themselves." Raper, *Mass Violence in America*, 37.

81. Roediger (like Lott and Rogin) writes in terms that have strongly influenced my assessment of the simultaneous violence/domination and obsession/desire that whites evidenced in regard to African Americans and blackness. Of blackface and blackface-on-Black violence, he continues, "Any rounded analysis of the minstrel mask would have to admit and even emphasize considerable ambiguity . . . identification with, and repulsion from, the blackfaced character . . . . Watching comedians in blackface did not imply solidarity with Black Americans. And blackface-on-Black violence suggests that just the opposite logic—one of hatred toward the object of desire—could prevail." Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 124.

82. Ibid., 105.

83. Lott, *Love and Theft*, 29.

84. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 105, 106.

85. Edwin Forrest, in 1820, was the first actor on the U.S.-American stage to perform in blackface. He impersonated a plantation slave. Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 28.

86. Ibid., 29.

87. Ibid., 28, 29.

88. Lott, *Love and Theft*, 43.

89. Ibid.

90. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 104.

91. Robert C. Toll examines the participation of African American performers in minstrelsy, including their formation of Black minstrel troupes in the mid-1850s (which were quite popular) and their struggles to sustain ownership over their companies when, in the early 1870s, white men began to take over ownership of Black minstrel companies. For example, in protest against Charles Callender, a white man who became one of the most prominent businessmen in Black minstrelsy, three minstrel stars—Billy Kersands, Bob Height, and Horace Weston—left their company and formed a rival one. They stated: "We are all men under no obligation to anyone, and looking for our best interest in the elevation and maintenance of ourselves and our families. We are not blind or insensible to our worth, and honorably proceeded to negotiate for better positions which we have accomplished from our present manager, Mr. Charles White." While the participation in minstrelsy saw

African American performers contending with white caricatures and stereotypes, Toll notes the extent to which Black minstrels modified their performances in various kinds of protest of white supremacy. In their portrayals of plantation life, e.g., Black minstrels rarely included mention of white masters or mistresses. They focused attention on and portrayed relatives and memories of family. In addition, they expressed antislavery sentiments: "these black protests were only undercurrents in a broader stream of nostalgic plantation material. Some of them were 'snuck' into nonprotest songs. In an otherwise innocuous song about romance on the plantation, for example, Pete Devonear complained that there were 'two overseers to one little nigger.' Similarly, several of the religious songs looked forward to heaven as the place 'where there is no overseer,' where blacks would be free men, and from which some whites would be excluded." Toll notes that such covert jibes were common in Black folk culture, so African American members of the audience would have been able to recognize and enjoy them, while whites would have been clueless and missed them altogether. See Robert C. Toll, *Blacking up: The Minstrel Show in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 203, 245–47.

92. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 124.
93. Ibid.
94. Ibid., 31.
95. Lott, *Love and Theft*, 71.
96. W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction: An Essay Toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860–1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 700, 701.
97. Rogin, "Black Masks, White Skin," 142.
98. Lott continues, "We are justified in seeing early blackface performance as one of the very first constitutive discourses on the body in American culture." Lott, *Love and Theft*, 17.
99. Ibid., 97.
100. LeRoi Jones, *Blues People: Negro Music in White America* (New York: Quill, 1963), 84.
101. Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown*, 18.
102. See Lott, *Love and Theft*.
103. Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise*, 95.
104. Sometime poor white figures were represented as well.
105. Ibid., 28.
106. Rogin explains that "Indian burlesque was a vaudeville standard," and cites, e.g., Fanny Brice singing "I'm an Indian." He also analyzes *Whoopee!*, a 1930 film that used a captivity spoof, to place Jews among the Indians. See ibid., 150–55.
107. Ibid., 28.
108. Indeed, regularly there were differences in the images of Native peoples portrayed by western white settlers versus those of their eastern white counterparts. One difference played out, e.g., in debates over "extermination"

and "assimilation" in which eastern intellectuals tended to speak in very different terms than white people actually "settling" in the west.

109. Similarly, this need accounts for the different kinds of performances of indianness and blackness. Rogin argues that white people obsessed on both blackness and indianness, but accounts for blackface in terms of the presence of African American peoples "within the U.S. border" (Madison), whereas, Native peoples were being pushed to the boundaries of an expanding U.S. empire, and massacred in the process. This "restricted 'the red [race to] our border,' . . . limiting redface largely to metaphor." Ibid., 26.

110. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 104.

111. Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 3.

112. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 20.

113. On an evening in 1734 in New Hampshire, white colonial Americans with painted faces and wearing blankets and feathers on their heads terrified and beat with clubs men, staying at an inn, who had been sent to enforce a local ordinance. Then they stayed outside for hours "screaming curses, epithets, and threats." The men in "redface" were protesting the New Hampshire governor's enforcement of "the Mast Tree law" in which trees suitable for masts in the Royal Navy were forbidden from being logged by the settlers. Ibid., 11.

114. Ibid., 12–14.

115. Ibid., 14.

116. Ibid., 13.

117. Drinnon, however, like many who study the phenomena of white obsessions with indianness, offers an unsatisfing analysis of this phenomena by turning to Freud. See Drinnon, *Facing West*, 9–11.

118. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 13.

119. Deloria makes much of the fact that these men were elites in their own context—not working-class white colonial Americans.

120. Ibid., 12.

121. In the Whiskey Rebellion that took place in the 1790s, a similar playing indian took place—demands during the Rebellion were made in form of an "Indian treaty" written by the "Six United Nations of White Indians." Ibid., 42.

122. Priscilla Wald, "Terms of Assimilation: Legislating Subjectivity in the Emerging Nation," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, ed. Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1993), 60.

123. The "other than English" is not the same as the derogatory "other" I have been describing. Making themselves other than English, in this case, refers the colonists' attempt to differentiate themselves from the English.

124. Emphasis mine. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 22.

125. "In New York, Mohawks wrote strident editorial letters to the newspapers and everywhere plastered handbills warning against the purchase or drinking of tea." Ibid., 12.

126. Ibid., 57.

127. Interestingly enough, during the period in which white colonial Americans were "playing Indian" as a way to make themselves distinct from Britain—and thus using a celebratory notion of indianness—in Britain from 1765 to 1784, the British were railing publicly against their "unruly colonists" through portraying them as indians. "British cartoonists used Indians to symbolize the colonies as alien and uncivilized and therefore needful of (and deserving) the rule of empire." Ibid., 29.

128. Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man's Indian*, 93.

129. Noting that Cooper was criticized by some for his "romantic" portrayal of Native peoples, Berkhofer writes, "No one criticized his image of the frontier White, however, for all subscribed to the same larger pageant of White progress into the interior of the continent." Ibid., 94. Bergland writes of Cooper that he "draws his readers into the fantastic world of American manliness, projecting Native American men and white women side by side as powerless objects of European American male desire." Renée L. Bergland, *The National Uncanny: Indian Ghosts and American Subjects* (Hanover & London: University Press of New England, 2000), 64; also see 63–107; and Drinnon, *Facing West*.

130. Ward Churchill calls these novels a kind of propaganda, used to condition the public. He places them in the same vein as the kind of propaganda used by the Nazis to condition the non-Jewish Germans to hatred of the Jews. See Ward Churchill, *Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1994), 75, 76.

131. At the same time these white images of indians functioned to justify U.S. expansionism, they were intertwined with the need to identify this new people as unique and distinct from Europe. Washington Irving, e.g., made an explicit call to (white) U.S.-Americans "to take advantage of Native American sources and themes to differentiate Anglo-American writing from the English." Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 57.

132. Richard Slotkin claims the show was "one of the largest, most popular, and successful businesses in the field of commercial entertainment," from 1883 to 1916. It toured all of North America and Europe. Richard Slotkin, "Buffalo Bill's 'Wild West' and the Mythologization of American Empire," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, 169. This title resonates, of course, with claims made about blackface.

133. Slotkin draws a strong historical link between such rhetoric as used in this context with the concurrent expansion of U.S. imperialism into the Philippines and elsewhere. Ibid., 171.

134. One of the accounts of Cody's military service included a horrific story of his involvement with a small party of Cheyenne, during which he killed a man named Yellow Hand. Recalls Slotkin, "then, as the troopers swept toward him, [he] walked to the corpse, scalped it, and waved his trophy in the air." This event became central to the "Buffalo Bill" legend and Cody's national celebrity: "Before the year was over he would be hailed in the national press as the man who took 'The First Scalp for Custer.' " Ibid., 167, 168. It is worth noting here, as well, that the show was most popular during the years that the numbers of lynching were at an apex.

135. Ibid., 171.
136. Philip Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil: Manifest Destiny and the Indian in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Great Fear: Race in the Mind of America*, ed. Gary B. Nash and Richard Weiss (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970), 89.
137. "American literature, critics from D. H. Lawrence to Richard Slotkin have argued, established its national identity in the struggle between Indians and whites." Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise*, 15.
138. Ibid., 25.
139. Dion Dennis, "Washington's Birthday on the Texas Border," *Theory, Technology and Culture* 20, no. 1–2 (1997): www.collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/201/300/ctheorty/eveents/1997/9702n36.txt.
140. The IORM is a political and fraternal group associated with Masonic-like activities and a traffic in indianness similar to those described at the beginning of this section, namely as a vehicle for expressions of U.S.-American patriotism. They write of themselves, "During the Revolutionary War, members of secret societies quenched their council fire *[sic]* and took up muskets to join with the Continental Army." The group has an women's auxiliary group called the Degree of Pocahontas. See www.redmen.org.
141. Greg Olson, "Noble Savage in the Courthouse Square: Patronage and Legacy in Sherry Edmundson Fry's Mahaska," www.iowa-counties.com/etcetera/mahaska.htm.
142. See www.redmen.org.
143. Ibid.
144. This annual celebration takes place, with varied rituals, to this day.
145. Dennis, "Washington's Birthday on the Texas Border."
146. Ibid.
147. Such a performance would not have taken place in the mid-1800s when U.S. control over the "frontier" was very unstable.
148. Emphasis mine. Their list of beliefs include the following: "Love and Respect of the American Flag; Preserving our Nation by defending and upholding the principle of free Government, America and the democratic way of life; Preserving the traditions and history of this great Country; Creating and inspiring a greater love for the United States of America; Helping our fellow men through organized charitable programs; Linking our members together in a common bond of Brotherhood and Friendship; Perpetuating the beautiful legends and traditions of a vanishing race and the keeping alive of its customs, ceremonies, and philosophies." See www.redmen.org.
149. The organization claims that their members have included not only "founding fathers" such as Presidents Washington, Jefferson, and Hancock, but recent presidents including Richard M. Nixon, Theodore Roosevelt, Warren G. Harding, and Franklin D. Roosevelt. See ibid.
150. The following lines are excerpts from the poem: "The posture, that we give the dead, / Points out the soul's eternal sleep. / Not so the ancients of these lands— / The Indian, when from life releas'd, / Again is seated with his friends, / And shares again the joyous feast. / . . . / And long shall timorous

fancy see / The painted chief, and pointed spear, / And reason's self shall bow the knee / To shadows and delusions here." Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 41.

151. Bergland employs the terminology "European Americans" in her text.

152. Ibid., 1.

153. Bergland contextualizes the publication of Stephen King's *Pet Sematary* during the 1980s amid the struggle in Maine by the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy peoples to have land claims validated in a 1794 treaty. The struggle resulted in an appropriations bill for 81.5 million dollars to enable the Penobscot and Passamaquoddy to purchase three hundred thiusand acres of land in Maine. In King's novel, a young family, which resides near a Native American cemetery, buys property in Maine leading to the death of the wife and the son and the residence of the father with their reanimated but decaying bodies. Ibid., 164–67.

154. Ibid., 67.

155. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 65.

156. Olson continues, "They tended to idealize American Indians as being stoically graceful, picturesque in dress and folkways, and in peaceful co-existence with the earth." Olson, "Noble Savage in the Courthouse Square."

157. The sculpture is of Mahaska. A local paper observed: "The Statue will stand for more than the inscription show[n]. There will be wrapped up in it all the romance and tragedy of the almost extinct red man, the story of pioneer days and pioneer men, the struggles and achievements of an artist and the filial devotion of a son." Ibid.

158. The event was attended by twelve thousand people despite pouring rain and was held on "Red Men's annual Flower Day festival." Ibid.

159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.

161. It is not uncommon to attend non-traditional white Christian worship services and to experience presumedly Native rituals or drumming as part of the expression of reaching beyond traditional Christian forms of worship. It is also not unfamiliar to experience white congregations singing traditionally African American hymns—with no historical context provided—or in more non-traditional worship, "African" drumming. Laura Donaldson writes, "Indeed, NANA [New Age Native Americanism] has emerged as a powerful catalyst for feminist transformation as non-Native women increasingly employ Indian traditions to escape the patriarchal biases of monotheistic religions and to become empowered, as well as individuated. In many towns and cities across the United States, drumming circles, shield-making work-shops, and 'touch-the-earth' ceremonies are common occurrences . . ." Laura E. Donaldson, "On Medicine Women and White Shame-ans: New Age Americanism and Commodity Fetishism as Pop Culture Feminism," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 3 (1999): 678.

162. Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil," 92–94.

163. Linda Barrington, "Editor's Introduction: Native Americans and U.S. Economic History," in *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations Into Native American History*, ed. Linda Barrington (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 13.

164. Quoted in ibid., 14.

165. John Mohawk (Seneca), "The Power of Seneca Women and the Legacy of Handsome Lake," in *Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance*, ed. Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker, and David E. Wilkins (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2003), 22.

166. John Mohawk notes that the efforts were "inconsistent and politically contested." They included, e.g., the Non-Intercourse Act of 1790 and the Canandaigua Treaty of 1794. See ibid., 22, 23.

167. Ibid., footnote 10, 33.

168. War inevitably led to removal as nations who were defeated were given "removal treaties." See Donald Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden & Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 382.

169. Such ideologies were early manifestations of Manifest Destiny, which would be formalized in the 1840s. See Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1981).

170. Emphasis mine. This language sounds frighteningly similar to the rhetoric used by the U.S. government to justify the most recent war against Iraq. Ibid., 103.

171. Borden emphasizes that even before the formal action of removal, large numbers of treaties and significant pressures were created to push Native nations to cede their land. Thus, by the time Jackson implemented removal, few Native peoples resided east of the Mississippi relative to the preceding decades. Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil," 80–83.

172. The cycle pursued through the 1800s rotated between removal, concentration, assimilation. Barrington, "Editor's Introduction," 12.

173. A note on this citation: I find the title of and the inquiry pursued in this article disturbing. Inquiring into whether the "rationale" given for removal of the Cherokee people was "true" or not—namely, Jackson argued to Congress that the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Creek could not survive in the area because they were not acculturating to white agricultural methods— seems to me akin to exploring the "causes" of lynching. I find the title of the essay, moreover, disturbingly inattentive to the resonances and power of language. David M. Wishart, "Could the Cherokee Have Survived in the Southeast?" in *The Other Side of the Frontier: Economic Explorations Into Native American History*, ed. Linda Barrington (Boulder: Westview Press, 1999), 168.

174. Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," 382; and Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil," 83. By 1834, writes Vine Deloria, Jr., almost all the eastern nations had been moved west of the Mississippi. Among those removed were also nations that had been allied with the United States during the War of 1812. Deloria writes: "Within a generation these same tribes [the Wyandots, Delawares, Shawanese, Senecas, and Miamies] that fought and died for the United States against Great Britain were to be marched to the dusty plains of Oklahoma, dropped in an alien and disease-ridden land, and left to disappear. Hardly had the war been concluded when the first of a

series of removal treaties began to force the tribes west across the Mississippi, first to Missouri and Arkansas, then on to Oklahoma." Vine Deloria Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 41, 42.

175. Barrington, "Editor's Introduction," 17; and Churchill, *Indians Are Us?* 36.

176. Barrington, "Editor's Introduction," 20.

177. Their lands included the regions that came to be known as Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia. Wishart, "Could the Cherokee Have Survived in the Southeast?" 168.

178. M. Annette Jaimes, assisted by Theresa Halsey, "American Indian Women: At the Center of Indigenous Resistance in Contemporary North America," in *State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 339.

179. Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil," 85.

180. Wishart notes that these should not be seen as Cherokee assimilation to white U.S.-American political forms, but rather as the Cherokee building institutions that would enable them to function independently of the U.S. government. Wishart, "Could the Cherokee Have Survived in the Southeast?" 168. In 1828, gold was discovered on Cherokee lands. Within a month, the Georgia legislature had passed legislation that prohibited "the meeting of the Cherokee governmental body, Cherokee mining on their own lands, all contracts between whites and Cherokee, and Cherokee testimony against any white in court." Barrington, "Editor's Introduction," 17.

181. This hearkens directly back to the ideology of nonpossession and non-habitation given attention in chapter two. Quoted in Wishart, "Could the Cherokee Have Survived in the Southeast?" 170.

182. Ibid.

183. Again, this is not to suggest that U.S. recognition of sovereignty was sincere previously. Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," 381.

184. Vine Deloria, Jr. explains that in the first case, *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831) the Court recognized itself to be in a difficult position. If it ruled that Georgia did not have jurisdiction within the borders of the Cherokee nation, then it opened itself up to numerous other suits by other nations. At the same time, it needed to keep relations with Native nations within federal jurisdiction. "Marshall therefore described the status of Indians and the United States as resembling that of a ward and guardian of a relationship, referring perhaps to the handicap he had already imposed upon Indians in reference to the passage of valid land titles [in 1823, *Johnson v. McIntosh*, a struggle among whites over who had rights to the land 'transferred' to them by Native peoples]." The second case, *Worcester v. Georgia*, 1832, negotiated a question over state and federal law in Native territory, by elaborating on the idea that "a rigid 'trust' relationship exists between the United States and American Indian nations." Vine Deloria Jr., "Trouble in High Places: Erosion of American Indian Rights to Religious Freedom in the United States," in *State of Native America*, 272, 273.

185. Ward Churchill and Glenn T. Morris, "Table: Key Indian Laws and Cases," in *The State of Native America*, 18.

186. Taiaiake Alfred, "Sovereignty," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 461.

187. In *Johnson v. McIntosh* (1823), however, the Supreme Court ruled on this in a manner that claimed the United States had sovereignty over claimed territory through this principle, ignoring both the stipulation that "discovery" only gave a European power the exclusive right to purchase the territory with Native consent and that discovery doctrine had pertained to European countries and not to the United States—"an outlaw republic." See Churchill and Morris, "Table," 18.

188. See Glenn T. Morris (Shawnee), "Vine Deloria, Jr., and the Development of a Decolonizing Critique of Indigenous Peoples and International Relations," in *Native Voices: American Indian Identity and Resistance*, ed. Richard A. Grounds, George E. Tinker, and David E. Wilkins (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 110–15.

189. Jimmie Durham, "Cowboys and . . ., Notes on Art, Literature, and American Indians in the Modern Mind," in *State of Native America*, 426.

190. Robert G. Hays, *A Race at Bay: New York Times Editorials on "the Indian Problem," 1860–1900* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Press, 1997), 51. The U.S. government had established an "Office of Indian Affairs" in 1832, and in 1849, had moved it to the Department of the Interior. This shift itself provoked discussion and debate for a long time, as it signaled a shift in approaches to Native nations by the United States. At the same time, war between a number Native nations and the United States (and numerous massacres by the U.S. military) continued through the end of the nineteenth century. See Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," 383.

191. Hays, *A Race at Bay*, 52.

192. Both of these positions can be seen in an editorial published on August 13, 1864. The author presents the secretary of the interior's most recent annual report, which itself notes the contradiction in U.S. policy of using language of "quasi-independent nations" while freely and unilaterally demanding removal at any point at which "their lands were required for agricultural purposes by advancing settlements." (The report is not condemnatory of this; rather, it uses it as a reason to eviscerate the language of independent nations altogether.) The author of the editorial then reviews the arguments for creating an inviolate region, and dismisses the feasibility of this idea. The author proceeds to argue that the only viable solution—if less than satisfactory in terms of being just—is to "abolish the tribal system altogether," and give to each Native person some funds in compensation, along with some land, and then "throw[. . .] open the unoccupied lands to the white settler." Indeed, this is what happened only two decades later, with the passage of the Dawes Severalty Act. Ibid., 22, 23.

193. Ibid., 20.

194. Ibid., 23.

195. The *Rocky Mountain News* is a prime example of this. Throughout the mid-1800s, the newspaper advocated extermination, creating a climate that led to the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864. See M. Annette Jaimes, "Sand Creek the Morning After," in *State of Native America*, 5–7.

196. This was not the first time the colonizers used biological warfare, which happened at least as early as the battles around Fort Pitt in 1763–1764. The event to which this reference is being made was the distribution of infected blankets to the Missouri River Mandans in the 1830s. See ibid., 7, 12.

197. Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil," 72.

198. See ibid., 86–88.

199. A painfully inadequate list includes the massacre of 150 Lakotas at Blue River (Nebraska) in 1854; of 500 Western Shoshones at Bear River (Idaho) in 1863; of 250 Cheyennes and Arapahoes at Sand Creek (Colorado) in 1863; of 100 Cheyennes at Camp Robinson (Nebraska) in 1878; and of 300 Lakotas at Wounded Knee (South Dakota) in 1890. See Lenore A. Stiffarm, assisted by Jr. Phil Lane, "The Demography of Native North America: A Question of American Indian Survival," in *State of Native America*, 34, 35.

200. Churchill cites these as including Georgia, Kentucky, Texas, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oregon, and California. Churchill, *Indians Are Us?* 75.

201. Stiffarm and Lane, "The Demography of Native North America," 34.

202. Borden, "Found Cumbering the Soil," 79.

203. Violence against Native peoples was not only imperial violence. In fact, the largest known lynching in U.S. history took place in 1862 in Mankato, Minnesota, where 38 Lakota men were hanged en masse. Accused of committing "massacres," many of the trials lasted five minutes or less. Initially, 313 men were sentenced to death. The case, ultimately, involved President Abraham Lincoln who reduced the death sentences from 313 to 38. Four thousand cheering white Minnesotans were present to witness the executions and white Minnesotans used the opportunity to confiscate Native lands. In a matter of days it was revealed that a number of the men executed had not even been present at the battles in which they were being charged with having committed massacres. See www.pulsetc.com/article.php?op=Print&sid=935.

204. Emphasis mine. Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 150.

205. Stiffarm and Lane, "The Demography of Native North America," 37.

206. Eric Cheyfitz, "Savage Law: The Plot Against Americans Indians in Johnson and Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh and The Pioneers," in *Cultures of United States Imperialism*,, 113.

207. Fixico details the strategies of the Muscogee Creek, who managed to resist much of the internal chaos that the pressure for allotment created. The Muscogee Creek went to Congress in 1889 to remind President McKinley of the eighteen treaties the United States had signed with them; they wrote a constitution in order to cultivate the internal strength needed to stand as a nation against the United States, they engaged in armed resistance, and made an attempt to become their own state (to be called Sequoyah) in opposition to white attempts to create Oklahoma. The Muscogee Creek resisted allotment for fifteen years successfully, but, ultimately, the United States began to implement it on January 3, 1903. Fixico documents the incredible devastation that took place internal to the Muscogee Creek nation, as a result—a devastation augmented by the discovery of oil under lands that had been allotted. See Donald L. Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the*

Twentieth Century: American Capitalism and Tribal Natural Resources (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998), 4–12.

208. Ibid., 4.

209. Donald Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," 384.

210. Stiffarm and Lane, "The Demography of Native North America," 35.

211. Ibid., 38.

212. While Native peoples constitute First Nations, and thus the realities of U.S. imperialism are international atrocities, the processes through which they were mythologized can be understood appropriately as racial—both as they created savages peoples and a noble, though extinct or vanishing, race. I refer the reader to chapter two and my discussion of why the ideologies of white/other employed to commit imperial atrocities can be appropriately understood as racial processes, without my making a claim that Native Americans are appropriately identified as a racial group.

213. I note that this claim is accurate in regard to the character of this settler colony, but may not be accurate in regard to the claim that it was the "first." As Larry L. Rasmussen pointed out to me, significant parallels exist between South Africa and the United States on this score. The claim to uniqueness aside, the point remains that the United States established itself, indeed, "against and through denial of its original inhabitants." Durhan, "Cowboys And . . .," 425.

214. Bergland, *The National Uncanny*, 15, 16.

215. Ibid.

216. Ibid., 13.

217. Ralph Ellison, "Twentieth-Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity," in *Shadow and Act*, ed. Ralph Ellison (New York: Random House, 1964), 28.

218. Gramsci quoted in Lott, *Love and Theft*, 11.

219. For an excellent resource, see Greg Tate, ed., *Everything but the Burden: What White People Are Taking from Black Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

220. This is Laura Donaldson's term. Donaldson, "On Medicine Women and White Shame-ans," 677.

221. Deloria writes of the early impact of "playing Indian": "Americans invoked a range of identities . . . . In the process they created a new identity—American—that was both aboriginal and European and yet was also neither. They controlled the center in an intricate, shifting three-way system of self-identification. Although this control was effective in establishing an American identity as both non-English and non-Indian, its continued openness *prevented its creators from ever effectively developing a positive, stand-alone identity* that did not rely heavily on either a British or an Indian foil. After the Revolution, Americans remained stuck in the middle, lost somewhere between 'simultaneous identity' and 'no identity.' " Emphasis mine. Deloria, *Playing Indian*, 36.

222. Donaldson, "On Medicine Women and White Shame-ans," 686.

223. Some white U.S.-Americans still have ethnic cultural traditions and spiritual legacies on which to draw. Some have religious traditions as well. Jews,

e.g., many of who are racialized as white (those practicing Judaism and not) have a strong history of representation in white antiracism activism. Some Christians similarly draw on the Christian tradition as a resource (though this is a much more problematic endeavor given the role of Christianity in both physical and cultural genocide, enslavement, and every other racial atrocity considered in these pages). In addition, some scholars have recently attempted to bring antiracist activity by white people into broader view, not in order to overstate its legacy, but in order to refuse the white supremacist blanket that would cover all signs of white resistance, making it more difficult for other white people to see options for disruption and refusal. See Becky Thompson, *A Promise and a Way of Life: White Antiracist Activism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2001); and Sally Noland MacNichol, " 'We Make the Road by Walking': Reflections on the Legacy of White Antiracist Activism," in *Disrupting White Supremacy from Within: White People on What* We *Need To Do*, ed. Jennifer Harvey, Karin A. Case, and Robin Hawley Gorsline (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2004).

4   The Imperative of Reparations

1. It is also the story of those persons "who have fought tirelessly for justice and equity and freedom in this land," and who have refused to be confined and defined by white supremacist and imperial machinations. Tim Wise, "Debtor's Prison: Facing History and Its Consequences," in *Should America Pay? Slavery and the Raging Debate on Reparations*, ed. Raymond A. Winbush (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 241.
2. Sharon D. Welch, Mary Elizabeth Hobgood, and Susan Thistlethwaite come to mind as examples.
3. Haunani-Kay Trask, "Restitution as a Precondition of Reconciliation: Native Hawaiians and Indigenous Human Rights," in *Should America Pay?*, 35.
4. J. Angelo Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations* (Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press, 2003), 149.
5. Joe R. Feagin writes, "The current prosperity, relatively long life expectancies, and relatively high living standards of whites as a group in the United States, as well as in the West generally, are ultimately rooted in the agony, exploitation, and impoverishment of those who were colonized and enslaved, as well as in the oppression and misery of their descendants." Joe R. Feagin, *Racist America: Roots Current Realities, and Future Reparations* (New York & London: Routledge, 2000), 262.
6. Roy L. Brooks, "The Age of Apology," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough: The Controversy Over Apologies and Reparations for Human Injustice*, ed. Roy L. Brooks (New York & London: New York University Press, 1999), 6.
7. Within the category of reparations, both monetary and non-monetary responses might be deemed appropriate. These may take the form of compensatory reparations—directed toward individuals—or rehabilitative reparations—directed toward a collective. Ibid., 9.
8. Ibid., 8.

9. Emphasis mine. Writing in relationship to the Japanese American struggle for redress, Roy L. Brooks continues, "Intuitions of public policy, the prejudices that legislators share with their constituencies, the willingness of political leaders to step forward and exercise political leadership, political inconvenience, and the simple exchange of favors have had the greatest impact on the fate of redress claims." Roy L. Brooks, "Japanese American Redress and the American Political Process: A Unique Achievement?" in *When Sorry Isn't Enough*, 157.

10. Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations*, 151.

11. This has been emphasized to me by Andrea Smith. The form of reparations must be part of any conversation about reparations, because so many forms of reparations might do nothing to disrupt white supremacy. One of the concerns expressed about reparations by some in the African American community, in fact, is that the U.S. government might use reparations to claim that its hands are now washed clean of its enslaving past, while doing nothing to transform racial stratification in the United States. Some forms of reparations, moreover, might perpetuate neocolonial relations between the United States and Native Americans.

12. It is important to note several things in regard to invoking any kind of comparison with Japanese American redress. First, I do not (nor, I believe, does Trask) wish to use Japanese Americans as a foil; in other words, it is not appropriate to make a complaint against the United State vis-à-vis Japanese Americans. In no way am I arguing that Japanese American suffering was less than that of Native peoples or people of African descent and that, thus, they were "less" entitled to redress. Moreover, such negative comparisons are to be avoided as much as possible, not least in the interest of coalition-building. It is notable, in this regard, that arguments for reparations to African American communities often invoke, by way of comparison, not only Japanese American redress, but also settlements granted to Native peoples. This is a tendency that should be eschewed, especially given that settlements with Native peoples have, in many cases, furthered U.S. imperial occupation of the land and more deeply entrenched neocolonial relations. Second, in terms of Japanese American redress itself, it is important to note the meager compensation that was allotted and that was paid only to actual survivors of internment camps. Twenty thousand dollars did not replace the actual "cost" of internment. Finally, and relatedly, it was an intentional and much deliberated choice made by Japanese American advocates to pursue redress not reparations, and to recognize the redress offered by the United States as a symbolic measure and not a compensatory one. On this point, see JoAnne H. Kagiwada, "And Justice for All," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 126–36. For examples of the problem of comparisons, see Jon M. Van Dyke, "Reparations for the Descendants of American Slaves Under International Law," and Raymond A. Winbush, "Introduction," in *Should America Pay?*, 59 and xii, respectively.

13. Trask writes that restitution for injustice, as in the case of Japanese Americans, enables those who have been victimized to take pride once again in being part of the nation. "Indigenous peoples, on the other hand, are *not* proud to be American since they are *not*, in truth, of America. Indeed the very

existence of native nations contradicts the dominant ideology of the United States as an immigrant nation founded on vacant land." Trask, "Restitution as a Precondition of Reconciliation," 39.

14. Ibid., 29.

15. In part, my claim in this regard is anecdotal and from personal experience. I learned to brace myself, e.g., when a white U.S.-American person asked me about the topic of this writing project. Even among "liberals" the responses I received were intense and, regularly, negative. There exists more substantial data on this, however. In 1997, a poll by ABC News found that two-thirds of white respondents said not even an apology was due for slavery and a full 88 percent opposed reparations. In contrast, two-thirds of African Americans said the government should apologize *and* compensate people of African descent for slavery.

16. I do believe, however, there is a kind of shame or guilt that becomes present for some white people when reparations is invoked—feelings that many find intolerable to the point of needing to create an ideology of denial. Molly Secours says that denial exists in a symbiotic relationship with deflection, for white people. After inquiring into the most common responses white people give to the idea of reparations (from "I'm not racist," to "My family never owned slaves"), she writes: "Denial prevents us from getting anywhere near the issue and deflection allows us to stay cloistered in denial." Molly Secours, "Riding the Reparations Bandwagon," in *Should America Pay?* 286.

17. See Marcia Y. Riggs, *Awake, Arise, and Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1994), especially chapter four.

18. Andrea Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 176.

19. Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations*, 147.

20. Ibid., 155.

21. That is, if one sets aside the pressing question about U.S. legality.

22. This included massive warfare that weakened Native nations such that treaty making became a best possible strategy; looking the other way while white U.S.-Americans settled on Native lands in violation of U.S.-Native agreements; and then refusing to enforce agreed upon boundaries by pushing Native peoples to cede even more land, rather than compelling white settlers to move. In the case of the Lakota people, which will be explored later, the U.S. Congress fraudulently ratified a treaty with only 10 percent of the adult Lakota in agreement, despite stipulations in a prior treaty that a full three-fourths of adults in the Lakota nation must concur.

23. Ward Churchill, *Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1994), 38.

24. David E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), x.

25. These include: "(a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group." See www.un. org.

26. It should be noted that, despite the formal cessation of policies of allotment in 1934 (with the Indian Reorganization Act), from 1936 to 1974, Native peoples continued to lose thirteen thousand acres of land a year, or another eight million acres. Winona LaDuke, *All Our Relations: Native Struggles for Land and Life* (Cambridge: South End Press, 1999), 143. Donald Fixico documents the devastating impact that allotment and the subsequent discovery of oil had on the Osage peoples—many of whom became "rich" individually, and, thus, also prime targets for a variety of white schemes. See Donald L. Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century: American Capitalism and Tribal Natural Resources* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998), chapter two.

27. As early as 1793 the U.S. Congress appropriated $20,000 a year to provide "educational services" to Native nations with whom they signed treaties—education, as the United States understood it, was for the purpose of development in the "arts of civilization." By 1819, the Congress had established a "civilization fund" and was working with Christian denominations to establish a comprehensive system of boarding and day schools. By 1869, attendance at mission schools was mandatory for children between the ages of six and sixteen on most reservations. Jorge Noriega writes, "It was not unusual . . . for a child to be taken at age six or seven and to never see his or her home and family again until age seventeen or eighteen. At this point they were often *sent* back, but in a condition largely devoid of conceptions of both their own cultures and their intended roles within them." In addition to being assimilated into white culture, conditions at many schools were terrible, regularly including, e.g., forced labor. The practice of taking children from their homes continued well into the twentieth century. See Jorge Noriega, "American Indian Education in the United States: Indoctrination for Colonialism," in *State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, ed. M. Annette Jaimes (Boston: South End Press, 1992), 391.

28. Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," 173.

29. See items (d) and (e) of footnote 25.

30. Churchill, *Indians Are Us?*, 39.

31. Crimes against humanity are defined as particular acts committed "as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack." These include "(a) Murder; (b) Extermination; (c) Enslavement; (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population; (e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; (f) Torture; (g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; (h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, . . . (i) Enforced disappearance of persons; (j) The crime of apartheid; (k) Other inhuman acts of similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health." See www.un.org.

32. Acts that are punishable are: "(a) Genocide; (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide; (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide; (d) Attempt to commit genocide; (e) Complicity in genocide." See ibid.

33. This runs counter to the ideology and social memory inculcated in non-Native U.S.-American citizens, in which we are taught that the United States gave Native peoples reservations.

34. Vine Deloria, Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1969), 36.

35. Ibid., 37.

36. Corlett articulates six possible reparations policies. The other five possible polices are increasingly insufficient in their ability to meet the standard of "strict justice," but are increasingly "plausible" politically. They include: "complete restitution of lands" in which Native peoples would have sovereignty over the lands and act as something akin to "landlords" to the United States; "complete compensation for harms to persons and property," which would include billions of dollars only; " 'Buffalo Commons' proposal," which would restore a significant, but partial portion of lands to Native peoples; a "substantial reparations tax," a legislative approach that might be constituted by 25 percent of each non-Native person's annual income; and, finally, a "minimal reparations tax," which might be constituted by as little as 1 percent of each non-Native person's annual income. Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations*, 185–90.

37. Ibid., 185.

38. Corlett continues, "Nonetheless, the sovereignty over certain lands by Native Americans to others satisfies the concern for morality and justice in that it gives back to Native peoples the lands to which they had and have ultimate ('trumping') moral rights. But it also does not unduly affect those currently living on those lands in violation of the principle of morally just acquisitions and transfers . . . . The citizens of the United States would become highly dependent on the goodness of the Native American nations. Of course, history shows that most, if not all, Native peoples are not the kinds of people with whom one has to worry regarding good will and cooperation." Ibid., 172.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. "The law gave full authority to the interior secretary to sign leases for the tribes, and the unforeseen success *[sic]* of the free enterprise system in lobbying for further exploitation meant that Indian lands would again be invaded for timber, water, minerals, and other natural resources." Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*, 159.

42. For primary documents in which the U.S. government first began to recognize this language as a result of Native activism and militancy (during the tenure of President Richard Nixon), see Alvin M. Josephy, *Red Power: The American Indians' Fight for Freedom* (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1971).

43. Turtles on Turtle Island have been found to contain levels of PCB contamination as high as 3,067 parts per million (ppm). In soil, 50 ppm is considered "contaminated" according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. LaDuke, *All Our Relations*, 12.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 97, 98.

46. The U.S. government lied about the amount of radiation exposure such tests created—claiming levels to be the equivalent of a chest x-ray. By 1997, however, the National Cancer Institute released a study showing that 160 million people had been exposed to radiation levels an average of 200 times higher than the government acknowledged. As a result, the Western Shoshone have experienced 75,000 cases of thyroid cancer and other thyroid disorders, as well as high rates of leukemia and other forms of cancer. Ibid., 98.

47. Emphasis mine. Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," 171. Also, see Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*, especially chapters seven, eight, and nine, which document the U.S. demand for natural resources to respond to the growing U.S. "energy crisis," and Native struggles to retain control over their lands in order to protect their sovereignty and the well-being of the land.

48. Stannard, *American Holocaust*, 13.

49. In 1974, Vine Deloria, Jr. wrote: "Rather than seeking a new social order or a new system of economic distribution and management, Indians are seeking no less than the restoration of the continent and the destruction, if necessary, of the white invaders who have stolen and raped their lands. As fantastic as such an aim may sound, it has deep roots in Indians consciousness." This goal, he continues, emerges primarily from Native religiosity. Vine Deloria, Jr., "Religion and Revolution Among American Indians," in *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*, ed. James Treat (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), 38.

50. See item (c) of footnote 32.

51. The quote is taken from text of the Civil Rights Act of 1875. There were several different measures from 1866 to 1875 through which the U.S. Congress attempted to create legislation that would ensure social and political equality for freed African Americans. See Robert Westley, "Many Billions Gone: Is It Time to Reconsider the Case for Black Reparations?" in *Should America Pay?*, 122.

52. As in previous chapters, it is critical here not to compartmentalize the issue of land and to recognize in U.S. pseudo-attempts to offer land to African Americans violations of Native sovereignty and land rights.

53. The Southern Homestead Act was passed in 1866 and allowed newly freed African Americans to purchase eighty-acre plots of land at reduced rates. Ex-Confederates were not allowed to apply for six months, but the reality of economic destitution among newly freed African Americans rendered it impossible for most to benefit from this legislation. See Westley, "Many Billions Gone," 122–24.

54. Thomas Geoghegan makes a case that, in fact, President Abraham Lincoln did apologize in his Second Inaugural Address when he described the Civil War as "this terrible woe, as the woe due to those by whome the offence [namely, American Slavery] came . . ." and continued by saying, "Fondly do we hope-fervently do we pray-that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God will that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's

two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword . . . ." Geoghegan does not make this case in order to suggest the United States has paid its due. His point, rather, is that we should not forget the power of these words in an age when we are more inclined to sing, "All you need is love." Still, I find his a hard case to make, and am not sure that anything is gained by seeing these poetic words as an official expression of remorse and repentance. See Thomas Geoghegan, "Lincoln Apologizes," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough*, 360–61.

55. Westley, "Many Billions Gone," 126.

56. Ibid.

57. I am not, here, advocating the pursuit of reparations strategies through domestic law. Indeed, one of the important gains of viewing Native American and African American struggles together in relationship to white supremacy is the possibility of strengthening the attempt to avoid some of the serious pitfalls intrinsic to pursuing reparations through a domestic strategy. Indigenous leaders in movements for sovereignty and self-determination are clear that the best strategy is an international one. See Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land."; and Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1993).

58. This is not to say, of course, that equality or protections were realized. And, though technically true, the pervasiveness of institutions such as sharecropping and peonage, which had similar effects as slavery, should not be overlooked in post-abolition United States.

59. Boris I. Bittker, *The Case for Black Reparations* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), 23. It should be noted that there are substantial weaknesses in Bittker's text. First, he repeatedly plays off the case of Native Americans—whom he says have been given reparations by the U.S. government—as the reason Blacks are entitled to reparations. Second, his exploration is limited to reparations for Jim Crow Segregation, around education issues in particular. He dismisses out of hand the possibility that reparations for enslavement should be pursued.

60. Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations*, 202.

61. Van Dyke, "Reparations for the Descendants of American Slaves," 74.

62. Ibid., 72–74.

63. Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations*, 219.

64. Emphasis in the original. Jewel Crawford, Wade W. Nobles, and Joy DeGruy Leary, "Reparations and Health Care for African Americans: Repairing the Damage from the Legacy of Slavery," in *Should America Pay?*, 154.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 255.

67. For a horrifying account of just one example of the audacity and brutality with which European countries ravaged the African continent and the peoples of the African continent, see Adam Hochschild's work on Belgium and the Congo. Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998).

68. Dennis C. Sweet III states: "How many Americans know that 25 million blacks died in slavery? And how many know that virtual slavery was perpetuated for nearly a century after emancipation? Peonage laws made unpaid workers out of debtors. There were sharecropping schemes. Then Jim Crow laws. And even after that, there were other entrenched policies that have kept African Americans living in ghettos." November 2000 *Harper's* Magazine, "Does America Owe a Debt to the Descendants of Its Slaves?" in *Should America Pay?*, 80. Apartheid, too, is a crime against humanity.

69. Van Dyke, "Reparations for the Descendants of American Slaves," 62–64.

70. Omari L. Winbush, "Reflections on Homer Plessy and Reparations," in *Should America Pay?*, 151.

71. Such relations are perpetuated through institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization, e.g.

72. Molefi Kete Asante, "The African American Warrant for Reparations: The Crime of European Enslavement of Africans and Its Consequences," in *Should America Pay?*, 4.

73. Corlett, *Race, Racism & Reparations*, 219, 220 Emphasis in original.

74. See Taiaiake Alfred, "Sovereignty," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, ed. Philip J. Deloria and Neal Salisbury (Malden & Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 460–74.

75. See the work of Sharon D. Welch who writes: "The cultured despair of the middle class is ideological." Welch's concern is similar to my point here. She notes that it is privilege that makes it possible for justice-minded middle-class white people to "give up" in struggles for social justice when successful results are not quick and clear. To find oneself paralyzed in the face of overwhelming evil can be a sign that one is not experiencing one's own life and survival to be at stake. Thus, one's paralysis exists in a relationship of complicity with injustice. For those who are the targets of such evil, such paralysis is not an option. Sharon D. Welch, *A Feminist Ethic of Risk, rev. ed.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 41.

76. He continues by arguing that such instability has often emerged as a result of resistance instigated by Black communities. Feagin, *Racist America*, 237.

77. Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, 32. Trask is a Native Hawaiian. The Kingdom of Hawai'i was illegally overthrown by the United States in the 1890s. As with all First Nation peoples, Native Hawaiians have their own distinct experience and history with the United States. However, horrifyingly similar realities exist in the decimation of 97 percent of the Native Hawaiian population, appropriation of much of the land, the presence of the U.S. military committing environmental atrocities, and white exploitation of Hawaiian culture.

78. Ibid., 41.

79. See ibid., 40–47; and for the full text of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, see ibid., 279–88.

80. Trask, "Restitution as a Precondition of Reconciliation," 35.

81. Ibid. Elsewhere Trask writes, "Given the history of indigenous peoples, then, no monetary compensation, no apology, no effort to put the past behind us, is

acceptable. The only acceptable reality is return of native lands and waters, a monetary indemnity, and recognition of native sovereignty." Ibid., 39.

82. Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, 46.

83. Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," 172.

84. See Donald L. Fixico, "Federal and State Policies and American Indians," in *A Companion to American Indian History*, 379–96; Alfred, "Sovereignty"; Josephy, *Red Power*.

85. Josephy, *Red Power*, 33.

86. See, e.g., Josephy, *Red Power*, 7; and complaints by the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians against former governor Pete Wilson and the State of California, "Statement of the Honorable Anthony R. Pico, Chairman, Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians, Press Conference: San Diego, March 13, 1998," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough*, 294–97.

87. The specific abrogated treaty was the Second Fort Laramie Treaty, which was signed in 1868 between the U.S. government and the Sioux. This treaty was a result of the United States suing for peace after the Sioux, in alliance with the Cheyenne and Arapaho nations, successfully defeated the U.S. Army as a part of Sioux efforts to keep the United States from illegal incursions into their territory (which had been guaranteed and Lakota sovereignty recognized in the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851). The treaty reserved the Black Hills for the Lakota people, but when gold was "discovered" by an illegal trespasser in 1873, the U.S. Congress sent in Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer to explore and, ultimately, attempt to "purchase" the region from the Lakota peoples. When the Lakota refused to sell, Congress declared it would block all further appropriations for the Lakota people until they surrendered the Black Hills. Congress went on to ratify a fraudulent treaty in 1876 through which it claimed the right to Lakota territory. This set the stage for further war: Custer was defeated in 1876, the Lakota people were removed and restricted under conditions of great deprivation and suffering to reservations through the 1880s, and, in 1890, the U.S. military massacred 350 Lakota people at Wounded Knee. Wounded Knee was largely perceived by Native peoples as U.S. retaliation for Custer's defeat; the official U.S. rationale was the need to stamp out the perceived threat of Native uprising that was being observed in the religio-cultural revival of Native peoples through the Ghost Dance. For more on this history, see Ward Churchill, "The Earth is Our Mother: Struggles for American Indian Land and Liberation in the Contemporary United States," in *State of Native America*, 162–69; Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*, chapter six.

88. Four years after the ICC was established in 1946, the Sioux filed claims over the Black Hills. The ICC made a preliminary ruling in 1974 that the United States had indeed illegally seized Lakota land and, thus, owed compensation for the Black Hills. It reaffirmed this decision in 1979, ruling that the Sioux were owed $17.5 million for the Black Hills—a figure based on assessments of the worth of the land in 1877 plus 5 percent simple interest. It also recognized Bear Butte as sacred to the Lakota and Cheyenne people, but upheld the "right" of the "public" to have access to the region as tourists. A series of claims, appeals, and legislative measures with different proposed measures

and amounts of compensation took place through the 1980s. For more details of this complex struggle, as well as the intrinsic limits of the ICC, see Roy L. Brooks, "Wild Redress?" in *When Sorry Isn't Enough*, 234; Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," 170; Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*.

89. Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*, 130–33.

90. Ibid., 132.

91. Nell Jessup Newtom, "Indian Claims for Reparations, Compensation, and Restitution in the United States Legal System," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough*, 264. In the case of the Lakota, the amount of compensation proposed in 1987 amounted to $2,800 per member. Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*, 135.

92. This is not to suggest that there exists consensus among the Lakota people (nor within other nations embroiled in land struggles) on the decision to refuse the monies that have been allocated as compensation for the Black Hills.

93. A similar experience is recounted by Smith in the struggle by the Western Shoshone against the Nevada Test Site, which is located on land guaranteed to the Shoshone under a treaty from 1868. (This issue was named earlier.) When the Shoshone took their case to the ICC they too were offered compensation at levels consistent with assessments of the value of the land in the year in which the land was taken (1872). Though the Shoshone tried to fire their lawyer, who had advocated this move, according to Smith, the Bureau of Indian Affairs continued to retain his services. Moreover, because the case came before the ICC, the courts have ruled that the Shoshone have lost title to their land. Now, Congress has acted to approve the location of a repository for high-level nuclear waste on Yucca Mountain—a sacred site of the Western Shoshone people. Smith, "Reparations and the Question of Land," 171.

94. Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*, 136.

95. See The Institute for Natural Progress, "In Usual and Accustomed Places: Contemporary American Indian Fishing Rights Struggles," in *State of Native America: Genocide*, 217–39.

96. See chapters three and five of Fixico, *The Invasion of Indian Country in the Twentieth Century*.

97. This struggle emerged in the mid-1990s in response to a 1994 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that ruled states could collect taxes on non-Native consumers at Native businesses, a decision that many nations claim violates sovereignty. In the New York Region, the Mohawk, Seneca, Dio, Oneida, and Cayuga, among several other nations, formed the First Nations Business League to fight New York's attempts to implement a policy in this regard. Their first press release read: "The Iroquois Confederacy and the individual nations of the Confederacy and the Algonquin Nations have never relinquished our sovereignty. We have never consented to give any foreign nation the authority to tax our people [February 23, 1996]." New York officials see in this attempt an opportunity to generate revenue for the state of up to one billion dollars a year. To this point, First Nation peoples in the region have successfully blocked New York's attempts. Indeed, despite the Court's ruling that the State has a "right" to tax, sovereignty renders any mechanisms through which taxes might actually be

collected constitutionally forbidden. The situation in New York is similar to those unfolding in Rhode Island, Maine, Oklahoma, and other states. See Pam Belluck, "States Moving to End Tribes' Tax-Free Sales," *New York Times*, September 28, 2003; "New York Lawmakers Consider Taxing Tribes," *NACS Online*, April 22, 2003, online: www.nacsonline.com/NR/exerres/00002b5 awmugjeuaoryegxt/NewsPosting.asp.

98. See Vine Deloria, Jr., "A Simple Question of Humanity: The Moral Dimensions of the Reburial Issue," in ed. James Treat, *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America* (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), 187–202; Rick Hill, "Repatriation Must Heal Old Wounds," in *When Sorry Isn't Enough*, 283–87.

99. See LaDuke, *All Our Relations*; Jace Weaver, ed., *Defending Mother Earth: Native American Perspectives on Environmental Justice* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1996).

100. Deadria C. Farmer-Paellmann, "Excerpt from *Black Exodus: The Ex-Slave Pension Movement Reader," in Should America Pay?*, 27.

101. Queen Mother Moore was an African American activist born in 1898 whose life's work spanned seventy-seven years and included a breathtaking array of struggles and achievements too numerous to be detailed here. It included work with Marcus Garvey, organizing on legal cases such as that of the Scottsboro Boys, advocacy at the United Nations, cultural and social work in Harlem and much else.

102. The African American struggle for justice articulated as a human rights struggle goes back to the vision of Malcolm X, along with Marcus Garvey, W. E. B. Du Bois, Paul Robeson, and others. As Malcolm X stated to the Organization of African Unity in 1964: "Our problem is your problem. It is not a Negro problem, nor an American problem. This is a world problem for humanity. It is not a problem of civil rights, it is a problem of human rights." Roger Wareham, "The Popularization of the International Demand for Reparations for African People," in *Should America Pay?*, 227.

103. Wareham, "The Popularization of the International Demand for Reparations for African Peoples," 237.

104. Ibid., 230.

105. Roger Wareham documents the struggle to hold the conference, the proposed title of which was simply "World Conference Against Racism." In the face of resistance from the United States and Western European countries, he argues, the expansion of the topic of the conference was an evasion tactic. "The Western countries hoped that broadening the scope would dilute the focus on racism and racial discrimination." Still, the United States was the last country to agree to hold the conference. Ibid., 229.

106. Ibid., 231, 234.

107. In 1998, the December 12th Movement successfully lobbied the African Group to propose a resolution through the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), which would declare the Transatlantic Slave Trade and Slavery a Crime Against Humanity. The approval of the resolution coincided with President Bill Clinton's trip to Senegal—and, coincidentally, Senegal was chair of the African Group at the time. Upon word of the proposed resolution,

President Clinton reportedly called President Diouf of Senegal (from Air Force One) and made it clear that it would not be in Senegal's best interest to put the resolution forward, and the next day Senegal withdrew the proposed resolution. The lobbying effort in which the Durban 400 and others were involved was intended to support the African Group in resisting the intense pressure exerted by the United States and the WEO Group to keep slavery as crimes against humanity and issues of reparations off the official table. Ibid., 231.

108. Ibid., 235.

109. *Harper's* Magazine, "Does America Owe a Debt to the Descendants of Its Slaves?" 103.

110. Ibid.

111. In a Harper's interview with Willie E. Gary, Alexander J. Pires, Jr., Richard F. Scruggs, and Dennis C. Sweet III, four of the United States' most successful class-action lawyers, several attempts to find a legal theory are discussed. The interviewees, many of whom have been involved with a variety of successful reparations suits, discuss breach of contract in relation to "40 acres and a mule," failed attempts to build a case out of the Thirteenth amendment, attempts to argue against statute of limitations and sovereign immunity, as well as the issue of who the plaintiffs are. See Ibid.

112. Pires successfully argued a $1 billion settlement for African American farmers in a discrimination case brought against the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and is currently working on a multibillion-dollar class-action suit on behalf of Native Americans. Ibid., 82, 107.

113. This was reiterated to me by Dianne Sammons, a lawyer involved in private suits on behalf of Richard E. Barber, Sr., a plaintiff against New York Life Insurance, Brown Brothers Harriman & Company, Norfolk Southern, and their predecessors, successors, and/or assigns, and Corporate Does Nos. 1–100.

114. After spending several years engaged in research, in 2000, Farmer-Paellmann discovered documents in the archives of Aetna Incorporated called "Aetna Slave Policy." Intending simultaneously to pursue legal action and build a media campaign that would put corporations with historic ties to the slave trade in the spotlight, Farmer-Paellmann contacted Aetna. By March 2000, Aetna had issued an apology for its participation in slavery, but had backed out of an initial promise to pay restitution. Farmer-Paellmann, "Excerpt from *Black Exodus: The Ex-Slave Pension Movement Reader*," 26.

115. From the press advisory. The case was filed in U.S. District court for the Eastern District of New York (Brooklyn office).

116. Richard E. Barber, Sr., e.g., filed a suit in May 2002 in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey, "On behalf of himself and as representative of his enslaved ancestors and all persons similarly situated."

117. The NRCC was formed in part to serve as an organization body that could help coordinate the multiple facets of the reparations struggle. It recognizes that "legal and political strategies are fundamental to the success of this movement." Dorothy J. Tillman, "Slavery, Reparations, and the Role of the Churches," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 217.

118. See ibid., 215–19.
119. Asante, "The African American Warrant for Reparations," 12.
120. Ibid.
121. The inclusion of land in discussions of appropriate reparations, not only by N'Cobra, but also by a good number of other major reparations coalitions is a major fault line in the relationship between struggles by First Nations' peoples and struggles by people of African descent. See www.ncobra.org.
122. "There are individuals, families, and religious institutions that directly bene- fited from slavery in the United States, and who, if acting in good faith, would contribute to reparations funds for use in assisting in the reparations process. However, we choose to focus on government and corporations because of their particular role in the horrific tragedies of chattel slavery and the continuing vestiges of slavery we live with today." See ibid.
123. See ibid.
124. Emilie M. Townes writes:

     "i believe reparations are about the ability or inability of whites and their kin to recognize they have attained their power and privilege on the backs of

     the poor
     the darker skinned
     the feminine
     and it just might be the time to have an honest conversation about
     this . . ."

     Emilie M. Townes, "Empire and Forgottenness: Abysmal Sylphs in the Reparations Debate for Black Folks in the United States," *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* 56, no. 1–2 (2002): 114.
125. See David W. Chen, "Battle Over Iroquois Land Claims Escalates," *New York Times*, May 16, 2000, p. 1.
126. This is the first resolution that charges a city to create a commission. Barron also introduced two other resolutions: one declaring March 21 Reparations Awareness Day and declaring the Transatlantic Slave Trade and slavery crimes against humanity, and the other stating that the City Council stands in support of class-action lawsuits being pursued against corporations. Stephanie A. Crockett, "N.Y. City Council Hears Arguments for Reparations Commission," www.bet.com/articles/1,,c1gb3105–3772,00.html.
127. This is a socialization that greatly varies depending on the affects of class, gender, physical ability, and sexual orientation.

Conclusion   Toward Becoming More Human

1. The document was delivered as a challenge to the "Christian Churches and the Synagogues in the United States of American and to All Other Racist Institutions." It began: "We the black people assembled in Detroit, Michigan, for the National Black Economic Development Conference are fully aware that we have been forced to come together because racist white America has exploited our resources, our minds, our bodies, our labor. For centuries we

have been forced to live as colonized people inside the United States, victimized by the most vicious, racist system in the world. We have helped to build the most industrialized country in the world." The initial demands included $500 million dollars (estimated at $15 per African American) for a variety of initiatives, including a southern land bank, publishing and printing industries, audio-visual networks, a research skills center, a training center, a National Black Labor Strike and Defense Fund, and a Black university. James Forman, "The Black Manifesto," in *Black Manifesto: Religion, Racism and Reparations*, ed. Robert S. Lecky and H. Elliot Wright (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1969), 114, 120–22.

2. William Stringfellow, "Reparations: Repentance as a Necessity to Reconciliation," in ibid., 59.

3. Linking costly and grace, a theological notion taken from Dietrich Bonhoeffer, is crucial. This journey must be costly, given the concrete demands on our lives because of who we are and what we have unjustly "inherited." Yet, it is always also a journey of grace, because we can truly never undo, redo, or "fix" the irreparable damages that have been done.

4. Vine Deloria, Jr., "God Is Also Red: An Interview with Vine Deloria Jr.," interview by James R. McGraw, *Christianity and Crisis* 35 (September 15, 1975): 206, quoted in James Treat, "Introduction: An American Critique of Religion," in *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*, ed. James Treat, by Vine Deloria, Jr. (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), 13.

5. Clara Sue Kidwell, Homer Noley, and George E. "Tink" Tinker, *A Native American Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2001), 4.

6. Kidwell et al. begin their work by being clear that it is a difficult if not impossible task to write a "Native American theology," given the diversity of American Indian cultures. Still, they claim there are some basic distinctions that set American Indian cultures and religious traditions apart from Euro/American cultures and religious traditions: categories of religion and worship; nature of deity; relationship between humans and other parts of the created order; differences in valuing space or time, community, and the individual. Ibid., 11.

7. Ibid., 13.

8. Vine Deloria, Jr., "Completing the Theological Circle: Civil Religion in America," in *For This Land: Writings on Religion in America*, edited by James Treat (New York & London: Routledge, 1999), 167.

9. A phenomenon about which many Native scholars and activists express their concern. See description of Kidwell et al. of the non-Native practice of Native religions as a mark of colonialism. Kidwell, Homer Noley, and Tinker, *A Native American Theology*, 173.

10. This claim can be made also in the context of remembering that race is a relationship. It is for this reason that a fundamental *theological* issue affecting Native American and white U.S.-Americans relations is the land itself. "To continue to resist just Native land claims and refuse reparations as compensation for lands illegally taken is to engage in an unhealthy and dangerous psychological denial about the conquest of this continent and the nature of our cohabitation on it." Ibid., 170.

11. "American history is replete with examples . . . where the white man has under-stood his experiences not in the context of encountering a people religiously and metaphysically distinct from himself but as an objective manifestation of the workings of divine purpose in the universe." So, e.g., instead of encountering the Powhatans as a people bringing the struggling English colonists food, John Smith suggested that God moved the Powhatans to bring the English food. In this sense history is determined (and, in a sense, predetermined). Deloria, Jr., "Completing the Theological Circle," 169.

12. Deloria continues, "I don't think we've confronted the American experience in any profound way at all. So nobody understands who we are or where we're going. And that's white and Indian." Quoting from Vine Deloria, Jr., "God Is Also Red: An Interview with Vine Deloria Jr.," interview by James R. McGraw, *Christianity and Crisis*, 206, in Treat, "Introduction: An American Critique of Religion," 12, 13.

13. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation, Twentieth Anniversary Edition* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1970), 45.

14. Ibid., 107.

15. Williams engages the biblical account of Hagar's experience in the wilderness, an account in which God did not liberate: "Regardless of the way one interprets God's command to Hagar to submit herself to Sarah, God does not liberate her." Williams articulates a tradition of survival/quality-of-life struggle in the African American experience in which Black women in particular have experienced a God who is involved in their survival struggle, enabling them to "make a way out of no way." See Delores S. Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 6, 145.

16. Delores S. Williams, "A Womanist Perspective on Sin," in *A Troubling in My Soul: Womanist Perspectives on Evil & Suffering*, ed. Emilie M. Townes (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993), 141, 142.

17. Ibid., 145.

18. One of which is the engagement in Black liberation theology of a linear view of history and an actor God of the sort that Deloria critiques.

19. Marcia Y. Riggs, *Awake, Arise, and Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 1994), 96.

20. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, 107.

21. Ibid.

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